



11 a.m.
Danny Howe announces the Sudan missions offering total.

The Call

Today's scripture

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God. — From Ephesians 4:1-3

June 17, 2009

HOLSTON ANNUAL CONFERENCE EDITION

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Wednesday SCHEDULE

All activities will be held in Stuart Auditorium, unless indicated.

7:30 a.m.
Morning Worship and Communion
Memorial Chapel

8 a.m.

- Reading of Daily Scripture
- Direct invoicing
- CFA: Budget approval
- Cabinet recognitions
- 2010 Annual Conference

9 a.m.
Break

9:20 a.m.
Leading Beyond the Walls
"Strategies for Reaching the Unchurched"
Rev. Adam Hamilton

- "Our Life Together,"
by Rev. Charles Maynard

11 a.m.
Sending Forth to Offer Them Christ
Bishop James Swanson
Combined Choirs, Brass Ensemble, and Liturgical Dancers of Greenville Area Churches

- Fixing of appointments
- Licensing of local pastors
- Adjournment

Conclude with inspiration

Direct invoicing, budget decisions precede Sending Forth service

Anual Conference is scheduled to adjourn before lunch, whereas in years past the conference concluded in late afternoon. Prepare for a busy morning.

The direct invoicing decision will be finalized at 8 a.m. Representing a task force of the Board of Pensions and Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), Charlie Harr will present the report published on pages 80-86 of the "Book of Reports." The report begins:



8 a.m.
Charlie Harr gives the Direct Invoicing report.

"We do believe the current system of allowing churches to forgo paying their fair share of pension and health costs has the potential to severely impact the Holston Conference from meeting its future pension and health obligations, not to mention its ability to fund other types of ministries through the Conference."

After the direct invoicing vote, the conference will vote on the 2010 budget. CFA has proposed a budget of \$15.16 percent, 4.6 percent below the 2009 adopted budget.

At 9:20 a.m., the Rev. Adam Hamilton will present his final lesson, "Strategies for Reaching the Unchurched."

By that time we will probably need to laugh. The Rev. Charles Maynard returns to Annual Conference to give his final-day, comical reality check in "Our Life Together."

The Sending Forth Service is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. Danny Howe, Missions Ministry Team chair, will announce the total offering collected for Holston's mission in Yei, Sudan. The conference also will bless the ministry of the Rev. Boo Hankins and the Rev. Phyllis Hankins, who depart June 22 for a two-year assignment in Sudan.

Bishop James Swanson will preach "Leading From Within," based on Ephesians 4:1-16. A choir, brass ensemble, and liturgical dancers from five Greenville churches will lift up their praises. The churches represented are Asbury, Christ, Pruitt Hill, Tate's Chapel, and Trinity. (The Rev. Boo Hankins currently served at Trinity UMC.)

Following Swanson's fixing of the appointments for the 2009-2010 year, he will license 24 local pastors. ■



11 a.m.

A Greenville choir including vocalists from Asbury, Trinity, Christ, Pruitt Hill, and Tate's Chapel will sing, directed by Kevin Flanagan (above).



Bishop Swanson's Sending Forth message:

Lead from within. Work for the whole.

I have a book of poems on my desk entitled, "Leading from Within: Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Lead." I am drawn most to the forward written by Madeleine Albright, the first woman to become U.S. secretary of state.

Albright writes about Sept. 11, 2001, and the moving story of Tom Burnett and United Flight 93. Burnett called his wife from the hijacked plane, realizing by then that two other planes had crashed into the World Trade Center. "I know we're going to die," he said, "but some of us are going to do something about it." They did, and many other lives were saved.

Albright makes this observation:

Since that awful morning, the memory of their heroism has inspired us. It should also instruct us. The reason is that when you think about it, "I know we're going to die," is a wholly unremarkable statement. Each of us could on any day say the same. It is Burnett's next words that were both matter-of-fact and electrifying. "Some of us are going to do something about it."

The Apostle Paul conveys the same fundamental challenge in Ephesians 4:1: *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Will we 21st century Christians walk worthy? Will we do something with the gifts, skills, abilities, and resources that God gives us?*

It is not our outward circumstances that determine our faithfulness and fruitfulness, but what resides on the inside. Will we be the people of God, or will we — like most of society — fall prey to the "me first" culture?

I challenge each of our clergy to lead a life empowered by the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, fasting, tithing, fellowship with like-minded colleagues, and a commitment to be learning disciples. We must strengthen our inner spirit so that we may be equipped to lead our congregations in transforming communities.

I challenge all of our laity to leave behind childish behaviors in a quest for power, position, or other selfish goals, and instead seek God's vision for living out their faith.

The world needs us to be at our best! We are only at our best as we feed upon the things that are right and true and good — which may be discovered in the strength of a relationship with Christ. Let this be the first of all our remaining years, where we concentrate on pleasing God and working for what's best for the whole.

James E. Swanson, Sr.

James E. Swanson, Sr.
Resident Bishop

