

R. Lawson Bryan – Resident Bishop

R. Christopher Ramsey - Superintendent

May 2021

Alive Together At The Table

Rev. Stephen Grantham to serve as Northeast District Superintendent



Bishop Lawson Bryan has announced the projected appointment of Rev. Stephen Grantham as the Northeast District Superintendent, effective June 2021.

Bishop Bryan previously announced that Rev. Jimmy Cason would serve in that capacity as an interim Superintendent, but with the further delay of General Conference and more pastoral moves this year than expected, he and the Cabinet felt it possible to make a regular appointment now.

“I am deeply grateful to Jimmy Cason for his outstanding leadership in South Georgia and for his willingness to serve the Annual Conference as an interim District Superintendent,” Bishop Bryan said. “Rev. Stephen Grantham’s record of effective pastoral leadership has already been a blessing to local churches. I welcome him to this new opportunity for expanded service to our Annual Conference.”

Rev. Grantham, who is completing his fifth year as senior minister of Moultrie First United Methodist Church, has served in the South Georgia Conference since 1983, pastoring churches in Covington, Davisboro, Warner Robins, Cordele, Statesboro, Reidsville, Jesup, Rincon, and Centerville.

A second-generation United Methodist pastor, Rev. Grantham graduated from LaGrange College and Candler School of Theology of Emory University. Ordained a Deacon in 1983 and an Elder in 1986, he recently finished his fourth unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and is now a Board-Certified Pastoral Counselor and Board-Certified Clinical Chaplain through the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. He and his wife, Sheri, have been married for 35 years and have two grown daughters and one grandson.

“It is with great humility and a tremendous honor that I accept my appointment to the Northeast District of the South Georgia Annual Conference,” Rev. Grantham said. “I am grateful to Bishop Bryan for placing

his trust in me. I am honored to use the gifts for ministry God has given me and the experience of 39 years of ministry to help give pastoral and administrative leadership to the churches, pastors, and their families in the Northeast District. I also look forward to working with the other members of the South Georgia Cabinet. I covet the prayers of all for this move and a transition to a new area of ministry.”

The other five district superintendents currently serving will be reappointed to serve in their respective districts. Rev. David Thompson will continue as the Coastal District Superintendent; Rev. Craig Hutto will continue to serve as the North Central District Superintendent; Rev. Steve Patton will continue serving as the Northwest District Superintendent; Rev. Paula Lewis will continue to serve as the South Central District Superintendent; and Rev. Doreen Smalls will continue serving as the Southwest District Superintendent.

Bishop Bryan and the Appointive Cabinet continue their work to prayerfully discern the pastoral appointment changes.

The Bishop and Cabinet originally announced April 18, 2021, as the intended date for the release of this year’s projected appointments. However, they needed additional time in order to intentionally and thoroughly complete the process. While appointments were not released on April 18, they are now available on [the conference website](#).

“As the annual process of appointment making continues, the Appointive Cabinet and I are grateful for the many expressions of prayerful support received from clergy and laity throughout the Annual Conference,” Bishop Bryan said. “We ask for your continued prayers as we follow the discernment process for appointment-making described in *The Book of Discipline* (§426-430).”

All appointments are considered firm projections pending the official announcement at the conclusion of the virtual one-day Annual Conference session on June 7.

Annual Conference Special Offering

Special Offering: Golden Cross Fund

Each year, the South Georgia Annual Conference designates a special offering. While we are not yet meeting together in person, we still want to join together our hands and gifts to collectively support a ministry that brings us Alive Together at the Table. The South Georgia Conference has therefore designated the Golden Cross Fund as the 2021 Annual Conference Special Offering. [Click here to learn more about this fund and ways to give.](#)

Annual Conference Timeline

- May 1 - Lay members must have email address on record in [the church dashboard](#)
- May 26 - Clergy / BOM members receive Clergy Session voting credentials by email
- May 27 - Online meeting platform & voting training* - 7 pm
- May 28 - Online meeting platform & voting training* - 9 am
- June 1 - Clergy Session - 10 am **Online**
- June 1 - Retirement Recognition Service - 7 pm **Online**
- June 2 - Laity & clergy receive Annual Conference voting credentials by email
- June 3 - Memorial Service - 7 pm **Online**
- June 4 - Last day for any voting credential changes/additions
- June 6 - Service of Ordination with Commissioning - 5 pm **Online**
- June 7 - Annual Conference Session - 8:30 am **Online**

**Delegates are encouraged to attend one of these sessions. The two training sessions will be identical in format and content.*

Book of Recommendations & Reports now available

The [2021 Book of Recommendations and Reports](#) is now available for ordering and download. Business items for the 2021 Annual Conference session are contained in the *Book of Recommendations and Reports* (BOR). [Read more](#)

QUESTIONS

For questions regarding the business of Annual Conference, please contact Meredyth Earnest, Conference Secretary, at meredyth@sgaumc.com.

For general inquiries, contact Kelly Roberson, Director of Communications, at kelly@sgaumc.com.

Social Media for the 2021 Annual Conference

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sgaumc

Twitter: www.twitter.com/sgaumc / #sgaumc

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sgaumc

Bishop Bryan Announces Retirement



In a [heartfelt video](#), Bishop R. Lawson Bryan, episcopal leader of the South Georgia Area of The United Methodist Church, announced his intent to retire, effective Sept. 1, 2021.

“It has been a great joy, and I thank you for the willingness you have had for us to be in ministry together. We are greatly blessed by the South Georgia Conference,” [he said](#). “In every way, this Conference is ready, not only for today, but even for tomorrow, because we are being Alive Together in Christ.”

Elected bishop July 14, 2016, at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference’s quadrennial meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C., Bishop Bryan began serving as South Georgia’s resident bishop on Sept. 1, 2016.

No decision has yet been made about who will succeed Bishop Bryan as South Georgia’s episcopal leader. The Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Committee on Episcopacy and the College of Bishops are working together on a plan for coverage that will consider recommendations from Bishop Bryan and South Georgia’s members of the Committee on Episcopacy.

In his announcement to the Conference, Bishop Bryan expressed his desire to spend more time with his family.

“Through this intentional process, I have discerned with clarity that it is time for me to turn my full attention to my family,” he said. “I began seminary 50 years ago. Since that time, our lives have been shaped by appointments, moves, and denominational matters. I have no regrets. What I do have, though, is confirmation that now is the time for me to focus my energies more directly on those whose love has sustained me.”

During his five years serving the South Georgia Conference - four years plus an additional year due to the postponement of the 2020 General Conference and Jurisdictional Conference because of the coronavirus pandemic - Bishop Bryan has focused on finding fresh ways to be alive together in collaborative leadership. He has worked to build teams like the Compass Group and Laity Cabinet that affirm the giftedness of the Conference’s laity and clergy.

With clarity, focus, and conviction that God’s guidance for him as the episcopal leader of South Georgia is found in Ephesians 2:5, “God has made us alive together in Christ,” Bishop Bryan has served South Georgia with faithfulness and tireless dedication, Conference leaders say.

“Sherrill and I love the South Georgia Conference and are thankful for the unwavering support the laity and clergy have so generously given to us,” he said. “We will always be Alive Together in Christ with our South Georgia family.”

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO FROM BISHOP BRYAN](#)

Conversations at the Table with Bishop Bryan for May

We continue to have great conversations for our Alive Together at the Table with Bishop Bryan. Participants are able to ask questions, and we are providing timely resources and answers to what is on their mind. The interactive time also helps shape our agenda for future conversations. Our next one will be Tuesday, May 11 at noon. Mark your calendars and [register here](#) for your seat at the table. We use the same link for each gathering so if you only need to register once.

Don Barnes Elected UMM President



Don Barnes is the newly elected president of the South Georgia Conference’s United Methodist Men.

An active member of Cordele First United Methodist Church, Barnes has served as South Georgia’s United Methodist Men’s secretary for more than a decade and has been involved in men’s ministry at the local, district, and conference level.

Barnes will formally assume the role on June 7, at the end of the 2021 Annual Conference session, but has already begun to work on a transition of leadership as he fills the remaining three years of the late Henry Holt’s term of service. Holt, who was elected Conference UM Men president last August, died January 30.

“I have known Don Barnes for many years, and he truly is a servant leader,” said Donald Rhodes, past South Georgia UMM president. “He will focus on helping our men grow in Christ so that other men may come to know Christ. I am excited about working with him in the coming years to grow our UMM ministries and missions.” [Read more](#)

Georgia United Methodist Foundation Newsletter

Check out the latest edition.

Sign up at www.gumf.org/stay-connected to have Growing Generosity delivered right to your inbox.

For more information, please contact GUMF at 770-449-6726, 877-220-5664 or info@gumf.org



Mathew Pinson elected GUMF President/CEO



The Georgia United Methodist Foundation Board of Trustees has unanimously elected Mathew Pinson as the Foundation's next president and CEO, effective July 1, 2021. Pinson will succeed Rev. Keith E. Lawder, who is retiring after serving as the Foundation's president since 2016.

GUMF Search Committee Chair Kathryn Dennis said of Pinson's selection, "We selected Mathew after conducting an extensive nationwide search. He brings great talents and a strong vision to lead the Foundation in the challenging years ahead. We are delighted he has accepted the challenge!"

Pinson responded, "I believe the Georgia United Methodist Foundation has an exceptional opportunity to provide leadership and resources for Methodists across the state. We have great potential to convene strong partners to advance the Foundation's mission further—from our existing programs to developing new opportunities. [Read more](#)

SGA CONFERENCE GATHERING | October 9, 2021

In addition to the June Annual Conference session, Bishop Lawson Bryan has set Saturday, October 9, 2021, Conference gathering. Our hope is that this gathering will take place in person at a conference-central location to be announced later. However, if it is not yet safe to do so, Bishop Bryan has asked that all members plan to gather electronically.





1st Mary & Anthony Griswell
6th Sonny & Sharon Moon
10th Chris & Kerri Shoemaker
12th Ron Womack
14th Sue Bagwell
14th Tom & Nona Tidwell
18th Bryan Price
19th Mary Louise Jones
25th Tris Strickland
27th Mark & Keta Hardin
29th Mike & Tammy Hammond
30th Lee & Pam Pettis

4th Mary Parker
7th Brandy Donnan
11th Lee Pettis
13th Brenda Johnson
14th Tammy Hammond
15th Elise Miller
18th Chip Strickland
21st Karen Zeigler
26th Faye Burgamy
29th Susan Cason
30th Allen & Kristen Cason



2021 Dates for Lay Ministries (LSM and CLM)

The 2021 dates for Lay Ministries - [Lay Servant Training](#) and [Certified Lay Ministry](#) - have been posted on the [conference website](#). The time is right for churches to take advantage of these leadership development opportunities. More than ever, we need well trained leaders in our local churches. For more information, contact Anne Bosarge, Associate Director, Office of Congregational Development, at anne@thechapelministries.com or 912-262-1331.

Apply today for Camp Connect Leadership Team!

Applications are now being accepted for the 2021 [Camp Connect](#) Summer Leadership Team. Applications are open to college students who have completed at least one year of college. The Leadership Team will commit to nine weeks of camping ministry which will include serving at high school, middle school, and elementary camps. These camp counselors will minister to hundreds of youth and children throughout the summer while making Christian friendships with other staff members that last a lifetime.

For more information, [click here](#) or contact Suzanne Akins, Camp Director, at (912) 638-8626 ext. 107 or by email at suzanne@sgaumc.com.

Follow Camp Connect on Facebook: www.facebook.com/CampConnectUMC.

FEMA to Help Pay Funeral Costs for COVID-19-Related Deaths

In early April, FEMA will begin providing financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020, for deaths related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to help ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the pandemic. We know many churches across our Conference have been impacted by the loss of members of the church family. This information may be helpful for someone qualifying for assistance during a difficult time. FEMA's mission is to help people before, during and after disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense grief for so many people. FEMA affirms their commitment to help with funeral and burial expenses that many families did not anticipate. There are certain criteria that must be met to be eligible for COVID-19 funeral assistance. For more information and for details on eligibility and how to apply, you can direct people to:

<http://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>





JOB OPPORTUNITY

Full Time Director of Youth Ministries – Swainsboro First UMC

Swainsboro First United Methodist Church is seeking a full-time Director of Youth Ministries. Swainsboro is a vibrant mid-sized church with a growing children's ministry and desires to extend this success into the youth and young adult age groups. This position would begin in June. Salary and benefits would be commensurate with education, experience, and position development. Interested applicants should submit a Cover Letter, Resume, and a list of references to the following email address: funcswainsboro@gmail.com.

Contact: Rev. David Unkles at 478-237-7535 for more information

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Pittman Park United Methodist Church in Statesboro, GA is seeking a part-time Director of Youth Ministry. This position is responsible for leading Pittman Park's youth program to provide a nurturing and encouraging atmosphere to support youth in our community in the growth of their spiritual lives and walk with Christ. The Youth Ministry serves youth 6th through 12th grade.

Typical responsibilities of the position include leading/coordinating weekly youth activities at Pittman Park on Sundays and Wednesday evenings; coordinate activities of adult volunteers; organize events and trips for the youth; provide opportunities for youth to put their faith into action through caring for others; maintain Safe Sanctuaries guidelines for all youth activities; promote the youth program by reaching out to youth not currently involved in the program and provide a welcoming environment; build relationships with youth and families; administer budget for youth ministry. The position reports to the Senior Pastor.

The ideal candidate is someone who is spiritually mature, self-motivated, knowledgeable of the Bible, and can connect easily with youth. Background in the United Methodist Church is preferable.

Send cover letter and resume to email or address below. Please include in cover letter a statement of why you feel you would be a good fit for this position. Complete job description available upon request. High school diploma required.

Email address: ppumc@nctv.com

Attention: Mark Murphree

Church address: 1102 Fair Road, Statesboro, GA 30458