

2009 North Texas Annual



Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe *Dallas Area*

Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe will be the preacher for the June 8 Service of Ordination and Commissioning. He was elected to the episcopacy at the 2008 South Central



Bishop Bledsoe

Jurisdictional Conference and assigned to be bishop of the North Texas Conference. Prior to his election, Bishop Bledsoe was superintendent of the Bryan/West District of the Texas Conference.

The son of a United Methodist pastor, Bishop Bledsoe was an executive with the YMCA. From 1974-1981, he served as a bi-vocational pastor in Northwest Texas and the Texas Conference before making the decision to follow his call into full-time ministry.

Bishop Bledsoe holds the Bachelor of Arts degree from West Texas State University in Canyon, where he majored in English and minored in Spanish. He holds the Master of Divinity degree from Perkins School of Theology, SMU, where he was the Benjamin E. Mays Scholar and Hebrew and Greek Scholar. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Drew University, Madison, NJ, in 1991. His doctoral project was "Equipping Christian Educators

to Respond to the Needs of At-Risk Inner-City Teenagers."

During his years as a pastor in the Texas Conference, Bishop Bledsoe served successful congregations including: Spring Woods UMC, Houston; Cypress UMC, Cypress; and Bear Creek UMC, Houston, where he was senior associate in charge of program and program staff. He was Director of Teaching Ministries for the Texas Conference from 1990-93.

Bishop Bledsoe served as a member of the Connectional Table, where he was on the planning and advisory team and was team leader for the joint budgeting process with the General Council on Finance and Administration. He was first elected to General Conference in 1992 and re-elected in 2000, 2004 and 2008.

Bishop Bledsoe is married to Leslie Jean (Bray) Bledsoe. Mrs. Bledsoe is a licensed social worker who has been a local pastor in the UMC. Though totally blind, she continues to provide leadership in numerous areas of conference life. The Bledsoes have six adult children, including 18-year old, Letitia Gail, who completed her first year of college at the University of Texas at Arlington this spring.