

Welcome to the annual meeting of the Alabama-West Florida Conference!

If this is your first time attending or, if you have not attended in awhile, the information here will help you navigate your way through our time together. If you have any questions prior to your arrival, feel free to contact your district's administrative assistant, anyone at the conference office: 334-356-8014, www.awfumc.org, or the conference Coordinator/Registrar, allison.posell@gmail.com.

You will need a copy of the Brochure of Reports (BOR). If you did not pre order your copy, you can access and download it, and any other Annual Conference related information (including the Lay Member Role) from the Website: www.awfumc.org. Follow the prompts for Annual Conference and you will see the Brochure of Reports on the right side of your screen. Please bring either a digital or printed copy with you.

In the BOR, please note the submitted petitions and resolutions that will be addressed in the first business session on Monday. Also note the agenda that forms the framework of the conference; the latest version is available on the Website and updated versions will also be distributed prior to the first business session on Monday at 1:30pm. Please bring your BOR to each business session.

On Sunday, June 12th, registration is open from 3-6:30pm. Registration differs from the reservations you made online; those were used exclusively for head counts for child care, volunteering for the Upper Room prayer line, general lunch, or the Laity banquet. Unless you have a meeting, want to peruse the Cokesbury bookstore, visit the various display tables, purchase a snack to support the Alabama Rural Ministry, find the location for the Experiential Prayer Room, or stop by on the way to your accommodations for the conference, you will find most people register a bit later in the day.

Parking is available behind, and next to, the church and shuttles will be onsite to transport you to the nearest entrance. Volunteers will direct you to the registration area and, once you find your District's table, you will sign in and receive your name tag and meal tickets (if purchased); the different colored name tags designate lay, clergy, and guest attendees. If you do not register on Sunday, you will be able to do so on Monday (times are listed in your agenda and on site).

Public Wi-fi access is limited and there will be a designated "hot spot".

Even though Sunday can be a long day, please stay for opening worship (7:00 PM); it's a glorious time! Among other things, during this service, you will be

introduced to the designated offering for this year's conference. Churches and individuals bring their offerings and gifts and, near the end of the conference, we are able to celebrate the generosity for the ongoing work of ministry! If you would like to give, feel free to bring a check or cash; you can also contribute online via the link to annual conference.

Let's hit the high points on the agenda for Monday.

The morning begins with separate meetings for the lay and clergy delegates; the clergy session takes place in the fellowship hall and the laity session meets in Wesley Hall (the large auditorium).

In various places on the agenda THE ORDER OF THE DAY designates a specific time for a specific event and the first ORDER OF THE DAY is the 10:30am Memorial Service in the sanctuary. All are invited to attend where we, as a conference, will share in Holy Communion and, along with their families, remember deceased clergy members and spouse who have died within the last year. Aside from the multiple rows reserved for families and the communion servers, feel free to sit anywhere. During the opening hymn and processional, the center aisle will be in use and, once all are seated, the ushers will gladly assist in helping you find a seat.

Regarding lunch, the agenda shows various groups that have planned in advance to meet. Unless you made previous plans to join one of them, you are encouraged to make other arrangements. If you did not reserve meals, there are multiple restaurants close by. Remember, you can always support the Alabama Rural Ministry and purchase a snack in the "servery" (across from the fellowship hall).

On your way into Wesley Hall for the 1:30pm business session, packets with agendas, nominations and red/green/yellow voting cards will be available to you. During the business sessions, delegates sit according to the "bar". Facing the platform, lay delegates sit in the chairs on the right and clergy delegates on the left. You will notice there seems to be more lay, than clergy delegates. Each year, the delegation is balanced (equal number of lay and clergy) and many of the retired clergy do not attend annual conference.

All guests are welcome to attend the business sessions and are asked to sit on the elevated seats in the back.

Everyone is asked to silence their cell phones/electronic devices during services and sessions.

Much of the work of the conference and denomination is organized in four-year increments. This year, we usher in a new quadrennium and part of that work means filling various positions in conference boards and agencies. Prior to this meeting, individuals were selected to serve in various areas and their names are included in a multi-page document that will be available to you in Wesley Hall. (It is also available online www.awfumc.org.) As you become more familiar with the work of the conference and become interested in serving in any of these areas, you will have an opportunity to share your interest at a later date.

Business sessions are conducted in line with Robert's Rules of Order. Sharing is welcomed and microphones are positioned in various places on the floor. Three sheets of colored paper, yellow, green, and red, are used for communication during discussions. Holding up the yellow paper indicates you would like to ask a question or request permission to speak. When called upon by the presiding Bishop, move to the nearest microphone and introduce yourself: name, church, district, and your specific role in this conference (lay delegate, etc.).

When asked for specific input "for" or "against" a motion, holding up the green paper indicates you will speak in favor and holding up the red paper indicates you will speak against the motion. After you finish, a page (youth volunteer) will confirm your name and then submit it to the assistant secretaries (the three individuals working on the far left of the platform).

After the initial opening business and organization of the conference, Bishop Leeland, who has been appointed to the Alabama-West Florida Conference for eight years, will offer words through the Episcopal address.

For some, it takes awhile get the feel of the flow and the work of the conference. Hang in there and, at any time, feel free to ask questions of the conference staff or the wonderful volunteers at our host church.

Monday evening is the Service of Ordination and Commissioning at Montgomery First United Methodist Church and it is worth experiencing at least once! From Frazer UMC, please allow yourself at least 20 minutes to travel to FUMC and, once you park your car, there will be individuals at the doors to assist you in finding your way to the sanctuary. There is a pre-service concert that begins at 6:20 and a reception that immediately follows the ordination.

Looking to Tuesday, please note the times you can visit the Experiential Prayer Room; it is a great place to center, focus, and realize aspects of prayer and spiritual formation.

There are two teaching sessions, led by Dr. Kevin Watson, in the morning and all are invited, and encouraged, to attend.

The details around lunch are similar to Monday's and, when we gather at 1:30pm in Wesley Hall, we will receive the report from representatives of the delegation who returned from the May 2016 General Conference meeting held in Portland, Oregon. (The General Conference is the governing body of the United Methodist Church where delegates from all over the globe gather once every quadrennium. Elections for the delegates (lay and clergy) are held during the annual conference meeting in the year that precedes the event. The next election will be in 2019.)

We will celebrate the ministries of those selected to receive various awards (presented each year) and will also recap and celebrate the "Imagine No Malaria" campaign.

Once the final session of the day is dismissed, those who purchased tickets will make their way to the Fellowship Hall for the laity banquet and the schedule will be open until the first session on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday is the final day of the annual conference meeting and after completing several items of business, we will join together for the "Sending Forth" ORDER OF THE DAY at 11:00.

When you depart from annual conference, please remove any personal belongings from your name tag holder and return it to the registration area or to one of the bins or boxes by the exits.

Following annual conference, you will be given an opportunity to evaluate your experience. We appreciate your feedback, ideas, and concerns and hope you will take the time to help us keep making our annual meeting what it has become today.