• The setting of *appointments*, which may be found at www.awfumc.org/apt2017
• Several award winners:
  
  **Francis Asbury Award**: Dr. Jimmy Jeffcoat of Huntingdon College
  
  **Alice Lee Award**: Daphne Johnston of Montgomery FUMC
  
  **Harry Denman Evangelism Award**: Rev. Andres Doimeadios of Casa De Dios Gateway Of Heaven (clergy); Malcolm Smith of Canton Bend UMC (lay); Brett Herndon from Chickasaw UMC (youth)
  
  **Inaugural One Matters Award**: Parker UMC
  
  **United Methodist Federal Credit Union Scholarship**: Caroline Barrett of Marion UMC
  
  **Susanna Wesley Leadership Award**: Helen Edwards of Church Street UMC
• Our *current general conference delegation* for the special called 2019 session
• The approval of two *resolutions* and voted on five *general conference constitutional amendments*
• The collection of 4,944 UMCOR kits
• 224 participants in the *health screening*
• A $11,084,468 million *budget* for mission and ministry for 2018
• A 1.58% *increase in missional giving* over 2015, which was at its highest level since 2001!
• Over 137,000 members in our conference
• The *2018 session* will be held June 3-6, 2018 at Frazer Memorial UMC

For complete coverage of the 2017 Annual Conference session, visit www.awfumc.org/ac2017
The 2017 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference was held June 4-7 in Montgomery, AL, with the theme, “Imagine: By Faith It Can Happen.” Bishop David Graves, presiding over his first annual conference session since becoming the resident bishop, welcomed clergy and lay members to Frazer Memorial UMC in Montgomery.

A capacity crowd attended the Opening Worship Service on Sunday evening, June 4. The service began with an uplifting reading of the Pentecost Story in six languages from lay and clergy representing various areas of the conference. A mass choir from around the conference, and led by Wayne Sigler of Frazer, provided inspiring music for the service. Bishop David Graves was introduced by Alexis Tibbetts, Chair of the Episcopacy Committee. Rev. Robin Wilson, Senior Pastor of Dauphin Way UMC, preached the sermon based on Ephesians 3:7-21 entitled, “More Than We Imagine.”

The Alabama-West Florida Local Mission Agencies were the beneficiaries of the 2017 missional offering. The agencies benefitting from this collection are The Ark, Dumas Wesley Community Center, Mary Ellen’s Hearth, Milk and Honey Outreach Ministries, United Methodist Inner City Mission in Mobile, and Pensacola United Methodist Community Ministries. A total of $46,022 was collected this evening.

Thirty clergy and clergy spouses who passed since the 2016 AWF Annual Conference session were remembered Monday during the Service of Remembrance and Holy Communion. Bishop David Graves offered the opening prayer and Rev. Ralph Sigler, Founder and Leader Pastor of Harvest Church UMC, delivered the inspiring and uplifting sermon entitled, “Things Above” based on Colossians 3:1-4 and Ephesians 3:20-21.

Surviving family members were hosted at a special luncheon by the AWF Commission on Archives and History.

The Service of Commissioning and Ordination was held Monday evening in the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church in Montgomery. The congregation represented family members and special friends of those being commissioned and ordained. The service included the commissioning of one provisional deacon and five provisional elders and the ordination of two deacons in full connection and six elders in full connection. Bishop David Graves preached a sermon entitled, “Be All That God Called You to Be,” based on Matthew 28:18-20.

Twenty-one clergy were recognized upon their retirement by Rev. Kathy Knight. Together, the retiring clergy have 617 years of service in our conference. Bishop Graves gave a heartfelt prayer honoring this group in a new season of life. Rev. Libba Stinson spoke on behalf of the retiring class. Back by popular demand was the “passing of the torch.” Stinson presented a stole to Rev. Woods Lisenby, who was ordained as an elder in full connection Monday evening, signifying new leadership in the conference.

Bishop David Graves delivered his Episcopal address to the body of the conference. Before he preached, he took intentional time to diligently thank those who were an integral part of annual conference. Graves conveyed to the conference how valued this team is to him and how blessed we are to have this leadership. His powerful sermon was entitled, “Too Hard” based on Exodus 14:10-13. Graves walked through various scenarios that seemed impossible but through imagining faith, they occurred. He spoke of racial and gender barriers that have divided our church and made a public apology to people of color and women who have been victims of discrimination. An emotional standing ovation was given after these statements.

The conference was honored by the outstanding leadership of several guests. Claire Bowen and Dr. Victor Dingus led two teaching sessions. We welcomed President Cam West from Huntingdon College and Lane Estes from Birmingham-Southern College, as well as Blake Horne, director of the United Methodist Children’s Home. Patricia Barnes (Sister Schubert) gave the Mary Ellen Bullard Leadership Address at this year’s laity banquet.

New to the 2017 Annual Conference was the addition of morning worship services on Monday through Wednesday. These worship services, under the direction of Rev. Jay Cooper of Bay Minette UMC, incorporated people from around the conference. A special emphasis was made to involve people representing the various stages of ministry, which included seminary students, local pastors, deacons, elders, laity, clergy spouses and conference staff. Also new to conference was the availability of translating devices for Hispanic clergy and lay during business sessions.