

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

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wings:

By Bishop James Swanson



Be the salt for those icy people

This recent cold weather brought snow to our area.
The Virginia and upper east Tennessee areas of
our conference received more snow than the rest.
My neighborhood had just enough snow mixed
with the cold to make travel hazardous. For my family's
safety, I got some salt to spread spread on my driveway and
sidewalk.

bishop's speaking schedule:

• **Jan 29:** Divine Rhythm,
Country Tonite Theater in
Pigeon Forge, at 8 p.m. ■

While I was spread-
ing the salt on the icy
pavement, my mind went
to Matthew 5:13: "You
are the salt of the earth."
Now I realize Jesus was
speaking of how a rela-
tionship with God gives
Christians the seasoning
and flavor to influence
other people. But at that
moment in my driveway,

I thought of how the salt, over time, causes ice to melt. It
may take a while, but eventually the salt erodes the slippery,
hazardous surfaces.

Many of us have had life experiences that cause us to
become cold and dangerous – like ice. For example, some
people didn't receive the love and affirmation they needed in
childhood. Others became bitter over a failed marriage. Some

believe they were overlooked by the high school football
coach. Perhaps their friends never expressed enough apprecia-
tion or their church failed to offer enough nurturing. The cur-
rent economy has also caused many to lose their jobs, leaving
them with deep resentment and bitterness.

I see this happening to people both inside and outside
the church. It is my prayer that as we begin this new year,
the laity and clergy of the Holston Annual Conference will
become the salt for all those who have become too hard,
crusty, and dangerous. Remember Jesus declared *you and
I* are the salt. Jesus affirmed that *you and I* are the persons
with the abilities to help those around us.

This year, as we continue our mission to "Offer Them
Christ," our denomination has presented four focus areas to
help us strengthen our ability to "be the salt." They are:

- **Developing Principled Christian Leaders**
- **Ministries with the Poor**
- **Global Health**
- **Creating New Places for New People**

My columns will feature these four target areas. Mean-
while, let's join together and be what Jesus has called us
to be: a people who are the "salt of the earth." It may take
some time for the salt to work, but just watch what happens
when it does. ■

in memoriam:



Robert Wallace

CLEVELAND, Tenn. – Robert O'Kelley Wallace, 81, died
Dec. 26 at his home. The Rev. Wallace was a retired clergy
member who was serving Black Fox UMC and who had served
First Copperhill UMC. He is survived by his wife, Ebba Lawrence
Wallace, two granddaughters, Sarah Keylon Wallace and Maggie
Wallace, and adaughter-in-law, Bonnie Wallace. His ashes will be
buried in Delaware alongside his son's burial place.

Larry Williams

DUBLIN, Va. – Larry Ray Williams, 71, died Jan. 2 at
Pulaski Community Hospital. The Rev. Williams was a retired
associate clergy member of Holston Conference who had served
Cripple Creek Circuit, First Narrows UMC, and South Bristol
UMC, among others. He is survived by his wife, Brenda Horton
Williams; two sons, Kelly Ray Williams of Woodlawn, and Gary
Lee Williams of Dublin; one sister, Nancy Hendrix of Mississippi;
six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A funeral service
was held Jan. 5 at Bower Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Bill
Rowland officiating. Entombment followed at Highland Memory
Gardens Mausoleum in Dublin. ■



opportunities:

Divine Rhythm on Jan. 29-31:

The Jan. 29-31 spiritual event is for people ages 18-35, held at
Country Tonite Theater in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Visit divinerhythm.com
or call toll-free (866) 690-4080. This year's speaker is the Rev.
Grace Imathiu.

'Traditioned Innovation' on Feb. 23:

Dean Gregory Jones of Duke Divinity School will lead this
Wesley Leadership Institute seminar Feb. 23 at Cokesbury Center
in Knoxville, Tenn. Consider how the Holy Spirit guides us to think
strategically and find better ways to engage change, whether in
worship, Christian education, or reaching the unchurched. Register
online at <http://innovation.holston.org> or call toll-free (866) 690-4080.

Clergy Women's Gathering on March 15:

The annual gathering will be held at First White Pine UMC from 11
a.m. to 3 p.m. E-mail maryparson9@gmail.com. ■