

### During the business session, members:

- approved a motion for South Georgia United Methodist clergy and laity to commit to stand against racism, renew their commitment to live out their baptismal vows, and speak with a united voice in every United Methodist Congregation against systemic racism;
- approved a recommendation for the reallocation of designated reserve funds to support several ministries in the North Katanga Annual Conference;
- celebrated the commissioning of deaconess Linda Laye from Columbus, Ga.;
- recognized Warren Plowden, the longest-serving Chancellor in United Methodism, and welcomed Cater Thompson as his successor;
- celebrated the ways the conference has responded to disasters and built disaster response capacity;
- shared appreciation for Gloria Morgan and her service as the Conference lay leader these past seven years, and affirmed J. Knapp as incoming Conference lay leader;
- recognized Port Wentworth United Methodist Church for winning the One Matters Award, presented by Discipleship Ministries;
- celebrated as Communications Director Kelly Roberson was presented a denominational Epi Award for her outstanding work in communications;
- approved the disaffiliation of seven churches;
- approved a budget of \$9,172,314, a reduction of \$153,870 from the previous year.

### Sending Forth

As Bishop Bryan closed the 2020 Annual Conference session, he introduced the theme for the coming year, “Alive Together at the Table.”

After reading verses from the 23rd Psalm, he asked, “Is there anything more powerful we can do in the coming year than to ask, ‘Where’s the table, Lord?’”

It’s at the table where enemies - violence, poverty, abuse, racism, sexism, ageism, all that harms human flourishing - are defeated, he said, and where new life begins. These are overcome when we come to the table that the Lord has prepared for us.

“Where’s the table? It’s in your church, it’s in your life, it’s in our decision ourselves to come to the table. We have to be at the table.”

# 2020

## South Georgia Annual Conference Virtual Session

August 15, 2020



## 2020 South Georgia Annual Conference Session “Alive Together in Witness”

### Apart but still together: conference worships virtually

Apart but still together. That was the unofficial theme of South Georgia’s 2020 Annual Conference session worship services as the conference celebrated virtually over the course of several days. Bishop Bryan preached the Commissioning Service and the Ordination Service. Dr. Craig Rikard, retired South Georgia minister, preached the Memorial Service.

### Commissioning & Ordination Services

During a virtual Service of Commissioning August 8, four people were commissioned as Provisional Members (Elders): Joseph Isaac Carter, Shannon Clark Patterson, Robby Paulk, and Jason Patrick Wade.

During a virtual Service of Ordination August 9, four people were ordained as Full Conference Members (Elders): Gerald Ray Akin, Jr., Jonathan Lee Brown, John Pierce Grantham, and Scott Dozier Stanfill.

### Retirement Recognition

Clergy were recognized during a virtual retirement recognition service August 11:

Wayne B. Anthony  
Gary C. Brady  
Annette Brooks  
Faye Burgamy  
James A. “Jimmy” Cason  
Donald C. Combs  
William H. “Bill” Daniel  
Lynn A. Drake  
Edgar A. Eschmann

Sally K. Flowers  
Rob Grotheer  
William G. “Billy” Hester  
Charles A. “Sonny” Moon  
Larry G. Rader  
D. Craig Rikard  
Jerry D. Sharpe  
Richard F. “Ricky” Varnell  
J. Maddox Woodbery

### Fifty Years in Ministry

Clergy recognized for serving fifty years in ministry were: H. Dwight Bishop, Eugene C. Cochran, Hugh L. Davis, Charles L. Houston, Richard E. Lanning, and Richard F. Varnell.

### Service of Remembrance

Twenty-seven clergy and clergy spouses who died from April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020 were remembered during a virtual Memorial Service on Thursday, August 13.

**A complete list of the 2020-2021 Clergy Appointments as well as full coverage of the 2020 Annual Conference Session can be found at [www.sgaumc.org](http://www.sgaumc.org).**

### Alive Together in Witness

Donning an episcopal purple face mask with the cross and flame emblem, Bishop R. Lawson Bryan welcomed nearly 750 delegates and guests to the 2020 Annual Conference session.

An historic session, this year’s gathering was virtual, and clergy and laity participated from their living rooms, home offices, and churches. Many traded their sport coats, ties, and dresses for more casual, comfortable attire.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, a concern for the health and safety of conference members, and the restrictions on large group gatherings, Conference leadership postponed the previously scheduled June in-person session and pivoted to plan a first-ever virtual session.

The 2020 Annual Conference session kicked off Sunday, Aug. 2 with a virtual clergy session. It was followed by four worship services on four separate days: the Virtual Commissioning Service on Aug. 8, the Virtual Ordination Service on Aug. 9, the Virtual Retiree Recognition Service on Aug. 11, and the Virtual Memorial Service on Aug. 13. The 2020 Annual Conference season culminated with the Aug. 15 virtual business session.

Though significantly shortened, the 2020 conference followed the original theme and focus: “Alive Together in Witness.”

In his devotional and morning address, Bishop Bryan read Paul’s words from his letter to the Colossians: “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison...”

He emphasized that God will open a door for the Word through South Georgia United Methodists.

Like Paul, he said, all need to pray to see the open doors. The coronavirus pandemic, race relations, and rolling restarts are all open doors through which ministries can be expanded and God’s love and grace can be extended, he said.

“I invite you to consider your open doors,” he said. “What are the doors we can walk through? What are the open doors you and I want to walk through in the next 16 months? ‘God help us’ is our prayer. God help us not to miss the open doors that are right before us.”