

REVIVE US AGAIN

Revive Us Again was indeed a spiritual renewal this year at the Florida Annual Conference attended by clergy and laity. Many speakers presented varied topics which brought emphasis to the holy spirit in our midst. Cuban Methodist Bishop Ricardo Pineira Diaz gave a powerful and inspiring message on Friday night culminating the week's work.

The spiritual nature of the conference touched all aspects.

We remembered and prayed for those souls affected by the **Pulse Night Club** terror attack as the one year anniversary drew near.

We prayerfully voted in the affirmative for several resolutions. Using words I gleaned from the resolutions some of them were:

Abolishing Systems of Mass Incarceration: citing the low economic status of many people and the disproportionate incarceration of people of color, the UMC identifies mass incarceration as a critical human and civil rights issue because of its disparate impact and disenfranchisement of people of color, youth, and people with limited economic resources.

Black Lives Matter: A Movement for all United Methodists

Our United Methodist Church values the dignity and worth of all humans and prioritizes becoming a pro-reconciling and anti-racist church recognizing that black men are killed 4 times more than any other race. Our United Methodist Church strives for wholeness in a fragmented world and has a passion for justice.

Combating Erosion of Human Dignity

In keeping with John Wesley's work to improve the lives of people without resources, we Methodists stand against:

-the rising incidents of hate crime

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- tense and escalating race relations
- the normalcy of degrading language toward women
- threat to quality, life-sustaining and life saving healthcare
- rising anti-immigrant sentiment

We also **commissioned or licensed** Missionaries, Pastors, provisional Elders, Deacons, and **ordained** Elders and one Deacon, in total 50 new servants of God.

For efficiency and economy our conference will now have 8 districts instead of 9 partly due to some church closings. We also learned that **our new district is the the Atlantic Central District** which stretches from Ormond Beach to Boca Raton. Our new District Superintendent is Rev. Gary Spencer.

The Florida Conference will work toward twice the number of vital churches in the conference by the year 2025. One initiative to that end is called **Fresh Expressions** which is tasked with "catalyzing new forms of church in a rapidly changing culture". In the last 4 years there are 80 Fresh Expressions already happening.

And finally, **The Methodists for Social Action (MFSA)** is sanctioned by the conference to be a voice in all social issues within the church. **The Way Forward** was commissioned at the 2016 General Conference and from there bishops appointed its members. Their goal is to address inclusion/exclusion of the LGBTQ community within the Methodist Church and to keep the church UNITED. They have, to date, met three times with more meetings scheduled going forward.

We certainly covered a wide variety of issues during the conference.

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I saw a comment **Bishop Ken Carter** made on FaceBook just after the close of the Annual Conference.

He said, "**What happened this week is, I'm convinced, the work of God**".