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What do you think of the 'Model for Ministry?'

Laity and clergy asked to evaluate conference mission, vision and goals



By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications
Texas Annual Conference

What is the Model for Ministry?

That's a question that has been raised by some in the Texas Annual Conference – even those who have been faithfully living into and working the model for two years.

When the Conference voted

in 2006 to adopt a new mission, vision and core values, it also voted to evaluate those changes (which are collectively known as the Model for Ministry) in two years.

The Model for Ministry also includes the conference key drivers – Excellence, Spirit-led, Fruitfulness and Accountability – and the new conference structure of nine districts and four centers for excellence.

The time has come for extensive assessment, in an effort to determine the fruitfulness of the vision, mission, core values and all components of the Model for Ministry and to determine any need for future adjustments.

All members of the Annual Conference are invited to share their opinions by taking an

online survey before November 7.

Additionally, districts will host "town hall meetings" for clergy and laity to share their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of the model.

The results of the surveys, listening sessions and other interviews will be presented at the 2009 gathering of the Texas Annual Conference.

The listening sessions are scheduled as follows:

October 18: West District Office, 526 University Drive East, Building C, College Station; Clergy – 10 a.m.; Laity – 2 p.m.

October 19: First UMC Missouri City, Room 124, 3900 Lexington Blvd., Missouri City. Clergy – 2

p.m.; Laity – 6 p.m.
October 20: St. Mark's UMC Baytown, 2811 North Main Street, Baytown. Clergy – 2

p.m.; Laity – 6 p.m.
October 21: First UMC Jasper, 329 North Bowie Street, Jasper. Clergy – 2

p.m.; Laity – 6 p.m.
October 22: First UMC Longview, Great Expectations Room, 400 North Fredonia, Longview. Clergy – 2

p.m.; Laity – 6 p.m.
To take the survey online, visit the home page at www.txcumc.org.

For more information on listening sessions, contact your district office.



Photo By Susan J. Meister/UMCOR

Christ UMC Becomes Evacuation Site

Residents and staff from Edgewater Retirement Community were evacuated to the Christ UMC Fellowship Hall

See Story on page 3.

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



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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Focus On Extension Ministries

The music ministry of Tiffani Walt

By Brant Mills
Texas Conference
Communications



Rev. Tiffani Walt and Christian music artist, Chris Tomlin.

Following her calling to work in Christian music, Tiffani Walt helps to share passionate worship with the world on a daily basis. Ordained as a Deacon in 2005, she is appointed to extension ministry with the management team of recording artist and lead worshipper, Chris Tomlin.

“When I left college I thought I would work in the Christian music industry and moved to Nashville. But, I left that behind and went to seminary,” Walt said. “Timing and relationships opened doors.”

Walt and her husband started working for the Woodlands UMC in 1997. Around the same time she became Minister of Family Life, Chris Tomlin became the Worship Pastor. She worked closely with Tomlin during the four years they served together. Tomlin eventually moved on to focus on developing his music ministry.

The Wals remained close to Tomlin and continued to work with him in various capacities – her husband John David through co-writing and Tiffani through the business management side of things.

John David Walt later took a position with Asbury Seminary and Tiffani Walt, now a licensed counselor, was appointed at Asbury as a counselor for the students. “In 2000, I started working for Chris,” Walt noted. “His ministry was growing and he needed someone to help him. He didn’t have anything in place. At that point I wrote all his contracts and worked with various ministries that were booking him. It was not until he had a record deal and we started booking him for larger events,” she said.

Ministry Focused

Walt describes her ministry as being a “wheel with different spokes,” because there are a lot of components to her job. “I help to focus on the ministry side of what [Tomlin] does. We orchestrate his yearly calendar... I’m the main contact for every event... and I [also] do basic things like map out our

tours. I am the person responding to the wide range of needs people have in relationship to Chris.”

She says that being trained for ministry helps her to see her work from a different perspective. “I’m equipped to respond to people’s needs in a different way. Its like the whole people of God kind of idea - I’m relating to Christians all over the world and Chris’s music is like an entrée to the world.”

Walt also noted that one of the most fulfilling sides of her job is relating to God’s people around the world. “From my

position I have been able to observe the vast worldwide scope of the reach of the ministry of Chris Tomlin. Here’s a great picture for you: In one week I corresponded with a group of Christians in China who wanted more songs from Chris for their underground church. They sent pictures of themselves huddled together in a small room singing “How Great is our God.” That same week, we were notified that Chris’s song, “Indescribable” was being played and sung on the Space Shuttle as they orbited the Earth. From the underground church to Space is quite a vast picture of the scope of this ministry.”

More Than Passionate Worship

When asked about the core values, Walt said “I think all those things are incorporated in what I do in terms of how music is incorporated in wor-

answered, download music and charts, but to find community, ask questions, gain theological insight and perspective and grow in their calling to lead worship. We hope to inspire, refresh and to equip leaders every where.”

Tomlin is currently on the Passion World Tour and has just released his new album, Hello Love.

“It has such a worldwide impact – just being a part of this ministry,” She added. “Also, in terms of breadth of relationship... it’s connected all over the world. Africa to the Philippines to London...”

“That’s why I’m relationship focused,” Walt said. “God has opened all these doors. It’s multi-denominational. It’s across racial and nationality barriers. It’s exciting for me - the types of relationships God has used to draw glory and bring people together. Just looking down, God has opened all

these doors. We stand amazed.”

Tiffani Walt has served in the Texas Annual Conference since 1997 and has served as Deacon since her ordination in 2005. Walt lives and works in Kentucky,

Rev. Tiffani Walt

though she and her husband remain members of the Texas Annual Conference. Her Husband John, also an extension minister, currently serves as the Dean of the Chapel and Vice President for Community Life at Asbury Theological Seminary.

For more information on Chris Tomlin, his ministry and his music visit www.christomlin.com

Worship Leaders can visit the Worship Frequency site at www.fqworship.com.

ship.” She emphasized that Tomlin is focused on worship and ministry rather than being a star. “The difference with him and other artists is he is writing for the church. I think worship leaders look to him like: ‘I need this for Sunday.’”

In addition to her other duties, Walt is helping to give her energy and focus to “Worship Frequency,” a new online community and resource site for lead worshipers around the world. “It’s an online community... and a worship seminary... Leaders visit the site not only to get musical questions

“God has opened all these doors. It’s multi-denominational. It’s across racial and nationality barriers. It’s exciting for me — the types of relationships God has used to draw glory and bring people together. Just looking down, God has opened all these doors. We stand amazed.”



Planning puts local church in forefront of ministry to retirement community

By Susan J. Meister*

“We are trying to think of a way to thank the people of Christ UMC,” said Ed Bell, executive director, Edgewater Retirement Community. “What they’ve done is ‘too big’.”

Residents and staff members of Edgewater evacuated to the College Station church, about 150 miles northwest of Galveston, on Thursday, September 11, as Hurricane Ike approached the island. When they arrived, nearly fifty volunteers from the church and nearby Crestview Retirement Community were waiting to assist.

“Our church has so many servant volunteers!” exclaimed communications director MerriBeth Kahlich, as she led a tour of a facility humming with activity. The Fellowship Hall, which normally hosts ministries and staff offices, was filled with residents, staff and volunteers.

“We’re ministering to two groups,” Kahlich continued. “We have about 110 residents from Edgewater and about fifty staff persons and their families.” She ticked off a long list of ministries - helping to unload trucks and buses, providing clothes for residents and staff, helping with games and other activities, serving meals to residents, hosting staff dinners, folding sheets, and more.

Christ UMC is one of about sixty churches in the Texas Conference who have been in the midst of ministry to the needs of those affected by Hurricane Ike. Cynthia Harvey, Director of Missional Excellence for the Texas Conference, said that many have worked directly in relief efforts, from serving as shelters, assembling flood buckets, and hosting and sending work teams.

“The time to plan for disaster response – both in relief and recovery – is before the disaster occurs,” explained Tom Hazelwood, UMCOR domestic disaster response executive. “It’s been my experience that the most successful church outreach

is the one that is well-planned in advance. During UMCOR training, we always encourage our churches to write their own disaster plan and then make a deliberate decision of how to be in ministry to their communities.

“The agreement that Edgewater has with Christ UMC is an example of how planning can lead to successful ministry,” he added.

Planning and preparation set the stage for successful evacuation and care

Ann Meador is Senior Vice President for Network Affairs for Methodist Retirement Communities, an organization of six United Methodist-affiliated retirement communities in the Texas Conference. Meador helps plan responses to local and regional disasters for the greater Houston area. After Hurricane Rita in 2005, she worked with Christ UMC to reach a formal agreement to use their building as a host location for Edgewater Retirement Community.

“The Fellowship Hall is a former psychiatric hospital that the church had converted to other uses,” Meador said. “It has a commercial kitchen, a good layout, and access to supplies.” In addition, another MRC affiliate, Crestview Retirement Community, is in nearby Bryan, Texas. Staff from the sister community has helped not only with the evacuation but also to supplement ongoing nursing and care.

Staff members suffer loss

Ron Jennette, MRC president and CEO, explains that many of the staff members who evacuated with the residents have lost their homes or belongings. “There are some very dedicated staff who continue assisting our displaced residents,” he said. “In some cases, they know all or much has been lost. We are working with them regarding FEMA assistance and more.” In one corner of the large dining hall, the Edgewater human resources department was helping staff members with

paperwork for insurance and FEMA.

Kathleen Davis, a unit charge nurse, and her cat are living with a member of Christ UMC. Her home in Bayou Vista is damaged, although she has insurance. “At first it was really stressful,” she said. “But the help by the church members has been beautiful. Everyone has made us feel welcome.”

Widespread flooding from the storm surge of Ike affected downtown Galveston. The Edgewater complex, across the street on the sea wall, experienced wind and water damage. Executive director Bell is working with crews to address the damage. In addition, the infrastructure of Galveston was severely damaged by the storm, and crews have been working to restore electrical, water and sewer services.

Now, as Meador explains, there are many questions to be answered before all the residents could move back to Edgewater. “The University of Texas Medical Branch needs to be up and running,” she said. “And our staff members need affordable housing.”

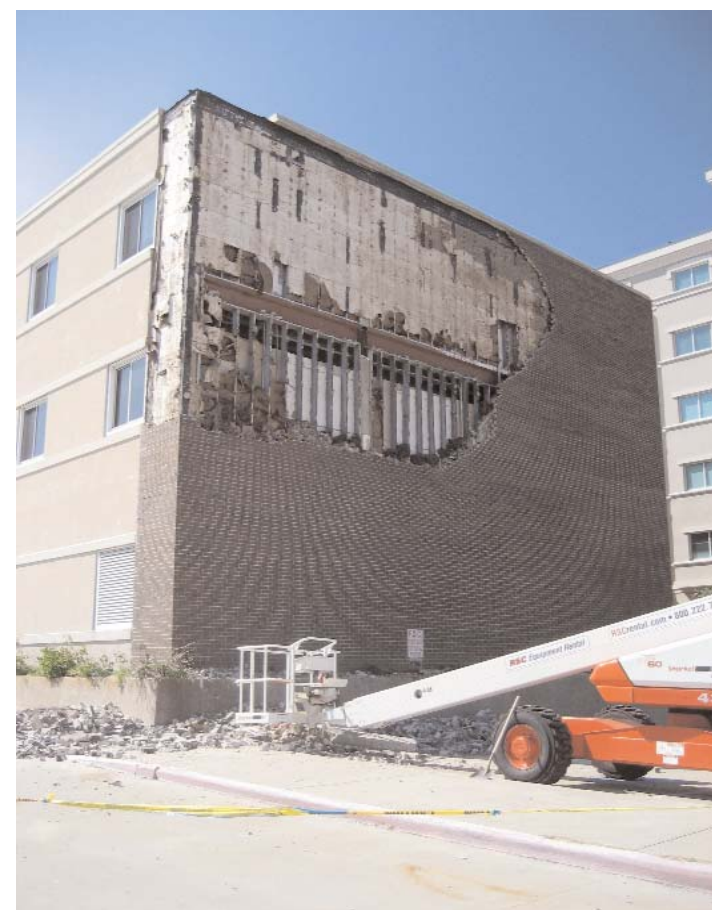
Jennette adds that at this time residents of Moody House (the independent/resident apartment portion of the community) are anxious to return to the Island when repairs are completed. However, residents of Turner Geriatric Center (the community health care center) will be relocated in the short term due to their care needs, with an eye to opening the Center at the appropriate time.

“We sought out locations as close to Galveston as possible, and also organizations that were interested in our staff as well as residents,” he said in an e-mail. “With many employees having lost or received considerable damage to their homes on Galveston Island, having an opportunity to live and work in another location is proving to be an answer to prayer.”



Volunteers at Christ UMC have helped residents in a number of ways since Edgewater Retirement Community evacuated to College Station, Texas.

Photo by Susan J. Meister/UMCOR



The Edgewater Retirement Community, located on Seawall Blvd., Galveston, sustained wind and water damage from Hurricane Ike.

Photo By Susan J. Meister/UMCOR

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Ike-response continues at local

More stories of 'hope and healing' online

Bellville UMC

Shortly after Hurricane Ike, the missions team of Bellville UMC met to plan its relief response. The appeal for flood buckets (filled with cleanup supplies) reminded them of a previous effort to send school supplies to Iraqi children. That effort had grown and received significant community support.

What began as a small project to encourage members to donate sponges and cleaning supplies quickly grew. The team adopted a goal to prepare 500 flood buckets. (The retail cost of the supplies for one bucket is approximately \$55, so that represented a \$27,500 project!)

On Sunday, September 28, some 140 persons - men, women, boys and girls - remained after worship for a quick lunch, and then began a full-scale assembly line process. In less than an hour, the first batch of 250 flood buckets had been assembled and loaded onto a delivery trailer. In addition to church members, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) volunteers offered assistance.

On Tuesday, Sept. 30, the buckets were delivered to the designated collection station in League City, but instead of being stored, they were immediately loaded onto a relief truck headed to the Texas City area. By Wednesday morning, Oct. 1, the church had already received a 'thank you e-mail' from a gentleman in Bacliff, Texas.

The second assembly line took place on Sunday, Oct. 5, and 250 buckets were filled and loaded in a short amount of time.

'Watching the assembly of the flood buckets was one of the most amazing things I have ever encountered,' noted associate pastor Amy Haralson. 'The hands of Christ were everywhere, working through everyone. Jesus looks different in every place, but here in Bellville, he is the child no

taller than three feet, weighing no more than 35 pounds, carrying three flood buckets weighing twice what he does, running with a huge smile on his face to place the buckets on the trailer so that they can be taken to those who need it the most. This is the same child who says to his mother, 'Wow, Mom, that was fun! When can we do it again?'

And that child may get the chance, for the missions team is already at work seeking to gather the supplies for an additional 250 buckets. For more information about the flood bucket project, contact BUMC at 865-5976.

Robert Stutes, Pastor
Bellville UMC

First UMC Pearland

Within two days after Hurricane Ike's destruction, the First UMC of Pearland in collaboration with Builders Without Borders of Texas, Inc., jumped into action. Teams were out in the communities of Pearland and nearby Alvin helping those who were struggling to help themselves. Trees were removed from homes and garages; damaged roofs were protected with tarps; wet dry-wall and flooring was removed from homes with water damage. Most of the recipients of this outreach were the elderly and the ill.

From September 25-28, a mission team from University United Methodist Church of San Antonio added their gifts, talents and energy to the effort. Led by Pastor Adam Knight, the team came with 15 members, who lodged at First UMC Pearland. The San Antonio team alone provided assistance to 16 households and were a blessing to all. The number of households touched by the overall outreach of First UMC, Pearland is well beyond 50...and the outreach continues.

Lori Saia
Director of Communications & Outreach

North District

Just wanted to let you know how I spent our money today. My wife and I went to Home Depot, and they donated \$100 dollars worth of buckets, lids, and materials. My son, John Earl Burton works there, and they were very good to us.

We then went to the local Dollar Tree, and Dollar General stores. We were able to average about 3.47 complete buckets for our donation of \$112 which is about \$32.24 per bucket! We added our own donation to this money and spent a total of \$193.42. With the combined funds we have 6 complete kits, along with 6 buckets and lids and a few left over items that will be assembled at Reeves Chapel on Wednesday, along with the items my congregation brings. I am looking forward to delivering these to those in need in the Beaumont area.

Thank you for allowing me to work with the money. It was a real blessing. God bless!

Rev. Tommy Earl Burton
Reeves Chapel UMC

Shady Chapel UMC

The weeks following Hurricane Ike, Shady Chapel UMC was very active in reaching into the community. Starting Sunday with no electricity, candles lined the altar and the church was opened an hour early and left open to allow those in the community to have a place to pray and feel the presence of the Lord in the midst of the disaster. All other churches in our area were closed due to lack of power. After service, many of the members including the pastor worked until dark at the local POD to distribute food, water and ice to the local residents and evacuees.

But Radical hospitality did



The youngest person in the flood bucket assembly line, two-year old Jaylen Segovia, is tethered by her dad, Eugenio while she places insect repellent in the collection bins!



A mission team from Plano, Texas tries to salvage household items from a parsonage demolished by Hurricane Ike.



churches in conference

not stop Sunday; the same people that came on Sunday came back on Monday. With the help of members of the National Guard we were able to step up in the distribution to handle more individuals at the local school. The members of the National Guard had no place to stay locally, so with the help of the church, we made arrangements with the local school to house them in the Gym, with showers and sleeping facilities. The churches made sure each member had inflatable mattresses to sleep on and food throughout the day, including homemade cookies made with only the use of generators.

With a membership of less than 75 people, Shady Chapel UMC pulled together to help each other out and to help their

community out. Since the POD closed down and power for the most part has been established, people are helping to remove limbs from yards, repair roofs and fences, and have worked to create new life in other ways. Shady Chapel UMC has just recently chartered the first ever Scouting organization for the community of Zavalla. They have put together 13 flood buckets with donations from church members.

So Ike did not slow down this church; it did not slow down the community. In fact, Ike brought together people, and showed what the love of God is, and how it provides an opportunity for neighbor to help neighbor.

Ross Hyde

First Methodist Houston

On Sunday, September 21 following worship, over 225 volunteers registered with First UMC in Houston and hit the streets to aid in disaster response efforts to help their neighbors. Each were assigned to one of 25 projects that were taking place all over Houston.

Kristen Jones, Mission Coordinator for the church's two campuses, said they "fed over 200 with MRE's, water and non-perishable foods in Port Houston and 200 women and children at area shelters; removed two trees from neighborhood roads, helped with debris in yards, trees on homes and [did] general cleanup inside homes." Some of the volunteers also helped to sort and box up cleaning products at the Christian Alliance Center in

Pearland.

"We sent church e-mails out asking the congregation to bring work supplies - gloves, rakes, brooms [and] saws," Jones noted. "We are working on mobilizing teams every weekend to continue responding to the needs that are coming in. We also have ministries on each campus... that are helping people with food and basic needs."

A second project FUMC is working on involves writing letters of appreciation to energy workers. Dr. Steve Wende asked the congregation to write letters expressing thanks for their hard work, noting that many of them have been working 16-hour shifts to bring power back to communities where it has been down.

The Congregation of FUMC

is one more shining example of the Methodist connection at work to help those in need in Texas.

Brant Mills
First Methodist Houston,
Volunteer

Christ UMC Sugar Land

Christ UMC Sugar Land has, for the past four weeks, responded to Hurricane Ike with fervor.

Week one: Since we had electricity, we held a community wide dinner each night and fed 1,000 people over the course of the week. During those evenings, we opened the chapel and provided prayer partners and had rooms for internet hook up and cell phone recharging.

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Left Photo: Members of the National Guard helped with the distribution of water, food and supplies at Shady Chapel UMC. The church also made arrangements with the local school to house them [the National Guard] in the school's gymnasium.

Right Photo: Christ UMC in Sugar Land, Texas held a supply drive for items needed by the Red Cross. Laura Gratz and another volunteer loaded her van with supplies to be taken to a shelter in Anahuac, Texas.



“Angel Speech”

By Kendal Carnley
Montgomery UMC

After Hurricane Ike, many people have been left in the dark. Even if they have their power back, there are still many other situations that could leave them feeling hopeless. It could be that there is much debris in their yard and they can't do the work or they have some damage to their homes that was caused by Ike.

As many people know, the MYF group was picking up debris that was caused by hurricane Ike yesterday. We had just finished a few yards when Ms. Cathy told us that we may have one more yard to go. However, it looked doubtful that we could do anything because a 60-something-year-old tree had fallen in

work by herself. As we began to do the backbreaking work, I noticed we didn't care that we were tired. It was as if a second wind had hit us slap in the face, and we were working harder than ever. As I looked around, I also

noticed that there wasn't a single person without a smile on their face and I realized just how lucky I was to be able to be a part of this and doing what God wants everyone to do: Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Close to the end, I was picking up many aluminum cans that were lying on the ground and raking up leaves and sticks that had been left behind when I noticed something that looked like plastic. I thought for

a minute of just keeping it in the pile and raking it in with the rest of the debris, but looking at it, it looked like as if it were longing to be back in the light and something told me to just pick it up. When I finally did, I noticed it wasn't plastic at all, but instead this beautiful glass angel. Immediately, I recognized that this had to be a sign

from God. He was just letting us know he was watching over and us and was happy with our work. This alone touched me very deeply and I immediately showed it to Ms. Cathy.

After close examination of

this angel, I noticed that its arm was chipped off and began to wonder. Wonder how this little glass angel survived through hurricane Ike, this gargantuan tree falling so close to it, my raking, and the MYF group possibly crushing it with every step. I came to the conclusion that this must also be a sign from God. I saw it as a symbol for our community and how we are so very fragile right now. We have been hurt by this storm. But we are still here, we are still intact.

In the end, I see what God was trying to tell me. He wanted me to let everyone know that we need to do his bidding and help our neighbors. He wants everyone one of us to pull each other up through the debris and let us see the light once again.



the yard, and let me tell you, it was huge!

In fact, it was the biggest tree I have ever seen in this small city of Montgomery. Just looking at this tree was a bit depressing for everyone because we were already so tired, but we decided to persevere and do whatever we could for this lady, who obviously could not do the





Planning puts local church in forefront of ministry to retirement community

Continued from page 3

Preparing for the long term response

As the staff of MRC and Edgewater look for ways to care for the residents, families in Galveston and towns all across southeast Texas are assessing damage to their homes and making plans to rebuild. The Texas Conference is working with UMCOR to put a long term organization in place to help survivors, especially those who are underinsured or uninsured.

“Unfortunately, Ike has ‘dropped out’ of the headlines,” Hazelwood said. “But the residents and staff of Edgewater, like so many others, have a long recovery ahead. The Texas Conference, UMCOR and the United Methodist Church stand ready to help churches and communities recover.”

You can help with the recov-

ery from the 2008 Hurricanes with a donation to Advance No. 3019695, [online](#) or by check to UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. In addition, mission volunteers will be needed to help with clean up and rebuilding. Contact your [jurisdictional United Methodist Volunteers in Mission \(UMVIM\) coordinator](#), or go to the [Texas Conference web site](#) to register your team.

All churches are encouraged to engage in disaster preparedness planning, both for their own facility and congregation, and for their communities. Go to the [UMCOR domestic disaster response and training web site](#), or contact your conference disaster response coordinator for more information and to schedule UMCOR training.

**Meister is the Domestic Disaster Response Correspondent for UMCOR referenced web sites, UMCOR domestic disaster response and training web site <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/work/emergencies/domestic/>*

Give on line: <http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/umcor/donate.cfm?code=3019695&id=3019695>

UMVIM contact information: <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/about/us/mv/mission-teams-umvim/jurisd-umvimco-ords/>

Texas Conference: <http://www.txcumc.org/>
Methodist Retirement Communities: www.mrcaff.org

Laity Sunday— one in spirit, all in ministry; in the spirit of fellowship

By Sandy Jackson

“If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; **but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**” (I John 1:6-7, NRSV, emphasis added.)

Koinonia is the Greek word for fellowship or community. Acts 2:42 describes the *koinonia* that existed among believers as they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers. All who believed were together and had all things in common.

When *koinonia* is genuine, the believers are connected and in solidarity or unity.

We hear a lot about fellowship in the church. We even have “fellowship halls,” where

we can meet to “fellowship.” But fellowship has a more important meaning when we realize the importance of meeting together to encourage one another to love and good deeds. Our United Methodist heritage had at its roots and emphasis on meeting together to give an account of our faithfulness.

Early Methodists met in societies, classes, or bands in order to pray together, hear a word of exhortation or encouragement, and “watch over one another with love.” Not only did these meetings provide a time of fellowship, but they provided the strength needed to live lives of personal and scriptural holiness.

Today we have plenty of meetings to attend in the church, but are they times of fellowship? Is there a spirit of holy conferencing there? Do we take the time to worship together, pray for one another, and encourage one another at those

meetings? We may be missing the chance to “walk in the light” when we forget whose work we are doing and when our focus is only on the business at hand, not on how we can discern God’s will for our work and love one another.

How do we walk in the light of God? We walk in the light when we are faithful in our devotional practices, care for others as Christ commanded, and meet together in fellowship, and mutual accountability.

When we are walking in the light, we are the light of Christ wherever we are. And when we are walking in this light, we will have fellowship with one another and thereby experience more of God.

Sandy Jackson is the Director of Lay Leadership Development for the General Board of Discipleship.

Local churches continue response to Hurricane IKE

Continued from page 5

Christ UMC members also distributed ice at a POD in Sugar Land; held a supply drive for needed items at Red Cross Shelters and coordinated with the City of Sugar Land and sent teams for debris/tree clearing/home repair for elderly and others in need.

Week Two: A team traveled to Galveston at 2 a.m. to assist Pastor Burt Palmer of Bear Creek UMC with water distribution. Other volunteers served the East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry; supplemented volunteers and Stephen ministers for shift duties at the FUMC Red Cross shelter; held a diaper, formula, underwear drive for Anahuac and more.

Week Three: The church continued its efforts to help elderly people with debris/tree clearing and home repairs. Additionally, 50 cots with bedding were sent to San Leon.

Week Four: Christ UMC is planning a flood bucket drive and will continue assisting with tree/debris clearing and home repairs as calls come in from the Annual Conference or members.

Renee Teel
Director of Missions

Community of faith cares for hurricane hurt communities

Emory and Alba UMC moved into action following an email message telling of an immediate need for baby care and flood clean-up items. A friend relayed details of the destruction to property, homes and lives wrought by Hurricane Ike to Rev. Kelly Krone. “As soon as the news reached us, we started sharing the need with others in our community – through our church sign, emails, word of mouth, at church functions –

wherever and however we could let people know of this immediate need,” shared Rev. Krone.

The response was amazing and overwhelming as church members, community groups and individuals brought donations to the Emory and Alba Methodist churches.

Donations included multiple baby care items of diapers, wipes, lotions, formulas and foods. A large number of non-perishable canned food items were also donated. John Royar, of Alba UMC, shared that people from all over were helping and that a local radio station had even made an announcement about the collection of donations at the church during their coverage of the county fair.

A special offering of \$1,500 was collected in both churches for recovery efforts across the Texas Annual Conference. “It just makes you feel so good to help,” shared Mary White of Emory UMC. “Putting together the flood buckets gave me such energy and pleasure that I don’t know why I don’t do things for people in need more often.”

The Texas Annual Conference expects recovery efforts to be a multi-year situation with financial repercussions greater than those from Hurricane Rita. “Three years ago you contributed over \$1 million dollars for Rita Recovery. UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) contributed \$4 million. Because of your generosity and the generosity of the UMC people around the world, nearly 850 homes in Southeast Texas were re-built. The need for Ike Recovery will be much greater,” Bishop Huie noted in her message.

Jill E. Krone
TAC Communications



Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

Fellowship Opportunities

Center UMC - Celebrating 135 Years of Ministry

October 19, 2008 is the date for Center UMC to highlight 135 years of ministry.

Trinity East UMC Celebrates a Century of Ministry

Trinity East UMC, 2418 McGowen, Houston, Texas will celebrate its 100th year of Christian service with a gala banquet, Saturday, November 8, 2008, 6 p.m., at the Hilton University of Houston Hotel and its anniversary worship celebration on Sunday, November 9, 2008, 10:30 am.

The guest speaker for both occasions is Dr. Luther Felder. Everyone is invited to share this experience.

For banquet ticket reservations (deadline October 1st) and other information, please contact Ms. Juanita Jackson, 713-743-5385 or jjackson3014@sbcglobal.net.

130 Years of Ministry Anniversary Celebration for Elkhart First UMC

The Elkhart First UMC will host a celebration for its 130 years of ministry on Sunday, October 19 at the church, 202 E Parker Street.

All previous church members and pastors are special guests. Everyone is invited to come and share in this joyous time.

For questions or more information, please call or email Rev. Lynn Willhite, 903-764-2347 or elkhartumc@valornet.com

Foundry UMC – Holiday Market and Tea Room

The Foundry United Methodist Church will host over 100 vendors at its annual Judy Dierker Holiday Market on Saturday, October 18, 2008, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Find terrific values on a wide array of goods, handcrafted items, fall & Christmas specialties, gourmet baked goods, children's toys, clothing, jewelry and more.

Also, shop at the Foundry General Store where every cent you spend benefits local and foreign missions. Stop by the *Texas Tea Room*, open 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and enjoy salads, desserts, and coffees.

Admission to the market is free; purchase tea room tickets for \$10 each. (For more information, call 713-937-9388 or see www.foundryfamily.org.)

Life's Too Short to Wear Anything Tight!

Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries to host luncheon

Life's Too Short to Wear Anything Tight! is the theme at The Texas Conference Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries' (FOAM) luncheon on Friday, October 31, at Jones Memorial UMC.

Willa Decker, a nurse and nurse practitioner who advocates, 'people should take time to laugh – it is music to the soul.' will be the guest speaker.

She will show how laughter has served as a "natural healer" throughout history and focus on the important role that laughter plays in the health and healing process.

Cost is \$12 per person including the meal and program. Other FOAM events will be announced at the meeting. Reservations and payment are due by Friday, October 24.

Checks should be made payable to F.O.A.M. and mailed to Rev. Mary Magnusson, 5405 Creek Shadows Dr., Kingwood, 77339. Jones Memorial UMC is located at 2504 Almeda Genoa and Highway 288.

Learning Opportunities

Christian Educators Fellowship and Preaching from the Center National Conferences

These conferences will be held October 23-27 in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the Albuquerque Convention Center.

Featured keynote speaker will be well-known environmental writer, Bill McKibben. Over 100 workshops will be offered and other event highlights include Bible studies led by Osvaldo Vena, Associate Professor of New Testament at Garrett Theological Seminary, daily worship and tours in the Albuquerque *Discovery Center* with dozens of vendors and pre-conference learning options.

For more information and to register, contact Ellen Thompson, Director of Christian Educators Fellowship, P. O. Box 24930, Nashville, Tennessee 37202, or 866-629-3113.

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

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

This question will be examined by William M. Linden in the Candlelighters adult Sunday School class at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The eight-part series runs from October 5 to December 7 in S-109, first floor of the Sanctuary building.

Linden holds a postgraduate Diploma in Theology from Oxford University and is an associate member of the Westar Institute, which sponsors the Jesus Seminar, the leaders in academic historical Jesus research.

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

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

For more about the class, contact Rev. Shelli Williams at swilliams@stpaulshouston.org or 713-528-0527

First UMC Jefferson Hosts Book Festival

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

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

For more information, contact the church at 903-665-3268 or visit the website, www.jefferson-booksalive.com, where a list of participating authors are listed.

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

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

The event is scheduled for Saturday, November 22, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm at Aldersgate UMC, 2201 Earl Rudder Freeway S.,

College Station, TX 77845

The presenter will be Rev. James Hollifield, Pastor of Newkirk UMC, Newkirk OK. For more information, contact Mary Reed @ 936-348-2050 or maryreed@att.net

Summer Collegium Project 2009

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

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

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

For more information and an application packet, visit our website at www.vts.edu/education/collegium or call Marilyn Johns at 703-461-1760.

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

Contact Thelma Jones at 713-521-9383, ext. 335 or thelmaj@methodists.net