

*Dear Holston Clergy,
I apologize in advance for the length of this email, but there are many important new details we need to share with you regarding Convocation 2015 and Clergy Gathering. I suggest you save and/or print this for future reference. I will also add a link to it on the Holston event calendar listing.*

CONVOCATION 2015 & CLERGY GATHERING ARE MOVING TO PIGEON FORGE!!!

The bad news...

Due to the closing of the Terrace Hotel this winter for bathroom renovations, our annual Convocation event was facing serious issues with accommodations, meeting spaces, and transportation. Since we felt that Lake Junaluska staff could not adequately address those issues, we decided that, for the well-being and comfort of our clergy, we needed to move the event.

The good news!

We have a plan "B", and we are really excited about it. Read on...

FACILITY:

Our new location will be [Music Road Resort & Convention Center](#), 303 Henderson Chapel Rd., Pigeon Forge, TN. It is just south of traffic light #1 on the Parkway. (No need to worry about rock slides or crossing the mountains in a blizzard!) It is a beautiful facility, and the meeting rooms in the Convention Center are adjacent to the hotel with a covered walkway. It has a fitness center and a 24-hour pool.

ACCOMODATIONS & ROOM RESERVATIONS:

The Resort has a Hotel and an Inn directly across the street from it. They plan to house most (or all) of us in the hotel. The room charge will be \$78.00 including breakfast, and it is at least \$42.00 below their lowest standard rate. All rooms are very large and include balconies and a microwave and fridge, and many have mountain and river views. Since we will be (hopefully) filling up the hotel, some of you will be able to get room upgrades (fireplace, jacuzzi) at no additional cost. But there is a catch... You MUST register for your room by our Convo early bird registration date of January 24th, 2015 to get this super bargain rate. Since, unlike Junaluska, they may have others wanting to stay there as well, they will not block the rooms after that date. You can [register directly online](#) at our special group page. If the screen says "timeout", just click on "new reservation." (Note: At this reduced cost in an area that provides so many interesting diversions, this may be the year you bring your spouse along. Your significant other can use the fitness center and the pool, go shopping or take a mountain hike, and then join you for evening worship.)

MEALS:

There is a hot breakfast included in your room rate, featuring scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits and sausage gravy, and many more fresh choices. Lunch and dinner will be on your own, but

there are 3 restaurants within one block and dozens of other choices up and down the Parkway.

Ruby Tuesday next door is offering free coffee, tea, or soft drinks (\$2.50 value + tax) if you identify yourself as Holston clergy. We have allowed plenty of time in the schedule for meals, so, since this is "slow season" in Pigeon Forge, there should be no schedule problems.

CHILD CARE:

We are thrilled to announce that the Holston Conference Foundation has generously offered to underwrite the entire cost of child care this year for our Holston clergy! To those young clergy parents who have never attended Convocation due to the cost and logistics of child care, I say, "Carpe diem!" This is your great opportunity. Rev. Jeff Lambert has kindly extended the use of the child care facilities and staff at [First UMC, Sevierville](#) for the entire duration of Convocation. They will be able to care for your children during all the plenaries, workshops, and worship services with time to spare for drop-offs. See [schedule](#). The church is located less than 4 miles from Music Road, just off the Parkway. Snacks will be offered, and lunch will be provided if you don't want to leave the hotel during the day. (See note above about spouses. They can bring the little ones along, too!)

WORSHIP:

This year we have added several Communion services, by request. We are also honored to have the [King Street Band](#) from Shady Grove UMC for Monday evening worship and [Jimbo Whaley and Greenbrier](#), who will provide bluegrass/gospel music for our Tuesday evening worship.

WORKSHOPS:

Please note that our workshops begin on Monday afternoon this year at 3:45 pm. You may want to arrive earlier to ensure that you will be there on time. The hotel has offered to make early check-ins available to their best ability. (Some before noon!)

CLERGY GATHERING:

Our [Clergy Gathering](#) event will take place during Convocation this year at 1:30 pm on Tuesday, the 24th, in the Duet ballroom at the Convention Center. If you are not attending Convocation, you will need to register for this event by going to the online [registration page](#) or via the registration form on the [brochure](#). There is no charge to register if you are just commuting for Clergy Gathering. See more details in the brochure about this very different kind of Gathering.

CONVOCATION REGISTRATION:

Read the [brochure](#) for all the details on workshops, plenaries, and worship services. Be sure to [register](#) for the event by January 24th to get the early bird rate and to guarantee that amazing hotel rate!

THE "MAIN THING":

So we've covered the "where," the "how", and the "when". Now we discuss "the main thing." This event is all about YOU, our Holston clergy. Once a year Wesley Leadership Institute works to provide a venue where our preachers can congregate to learn, to worship, to enjoy fellowship with colleagues, and to celebrate the glorious mission we have in sharing Christ with our congregations and our communities. Our hope is that you will leave this event rested, enlightened, and on fire to carry out the mission with new energy for another year.

On behalf of WLI, I wish you a joyous and blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year, and we look forward to seeing you in Pigeon Forge!

Finally, a [Christmas message](#) from the Bishop and Rusty Taylor....

Wesley Leadership Institute
Rev. Dan Taylor, Director - danieltaylor@holston.org
Sue Weber, Admin Asst. - suweber@holston.org