

2018 North Alabama Annual Conference

The North Alabama Annual Conference gathered at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville June 3-5, 2018. Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett presided over the Conference with the theme of “Singing God’s Song in Harmony.”

Ethnic Ministries was the focus of the 2018 Annual Conference. Executive Director Rev. Dr. Clinton Hubbard Jr. shared about the Conference priority of Ethnic Ministries with video highlights of the team’s work. Worship included music from various congregations and ethnic backgrounds. The Ethnic Ministries Team also:

- Shared reports on the work of North Alabama’s Latino and Native American Ministries.
- Introduced Black Church Initiatives to be offered in the coming year, including Know to Grow Leverage Workshops and Partnership Ministry Grants.
- Offered insights on how Ethnic Ministries is reaching children, youth and millennials.
- Provided an update from the Courageous Conversations Team.
- Introduced the incoming Executive Director of Ethnic Ministries Rev. Donald Smith.

The Conference also received a Special Offering designated to continue and expand the work of the Ethnic Ministries Team by way of leadership recruitment, internships and young adult ministries.



Bishop Sharma D. Lewis from the Virginia Conference inspired and challenged attendees, preaching “North Alabama, What Clothes Are You Wearing?” and “Take Jesus to the Streets!”

Dr. Kevin Watson, Assistant Professor of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, led teaching sessions each morning, emphasizing that Methodist small groups focus on transformation and not just information.

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During business the Annual Conference:

- Celebrated four ordained elders, three ordained deacons, two associate members, three provisional elders, one provisional deacon, 17 licensed local pastors, 19 certified candidates for ministry, and recognized 22 retiring clergy.
- Received the In Mission Together Award from the General Board of Global Ministries, recognizing the North Alabama Conference as one of the top ten Annual Conferences in its financial support of United Methodist missions.
- Heard from the Louise Branscomb Barrier Breaker Recipient, presented by COSROW, Ama Shambulia, director of Urban Ministry's WE Gardens and WE Café.
- Announced the 2018 Denman Evangelism Award recipients (Clergy) Tony Johnson, (Laity) Paula Phillips and (Youth) Billy Prewitt.
- Celebrated starting 60 new faith communities in 2017, more than any other annual conference in the U.S. This includes Celebrate Recovery, Fresh Expressions, Satellites, new worship services, new faith communities and restarts.
- Learned of the new book *Go and Be Reconciled* by Dr. William E. Nicholas. The book tells the story of the United Methodist Church during the Civil Rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the North Alabama Conference.
- Celebrated that Ministry with the Poor Interns are now in Birmingham and Anniston, living in intentional community and serving local neighborhoods.
- Approved the 2019 Conference proposed budget of \$10,155,717 and the continuance of the proportional giving (tithe) funding model.
- Received an invitation to join Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett and the Adult Discipleship Team in "Reading Together," an opportunity to read through the entire Bible during 2019.
- Remembered 34 clergy and clergy spouses who have died in the last year during the annual Memorial Service.
- Received an update from Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett about the 2019 Called General Conference. Following the presentation, Rev. Monica Harbarger walked the Conference through a time of processing around tables.
- Cast ballots on the correct text of an amendment to the UMC constitution approved by the 2016 General Conference.
- Voted on the following petitions and resolutions:
 - Did not adopt a Petition Concerning Clergy Appointments to Home Church
 - Adopted a Resolution Supporting Childcare Licensing and Inspection
 - Did not adopt a Resolution Concerning HealthFlex Insurance Plan
 - Adopted a Resolution Concerning Parity in Appointments
 - Did not adopt a Resolution Concerning Unity

For a full wrap-up, visit www.umcna.org/ac2018.

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