

Job Description for Appalachian Trail Chaplain Thru-Hiker

In order to better serve the people of the hiking community, Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church, offers the Appalachian Trail Chaplain ministry position. The ministry is designed to accomplish what a local Church cannot, build trust with passers-by through long-term interpersonal care. As hikers are by definition "on the move," the concerned Minister is left no recourse but to likewise "gird up his loins" and take to the hills in hopes of touching lives. The Chaplain will assume that role; he/she will be a hiker, then a minister: a counselor; a peacemaker; an evangelist; a confidant and friend. The Chaplain will walk the 2180+ miles from Georgia to Maine and all along the way, and to everyone he/she meets, will bear witness of God's love. This commission will begin upon commissioning by the Bishop of the Holston Conference and end upon completion of the Trail that calendar year. The Chaplain will answer in his/her service to the Appalachian Trail Chaplaincy Board.

Expectations:

Prior to the Hike's start, the successful candidate will:

- 1) Earn understanding of principles of "Recovery Ministries".
- 2) Undergo Chaplaincy training and training in Wesleyan Theology, if necessary.
- 3) Purchase necessary gear. (Gear will be mutually agreeable to the candidate and to the ministry board, who will pay for the purchases and the candidate will retain them at his/her hike's end);
- 4) Plan menus and schedule food drops. (Menus will be mutually agreeable to the candidate and the ministry board., who will be responsible for their purchase and timely shipment);
- 5) Prepare physically, mentally and spiritually for the rigors of the AT.

Beginning with the Hike, the Chaplain will:

- 6) Receive commissioning by the Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church. (The ministry will provide transportation to the AT terminus to start his/her hike);
- 7) Accommodate (as much as possible) film-maker scheduling and demands;
- 8) Accommodate (as much as possible) local Holston Church Program demands;
- 9) Keep an up-to-date e-journal to be accessed and utilized by "The Call" for regular publication. (The Chaplain will retain the intellectual rights to his or her journal. Extrapolations used by "The Call" are intended for promotional purposes only);
- 10) Working with the Board, provide regular social media postings to promote the mission and ministry of the current chaplaincy hike;
- 11) Attend Holston Conference's Annual Conference and report on current status of this ministry. (Ministry will provide transportation to and from the event);
- 12) Make necessary effort to connect with "local" churches sharing information with them regarding the mission and ministry of the chaplaincy program, helping those churches increase their understanding of the trail community and how they too can be in ministry to those that journey on the trail;
- 13) Provide assistance as you are able to those encountered that are in distress;

- 14) Finish well. (Ministry will provide transportation back to the Chaplain's home);
- 15) Make a final report; note deficiencies in the program; recommend improvements.
- 16) Using tools provided, provide the committee with information to track daily your starting and stopping as well as movement activity.

The Chaplain's Expectations

Prior to the hike's start, the Ministry Board will:

- 1) Stay in close contact with the Candidate, a contact that will be maintained throughout the program, in order that the Candidate might enjoy needed support;
- 2) Pay for any training/certifications required of the Candidate; purchase all mutually agreeable necessary gear; and provide the Candidate with AT guidebooks and maps;
- 3) Provide transportation for the Candidate to the AT terminus at start of hike;
- 4) Attend Holston Conference United Methodist Church's commissioning of the Candidate as Appalachian Trail Chaplain.

Beginning with the Hike, the Ministry will:

- 5) Provide the Chaplain a per mile trail-town allowance, first payment up front for the first 500 miles (to be spent at the Chaplain's discretion); next payment upon the completion of those miles as an advance on the next 500; and so forth and so on, for the miles that are hiked, until a total for the total trail miles has been accrued; or until the experiment is deemed complete by both the Chaplain and Ministry Board. (The Chaplain may keep all unused monies that have been "earned");
- 6) Provide the Chaplain with a "smartphone" for e-journal postings that will be available for public access;
- 7) Provide the Chaplain with the necessary communication tools to allow reporting and tracking of the Chaplain's movement.
- 8) Provide transportation to the Chaplain: to/from Annual Conference; to/from other events as directed by the Chaplaincy Steering Committee; to/from the hike's start/end and the Candidate's home.