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Conference is in session

Worshippers encounter God's promise in remembrance service

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie called the 38th session of the Texas Annual Conference to order Sunday, May 27, 2007, in a

Amazing Grace. How Great Thou Art. It is Well. There is a Balm in Gilead. Victory in Jesus.

university president and Associate General Secretary of the General Board Higher Education and Ministry, illustrat-



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and Dr. Julius Scott, guest speaker for the opening worship service enter into the sanctuary at The Woodlands United Methodist Church.

service of remembrance that celebrated servants who are absent from the body and present with the Lord.

In step with this year's theme of Passionate Worship, was the 30-minute hymn sing that preceded the worship. The combined choir of Jones Memorial UMC, Covenant Glenn UMC and Blueridge UMC singers led more than 1,500 members of the Methodist family in singing the favorite hymns of the clergy and clergy spouses who died during the 2006-2007 conference year.

Transforming promises

The featured speaker for the evening was Dr. Julius Scott, who Bishop Huie described as someone who's been living out the conference vision of 'transforming lives and reshaping futures' long before its adoption.

"He changed my life," Huie said, "and shaped me in some ways that neither one of us could have imagined how our lives would intersect in the future."

Scott, who has a distinguished career in religion and education, including serving posts from university chaplain to

ed what it means to encounter a promise.

"Promises are written into the texture of our lives," Scott said. "The rainbow is a promise."

Dr. Scott then shared some Old Testament reminders of the promise.

"When God speaks to Abraham, he makes it very clear. 'You will be my children. I will be your God. Come into the land. Inherit the land. Multiply. And, I will be with you.'"

Noah also encountered the promise.

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Delegates vote for resolutions impacting youth and Lakeview

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications, Texas Annual Conference

In keeping with the theme of the 2007 session of the Texas Annual Conference – "Passionate Worship: Encounters with the Holy" – the more than 2,000 delegates and guests in attendance truly encountered the holy.

From impromptu offerings for global mission to the laying on of hands in prayer for all those in ministry, worship services and business sessions alike offered Texas Annual Conference attendees opportunities to encounter the holy.

One conference highlight shared during Bishop Janice Riggle Huie's Episcopal Address was the announcement that 13 new churches will be started throughout the conference in the coming year in Tyler, Port Arthur and Houston. Several of the new church starts speak to specific demographics such as young adults, the formerly incarcerated and Hispanic worshippers. (A complete profile of all new church start pastors and their mission fields will be included in the June 15 Cross Connection.)

Resolution weigh-in

Among the most discussed resolutions of the annual conference were those dealing with Lakeview Methodist Assembly and the representation of youth on the team that plans conference camping.

The 2006 restructuring of the entire Annual Conference placed the planning of camps under the 9-member Conference Council on Youth Ministry and the 4-member Age-Level and Camping ministry team in the Center for Congregational Excellence. The resolution proposed the council be expanded to include 27 members – three from each district – with districts nominating two youth and

one adult, with the final selection resting with the conference nominations committee.

"Emotionally, most of us just want to give power to the kids," said Rev. Steve Wende of First UMC in Houston during the Wednesday business session. "Lift them up and let them take control."

Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Rick Goodrich affirmed the reason for proposing the review of the nominations committee.

"There's a process in place that we voted on yesterday for nominations to ensure diversity on all the committees that we have," Goodrich said. "This process includes the empowering of youth, by their electing of the names sent to the nominations committee. This process ensures diversity as opposed to hoping for the possibility of diversity through an election process."

After much debate, an amended resolution was passed that called for the final selection of the district representatives to be made in the districts by the youth.

Also garnering much attention was the resolution calling for a task force to develop a long-term vision for Lakeview Methodist Assembly and a development and program plan.

When a delegate raised the question of if this plan would meet Lakeview's needs, Lakeview Director Rev. Von Dawson rose to speak in favor of the resolution.

"From the very beginning as this resolution emerged from the Core Leadership Team, Lakeview has been involved in the discussion," Dawson said. "We want to see the goals and dreams that have always been there for Lakeview to grow...Let's look at this and see

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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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Resident Bishop
Janice Riggle Huie

Director of Communications
Eleanor L. Colvin
ecolvin@txcumc.org

Editor
Thelma Jones
thelmaj@methodists.net

Web Content Manager
Brant Mills
bmills@txcumc.org

Communications Assistant
Rebecca Garcia
garciar@methodists.net

Cross Connection
5215 Main Street
Houston, Texas 77002
713-521-9383

Conference Web Site:
www.txcumc.org

New Bible study format a huge success

By Thelma Jones
Editor, Cross Connection

The 38th session of Annual Conference used a new format for opening each daily session. In prior sessions, the day began with a short devotion.

This year, in keeping with its theme, *Passionate Worship*, the Texas Annual Conference decided to offer a bible study instead. Judging from the crowded sanctuary, the idea was a successful one.

Reverend Justin Coleman, recent graduate from Duke Divinity School, offered a fresh look at a well known scrip-



Reverend Justin Coleman speaks about the need for brokenness in the Christian life as a primary need if Christians are to be available to be used by God.

ture story. He chose the story of the unnamed woman who anointed Jesus with her tears and expensive perfume,

The study spoke of brokenness; how our willingness to turn to God in our broken state in order to be healed and used in His service. “Those who have been forgiven much can love much,” he said.

Tuesday’s morning bible study showed *passionate worship*.

What better way to begin the day than the study of God’s Word followed by the activity of working in conference sessions to transform local churches in the Texas Annual Conference into vibrant, growing congregations that exemplify God’s love for us?

What do you have?

Let God take it, bless it, break it and give it to the world

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications

In a worship service that centered on the Mark 6 and Mark 8 telling of the feeding of the multitudes, Texas Annual Conference worshipers were fed Monday night in a service featuring Bishop Will Willimon of the North Alabama Conference of

that is leading the entire church in areas of renewal, accountability and growth. And, I thank you,” Willimon said, while describing how this impacts his annual conference. “My cabinet said: ‘Bishop, you’re pushing too hard on these numbers’ ... I said: ‘If

“Master, it’s getting late – you need to wind this thing up,” Willimon paraphrased. “The people are hungry.”

The following discussion is familiar to modern disciples as well. The Lord says do. Disciples ask how.

“Then Jesus takes what they have and he blesses it, breaks it and gives it ... And, it’s enough,” Willimon said. “No, the story says it was more than enough. There’s a surplus with Jesus.”

“In any kind of desert of human need, when Jesus shows up, the desert blossoms. The grass is green.”

Bishop Will Willimon

the United Methodist Church.

In his opening prayer, Rev. Morris Mathis of Christ United Methodist Church in Sugarland, Texas prepared the body to receive the word of God through Bishop Willimon and to live out that word in their lives.

“Grant us open hearts,” Mathis prayed, “that we might experience the abundance of all you offer us.”

Worship leader Marcia McFee led the congregation in singing songs in the spirit of that prayer.

So, build us a table and tear down the wall.

Christ is our host.

There’s room for us all.

Bishop Willimon first commended the Texas Annual Conference.

“This is an annual conference

you think this is hard, you ought to thank the Lord that I’m your bishop and not Janice Huie.”

Sea of need

Willimon then turned his attention to the multitude.

“Jesus looks out on this sea of human need, and Mark says he has compassion on them,” Willimon said. “Of all the needs lay before him, he teaches them ... Human hunger comes in many different forms.”

This is a key to church growth. Willimon shared a recent survey citing a pastor’s participation in weekly instruction somewhere in the congregation as a characteristic of growing congregations.

And while the teacher saw one need in the multitude, the disciples saw another.

Miracles of surplus

Since it can be easier to see the miracles of surplus in bible days as opposed to modern days, the bishop lifted up examples from the North Alabama Conference where God has taken what the people have, blessed it, broken it and given it.

There was a surplus of elderly, retired teachers who saw a need among latch-key kids, and began offering after school care to six children twice weekly. Within three weeks, they began offering the service five days a week, and now they serve 75 children, one of whom was baptized after joining the program.

“Sometimes, when you’re working in the church ... sometimes, we’re the last people to see the miracle,” Willimon said. “Time and again we look out on all we could be doing, should be doing and we despair ... Then he

takes it, blesses it, breaks it and it’s enough.

“In any kind of vast desert of human need, when Jesus shows us up, the desert blossoms. The grass is green.”

In another North Alabama miracle, the Lord took a surplus of college men in a fraternity house to meet the need of a young child. He encountered this everyday miracle when the group’s behavior resulted in a request of Willimon to give a presentation on character.

While leaving, he inquired about whom the elementary school aged child who appeared to be living among them. He was told they met this child of a crack addict through a mentor program. When the mother couldn’t care for him, the fraternity did – often for days at a time or up to a week. These men in need of character education would read bedtime stories, feed and take him to school.

Willimon thought that was a miracle.

“You know what’s miraculous?” one fraternity member asked. “That God Almighty would use someone like me to do something this good. That’s miraculous.”

He takes it, blesses it, breaks it and gives it. And, it is enough.

Remembrance Service

Continued from page 1

“Noah built the ark in sunshine under a cloudless sky,” Scott said. “But he built it. He built it because God had promised.”

And, not to forget Moses. “Moses encountered the promise,” Scott said, “when God told him to go to a place he

vocalist.

“He could have been a rhythm and blues star – he had the talent,” Scott said. “But he knew the promise. He came from four generations of preachers ... He didn’t lose his voice.... He sang the songs of Zion.”

“Promises are written into the texture of our lives,” Scott said. “The rainbow is a promise.”

Dr. Julius Scott

knew not and live in tents and find it without a map. And he did.”

Modern sojourners

Fortunately, God continues to honor his age-old promises, and continues to call modern servants to live into those promises. Candles were lit during worship in recognition of the more than 30 sojourners lost during the last year.

“They were all outstanding souls,” Scott said. “Great imitators of Christ.”

Specifically, he spoke of the talent of one pastor to find the finances to build and grow churches.

Honoring the help mates

“All of them were lively and lovely, with great modesty and loyalty to their husbands and the ministry they followed,” Scott said. “They decided to follow Christ by being the wind beneath someone else’s wings.”

Vacation Bible school, endless meetings, cooking meals for the invited and uninvited and providing counsel to those in need were among the often thankless duties of a clergy spouse.

“They will never see their names on church marquees,” Scott said. “Yet, they serve the Lord with all their hearts, minds



Attendees enjoy the opening worship service.

“Jones Memorial stands today as an affirmation of this man’s encounter with the promise,” Scott said, with members of Jones Memorial UMC comprising a portion of the stellar mass choir in his shadow.

Another pastor he referred to as his ‘boyhood chum.’ This man he noted for his musical talent, which earned him a spot as a backup singer to a national

and souls and they answered the call to be wives and help mates.

“Let their faith inform and inspire our service and our future...Let their witness call us to evangelism. Let us claim our promise.”

Assembly prepared laity for spirit-led service

By Leah Taylor
Conference Lay Leader

A warm welcome greeted the more than 1,000 lay delegates and guests as they entered the Marriott Hotel exhibit hall Monday morning. The celebration Singers and Praise Band



Delegates prepare to take the first vote for General Conference 2008.

from Pearland First UMC spilled out the doors and filled the room with the spirit of the Lord.

Together, we sought God’s guidance of our time together as the band lead us in singing, “Here I Am, Lord.”

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie welcomed the delegates and guests, and Don House, head teller, explained the voting procedure to elect the lay delegation for the 2008 General and Jurisdictional Conferences.



Sharon Krowl helps with the registration of lay delegates for the laity meeting.

Bishop Huie then presided over the first round of voting for the delegations. In her remarks,

the Bishop reminded the assembly of the letter from the Commission on Religion and Race promoting the theme that “Inclusiveness Counts” as we choose our delegations.

A presentation explaining the business conducted at General and Jurisdictional Conference was shared with the lay delegates. It educated the laity on the commitment a delegate must make to participate and the responsibilities that go along with accepting a place on the delegation.

The presentation is available on the conference website.

A short introduction of each District Lay Leader followed,

giving the laity more knowledge of the responsibilities of these individuals and the work they do in

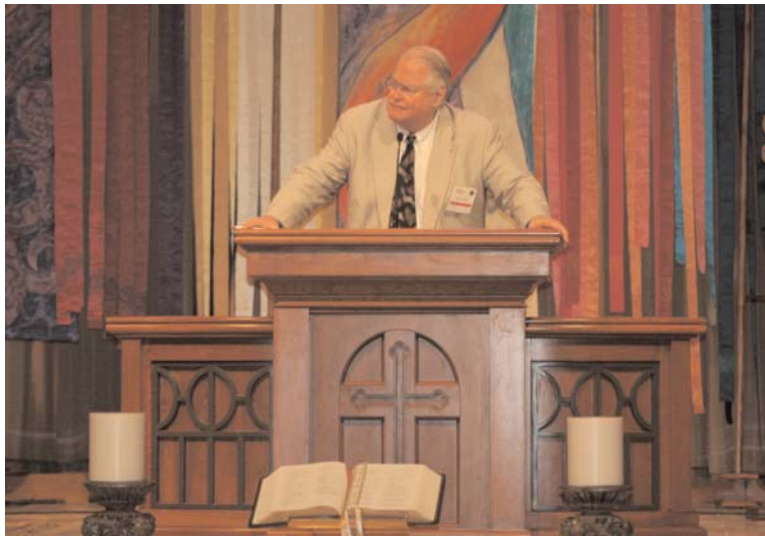
their churches, districts and the conference. The current District Lay Leaders are: Central North, Jim deMasi; Central South, Corky Fowler; East, Johnny Bear; North, Martha Scott; Northwest, Stephanie Griffin; South, Reginald Clemons; Southeast, Morris McCall; Southwest, William Moseley; and West, Don House.

Jennifer Sample, Executive Director of the Methodist Mission Home in San Antonio, Texas, shared pictures and success stories of the work being done in this ministry. She highlighted the Home’s efforts to place babies in loving homes of adopting or foster families.

Heartwarming stories of the work the home does with disabled young adults, preparing them to live lives at their fullest potential, were also included. Sample reminded the laity that the Methodist Mission Home does not receive apportionment funds, but welcomes any and all support from the churches of the Texas Annual Conference.

In honor of Memorial Day, Jim deMasi shared a tribute to veterans, families of veterans and families with members who are currently serving in our Armed Forces. He reminded us of the beginnings and meaning of Memorial Day.

After a beautiful rendition of “Because He Lives,” by Reginald Clemons, South District Lay Leader who is a member of Pearland First UMC, the 2007 Lay Member Assembly adjourned in an attitude of spirit-filled gratitude to be in service to our Lord Jesus Christ.





Here I am, send me!

Texas Conference commissions 17, ordains 20 in 2007

By Rev. Mary E. Tumulty
Board of Ordained Ministry

It begins at our baptism. . .
“Lord, you give the great commission: ‘Heal the sick and preach the word.’ Lest the church neglect its mission and the gospel go unheard, help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity. With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.”

It is lived out in the everyday tedium of our lives when the holy breaks in and makes those things ordinary, extraordinary and sacred by God’s presence.

“Lord, you call us to your service: ‘In my name baptize and teach.’ That the world may trust your promise, life abundant meant for each, give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community. With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.”

The call comes to all of us one way or another. Sometimes it comes as we sit, waiting at the bedside of a loved one who is sick, or sometimes as we are singing silly songs at Vacation Bible School. For others the call comes at Summer Camp or serving in the UArmy kitchen or bumping along a dusty road in Mexico with the sun scorching our heads and the sweat pouring off our bodies, and still for one as he opened the door to a car.

The call comes to the very young ones and to those not so young anymore, to whom God has not tired of calling. . .

“Lord, you make the common holy: ‘This my body, this my blood.’ Let us all, for earth’s true glory, daily life heaven ward, asking that the world around us share your children’s liberty. With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.”

So, God takes what we have to offer broken and bowed but open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and we begin this path toward commissioning and ordination; our lives changed forever, our lives offered to service to

the living Lord, till death do us part.

After discernment and seminary, after hours of prayer and holy conferencing, instruction and interviews we come to Annual Conference and kneel before God as witnessed by the

anticipation, our eyes welling with tears, as a bride who waits to go down the aisle to her bridegroom. The music swells and the voices sing with joy, “Lord, You Give the Great Commission,” and we step into the sanctuary.



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie with the 2007 Ordinand class before the ordination ceremony.

congregation and the bishop prays:

“Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this one. Send him/her now to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to announce the reign of God, and equip the church for ministry, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

For three years these “probationary members” work in local congregations, join in holy conferencing, develop their gifts for ministry, pray and listen in order to prepare themselves for full membership and ordination.

“Lord, you show us love’s true measure: ‘Father, what they do, forgive.’ Yet we hoard as private treasure all that you so freely give. May your care and mercy lead us to a just society. With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.”

Ordination is a gift from God for the church and is exercised in covenant with the whole church and within the covenant of the order of deacons and order of elders. The church confirms our call through ordination to be in relationship with the laity, bishops and those in the covenant connection.

We gather outside the sanctuary, our hearts pounding with

The moment is here and we go forth to kneel before the bishop. Hands reach out to touch us in love and support; hands that reach across the ages and millennium, who are linked to one another by the laying on of hands; surrounding us is a cloud of witnesses who hold and strengthen us.

“Take authority as a deacon to proclaim the Word of God, and to lead God’s people to serve the world in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

And the people say Amen!

“Take authority as an elder to preach the Word of God, and to administer the Holy Sacraments in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

And the people say Amen!

“Lord, you bless with words assuring: ‘I am with you to the end.’ Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend and, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity. With the Spirit’s gifts empower us for the work of ministry.” (United Methodist Hymanl 584 Lord, You Give the Great Commission).

Texas Conference UMMen host ‘Festival of Faith’ dinner

By Kenneth Tielke
Texas Conference UMM President

The Texas Annual Conference was blessed by the Conference United Methodist Men sponsoring a dinner event on Monday, May 28 at The Woodlands United Methodist Church. This first time venture for the UMMen proved to be well received and exceptionally successful.

The purpose was to provide an enjoyable and informative setting to convey recognition and appreciation for the support by the local churches to men’s ministry.

Upon entering Wesley Hall

Everyone was brought up-to-date on the status of the Conference and new District UMM organizations. Six of the new nine districts have a full slate of elected officers. The remaining three have a partial number of elected officers in place. District officer election meetings will be called shortly after annual conference to complete these ministry organizations.

All nine districts have adopted new district UMM bylaws to govern their actions and effectiveness. The Conference



Ken Tielke, President of United Methodist Men addresses the first dinner of appreciation for men in ministry.

for dinner, the guests were greeted with the inspirational sounds of the Southernaires – a seasoned gospel group from Rosenberg First UMC. Conference UMM President, Kenneth Tielke welcomed guests and offered the opening prayer.

The keynote speaker for the evening, Gil Hanke, is presently the president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and lives in Nacogdoches, Texas.

In his address, Gil related the results from a nationwide survey asking who was most influential in bringing men to Christ. The majority of men reported that “someone else” other than a parent or pastor was credited with planting the seed for this personal, spiritual relationship. He encouraged each one of us to be that “someone else” for others we encounter in our daily lives. The Lord will provide us with many opportunities to make disciples, and we know we have been commissioned to do just that.

UMMen adopted some changes in their bylaws at their Spring Retreat in late April, which alters the organizational structure and areas of responsibilities.

Instead of having two vice-presidents, there will now be three vice-presidents. Each one will be assigned to a three-district region. This will more readily address the needs of the district organizations and the local churches. Additionally, Kenneth Tielke announced the Conference UMM Board has approved work to begin with the Texas Methodist Foundation to establish a permanent endowment fund to finance the mission and ministry goals of the Texas Conference United Methodist Men.

Honoring the dedicated

United Methodist Men have supported Scouting ministries since 1980 through the UMMen Foundation. Larry Lanz, the Texas Conference Scouting Coordinator, presented four Bishop’s Awards of Excellence and two Torch Awards to

New initiatives

Continued on page 8

Spontaneous offering 'nets' huge catch for 'Nothing But Nets'

The Texas Annual Conference redefined extravagant generosity Wednesday by pledging nearly half a million dollars for Nothing

But Nets.

An impromptu offering followed the Nothing But Nets presentation during the morning busi-

ness session. It began with one \$20 gift laid on the altar, and ended with \$8,400 overflowing an office-supply box that substituted for an offering plate.

An afternoon presentation on the conference delegation's visit to Cote d'Ivoire prompted another surprise offering.

Chapelwood UMC presented a check for \$100,000, which started a ripple effect of \$100,000 pledges from St. Luke's, Windsor Village and The Woodlands United Methodist churches. First UMC Longview encouraged others to give whatever is pos-

sible, with its pledge of \$25,000.

In a matter of minutes, the extravagant generosity of the

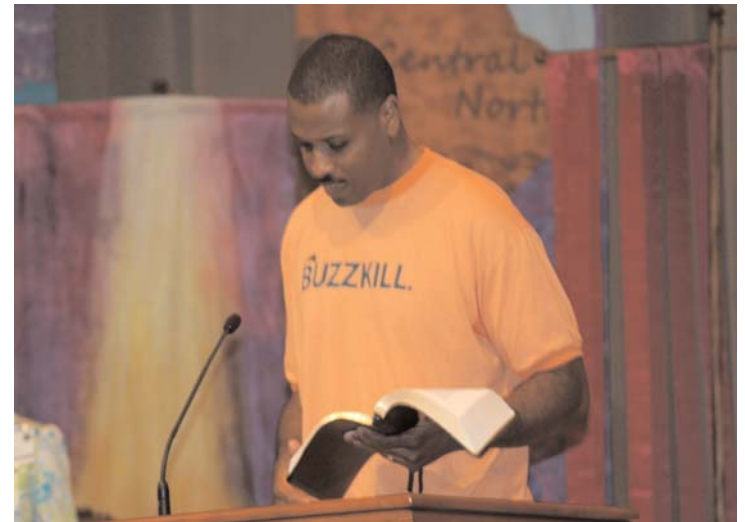
autographed by an Astros player.

An additional offering the night before brought in another



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and Conference Treasurer, Dr. Elijah Stansell look on in amazement at the generosity of the offerings for the Nothing But Nets initiative.

Photo by Lydia Baehr



Reverend Ed Jones offers a prayer during a worship service wearing a T-shirt in support of the 'Nothing But Nets' project.

people of the Texas Annual Conference netted more than 40,000 nets for the people of Cote d'Ivoire.

Also, on Wednesday an auction netted \$13,000 for an autographed photo of Bishop Janice Riggle Huie throwing out the first pitch at an Astros baseball game and the ball she threw,

\$8,300.

In all, \$123,462 was collected for Nothing But Nets during the annual conference gathering, \$325,000 was pledged and much more is expected as God continues to move people to express extravagant generosity.

Peace with Justice ministry fights human trafficking

By Elaine Kimzey

Peace with Justice, Chairperson

Stephanie Webber, of Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition, spoke at the Peace with Justice luncheon at Annual Conference about the growing problem of human trafficking.

More than 100 people heard the grim facts as Webber enumerated them, and many gathered materials to take her message back to their local churches.

One attendee commented, "This is wonderful! I finally know what I can do to help the woman who is my neighbor down the street. Finally, I can actually do something."

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. After drug dealing, it is tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world today, and it is the fastest growing.

Globally, 27 million

people are enslaved. The U.S. government estimates that

20,000 people are trafficked annually into the United States, most of them women and children. Trafficking is distinguished from smuggling, in that human trafficking victims have been enslaved through force, fraud or coercion and subjected to involuntary servitude.

Webber shared stories of some of the victims, asking after each one, "Is this acceptable?" There was no doubt among the luncheon attendees that, indeed, it is not acceptable.

The Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition plans a Human Trafficking Awareness Week

beginning September 16. Features will be a Health Fair to

contributed a grant to support the billboard campaign.



Chairperson Elaine Kimzey (left) introduces guest speaker Stephanie Webber, of Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition at Peace with Justice luncheon.



Members of the Peace with Justice ministry of the Conference showcase their ministry's goals in the display area during Annual Conference.

equip health care workers for identifying victims, a billboard campaign to increase public awareness, and further work with law enforcement officers. Churches are invited to add their voices to the campaign.

Peace with Justice Ministries of the Texas Annual Conference has joined the Coalition and has

To find out how others can help, contact Stephanie D. Weber at sdweber@houston.rr.com or 713-306-0583. For more information and resources, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/>.

Resolutions on youth and Lakeview

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can we make Lakeview better, can we serve more people, can we do better things. As we expand who we are for all of youth and persons around out nation.”

The resolution passed and the task force will consist of Lakeview board members, Core Leadership Team members, district camp coordinators, and at-large representatives to give voice to youth and disabled populations.

New processes

Resolutions calling for a Disability Awareness Sunday in the conference; amendments to the Sexual Ethics Policy and establishing procedures for endorsing Episcopal candidates all passed with little to no discussion.

Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Rick Goodrich credits this to the practice of holy conferencing. All of the resolutions submitted prior to annual conference were discussed in the pre-conference district delegate meetings.

“I think that process made a big difference,” Goodrich said. “We actually talked about them in a meaningful way, and we had workshops on them, instead of people hearing about them for the first time at annual conference. That helped us amend some and modify some ... The real desire of those resolutions was to get the awareness of these issues before people. The district meetings did get them before the people and there was no need to debate them on the floor.

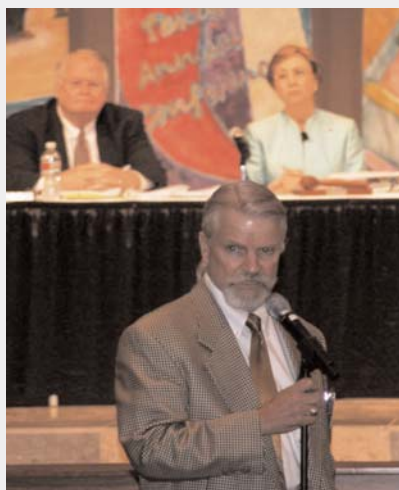


Rev. Tommy Williams of Woodville UMC prays before delegates cast their votes.

“The whole emphasis on holy conversations, holding a true dialogue with respect for one another even when we disagree was, for the first year, very effective and I look forward to working on that more in the future ... it can only benefit the way we proclaim the Gospel.”

Another new addition to annual conference was designed to impact the way delegates elected representatives to General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Before each ballot, delegates observed a moment of silence, then a clergy or lay person led the entire body in prayer.

“To my knowledge it’s the first time we’ve done that,” Goodrich said. “The hope is that the process will allow people to truly listen to the way God and



Reverend Von Dawson, Director of Lakeview Conference Retreat Center explains the importance of the connection between Lakeview and the Texas Conference.

the Holy Spirit speak to them in voting process. It allows them to be more discerning and truly listen to the Holy Spirit.”

United Methodist Men celebrate men in ministry

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deserving churches and individuals.

One of the greatest on-going ministries in our Conference, as well as UMMen’s ministries

tics are best seen through service to fellow men and women and commitment to the teachings of the Christian faith.

Several men in the Texas

The majority of men reported that “someone else” other than a parent or pastor was credited with planting the seed for this personal, spiritual relationship. He encouraged each one of us to be that “someone else” for others we encounter in our daily lives.

nationwide, is the *Strength for Service to God and Country* daily devotional books. This daily devotional is re-published from the original of those issued to military service men and

Conference have been recipients of this award for outstanding service. On Monday night, one more was added to that number. Rev. Tom Ramsey was presented with this distinct honor. This



Larry Nance, the Texas Annual Conference Scout Coordinator presents awards to excellence and torch awards to deserving churches and individuals.

women during World War II and the Korean conflict.

Recognition certificates were presented to five congregations in the Texas Conference for exceptional contributions to this project. Those recognized were Sealy UMC, John Wesley UMC, Memorial Drive UMC, Jewett UMC and Donnie UMC. All United Methodist Men’s fellowships and congregations are encouraged to purchase these devotionals as gifts to all our military personnel and civilian service personnel in your communities.

In 1982 the directors of the United Methodist Men Foundation established the Society of John Wesley as a means of recognizing those who exemplify the characteristics of John Wesley. These characteris-

award is the highest award in the United Methodist Church in recognition of United Methodist Men.

Ramsey has been active in United Methodist Men’s ministry for many years as district president and conference vice-president. He has now entered into the ministry full time and continues to support the missions and ministries of UMMen throughout the conference.

A delicious steak dinner was enjoyed by all. The event was closed with the wonderful gospel singing of the Southernaires. Plans are to continue this awesome gathering at the Texas Annual Conference next year to mark the centennial celebration of organized men’s ministry in the Methodist Church.

Look for more Annual Conference News

in the next issue of Cross Connection:

Restorative Justice

Denman and Copeland Award Winners

New Church Start Pastors and their mission fields

Pastoral intern profiles

Episcopal Address Highlights