

During the business session, members:

- celebrated the faithful ministry of the laity with a report from Lay Leader J. Knapp who introduced the Laity Cabinet;
- recognized conference agencies and showed appreciation for their fruitful ministries;
- watched videos highlighting areas in the South Georgia Conference of ways the conference is “Alive Together at the Table;”
- approved a motion to no longer collect apportionments for payment of pre-1982 pension and benefits and celebrated that the obligation for the funding of this pension and the yearly increase of the past service rate has been met;
- heard from Mr. Bill Hatcher and Rev. Jim Cowart, heads of South Georgia’s General Conference delegation;
- recognized Emanuel United Methodist Church for winning the One Matters Award, presented by Discipleship Ministries;
- received a special offering for the Golden Cross Fund;
- approved the disaffiliation of 9 churches and the closing of 2 churches;
- accepted an invitation from the Northwest District to host the 2022 Annual Conference session in Columbus June 5-8;
- approved a budget of \$8,437,218, a reduction of \$735,096 from the previous year.

Sending Forth: ‘Be the Doorkeepers’

As Bishop Bryan closed the 2021 Annual Conference session, he read Psalm 84 and encouraged South Georgia United Methodists to stay together and be doorkeepers.

“Aren’t we ready to be back in worship, in church together? The psalmist expresses it perfectly: ‘My soul longs for this,’” Bishop Bryan said. “I hope the pandemic has helped teach us all to stay in touch with our deep longing that God has given us to be together. This is the way God created us. This is the need the church fulfills. It’s part of who we are.”

To close, Bishop Bryan asked everyone to consider themselves as doorkeepers - those who welcome and invite others in.

“May we go forth today thinking of ourselves as doorkeepers. It’s something every one of us can do,” he said. “We’re all here because doors were opened for us. I’d rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord. That’s what your community needs: people who know how to open doors. And you are one of those people. You know the doors that need to be opened, and you know how to open those doors. I’d rather be a doorkeeper; what better role could you have?”

2021

South Georgia Annual Conference Online Session

June 7, 2021



2021 South Georgia Annual Conference Session “Alive Together at the Table”

Apart but still together: conference worships virtually

Apart but still together. That was again the unofficial theme of South Georgia’s 2021 Annual Conference session worship services as the conference worshiped together virtually over the course of several days and remembered, celebrated and honored South Georgia United Methodists. Bishop Bryan preached the Service of Ordination with Commissioning and Dr. Brad Brady, retired South Georgia minister, preached the Memorial Service.

Service of Ordination with Commissioning

During a Service of Ordination with Commissioning June 6, Eric Kyle Mayle was ordained as a Full Conference Member (Elder). Four people were commissioned as Provisional Members for Ordination as Elders: William Rushton Black, Tamara Lynn Humphries, Pamela Vaughn Johnston, and James Patrick Owens. Bishop Bryan preached a message titled, “The Common Call.” The common call to ministry binds clergy and laity together, Bishop Bryan said. “You know it’s all about the call,” he said. All the way back to Genesis, “until you have God’s call, you don’t have anything. But when you have the call, you have everything.”

Retirement Recognition

Clergy were recognized during a retirement recognition service June 1.

James Robert Beckum	Gary V. Page
Remer Logan “Brad” Brady III	Norris Ashley Randall, Jr.
Columbus B. Burns III	Carol Morgan Smith
Darrell Carter	Stephen Lee Vinson
Eddie J. Conaway, Jr.	Shareon N. Womack
Bob Mark Moon	

Fifty Years in Ministry

Clergy recognized for serving fifty years in ministry were: Nathan C. Godley, J. Dan Robinson, William L. Strickland, Marcus V. Tripp, and Richard E. Turner.

Service of Remembrance

Forty-five clergy and clergy spouses who died from April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021 were remembered during a virtual Memorial Service on Thursday, June 3.

A complete list of the 2021-2022 Clergy Appointments as well as full coverage of Annual Conference can be found at www.sgaumc.org.

Alive Together at the Table

Leading his fifth and final annual conference session as South Georgia’s episcopal leader, on Monday, June 7, Bishop R. Lawson Bryan welcomed more than 700 delegates and guests to the 155th session of the South Georgia Annual Conference.

With a theme of “Alive Together at the Table,” Bishop Bryan opened the online meeting by reflecting on his five years serving South Georgia and the numerous ways in which the conference is alive.

He also acknowledged how the global coronavirus pandemic has changed the way congregations and churches work and worship, but they are strong and resilient.

“I celebrate the adaptability of our laity and our clergy,” he said. “I have learned something about how faithful our laity and clergy are. Many of our local churches now have fresh, new avenues of ministry. We’ve learned better ways to be the church.”

And although times are uncertain, Bishop Bryan said he’s noticed South Georgia United Methodists do not seem to be uncertain about what matters most.

“I have not sensed any uncertainty about the importance of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” he said. “Our laity and clergy, while acknowledging uncertainty all around, still realize that the hurting people in our communities need a church and that they’re ready to respond to a church that is open to them, and that is what I see happening all over.”

Greetings from Bishop David Graves

Just as Georgia and Alabama share the Chattahoochee River, they will soon share an episcopal leader. Bishop Bryan, who will retire this September, introduced Bishop David Graves, who serves as bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Upon Bishop Bryan’s retirement September 1, 2021, and during the approximate 16-month interim, Bishop Graves will provide episcopal leadership to both the South Georgia and the Alabama-West Florida Conferences.

Winning people to Jesus is Bishop Graves’ purpose in life. “It’s about seeing the unseen, it’s about transforming lives, and God calls us to change our corner of the world,” he said.

Bishop Graves said he is thankful for the opportunity to serve both conferences and believes God is going to do amazing things with the partnership.