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District Roundup

NEWS FROM YOUR DISTRICT



Chattanooga

In 2007, Chattanooga District celebrated the completion of a new "sprung" building for Lighthouse United Methodist Church.

Over the holidays, we asked our district leaders to report the best things to happen in their districts, ministry-wise, in 2007, as well as their hopes for 2008. Here are highlights from the responses.

– Editor, *The Call*

Chattanooga:

- The district hosted the "Large Church Initiative" at First-Centenary UMC on March 7-10, with the Rev. Adam Hamilton, the Rev. Leonard Sweet, the Rev. Kent Millard, the Rev. Robert Pierson, Bishop Al Gwinn, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, and Bishop James Swanson as leaders.
- The district celebrated the completion of a new building for Lighthouse UMC and a homeless ministry at Forrest Avenue UMC.
- "I also celebrate the faithfulness of the clergy and congregations of the Chattanooga District in their efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in bold, passionate, and joyful ways," said Superintendent Al Bowles. "Our hope for 2008 is that God will use us as effective instruments in helping more people know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."

Cleveland: "Since the purpose of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, the 'best thing that happened in the district' would have to do with church growth and new persons in our congregations," said Superintendent Mike Travis. "Many of our churches reflected growth in membership. One of our congregations, First Copperhill UMC, received more new members on a single Sunday than had been received in any single year in the church's recorded history. Another congregation, Croft's Chapel UMC, had standing room only on Sunday morning.

"What I would like to see in 2008 is for more of our congregations to



Cleveland

First Copperhill UMC received more new members on a single Sunday than had ever been received in any single year in the church's history.

make similar reports at the end of next year."

Kingsport: "The best thing to happen was the outreach and ministry to children in communities around the churches," reports Superintendent Fred Dearing. "Children are fed, taught, and nurtured in the context of love, security, and affirmation. It was amazing to discover and celebrate these various ministries during the charge conferences."

Dearing's hope for 2008: "To build up these and other missionary efforts – which range from ministering to children, youth, and adults to supporting outreach in Sudan and throughout the world. We need to help the churches know that they are salt and can flavor a violent world with love and grace, while at the same time helping people establish a relationship with God in Jesus Christ."

Knoxville: The district office is "excited" about the addition of Latino Ministries Director Jeanet Berruecos, reports Superintendent Doug Fairbanks and Administrative Assistant Mary Hawkins. "Jeanet and members of Church Street UMC hosted a dinner at Marble City UMC to introduce the Latinos to the tradition of Thanksgiving," Hawkins said. "Also, for Christmas gifts, Jeanet presented Spanish Bibles to students of her English as Second Language class." Hope for 2008: "That the Latino ministries will start holding United Methodist services and become active in the district and conference."

Maryville:

- The district had a Mission Festival in February. About 500 came for worship as Bishop James Swanson preached and the Hallelujah Kids (from the district Hispanic ministry) sang.
- The district sponsored two summer weeks of hurricane-recovery work in Mississippi, with more than 50 participants.
- Also last summer, more than 200 gathered for a Day of Discipleship. The day concluded with a district conference and a vote to enter into a district-to-district

partnership with the 13 United Methodist churches of Latvia.

- Congregations reached out to their communities through school tutoring, clothes closets, and food pantries. "They worked with teen parents and the unseen impoverished," reports Superintendent Carol Wilson. "They supported ministries such as Holston Home for Children, Wesley House Community Center, Camp Wesley Woods, Henderson Settlement, and Red Bird Mission. They sponsored mission trips to the Gulf Coast, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and such faraway places as Vietnam, India, Sudan, and Tonga."
- Wilson's hope for 2008: "Several congregations are organizing a Blount County Family Promise chapter, providing support for homeless families. In March, we will ask our congregations to sponsor a Mission Sunday, with the collection of hands-on kits for local missions. We pray our efforts will be a blessing to our neighbors as we share the love of God."

Oak Ridge: "Perhaps the best thing that happened ... was the establishment of a ministry partnership between the congregations of the Norris-Sinking Springs Charge and a congregation in Kuldiga, Latvia, which was formalized during a short-term mission trip to that country in July," reports Superintendent Ken Henderlight.

"My hope for the district in 2008 is that a new congregation will begin meeting in the auditorium of the new Hardin Valley High School in September, ultimately leading to the organization of a new church on the 22 acres purchased by the district in 2007."

Tazewell:

- The district sponsored several corporate ministries in 2007, including:
- Camp Laurel events for children, youth, and special-needs participants
 - Two older-adult district events with innovative programs and good attendance
 - A district conference featuring worship and a focus on youth (with two professions of faith)
 - Another truckload of supplies for the Annual Conference hands-on missions offering
 - Three district youth events
 - Cluster revivals and special services; the strong work of United Methodist Men and Women; and a well-attended Lay Speakers Training

–Superintendent Don Nation