

Cross Connection

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

Annual conference focuses on faith-forming relationships to transform church and world

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Texas Annual Conference
Communications Director

Faith. Formed. Together.
That's the foundational theme of the 2009 Texas Annual Conference gathering, which takes place May 24-27 at The Woodlands UMC.

As always, an atmosphere of worship will be set that will prayerfully permeate the business sessions as well.

"This year we have explored the creative use of fabric and lighting effects in the sanctuary to achieve a different look in a space to which have all become accustomed," said Melissa Burnham, who leads the annual conference worship team. "Not only do we on the worship team try to provide meaningful worship for persons who are normally the ones planning the worship (ministers and worship leaders), we try to spark their imaginations and their creative energies by giving them fresh ideas each year.

"Hopefully, each person will have one new thing to try in worship back in their local church."

Conference will also sport a "green" presence this year. While the Heartspring Foundation is providing reusable shopping bags and conference members are encouraged to bring mugs to cut down on waste, the worship team is going green as well.

"We have also used reclaimed items this year -- cedar posts from a tree downed by Hurricane Ike are being used to fashion a large cross on the stage which will be used several times in the worship experiences," Burnham said.

Also, in response to comments on the evaluations last year, the team is including more contemporary music.

Attendees will hear songs written by Reuben Morgan, Paul Baloche, Israel Houghton and Jonathan Larson.

Approximately 172 years after four missionaries – Martin Ruter, Littleton Fowler, Robert Alexander, and Lewellen Campbell – were sent to Texas, the mission of transforming the hearts of Texans continues in ever-evolving ways. Annual conference gatherings help those assembled to take the pulse of the church; report back on its health and continue to add to the church's vitality through mission, service and faith-forming relationships.

As it was for the early missionaries, there are ups and downs, charges discontinued, and new appointments for pastors.

"But be of good cheer. The day is not distant when Texas will be able to sustain itself as a Conference," wrote Mississippi Annual Conference Bishop in 1839 upon changing the appointment of one of Texas' early missionary pastors.

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie will deliver a similar message of hope and encouragement during the Episcopal Address on Monday, May 25, at 1 p.m. As is her tradition, the Bishop will celebrate the grace-filled victories of the annual conference year, while issuing the charge for the next 365 days of Christian service.

Starting by remembering

Dr. Elijah A. Stansell Jr. will preach at the Service of Remembrance on Sunday, May 24 at 7 p.m. This sacred service marks the official start of Annual Conference while celebrating the ministries of those who have died since the last annual conference.

Since September 2004 Stansell has served as Treasurer

Clergy and Clergy Spouses Remembered At Conference

DECEASED CLERGY	DECEASED SPOUSES
Isaiah Daviss	John Bess
Donald R. Box	Christine Garoutte
Lois June Boyles	Dorothy Iwig
Dave Morgret	Merle A. Jones
Bill Haskell	June Landrum
Rick Smith	Larry Mobley
Joe W. Fort, Sr.	Foy Mae Reagan
Keith Kellow	Linda Scott
Robert E. Johnson	Ruth Jonte Smith
Doyle Riley	Joyce Whiddon
Thomas Latta	
Brad Nelson	
LeRoy Stanton	
Spurgeon Dunnam	
Clinton H. Clements	
Billie M. Thomas	
Russell J. Watkins	

of the Texas Annual Conference. Previously, he served as a District Superintendent, after his last local church appointment at McCabe Roberts Avenue UMC. Dr. Stansell has served on many boards, task forces and committees within the Methodist denomination and as a delegate to the General Conference. Stansell is married to Audrey H. Stansell and they are blessed with three daughters, a son-in-law, and two grandchildren.

A list of the honorees (as of

the publication date) is included in this edition of the newspaper.

Dramatic Worship

Friends of the Groom is a professional theater company dedicated to communicating the Christian message in an entertaining and challenging format. The inter-denominational group is located in Cincinnati, Ohio, and since 1980, has performed plays, led retreat weekends, and conducted workshops in thousands of locations from

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



TAC receives \$2 million grant

A significant new grant to the Texas Annual Conference will strengthen congregations for the future by investing in the development of young clergy. Lilly Endowment Inc. recently notified Bishop Janice Riggle Huie that the conference

the way in equipping clergy and congregations for fruitful ministry, mission and witness in this century. This grant will help accelerate the capacity for leadership, which is an important strategic priority as we anticipate the retirement of

Advancing Pastoral Leadership is a five-year grant that will create a new long-term, comprehensive process of developing Spirit-led, excellent, fruitful and accountable pastoral leaders. It will be part of the work of the Center for

Advancing Pastoral Leadership. She has created leadership development programs and has significant experience in program start-up.

“It’s always great news to receive a large grant. And then the hard work begins,” said Virtue. “I am glad to offer my experience to the conference and will relish the chance to work with your emerging clergy leaders. This month, we will be ready to announce more details about the program and how to apply. In the meantime, please offer prayers for the work and celebrate the strength of the annual conference that has made such an extraordinary grant possible.”

More information will be forthcoming on the Texas Annual Conference website and through a “Special Edition” of the Clergy E-Newsletter in May. For now, inquiries may be directed to the Center for Clergy Excellence through Rev. B.T. Williamson at bt.williamson@txcumc.org.

“Our Centers are leading the way in equipping clergy and congregations for fruitful ministry, mission and witness in this century . . . I am thrilled about receiving the grant. I am even more thrilled that the leaders of a major funder of church-related efforts would recognize and validate our efforts to insure that our churches stay vibrant through the coming decades.”

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie
Texas Annual Conference

would receive \$2 million in support of its efforts to increase the number of clergy ready to serve strategic churches for the next 30 years or more.

“This grant is a vote of confidence in the Texas Conference by the Endowment,” said Bishop Huie. “Our Centers are leading

nearly half of our clergy in the next decade.

“I am thrilled about receiving the grant. I am even more thrilled that the leaders of a major funder of church-related efforts would recognize and validate our efforts to insure that our churches stay vibrant through the coming decades.”

Clergy Excellence and will be one of the many efforts the conference is making to cultivate, develop and sustain capable leaders for the church.

Bishop Huie has asked Rev. Janice Virtue, executive director of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, to serve as the initial project director for

BYOM to Annual Conference 09

The conference Board of Church and Society (BCS) encourages delegates and guests to “go green” at the 2009 gathering of the Texas Annual Conference.

We’re making progress, but when away from home, Polystyrene cups (most commonly known as Styrofoam) are still the container of choice. Did you know that one 8 oz Styrofoam cup can sit in a landfill for up to 400 years? Or that Styrofoam waste takes up 25 percent to 30 percent of all landfill space?

Participation in the “Bring your own Mug” (BYOM) campaign is a simple way to practice good stewardship of the planet we share. With an estimated 2,600 delegates and guests expected at the TAC this year we could easily throw away 3,000 Styrofoam cups per

day.

The Board of Church and Society is a partner in the conference effort to “go green” in big and small ways. Several groups and organizations are shining spotlights on better ways to live and care for the earth. The United Methodist Foundation is on board, helping us get off to a great start at annual conference by underwriting reusable bags containing all the materials that delegates receive at the conference registration tables.

Conference attendees can carry the bags as a public witness to United Methodist concern for creation, and then perhaps use them later to promote investment in personalized reusable shopping bags for their own church families. It’s a



great way to encourage an earth friendly habit, to publicize your church, or to offer great gifts for visitors.

Join us in taking another step. When packing for annual conference, toss in your favorite mug and bring it with you. Use it and reuse it

throughout the 3.5 days that we’ll be together. Leave annual conference feeling good that you’ve helped spare landfills of 10,000 or more Polystyrene or paper cups. Simple, but effective. Bring your own mug! See you at conference.



New name, same mission

'Heartspring Methodist Foundation'
to serve financial needs of conference

Heartspring

Methodist Foundation

Financial Partner to the Texas Conference

The United Methodist Foundation of the Texas Annual Conference officials recently changed its name to Heartspring Methodist Foundation. It also has launched a refreshed and expanded Web site at www.heartspringmethodist.org.

"For the past two years, we've been conducting a strategic review of our organization and research with our constituents to determine how we can best serve our conference's financial needs," said Rev. C.J. Taylor, Heartspring president.

work that springs from the heart," Taylor said. "And Heartspring also reflects the spirit of love, generosity and renewal that enriches us and fellow Methodists."

Among the sacred work that Heartspring will continue to assist individuals and churches with is individual estate planning; church building and refurbishing projects; stewardship campaigns and consulting.

"That's what makes my job so enjoyable everyday," Taylor said, "because we spend the majority of our time visiting

advance causes close to their hearts.

As financial partner to the Texas Conference, the foundation designed its new Web site to provide a wealth of information and resources, both on the products and services it offers as well as general information on financial issues for churches, agencies and individuals.

With today's economy in which financial issues are a heightened priority for many, Heartspring is expanding its outreach programs to provide tools and information on finan-

TAC implements new email system

By Brant Mills
TAC Web Content Manager

In order to help everyone reduce the problems associated with constantly changing email addresses for frequently moving clergy, the conference has arranged to offer to all clergy a dedicated email account that will not change. A similar account will be offered to all clergy spouses. These will be free for all users.

By offering a dedicated account to every clergy person, as they transition to new appointments they remain connected and don't miss vital communications from their district, the conference office or other clergy within the conference.

Conference IT Manager Ivan Krowl said "I know that some will not want to join in this program, but they probably have an email address that they like and it probably does not change anyway. We plan to have a very specific way to create the email addresses so in almost all cases you can guess an email address if you know the correct spelling of a person's name."

The conference has two email domains set aside to be used for this purpose: umcmail.us (offered to all clergy) and umcspouse.us (offered to all clergy spouses).

Since this new address will work from anywhere, there will be no need to change the address again regardless of where a user moves.

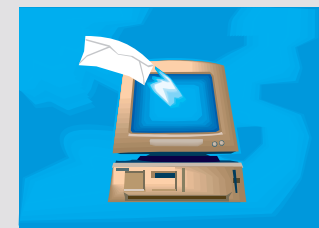
Krowl said some have asked about moving and having parishioners still attempting to reach a church through a previous pastor's e-mail address. "Most churches have their own e-mail service and domain name for their website. The church should have a general account like "pastor@xyzchurch.org" that can

transition to the next incoming pastor seamlessly. That's the best way to approach it."

These new accounts will adhere to the following standards:

- The first letter of the first name and the full last name.
- In the case of similar first initials and last names, a number will be added to the end to make sure the email address is unique.
- This standardization allows most email addresses to be created without having to look someone up in a list somewhere.

These accounts are available now and can be set up for you whenever you are ready. To set up an account for yourself or your spouse, please call the Conference Office at 713-521-9383 and ask for either Tracey Blackshire or Rebecca



Hernandez, either one will be delighted to assist you..

During Annual Conference there will be a table set up in the Conference Information Technology room - room TWUMC-D205 (also known as the "Dove room") where anyone who wants an email address can sign up to have an account created for them. To expedite the process, please have already picked the password that you want applied to the account being created.

If you are changing appointments at annual conference this year and expect your email address to change, please make sure you stop by and sign up for what should be the last email address change you will ever have to make.

**"In some ways, we're one of those well-guarded secrets." . . .
The name change is to help people understand that there's a resource within the bounds that has the products, services, resources and personnel to help churches and individuals that want to do great things for the work of the Lord."**

Rev. C. J. Taylor, Heartspring President

"We have honed and focused the products and services we offer to help fulfill our mission and theirs - to build resources to do more of God's work."

The analysis also revealed the need for a new name, related to the foundation's mission, which would distinguish it from organizations with similar-sounding names. Additionally, the United Methodist Foundation of the TAC realized that its moniker was "a name train," a long name that no one referred to, but more often than not, shortened.

So, how does the new name reflect the foundation's mission?

"We are called to partner with churches, individuals and agencies to help fund the sacred

with churches and institutions - Lakeview, Lon Morris [College] and Wiley [College] being the biggest three - that are trying to do great things for the cause of Christ."

Heartspring's history and future

Heartspring Methodist Foundation, founded in 1978 by the Texas Annual Conference to serve its members, offers loans, investments, endowment funds and other vehicles for charitable giving. Through presentations, seminars and consulting, it helps churches enhance stewardship, serve their congregations and extend their ministries. The foundation also works with individuals to build and deploy resources to

cial options. Sign up on the Web site, www.heartspring-methodist.org, to receive regular updates.

Participants in the Texas Annual Conference, May 24-27, can visit the Heartspring Methodist Foundation booth to learn more about the organization's resources.

"In some ways, we're one of those well-guarded secrets," Taylor said. "The name change is to help people understand that there's a resource within the bounds [of the conference] that has the products, services, resources and personnel to help churches and individuals that want to do great things for the work of the Lord."



Accounting and accountability in the church

By Brant Mills
TAC Web Content Manager

This article is part of a series offering a snapshot of extension ministries in the Texas Annual Conference. Please watch the conference website and Cross Connection for future articles.

Rev. Brenda Porter brings extensive accounting experience to the table when churches need help. An ordained deacon appointed to a ministry outside the local church, Rev. Porter has been a C.P.A. since 1985 and was called into ministry in 1996 after working in accounting for a developer and a hotel management company.

"I went to Brite Divinity school for a Masters of Theology, and while I was there doing accounting as part-time work... I realized that I love accounting and began exploring God's call in that light of service," Porter said.

She added that she took her love for accounting and her call into ministry and explored how God could be calling her into a



Rev. Brenda Porter

ministry that used her financial background as part of that ministry. "From the end of 1998 through the summer of 2004 I worked as a church business administrator at three different Methodist churches... St. Matthew's, Houston, The Foundry and Holy Covenant in Katy."

Her current ministry is focused on helping churches on an as-needed basis. "I work on church audits, reviews and compilations for many denominations and some non-profits," Porter said, "For these services, I work with [Cynthia Cox C.P.A.] whose practice is with churches and non-profits. Any audit, review, or compilation work is done as a member of her firm."

Another area of her ministry involves other financial and business assistance to churches; she has helped one church out with IRS issues and another

with doing some account work in Quickbooks.

"One of my concerns from the beginning of working for the church was the small churches without the resources to have a business administrator. If congregations are unaware of money they have and how much is being spent it makes it more difficult to be a good steward with those resources," Porter said.

While most of her work is on an as-needed or short-term basis, she offered one example of a long-term project she is involved in.

"I got a call from an interim minister going into a church with financial issues. I have been working with them since January of last year and have done bookkeeping for them for the past sixteen months. I am now training an employee to carry it on. It is something I've been able to do in conjunction with one of the interim ministers. Often there are financial issues, and having worked in a local church and having done audit work as well gives me a

perspective on both sides."

She said it is common for Churches who have need of an interim minister to have questions relating to setting up and reporting finances.

Porter mentioned other aspects of her ministry as well. In addition to extension ministries, she is appointed to Cornerstone in Houston where she assists with worship, sings in choir, is an active member of a Sunday School class, and preaches when asked.

Her husband, Larry, is an active member at Cornerstone, as a choir member, Sunday School member/teacher, Trustee, and member of the Building Committee. She says she has been actively involved in the Emmaus movement and has served as assistant spiritual director on several walks.

As an active member of a Deacon's Renovaré group, she enjoys the opportunity to grow spiritually with other Deacons. She is on the equitable compensation commission, the conference board of trustees and has been the relocation coordinator

for the conference since 2004. "That to me is a major ministry," she said, adding that through that position she tries "to answer questions and take stress out of the moving process."

Porter said she also directs churches to resources they can use. "There are very good resources on the GCFA website (www.gcfa.org) and there is an organization called the National Association of Church Business Administrators (www.nacba.net) who were extremely helpful to me when I started working in a church office."

She said she sees her ministry as very connectional and added that "a disciple is a learner in all facets - not just about the Bible, and I see my ministry as one of helping churches learn to be better stewards of the resources God has given to them."

Rev. Brenda Porter C.P.A. is available for consultation and can be reached by e-mail at thebritrev@comcast.net or in her office at (281) 599-7804.

Annual conference focuses on faith-forming relationships to transform church and world

Continued from page 1

Anchorage to Canterbury. Friends of the Groom will minister during the Monday night worship service at 7 p.m. To learn more about their ministry, visit www.friendsofthegroom.org.

The company has designed a drama for this annual conference that focuses on the journeys of believers. The 3-part presentation will be woven throughout the interactive worship service.

Duke scholar to teach Bible

Edgardo Colón-Emeric, assistant research professor of theology and Hispanic studies at Duke University, will lead this year's Bible studies. Colón-Emeric is also director of the Hispanic House of

Studies at Duke Divinity School.

An ordained elder in the North Carolina Annual Conference, Colón-Emeric also serves as associate pastor of Reconciliation UMC, a bilingual, multicultural congregation. His ecumenical study of the theology of John Wesley and Thomas Aquinas received the 2008 Aquinas Dissertation Prize from Ave Maria University and is forthcoming from Baylor University Press. His research interests center on the intersections of classical theology and Hispanic questions.

The Bible studies are open to all and scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, at 1:30 p.m. and Wednesday, May 27, at

8:30 a.m.

Go forth and serve

Rev. Christi Conway currently serves the two-point charge of Noonday/Flint UMC in the Tyler area. She previously was an Associate Pastor of St. John's UMC in Richmond and pastor of Wesley McCabe UMC in Longview.

Conway, who is in her 10th year of ministry as a pastor in the Texas Annual Conference, currently serves on the Board of Ordained Ministry; as Co-Coordinator for District Camp North/Northwest; as a Northwest District Ministry Mentor, and Jurisdictional Conference delegate. She is married to Rev. Dan Conway

and they have two energetic boys.

The sending forth service is set for Wednesday, May 27, immediately after the conclusion of the morning business session. A male, clergy chorus will minister at this final worship service.

Rich legacy

Additionally, there will be a service to celebrate retirees at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, May 26.

The Texas Annual Conference history, as recorded in the Journal, celebrates a diverse heritage and history of serving farm communities, port cities, oil boom towns, suburbanites, retirement communities, inner city residents

and immigrant communities from all over the world.

"From its origins as a foreign mission to its present status as one of the leading conferences of the UMC, [the Texas Conference] has been marked by its boldness in seeking new opportunities for witness and service," according to the conference historical document.

Don't miss your opportunity to add to the Texas Annual Conference's rich legacy May 24-27, 2009. For more details about the event, see the preliminary agenda on page 6, or visit www.txcumc.org and click the 2009 Texas Annual Conference button.



Bishops roll back wages in sign of sacrifice

A UMNS Report
By Linda Green

United Methodist bishops are taking a pay cut.

In a sign of solidarity with people and churches struggling in the global economic crisis, the 50 active bishops from the United States voted to forgo a pay raise for 2010 and instead roll back their salaries to 2008 levels. Their annual pay would drop from \$125,658 to \$120,942 beginning January 1.

“The current global crisis has ... gifted us with a sense of urgency and an opportunity to lead courageously,” the bishops said in a call to action at their spring meeting.

The bishops said they did not know if their action would have a snowball effect because other salaries, including those of top church executives, are related to the bishops’ wages. The United Methodist Council of Finance and Administration will address the bishops’ action during its May 13-15 meeting in Nashville.

The bishops said, however, they had a personal obligation to

be leaders in sacrificial giving in response to the financial crisis. This moment in history, the bishops said, “demands bold, courageous, transformative action.”

Western North Carolina Bishop Larry Goodpaster, the council’s president-designate, said the call to action is a way to name the urgency of the

moment, an urgency that “calls us not to panic, not to fear, but for confident action into the future.”

California-Pacific Bishop Mary Ann Swenson said the salary rollback shows “we really are participating in sacrificial giving and going beyond to go back to a level from a year ago.”

Some regional and local church leaders have already taken similar salary cuts to help with budget deficits and to keep ministries going, several bishops said.

In another effort to save money, the Council of Bishops voted to shorten their semi-annual meeting by a day, from five to four days, beginning with the November meeting.

Among the financial challenges facing the church, the bishops discovered the 2008 General Conference was \$1.5 million over budget and that the projected shortfall for the 2012 conference, the church’s top legislative assembly, would be more than \$3 million. The bishops will begin working with the Commission on General Conference and the United Methodist Council on Finance and Administration

to redesign the next General Conference.

The United Methodist Church approved a \$75 million Global Health initiative and an additional \$25 million challenge goal during the 2008 General Conference to help end malaria. The bishops committed to helping the church reach its goal by 2012. Every bishop, active and retired, will make a voluntary contribution to the initiative. The bishops also committed to help the Central Conference Pension Initiative raise the remaining \$5 million of the pension initiative’s \$20 million goal to support pension programs for retired pastors and surviving spouses in Africa, the Philippines and Europe.

In spite of the crisis facing the church and denomination, the bishops said this is a “kairos moment in time” and they have not lost their heart of passion to be servant leaders for the church.

**Green is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in Nashville, Tennessee.*



Bishops Benjamin Boni of Côte d'Ivoire (left) and Mary Virginia Taylor of South Carolina (center) listen to the discussion about a call to decrease salaries of U.S. bishops.

Methodist Children's Home recognized on National Residential Education Day

By Carrie L. Anderson
Community Relations Officer
Methodist Children's Home

As a homeless 12-year-old living out of her family’s truck, Heather wanted nothing more than a place to call home. After her mother passed away when Heather was 11, her family lost their home in Houston, and her only sibling, an older brother, moved to a ranch near Waco. With nothing left for them in their hometown, Heather and her father moved to Waco.

A local church provided support for Heather’s family, and church members assisted with her eventual placement at Methodist Children’s Home in 2000. Heather lived at MCH for almost five years. During that time, she caught up to her grade level in school, having

missed a year of formal education prior to coming to MCH, and graduated as the salutatorian of her senior class. Involved in choir, ROTC, youth group and mission trips, Heather became a shining star at school and a beacon of hope to other residents of Methodist Children’s Home.

Heather will graduate from Texas A&M University in May, and she is grateful for the financial assistance she has received from MCH to help with college expenses.

“I am thankful for the support of Methodist Children’s Home, not just in my teen years, but also during college,” Heather said. “I know their support has made the difference.”

Making a difference in the lives of children and youth is

the mission of Methodist Children’s Home, which serves more than 1,000 children from Texas and New Mexico each day.

The 119-year-old child care agency and other residential programs across the country was recognized by CORE during its first National Residential Education Day. CORE (Coalition for Residential Education) is a national non-profit organization, based in Washington, DC, that promotes residential education programs for economically and socially-disadvantaged youth.

“Kids need physical and emotional safety, and they need a quality education,” said Heidi Goldsmith, executive director of CORE. “Ideally, that structure is a good family. But if that is not possible at this point

in a child’s life, a well-run RE program can provide for a child’s needs.”

MCH receives strong support from CORE. The organization has recently recognized the Home with four awards: George and Genevieve Ratliff, MCH homeparents, 2009 Residential Educators of the Year; Mary Bilheimer, unit manager, 2008 Residential Supervisor of the Year; Kamico Cornelius, a graduate of MCH, 2007 Student of the Year; and Bobby Gilliam, MCH president, 2006 Administrator of the Year.

“Methodist Children’s Home is grateful for the support our youth and staff members receive from CORE, and we appreciate their commitment to at-risk children and youth across the country,” said

Moe Dozier, vice president for residential services at MCH and a member of CORE’s board of directors. “We enjoy working with other nationally-known child care agencies that share our commitment to a strength-based approach to child care.”

Like many of the children and youth served by Methodist Children’s Home, Heather realizes that MCH played an important role in helping her build a solid foundation for the future.

“I know that I would have made a journey of self-discovery as a teen no matter where I lived, but living at Methodist Children’s Home gave me a way to look at myself through a lens of hope rather than despair,” she said.



Celebrate a Special Sunday of Shalom

The General Board of Church and Society

Missionary Rick Jost found a simple way to make a difference - solar ovens!

"Motivation for what we do is the crushing poverty in Haiti," Rick said. "It brings many people to tears when they see how these people live."

Peace with Justice (PwJ) Sunday, celebrated on June 7 this year, witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world.

Drinking dirty water and cooking over open fires - because one has no choice - are justice issues. By building and taking solar ovens to Haiti, Rick and other United Methodists help poor families pasteurize drinking water and cook healthy meals in a safe environment.

Texas Conference congregations who celebrate PwJ Sabbath or who collect the PwJ Special Offering can rejoice with missionary Rick! Taking the PwJ offering is one way to live out extravagant generosity and connectional ministry. Since half of the offering collected by our conference is retained to fund Texas Conference peace with justice programs, you can also see a difference in your own neighborhood.

Texas Conference PwJ Grants

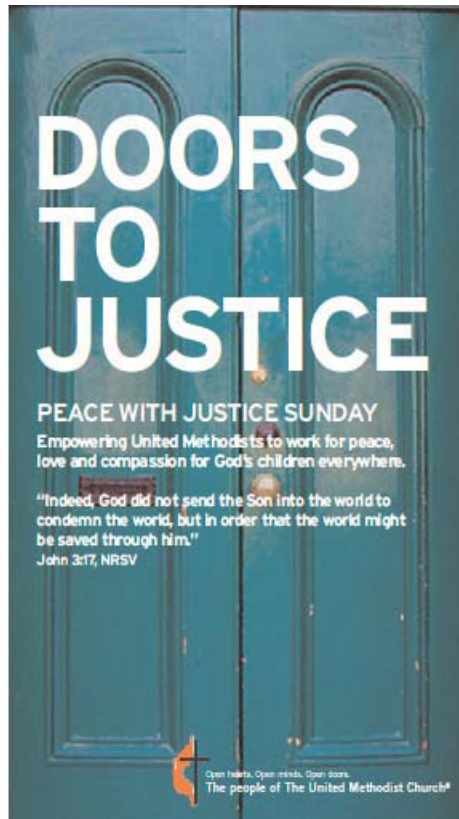
The PwJ grants awarded in May 2008 totaled \$3,403 and went to Grace UMC in Palestine for an anger management training project, Angleton UMC for grandparents raising grandchildren project, and to Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition's awareness-raising art exhibit on modern day slavery.

The other 50% of the funds collected go to fund justice in other areas of the US and world — 28 grants totaling \$52,805 were awarded in 2009.

Recipients comprise diverse ministries, such as empowering women, immigrant legal services in Iowa, justice and peace work in Jerusalem, training election observers in Mozambique, conflict management and mediation, and a water justice project.

Resources and contacts

Free posters and offering envelopes can be ordered from www.umgiving.org. Litanies and prayers suitable for Peace with Justice Sunday are found at www.umc-gbcs.org.



For a speaker, contact one of your Texas Annual Conference Peace with Justice Coordinators: Bren Hardt bbhardt@gmail.com or Elaine Kimzey ewk@cebridge.net

We enthusiastically encourage your church to participate in 2009, celebrate Peace Sabbath and send a contribution or the offerings to the PwJ fund of our conference. Every dollar helps. Together, we can work together for a faithful and loving world for all and bring hope for our future.

2009 Annual Conference News Coverage



The Office of Communications needs your help. At Conference, there will be many informative and interesting events taking place, many of them at the same time.

In an effort to provide the most comprehensive coverage possible, we are asking you (or a designated person) to be our "on the spot reporter" for your event. After Annual Conference, we will publish a special "Annual Conference" edition of the Cross Connection newspaper, highlighting meetings, workshops, and meal events for which we receive stories.

For the submission of articles, it should be 200 words or less (with photos). Articles and photos can be submitted to Eleanor L. Colvin or Thelma Jones via e-mail, (ecolvin@txcumc.org or thelmaj@methodists.net). The deadline for submission of information of information will be Wednesday, May 27, 2009.

Photos may also be directly uploaded to the conference web site through this link: www.txcumc.org/acphotos. You must register on this page before uploading pictures. Additionally, several bloggers will report on annual conference throughout the event at <http://www.txcumc.org/09acblog>.

2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

Following is a general outline of the agenda for Annual Conference 2009.

This is the agenda as of this publication date. For updates, visit the conference website, www.txcumc.org.

At registration, participants will receive an updated agenda in their packets.

Opening of Annual Conference - Sunday, May 24, 2009

2:00-6:00 PM Early Registration (Clergy & Lay, Marriott Waterway Hotel)
7:00 PM Service of Remembrance
Preacher: Dr. Elijah Stansell
9:00 PM Service of Remembrance
Reception (Wesley Hall)

First Day of Annual Conference - Monday, May 25, 2009

7:00-8:30 AM Boards, Divisions, Commissions, Committees, Ministry Teams, meet as called (Meeting rooms listed in Pre-Conference Journal)
8:00 AM Registration (Clergy-The Woodlands UMC) (Lay-Marriott Waterway Hotel until noon/1:00 pm The Woodlands UMC)
9:00 AM Meeting Of Clergy - Sanctuary
9:00 AM Meeting Of Laity (Marriott Waterway Hotel)
11:00 AM Lunch Break
1:00 PM Opening Celebration for TAC 2009 - Sanctuary
3:00 PM Annual Conference Business Session Sanctuary
5:00 PM Dinner Break
7:00 PM Worship Service - Friends of the Groom drama presentations

Second Day of Annual Conference - Tuesday, May 26, 2009

9:00 AM Annual Conference Business Session - Sanctuary
11:00 AM Retirement Celebration -Sanctuary
12:00 NOON Lunch Break
1:30 PM Bible Study
Teacher: Edgardo Colon-Emeric
Sanctuary
2:00 PM Business Session (Amendments & Resolutions - Sanctuary)
4:00 PM Dinner Break
7:00 PM Ordination & Commissioning Service
Preacher: Bishop Janice Riggle Huie
Sanctuary
9:00 PM Ordination & Commissioning (TWUMC-Wesley Hall)

Last Day of Annual Conference - Wednesday, May 27, 2009

8:00 AM Morning Bible Study
Teacher: Edgardo Colon-Emeric
Sanctuary
9:00 AM Annual Conference Business Session
10:45 AM Sending Forth Service
Preacher: Rev. Christi Conway
Sanctuary
12:00 NOON End of Conference



Here I am, Lord send me

By Ed Hilliard
Director of Disaster Recovery

Methodist? Baptist? You may get confused if you try to pin a label on Tim and Jennifer Schwartz. Tim is an ordained pastor in the American Baptist Church and Jennifer is a certified occupational therapist. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, they are two of Galveston's newest residents. Jenn gave up her career and Tim has resigned his pulpit and both of them have answered God's call to come to Galveston and offer their lives in ministry.

They had heard the call and reached out to the various relief agencies in Texas and offered their services. They eventually decided to align themselves with the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Here, they hope to find the opportunity to serve and to answer "Here I am Lord, send me."

Tim and Jenn have both joined in wherever there is a need but Tim has quickly assumed the role of writing grants for the individual victims of Hurricane Ike. Tim found a grant available from a national banking organization and quickly began compiling the necessary paperwork to help our clients qualify for the grants. Through his efforts dozens applied for the grants and many of these received as much as \$10,000 to apply toward repairing their damaged homes.



Jennifer Schwartz repairs beams in the ceiling of a house damaged by Hurricane Ike.

Tim is also quickly becoming a key part of the management team by creating standards for procurement. We anticipate spending \$2 to \$3 million on construction materials in the coming year. Tim hopes to stretch our purchasing power by shopping for the best suppliers for our needs.

Jenn has been integral in working with Tim on these projects but has also carved a niche of her own. Jenn has become trained on how to do our case management. Case management is the lynchpin to all we do here. Case managers or Family Advocates as we call them, represent the client and become their overall support net in finding ways to meet their most serious needs.

Jenn has also assumed the critical role of assuring that each dollar spent on a client is accurately reported. As you can imagine, there is simply not

enough dollars to repair all the homes here so it is critical that we are good stewards of what funds we do have.

To be sure you understand what Tim and Jenn left behind, they both left thriving careers, their homes and families to answer their call. They have come here to volunteer with no income and no place to live. They spent the first month living in a closet in a local church.

They have now moved into a borrowed motor home with their few possessions set up in the yard of a parsonage. From here they work from early to late six days a week doing those things that need to be done as servants of Christ. In between these duties, they can be found around the island hanging sheetrock, painting or otherwise working to repair the individual homes of the underserved here.

On Sundays they spend their time in worship and immersing themselves in the local culture of their new homes by cycling around the island, always on the look out for those in need. If you would like to join the Schwartzs in their ministry to the underserved please join our prayer team. Keep us all in your prayers and if you would like to make a contribution, please send it to:

Disaster Recovery
5215 Main Sreet
Houston, TX 77002
Attn: Ed Hilliard

Demands and pressures from stress

Balanced Living Provided By The Department of Clergy Excellence

There are two kinds of external demands and pressures: physical and psychological. External physical demands and pressures—gravity, air pollution, noise pollution, extreme weather conditions, etc.—generally aren't acknowledged as demanding or stressful.

External psychological pressures and demands include family, personal, social, environmental, financial and problems on the job. This is what most of us think about when we talk about stress.

All these demands and pressures compete with one another for our attention, generally all at the same time. Psychological research, however, has shown we can only pay attention to seven items, plus or minus two, at a time. Something has to give, so we set out own, subjectively defined priorities as to what we'll pay attention to, and when.

Sometimes we do this poorly, over extend ourselves, and create stress. Priority setting is particularly problematic when the demands and pressures not only compete, but conflict—work versus leisure time or family life, for example. When this happens, stress just escalates further.

Those external competing and conflicting demands and pressures—that big lump of items we "have to do" now combines with our internal demands and pressures—those things inside our heads.

In our graphic, the things clamoring for attention from inside the person's head include:

Physiological demands and pressures such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, sexual desire, needs for elimination, etc.

Psychological demands and pressures concerning your views of who and what you

are, what your rights and privileges are, expectations of yourself and others, psychological baggage from the past, etc.

Your internal demands and pressures are thus added to your external demands and pressures to produce a total burden of demand and pressure composed of many competing and conflicting elements all clamoring for your attention.

Obviously, one way to control stress is to set limits and priorities. But the effort of organization can become another demand and pressure in and of itself and we tend to put it off.

How many times have you said, "When I get time, I'm going to get organized." But, somehow, you just never get around to it. Under these circumstances, demands and pressures can, and often do, get out of control.

Add to the demands and pressures the fact that your body is gullible, it'll believe anything you tell it. It responds to the yammering of all those untrouled, conflicting, competing demands and pressures you're feeling by automatically and unconsciously mobilizing its resources to deal with all of them at the same time.

You can only push yourself so hard for so long. When you exceed your physical limits for mobilization, something in your mind and/or body breaks down and you develop stress-related symptoms (physical and mental).

The particular symptoms you develop depend upon a complex interaction between the physical constitution you inherited and the intensity, frequency, and duration of your mobilization in response to the demands and pressures you've talked yourself into.

The more overwhelming your demands and pressures, the more serious the health consequences of your mobilizations.



Jim Schwartz works on the exterior frame of a home in the Galveston area.



Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

Fellowship Opportunities

Communications breakfast to serve up tips and tools

Join the Conference Communications Committee for a breakfast meeting during Annual Conference that is designed for anyone who helps a church or ministry with publicity or communications.

Consultant Yvon Prehn will share her communications insight through a “virtual seminar.” Prehn’s experiences as a pastor’s wife, news reporter, author and public speaker all shape her innovative approach to church communications.

Among the topics breakfast participants will explore are: the five steps people take from “unchurched” to committed and the marketing steps that coincide; as well as tips for effective bulletins, outreach publications, ministry marketing, volunteer materials, and creating multi-channel campaigns for the web and print.

Additionally, all attendees will receive a free disc full of money-saving and time-saving tools that can be immediately implemented in your ministry setting.

The breakfast is set for Tuesday, May 26 at 7:30 a.m. in room D208 at The Woodlands UMC. The cost is \$10.

Checks should be made payable to Texas Annual Conference and mailed to April Canik, St. Luke’s UMC Communications Director, P.O. Box 22013, Houston, Texas, 77227-2013. Seating is limited.

Laity workers interested in communications, church secretaries and anyone who impacts the church’s internal and external communications are welcome. For more information, contact

Eleanor Colvin at ecolvin@txcumc.org or 713-521-9383 x334.

First UMC Lake Jackson Hosts Classical Piano Concert
First UMC will present its second concert in the new Concert Series on Monday July 6, 2009 at 7 p.m.

The concert will be in the sanctuary at 404 Azalea, Lake Jackson, Texas and will feature Jim Hendricks in a sacred classical piano concert.

It is free to the public with a love offering being accepted, a nursery is provided and a reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

Contact Music Director, Eddie Vandewalker at 979-297-3046 for more information.

Perkins Dinner
Perkins School of Theology will host a dinner on Monday, May 25th for Perkins graduates, friends, and prospective students during the 2009 session of the Texas Annual Conference.

The dinner is scheduled for 5:45 p.m. in Aldersgate Hall at The Woodlands UMC. For more information, please contact Rev. Suzy Reedstrom at suzyreedstrom@mdumc.org

Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries Luncheon

Jeanette Clift George will be the featured speaker at the F.O.A.M. luncheon at Annual Conference, Monday, May 25 at 11:30 in Aldersgate Hall. She is the founder and the artistic director of the A.D. Players.

Tickets are \$16 per person. Luncheon tickets are available from Dorothy Fontana, St. Luke’s UMC at 713-402-5031, or email at dfontana@stlukes-hou.org.

Checks should be made out to Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries (FOAM).

Strawbridge UMC Celebrates 25 Years In Ministry
Sunday May 17, 2009, Strawbridge UMC will celebrate its 25th anniversary. All former pastors and members are invited to this day of celebrations and remembrances.

The worship service will feature music from Strawbridge’s adult and children choirs. Founding pastor, Rev. C. J. Taylor will present the message.

Festivities will continue with a free concert by the Dixie Echoes at 6 p.m.

First UMC Hempstead Celebrates 150 Years Of History

On May 17, First UMC will receive a historical marker, commemorating 150 years of ministry and service to the community.

A worship service and dedication ceremony will take place, followed by lunch in the fellowship hall.

Learning Opportunities

Host Churches Needed for DISCIPLE Bible Study Mini-Training Events

The DISCIPLE Bible Studies (DBS) Task force of the Texas Annual Conference (a part of the Faith Forming Relationships and Spiritual Formation Ministry Team) is looking for churches interested in hosting a mini training event in their respective districts.

Because of the recent downturn in the economy, the Texas Annual Conference DBS Taskforce has elected to offer these events locally.

Attendees will have the opportunity

to learn and explore various ways in which DISCIPLE studies might be offered, scheduled and funded, and discuss advertising and registration details that might benefit their particular group.

Now is the time to schedule a training event at your church. Contact Jill Krone, TAC DBS Taskforce coordinator at 903-473-3755 or jill.krone@gmail.com, for details and scheduling information.

The Disciple Taskforce is waiting to assist and support you with any questions you might have as you offer these transforming studies to your congregation. What a great time this is to share DISCIPLE studies with your church or community!

The Woodlands UMC to host author, Sybil MacBeth In Prayer Workshop

Sybil MacBeth, author of *Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God*, will present her fun, interactive workshop Thursday, May 21, 9:30–11 a.m. and 7-8:30 p.m. at The Woodlands UMC, capping off a three-week series designed to bring prayer into your daily life in fun and unusual ways.

The cost for the May 21 workshop is \$10 per person, however, there is no cost for the first two sessions.

For more information and to register for any of the three programs, visit www.twumc.org/shorttakeson-prayer or contact Lisa Blanchard at 281-297-5979.

TAC Preachers’ Children Survey

The Texas Conference Committee on Archives and History would like to put together a booklet of experiences from preachers’ children

and would love to hear from you.

Their survey is available online at <http://www.txcumc.org/pksurvey>.

Outreach and Mission

Divorce Recovery Workshop
St. Luke’s UMC Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment will host this event starting, Sunday, June 7 at 9:45 a.m., at 2719 Joanel, Houston, Texas 77027.

Dr. Kelton Ro-Trock leads this four-week small discussion group which is designed to help people take positive steps toward healing and wholeness after experiencing divorce. There is no charge for the class, but registration is required.

Contact Ann Yeoman at 713-402-5046 or counselingcenter@stlukes-hou.org

Clear Lake UMC Offers 13 Week Session On Divorce
Divorced? Separated? Find help. Discover hope. Experience healing.

The 13-week session begins Sunday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Clear Lake UMC located at 16335 El Camino Real, Houston, Texas.

Pre-registration is required for this group. Contact Cari Robineet at cari@clearlakemethodist.org, or at 281-488-5111, ext. 135.

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