



# Cross Connection

a Texas Annual Conference publication  
an edition of The United Methodist Reporter

Label Area

Two Sections, Section A

076000 Volume 155

Number 36

January 9, 2009

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

## A Good Read for a New Year

By Bishop Janice Riggle Huie  
Texas Annual Conference



One of my favorite pastimes during the holidays is curling up with a good book. This year, *Outliers* by

Malcolm Gladwell met the "good book" standard for me. Apparently, lots of other folks think so too because it ranked No. 1 on the 2008 New York Times best seller list for non-fiction. Dean Greg Jones of Duke Divinity School recommended it to me. If you haven't already read it, you might consider it for your 2009 reading list.

The term "outliers" refers to "a statistical observation that is markedly different in value from the others in the sample." *Outliers* is the story of extremely successful people and how they became successful. These are folks whose positive achievements fall outside ordi-

nary expectations. Gladwell is interested in what we can learn from their stories.

Gladwell looks at people like Bill Gates, the Beatles, and an attorney named Joe Flom.

**I think about people like Mother Teresa or John Wesley. These folks weren't satisfied with being an "almost Christian." They gave themselves whole-heartedly to Christian discipleship.**

Success such as theirs is often attributed primarily to intelligence and ambition. Gladwell tells a different story, one that is more complex and interesting. He suggests that we look *around* these people — at their family, birthplace, birth date, cultural values, time spent learning their skill and much more.

One of the factors to which Gladwell points is "the 10,000 hour rule." While talent is important, he believes that practice and preparation are more

important. Learning a skill exceptionally well requires a huge amount of practice. Excellence in performing a complex task doesn't require some practice; it requires lots of

practice. The number some researchers have settled on is 10,000 hours.

In chess, it seems to take about ten years to become a grandmaster — at about 1,000 hours of playing chess per year. In the field of music, Gladwell points to the two years between 1960-62 during which the Beatles played in Hamburg, Germany. The expectation was to have performances seven days a week, five to eight hours a performance — an extraordi-

narily demanding schedule. After the Beatles disbanded, Lennon remembered the Hamburg period, "We got better and got more confident. We couldn't help it with all the experience playing all night long."

The most fascinating 10,000 story may be Bill Gates' story. Ordinarily, he is recalled as a brilliant and ambitious geek who dropped out of Harvard to build a little software company called Microsoft. Clearly, Gates is brilliant, ambitious and courageous. Gladwell argues excellence takes more than those qualities. He tells us that when the young Bill got bored in public school, his parents had the financial capacity to move him to a private school where he had access to a computer in 1968 in the eighth grade — an extraordinary opportunity in 1968. In high school, he learned that he could get access to the computer at the University of Washington — close to his home — between 3-6 a.m. Furthermore,

*Continued on page 7*



**Chapel doors of St. Paul's UMC in Houston open to Las Posadas' pilgrims.**

**Las Posadas, the Mexican Advent celebration is in remembrance of the journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem.**

**Story on page 5**



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



## “Getting Ready for Guests”

### Central North district offers welcoming training event

**By Jan Floro**  
**Church Grow Now**

The Central North district of the Texas Annual Conference will host, “Getting Ready for Guests,” a seminar that focuses on congregations showing ‘radical hospitality’ to visitors and guests.

If you attended the Welcoming Congregation training event a couple of years ago, you will want to gather a group from your church to

attend this updated training February 21, 2009 at Faith UMC, 2403 Rayford Road in Spring, Texas. If you missed the previous event, you will certainly want to participate this time.

#### Who should attend?

Warm, friendly members make a church congregation more welcoming. Everyone connected with the worship service, currently serving in inviting and welcoming min-

istries and everyone interested in church growth should attend the seminar.

To date, two out of 13 district churches participating in the *Transforming Church* program have continued to achieve the second year welcoming certification. This training event will definitely benefit congregations by regrouping, refocusing, and providing the motivation to proceed with the welcoming certification.

Contact the district office by February 13 for registration. The time of the event is 8:30 a.m. to noon and the cost is \$20 per person (with a maximum of \$100 per church).

Whether or not you are part of the Transforming Church program, you will gather valuable information that will assist your congregation in becoming a more welcoming place.

## Methodist Hospital graduates first class of lay ministers

**By Rev. Ted Smith**  
**Director of Spiritual Care and Education**

The Methodist Hospital of Houston seeks to build faith forming relationships through its department of Spiritual Care and Education.

The department recently held the graduation of the first class of the Lay Ministry

College. Bishop Janice Riggle Huie was the guest speaker.

Eleven lay persons from the Houston and Tyler areas completed two years of in-depth training in congregational care led by pastoral educators from the department.

They are now able to assist parishioners in the wide range of non-crisis life situations of

grief and loss that effect all congregations.

Through empathic listening, relevant questions, and appropriate prayer, these graduates help persons “tell their story” and facilitate their movement toward greater emotional and spiritual health. Their ministry of congregational care advances the church

in its mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Graduates of the Lay Ministry College are now equipped for full-time and part-time employment by congregations as they contribute to the Conference’s vision and mission.

### 2008 Lay Ministry Graduates

| NAME                  | CHURCH                             | DISTRICT      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Benjamin Bright       | Living Hope Fellowship, Gladewater |               |
| Robert Brock          | Shady Chapel UMC                   | East          |
| Dianne Davis          | Clear Lake UMC, Houston            | South         |
| Dorothy Ringer-Sumner | Nu Faith Community UMC, Spring     | Central North |
| Barbara Gust          | Lynches Chapel UMC                 | East          |
| Alean Harper          | Riverside UMC, Houston             | Central South |
| Dianna Henson         | Aldersgate UMC, Santa Fe           | South         |
| Suzanne Palmer        | First UMC, Alvin                   | South         |
| Blair Parker          | Bethany Christian Church, Houston  |               |
| Maxine Smith          | First UMC, Houston                 | Central South |
| Marisela Weaver       | Chapelwood UMC, Houston            | Central South |



# Learn to develop prevention and recovery support team ministries

## Bay Harbour UMC hosts leadership training event

By Elaine Kimzey  
Center for Missional  
Excellence

Bay Harbour UMC, in collaboration with The Bay Area Alliance for Youth and Families will sponsor a leadership training event for all churches interested in implementing *Faith Partners*, a way to help faith communities in the Houston area increase their capacity and

ability to respond to substance abuse problems which affect their congregations.

The event will be held January 15, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bay Harbour UMC, 3459 FM 518 Road E, South Shore Blvd. at Deke Slayton Highway in League City, Texas.

Faith Partners teams promote prevention through education, teach members how to

share concern in the early stages of addiction and provide support for those in recovery from addiction. This leadership training will introduce a successful step-by-step model for developing a prevention and recovery support ministry currently being used by numerous congregations in several states.

The Rush Center of the Johnson Institute will be the trainer of this session. The cen-

ter, based in Austin, Texas provides tools, training and technical assistance for clergy, religious staff and lay members by delivering effective prevention strategies, appropriate responses to addiction and recovery support.

The Rush Center staff has over 20 years of experience in the chemical dependency field, several years of working with the faith community using the

Faith Partners Team approach and experience as leaders of a Faith Partners Team Ministry in their own congregation.

The cost of \$10 per person covers lunch. The training and materials are provided free of charge. Contact Emily Caldwell, Bay Area Alliance for Youth and Families at 281-284-0373 or [ecaldwell@ccisd.net](mailto:ecaldwell@ccisd.net) to register or for more information.

# Recruiters explore ways to develop young clergy

By Vicki Brown\*  
United Methodist News Service

Forty-four annual conference representatives who work with young clergy candidates spent three days sharing strategies for success – from candidacy summits to vocational mission trips.

“There is no magic answer to the question of how to encourage and develop young clergy, but the annual conferences have so much influence over what happens in the life of young candidates.

“And, they are trying new things that work, so we wanted to offer a chance to share ideas, discuss potential roadblocks and look at what resources might be shared,” said Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment for the United Methodist Board of

Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, about gains shown in his 2008 Clergy Age Trends Report.

For instance, the actual number of young elders in The United Methodist Church increased from 876 to 910 from 2006 to 2007, and the actual number of young deacons increased from 64 to 69 during the same period.

The consistent decline in under-35 clergy as a percentage of all clergy hit a low point in 2005. Weems said that figure has held relatively steady with slight increases in the last three years. In 2008, under-35 clergy (deacons and elders) reached 5 percent of active clergy for the first time this century.

Recruiters talked about changes they have made, met with seminary admissions staff and heard a presentation from a

Conference, said annual conferences must teach local churches how to emphasize call.

“Most of the future clergy of The United Methodist Church are sitting in the pews today. If we don’t teach congregations how to encourage them, we won’t have them,” she said.

### Being innovative

Bruse said many changes made in Texas are included in the Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s Best Practices documents at [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org). One of the best examples, she said, is the



Rev. Carol Bruse and Rev. David Comperry chat during a break in one of the sessions.

“I’m going into ministry,” Bruse said.

New innovations in Texas include the candidacy summit and group mentoring. The first candidacy summit got 80 candidates together as they started the process, with all the district superintendents and the clergy identified as the best mentors in the conference.

Mentoring in groups allowed candidates to build relationships with each other as well as the mentor, she added. “People shouldn’t have to walk it alone, and they shouldn’t fall in a ditch,” Bruse said.

Group mentoring provides a self-monitoring to the process

too, she added. “We had one mentor who got off track, and the group kept going without him. Plus, they were willing to say the mentor was checking out, which is harder for a candidate working one-on-one to do,” she said.

The Rev. Malcolm Frazier, United Methodist campus minister at Howard University in Washington and chair of the recruitment committee for the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference, said the first change in his conference was adopting the mindset of cultivating a culture of call.

**New innovations in Texas include the candidacy summit and group mentoring. The first candidacy summit got 80 candidates together as they started the process, with all the district superintendents and the clergy identified as the best mentors in the conference.**

Higher Education and Ministry.

During the December meeting, recruiters heard from the Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr., executive director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at

regional director of the Fund for Theological Education about calling congregations.

Rev. Carol Bruse, associate director of the Center for Clergy Excellence in the Texas Annual

college pastoral leadership internships, in which college students considering ministry serve as interns at a supportive churches. “Almost 100 percent went from ‘I don’t know,’ to



# Balanced Living

## January is National Blood Donor Month

By MH Net

Blood donations are an important part of being prepared to provide effective treatment to those that have been severely injured. Having replacement blood readily available helps to ensure the recovery of those impacted by natural disasters, traffic collisions, workplace injuries, and other life-threatening occurrences. Here are frequently asked questions about blood donation so you can determine if donating blood is for you.

### Is donating blood safe?

Donating blood is a safe process. Needles and bags used to collect blood are used only once and then discarded, helping to reduce the possible spread of infection to the donor.

### Can I give blood if I have been turned down before?

The common reasons for which donors are turned away from donating are temporary, not permanent.

For example, one common reason for a deferral is low iron levels in the blood. Iron levels fluctuate daily and are affected by what you eat, so they do not permanently disqualify a prospective donor. Check the eligibility requirements to see if you're eligible to donate. A "mini-physical" is given to all potential donors to ensure they are healthy enough to donate.

### How often can I give blood?

Regulations in the United States allow people to donate whole blood once every 56 days.

The waiting period between donations can be different for other blood components.

For example, donating only platelets in a process called *apheresis* requires only a three day waiting period before a person can give again. Donating two units of red blood cells through a similar process doubles the waiting period to 112 days.

### How much blood is taken – won't it make me weak?

A blood donation equals approximately one pint of blood. The average adult body has 10-12 pints. The vast majority of people will not feel any different because of the donation.

A very small percentage may experience temporary dizziness, but some rest and fluids will help you feel better quickly. Your body will replace the lost fluid within 24 hours.

### Can I direct my blood to an individual?

Patients scheduled for surgery may be eligible to donate blood for themselves in the weeks before non-emergency surgery in a process known as *autologous* donation. If an autologous donation is not used, it is discarded.

Family members and friends can also make directed donations. Directed donations are fully tested, so if they are not used by the intended patient, they can be released for use by other patients.

### Can I direct my blood donation to the military?

The American Red Cross has created a strong operations network that helps us direct your blood donation to the areas of the country – or the world – where they are most needed.



While you can't direct your donation specifically routed to military personnel, you can be sure that it will be sent to the areas of most critical need.

### How do I know if I am eligible to donate blood?

You must be in good health, be at least 17 years old, and weigh at least 110 pounds.

You will also need to pass physical and health history reviews prior to donating. There is no upper age limit on your ability to donate. Conditions that require a temporary deferral are pregnancy, travel to certain parts of the world, inoculations, some health conditions and certain medications.

Call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE or check the eligibility requirements to get answers to specific eligibility questions you may have. Eligibility requirements may also vary for some states and blood centers. Final eligibility is determined by medical professionals at the time of donation.

### How do I know if I am not eligible to donate?

While you may be unable to donate blood, there are other ways you can help.

You can organize a blood drive, recruit other suitable donors, or volunteer at fixed sites or mobile blood drives. Monetary donations are another way to help ensure that safe blood can be provided to those who are in need. Learn more about how you can help by contacting your local office of the American Red Cross.

## Register now for Sexual Ethics training seminar

Sexual Ethics training will be held Thursday, February 5, 2009 at FUMC Pearland in the Assembly Room of the church's Family Life Center.

annual Conference are expected to participate in regular training in sexual ethics and document a certificate of completion in the Dove System.

### Who should attend?

- All clergy to be appointed in 2009 for the first time.
- All clergy who wish to transfer into the Texas Annual Conference from another Annual Conference or denomination.
- All clergy seeking probationary or full membership in the Texas Annual Conference who have not attended sexual ethics training within the last four years.
- All clergy who have not attended sexual ethics training in the past four years.
- Certified candidates for ministry.
- Lay professionals seeking certification or who have not attended a training in the last four years.

All persons under appointment must understand and comply with the Sexual Ethics Policy of the Conference. .5 CEU's (6 contact hours) will be awarded.

The registration form can be downloaded at [www.txcumc.org/setraining](http://www.txcumc.org/setraining).

It is important for each person to register so that we may have materials and lunch for each participant. Fill out the registration form online or print it out and email it to: [marytumulty@gmail.com](mailto:marytumulty@gmail.com), or mail it to: Rev. Mary E. Tumulty, 30 Rolling Stone Place, The Woodlands, Texas, 77381.

Rev. Tumulty can be contacted at 713-302-9131.

The registration deadline is January 23, 2009, and the cost of \$15 can be paid at the door. All checks should be made payable to the Texas Annual Conference.

### Why do I have to attend?

All clergy seeking appointment in the Texas





In the Las Posadas processional, Mary and Joseph lead the children and their families to the first stop along their journey.

## Las Posadas celebration at St. Paul's, Houston

**By Nataly Negrete**  
**Director of Hispanic Ministries**  
**and Rutabaga Territory**  
**St. Paul's UMC**

Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican Advent celebration meaning, "the inns" or "the lodgings."

The celebration is a remembrance of the difficult journey of Mary and Joseph through the streets of Bethlehem, seeking lodging.

A procession led by children, often dressed as Mary and Joseph, goes from house to house for several nights, pleading to be let in. As with Mary and Joseph, they initially are turned down, but eventually the

doors are opened and festivities begin.

Hispanic Ministries at St. Paul's UMC, Houston, conducted Las Posadas processions followed by a brief worship service in Spanish and English in the Chapel each evening from December 12 through 19.

Their journey began in Abraham Station, across Fannin Street from the Sanctuary building. Everyone was a pilgrim singing "Camina Pueblo de Dios" ("Walk on, O people of God")

and carrying a candle, with the lead children dressed as Mary and Joseph.

They knocked on one of the doors across from the Chapel, singing in Spanish, "Do you

**The celebration is a remembrance of the difficult journey of Mary and Joseph through the streets of Bethlehem, seeking lodging.**

have lodging?" The people inside responded by singing, "Go away. This is no inn."

They knocked on a second door, again singing, "Do you have lodging?" Again to be

refused with "Go away. This is no inn."

The third, and last, "house" was the Chapel where the "inn keepers" welcomed the exhausted travelers by singing

"Welcome, pilgrims, to this shelter. Let its peace to you impart. Though a poor and lowly dwelling, it is offered from the heart."

Inside the Chapel each

evening, a brief service was conducted of a scripture reading and storytelling in Spanish and/or English by St. Paul's members and friends, Emily Everett, John Rodriguez, Nora Q. Boots, Sandy Bankston, Ralph Longoria, Lillian Leeds, and Rev. Emily Chapman.

Each service concluded with a prayer, the singing of "Noche de Paz" ("Silent Night"), and a benediction. The families then retraced their journey back to Abraham Station where together they enjoyed a snack.

The Las Posadas celebration culminated with a bi-lingual procession and fiesta at 11 a.m. Saturday, complete with Bible readings, music, and a piñata.



# St. Andrew's 'Empty Stocking' fill hearts and homes with joy

**By Rev. Scott Stewart  
St. Andrew UMC  
Mount Pleasant**

The 2008 Empty Stocking campaign ended with the distribution of toys to 1,833 children and providing 30 pounds of food each for 727 families.

Despite the traffic jam created by the annual Christmas giveaway to needy families, the distribution of the toys and food at St. Andrew's UMC in Mount Pleasant, Texas, went off without a hitch.

Empty Stocking collaborated with the Mount Pleasant Police and Fire Departments' *Blue Christmas* food and toy drive, receiving part of their donations. Michelle Woodruff, Coordinator of Titus County Cares said, "The volunteer support during the delivery day was absolutely wonderful."

Volunteers from Rancer Church and Tennison UMC rolled up their sleeves to help the effort at St. Andrew's. "TEA Region 8 also sent over 18 volunteers and we had the home school groups here as well as all of the *Communities in Schools* coordinators and

their director, Carla Asvill," Woodruff said.

Ms. Woodruff extended a special thank you to St. Andrew's Rev. Scott Stewart. "He and his church were more than gracious. We pretty much invaded their church for the past month. That's a lot for any pastor to put up with."

Lots of praise go to Tony Mize of Brookshire's Food Stores for their efforts in helping the drive recoup the canned goods lost when Campbell's could not give its huge annual donation of food. Pilgrim's Pride contributed as well.

Although the beleaguered company could not give financially this year, they were there with a refrigerated truck. The Pilgrim's truck that Empty Stocking had used before experienced some mechanical problems that caused Pilgrim employees to unload and reload the hens and chickens into the new truck on site.

"It was a lot of work for them," Woodruff said. "The families were so excited to get the food along with the toys."



**Top Right: Ready for pick up.** The Empty Stocking campaign distributed toys to 1,833 children. With the help of the community police and fire department, the church had more than enough donations to meet the need.

**Middle Right: Shopping carts are being loaded with food supplies.** A total of 727 families were the recipients of 30 pounds of food per family.

**Bottom Left: One of the many volunteers from various churches, schools and organizations in the community helps load up boxes of food supplies.**



# A Good Read for a New Year

*Continued from page 1*

he developed a small group of friends who loved computers as much as he did. Several of them went to Harvard with him. By the time, he dropped out of Harvard his sophomore year, he had been programming computers for seven years — way beyond the 10,000 rule.

A second key factor Gladwell examines is opportunity. Folks who become outstanding in their fields not only practice extensively, they also need opportunity. Bill Gates had opportunities. One of the most poignant stories in the book is Marita's story — a student at a KIPP Academy in the Bronx. Marita was able to attend the Bronx KIPP Academy because she won the lottery — literally.

KIPP is one of the new public school educational experi-

ments funded primarily by the Gates Endowment. The Bronx is one of the poorest areas in New York. KIPP students are chosen by lottery with any fourth grader living in the Bronx eligible to apply. About half of the students are African American; the rest are Hispanic. Three-quarters of the children come from single-parent homes. Ninety percent qualify for “free or reduced lunches.” By the end of eighth grade 84% of these students are performing at or above their grade level in math — as well as kids in the suburbs. They do nearly as well in other subjects. Everybody participates in orchestra every day. Nearly all of these kids go on to college. I'll let you read Marita's story for yourself to learn what her transformation requires of her.

Although Gladwell doesn't comment on any religious figures, I find it fascinating that both the Gospel of Matthew and Luke go to great lengths to tell us stories about Jesus' family history, his time and place of birth, and the expectations of greatness that were placed on him by those circumstances. Luke even tells us that when Jesus was only 12 years old, he stayed behind in the Temple “listening to the teachers and asking them questions.”

No doubt most other kids were outside playing. When Jesus' worried parents located him, his response was “where else did you think I would be?” With that level of practice and excellence, it is no wonder Jesus attracted his own disciples in a very short period of time.

I think about people like Mother Teresa or John Wesley. These folks weren't satisfied with being an “almost Christian.” They gave themselves whole-heartedly to Christian discipleship. Even though she experienced years of what she called “darkness,” Mother Teresa continued her practice of prayer and devotion and love of God's “least of these.”

Wesley himself was always striving for perfection — to become “perfect in love in this life.” He practiced every day.

In our conference, we talk a lot these days about congregational “transformation” — congregations that become more and more engaged with making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Gladwell's book reminds me that transformation takes a tremendous amount of practice and learning over time. Congregational transformation is not easy. It requires perseverance and determination to live out Jesus' commandments.

I'm asking myself, “What would the “10,000 hour rule” require of me as an individual and us as a conference in this new year? What does it mean for pastoral and congregational excellence and fruitfulness? I invite you to join me in that pondering.

Grace and peace,  
Janice Riggle Huie

## Recruiters explore ways to develop young clergy

*Continued from page 1*

“We have a pre-ministry club for students who are really discerning a call,” he said. He also leads vocational mission trips with a focus on vocational discernment. Those trips can be

to Exploration are in the candidacy process now,” Frazier said.

### **Opportunity, not crisis**

The Rev. Jack Terrell-Wilkes, coordinator of recruit-

Louisiana Annual Conference, said his conference offers two chances for candidates to meet with the board of ordained ministry, once in the fall and again in the spring. “If someone has a

added that the group mentor helps assess how effective mentors are.

Steve Autrey, Western North Carolina, said conference camps that send a high percentage of young people into ministry have been identified. “We are looking

at what they do to see what we can learn.”

*\*Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.*

**“People shouldn't have to walk it alone, and they shouldn't fall in a ditch.”**

Rev. Carol Bruse  
Associate Director of Clergy Excellence  
Texas Annual Conference

life-changing for college students, Frazier said.

In addition, students regularly attend Student Forum, the annual leadership development event for college students sponsored by the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Frazier said regular district gatherings for youth are held and that young adults from the conference attend Exploration, a board-sponsored event for young people considering ordained ministry.

“Half our students who went

ment and nurture, Oklahoma Annual Conference, said the need for young people in ministry should be reframed as an opportunity for where the church is going, not a crisis that must be fixed.

Innovations in Oklahoma include internship programs, adoption of seminary students by local churches, and a whirlwind seminary tour that helps young adults visit many United Methodist seminaries quickly and cheaply.

The Rev. Juan Huertas,

struggle in the fall, they have the opportunity to work on it for the spring,” he said. Huertas also said the conference Board of Ordained Ministry visits every provisional member each year and that everyone has two interviews a year with the board of ordained ministry.

During a small group discussion, Lisa Garvin, Mississippi Annual Conference, asked if anyone had a way to evaluate mentors.

Huertas said the best way is to ask the candidates, and Bruse



**The Revs. Ed Fashbaugh (left) and Greg Johnson discuss recruiting techniques during a meeting of United Methodist clergy recruiters in Nashville, Tennessee.**

*UMNS photos by Vicki Brown*



## Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

### Fellowship Opportunities

#### First UMC Houston to host "Great Minds of Methodism"

The program is scheduled for January 25 at the 9 a.m. worship service of First UMC West Campus and at the 11 a.m. worship service at the downtown location.

The guest speaker is Dr. James W. Moore. Dr. Moore, retired senior minister of St. Luke's UMC, will preach at both services.

His topic, "The Moments that Take Your Breath Away" is the same topic as his new book. A book signing event will be held following the 11 a.m. service.

Contact Linda Calvert at 832-668-1834 or [lcalvert@fmhouston.com](mailto:lcalvert@fmhouston.com) for more information.

#### 2009 Religious Emphasis Week At Wiley College

Save the dates of February 1-7, 2009. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., will kick off the Wiley College 2009 Religious Emphasis Week observance beginning with a community worship service at 6 p.m., Sunday, February 1 at the Julius S. Scott, Sr. Chapel.

Dr. Moss will also deliver the sermon at 11 a.m. worship service on Monday, February 2.

The college's theme for this occasion is "Christian Ethics for the 21st Century Christian" and the guiding scripture for the week is Romans 12:1-2.

The public is invited. For more information, contact Melody Patterson at 903-927-3391 or Rev. Michelle Hall at 903-927-2455.

#### UM Student Day 2009

Lon Morris College will celebrate, United Methodist Student Day, January 31, 2009.

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie will be the guest speaker for the worship service.

College information will be available, the Fine Arts Department will hold auditions and there will be a Lon Morris basketball game. The game is open to junior and senior high student ministry groups. The cost for the event is free.

For more information contact Rev. Rhett Ansley at 903-589-4003, [ransley@lonmorris.edu](mailto:ransley@lonmorris.edu) or go to [www.LonMorris.edu](http://www.LonMorris.edu) or [www.BeaBearcat.com](http://www.BeaBearcat.com).

#### Houston North Emmaus Community Hosts Spiritual Formation Retreat

Do you know a man who is a faithful worker in your local church that you would like to honor?

They may sing in the choir, usher, lead worship, teach Sunday School, serve as a greeter or serve in ways that have, in the past, prevented them from attending retreats that would enrich their faith and deepen their walk with Christ.

A new opportunity is being offered that will allow them to feed the soul without neglecting the joy they express in working in their ministries.

January 28-31, the Houston North Emmaus Community will lead the Walk to Emmaus retreat at the Kaiserhof Retreat Center near Tomball, Texas.

For more details, go to [www.hnec.org](http://www.hnec.org) or call Larry Smith at 936-653-2287.

### Learning Opportunities

#### Division of Church and Society Focus On Health Care

Reforming the U.S. health care system will be the topic for an event sponsored by the Division of Church and Society for the Houston area. On Tuesday, January 13, the workshop will be held at Park Place UMC.

Participants will look at proposals from the Obama-Biden team

(including Sen. Daschle's ideas in his book, *Critical*) and the alternative from Physicians for a National Health Program. Dr. Ana Malinow, President of Physicians for a National Health Program, will be the principal speaker, with biblical, theological, and philosophical background from Rev. David Meeker-Williams and Dr. George M. Atkinson.

The Division of Church and Society is continuing its exploration of issues in which gospel imperatives affect ordinary Americans. Last fall it began its study of immigration; this winter it begins to study health care.

Your suggestions on other issues to explore are welcome. Contact the Rev. Kevin Young at [kevin@areiospagos.com](mailto:kevin@areiospagos.com).

#### St. Luke's UMC Houston Starts New Year with Men's Life!

MEN'S LIFE programs have spread throughout the entire Houston area as men are exploring new opportunities for personal growth in all of their relationships.

When men connect in life-changing ways, a powerful ripple effect touches families, the workplace, even our communities. Deeper connections with God and other men inspire transformational change that is hard to describe.

Through authentic and entertaining presentations and small group discussion, MEN'S LIFE helps men grow in authentic relationships with one another, while steering men to be all they were created to be.

St. Luke's UMC's MEN'S LIFE program encourages men in their transformation towards being successful leaders at home, work and in their communities.

The topic for the study is *Men's Life II: Winning @ Home (and life in general)*. The session is led by Senior Pastor Tom Pace and begins at 6:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This session

focuses on the home and family. It will begin to build the walls of manhood through study dealing with a man's chief responsibility. Come and explore how a man can enjoy and relate to family in a whole new way.

Register anytime during the semester by calling 713-402-5086.

#### Introductory Enneagram Class at St. Paul's UMC Houston

An Enneagram class for beginners will be at St. Paul's UMC on Sunday, January 18, from 1 to 5 p.m. It will be led by Judy Wilbratte, Enneagram trainer and consultant. The registration fee, due by January 12 is \$35, or \$40 at the door. Participants should bring a note pad; other class materials will be available for purchase by cash or check.

Studying the Enneagram helps people identify their particular unconscious patterns of thinking, acting, and feeling that play out in nine different personality styles. Knowing one's own style helps a person to see his or her core unrecognized behavior patterns and gain exceptional insight into others.

An advanced Enneagram class is scheduled for Sunday, February 8, at the same time with the same pricing.

An ongoing Enneagram study group is available at no cost for people who already are familiar with the Enneagram. It meets from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month throughout the year.

To register for classes, contact Judy Wilbratte at 713-410-7123 or [info@the9types.com](mailto:info@the9types.com) or the church's website: [www.stpaulshouston.org](http://www.stpaulshouston.org).

#### Grace Fellowship UMC Prayer Group Study

You were created for fellowship with God. Disciples Prayer Life will lead you to develop intimacy with God, and effectiveness in

your prayer life. You will examine biblical examples and no matter where you are in your walk with God you can develop a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him. This 9-week small group study begins Sunday, January 11, 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. in room 204, 2nd floor of the mansion, located at 2655 S. Mason Road, Katy, Texas, 77450. Your prayer life will never be the same.

Register by January 4 by calling Beth Scanlan at 281-460-9716 or email her at [scanlanent@earthlink.net](mailto:scanlanent@earthlink.net).

#### Mt. Sequoyah Offers Three Conferences in 2009

Coming early in 2009, Mt. Sequoyah will host the following events:

Addiction Ministry Responders Conference, February 23-25 – A conference for all church leadership to help shape the church's response to substance abuse problems within their communities and congregations.

Small Church Leadership Institute, March 9-13 – A conference to equip laity and clergy with the knowledge and skills for leading their small attendance church into the future.

Caring for Creation Conference, March 27-29 – A conference designed to educate, network and inspire faith communities to initiate, develop and sustain stewardship programs that will protect and celebrate God's creation.

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)