

holston's vision:

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.

— Adopted by the 2006 Holston Annual
Conference



The Call

www.holston.org

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southwest Virginia, and north Georgia

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United Methodist job openings and other
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Sign up at www.thecalltwo.holston.org. ■

wings:

By Bishop James Swanson



Offer Them Christ: Ministries With the Poor

The Book of Acts tells how the early disciples
lived out their experience with Christ, after his
ascension. Faith in Christ had to be lived out in
community, where there was hurt, pain, disap-
pointment, and other trials. Faith in Christ did not insulate
the early Christians from the misfortunes of this world.

bishop's speaking schedule:



- **Feb. 13:** Holston Confer-
ence Black Methodists for
Church Renewal, Beck Cultural
Center, Knoxville, 3 p.m.
- **Feb. 19:** Local Pastors
School, Buffalo Mountain
Camp, 2 to 5 p.m.
- **Feb. 20:** Holston Evange-
lism Conference, Cokesbury
Center, Knoxville, 1:30 p.m.
- **Feb. 21:** First Cleveland
UMC, 10:45 a.m.
- **Feb. 28:** First-Centenary
UMC, Chattanooga, 8:45 a.m.
and 10:45 a.m. ■

Remember that it was
not long after the coming
of the Holy Spirit that
Peter and John encoun-
tered a crippled man at the
gate, begging for alms (a
handout). It was not long
before the First Church
of Jerusalem was forced
to deal with poor widows
and their children living
among them.

It was as if the Holy
Spirit tried to let Chris-
tians know that salvation
would not release them
from caring for the least,
the lost, and the lonely. In
fact, by accepting Christ,
their eyes were opened to
those they were called to
serve, serve with, and love.

The earthquake in Haiti
reveals a vivid picture of

deep poverty. The earthquake forces Christians and others to
look at poverty existing just beyond our shores. Does God
expect and hold me accountable to respond to people who
need me and my resources? Haiti is only the tip of the ice-

berg. The poor are all around us. The Church can not escape
this call.

Yet, we sometimes forget that poverty exists not only
Haiti, but in our own communities and beyond. The world
needs our help and requires our love.

The 167,000 people of the 904 churches of the Holston
Annual Conference are called to journey toward God's pre-
ferred future of offering Christ in bold, passionate, and joyful
ways to the people who need us. It is not always easy to live
out that calling. There will be times when we will be called to
live sacrificially, to deny ourselves for the Gospel's sake, to
go places we would rather not go, to be with people we would
rather not be with, to give money when our nature is not to
give, and to do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I celebrate with the many people of Holston who are
responding to the call, while challenging those who have
allowed their hearts to grow cold to let the Holy Spirit use
them to God's glory. Start looking around and listening to
God's call, and you will soon discover that so many people
are in need. If you will only reach out to the poor in gratitude
for what God has done for *you*, you will discover a fresh faith,
a bolder spirit, a newfound confidence that God is with you.

You will discover that you are the salvation of the poor,
but the poor will lead you to salvation by pushing you to be
more like Christ. If you don't know how to respond to this
call, ask your pastor. If you or your pastor want to know
where the needs are, contact your district superintendent or
the conference staff. We want to stand with you as we Offer
Them Christ through Ministries with the Poor. ■

*"Ministries With the Poor" is the second of four focus
areas determined by the United Methodist Church.
Bishop Swanson wrote about "Developing Principled
Christian Leaders" in January. Still to come are "Global
Health" and "Creating New Places for New People."*



opportunities:

Annual Conference resolutions: March 1

Resolutions for Annual Conference must be submitted by March
1. Send to sheilaknowles@holston.org or mail to: Sheila Knowles,
Holston Conference, P.O. Box 850, Alcoa, TN 37701-0850. Please
include contact information.

Francis Asbury nominations : April 1

The Francis Asbury Award is presented at Annual Conference
to a leader in higher education. Nominations are due April 1. Down-
load a nomination form at [http://holston.org/media/about/resource/
Francis_Asbury_Nominatin.pdf](http://holston.org/media/about/resource/Francis_Asbury_Nominatin.pdf) or call the conference office toll-free
at (866) 690-4080.

New and online: Sudan Art Blog

The Sudan Art Blog offers a new way to celebrate the beauty
of Sudan while raising money for ministry. Visit [http://sudanart-
blog.holston.org](http://sudanart-
blog.holston.org).

Jr. High Service Week at Camp Lookout

Junior High Service Week puts middle school students to work
feeding the homeless, spreading mulch, and participating in other
hands-on ministry projects. Sign up for June 7-11 week at Camp
Lookout near Chattanooga. Visit <http://camplookout.com> or e-mail
don@camplookout.com.

Senior outings: March 1 or April 11-13

"Mini-Jubilation" will be held March 1 at Allen Memorial UMC in
Athens, Tenn. E-mail bobbostick@holston.org or call the Con-
nectional Ministries Office toll-free at (866) 690-4080 for information.
Also coming April 11-13 is Jubilation 2010 in Kingsport. Visit [http://
holston.org/events/2010/apr/11/jubilation-2010/](http://
holston.org/events/2010/apr/11/jubilation-2010/). ■