

# mydistrict MORRISTOWN



Ed Cunningham, 64, has pastored Bethel UMC, an historical African-American congregation, since 1992. He's a pharmacist who sold his Bulls Gap drugstore last year. He now co-owns a dance school in downtown Morristown. This is his district.



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|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 Abingdon      | 7 Knoxville   |
| 2 Big Stone Gap | 8 Maryville   |
| 3 Chattanooga   | 9 Morristown  |
| 4 Cleveland     | 10 Oak Ridge  |
| 5 Johnson City  | 11 Tazewell   |
| 6 Kingsport     | 12 Wytheville |

Sneedville | Iris Festival | Pal Burgers | Cedar Grove | Morristown College | Baileyton Barbecue | Cocke County | Family Spirit | Bulls Gap | Dixie | Del Rio

**Morristown District is** one of 12 districts in Holston Conference. It includes 66 charges comprised of 107 churches and 2 preaching stations. Located in Tennessee, the district has churches in Greene (41), Jefferson (24), Cocke (13), Hamblen (13), Grainger (10), Hawkins (6), Sevier (1), and Hancock (1) counties.

- **Largest membership church:** First Morristown, with 1,246
- **Largest average worship attendance:** First Morristown, with 492
- **Smallest membership church:** Cedar Grove (Rutledge Circuit), with 9
- **Smallest average worship attendance:** Cedar Grove (Rutledge Circuit), with 4; Mt. Vernon (Cherokee Circuit), with 4
- **Oldest church:** Beth-Car, founded in 1787
- **Youngest church:** *Iglesia Rios De Agua Viva Metodista Unida* (Rivers of Living Water), started in 2006, unchartered
- **Congregation with largest growth:** *Rios De Agua*

**Who's the boss?** The Rev. Mickey Rainwater, age 47, has served as district superintendent since June 2007. His home church is Hills Union UMC. At age 19, he was appointed as lay pastor to Mulberry Gap UMC, Del Rio Circuit. Dixie Miller is not only district administrative assistant, she's also part-time local pastor at Bales Chapel UMC. Her home church is Mount Pisgah UMC of the Cherokee Circuit. The district office is located at 112 East North Street, in a former bank building in downtown Morristown.

**Midway:** Morristown is considered the conference mid-point between Wytheville and Chattanooga Districts, so a lot of conference meetings happen at First White Pine UMC off I-40's exit 8. The district has the highest number of charges (66), and one of the biggest Hispanic populations in Holston.

**Speaking of:** The district is proud of its growing Hispanic ministry, led by the Rev. Arturo Reyna. Formerly of Wytheville District, Reyna came to Morristown to begin a congregation at Liberty Hill UMC in 2006. Today, the Sunday morning service has nearly 100 in worship; Sunday evening service, 30; and now there's talk of a third service to accommodate shift workers. *Rios De Agua* may soon move into a downtown Morristown building, purchased by First Morristown UMC.

**The district is known for:** Holston Home for Children, based in Greeneville, has cared for children since 1895 ([holstonhome.org](http://holstonhome.org)). Jubilee Project, based in Sneedville, has served the disadvantaged in Hancock County since 1991 ([jubileeproject.holston.org](http://jubileeproject.holston.org)). Until it closed in 1994, UMC-related Morristown College was also a source of district pride. Students from the African-American two-year institution walked down the hill from the downtown campus to worship at what is now Bethel UMC. A Holston pastor, the Rev. Raymon White, served as college president from 1972 to 1981. Founded in 1881, the former campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; some still hope it can be restored for a new purpose.

**Fan the flame:** Members grieved when century-old Baileyton UMC burned in November 2007. Since then, the congregation has been fired up about re-building and revitalizing. In August, a benefit barbecue and auction raised a total \$75,700. Some 370 volunteers from about 50 churches worked to make the event a success, according to the *Greeneville Sun*. "Morristown is one of our largest

districts, but at the same time there's a feeling of closeness and family spirit," says former Superintendent Richard Patterson.

**Visitor-worthy:** Patterson recommends the Mountain Makins Festival, a folk-life and crafts festival held Oct. 25-26 in Morristown ([www.rosecenter/mtnmakins.html](http://www.rosecenter/mtnmakins.html)). In early May, Greeneville has an Iris Festival, which last year brought more than 35,000 visitors to the town. Greeneville is also home to the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site. The Crockett Tavern Museum is in Morristown.

**Best place to eat after church:** Patterson, who now lives in Dublin, Va., remembers the tasty salad bar and veal parmesan at Little Dutch Restaurant in Morristown. Rainwater says his family likes to stop by Pal's Sudden Service in Morristown for Pal burgers, fries, and sweet iced tea ("sugar and lots of it"). Reyna goes home for tacos and hot sauce, although he has an affection for "any kind of seafood" at the Golden Corral. Cunningham joins his wife and friends from First Morristown UMC at varied restaurants, where he will often order chicken. "Because all preachers have to eat chicken," he says. ■

Mountain Makins



Praise with Rios De Agua



Salad at Little Dutch



## what's cool in mydistrict



Holston Home for Children