

Winter Conference 2019

Biographies

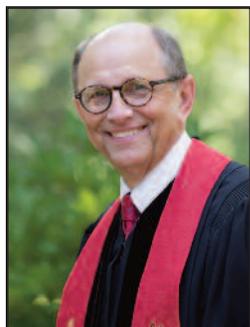


Bible Teacher: Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger

Tod Bolsinger joined Fuller Seminary in 2014 as vice president for vocation and formation and assistant professor of practical theology, and he now serves as vice president and chief of leadership formation. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1993, Dr. Bolsinger served as senior pastor of San Clemente Presbyterian Church from 1997 to 2014. Prior to that he was associate pastor of discipleship and spiritual formation at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood.

Holding both a PhD in Theology and Master of Divinity from Fuller, Bolsinger taught graduate-level classes in theology for 14 years at Fuller's regional campus in Orange County prior to joining the seminary's regular faculty. He has extensive experience in church and nonprofit consulting and executive coaching, and writes infrequent weblogs on church and leadership formation. His faculty role at Fuller includes teaching the Practices of Vocational Formation class and a cohort in Leading Change for DMin students.

Bolsinger has authored three books, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Christian: How the Community of God Transforms Lives* (Brazos, 2004), *Show Time: Living Down Hypocrisy by Living Out the Faith* (Baker, 2005), and *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (IVP Books, 2015). Bolsinger has also written a chapter about building community in a virtual world in the book *The New Media Frontier: Blogging, Vlogging, and Podcasting for Christ* (Crossway, 2008) and contributes essays and articles to journals in the areas of leadership, spiritual formation, leadership formation, and innovation.



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.

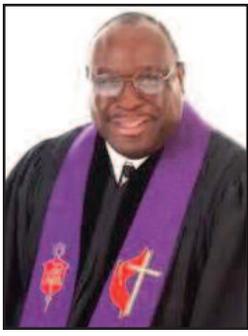


Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson is the episcopal leader of the North Georgia Conference. She was elected bishop by the 2016 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church and consecrated July 15, 2016. Her first assignment as bishop is to the North Georgia Episcopal Area of the United Methodist Church and she began service in North Georgia on September 1, 2016.

A Florida native, Bishop Hauptert-Johnson (or "Bishop Sue") is a graduate of the University of Florida (B.S. in Business Administration), University of Florida College of Law (J.D.), and Candler School of Theology at Emory University (M.Div.). She was a federal law clerk and a litigator with the Tampa law firm of Carlton, Fields before she answered her call to ministry.

After graduating summa cum laude from Candler, she was ordained a deacon in the Florida Annual Conference in 1996 and an elder in 1998. She subsequently served pastoral appointments as an associate pastor at 4,500-member First UMC, Lakeland; as pastor of a 300-member rural/suburban church, Hillsborough UMC, Tampa; and as a lead pastor of two large-membership churches, First UMC, Cape Coral, and First UMC, Ocala. Bishop Hauptert-Johnson served as the North Central District Superintendent of the Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church from 2013-2016.



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.”

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.



Bishop Kenneth H. Carter

A native of Georgia, Kenneth H. Carter is a graduate of Columbus College (B.S.), Duke University Divinity School (M.Div.), the University of Virginia (M.A.) and Princeton Theological Seminary (D.Min.). In addition, Bethune-Cookman University and the United Methodist University of Liberia have awarded him the honorary D.D. degree. He was ordained a deacon in the Western North Carolina Conference in 1983 and an elder in 1986. Subsequently he served a four-point charge, as an associate pastor of missions and evangelism, as a new church planter, and as senior pastor of two large regional churches; his ministry at Providence United Methodist Church in Charlotte was described by the historian Diana Butler Bass in her *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. He also was the superintendent of the Smoky Mountain District of the Western North Carolina Conference, which included sixty-nine churches in the seven westernmost counties of the state, all within the region of Appalachia.

In the Western North Carolina Conference, Ken chaired the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Committee on the Episcopacy. He was elected to five jurisdictional conferences and three general conferences, and he led the WNCC delegation in Tampa in 2012. In the denomination, he has served on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the Committee on Faith and Order, the Ministry Study Commission, the University Senate, and the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. He currently chairs the United Methodist Church Holistic Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Task Force on Human Rights and Investment.

In 2012, Ken Carter was elected to the episcopacy by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church and assigned to the Florida Conference.



Evening Worship: Rev. Dr. Baxter Hurley

Dr. Hurley was born in Toronto, Canada. He fell in love with Carolyn Loyley, a missionary kid based out of Toronto and chased her from Toronto to Chicago to Savannah. They later got married in the Bahamas, then decided to live in GA. He joined the UMC in 1993, and was appointed as a minister in 1995. Dr. Hurley first served Georgetown UMC, near Eufaula, AL, while attending Emory. He went on to serve Wilmington Island UMC as Associate pastor, Ebenezer UMC in Macon, Andrew UMC in Kathleen and Byron UMC. He got his doctorate from Asbury Theological Seminary in 2013. Currently serving Forest Hills in 6th year.



Evening Worship: Rev. Dr. Alice Rogers

Rev. Dr. Alice Rogers, currently lead pastor of Glenn Memorial UMC in Atlanta, will be appointed to serve as superintendent of the Gainesville District. She succeeds Rev. Richard Chewning who will retire at the end of 2018.

"Dr. Rogers has deep family roots in North Georgia, and grew up going to Salem Camp-ground each year. She is a creative leader, inspiring preacher, gifted administrator, and respected teacher," said Bishop Sue.

"I have been blessed beyond measure to serve with the wonderful congregation of Glenn Memorial, and I am equally blessed to have this opportunity to be in ministry with the clergy and laity of the Gainesville District," said Dr. Rogers.

Before serving at Glenn Memorial UMC, Rogers held appointments at Candler School of Theology, Aldersgate UMC in Augusta, Jackson UMC, Mt. Bethel UMC in Marietta, Comer UMC, and East Point First UMC.



Evening Worship: Rev. Dr. Byron E. Thomas

Pastor Byron E. Thomas is a native of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. A veteran of the United States Air Force, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Philosophy from Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia and a Master of Divinity degree from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He also holds a Certificate in Executive Leadership from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. In 2016, Pastor Thomas graduated from the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS) program with a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) in Preaching through McCormick Theological Seminary.

Pastor Thomas has served as Senior Pastor of Ben Hill United Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia since June 2013 where his focus has been on strengthening the link between spiritual formation and missions. Placing a premium on discipleship as opposed to membership, he has emphasized the importance of spiritual formation as foundational for faithfully executing the ministry God has entrusted to the Church. He also strongly believes that United Methodist churches operate best when the mission of the church is being carried out by laity who are Christ-centered and demonstrate a love for God, for themselves, and for the people of God.

Pastor Thomas teaches the Six Marks of Discipleship as foundational principles and practices that support the vision and mission of the church. He encourages believers to participate in worship weekly, engage in daily Bible Study, engage in daily prayer, serve others, give, and develop spiritual friendships.

Pastor Thomas has previously served as the Pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Atlanta, GA, Associate Director in the Office of Connectional Ministries for the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church where his primary area of concentration was Advocacy, and as Pastor at the Fort Street United Methodist Church in Atlanta, GA. He also served in various capacities within the North Georgia Conference and the Southeastern Jurisdiction including: Chairperson of the Committee on Related Agencies, Chairperson of the Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns, Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee, and Member of the Board of Directors of the Hinton Rural Life Center in Hayesville, North Carolina. He has served the Atlanta-College Park District as a member of the District Board of Ordained Ministry and as the Chair of the District Committee on Superintendency. He has twice-served as Chaplain and Educational Liaison at the United Methodist Children's Home and has also chaired the Board of the Interfaith Children's Movement (ICM). In May 2015 Pastor Thomas was elected as the President of the North Georgia Black Methodists for Church Renewal (NGBMCR). In October 2015 he was elected as the Coordinator for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Black Methodist for Church Renewal (SEJBMCR). At the 2015 North Georgia Annual Conference in Athens, Georgia, Pastor Thomas was elected as a Clergy Delegate to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences.



Evening Worship: Rev. Michael Beck

As a traditionally trained Methodist minister, Rev. Michael Beck serves as the senior pastor of Wildwood United Methodist Church. Michael completed his Master of Divinity at Asbury Theological Seminary with highest honors. As a recipient of the Towel and Basin Award, the most prestigious award given to a graduating senior, Michael exemplifies the role of a servant-leader. He also received the Zondervan Greek Scholarship Award as the most outstanding Greek student in his graduating class. His preaching, firmly grounded in the Scriptures, blends the prophetic with the practical. Michael's ability to make the truth of the Bible real to everyday life contributes to the vibrant nature of our inspiring worship experiences.

God has used Pastor Michael's traditional Methodist training in some very non-traditional ways. This is evidenced by a thriving New Life worship experience geared toward young families, a multi-site Celebrate Recovery program, as well as weekly worship gatherings held in local restaurants and tattoo parlors. The God inspired impact of this innovative approach has seen the addition of over 200 new members in the past four years, the majority of whom are brand new Christians.

Michael's inspirational style of leadership has led him outside the local church and into the community. As a missional pioneer he has spearheaded several movements to create systemic change. God is now using Michael's gifts and passion to reach the not-yet-Christian on a district and national level as the newly appointed South Atlantic Coordinator of Fresh Expressions US. He lives here in Wildwood with his wife, Jill, and their blended family of 8 children.



Workshop: Rev. Dr. Chris Goff

Chris Goff is the Director of Outreach & Discipleship at Thomasville UMC. He was born in Pascagoula, Mississippi. He is married to Pam Goff (the Director of TFUMC's Young Learner's Academy). They have triplets; Zach, Clay and Emma. He received a B.S. from the University of Southern Mississippi, an M.Div from Asbury Seminary, and M.S.W. from Florida State and a D.Min. from Asbury Seminary. Dr. Goff has served a number of Methodist Churches and has been on staff in Thomasville since 2000. When not engaged in missions and discipleship-related stuff, loves kayak fishing, snorkeling, and most anything outdoorsy.



Workshop: Rev. Betsy Butler

Betsy Butler is the Minister of Mission at Athens First UMC. Her formal ministry began in 2013 after completing her MDiv at Candler School of Theology. However, Betsy began serving as a layperson at Athens First UMC in 2000.

She is married to Rhett Butler and they have two children; Ben, who is a senior at the University of Georgia and Virginia Beth, who is a sophomore at Furman University.

Betsy serves on the Board of Ordained Ministry for the North Georgia Conference and is committed to serving as a member of a strong connectional conference. As a member of the Annual Conference Host Committee, she serves as the Worship Liaison and enjoys being a part of the planning required

for a successful Annual Conference.

Betsy is an ordained deacon and is passionate about the call of connecting the church to the world. Most of her ministry focuses on training and equipping congregations to serve and share the love of Christ in the community and the world. Fresh Expressions offers the opportunity for the church to be the church outside the walls of the building and inside the gates of Bethel Homes. Bethel Homes is a low-income housing development situated two blocks from Athens First UMC. A "Women's Fellowship Group" is held every Tuesday where a meal is shared and women share life's struggles and joys, as well as learn through a Bible study.