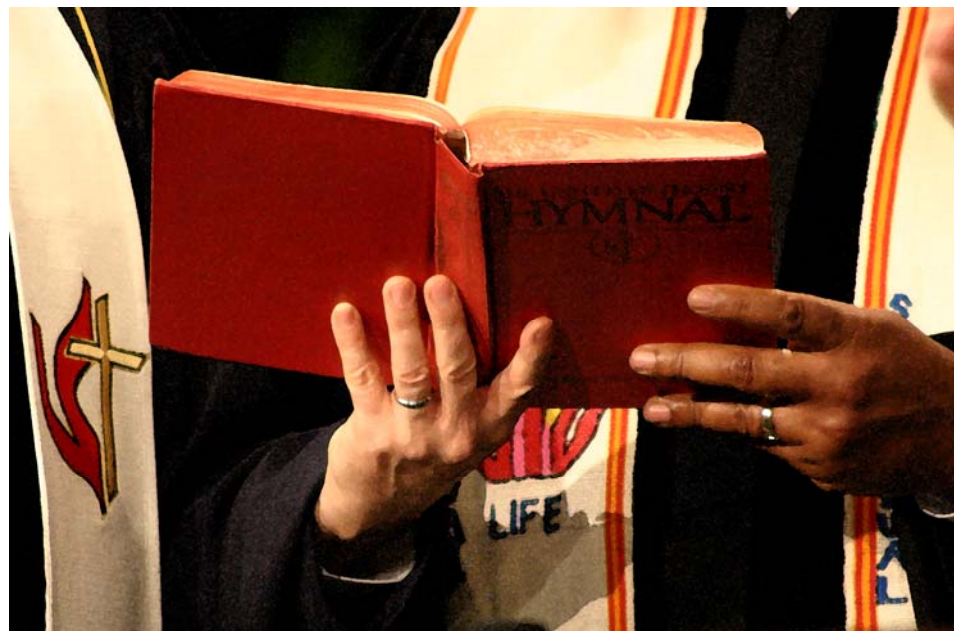


Among many other agenda items during the four-day event, the Conference:

- Celebrated the ministry of the laity at the annual Laity Banquet, which this year established the *Mary Ellen Bullard Leadership Address* featuring Jeff & Kevin Steele as the first guest speakers;
- Received an offering of over \$244,000 for the Blue Lake Campaign. The campaign has now raised over \$2.5 million;
- Adopted a resolution dealing with tax fairness issues in Alabama;
- Celebrated the two winners of the Denman Evangelism Award: Mr. Bill Harris of Trinity UMC in Fort Walton Beach, FL (laity); and Rev. Jason Adams of St. Luke UMC in Pensacola, FL (clergy);
- Recognized Matt O'Reilly as the first AWF UM Foundation Scholar;
- Established a \$17.6 million budget for mission and ministry for the next year, up 3.9 percent from 2009;
- Honored Rev. Libba Stinson as the 2009 "Alice Lee Award" recipient;
- Received an impromptu offering of over \$5,700 for the Central Conference Pension Initiative;
- Witnessed Caitlin Beidler paint a live interpretation of Bishop Leeland's opening sermon. That artwork, along with three others, were auctioned to raise \$1,600 to be divided among Alabama Rural Ministries and the Blue Lake Campaign;
- Celebrated Daphne (Ala.) UMC as the winner of the Local Church Heritage Award;
- Enjoyed Wednesday morning worship music provided by members of Hispanic ministries from across our eight districts;
- Welcomed the new director of Blue Lake Camp, Ms. Phyllis Murray;
- Recognized Gulf Breeze UMC, Gulf Breeze, Fla. (Pack 11) as the recipient of the Bishops Award of Excellence in Scouting;
- Greeted clergy serving in extension ministries;
- Recognized newly licensed local pastors;
- Celebrated over 149,000 members of the Alabama—West Florida Conference; and
- Announced the 2010 session of the AWF Conference will meet June 6-9 at Frazer UMC in Montgomery, Ala.



Alabama—West Florida 2009 Annual Conference



*Partnership in the Gospel:
Celebrating Together*

2009 Alabama—West Florida Annual Conference

The 2009 Alabama—West Florida (AWF) Annual Conference was held June 7-10 at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Ala. Bishop Paul L. Leeland presided over his first annual conference since his assignment in September 2008 with the theme of “Partnership in the Gospel: Celebrating Together.” Throughout the conference, clergy and laity ministry partnerships were highlighted.

Special Mission Offering Recipient: Blue Lake Campaign

Prior to this year’s conference, Bishop Leeland urged the churches of the AWF conference to fully participate in the “Campaign for Blue Lake,” which set out to raise \$3 million for the conference’s camp and assembly grounds. The people of the AWF Conference overwhelmingly responded by contributing over \$244,000.

Service of Ordination & Commissioning

Two deacons and 10 elders were ordained as members in full connection; three provisional deacons, and 11 provisional elders were commissioned; and one associate member was recognized during a Service of Ordination & Commissioning on June 8 at First United Methodist Church of Montgomery, Ala. Bishop Joe Pennel preached an inspiring sermon, “The Inadequacy of Words.”

Service Remembers the lives of Clergy & Clergy Spouses

Thirty-four clergy and clergy spouses who died in the past year were remembered during a Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion on Monday, June 8. Rev. Robert Spicer, pastor at Frazer UMC, Asbury campus in Montgomery, Ala., delivered the sermon “When Servants Go Home.”

Retiring Clergy Honored for Years of Service

Fifteen clergy retiring this conference year were honored on Monday, June 8. Together, they represent 415 years of combined service to the United Methodist Church.

Special Guests

Dr. Jason Borders, Professor of Religion at Huntingdon College, led the conference in morning Bible study, “Who is He and Who are We? Messiahship & Discipleship in Luke 9: 18-27.”

Dr. Jim Harnish, senior pastor of Hyde Park UMC in Tampa, Fla., provided two teaching sessions on Tuesday, June 9 focusing on “Transformed Leadership for Transforming Congregations.”

Business Matters

The Conference overwhelmingly voted “no” on 23 proposed amendments to the constitution of The United Methodist Church that dealt with restructuring regional bodies of the church. The Conference also voted on nine additional proposed amendments. A full vote tally may be found at www.awfumc.org/ac2009

The Conference voted to adopt a proposal from the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits to move the conference to a method of directly billing churches for health insurance and pension costs beginning in January 2011. This action will significantly reduce the conference budget in coming years.

Full coverage of the 2009 Annual Conference at:

www.awfumc.org/AC2009