



# Cross Connection

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*Vibrant, growing congregations changing lives and reshaping futures for Jesus Christ*



## Saving lives, sharing hope

35-member delegation to represent you in Cote d'Ivoire; deliver 1 million nets

See story on page 4.

## Ike video designed to raise awareness and funds

By Eleanor L. Colvin

To help keep Hurricane Ike's impact at the forefront of people's minds, the Texas Annual Conference has produced a video resource spotlighting the storm's devastation and the need to aid in recovery.

Ike was the third costliest U.S. hurricane of all time, behind Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and Hurricane Katrina

2005. Damages along the U.S. coast are expected to exceed \$27 billion, with Texas Annual Conference churches and members shouldering a sizeable share. This is evidenced by the loss of countless homes in coastal communities and the total loss of four houses of worship. In all, more than 200 TAC churches and parsonages were damaged.

The video, which was filmed

and edited by John Hines and Two20 Media, in consultation with the TAC office of communications, calls attention to the storm's impact on the annual conference in an effort to raise money for recovery.

In a September 29th letter, Bishop Janice Riggle Huie wrote of the Annual Conference's generosity: "My heart overflows with thanksgiving for your generous response

to the relief and recovery process," she wrote. "You have already contributed thousands of volunteer hours and brought water, food, chainsaws and flood buckets to affected areas ... We also need your generous financial support to deal with catastrophic expenses in communities and congregations."

Funds raised will help pay

*Continued on page 2*



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.

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## Disaster recovery office opens in South District



Ralph Hendricks and Tim McGuire from Lake Jackson, renovated the damaged steps at the nearby house in Corpus Christi, Texas.

By **Thelma Jones**

When Hurricane Ike roared into the Gulf Coast, it caused a huge amount of devastation to Houston, Galveston and surrounding areas. The specter of Hurricane Rita was raised again, albeit a different location being

the target of the storm's wrath.

The Texas Annual Conference Center for Missional Excellence has opened the, *Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery Office*. It is headed by Eddie Hilliard, a member of Memorial Drive UMC and Alan Miller, who was previously a staff person for the Rita

Recovery team.

Prior to working with the Rita recovery effort, Miller was a construction supervisor for the Port Arthur satellite office. He has been involved with mission trips for 21 years all over the United States and in Siberia.

Hilliard, who will oversee the office, also loves the ministry of the mission field and has extensive experience in disaster recovery work.

"The focus of the disaster recovery office will be to minister to the needs of the people," said Hilliard. "It will take approximately 3 to 4 years for people to physically recover from the hurricane. The emotional scars may never go away."

Hilliard speaks from experience. He is a native from Mississippi and his family is still recovering from damage (both physical and emotional)

done by Hurricane Rita.

The office will be located at Friendswood UMC. Future satellite offices in other locations are in the planning stages. Another important component of the office is connecting with Partners In Mission (PIM), United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR) to coordinate volunteer work teams.

"Teams have come from as far away as California, Illinois and Florida," says Hilliard. In the spirit of support and remembrance of the help sent to them during Hurricane Katrina recovery, the Mississippi Conference sent a volunteer team to the island of Galveston.

Thousands have been affected by Ike. People have lost their homes, churches, and businesses. Perhaps more important than the loss of material things; many have lost a sense of security, a feeling of safety that Hurricane Ike stripped away just as surely as it washed away years of family and community history.

"This is not just a denominational recovery effort," declared Hilliard, "It is an ecumenical venture."

*Thelma Jones is the editor for the Cross Connection newspaper, a publication of the Texas Annual Conference.*

*Angela Baker  
Hurricane Rita Recovery*

**"So, now we have changed from Rita Recovery to Disaster Recovery. What a blessing to share what we've learned over the last 3 years with our brothers and sisters in the Houston/Galveston office. This has become a ministry and we look forward to doing God's work as we help families recover from this disaster."**

## Ike video designed to raise awareness and funds

*Continued from page 1*

the salaries of pastors whose congregations have been scattered and their churches destroyed. Donations, of course, are also needed to rebuild homes in Ike-ravaged areas.

And, rebuilding is something this annual conference knows how to do. Three years ago, the people of the TAC gave more than \$1 million dollars for Rita Recovery.

"Because of your generosity and the generosity of UMC people around the world, nearly 850 homes in Southeast Texas were re-built," wrote Bishop Huie. "The need for Ike Recovery will be much greater."

Individuals are encouraged to view the video online or distribute the page link – <http://www.txcumc.org/ikevideo> – to potential donors. Church leaders may also download the Windows Media or Quicktime files to play for their congregations.

All Ike Recovery contributions given to the Texas Annual Conference will support recovery efforts within the Texas Annual Conference. Make checks payable to the Texas Annual Conference, and note Fund #534 IKE-TAC on the check memo line.

*Eleanor Colvin is the Director of Communications for the Texas Annual Conference.*





# The greatest gift of all — ‘sharing with others’

## Ornament donations sought to brighten holidays for Ike victims

By Jill Krone

Twelve years ago, while living in the Chicago area, my family's home was flooded. One of the most emotionally difficult times for me was looking ahead to Christmas. Our tree and our ornaments that we created as children, purchased or that had been handed down



through the family were

destroyed.

I remember the overwhelming love I experienced as I put ornaments on my tree that family members surprised us with.

One day I received a package and on opening it discovered that my family had collected these treasured mementos from both (my husband and I) of our extended families. It was a joyful night decorating our tree that Christmas, as we recalled stories of our new ornaments and those who shared them with us.

In the spirit of new birth, wouldn't it be a wonderful way of sharing with others by collecting, or creating, Christmas tree ornaments? To be able to provide this for our clergy families would be great, but why stop

there? If a large amount of ornaments could be collected, they could be offered in limited number to persons in Hurricane ravaged communities.

You are invited to participate in this project. This could be a wonderful opportunity for Sunday School classes, study groups, walking groups, leadership teams, churches, friends and families to all come together and give something special to someone. Your church may have older ornaments in storage. These would make wonderful shared donations. What about when the local store puts holiday lights on sale? Yes, I think collecting light strands would also be welcomed.

**Time Is Of The Essence**

Christmas is less than two

months away. Getting the word out is the first step in making this venture a success. Yes, you are welcome to send some of them when you start your personal decorating, but it is my hope to have the ornaments ready for ‘shoppers’ by **December 1.**

Consider checking out stores and garage sales. Look for specialty stores with bulk packages of the same item (we can divide these). If you are gifted in working with crafts, how about sharing this talent with others by creating ornaments? Talk to local care centers and schools and see if their craft/art programs would participate. Get your children involved in making ornaments as a family event.

This is one of many ways we as a church family can come



together to help make a brighter holiday for others. Thanks so much for your help.

Ornaments may be sent to: Jill Krone, 359 RS CR 3120, Emory, Texas, 75440.

*Jill Krone is a contributing writer for the Office of Communications of the Texas Annual Conference.*

# ‘Promises to keep...and miles to go before we sleep’

## UM Service Center staff joins recovery effort, serve meals at Moody Memorial

By Rev. Cynthia Harvey

As we neared Galveston Island on a dreary rainy Tuesday it became evident that even four weeks after Hurricane Ike paid Island residents a visit, Galveston Island was a much different place than I visited just a few months ago on a sunny summer day. The staff of the United Methodist Service Center had chosen to forgo their monthly birthday luncheon and instead help serve lunch at Moody Memorial First UMC.

Moody had been hosting a lunch since the early days after the storm at the rate of about 1,000 lunches per day. The staff offered respite for the many volunteers who had spent countless hours in the previous days serving a hot meal to local residents and relief workers.

The boats that still lined the entrance into Galveston and the heaps of debris were a sign and symbol that that as the great poet Robert Frost once said, “But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.”

We were greeted by the “tent



**Jan Ervin, Rev. Cynthia Harvey and Dr. Donald Waddleton prepare to serve lunch at Moody Memorial UMC.**

city,” the place hundreds of displaced Galvestonians are now calling home. We made our way around debris still lining the empty Strand which now looked like something out of a science fiction movie, as workers clad in

hazmat suits made their way in and out of the once bustling shops, it was almost eerie.

As we approached Moody the 18-wheelers in the parking lot had replaced many of the cars that were there for Sunday worship the last time I was in Galveston. But the promise of hope for a new day was quickly witnessed as the other half of the parking lot was filled with cars belonging to volunteers. And once inside Moody, you got a sense that this was an Easter kind of place, a place of resurrection, a place of hope, a place of safety, a place where people could come and receive not just a hot meal but the possibility that there was such a thing as the calm after the storm.

We quickly went to work sporting our aprons and rubber gloves. As the lunch hour neared utility workers arrived to have lunch; today, a tasty barbecue sandwich, chips, cookies and a piece of fruit, they were cheered as they passed through the line. There were residents who shared their story as they picked up their lunch. They were still without power after four weeks, no natu-

ral gas, and still cleaning debris from in and around their home. Trash removal workers were also greeted by the cheers of those serving and the line continued. Outside a drive-thru station was set-up so that those too busy to stop and sit for lunch could pick up their lunch on-the-go.

It became clear very quickly that I was in the midst of a great community. A community of relief workers, church workers, contractors and local residents all with the same goal in mind – to bring a sense of hope and promise to a community in great need. There were Galvestonians and outsiders like ourselves and whether we know it or not or have the language of scripture or not we were living out our call to love God and love our neighbor.

Yes, we do

have promises to keep and there are many miles to go before we sleep again in Galveston, but the hope and promise of a new day is on the horizon as brothers and sisters band together to make all things new.

As Brian Wren wrote: *Christ is alive and goes before us, To show and share what love can do. This is a day of new beginnings, Our God is making all things new.*

*Rev. Cynthia Harvey is the Director of the Center for Missional Excellence.*



**Rev. Rick Goodrich and Dr. Elijah Stansell get ready to serve hundreds of people affected by Hurricane Ike.**



# Fighting malaria in

## 35-member delegation to represent you in Cote d'Ivoire

By Eleanor L. Colvin

Every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria.

That is one of the many sobering statistics that inspired the people of the Texas Annual Conference to give more than \$1 million last year to help stop the spread of malaria.

It's also among the chief reasons that motivated 35 members of the TAC to travel to Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa, November 7-17 to distribute long-lasting, insecticide-treated nets, purchased via the *Nothing But Nets* campaign and through your extravagant generosity.

While malaria has largely been eradicated in the United

the more than 85,000 individuals who have supported the *Nothing But Nets* global, grassroots initiative, which has raised more than \$21 million and distributed more than 700,000 nets to date.

"We are excited to partner with the people of The United Methodist Church and Texas Annual Conference to help distribute nets to children and their families in Cote d'Ivoire," said Elizabeth McKee Gore, Executive Director of *Nothing But Nets*. This is a wonderful opportunity for the delegation members to not only share their experiences combating malaria with the families in Cote d'Ivoire, but to also share their experiences in Africa with their

years.

While there can be political and social obstacles to introducing this type of initiative in developing nations, the political leaders of Cote d'Ivoire have embraced and endorsed the campaign because of the magnitude of the disease.

"People talk a lot about AIDS because AIDS does not have a remedy," said Cote d'Ivoire President Laurent Gbagbo during the TAC's initial visit to Cote d'Ivoire in 2007. "People are so scared of AIDS. In terms of quantity, in our country, Malaria kills more people than AIDS."

### Power of partnerships

The people of the United Methodist Church are founding partners of *Nothing But Nets*, along with National Basketball Association's NBA Cares and Sports Illustrated. The United Nations Foundation created the *Nothing But Nets* campaign in 2006. Other partners include VH1, The Mark J. Gordon Foundation, AOL Black Voices, The Wasserman Foundation, Major League Soccer's MLS W.O.R.K.S., the Women's National Basketball Association, and Rotarians' Action Group on Malaria.

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.' Thanks to the generosity of the people of the Texas Annual Conference, our partners around the world, and the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference, 37 of us will join over 1,000 Ivorian United Methodists demonstrating Jesus' love to hundreds of thousands of Ivorian children," said Bishop Janice Riggle Huie. "It is a rare privilege for most of us to participate so directly in saving lives. Along with the whole team, we thank you and promise to carry Christ's love and hope in all that we do."

*Eleanor Colvin is the Director of Communications for the Texas Annual Conference.*



An Ivorian mother keeps watch over her hospitalized infant who is protected by a mosquito net.

### This historic trip marks the first time that churches have participated in the on-the-ground delivery of nets.

States, between 350 and 500 million people are still infected each year, mostly in Africa. More than 1 million of those infected die from the disease, and 75 percent of those deaths are children under the age of five.

Texas Methodists, the United Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire and the United Nations Foundation have formed a dynamic partnership to combat malaria in Africa by raising funds to purchase life-saving bed nets.

This historic trip marks the first time that churches have participated in the on-the-ground delivery of nets. The team will hand deliver more than 1 million nets to the neediest Ivory Coast residents as a part of a national measles vaccination campaign, led by the Cote d'Ivoire ministry of health, the Measles Initiative, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and other partners.

These volunteers are among

friends, family and faith communities at home."

To receive updates throughout the trip, visit the TAC web site at [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org) to read team blogs.

### How does it work?

Bed nets work in two ways. They stop mosquitoes from biting during the night and spreading the disease, and the insecticide on the net kills the mosquitoes when they land on it.

There are medicines used to treat and prevent the disease, but often they are expensive and not widely available. Insecticide-treated bed nets have been identified as the most cost effective way to prevent the spread of malaria.

It cost \$10 to purchase and distribute a long-lasting, insecticide-treated net and educate on its proper use. More often than not, entire families sleep under one net, and the nets are effective for approximately five



Team member, Rev. Todd Jordan prays at the Methodist Hospital of Dabou in Cote d'Ivoire. A net hangs nearby.



# Africa

## Texas Annual Conference Cote d'Ivoire Nets Delivery Team

NAME	CHURCH	DISTRICT
Mona Avalos	First UMC, Huntsville	West
Rev. Mark Bunch	Wesley UMC, Beaumont	Southeast
Elizabeth Byrd	First UMC, Jefferson	North
Alan Coleman	Trinity UMC, Beaumont	Southeast
Eleanor L. Colvin	St. Mark UMC, Houston	Central South
Rev. Noel Dennison	Chapelwood UMC	Central South
Jan Ervin	Deer Park UMC	South
Rev. Kevin Gilmore	Buffalo UMC	Northwest
Rev. Rick Goodrich	John Wesley UMC	Central North
Rev. Joshua Hale	Wesley Student Center, Beaumont	Southeast
Rev. Cynthia Harvey	Memorial Drive UMC	Southwest
Eddie Hilliard	Memorial Drive UMC	Southwest
Bishop Janice Riggle Huie	Texas Annual Conference	
Rev. Pam Jackson	John Wesley UMC	Central North
Rev. Todd Jordan	Caldwell UMC	West
Rev. Kilumba Kalamba	Prairie View, Wesley Foundation	Central North
Rev. Nancy Kellond	Montgomery UMC	Central North
Lynda Langston	Lufkin UMC	East
Stephanie Lind	Holy Covenant UMC	Southwest
Kathie Mann	Friendswood UMC	South
Linda Marr	A & M UMC	West
Rev. Morris Mathis	Christ UMC	Southwest
Steve May	First UMC, Bryan	West
Douglas Molineu	St. Paul UMC	Central South
James S. Moore	Westwood UMC	Northwest
Rev. Will Reed	Servants of Christ UMC	Central South
Rev. Carmen Rickel	St. Paul UMC, Henderson	East
Mary Ellen Riley	Livingston UMC	East
Lara Routon	Marvin UMC	Northwest
Susan Silvus	St. Luke UMC	Central South
Donna Syas	St. James UMC, Beaumont	Southeast
Leah Taylor	St. Peter's UMC	Southwest
Rev. Jon Thornsby	Friendswood UMC	South
Martha Vaughn	Waskom UMC	North
Bill Webb	Aldersgate UMC	North

*View pictures and read team blogs*

*online at [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org)*

*during the trip.*

### Net Distribution Prayer Guide

This guide to prayer is designed so that churches, organizations, and individuals may participate in the Net Distribution Team's ministry in Cote d'Ivoire this November. Please use this guide over the 12-day period that the Conference teams will be preparing, traveling, worshipping and distributing.

The prayer guide includes the team's daily agenda, a prayer focus and a Psalm to read. Please pray for team members by name each day.

**6 November**                      **Making Preparations**  
Pray for the work of the Spirit, providing for ministry.  
*Psalm 139 "Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your Presence?"*

**7 November**                      **Departing the U.S.**  
Pray for safe travel of the team.  
*Psalm 143 "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on a level path."*

**8 November**                      **Arriving in Cote d'Ivoire**  
Pray for the Ivorians who will greet and host us.  
*Psalm 29 "May the Lord give strength to His people! May the Lord bless His people with peace!"*

**9 November**                      **Spending the day in worship**  
Pray for the Eglise methodiste unie de Cote d'Ivoire.  
*Psalm 133 "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"*

**10 November**                      **Training and meeting with officials**  
Pray for Ivorian leaders and an end to the civil war.  
*Psalm 122 "For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, 'Peace be within you.'"*

**11 November**                      **Distributing Nets**  
Pray for mothers, children and all families.  
*Psalm 91 "You will not fear the pestilence that stalks in darkness, the destruction that wastes at noonday."*

**12 November**                      **Distributing Nets**  
Pray for doctors, nurses and all medical workers.  
*Psalm 30 "O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me."*

**13 November**                      **Distributing Nets**  
Pray for international aid organizations and workers.  
*Psalm 101 "I will sing of loyalty and of justice; to you O Lord, I will sing."*

**14 November**                      **Distributing Nets**  
Pray for safety and peace in homes, cities, countries.  
*Psalm 4 "I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety."*

**15 November**                      **Distributing Nets**  
Pray for greater awareness in the U.S. of global needs.  
*Psalm 125 "Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts."*

**16 November**                      **Spending the day in worship**  
Pray for salvation, wholeness and holiness in the world.  
*Psalm 116 "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."*

**17 November**                      **Returning to the U. S.**  
Pray for future work and our partnership with EMUCI.  
*Psalm 103 "But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting..."*

*Created by Rev. Joshua Hale*



# Getting to know your neighbors

Planning meeting for First UMC Humble pays big dividends



First UMC Humbe volunteered to host *National Night Out* for their community. The event was cancelled by the city of Humble after Hurricane Ike hit the area. Left Photo: Children and adults enjoy the art of face painting. Right Photo: Playing in the pumpkin patch was a favorite past time with the kids

## By Brant Mills

A small church found themselves hosting an event for their entire community less than two weeks after discussing ways to reach out and be good neighbors.

First UMC Humble held a planning committee meeting recently to discuss what more they could do to get to know their neighbors.

Senior Pastor Dr. E.B. Beasley said they “had a dinner and a dream night to talk about things and we said we need to make the community more aware of who we are. Somebody said we need to go down to the street into a nearby park and just cook hot dogs or hamburgers and invite the neighborhood.”

A couple of days later some of the church staff found out about an upcoming event that fit into their vision. National Night Out, which is designed to focus on crime and drug prevention, was going to be taking place in their town, but when they called to get more information, the city had already drafted the press release to cancel the event.

“The subdivisions and the apartment complexes couldn’t do it after Ike – so we said

‘we’ll help you,’ Beasley said.

“That was on Sunday night - we said we ought to do it. On Thursday we got the call, and now we’re out here on Tuesday cooking hot dogs for the whole community - and we just had to go out and get some more. You’ve got to be careful when you ask God to do something because he’s got a weird sense of humour – he delivers on these things,” Beasley added with a hearty laugh. That’s why we were talking about the hot dogs from the beginning and now ten days later were doing it.”

## Know Your Neighbors

“This is actually an extension of being a part of the community post Ike,” FUMC Associate Amanda Davis said.

“When Ike came through, neighborhoods where people knew each other took care of each other, but those where people didn’t know each other, they didn’t reach out to each other,” Beasley noted. “It’s really important that our communities and our neighborhoods know each other and the church has the opportunity to be the vehicle to make that happen... We show them we care and we’re hoping that some of these people will

come into the church – will come and experience our fellowship.”

FUMC Humble has been working on reaching out to the newcomers in the town, but for the last 8 or 9 months they’ve been talking about those immediately around the church.

**“You’ve got to be careful when you ask God to do something because he’s got a weird sense of humour – he delivers on these things.”**

**Rev. E. B. Beasley  
Senior Pastor, First UMC Humble**

“We’re looking for ways to minister to the neighborhood that we’re in. Beasley noted. This is where God’s put us, and... we need to include [those nearest to the church] in the ministries we were doing.”

Davis said events like this allow the church to get to know the community. “We have been talking about a doughnut hole. We reach out into the new neighborhoods but we forget to look inside that doughnut area to the people within walking distance of our church. [Ministering to] a community like this where people are encouraged to walk here... - its where you get to know your

neighbors.”

## Mission Minded Night Out

Davis said they passed out over 1,000 flyers to nearby apartment complexes and were able to get 4 elementary schools to send every child home with a flyer.

“We bought 200 hot dogs

and we ran out within the first hour,” Davis said, adding that they had to go buy 200 more.

Throughout the evening 300 children were fingerprinted by the Humble Police Department, who brought McGruff the crime dog with them. Target, the NNO national sponsor came out to give away gift cards and paint faces, and the Humble Fire Department brought a few of their antique fire trucks for the crowd to enjoy. The church even had a pumpkin patch open for people wishing to take one home.

“They’re having a good time tonight,” Beasley said, as a group of children ran around

playing behind him. “It’s part of being a neighborhood and part of being in a small town. It’s a part of the values we’re trying to lift up in the church. There’s a lot of fun going on.”

The staff at FUMC Humble are constantly looking for new ways to reach out into their community. Davis said through the local schools, they have gotten to know the children who are on assistance programs for food and the church feeds them on Saturdays.

Dr. Beasley also said that their Methodist Men’s group “is talking about trying to provide 20 District camp scholarships for kids in the church’s neighborhood next summer because of what the conference camping program at Lakeview can offer them.”

For more information on FUMC Humble or their programs, please visit their website, <http://www.fumc-humble.org/>

For additional information on National Night Out, please visit their website at: <http://www.nationalnightout.org/nno/>.

*Brant Mills is the Web Content Manager for the Texas Annual Conference.*



# Traditional Worship for Contemporary People

A worship conference at St. Paul's United Methodist Church

By Donna Adair

St. Paul's United Methodist Church is hosting a conference to explore the merits of traditional worship for contemporary people who are searching for an experience that is life-changing, inspirational, and connects with God. This conference is organized in conjunction with the Worship Committee of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The conference from 1 p.m. Tuesday, November 11, to 5 p.m. Thursday, November 13, will provide tools for ministers, musicians, local church leaders, and liturgists "to really make a difference in creating worship that touches people, leads them closer to Christ, builds the church stronger, and helps people truly relate to their Creator."

Among the topics to be explored are:

- Preaching without Screens: Giving Shape to Your Sermon
- High Church in a Small Town

- Altars, Paraments, and Banners
  - Renewing the Eucharist
  - Getting Youth Involved: Acolyting
  - Building an Effective Worship Team
  - Lectionary Preaching and Spiritual Formation
- Among the speakers will be:
- Dr. Mouzon Biggs, Jr., senior minister at Boston Avenue UMC, Tulsa
  - Rev. Kent Ingram, senior minister, First UMC, Colorado Springs
  - Rev. Daryl C. Higgins, senior minister, First Protestant Church, New Braunfels
  - Dr. Tom Pace, senior minister, St. Luke's UMC, Houston
  - Rev. Kelly Sullivan, senior minister at First UMC, LaPorte

The St. Paul's Choir will lead a choral Evensong worship service at 7 p.m. Wednesday, November 12, as one example of traditional worship.

Registration is \$195/per-

son and includes three meals in small groups hosted by one of the speakers. For more information and to register, go to [www.leadershipnexus.net](http://www.leadershipnexus.net).

St. Paul's UMC is located at 5501 Main Street at Binz/Bissonnet, across from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Free parking is available across Fannin Street from the church, and the Museum District MetroRail stops are within walking distance of the church. Website:

[www.stpaulshouston.org](http://www.stpaulshouston.org)

*Donna Adair is the Director of Communications at St. Paul's United Methodist Church*



## Texas Annual Conference Offers Open Enrollment for Group Health Benefits Program

The dates for open enrollment for participants of the Group Health Benefits Program are November 1-15, 2008.

Enrollment is only available electronically. Visit the Conference website and click on "Open Enrollment 2009." For more information, contact Melonie Joseph in the Benefits Office at 713-521-9383, ext. 358.

## Charis Program prepares 22 for ministerial service



The 2008 class of spiritual directors. Charis is a 3-year training program.

By Constance Bovier

A celebratory worship service was held at Livingston UMC, where 22 men and women of the Charis Spiritual Director Training Program knelt at the prayer shawl-draped altar rail for commissioning as spiritual directors. In her address to the gathering of graduates, family and friends, Dr. Karen Dorris, Director of the Center for Congregational Excellence, acknowledged the new spiritual directors as church leaders and offered some powerful images for them to carry forward into ministry.

She called the graduates "stone-rollers," now equipped to help remove the stones that keep some individuals spiritually entombed. She challenged them to embrace the scriptures and to "dance with the Spirit," always attending to their own spiritual disciplines in order to best serve others.

This pioneering class of the Charis program includes both lay and clergy who received a calling to this ministry. Lay graduates are returning to their faith communities prepared to support their pastors in tending to the spiritual life of their congregations, while clergy graduates have experienced enrichment of their pastoral skills.

Rev. Ruby Nelson of St. Paul's UMC in Beaumont says, "I had two goals when I applied to the Charis program. One goal was to enhance my own spirituality and the second, to become a better pastor." Both goals, she says, have been met by the training, and she sees the ministry of spiritual

direction as an important component supporting the conference emphasis on the spiritual well-being of the clergy.

While the new spiritual directors offer significant benefits to their local churches, the Charis program has prepared them to be a rich resource for the entire region. "These graduates have discerned and indicated ways in which they are called to serve within congregations throughout the Conference and we have that information available for anyone who contacts us. Besides one-to-one spiritual direction, many of our graduates are called to teach and facilitate group spiritual direction," says Rev. Glynden Bode, Charis Board Chair.

According to graduate and new Charis board member Barbara Dyar, the graduation service captured the essence of the calling: "It was a stately ceremony with the liturgical formality that communicated how sacred a call, how holy a trust, we have been given."

To receive a listing of spiritual directors and the specific ministries they offer, contact Charis Program Coordinator Becky Oates: 281-360-1942 or [havenofrest@earthlink.net](mailto:havenofrest@earthlink.net); or Charis Board Chair Glynden Bode: at 281-537-5628 or [glyndenbode@gmail.com](mailto:glyndenbode@gmail.com).

The Charis program is supported by the Faith Forming Relationships & Spiritual Formation Committee, Center for Congregational Excellence of The Texas Annual Conference.

*Constance Bovier is a Board member of the Charis Program.*



## Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

### Fellowship Opportunities

#### Prayers and Squares

If you can tie a knot and say a prayer, you can be a part of Prayers and Squares. If you are handy with a needle — or want to learn how to be — you also can help make these prayer quilts.

Prayers and Squares meets in Abraham Station at St. Paul's UMC from 2 to 7 p.m., the first and third Sundays of the month. Some people also participate by hemming and finishing the quilts at home.

The quilts are prepared as a "physical prayer of comfort and healing" for the intended recipient(s). These may be individuals who are gravely ill or who are going through another kind of life trauma.

Once completed, the quilts are displayed on the church's Jones Plaza, giving everyone the opportunity to tie a knot and say a prayer on behalf of the recipient.

All ages, stages, and genders are encouraged to be a part of this prayer and caring ministry. One need not be a member of St. Paul's to participate.

To request a prayer quilt or for more information about how to become a part of Prayers and Squares, contact Rev. Gail Williford at 713-528-0527 or [gailwilliford@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:gailwilliford@stpaulshouston.org).

#### Moody Memorial First UMC Hosts Seaside Treasure Festival

Seaside Treasure Festival celebrates its 10th year by expanding to a 2-day event on November 21-22, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Seaside features arts and crafts vendors, lunch, a fabulous silent auction, entertainment, and much more. Join the fun at Moody Memorial

First UMC, 53rd and Avenue U, Galveston, Texas. Festival proceeds support mission and outreach work in the Galveston area.

Admission is free. To request more information, email [stf@moody.org](mailto:stf@moody.org) or call 409-744-4526, ext. 783 and leave a message. For detailed vendor information and applications, please visit the web site at <http://www.moody.org/stf>.

### Learning Opportunities

#### St. Paul's UMC – Walking the Labyrinth

Thursday, November 6, the movable labyrinth will be set up for prayer and meditation from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m. It will be located on the second floor of the Sanctuary building in the Activity Center.

Found in many religious traditions in various forms around the world, the labyrinth is an archetype of the journey of a spiritual seeker, a symbol of unity and wholeness.

The labyrinth is available the first Thursday of each month.

#### St. Luke's UMC – "Hope for the Holidays" Workshop

Thursday, November 13, 6:30 p.m. in the Hines Baker room, St. Luke's UMC (in association with the Mental Health America of Greater Houston and St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment) will host, *Hope for the Holidays*, a workshop for individuals having trouble getting into the holiday spirit in light of the recent disaster and national financial crisis.

How will you cope with holiday stress this year? Have you been struggling with the "blues" during the holidays in recent years? Have you lost a loved one and are struggling to find a way to celebrate the holidays without his/her presence this year?

This workshop will help identify the feelings you may be struggling with including signs of withdrawal, hopelessness, disconnection, and more. We will also explore tools and resources available to offer spiritual and emotional support and help you find caring communities and connections.

Presenters will be, Rev. Linda Christians, Executive Pastor Discipleship and Amy Birchill, Director of St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment. For additional information, contact the church at 713-622-5710.

#### Central South District presents

##### *Strengthening Smaller Congregations*

Central South District in association with Union Baptist Association and Antioch Institute of Houston Baptist University will host this event.

The guest speaker is Dr. Kennon L. Callahan, author of *The Future That Has Come* and *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. The workshop will be Tuesday, December 2, 2008, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Cultural Arts Center of Houston Baptist University.

The registration fee is \$25 per person (includes training materials, lunch and a copy of *Small, Strong Congregations*).

To register, contact Sheila Hardman at 713-222-0117.

#### "The Historical Jesus" Study Series at St. Paul's UMC

Who was this human being named Jesus who walked about Galilee in the first century, the person who showed what God is like and what a human life full of God is like?

This question will be examined by William M. Linden in the Candlelighters adult Sunday School class at St. Paul's United

Methodist Church. The eight-part series runs from October 5 to December 7 in S-109, first floor of the Sanctuary building.

Particular emphasis in this series will be placed on the Jewish context of first-century Israel, Jesus' treatment of women as equal with men in ministry, and his opposition to the patriarchal system of his day.

Participants will be introduced to a new way to read the Bible and to think about God — not as the God with rules, guilt, and punishment, but as a God of Justice, compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance.

For more information about the class, contact Rev. Shelli Williams at 713-528-0527 or [swilliams@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:swilliams@stpaulshouston.org).

#### First UMC Jefferson Hosts Book Festival

Books Alive! 2008 is a Christian and Inspirational book festival that provides book lovers the opportunity to meet and hear some of their favorite authors talk about their books and their lives.

The festival will be held November 7-9, 2008. Friday's event will feature dinner with the authors. Saturday is an all-day event of presentations that are free of charge. Saturday night, there will be a Christian music concert.

For more information, contact the church at 903-665-3268 or visit the website, [www.jefferson-booksalive.com](http://www.jefferson-booksalive.com). A list of participating authors are also listed.

#### "Making a Difference" A workshop for Rural/Small Membership Churches

Churches whose membership totals less than 100 members are invited to attend a workshop geared specifically for them.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, November 22, 8:30

a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Aldersgate UMC, 2201 Earl Rudder Freeway S., College Station, Texas 77845.

The presenter will be Rev. James Hollifield, Pastor of Newkirk UMC, Newkirk OK. For more information, contact Mary Reed at 936-348-2050 or [maryrreed@att.net](mailto:maryrreed@att.net).

#### Summer Collegium Project 2009

Applications are now being accepted for the Summer Collegium, a Lilly Endowment project in support of small congregations.

Twenty-five clergy and their spouses from all Christian denominations will be invited to spend nine days at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, focusing on Body, Mind, and Soul: Celebrating, Strengthening and Sustaining Clergy Wholeness in Small Congregations.

The Summer Collegium takes place June 24-July 1, 2009, and applications must be postmarked by December 15, 2008 to be considered. All expenses for the event, including travel, meals, lodging, books, pulpit supply and child care at home are paid for by the grant.

For more information and an application packet, visit the website at [www.vts.edu/education/collegium](http://www.vts.edu/education/collegium) or call Marilyn Johns at 703-461-1760.

*Do you have information about your church or ministry you would like to share with others?*

Contact Thelma Jones at 713-521-9383, ext. 335 or [thelmaj@methodists.net](mailto:thelmaj@methodists.net).