

**Holston Conference Vision Statement
Action Plan
“Offer Them Christ”
December 2008 through December 2009**

Vision Statement

God envisions
bold, passionate, and joyful communities of faith
where the spiritual hunger to worship God and to serve Christ
sets disciples on fire
with Spirit-filled, risk-taking love for all God’s children
until Holston Conference reflects the saving grace and redeeming justice
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Background

Based on the action of the Holston Annual Conference in June 2006, the Vision statement was adopted, and implementation of the Vision statement was delegated to the Connectional Table of the Conference. Following extensive discernment and discussion, the Connectional Table adopted “Offer Them Christ” as the Annual Conference focus for December Advent 2008 through the end of December 2009. “Offer Them Christ” was presented in response to the portion of the Vision statement “... until Holston Conference reflects the saving grace and redeeming justice of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The following Action Plan is proposed to implement our Conference emphasis on “Offer Them Christ” as we seek to live into God’s vision for Holston.

Proposed Action	Responsible Body
All sermons for a year are encouraged to be an effort to “Offer Them Christ” through preaching from texts chosen from the Four Gospels. Lectionary preachers could use the Gospel Lesson each Sunday. They could consider preaching a series of sermons on Christ, departing from the lectionary at times. Non-lectionary preachers could select texts for 52 weeks of preaching and could consider preaching through a Gospel, or a series on The Parables of Jesus, The Miracles of Jesus, The Beatitudes, Jesus and the Outsiders, Men and Women Who Met Jesus, etc. The great days of the Church Year could cover the Birth, Epiphany, Baptism, Temptation, Last Supper, Cross, Resurrection, etc.	Wesley Leadership Institute, Clergy Services, Clergy Concerns
District-level workshops for clergy day/evening to master one Gospel – need to hold before Advent	Director of Clergy Services, Wesley Leadership Institute
Have Continuing Education opportunities for clergy for six months leading into the year and throughout the year focused on preaching from the Gospels. Devote Minister’s Convocation, the Clergy Gathering, special courses at our three conference colleges, Lectionary study groups, special seminars with Bible scholars, etc., to help preachers give a fresh look at the Jesus we meet in the Four Gospels	Director of Clergy Services, Wesley Leadership Institute, Steward of Clergy Concerns
Bibliography will be prepared to assist pastors in study resources for preaching from the Gospels	Director of Clergy Services
Every Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee will be encouraged to provide Volumes 7 and 8 of New Interpreter’s Commentary of the Bible for every active pastor in Holston	Appointment Cabinet
Laminated cards will be prepared for every pulpit in Holston Conference:	Communications

Proposed Action	Responsible Body
“Preacher, we would see Jesus” or “Offer Them Christ.”	Commission
Covenant Agreements will be prepared for every pastor in Holston to agree to emphasize “Offer Them Christ” for a full year	Appointment Cabinet
UM Seminaries will be contacted and asked to recommend “top five” books for preachers to use in preaching the Gospels	Wesley Leadership Institute
“Offer Them Christ” will be the focus for one full session of Local Pastor’s Licensing School	Board of Ordained Ministry
“Offer Them Christ” will be the focus for one full session of First-Time Appointees’ training and preparation	Board of Ordained Ministry
“Offer Them Christ” will be the focus for Probationers’ training and preparation	Board of Ordained Ministry
A question will be required of persons to be commissioned, persons to be ordained, and persons to be licensed as local pastors asking their definition, philosophy, and application of evangelism in the local church	Board of Ordained Ministry
Each elder will have a portion of his/her continuing education be dedicated to evangelism	Wesley Leadership Institute, Appointment Cabinet, Pastor/ Staff Parish Relations Committee
District Superintendents will dedicate one full year of District clergy meetings to focus on Offering Christ through preaching the Gospels	Appointment Cabinet
Lectionary groups will be formed in each District to allow clergy opportunities to focus on Offering Christ through the Gospels	Wesley Leadership Institute, Clergy Services, Clergy Concerns, Appointment Cabinet
Preaching from the Gospels study groups will be formed in each District to focus on Preaching the Gospel of John for a period of time and/or preaching from the Gospels for Advent, Christmastide, Epiphany, and Lent	Wesley Leadership Institute, Clergy Services, Clergy Concerns, Appointment Cabinet
“Offer Them Christ” and a Covenant Agreement will be offered as a part of District Conferences.	Appointment Cabinet
Covenant Agreements will be prepared for every church in Holston to covenant to emphasize “Offer Them Christ” for a full year through the Charge Conference packets	Extended Cabinet
UM Seminaries will be contacted and asked to recommend “top five” books for lay persons to use for in-depth study of the Gospels	Wesley Leadership Institute
Two Holston Cokesbury stores will be requested to offer study resources at 25% off during a special sale time (resources requested from UM seminaries for clergy and for laity)	Office of Connectional Ministries
At every level (local, district, conference) all programs and emphases of the church must ask, “How does this serve our effort to ‘Offer Them Christ?’” The second question is, “What are we not doing that we should be doing to ‘Offer Them Christ?’”	Conference Council on Finance and Administration; Discipleship Team
Regular communication will be provided between Church Witness/Evangelism Chairs to press them forward	Communications Commission
The following will be provided to Offer Christ: (1) resources, (2) training, (3) material, (4) accountability (written in red ink), and (5) celebration	Discipleship Team, Board of Ordained Ministry, Appointment Cabinet
People will be reminded once again that Offering Christ includes both social and personal holiness – not “either/or” but “both/and.”	Communications Commission
Charge Conference material to reflect the Action Plan and any results of “Offer Them Christ” with a question designed to facilitate communication	Appointment Cabinet
We will celebrate those places that are doing it right. For those who are doing it right, we want them to be more supported, more efficient, more celebrated.	Extended Cabinet, Witness Ministry Team
Local churches could form new Disciple Bible Studies on one or more of the Four Gospels. Other curriculum resources are available to help the church take a fresh	Discipleship Team

Proposed Action	Responsible Body
look at the Christ of the Gospels. Make the goal of the Bible Study not just the completion of another study, but the discipling of witnesses who will share Christ.	
District Superintendents will model what it means to teach and preach Christ – to teach and preach from the Gospels – in their Charge Conference devotionals.	Appointment Cabinet
Plan for children, youth, and adult Sunday School classes devoted to studies of the life and teachings of Jesus.	Nurture Ministry Team
Summer camps could offer a special curriculum on Jesus.	Nurture Ministry Team
Our Wesley Foundations and conference colleges will offer special classes on Jesus in the Gospels.	Board of Higher Ed and Ministry
At Annual Conference 2009, the Cabinet will report (in the Cabinet report) on how many churches signed the agreement and how the churches are doing in keeping the agreement.	Appointment Cabinet
Annual Conference worship and workshops will model “Offer Them Christ,” assuming that many present do not yet know Christ	Annual Conference Planning Committee
Conference events (Resurrection, Divine Rhythm, Jubilation, Ministers Convocation) will be requested to focus on the theme of Offering Christ for 2009 event topics	Discipleship Team and Wesley Leadership Institute
District Days of Discipleship and Vision will focus on training and workshops around “Offer Them Christ”	Extended Cabinet
District Days of Discipleship and Vision will ask each Church leadership team to leave with a draft Action Plan to “Offer Them Christ”	Extended Cabinet
The Call and The Call 2 will emphasize weekly (spotlight) a story about churches that exemplify the theme as evidenced through Professions of Faith – top 25 Holston churches numerically and percentage in Holston for Professions of Faith	Communications Commission
Charge Conference material will reflect the Action Plan and any results of “Offer Them Christ” with a question designed to facilitate communication	Appointment Cabinet, Discipleship Team
Develop our own logo for “Offer Them Christ.” Encourage churches to make banners with the logo	Communications Commission
Laity of the local church must be involved early in the planning stages. They must have an opportunity to examine the Basic Premise and the general concept and to give feedback. They should be able to share in the decision about their church taking up this emphasis; it should not be left to the pastor alone to decide to participate or not to participate.	Board of Lay Ministry
All Ministry Teams, Committees, Boards, etc. will be required to respond to this question in the CCFA budget process: “Does this request make us stronger and more courageous to Offer Christ?”	Conference Council on Finance and Administration
Give the lay members of Annual Conference a written report to present to their congregations when they return home.	Board of Lay Ministry
Denman Award will be presented in Evening Worship at Annual Conference, allowing for more time for presentation and elevating importance of evangelism	Witness Ministry Team and Annual Conference Planning Committee
Close the year-long emphasis of “Offer Them Christ” with Conference-wide event on the topic geared toward Local Church Witness/Evangelism ministry teams	Discipleship Team, Witness Team, Wesley Leadership Institute