



bishop's speaking schedule

- ☛ **March 13:** Valley Rally, Sequatchie Valley Cluster (Chattanooga District), 2:30 p.m. (CST)
- ☛ **March 13:** Dade County Cluster, Trenton UMC (Chattanooga District), 7 p.m.
- ☛ **March 20:** Oak Ridge District reception, First Oak Ridge UMC, 2:30 p.m.
- ☛ **March 21:** Jubilation 2005, Glenstone Lodge, Gatlinburg, Tenn., 6 p.m.



The Call

www.holston.org

Serving 925 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia

USPS 020-295

Published Biweekly by

Holston Conference

of the United Methodist Church

9915 Kingston Pike, Suite C, Knoxville, TN 37922
Telephone (865) 690-4080 Fax (865) 690-3162

**Periodical Postage Paid At
Knoxville, Tennessee**

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
The Call, P.O. Box 32939
Knoxville, TN 37930-2939

James Edward Swanson Sr. Bishop
 Gordon Ridenour Executive Assistant
 Annette Spence Bender Editor
 Dion Dykes Sr. Creative Designer
 Millie Meese Circulation Manager
 Donna Hankins Multimedia

What's your size?

The Call uses the following symbols to identify articles about small, medium or large churches:

S = Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)

M = Average 86 to 225 in worship service(s)

L = Average 226 or more in worship service(s)

Got something to say?

Send letters and e-mails to:
C-Mail, The Call
P.O. Box 32939
Knoxville, TN 37930-2939/ fax (865) 690-3162/ thecall@holston.org.

Want to subscribe?

For a 12-month subscription (26 issues), write a \$15 check made to "Holston Conference" and send to:
The Call
P.O. Box 32939
Knoxville, TN 37930-2939
For credit card orders, call (865) 690-4080 or visit www.holston.org. ■

wings

By Bishop James Edward Swanson Sr.



We must reach more men but not at the expense of women

As I prepared for a recent gathering with our United Methodist Men in Morristown, I came across some statistics from my Southern Bible College days that really hit me in the face.

Did you know that the church loses one out of every four females and three out of every four males after they reach the age of 17? Just look around your congregation next Sunday and see how many males are present compared with females. This same research showed that when a married man with children is led to commit himself to discipleship that the likelihood of winning the entire family increases almost fifty percent – over the likelihood that the family will be won after a married woman becomes a disciple.

I have some anxiety about even approaching this subject concerning our inability to attract and maintain males in the church. The anxiety comes because of our dismal record in the way we have treated women in the church. Despite the fact that women have been in the majority, our leadership in the past has marginalized women, denied them leadership opportunities, tried to keep our pulpits closed to women preachers, systematically shut women out of Boards of Trustees – and the litany continues. So I hesitate to bring up these statistics because I don't want anyone to misuse them as reasons to turn back the hands of time. In recent history, women have made some tremendous strides within the church. This in no way means that the struggle for equal inclusion of women is over. There are still Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committees that live in fear that a woman will be

sent to be their pastor. Even when the SPPR Committee is open to welcoming a female pastor, there are congregations with pockets of power that can and do make ministry difficult for women pastors. Yes, I celebrate the strides we have made – but the struggle continues.

So I hope you can understand why I hesitate to bring up the reality that we are not reaching men for Christ. But, somehow the church must be big enough and brave enough to deal with both of these issues without minimizing either. I was encouraged by the United Methodist Men's "Day with the Bishop" at First Morristown Church on the last Saturday in February. This was a good beginning that provides us with an opportunity to strategize together on how we can begin to win men to Christ.

On March 7, I will be with the clergywomen of Holston at First White Pine UMC. It will be a time to celebrate the 50 years that clergywomen have been, by God's grace, providing ministerial leadership to our churches. I approach this meeting with an interest in hearing the stories of the women clergy who serve Holston and finding ways we can continue to "Lift High the Cross."

In both cases I believe that the Holy Spirit is looking for faithfulness to our mission of "...making disciples of Jesus Christ" and for us to do so with honesty and integrity. I believe we can continue to break down barriers to women in ministry and at the same time empower our churches to reach their communities for Christ – even those hard-to-win men. I believe that the people of the Holston Conference are up to the task and know that the Holy Spirit will be with us. ■

in memoriam:



Carol Dunsmore

RADFORD, Va. – Carol Weaver Dunsmore, 75, died Feb. 23 in Carilion New River Medical Center. She was a retired Holston minister who had served as director of the Radford University Wesley Foundation and as pastor at New Hope/Mt. Airy UMC. Dunsmore is survived by a brother, the Rev. Beecher Dunsmore of Maryville, Tenn.; sister, Marcia Hale of Kingsport, Tenn.; along with several nieces and nephews. Memorial services will be held at a later date at the family's convenience. The Wesley Foundation will hold a worship service to celebrate Dunsmore's life on March 12 at 2 p.m. at Grove UMC, 1020 Tyler Avenue, Radford, Va. Visitation will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Wesley Foundation, 1022 Downey Street, Radford. Memorial contributions may be made to the Radford University Wesley Foundation. ■



reading list:

We asked these participants at United Methodist Men's Day in Morristown, "What book is lying on your nightstand?"

▼ **Donn Berney**
Harned's Chapel UMC
Morristown District
Studies in the Book of Revelation, by Steve Moyise



▼ **Jason Lowder**
West End UMC
Wytheville District
The Man in the Mirror: Solving the 24 Problems Men Face, by Patrick Morley



▼ **Nat Watson**
St. Paul UMC
Johnson City District
The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for? by Rick Warren



numbers:

Holston congregations continue to give generously to tsunami victims through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

\$498,329 – Total submitted to the finance office as of March 2

346 – Total number of participating Holston congregations

\$15 million – Worldwide total contributed to UMCOR as of Feb. 23