

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

- Celebrated the ministry of the laity;
- Adopted a resolution dealing with tax fairness issues in Alabama;
- Elected Dr. Steve Furr of Jackson, Ala. as the new conference lay leader;
- Honored Mrs. Mary Ann Pickard upon her retirement as Conference Archivist, a position she has held since 1976;
- Celebrated two winners of the Denman Evangelism Award: Irving Santos, lay pastor at The Grace Place UMC, Mobile, Ala. (lay winner), and Rev. John Webb, pastor of Pace UMC, Pace, Fla. (clergy winner);
- Recognized the first graduating class of the Rural Church Initiative at Huntingdon College;
- Recognized Samantha Baldwin, 10, of Crawford's Chapel UMC for her work in raising funds for the Ganta UM Hospital in Liberia;
- Established a \$17 million budget for mission and ministry for the next year, up 3.78 percent from 2008;
- Recognized Mary Esther (Fla.) UMC as a "Church for All God's Children;"
- Honored Mrs. Florence Strang as the 2008 "Alice Lee Award" recipient;
- Voted to send the United Methodist Publishing House profit contribution of \$9,703 to the Central Conference Pension Initiative;
- Celebrated Skipperville (Ala.) UMC as the winner of the Local Church Heritage Award;
- Heard an update on the \$3 million "Campaign for Blue Lake" - the capital funds campaign for the conference's Blue Lake United Methodist Assembly;
- Recognized John and Mary Ellen Bullard of First United Methodist Church of Montgomery, Ala. as the recipients of the 2008 Kresge Award given by the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. The Bullards were nominated by Huntingdon College.

Full coverage of Annual Conference may be found at

[www.awfumc.org/AC2008](http://www.awfumc.org/AC2008)



# Alabama—West Florida Annual Conference June 1-4, 2008

Frazer Memorial UMC  
Montgomery, Alabama

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## 2008 Session of the Alabama—West Florida Annual Conference

The 2008 Alabama—West Florida Annual Conference was held June 1-4 in Montgomery, Ala. at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church, with the theme “Amazing Love – Great Grace.” The theme combined Acts 4:33 with Charles Wesley’s great hymn, “And Can It Be.” The opening worship service was led by a mass choir of 60 youth from churches throughout the conference, led by James Keith Posey of Gulf Shores (Ala.) UMC.

### Special Mission Offering: Ganta United Methodist Hospital

Prior to this year’s conference, Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster challenged the churches of the conference to raise \$60,000 for the Ganta United Methodist Hospital in Liberia (Advance # 982168). The bishop arrived at the goal by a desire to recognize the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Advance for Christ and His Church.

The 120-bed hospital serves 500,000 people from 82 villages—most of whom make less than \$600 per year. At time of press, with donations still coming in, the people of the AWF Conference have overwhelmingly responded by raising almost \$70,000.

### Service of Ordination & Service of Commissioning

Two deacons and 11 elders were ordained as members in full connection during a Service of Ordination on June 2 at First United Methodist Church of Montgomery, Ala.

Ten clergy entering into a probationary relationship with the conference were commissioned on June 4 (1 probationary deacon, 8 probationary elders, and 1 probationary elder in a missional setting) during a Service of Commissioning on June 4. Among those commissioned was Tsuchue Vang from Laos, where Bishop Goodpaster also serves as Bishop.

### Guest Preachers

Worship leadership was provided by Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster, Alabama – West Florida Area; Bishop Robert C. Morgan, retired; and Rev. Donald Smith, senior minister of Toulminville – Warren St. United Methodist Church, Mobile, Ala.

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## Retiring Clergy Honored

Twenty-two clergy retiring this year were honored on June 2. Together, they represent 639 years of service to the United Methodist Church.

### Service of Remembrance

Twenty-eight clergy and clergy spouses who died in the past year were remembered during a Service of Commemoration and Holy Communion on Monday, June 2.

### Special Guests

Dr. Lacey Warner, Associate Professor of Evangelism and Methodist Studies at Duke Divinity School where she also serves as Associate Dean for Academic Formation and Programs, led morning Bible studies highlighting Wesleyan teachings.

Rev. Adam Hamilton of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection provided three teaching sessions on Tuesday dealing with “Leading Beyond the Walls.”

Mrs. Shawn Bakker, director of The Advance, spoke on Tuesday evening commemorating the designated giving agency’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The 2008 Conference session came to a close with Bishop Goodpaster fixing the pastoral appointments for the 2008-2009 annual conference year.

A complete appointment book may be found at [awfumc.org/ac2008](http://awfumc.org/ac2008).

*“Because of God’s amazing love and great grace, we are the church and we grow toward becoming Acts 2 churches filled with faithful, fruitful disciples.”*

**-Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster**