

## Among many other agenda items during the four-day event, the Annual Conference:

---

- Celebrated the ministry of the laity at the annual Laity Banquet;
- Heard an update from the District Task Force committee;
- Received an offering of over \$91,602 for Imagine No Malaria and heard an update from Sheri Altland;
- Collected 3,269 UMCOR relief kits and 1,460 school kits;
- Established a \$10.9 million budget for mission and ministry for 2016, a reduction of 0.4% from 2015;
- Acknowledged a 1.6% increase in missional giving, which is the greatest increase since 2005;
- Celebrated the three winners of the Harry Denman Evangelism Award: The clergy winner is Rev. German Gomez. The lay recipient is Cameron Winton and the youth recipient is Sydney Wilson;
- Celebrated Sheila Bates receiving the Francis Asbury Award;
- Honored Helen Edwards as the 2015 “Alice Lee Award” recipient;
- Recognized Ruth Ann Powers for receiving the first annual Susanna Wesley Award for Excellence;
- Witnessed Bradford’s Chapel UMC and Fairview UMC receive the Local Church Heritage Awards;
- Greeted clergy serving in extension ministries;
- Recognized newly licensed local pastors;
- Received approximately 100 health plan participants at the wellness health screenings;
- Passed 14 petitions and two resolutions;
- Fixed pastoral appointments, which may be found at [www.awfumc.org/apt2015](http://www.awfumc.org/apt2015);
- Celebrated over 139,000 members of the Alabama-West Florida Conference; and
- Announced the 2016 session of the AWF Conference will meet June 12-15 at Frazer Memorial UMC.



Alabama-West Florida  
Annual Conference 2015 | The Great Commission  
**nurturing  
disciples**

## 2015 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

The 2015 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference was held May 31-June 3 in Montgomery, AL, with the theme, "The Great Commission: Nurturing Disciples." Bishop Paul L. Leeland, presiding over his seventh annual conference session since becoming the resident bishop, welcomed clergy and lay members to Frazer Memorial UMC in Montgomery.

### Special Mission Offering Recipient: Imagine No Malaria

Imagine No Malaria was the beneficiary of the 2015 missional offering. Churches from within the conference have been working towards the goal of saving 100,000 lives since January, 2014. Sheri Altland, Campaign Director with Imagine No Malaria, was welcomed to our conference and gave a brief presentation at the Opening Worship service. At this service, \$91,602 was collected to bring our total to date of 93,361 lives saved.

### Opening Worship

The Opening Worship Service of the 2015 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference session was held Sunday evening, May 31, in the Sanctuary of Frazer Memorial UMC in Montgomery, AL. Bishop Mike Lowry of the Central Texas Conference preached the sermon based on Psalm 89:5-18 and Acts 12:1-17 entitled, "Stuck by the Story." He told of God transforming the lives of entire communities proclaiming, "Christ still reigns!" He also expressed that one of the most encouraging things going on across the Christian community is the reawakening and recovery of spiritual formation and small groups for prayer and Bible study. A mass choir from around the conference, and led by Wayne Sigler of Frazer, provided inspiring music for the service including moving renditions of, "By Faith," "Forevermore" and "Say Amen." The Old Testament Lesson was read by Rev. Enrique Escobar and Amber Shirley gave the Epistle Lesson. Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson, talented worship leaders from the Atlanta area, were inspiring additions to conference this year and led an inspirational and spirit-filled worship medley.

### Service of Ordination & Commissioning

The Service of Commissioning and Ordination was held Monday evening in the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church in Montgomery. The capacity crowd represented family members and special friends of those being commissioned and ordained. Prior to the start of the service, the cathedral choir of Montgomery First UMC presented worshipful music led by Jack Horner. The service included the commissioning of two provisional deacons and six provisional elders and the ordination of one deacon in full connection and four elders in full connection. Bishop Mike Lowry of the Central Texas Conference preached a sermon entitled, "No Reservation, No Retreat, No Regret" based on Psalm 46:1-3 and Acts 28:30-31.

### Service Remembers the lives of Clergy & Clergy Spouses

Thirty-three clergy and clergy spouses who had passed since the 2014 AWF Annual Conference session were remembered today during the Service of Remembrance and Holy Communion. Bishop Paul L. Leeland offered the opening prayer and Rev. Spencer Turnipseed of Point Washington UMC delivered the inspiring and uplifting sermon based on Joshua 4: 1-7 entitled, "Meaning in Stones." A capacity crowd remembered those that have given many years of service to the conference. Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson provided comforting music through their rendition of, "If You Could See Me Now." Rev. Virginia Kagoro gave the Epistle Lesson, Revelation 12:1-6a. Surviving family members were hosted at a special luncheon by the AWF Commission on Archives and History.

### Retiring Clergy Honored for Years of Service

Twenty-one clergy were recognized upon their retirement by Dr. Jim Sanders during Monday's Order of the Day. Together, the retiring clergy have over 440 years of service in our conference. Rev. Neil McDavid spoke on behalf of the retiring class.

## 50th Anniversary Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March

Rev. Jackie Slaughter and Dr. Brian Miller led the conference in a poignant moment where we honored the history and significance of the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery march. Rev. Slaughter welcomed special guests that played a part in the original march and the anniversary march. They also read a narrative representing the words of those who were present and recalled the events of that historic weekend. The conference participated in a responsive litany and prayer. An emotional, collective singing of "The Lord's Prayer" concluded this very meaningful Order of the Day.

### Special Guests

The conference was honored by the outstanding leadership of several guest speakers. Rev. Jorge Acevedo, from Grace Church in the Florida Conference, led two Bible study sessions. Bishop Mike Lowry of the Central Texas Conference preached the opening worship service and the Service of Commissioning and Ordination. We welcomed Sheri Altland, Campaign Director with Imagine No Malaria and Marcus McKinney from the Historic Black Colleges. Drexel Gilbert gave the *Mary Ellen Bullard Leadership Address* at this year's laity banquet.

### 2016 General and Jurisdictional Delegation

The 2016 General and Jurisdictional Delegation was elected at this year's conference. The delegates are:

#### General Conference Delegation

Steve Furr, laity  
Pat Luna, laity  
Beverly Maddox, laity  
Clara Ester, laity  
Dawn Hare, laity  
Lawson Bryan, clergy  
Larry Bryars, clergy  
Jeremy Pridgeon, clergy  
Robin Wilson, clergy  
John Brooks, clergy

#### Jurisdictional Conference Delegation

Frank Moore, laity  
Robert Powell, laity  
Frank Dunnewind, laity  
Tripp Gulledge, laity  
Gene Floore, laity  
June Jernigan, clergy  
Rurel Ausley, clergy  
Cory Smith, clergy  
Tonya Elmore, clergy  
Emily Kincaid, clergy  
Susan Hunt, laity alternate  
Antonius Barnes, laity alternate  
Duane Keck, laity alternate  
Paulette Thompson, laity alternate  
Dan Morris, clergy alternate  
Jackie Slaughter, clergy alternate  
Allen Newton, clergy alternate  
Rob Couch, clergy alternate



---

Full coverage of the  
2015 Annual Conference at  
[www.awfumc.org/AC2015](http://www.awfumc.org/AC2015)  
[awfrc@awfumc.org](mailto:awfrc@awfumc.org)