



Cross Connection

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New churches, planting seeds throughout the Conference



Rev. Marvin Hood welcomes people to the first worship service of Newgate Faith Community. See complete story on page 5. Also, learn more about Dayspring UMC, the new church start in Tyler, on page 4.



Wesleyan Institute focuses on discipleship

See story on page 6.

Volunteers needed for dental project in local mission field

By The Texas Dental Association Smiles Foundation and the TAC Office of Communications

The Texas Annual Conference is joining forces with the Texas Dental Association Smiles Foundation to host the 2007 Texas Mission of Mercy on Friday and Saturday, November 2-3. Free patient care will be provided from 7 a.m. - 5 p.m., at Spring

The goal is to treat 600 people at the November event. This will require 75 volunteer dentists, 30 volunteer hygienists, and an additional 600 volunteers for assisting, registration, sterilization, check-out, food and to be patient ambassadors.



Branch Development Center.

The major underwriter for the 2007 Houston TMOM is The Methodist Hospital System, with support from the Houston Dental Society. Additional funding is still needed.

The Texas Annual Conference Center for Missional Excellence and its Mercy Ministries Committee currently is recruiting volunteers for this project. Sign up online at www.tdasf.org/houston.

"This is an opportunity to do mission in your own backyard," said Jacque Banman, associate director of the Center for Missional Excellence. "You don't have to drive very far or take a plane ride anywhere ... this is a unique opportunity for people to be involved in a medical mission at no cost to themselves."

Priceless procedures

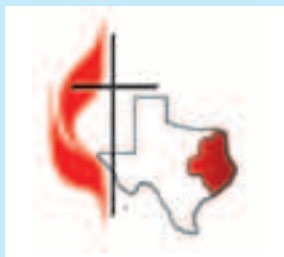
Since the first TMOM, held in Tyler in 2001, more than 9,000 Texans have been assisted with their dental health at a value of more than \$3 million. The average patient receives \$344 in charitable service at no cost.

A Texas Mission of Mercy is best described as a dental "MASH." The organizers will turn the community center into a temporary dental clinic. In addition to the 30 dental chairs, there will be x-ray machines and electronic equipment transported to the site.

The services rendered vary from emergent to restorative. Common procedures include extractions, fillings and cleanings. Some people will require

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The Cross Connection The Texas Annual Conference



The mission of the Texas Annual Conference is to equip congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world to the glory of God.

The Cross Connection is the official publication of the Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

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Delegation considers Episcopal nominations

By Jill Krone
Texas Annual Conference Delegation

The General and Jurisdictional conference delegations have received nominations for five Texas Annual Conference clergy persons for possible election to the office of Bishop.

Clergy nominated for Episcopal Consideration and endorsement by the Texas Annual Conference include: Earl Bledsoe, Jim Foster, Gail Ford Smith, Elijah Stansell and Jim Welch. Only conference elders in full connection are eligible for nomination.

The process requires each of these nominated to provide, at the next delegation meeting, a brief statement and a statistical report – including information on average worship attendance, membership, professions of faith, and percentage of apportionments paid – on previous pastoral appointments.

The field for consideration



W. Earl Bledsoe
West District
Superintendent



J. W. Foster
Senior Pastor
John Wesley
UMC



Gail Ford-Smith
Southwest District
Superintendent



Elijah Stansell
Conference
Treasurer



Jimmy M.
Welch
Central South
District
Superintendent

Jurisdiction, seven bishops will return, which leaves four positions to be filled.

Retiring are:

Bishop Bill Hutchinson of Louisiana; Bishop Ben Chamness of

Central Texas and Bishop Joel Martinez of Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences. A replacement will also be named for the North Texas Conference because of the death of Bishop Rhymes Moncure.

Episcopal positions will be filled by who best meets the needs within the Jurisdiction. Bishops currently serving may be relocated if it is found to be in the best interest of the jurisdiction.

will then be narrowed to three candidates, who will be interviewed by the delegation during the third meeting. Once interviews are completed, delegates will vote on the number of candidates to endorse and then on which to endorse.

At the first meeting of the delegates there was a lengthy discussion relating to the TAC delegate's Episcopacy endorsement process and how to accomplish this in alignment with the Episcopal Candidacy Resolution. Agreement on this was confirmed through the passing of a defini-

tive motion.

Following additional discussion about how the TAC delegation has historically welcomed interviewing the Episcopal candidates from other Conferences as well as caucuses, a motion passed that supports the continuation of this procedure.

Serving the connection

The Jurisdictional delegation has the responsibility to seek to elect bishops that best meet the needs of the Episcopal leadership within the Jurisdiction.

In the South Central

Officers, assignments named at first Texas Annual Conference delegation meeting

By Jill Krone
Texas Annual Conference Communications

On Saturday morning, July 7, 2007, the meeting room at The Woodlands United Methodist Church began to fill up with persons eager to undertake the responsibilities with which they were charged. Each was there, elected to serve as a member of the Texas Annual Conference (TAC) Delegation Team.

The South Central Jurisdiction meets July 16-19, 2008, in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Don House, laity, heads up the TAC delegation as this quadrennial's first lay-person elected.

Determination of leadership for the delegation is based on a rotation between clergy and laity each election, every four years.

agenda is set by deadlines established under the TAC Resolution of Endorsement of Episcopal Candidates, endorsed in May.

A working foundation

Consultant Mike Murray spent the morning helping the Delegation build community, establish norms/rules, and lay the foundation for our future work through a special ministry program financially supported by the Texas Methodist Foundation.

Delegates completed exercises that encouraged intentional thoughtfulness on how to proceed as a team, build trust and encourage ways to successfully accomplish tasks.

Additionally, the delegation reviewed Ephesians 3:14-21 and seeking God's message for the delegation and each member individually. The passage reads as follows in the New International Version of the bible:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell

in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Business of the day

Following a brief break to enjoy the lunch prepared by the host church, The Woodlands UMC, the business portion of the meeting got underway.

The delegation elected Donna Schlitt as their Treasurer, to collect funds and handle the fiscal obligations of the delegation. Jill Krone was elected as delegation secretary.

The following information was presented: 1) a reminder that names of clergy for consideration of Episcopal office must

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I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Ephesians 3:16-17

Delegates are representatives of the Conference, consisting of equal numbers of clergy and lay, elected to tend to the details and preparations for General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

General Conference is scheduled to meet in Fort Worth, Texas, April 23 – May 2, 2008.

The agenda included receiving names of clergy under Episcopal consideration; Jurisdictional requirements for Episcopal endorsements; calendaring, electing a delegation treasurer and secretary and Legislative Committee assignments. Much of the meeting

Taking care of the soul

Krist Samaritan Center offers pastoral care program to support pastor development

By Kelcey Rieger

Media Contact for Krist Samaritan Center

Demands from a congregation can vary and often a pastor is expected to meet many needs. The job is stressful, with little done to replenish pastors — stretching them to their limits.

Recognizing the needs of the pastor, the Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education developed a distinctive training program for parish pastors and church leaders to enhance their pastoral ministry and care for their own souls.

“One of the strengths of this program is that in addition to the pressures on the clergy, it also deals with conflicts in the parish setting that can surface in subtle ways. We often don’t recognize it until it is full blown.”

Rev. Bob Huie

The Krist Samaritan Center’s Pastoral Care Specialist Program began in the fall of 1995, and has been extremely successful in providing pastors with the motivation to succeed within their own congregation and in life.

Designed for professional church workers or lay leaders, the program increases an individual’s skills in pastoral care through human growth and development, and assessment of persons and congregation.

“The Pastoral Care Specialist program expands the pastor’s knowledge base and connects him or her to a group of people

with similar interpretations of ministry, as well as providing support and new colleagues,” said Dr. Jerry DeSobe, executive director of the Krist Samaritan Center and past president of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC).

For 33 weeks beginning in September, pastors gather to experience personal and interpersonal growth, increase their skills in pastoral care, assess family systems and congregation

and conflict, as well as learn to help others make use of their faith as a source of healing.

The ecumenical nature of the program and staff only proves to enhance learning. After completing the program, participants are eligible for membership in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors designated as Pastoral Care Specialists.

“One of the strengths of this program is that in addition to the pressures on the clergy, it also deals with conflicts in the parish setting that can surface in subtle ways. We often don’t recognize it until it is full blown,” said

Rev. Bob Huie, Krist Samaritan Center coordinator of pastoral education. “This program takes real life situations from the parish and teaches the pastor new and strategic ways to intervene.”

The Pastoral Care Specialist Program provides a learning opportunity for local church pastors that not only offers sound theological and theoretical information, but also addresses the soul.

The program begins Thursday, September 6, 2007, with orientation on Tuesday, August 28. For more information visit www.samaritanhouston.org, or to apply, contact Mariana Targhetta, director of education, at 281.480.7554, ext. 17.

The Carole and Ronald Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education is a not-for-profit faith-based organization committed to providing affordable counseling services and educational programs to people of all economic backgrounds, as well as training for church and mental health professionals.

Founded in 1986, the Center is accredited as a service center and training program by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and the Samaritan Institute. The Center has served over 30,000 families and has 18 office locations throughout the Houston and Galveston area.

For more information, please visit www.samaritanhouston.org.

Wesley Theological Seminary announces doctor of ministry programs

“Campus Ministries” and “Wesley and the Poor” add specific concentrations for ministry settings

By Beth Ludlum

Director of Recruitment



Wesley Theological Seminary announces the approaching application deadline of October 1 for

two unique Doctor of Ministry tracks beginning in Washington, DC in January 2008 – “Campus Ministries” and “Wesley and the Poor.”

“Campus Ministries” is designed for those called to ministry on a college or university campus. Unique challenges are named and studied such as working in the shadow of secular science, witnessing in a pluralistic environment, meeting the respective needs of traditional and non-traditional students, connecting with local congregations, and establishing long-term financial support for ministry. Through high-energy seminars and innovative projects, faculty and participants will discover solutions and create best practices for campus ministry in coming decades.

Recent nationwide surveys show that nine in ten Americans want churches to be more active in ministry to and with the poor, and eight in ten want churches to be more active in giving poor people a voice in public affairs and addressing the roots of poverty. “Wesley and the Poor” addresses that call by helping church leaders stand in the heritage of John Wesley with

renewed vision and tools for leading the church in ministry to and with the poor.

Other upcoming Doctor of Ministry tracks at Wesley include “Life Together: Spirituality for Transforming Community” and “Making Disciples: Theological Foundations and Best Practices” beginning in May 2008 and “Pastoral Theology, Care and Counseling” and “Arts and Theology” beginning January 2009.

“The Doctor of Ministry program is a natural continuing education step for dedicated clergy who want to pursue focused study,” said Dr. Lew Parks, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program. “Beyond earning the degree, Doctor of Ministry graduates function as resource persons for the local and regional church.”

Applications are being accepted through October 1, 2007. Details are available at WesleySeminary.edu, and program questions can be directed to Dr. Lew Parks at LParks@WesleySeminary.edu or (202) 885-6481.

For application materials and information, contact the Office of Admissions at Wesley Theological Seminary, 4500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20016. Admissions may be reached by phone at (202) 885-8659 or (800) 882-4987 or by email: admissions@WesleySeminary.edu.

Volunteers needed for dental project in local mission field

Continued from page 1

the removal of teeth due to disease, and many of these will receive prosthetic devices designed to restore their full smile.

As the Texas Dental Association strives to lead in the arena of increased access-to-care, the Texas Dental Association Smiles Foundation has become a beacon of hope for the disadvantaged.

TMOM has touched patients from all over the state of Texas, with events held in Tyler, El

Paso, Dallas, Georgetown/Round Rock, Burnet, Hereford and Laredo.

Organizers have found that the physical pain of dental disease and the emotional pain of a

disfigured smile often serve as barriers to gainful employment. Thus, one of the chief goals is the

re-establishment of dental health as the individual strives to recapture their dignity and self-esteem.

“This is an opportunity to do mission in your own backyard. You don’t have to drive very far or take a plane ride anywhere ... this is a unique opportunity for people to be involved in a medical mission at no cost to themselves.”

Jacque Banman

Associate Director, Center for Missional Excellence

“I really believe that helping someone restore a smile can help that person change their attitude, change their thoughts and change their perception of themselves for the future,” said Rev. Mark Woodward of West University UMC, who serves as the community co-chair along with Dr. Lee Clitheroe, who is the dental co-chair. “It touched my heart, and just made sense.”

New church starts around in the Texas Annual

Church to hold services at Carmike theater

By Allen Arrick - Staff Writer
The Tyler Morning Telegraph

When Pastor Jeff Olive of Marvin United Methodist was appointed by the Bishop of the Texas Annual Conference to start a church in South Tyler, he drove around, praying to find a building.

Olive is an energetic, thin and determined 33-year-old, who has a vision of something new but honoring something old.

Carmike Cinemas on South Broadway didn't fit the mold of a traditional church - but it fit the mold of what Olive was looking for; an unassuming building people were familiar with; a church built around people and a church with comfortable chairs.

"Our founder, John Wesley, used very unheard of methods to share Jesus' story in his day and time," Olive said Tuesday. "What the Methodist church is doing today is not moving away from its foundation or structure but honoring its past by moving out in new and different ways."

And he followed that goal of moving in a different way. "How many churches have you been to that have cup holders?" Olive said.

The church will officially be called Dayspring United Methodist and will hold its services in one of the theaters, while a children's service will be in another theater.

But Olive noted it's important to remember that this is not a "theater-church." The venue is not central to his vision. It's not church as a multi-media experience.

"Our hope and vision is that many people who have lost their connection to church for a variety of reasons, or have never had that connection, will find it easier and more welcoming to walk into someplace familiar like a neighborhood movie theater, than walking into a church with the formality, discomfort or even fear it evokes in some," he said.

Olive coordinated with Carmike to rent a theater for his congregation on Sunday mornings beginning in October. Carmike is closed on Sunday mornings and the church wouldn't interfere with the theatre's usual business.

"We chose the Carmike because it is in our 'mission field' or part of Tyler that Christ has called us to serve," he said. "The theater has good parking, easy access, comfortable seating and everyone knows where it is."

A church in a theater is nothing new, but in this day and age, opening a theater-church in a city which has an already large Methodist church takes things in a new direction.

"The Methodist Church's structure hasn't really changed over time, although from the outside it might appear that way."

On the move

The Rev. Janice Riggle Huie, the bishop of the Methodist Texas Annual Conference - which includes much of East Texas and Houston - gave an Episcopal address to the conference in June. She outlined several distinct areas of change: church transformation, new churches, and younger clergy.

"We're aware that the 58 counties of the Texas Annual Conference are growing and the population growth in those counties as a whole is quite rapid," Bishop Huie said in a recent phone interview from Houston with the Tyler Morning Telegraph. "The areas of growth are in the Houston metroplex area and the Tyler area."

At the Texas Annual Conference's Episcopal Address, Huie cited the need for new

churches and a new way of thinking about old ones - more than hardwood pews and stained glass.

"We shifted conference resources and energy...to start new congregations and to transform existing congregations," she said in the speech.

ber of clergy under the age of 30 will triple. In the interest of full disclosure, I will quickly add that this means the number of under-thirty clergy will move from three to nine," she said. But Bishop Huie doesn't wish to break from the traditional roots of the Methodist Church. She noted

that the primary mission of the church isn't going to change.

"What we're attempting to do is what Methodists have always done - go where people are moving. That is where we're starting new churches. It's always been our practice as a church to go where the people are and we're trying to make it possible for them to have a church," she said.

She said that a church in a movie theater is just a new spin on an old idea of a church meeting wherever the congregation finds a place. "Some new churches look for usable space. One of the largest churches in the denomination started in a funeral home - Resurrection United Methodist," she said.

Bishop Huie said the road of change is not always easy for every member of a church, and some have what she characterized as "change fatigue."

"Change is hard. These changes have not been made without difficulty and sacrifice. We've made some mistakes, and we are correcting them as quickly as possible," she said. "We've experienced some resistance and we are trying to learn from it."

Challenging trends

Olive and Huie are facing a change in the way people think about and attend church. "On a national and even global level, church attendance is on the

decline," Olive said. "Many churches are doing an ineffective job of sharing a message that is compelling for younger generations. In effect, we are losing whole generations because they do not think Jesus' story has anything to offer them."

Research by the Barna Group - a polling agency covering religious issues - shows that church attendance has been declining over the past 16 years. In a 2004 Barna survey, 43 percent of respondents had gone to a church service in the last seven days, down from 49 percent in 1991.

The amount of adults who are considered "unchurched," meaning they haven't been to a church service in the last six months, not including holidays, is up 93 percent. In 1991, there were 39 million "unchurched" Americans, compared with 75 million in 2004.

"A reason most people cite for leaving their last church is they did not feel their gifts were needed or used."

Olive noted a specific problem in church communications and warned against a church which tries to increase its membership without utilizing its current congregation. "Our vision is that the church be built around the people, not infrastructure, and knowing that the focus be on simple authentic worship," he said. "We want those who come to Dayspring to come knowing they are not recipients of worship, but active participants in it."

Olive said addressing the reasons people leave church require solutions which break from the pack. "It is not the norm...that a Methodist pastor is appointed from one church to another church in the same city," he said. "I love Tyler, I love the people in East Texas, and I love my former church, Marvin United Methodist Church. I would not have stayed in Tyler if I had not felt a calling and confirmation that God was leading me to plant a church in South Tyler."

This article was reprinted with the permission of the Tyler Morning Telegraph and can also be found at www.tylerpaper.com.



Pastor Jeff Olive is the senior pastor of Dayspring UMC. The church will meet in the Carmike theaters Sunday mornings beginning in October.

And the transformation starts here in Tyler with Olive's congregation. "What we're doing is more of the latter: starting new congregations," Olive said.

Huie emphasized getting younger members of the church involved - and Olive fits the bill. In her address, she said the church needed to shift its resources "to equip our current pastors and to identify and recruit gifted, young, diverse pastors."

"As of June 1 (2007), the num-

al Conference

Free to worship

Newgate hosts first worship for ex-offenders, families and more

By Eleanor L. Colvin

Texas Annual Conference, Director of Communications

“God has revealed himself today – God has revealed himself in this place,” said Rev. Marvin Hood on Sunday, July 22, to more than 100 worshippers of the Newgate Faith Community, who overflowed their temporary home in the Park Place UMC chapel.

Newgate faith community – set to officially launch Easter 2008 – celebrated its first worship service uniting the leadership body, Restorative Justice supporters and the community together at Park Place UMC, which serves as the ministry hub of the East End Parish.

Hood previously said he has a core group of about 21 supporters who have been in ministry with him for years, often worshipping together in his home.

“We’ve been doing what I call elbow church – we’ve been nudging other people and letting them know we’re having our first worship service,” Hood said.

The “elbowing,” when added to the neighborhood canvassing leaders participated in to invite people to share in the new faith community on Saturday, July 21, yielded a capacity crowd on Sunday morning.

“I know it’s tight in here,” Hood said, as he invited worshippers to come to the altar or remain in their seats for prayer. “But didn’t we want it

tight?”

Among the purposes of Newgate is to provide a barrier-free worship experience for everyone, particularly ex-offenders and the families of offenders.

Bikers and business suits, young people and elders comprised the worshipping body. In any other setting, the diversity of the demographics may have made some uncomfortable. In any other setting, the worshippers’ tattoos may have garnered stares.

“Relax, you’re home now,” Hood said, affirming that

“At some point, we have to break down these barriers that have separated us socially. We’re doing a ministry that’s somewhat different from other ministries.”

Rev. Marvin Hood

Newgate is designed to be a safe space for all Christians.

“At some point, we have to break down these barriers that have separated us socially,” Hood said in a recent phone interview. “We’re doing a ministry that’s somewhat different from other ministries.”

“We’re primarily trying to reach those families – who because of shame and the stigma of having a family member who’s incarcerated – have not been connected to the church. We’re trying to reach the formerly incarcerated. We’re trying to reach the correctional professionals.”

The Newgate Faith Community will worship on Sundays at 10:15 a.m. at Park Place UMC, 3827 Broadway.



Worshippers enthusiastically praise God at the first worship service of the Newgate Faith Community.

Rev. Marvin Hood, who has been a longtime Restorative Justice minister in the conference, is the founding pastor of Newgate.

Above: Rev. Hood greets his new congregation.

GBOD and conference partner for ‘A Wesleyan Institute’

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications

In an effort to help clergy and congregations grow in faith, the General Board of Discipleship is partnering with the Texas Annual Conference to offer Methodists throughout the connection *A Wesleyan Institute*, October 8-11, at Klein UMC in Spring.

“It’s an opportunity for United Methodists to gather to be immersed in our Wesleyan DNA and the Wesleyan way of making disciples of Jesus Christ,” said the Rev. Steve Manskar, director of accountable discipleship at GBOD.

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, resident bishop of the Texas Annual Conference, will preach



Bishop Huie

the opening worship on Monday, and the Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, senior pastor of Windsor Village UMC, will preach the closing Wesley Covenant Service on Thursday.



Caldwell

“This is a unique opportunity for our conference – the General Board has never co-sponsored an event of this magnitude,” said the Rev. Mark H. Young, senior pastor of Klein UMC, who added that when

GBOD shares its resources through workshops or seminars, it usually is in partnership with one church or a few churches.

“This event is of a different magnitude than meeting with one district or one or two churches.”

Questions and issues regarding discipleship will be explored. How do we love one another as Christ loves? How does a congregation “increase faith, confirm hope, and perfect us in love?” Those are two questions around which GBOD and the Texas Conference will engage attendees in dialogue.

Event planners hope to serve 300-500 clergy and laity throughout the week.

The method

Covenant Discipleship groups are a contemporary adaptation of the small groups that were the method of Methodism.

“Covenant discipleship is based on

the early Wesley class meetings,” Young said. “That’s really how we started as a church.”

“As clergy get the hang of this, we’re hoping they’ll go back and replicate some of these small groups in their church.”

Texas Annual Conference clergy

It’s important to remember who we are. We have a unique voice in faith tradition - (the Wesleyan model) is the genesis of our church and the heart of who we are. It’s time to reclaim and live that out.

are familiar with this concept, as the Center for Clergy Excellence has called all clergy to be in some form of a covenant peer group. Leaders have found the clergy peer group to be one of the premier ways to grow and deepen one’s faith through covenant relationships.

Of course, clergy are not the only ones who benefit from this model. Even congregations that already employ small group ministries can benefit from the unique focus of covenant discipleship groups.

“Other small groups focus on bible study, prayer, fellowship, mission and service -- the choir is a small group with a specific purpose,” Manskar said. “The focus of a covenant discipleship group is accountability and support for discipleship ... the purpose is to form people as leaders in discipleship.”

Because of this, laity also are invited to attend *A Wesleyan Institute*.

“I would encourage lay people to attend, because it’s too good of a model to keep among our clergy,” Young said. “It needs to take life and root outside the clergy. This is all about discipleship – how do you make disciples. It’s a unique Wesleyan model.”

And what is so important about honoring and employing a discipleship model instituted centuries ago?

“It’s important to remember who we are,” Young said. “We have a unique voice in faith tradition – (the Wesleyan model) is the genesis of our church and the heart of who we are. It’s time to reclaim and live that out.”

Get connected

For more information on *A Wesleyan Institute*, contact Becky Caudill at 877-899-2780, ext. 7059 or

e-mail cdgroups@gbod.org.

Registration is \$150 before September 14, and \$175 after September 14. The fee includes six meals (three lunches and three suppers) and a complimentary copy of *A Disciple’s Journal (Year A)*. This event qualifies for 1 CEU.

Partial reimbursements are available for Texas Conference clergy.

Covenant Clergy Group leaders may receive \$100 reimbursements and clergy may receive \$50 reimbursements. To be reimbursed, forward your registration confirmation to martyg@methodists.net by September 14.

If you must cancel for any reason before September 28, GBOD will retain a \$50 administrative fee. No refunds will be granted for cancellation after September 28.

Participants are urged to make hotel reservations well before September 23, as other events are taking place in the area at the same time and may cause hotels to fill up quickly.

Plenary speakers include:

- Bishop Janice Riggle Huie
- Dr. David Lowes Watson, Wesley scholar and seminary professor
- Sandra King-Shaw, member of Asbury UMC in Washington, D.C.
- Dr. Daniel Flores, pastor of La Trinidad UMC in Ft. Worth, Texas
- Dr. Steven W. Manskar, Director of Accountable Discipleship for GBOD
- Rev. Tom Albin, dean of the Upper Room Chapel, GBOD and
- Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, senior pastor of Windsor Village UMC in Houston.

Special guest Suzannah Moorman will perform selections from her CD, “Great Wesley Hymns,” as part of the evening worship on October 10: “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing: A Celebration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Hymns of Charles Wesley.”

For more details, visit www.gbod.org/wesleyaninstitute.

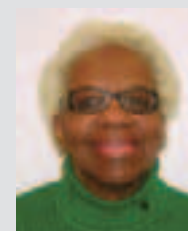
Wesleyan Institute features 8 workshops

The following topics will be explored at the event October 8-11:



Covenant Writing:

Steven Manskar, Director of Accountable Discipleship at GBOD and author of [Accountable Discipleship: Living in God’s Household](#) and *A Disciple’s Journal*.



Supporting and Sustaining Covenant Discipleship Groups:

Trish Merrill and Sandra M. King-Shaw. Merrill is Director of The Rush Center of the Johnson Institute in Austin. King-Shaw is a

member of Asbury United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., where she directs Lay Leadership Development.

How to Get Through the Doldrums (when it gets dull & routine):

Vicki Brendler, pastor of Bridgewater UMC in Bridgewater, New Jersey.



Charles Wesley as Spiritual Guide:

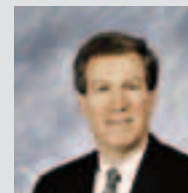
Tom Albin, Team Leader of Upper Room Program Ministries and Dean of the Upper Room Chapel.

Sprouts: Covenant Discipleship with Children:

Cari Vega, minister to children and their families at St. Andrews UMC in Plano, TX

Covenant Discipleship with Youth & Young Adults:

David Sutherland, author of [Together in Love: Covenant Discipleship with Youth](#) and professor of mathematics at Hendrix College in Conway, Ark.



Covenant Discipleship for Pastors:

Mark Young and Vicki Brendler. Young is senior pastor of Klein UMC in Spring, Texas.

How to Introduce Covenant Discipleship to Your Congregation:

Steven Manskar.

It’s a great opportunity for people who want to take the mission of the United Methodist Church seriously. -- Steve Manskar, GBOD

Professional Church Support Staff's Ministry Celebrated

By Jill E. Krone, Texas Annual Conference Communications



The Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries (PAUMCS) is a professional organization whose membership consists of all persons, presently or previously, paid or volunteer, engaged in administrative and/or secretarial work in any local United Methodist Church, extension ministry, and/or agency of The United Methodist Church. Started in 1982, PAUMCS just celebrated its 25th year during their annual conference held in Dallas, where PAUMCS started.

With a mission to provide a supportive base for the unity and fellowship of its members, to provide individual growth, professional development, continuing education, and spiritual enrichment, PAUMCS was officially recognized by the 1988

General Conference.

At this time, legislation was adopted which states that the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) has the authority and responsibility: "to provide guidance and consultation for continuing education of church secretaries, including establishment of training and certification programs, and to provide assistance to the Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries." (The Book of Discipline, 2004, Paragraph 807.19).

Southeast District Administrative Assistant, Donna Moody, indicated that she benefits from her PAUMCS membership through "a wealth of information from GCFA and talking to others throughout the country, connecting with them." West District Administrative Assistant, Priscilla Wright, agrees, "You can always find someone whose been-there, done-that to offer you assistance."

PAUMCS member, Anna Rohde, reminds all church workers, "It is important to have a peer group that you can seek support and information from." Moody reiterated, "The greatest benefit of PAUMCS membership is networking with other secretaries.

There are many seeking that connection with someone else in a similar office situation." Local church staff is encouraged to have funds put aside during budget planning to help cover expenses to the yearly PAUMCS conference, to be held in Dayton, OH in April of 2008. "Just like clergy, all church workers need mentors they can connect with who have similar work situations. PAUMCS is not just for administrative assistants working at the district or conference level. This also is an organization for laity working on staff at a church," Rohde said.

In addition to offering peer support through a Prayer-Net,

PAUMCS certification include Anna M. Rohde, Vetta Quackenbush, Thelma Jones, Donna Alexander, Donna Moody, Priscilla Wright, Doris Folser, Sharon Krowl, Lonna Nunn, Norma Bryant, Beverly Galley, Barbara Franklin, Marj Cujko and Margaret Scott. "It is an education in your job," Rohde emphasized.

Wright and Moody both recently returned from certifying. "Certification supports everything in the Texas Annual Conference vision and equips us to do our job better and to help our pastors. I have a better understanding of my job." Moody shared. Wright indicat-

training helps me to be more flexible so I can keep up with the changes that are occurring in our conference."

PAUMCS Chapters, located throughout the United States, meet a minimum of once annually for continuing education, handling business, and electing chapter officers. Before the close of 2007, it is hoped that the TAC Conference Secretary Organization will move to become its own chapter of PAUMCS.

Meetings are held during conference each year and the efforts and productivity of these vital church workers is celebrated during a luncheon. The 2007

"Certification supports everything in the Texas Annual Conference vision and equips us to do our job better and to help our pastors. I have a better understanding of my job."

Donna Moody
Southeast District Secretary

The Vital Link Newsletter, and their Linking Hands daily e-mail communications where advice can be sought from people all over the country, PAUMCS provides a rigorous certification program for the Professional United Methodist Church Secretary.

Those in the Texas Annual Conference who have received

ed, "The certification process helped me to better understand who I am. We did a lot of testing on how we handle situations. Hopefully, I'll become a better leader." She continued, "The Texas Annual Conference vision is constantly changing, growing, and striving to make disciples of Jesus Christ and I think that the

Luncheon hosted nearly 200 conference-connected church workers.

To learn more, log-on to www.paumcs.org or paumcs@gcfa.org or contact Anna Rohde at 903.758.7003 or aroh@sbcglobal.net for information related to PAUMCS within the Texas Annual Conference.

Church News From Around The World

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) Delegates to the triennial convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have re-elected their president and approved "altar and pulpit fellowship" with a smaller group of Lutherans.

The Rev. Gerald Kieschnick was re-elected on July 15 to lead the 2.5 million-member denomination for his third three-year term.

In an opening session prior to his re-election, Dr. Kieschnick, 64, urged members to do more to turn around a 35-year downward "slide" in membership, which was about 2.8 million in 1972.

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) A group of religious leaders met on Capitol Hill on July 17 to lobby for a Farm Bill that would improve the Food Stamp Program a change they described as the quickest way to reduce hunger in the U.S.

Bread for the World, a Christian

anti-hunger organization, is leading Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans and other churches to push what they call "reform that reflects American values of fairness and equal opportunity."

Religious leaders have been visiting representatives and encouraging Christians to write letters to legislators both in favor of food stamps, which now pay recipients an average \$1 per meal, and in opposition to what they see as an expensive and unjust farm subsidy program.

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has reached a landmark \$660 million settlement with 508 alleged victims of sexual abuse, the largest such payment thus far in the Catholic clergy sex abuse scandal.

The settlement was approved by a California judge on July 16 and follows an agreement by the archdiocese last December to pay \$60

million to settle 45 abuse claims made against its clergy.

Collectively, the sex-abuse scandal has cost the U.S. Catholic Church about \$2 billion since 1950. Archbishop of Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony said funding for the settlement will be shared by the archdiocese, insurance companies, several religious orders and other parties.

PORTLAND, Ore. (Religion News Service) Oregon's top court has rejected the Mormon church's bid to shield detailed financial information about its net worth a closely held secret for nearly half a century.

But the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints did not immediately release the financial information to lawyers for a Portland-area man who claims he was molested by a church "home teacher" in the late 1980s.

"The church is considering its position," said Stephen F. English,

the LDS church's lead Portland attorney. "The church respects the rule of law but has profound constitutional concerns based on its constitutional right to protect the free expression of its religion."

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) Conservative Christian groups protested the first appearance of a guest Hindu chaplain on the Senate floor on July 12.

When Rajan Zed, public relations officer of the Indian Association of Northern Nevada, stepped to the Senate rostrum to pray, protesters began shouting from inside the chamber before he could begin.

"Lord Jesus, forgive us, Father, for allowing the prayer of the wicked which is an abomination in your sight," shouted one protester before the U.S. Capitol Police removed three people.

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) The longtime

leader of the Assemblies of God has decided to resign his position.

The Rev. Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God since 1993, announced on July 10 that he will leave his position 60 days after the Pentecostal denomination meets for its General Council Aug. 8-11 in Indianapolis.

WASHINGTON (Religion News Service) Muslim Americans and white evangelicals find themselves on opposite sides of many issues, but have more in common than other religious groups when it comes to religious fervor, scriptural literalism and social morality, according to a new report.

The report by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found that U.S. Muslims and evangelical Christians consistently scored closer than other groups, including black Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics.

How are you transforming?

By Dr. Don Nations
DNA Coaching

The journey toward transformation is underway in the Texas Conference.

You have taken the lead in the denomination and are showing others the way forward. Whether or not your church is in the intentional, systematic three year transformation process, all churches need to be about the task of transformation.

I am often asked questions such as “where should we be in the transformation process?”, “what should we be doing next?” and “are we keeping up with other churches?” Given the frequency of these questions, allow me to address them.

All churches in the annual conference completed the Church Transformation Survey around the end of last year and will complete it annually for at least the next several years. I would

strongly encourage every church to take the steps necessary in order to score a “5” (maximum score) on the Hospitality question and the Guest Follow-Up question. This work will help the church greatly.

Another step to take is to complete the paperwork needed to qualify for the Welcoming Congregation Award offered through Igniting Ministry. This can be a beneficial step for all churches. For those churches in the DNA Coaching transformation process, it is a requirement of the process that you receive this award by the end of 2007.

Those churches in the DNA Coaching transformation process received an onsite visit from a coach in January or February of this year. Suggestions were made related to improving the impression made on first-time guests.

Typically these included installing signs, cleaning carpets, installing signs, painting walls, installing signs, improving the parking lot, installing signs, cleaning out light fixtures and replacing light bulbs. Can you guess which suggestion was made most often?! Working on these suggestions will also help the church as it seeks to reach more people for Jesus.

Great stories of change and transformation are already being created in many churches. Will the next great story come from your church? Keep up the good work and may God bless your efforts!

For information on welcoming congregation certification or to access the church transformation workbook, visit www.txcumc.org/congregationalexcellence.

Healing the brokenness

Shaping communities of peace and reconciliation in Christ

By Thelma Jones, Editor
Cross Connection

Bellaire United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas is offering a workshop entitled, “Healing the Brokenness” on Saturday, September 29, 2007.

This is a workshop designed to assist laity and clergy of the local church in continuing the dialogue and difficult work of naming, addressing, and healing the personal, social, and structural divisions that affect us as the people of God across racial and economic barriers.

The workshop will be led by Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, co-directors of the Center for Reconciliation at Duke Divinity School.

Emmanuel Katongole brings his experience of growing up in Africa under the brutal regime of Idi Amin, of the genocide in neighboring Rwanda, and his involvement in the dynamic and rich traditions of the African

church. He is the co-director of the Center for Reconciliation, and serves as Associate Professor of Theology & World Christianity at Duke Divinity School.

He is the author of *A Future for Africa: Critical Essays in*



Christian Social Imagination.

Chris Rice lived and worked for 17 years in an inner-city neighborhood in Jackson, Mississippi with Voice of Calvary, an interracial church and Christian community-development ministry. He is co-author of *More than Equals: Racial Healing for the Sake of the*

Gospel and author of *Grace Matters*, a memoir of his Mississippi journey.

In 2004, Chris convened the track on Reconciliation at the Lausanne Forum on World Evangelization.

Registration starts at 9:30 a.m., with the opening session; Reconciliation: A Journey of Pain and Hope following. There will be a small group break-out session during lunch; an afternoon session entitled, Reconciliation: Gift and Invitation. The workshop ends at 2:30 p.m. with the closing, “Claiming the Vision through the Praise of God.”

The cost of \$10 covers registration, box lunch and materials. Individuals may register via email, pmcgehee@smu.edu or call 713-666-2167 with name, address, phone number and home church.

Mail checks made payable to “BUMC” to the attention of Rev. Diane McGehee, Bellaire UMC, 4417 Bellaire Blvd., Bellaire, Texas 77401 and mark it “Healing the Brokenness Workshop.” Deadline for registration is September 14, 2007.

TAC delegation meeting

Continued from page 2

be nominated prior to the close of the meeting, 2) the General Conference publication deadline is in September, 3) the receipt deadline for resolutions is October 26, and 4) advance copies of the Daily Christian Advocate (containing every resolution) is usually available in January.

Delegates are requested to read each of the expected 2,000 resolutions. General Conference delegates receive copies in the mail. All other delegates are requested to purchase a copy when it becomes available.

Don House led the delegation in reviewing the information contained in “South Central Jurisdiction: An Examination of Historical Trends” - a document that offers insights into the disciple-making and fiscal trends of each conference within the South Central

Discipleship

Bettie Jo Hightower, Clergy; Mary Reed, Lay

Faith & Order

Steve Wende, Clergy; Sam Daffin, Lay

Financial Administration

Morris Matthis, Clergy; Don House, Lay

General Administration

Elijah Stansell, Clergy; Andy Hernandez, Lay

Global Ministries

Chap Temple, Clergy

Independent Commissions

Frank Alegria, Clergy

Judicial Administration

Gib Walton, Lay

Local Church

Gail Ford Smith, Clergy; Gil Hanke, Lay

Delegates are representatives of the Conference, consisting of equal numbers of clergy and lay, elected to tend to the details and preparations for General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

Jurisdiction.

Legislative Committee assignments determine on which committee the General Conference Delegates will primarily focus their efforts and talents when preparing for and attending the General Conference Sessions.

A tentative list of Legislative Committee Assignments was determined for submission to the General Conference. Final assignments as accepted are:

Church and Society-1

Tom Wussow, Lay

Church and Society-2

Jim Bankston, Clergy
John Worsham, Lay

Conference

Jim Foster, Clergy;
Ewing Werlein, Jr., Lay

Ministry & Higher Education

Jim Welch, Clergy; Ruth Palmer, Lay

Superintendency

Earl Bledsoe, Clergy;
Leah Taylor, Lay

Other business conducted included the adoption of a formal taskforce to evaluate and communicate with the TAC by 2009 regarding the Episcopal endorsement process and the endorsement of Jill Krone to handle communications for the delegation.

The delegation will next meet on August 18 at 10 a.m. at The Woodlands UMC. A third delegation meeting has been set for September 29 with location and time to be determined.