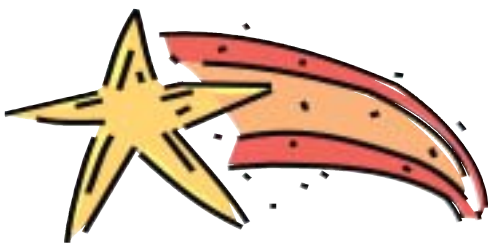


The Call

March 28, 2003

HOLSTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Kingsport District shoots for the stars (again)

By Annette Bender

For the second year in a row, Kingsport District leads the conference with the highest percentage of churches achieving "Five-Star Church" status in 2002.

Forty out of 59 Kingsport congregations – 68 percent – qualified for the title by paying their Fair Share apportionments in full and giving to missions funds, according to the treasurer's office.

Other districts reporting high percentages of Five-Star Churches include second-place Maryville District with 53 percent (34 of 64 congregations), and third-place Morristown District with 50 percent (56 of 110 congregations).

The Rev. Grady Winegar, Kingsport district superintendent, said that pastors and congregations are encouraged to meet Five-Star criteria at the district conference in September, in clergy meetings, and through occasional reminders in the newsletter.

"I think they have accepted the idea that they want to be involved in missions, and they see the [Five-Star certificate] as a way of cultivating moral in their churches," Winegar said of Kingsport congregations.

"Some of those churches on the list are very small, with only 45 in worship. But they're very determined to do this every year. They've got a few laypeople who see the opportunity to be in mission and they're proud to do it."

Conference-wide, an average 43 percent of all 929 congregations achieved Five-Star recognition in 2002. To qualify, Holston churches must pay 100 percent of apportionments and give any amount of money to each of these four Advance Special categories: International, United States, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and Conference-Initiated Specials.

Kingsport churches shoot, continued on page 7

Military Chaplain From Holston:



Chaplain David Knight and wife Stacy, pictured at a recent Air Force banquet, are preparing for a possible six-month deployment to Iraq.

'I CAN SEE GOD'S HAND IN LEADING ME TO THIS PLACE'

By Annette Bender

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. – The day after President Bush's war ultimatum on TV, Chaplain David B. Knight Jr. prepared for possible deployment within 48 to 72 hours.

"I'm just kind of waiting. My bags are packed," said Knight, a Holston minister serving as Air Force chaplain at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. "My family and I are bracing ourselves for six months of separation."

The day before Bush's 48-hour deadline expired and war began with Iraq, Knight described the mood among military personnel and their families as "high-intensity."

"Since I've been here in June, deployments have been a reality. There are folks I've not seen in chapel who are deployed – there are a few less faces around here. This is noticeable," Knight said in a telephone interview on March 18.

"But I think there's a sense of keeping your chin up and people relying on each other. There's a real strong sense of family here."

Knight is the son of retired pastor David Knight Sr. The Rev. Knight Jr. served Holston churches for 14 years, most

recently the church start-up, Wellspring UMC in Maryville District.

Approaching his 40th birthday, the cut-off date for entering military chaplains, Knight felt led to become an Air Force chaplain in 2001. On Sept. 11 at 10 a.m., he had an appointment to submit his application to a recruiter.

"The recruiter there in Knoxville said, 'Come on by Sept. 11, 10 o'clock. It should be a pretty slow day.'

"It turned out to be pretty eventful," said Knight, referring to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon that morning.

"They closed down the recruiter's office. I was the last one in. He grabbed my application and said, 'We're going to need you.'"

Knight felt some "apprehension" about entering the military on a day when war was clearly a prospect. "But I think there was a great sense of purpose and of knowing the stress level of military folk was going to be increased by that event. My opportunity to do ministry was going to be multiplied.

"God was truly calling me to serve men and women within the military."

I can see God's hand, continued on page 7

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