

Photo by Steve Wall, The Daily Post-Athenian

Floyd Falany (left), Tennessee Wesleyan's interim president, welcomes incoming president Thomas Armstrong at a recent convocation.

From Texas to Tennessee: TWC welcomes new president

By Johnny Hutsell-Royster
The Daily Post-Athenian

ATHENS, Tenn.— A convocation at Tennessee Wesleyan College Jan. 9 was the opportunity for the college's interim president, Floyd Falany, to introduce the college's new president, Thomas Armstrong.

Falany said he's enjoyed his short term as interim president but he'll soon be returning to his home.

"The best people I've ever known I've met in Athens, Tennessee," said Falany, a retired president at Reinhardt College in Georgia who agreed to serve as Wesleyan's interim president following the resignation of President B. James Dawson.

Then, Falany introduced Armstrong, who had been a professor and administrator at Texas Wesleyan University when he was chosen by Tennessee Wesleyan's Board of Trustees to become the new president at the Holston Conference-related college.

"I'm going to tell you about a man I'm excited about. We found him in Texas and he has agreed to become president of Tennessee Wesleyan College," Falany said. "Dr. Tom Armstrong knows what it takes to be a college president. He obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in Colorado and earned

his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia, and he's been in classrooms most of his professional life."

Armstrong, who grew up in Iowa and Colorado, has served as an assistant professor, associate professor and professor and eventually as assistant dean and dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Georgia College (now Georgia College and State University) in Milledgeville.

In 1993, he was named provost at Francis Marion University before becoming provost and senior vice president at Texas Wesleyan University in 1995, where he served as professor of history and special assistant to the president before accepting his new position at Tennessee Wesleyan.

He and his wife, Janice Fennell Armstrong, have one daughter, Sharon Plattner, who lives with her husband in Davidson, N.C. The Armstrongs have one grandson, Jacob.

Taking the podium, Armstrong said he's been impressed by the "warm hospitality" that has been extended.

"Jan and I are delighted with the result of the search," Armstrong said. "We are thankful, too, for those who have been so hospitable to us during the process of moving."

Armstrong welcomed everyone to the convocation, which he said is celebrated in many private independent colleges.

Holston Home dedicates new barn

By Homer Marcum

GREENEVILLE, Tenn. — The children at Holston United Methodist Home for Children won't ever have to go off campus to ride horses again, thanks to the generosity of the George R. Johnson Charitable Trust and church volunteers who renovated the old dairy barn into an as-new equestrian facility.

Church and Holston Home officials dedicated the George R. Johnson Equestrian Barn to God's service and the children's enjoyment during ceremonies inside the barn on Jan. 9.

"This therapeutic, fun-filled program will help to compensate for so much these children have missed out on in their lives," said Bishop Ray Chamberlain.

Holston Home's adventure-based coun-

selor, Lorrie Wright, spearheaded the effort after she found that the children loved going to an off-campus facility to ride horses.

"Our children simply love to ride horses because they can relate to those beautiful animals," Wright said.

The barn was built in 1928 and housed a large herd of dairy cattle, and, later, beef cattle. In the early 1960s the herds were sold and the barn became a storage facility.

When Wright began taking Holston Home's children to a Greene County equestrian program during the 1990s, she discovered that the children benefited by interaction with horses.

"They gained confidence, and their self-esteem seemed to soar as they found that they could trust the horses and become friends with them," Wright said.

Art Masker, Holston Home's president and chief executive officer, thanked Doris Johnson and her daughter Janice Johnson Wilson for the donation from the George R. Johnson Charitable Trust that made restoration possible. He also thanked volunteers from the Holston Conference Volunteer Labor Program for providing most of the labor that brought the old barn back to life. The volunteers re-lined the barn's inside walls with pine boards cut from dead pine trees in the woods on Holston's Home's campus, trees that had died from pine-beetle infestation.

Five horses, all donated by Holston Home friends, now reside in the barn and romp in a three-acre fenced field. ■



Photo by Homer Marcum, Holston Home for Children

Bishop Ray Chamberlain helps dedicate Holston Home's newly refurbished barn on Jan. 9. Pictured from left to right: Doris Johnson, representing the George R. Johnson Charitable Trust; Chamberlain; Kent Bewley, chairman of Holston Home's board of trustees; Janice Johnson Wilson, George R. Johnson Charitable Trust; and Art Masker, Holston Home president and CEO.

"This college has 145 years of rich history and you are living in an atmosphere of small classrooms where you receive personal attention from staff members," Armstrong said. "Education in this setting is a more meaningful experience."

Armstrong has been active in civic endeavors and has published essays and book chapters and contributed more than 100 book reviews to scholarly journals. He has also served in professional organizations and has been active in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, where he chaired more than 15 visiting teams and made presentations at annual meetings.

Armstrong is Wesleyan's 19th president. He was chosen from among 68 candidates who applied for the position following the resignation of Dawson, who left Wesleyan to become president of Coker College in South Carolina. ■

—Reprinted with permission from
The Daily Post-Athenian

Resurrection, continued from page 1



Photos by Annette Bender, The Call

Resurrection participants pray following Handy's Friday night presentation.

Springs UMC, Morristown District. "He would make Satan want to praise God."

Handy, assistant pastor at Brentwood UMC in Nashville and director of sales for United Methodist Publishing House, fired up the crowd with his "Can I get an Amen, somebody?" delivery. He told youth about Zacchaeus, who Jesus summoned by saying, "Yo, Zac, let me holler at you. I need to go to your crib."

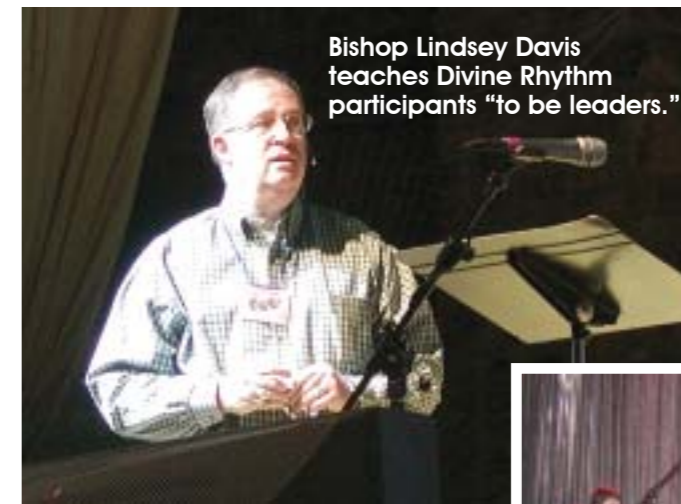


Nashville preacher Stephen Handy tells youth, "God is not finished with you yet."

"Jesus is always sending out invitations," Handy said. "He wants to get through the clutter of the day. In other words, Jesus wants to get into your head."

Replacing the Chattanooga-based James Ward Band, Tomlin moved some students to tears with his own "We Fall Down," then to their feet with "The Happy Song" by Delirious. Tomlin and his band, known for their "Passion"

Divine Rhythm settles into cozy niche with 18-plus crowd



Bishop Lindsey Davis teaches Divine Rhythm participants "to be leaders."

By Annette Bender

GATLINBURG, Tenn. — Baby, it was cold outside. But inside at Mills Auditorium, Divine Rhythm found the chemistry that appealed to the elusive young adult crowd.

Two years after its inaugural event, Divine Rhythm again coincided with Resurrection as the more mature counterpart to the rowdy teen-age blowout at Gatlinburg Convention Center, Jan. 17-19.

Attendance numbers were slightly lower than in 2002, but follow-up surveys indicated that Divine Rhythm reached a new high. Many participants gave good reviews to worship leader Wayne Kerr of Houston and speaker Bishop Lindsey Davis of North Georgia Conference.

Kerr and his band's sets included original songs such as the Adam Sandler-sounding "First Grade" as well as new praise standards like "Here I am to Worship."

"A lot of the surveys said that we should have Wayne Kerr back next year," said Eric Glass, member of the DR design team. "They just like everything



Photo by Mark Willis

The Wayne Kerr band from Houston leads worship — and laughter — at Divine Rhythm.

about Wayne — his music, his attitude, his presence." In his relaxed, fatherly manner, Davis challenged participants to be "Godly servants instead of self-righteous servants."

Heather Davis, 22, said she preferred Davis' approach to that of last year's speaker, which she considered juvenile. "I felt like I was a kid in day camp," said the University of Tennessee graduate student from Church Street UMC. "Bishop Davis talked to us as if he's teaching us to be leaders."

Pre-registration was sluggish, prompting conference leaders to worry that Divine Rhythm 2003 would attract significantly fewer participants than in 2002. In the end, 539 attended, about 20 fewer than in 2002.

"That's just the nature of young adult groups," said the Rev. David Woody, explaining why the beyond-18 set is more difficult to engage than youth. "They don't have a youth director who says, 'Are you going or not? Send your money in.'"

"It's easy for young adults to fall through the cracks," Bishop Davis told *The Call*. "We have to work especially hard to get young adults to participate."

Despite snow, single-digit temperatures and the fact that many college students barely had time to return to campus from Christmas break, Divine Rhythm had good turnouts from the Wesley Foundations and conference colleges, Woody said. Emory & Henry College sent the largest group: 34 participants.

Fifty-three people participated in Divine Rhythm's annual blood drive — up from 44 last year. The DR crowd also gave \$787 to a scholarship offering for next year's event.

The weekend concluded with Holy Communion. ■

tours, are based in Austin, Texas.

"I was amazed when they got Chris Tomlin," said Coe Hudson, 17, of Trinity (Athens) UMC, Cleveland District. "I've known about him for a long time. He's pretty big."

In addition to music and message, students took in the tourist attractions and restaurants of frigid Gatlinburg, where the temperature dropped to 9 degrees and the sidewalks were icy. Many gathered for devotions with their individual youth groups after the massive morning and evening sessions in Gatlinburg Convention Center.

Absent this year were gripes from parents and leaders about limits on the number of adults accompanying youth in the convention center, organizers said.

"The CCYM (Conference Council on Youth Ministries) heard that concern," said Angee Woody, Holston coordinator of youth ministries, "and we made some changes in the size of the stage. That allowed us to add a new section of seating in front of the stage."

Next year, Resurrection has the potential to grow from 10,000 participants to a maximum of 20,000 as the design team introduces double sessions during each weekend. For example, the "Session A" group

would attend Friday night's program 7-9 p.m. The "Session B" group would attend 9:30-11:30 p.m.

Similar scheduling would occur throughout the two weekends. At this year's second Resurrection weekend, organizers planned to test entry and exit patterns necessary to make the process go smoothly when double sessions commence in 2004, Woody said. Next year's event is scheduled Jan. 16-18 and Jan. 23-25, 2004.

"The greatest advantage to the new design is that it will allow more participants in each weekend," according to an early registration flyer distributed to youth directors. "Hopefully, this arrangement will also assist those who travel a great distance the luxury of late arrival on Friday night."

This year's 10,000 participants represented 422 congregations, 397 from Holston Conference, according to staff members. United Methodist groups from outside the conference included First UMC from Dunbar, W.Va., and Trinity UMC from Bythewood, S.C. Youth groups also came from other denominations, nine in all.

Following tradition, Resurrection concluded with Holy Communion on Sunday morning. ■

For more photos, visit www.holston.org.