



 The North Georgia Conference  
of The United Methodist Church

## DISTRICT 8 SouthWest

Butts, Coweta, Fayette, Harris, Heard,  
Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Monroe, Pike,  
Spalding, Troup and Upson Counties

A monthly publication of  
The SouthWest District of The United Methodist Church

Rev. Susan Landry  
District Superintendent

January 2021

***“...and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.”*** Matthew 2:9

At the penning of this article, we have just experienced an exciting historical event that connects us to the night of Jesus’ birth over 2000 years ago. For the first time since 1623, Jupiter and Saturn orbited so close together that they appeared as one very bright star shining in our night sky. Did you see it on Dec 21?



As we enter into the day and the season of Epiphany, our eyes gaze more intently at the light—we consider it afresh through the scripture. Since it is a “new year”, we seek a fresh take on the meaning and impact of the light—the light of Christ. We can see it, and we ponder—what comes next? This is the new year, after all—what shall we do with ourselves?

What if we did these 2 things for now? 1. Allow ourselves to enter into the beauty of the light, the revelation of Jesus coming for us—just standing in awe and letting it warm us up. Then, 2. Bearing that light, that hope, that love to all in this world who need it.

More than a shooting star or a planet alignment, this world needs the Light of the World to be born in me and in you. When our lights combine, the light shines much more brightly, illuminating, encouraging, and inspiring us all. May 2021 be the year of The Light shining in the darkness—through you and me.

Susan

## SouthWest District Ministers' Meeting

Thursday, January 7, 2021, 7:00pm  
via Zoom

All appointed pastors are expected to participate and will receive the Zoom invitation the first week of January for this important meeting.

### End of Year Reports

Every church MUST submit an End of Year report through Data Services between January 12 and January 31. The SouthWest District has a team of Statisticians that will be reviewing the reports as they are submitted and are available to assist you with completing the reports. Information is available now on the Reports Due page of the district website and will be sent to all pastors on Monday, January 4. There is also a video put together by the Conference that has helpful information regarding the reports. It can be viewed at:



<https://vimeo.com/494526793/e437b9e50d>. On Tuesday, January 12, there will be a Zoom EOY Training, led by District Statistician Rev. Skip Mitchell. Anyone interested in participating should contact the District Office to receive the Zoom invitation.

PLEASE DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO BEGIN THESE IMPORTANT REPORTS!

### **ATTENTION ALL LOCAL PASTORS**

Schedules have been emailed to all local pastors with dates and times for your evaluation and license renewal with the SouthWest District Committee on Ordained Ministry. Prior to those February meetings, there is some paperwork that needs to be submitted to the District Office no later than January 29:

- 1) Clergy and SPR Evaluation Forms
- 2) Annual Report of Local Pastors (emailed with schedules)
- 3) BRIEF autobiographical statement

Paperwork can be emailed to [southwest@ngumc.net](mailto:southwest@ngumc.net), mailed to P. O. Box 13, Griffin, GA 30224, or delivered to the office on Tuesdays or Thursdays or delivered to Denise at LaGrange First on January 28, 2-4:30

## District At Large Delegates to Annual Conference Needed

The SouthWest District is required to provide the following breakdown of At Large Delegates to the 2021 Annual Conference:

6 youth, ages 14-18

18 young adults, ages 19-35

1 Wesley Foundation representative from LaGrange College

27 adults

Annual Conference is currently scheduled for June 3-5, although the decision has not yet been announced as to whether it will be an in person gathering or a virtual meeting. Any interested, active laity in the district are encouraged to submit an application to serve as a district delegate. Local Church delegates will continue to be selected at the church level as always. For more information, or to obtain an application form, visit the Special Events and News page of the district website, [www.ngumc.org/southwest](http://www.ngumc.org/southwest), or contact the District Office ([southwest@ngumc.net](mailto:southwest@ngumc.net) or 770-227-1074). Applications must be received in the district office no later than **January 28**.

## Final 2020 Apportionment Payments

Noon on January 8, 2021, is the final opportunity to make 2020 apportionment payments. Payments may be hand-delivered to the conference office the week of January 4, 2021. To minimize person-to-person contact, a drop box will be placed outside the entrance to the conference offices starting Monday, January 4, 2021, through Thursday, January 7, 2021, 9 am until 5 pm, and on Friday, January 8, 2021, 9:00 am until 12 noon.

Someone will be inside the building to collect payments from the dropbox throughout the day. Please leave contact information with your payment if you would like confirmation that your payment has been received. Contact Bruce Cooper at 678-533-1394 with questions.



**All churches are strongly encouraged to check your 2020 payment record against the Conference records to be sure that all payments have been received and posted. On the home page of the conference website, go to the Apportionment Payments section and enter your church number to get a 2020 Apportionments Paid Report.**

# CLERGYEDUCATION

Continuing Education for Church Leaders

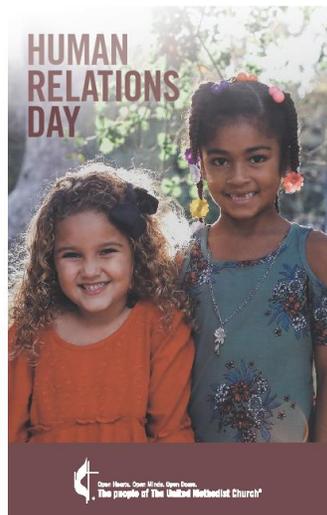
[clergyeducation.com](http://clergyeducation.com)

**A Message from the District Mission Coordinators, Rev. Maria Gardiner & Rev. Katie Mattox:**

One word to sum up 2020 would be “unprecedented”. We have had a pandemic, the likes of which we haven’t seen for 100 years. We have had an extremely divisive presidential election, and an on-going runoff election. We have witnessed, and suffered due to racial injustice. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12 verses 26 and 27, “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it. You are the body of Christ and parts of each other.” (CEB)

This year, we have suffered. We are all one in Christ, and we share in each others pain and joy. In response to the injustice we see in our world, the United Methodist Church takes action. Every year, the United Methodist Church celebrates **Human Relations Sunday** on the Sunday prior to the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. This coming year, it will be held on Jan. 17, 2021. Human Relations Sunday, and the special offering given on this day, is a direct way to respond to the racial, economic and social injustice within the world around us. For more information about Human Relations Sunday, click this link: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/2021-human-relations-day-sundayemail-copy-3> .

For a Special Sunday Planning Calendar click this link: [https://www.resourceumc.org/-/media/umc-media/2020/11/19/11/52/2021\\_special\\_sundays\\_planning\\_calendar\\_final.ashx?la=en&rev=f946609690834f418e420df31a9a6891](https://www.resourceumc.org/-/media/umc-media/2020/11/19/11/52/2021_special_sundays_planning_calendar_final.ashx?la=en&rev=f946609690834f418e420df31a9a6891)



*Happy New Year  
from Susan & Denise  
in the SouthWest District  
Office*

## A Message From UMM Conference President, Odell Horne:

I pray that you all had a blessed Christmas, and that you will have a prosperous New Year! 2020 has been a tumultuous year.

A virus in Wuhan, China caused a global pandemic with the aid of international travel. This virus took the lives of many people; and it caused businesses, schools, and churches to close temporarily. It also forced us to change our habits.

A video of a black man murdered while jogging near Brunswick, GA sparked racial protests, that were only exacerbated with different videos in Louisville, KY and Minneapolis, MN becoming public.

And a tense Presidential election, which led to multiple ballot recounts, was followed by what seems to be a never ending Senate runoff election.

And on Christmas Day a bomb devastated downtown Nashville, TN.

Despite all of this, God is still on the throne!!!

During this year the United Methodist Men have been hard at work, check out our [2020 - A Year In Review](#) video. We hosted our first [Igniting Faith Virtual Conference](#) in October (which will be replayed on New Years Eve). And speaking of New Years Eve, the General Commission on United Methodist Men will be hosting a good old-fashioned Methodist [Watch Night Service](#).

We have developed a [Speakers Bureau](#) to assist you in connecting with us.

I have attached the United Methodist Men's 2021 calendar below. This calendar is subject to change, so please check for updates [here](#).

We will have a Leadership Council Meeting on Saturday, January 9, 2021, please see the flyer below, and register [here](#) to attend.

Finally, please consider giving to the United Methodist Men of the North Georgia Conference directly. I have attached a fundraising letter, however you can [Donate to NGCUMM](#) using this link.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. [Like](#), [share](#), and [comment](#) on our social media accounts

Sincerely,



Odell Horne | President  
North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Men  
P.O. Box 450646 Atlanta, Georgia 31145  
404-909-8250  
<http://www.ngcumm.org>



# Cultivating Digital Fresh Expressions: Authors Present Webinar for North Georgia United Methodists



Friday, January 22, 10:00-11:30am, Via Zoom

Let's learn about launching Fresh Expressions in the digital age. Dr. Michael Beck and Dr. Rosario Picardo will share the work behind *Fresh Expressions in a Digital Age; How the Church Can Prepare for a Post Pandemic World* along with a time for live Q&A in this Zoom webinar. The cost is \$10. Participants will get a 40% discount code on the ebook following the webinar. To Register:

<https://www.ngumc.org/eventdetail/14816335?month=1&year=2021&day=1&display=m>



Happy Birthday to the following ministers celebrating birthdays in January:

9 – Carson Thaxton  
10 – William Collier  
11 – Michael Phillips  
Scott Pickering

22 – Gary Johnson  
Wade Corley  
27 – David Adamson  
29 – Skip Mitchell