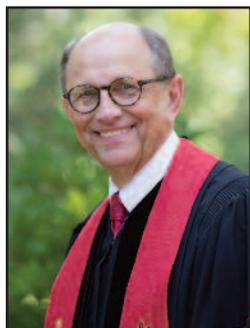


Winter Conference 2018

Biographies



Bishop Robert Lawson Bryan

Serves as episcopal leader of the South Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church. Elected bishop July 14, 2016, at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference's quadrennial meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C., he began serving as South Georgia's resident bishop on Sept. 1, 2016. Bishop Bryan holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Tulane University and a doctorate in ministry from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He is married to Sherrill, and their son Philip and daughter-in-law Brittany, along with their grandson, John Phillip Bryan, Jr., reside in Alabama. Bishop Bryan is passionate about people owning their identities as being "alive together in Christ," from Ephesians 2:5.



Bible Teacher: Dr. Ben Witherington, III

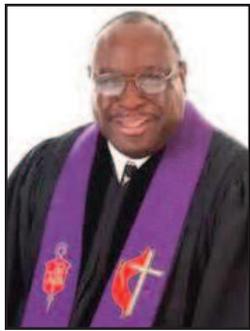
Bible scholar Ben Witherington is Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and on the doctoral faculty at St. Andrews University in Scotland. A graduate of UNC, Chapel Hill, he went on to receive the M.Div. degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from the University of Durham in England. He is now considered one of the top evangelical scholars in the world, and is an elected member of the prestigious SNTS, a society dedicated to New Testament studies. Witherington has also taught at Ashland Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt University, Duke Divinity School and Gordon-Conwell. A popular lecturer, Witherington has presented seminars for churches, colleges and biblical meetings not only in the United States but also in England, Estonia, Russia, Europe, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Australia. He has also led tours to Italy, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. Witherington has written over fifty books, including *The Jesus Quest* and *The Paul Quest*, both of which were selected as top biblical studies works by Christianity Today. He also writes for many church and scholarly publications, and is a frequent contributor to the Patheos website. Along with many interviews on radio networks across the country, Witherington has been seen on the History Channel, NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, The Discovery Channel, A&E, and the PAX Network.



Worship Leader: Robert Henry McMichael, III

A 5th generation Atlantan. A product of the Atlanta Public Schools, Robert is a 1999 graduate of Morehouse College, and a 2009 graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. Robert has distinguished himself as a Preacher, writer, lecturer, vocalist and organist. He has served in numerous capacities in churches throughout the Atlanta area. As Organist, he has served at the Mallelieu United Methodist Church, East Point, GA, (now East Point First Mallelieu UMC) and at the Hoosier Memorial United Methodist Church, his home church. He has served the Cascade United Methodist Church as Director of the Women's Chorus and Praise and Worship Leader. He also served the Historic Central Ministries United Methodist Church where he served as Minister of Music, Worship and the Arts. He served the Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church in Marietta as Worship Leader/Ministerial Assistant. As a preacher/teacher, Robert has preached many revivals and special worship services. He has led many Bible studies both at Mt. Bethel and in the community. Some of his studies have included *Celebration of Discipline* by Robert Foster; *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire* by Jim Cymbala; *When God's People Pray* by Jim and Carol Cymbala. As a baritone soloist, Robert has been featured at many recitals and concerts. One of his proudest moments when he was chosen to be a part of the Chorus that performed Brahms's *Nanie* at the Woodruff Arts Center under the direction of the late Robert Shaw. In July of 2001 he co-chaired a delegation that traveled to the Ivory Coast of West Africa to take the Gospel message in song and to begin discussions on how the then "Methodist Church of Cote'Ivoire" and the United Methodist Church could merge. Within two years of the initial conference, the Methodist Church of Cote'Ivoire became a part of the United Methodist Church. Robert is also a Realtor ® with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage - Buckhead West Paces office. He is one of Metro Atlanta's leading Real Estate Consultants.

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Bishop James Edward Swanson Sr.

James Edward Swanson Sr. is the resident bishop of the Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church. His tenure began Sept. 1, 2012, with his first public appearance one day earlier to the conference's Seashore District. He went there to be with those affected by Hurricane Isaac. The hurricane made landfall on Aug. 28, 2012, causing additional devastation to Mississippi coastal communities recovering from Hurricane Katrina seven years earlier.

Swanson listened to the people of Mississippi and discovered values deep within their hearts—love, generosity, justice and apprenticeship—thus, becoming the Core Four Values of the Mississippi Conference. It is from this Core Four that the churches seek to center their unique ministries. However, none of these values are accomplished alone. Swanson travels the Mississippi Conference teaching, “We are one Church in 1,030 locations.”

His contagious spirit of hospitality, a determination to excel at being “the you” God created each person to be and spirited preaching has helped bring life, laughter and light to congregations in the Mississippi Conference and beyond. He continues to emphasize that winning people to Christ requires risk-taking love, and crossing old boundaries to discover where the Holy Spirit is at work. He is modeling with the extended cabinet how coaching can revolutionize ministry. Cabinet members and other conference groups meet for two eight-hour sessions each month to be trained in loving, learning and leading. Because of this coaching, Swanson continually asks Mississippians about their “glory sightings”—where they see God at work.

Swanson was elected a bishop of The United Methodist Church during the 2004 Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference. He was assigned to the Holston Conference where the episcopal office is located in Knoxville, Tennessee. Swanson served the Holston Conference for eight years. Under his leadership, the Sudan Mission initiated. The number of United Methodist congregations in Sudan grew from three to 30 between 2006 and 2012. A residential home for Sudan's district superintendent was built and used as a training site for clergy and laity of South Sudan. Plans were laid for Holston to raise funds for the campaign, Imagine No Malaria to prevent and treat the deadly malaria disease in Sub-Saharan Africa. The campaign resulted in \$1.2 million dollars.

Swanson serves as the president of the General Commission of United Methodist Men for 2017-2020. He was re-elected to the post following his service for 2012-2016. Swanson is a member of the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU). He serves on the board of trustees for Emory University, Rust College and Millsaps College. He is also the chairman of the board of trustees at Gammon Theological Seminary.

Swanson is a sought after preacher, workshop leader and lecturer. He has presented to people in Japan, Korea, Brazil, Russia, Estonia, Chile, Canada, the Holy Land, Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe and throughout the United States.

Swanson is married to Delphine Yvonne Ramsey Swanson. They have the joy of being parents to six adult children, Karen Latrese Swanson Jones married to Earl Jones Jr.; James Edward Swanson Jr. married to Yaki Bryant Swanson; Shondell Swanson married to Angela Drain; Carlton Eugene Swanson married to Ivis Rosario; Janae Evonne Swanson Brown married to Vernon and Joshua Emile' Swanson. The Swansons are blessed with 16 grandchildren.



Workshop Leader (Change Management): Ms. Anne Bosarge

Serves as the Multi-Campus Director at The Chapel Ministries, a multi-site United Methodist congregation with 4 campuses in Brunswick and Rincon. In her role as Multi-Campus Director, she trains and equips staff and ministry leaders and ensures all campuses are moving forward toward accomplishing the The Chapel's vision, to provide environments for people to encounter God and respond to His call on their lives. She has a passion for leading change and helping leaders discover how they were uniquely created to be a part of expanding the Kingdom of God. Anne lives in Brunswick, GA with her husband, Corey. She enjoys baking, reading, writing, and spending time with her kids: Rosalyn (18) and Jacob (14).

Session: Big Change One Step at a Time

Do you feel stuck? Are you busy but not gaining traction? You might be ready for a change! In this workshop we'll explore how change is an integral part of spiritual growth and learn how to create a greenhouse for growth that enables us to change as mature in our faith. The practical steps presented in this workshop will include strategies you can begin to implement immediately, regardless of your circumstance or area of “stuckness.”

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Workshop Leader (Managing Conflict): Ms. Claire Bowen

Claire comes to the Methodist Church as both a human resources professional from the corporate world and an active, life-long UMC member.

"I never thought I had enough emotional objectivity to bring my corporate HR skills to the church I love," Claire confesses. "But about 4 years ago I got over that."

Claire started her work in the UMC by conducting on-boarding seminars for new senior pastors at large churches and the staff members at those churches.

She then began to do this same type of work for the new bishops elected in 2016, arranging on-boarding sessions for them with both their cabinets and the pastors of large congregations under their charge. Claire has expanded her work to include new district superintendents, new associates who join a church team and new pastors with their lay leaders.

Before starting her own consulting firm, Claire Bowen and Company, in Atlanta, Claire was at First Atlanta Corporation, which had 6,000 employees at the same time. After servings as the HR manager for the 1,500-person retail division of the company, she moved to run the firm's Corporate Leadership Training School and later became the Organization Development Specialist in charge of Team Building, Strategic Planning and Leadership Coaching.

Her specialties are: Team Building, Strategic Planning Retreats, Executive Coaching and New Leader On Boardings.



Workshop Leader (Pastor as Change Agent): Dr. Jody Ray

Dr. Jody Ray was appointed as Mt. Bethel's new Senior Pastor in May 2016. Jody is an Elder in the North Georgia Conference and was previously the Senior Pastor at Stockbridge FUMC for five years.

Jody is a second-career pastor, having worked in the financial services sector before entering the ministry in 2000. He is also the President of Project 82 Kenya, an organization that ministers to orphans in the most desperate places in Kenya.

He received a degree in finance and accounting from North Georgia College and State University, a Masters of Divinity from Gammon Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate of Ministry degree at George Fox Seminary.

Jody has been married to his wife Shelley for fifteen years. They have two incredible daughters, Jennings and Carson. They also have the most adventurous son in the world, Robert.

In his free time, Jody enjoys reading, writing, fly fishing, hunting, and playing golf. On Saturdays in the fall, he can be found cheering for the Ole Miss Rebels.