



# Cross Connection

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

Two Sections, Section A

076000 Volume 158

Number 14

August 05, 2011

## What's Inside

Five Stars of Excellence  
Christian Education  
Program 2

New Mobile Medical  
Clinic - A Blessing to  
Others 3

African Journeys:  
Seeking Christ Among  
the World's Poor 4

Back-to-School:  
Diverse Ways to  
Prepare for School By  
Helping Others 6

John Wesley UMC:  
Spreading the Gospel  
from the Inside Out 7

St. John's UMC Texas  
City Breaks Ground for  
New Building

Spotlight On Local  
Church Ministries 8

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

# My Neighbor is on the Other Side of the World

By Helen Flagg  
Clear Lake UMC

In the gospel of Luke, a lawyer asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan and asks the lawyer which person who passed by the injured man was his neighbor? And the lawyer replies: "The one who showed him mercy."

Each of us is presented on a daily basis with opportunities to show mercy to those who are in need. I was presented with a wonderful opportunity in June 2009 when I was surfing the Internet, looking for a pattern to make knitted ponchos for my granddaughters. I never found the right pattern, but I found much more; a charity called **Knit-a-Square in South Africa**. The charity was totally new and was pleading for help from knitters to knit squares that would become blankets and keep warm millions of HIV-

AIDS poverty-stricken, abandoned orphans in the midst of a freezing South African winter.

Knit-a-Square was begun by a family, Sandy McDonald and her husband Roger and their daughters, all originally from Zimbabwe who immigrated to Australia because of extreme violence. Through the power of the Internet and Sandy's computer skills, a website was set up to ask knitters and crocheters around the world to knit and send them eight inch squares, using bright colors and any stitch. These 8-inch squares would be made into blankets to keep the



Helen Flagg, along with other women at Clear Lake UMC who knit and crochet started a Knit-A-Square ministry. The squares are shipped to South Africa where they are made into blankets for HIV-AIDS orphans.

children warm during the winter months. In her daily activities in and around Johannesburg, Ronda, Sandy's aunt was encountering children approaching her car asking for food and shivering in thin clothing in twenty degree weather. She began carrying inexpensive blankets and apples in her car to give out, but the demand was too great.

I believe God directed me toward the **Knit-a-Square website** so that I could help my neighbors on the other side of the world. I was not looking for a ministry that I could do at home but

God gave me one! I began knitting both squares and hats and sending them to Ronda, where volunteer teams of South African ladies sewed the squares into blankets, which required 35 squares each.

Because of the high customs tax, the blankets could not be made in the U.S. and sent to Africa because they have resale value. When the squares become blankets; these blankets are sent to shack settlements where many of the orphans are in small day care groups with little personal belongings. Most settlements have no heat in winter and these garments and blankets may be the only items the children have to keep warm.

After two months, I was impressed by God to approach the staff at my home church, Clear Lake UMC in Houston, Texas, to inquire whether I could begin a knitting ministry. With their support I began asking church knitters and crocheters to meet



Appreciation for the work of the **Knit-A-Square** ministry at Clear Lake UMC is exhibited by the smiling happy faces of these children in one of the day care groups in South Africa.

Continued on page 3



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

**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

**Conference Web Site:**  
www.txcumc.org

**To Subscribe:**

**Send your subscription fee of \$20 payable to the Texas Annual Conference to:**

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



# Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education program honors 2011 winners

## 7 Shooting Star award winners in the Texas Conference

**By Donna Adair**  
**Director of Communications**  
**St. Paul UMC**

The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education has been an ongoing program for more than 10 years. The goals of the program are to assist local congregations in inviting and growing disciples of Christ; encourage, promote, strengthen, and facilitate the growth of Christian Education programs, especially the Sunday Schools, of our churches and connect Christian Education to the overall ministry of the local church and the connectional church.

The Shooting Star award is an award that may only be received every two years, and churches must have received the "Five Stars of Excellence" award the previous year and also qualify to receive that award in the current year. The seven award-winning programs or events that earned the Texas Annual Conference 2011 Shooting Star Award from the conference's Christian Educators Fellowship are described below.

### **First UMC, Brookshire Children's Church**

The goal of this ministry is to offer elementary school-age children education about worship and the experience of a worship service for their level of understanding.

Church members converted a room into a mini-sanctuary, and adult and older youth volunteers were trained as leaders. At a modest cost, the curriculum was adapted from *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman along with a Betty Lukens felt board system.

As a result of this program, children are developing a greater understanding of the order of worship while learning and leading in worship at

Children's Church.

For more information, contact Susan Lyle or Rev. Dottie Dumas at 281-375-5683

### **First UMC, Humble Church-wide Advent Study**

During the Advent season, the church offered a church-wide study, *Christmas Gifts that Won't Break*, based on the DVD and workbook of the same name.

Sunday School teachers

Wednesday nights, and 65 of the 70 children who attended Snow Day signed up for the Wednesday program. Each evening included a meal, Bible study and activity centers, and time for sharing, singing, and prayer.

The program was so popular that plans were made to continue the Wednesday night programming. Participants were invited to all summer and future church events. This min-

**"It is especially gratifying to note that the size of these churches is not an indicator of the innovation or quality of their ministries. . . Church membership among the Shooting Stars ranged from 200 to thousands."**

Ellen Edwards  
Christian Education Director of St. Paul's UMC and  
Chairperson of Awards Program

were trained as facilitators for their classes, and adults, youth, and children participated in the study during the Sunday School hour each week. Lessons for the different age groups provided time for extended reflection through prayers, journaling, and weekly challenges. The senior minister's sermon series also was based on the study's themes.

A total of 210 members participated in the series, which is expected to impact the future vision of the congregation.

For more information, contact Sharon Taylor at staylor@fumc-humble.org or 281-446-2332.

### **First UMC, Katy Snow Day on Moose Mountain**

The goal of this program was to offer a day of fun, food, and fellowship — after Christmas and before school resumed — for families from the community, recent visitors, and church families with children.

The one-day event launched a six-week series on

istry has brought new life and excitement to the church.

For information, contact Pam Cline at pcline@firstmethodistkaty.com or 281-391-2121.

### **First UMC, Trinity Grief and Alzheimer's Support Groups**

The Grief Support Group at Trinity has been an effective ministry of the church for many years. Led by a professional therapist, the support group meets weekly in a church office and is open to the entire community. Through this group, the need was recognized for a support system specifically for families and caregivers of Alzheimer's patients.

The church now sponsors the Alzheimer's Support Group twice a month, offering information about dementia, along with tools and support for the caregiver's role.

For more information, contact Lue Wenzel at lwenzel@valornet.com or call the church at 936-594-3826.

**John Wesley UMC Houston.**

### **Missions Possible**

The Missions Possible Sunday School class was formed with a goal of nurturing the love of serving others by connecting the educational component of Sunday School with hands-on service.

Opportunities for hands-on service are offered monthly during the class time or on Saturdays, and the class provides support for the projects through their offering. Time for evaluation and reflection follows each project. On Sundays when the class is not in hands-on service, they rotate among videos, book studies, and guest speakers from organizations serving the needs of the community.

Missions Possible is attracting visitors as well as other new members, and it is impacting the way the church moves forward in mission.

For more information, contact Sue Highfield at shighfield@jwumc.org or 281-379-4302.

### **Memorial Drive UMC Houston**

#### **A/Way – Into the Rhythm of Life Retreat**

A church-wide spring retreat was held at Trinity Pines Retreat Center, and the participants ranged in age from eight months to more than 80 years.

The goals of the event were to allow participants to experience time away in a natural setting; enjoy intergenerational fellowship, play, and worship; and acquire tools to help establish a rhythm for living that honors God and renews and nourishes the soul.

With the whole assembly and in various age groupings, the scripturally based theme was explored in ways that were new to the participants, culminating with covenants for living in a rhythm of life that acknowledges God's presence.

For more information, contact Sheri Kelley at sherikel-

*Continued on page 6*



Pictured at the dedication service are some of the individuals who worked on the project, from left to right: John Hanes, Pil Grooms, Gene Whitley, Rev. John E. Warren, pastor FUMC Orange, Jess Stokley, Director of The Christian Alliance, Dr. Dick White Southeast District Superintendent, and Jim Malcolm.

## New mobile medical clinic will be a blessing for others

The Orange County United Methodist Men (OCUMM) have completed the project of building a Mobile Medical Clinic, utilizing a storage pod and plans purchased from Christian Alliance in Pearland, Texas.

OCUMM is inclusive of the men of First UMC, Orange and men from other Methodist churches in Orange County.

The forty foot steel storage pod was placed in the parking lot of First UMC, Orange, where the men have worked several months to convert it into a clinic per Christian Alliance specification plans. Several group fundraisers and many individual contributions made this project possible.

The completed clinic will now be fitted with equipment

and supplies by Christian Alliance and shipped to an area of the world where there is currently no available medical facilities.

Since 1998, Christian Alliance has delivered more than 100 of these medical clinics and \$20,000,000 worth of prescription medicines to areas of need throughout the world. These medical clinics are complete with exam and dental stations as well as office and storage space.

Mr. Jess Stokley, Director of Christian Alliance says, "The pod will be the 111th one placed into service. You will be able to go to the Christian Alliance website and track its journey around the world by the number 111." The storage pod was repurposed from a vessel to carry goods to serve and heal, and offer Christ to a broken world.



Members of First UMC, Orange and other Methodist churches in Orange County gather to witness the completion and dedication of the new mobile medical clinic. Through fundraisers and individual donations, the project was completed this year.

## My Neighbor is on the Other Side of the World

Continued from page 1



A mother cradles her child in one of the baby sacks created from the knitted squares of cloth.

together and work in a mission project at home. The response was overwhelming.

Our **Knit-a-Square Circle** has become a full outreach ministry. Both the church and our United Methodist Women's ministry have contributed to postage costs which can be expensive to ship our boxes of squares to South Africa. God has blessed our **Knit-a-Square Circle** with more than twenty knitters and crocheters who make squares, hats, slip-overs, heavy over-sweaters, and knitted baby sacks with matching hats. We are grateful for a caring, supportive church.

The **Knit-a-Square Circle** at Clear Lake UMC has sent more than **2,000 knitted squares** and many sweaters, baby sacks,

hats, slipovers, and knitted soft toys in only two years. We have become a cohesive group with one purpose...to use our talents, our financial resources, our hands, and our skills to serve God in helping warm these unfortunate children.

At the Knit-a-Square website [www.knit-a-square.com](http://www.knit-a-square.com) there is a Square Circle Forum if anyone is interested in starting this rewarding ministry. This month the website announced the charity is extending into Zimbabwe to send squares to a home where there are 130 orphans who need blankets. Truly God is blessing this endeavor as He has given so many of us the opportunity to show mercy to our neighbors who are on the other side of the world.



A photo of the cloth squares. The ministry at Clear Lake UMC has sent more than 2,000 pieces of cloth in a two year period.



# African Journeys: Seeking Ch

**By Rev. Diane McGehee**  
**Director of Missional**  
**Excellence**  
**Texas Annual Conference**

We left for Africa contemplating Mother Teresa's words: "Where there is love, there is God" and seeking to care for Christ in the least of God's children as Jesus calls us to do. We are here to learn to see with new eyes and love with open hearts - to love the forgotten of the world, even as God loved us. That starts with learning to see them in their dignity and beauty and being present to the mystery of God within them.

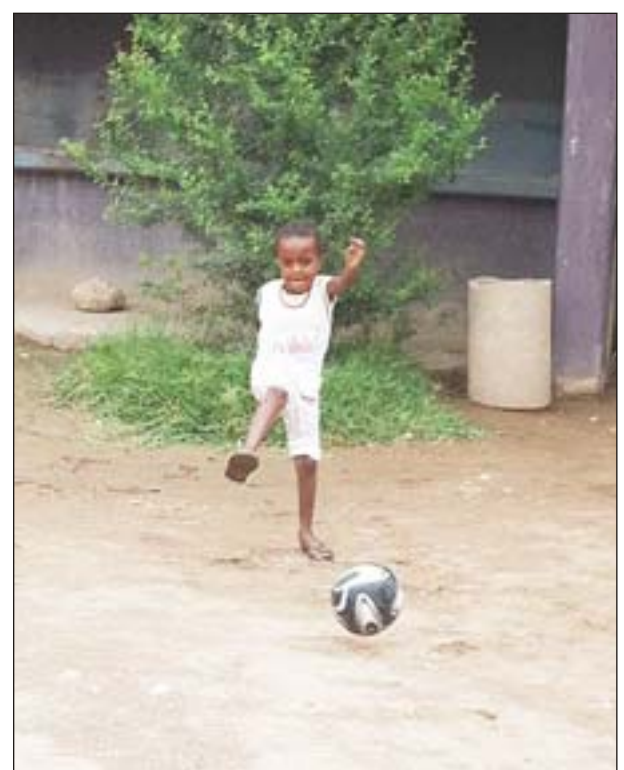
We have spent most of our time here visiting where they sleep and work on the street and doing what we can to show them kindness and give them dignity. The river bed is dry this time of year and it is a place to play - so we brought soccer balls and skipping ropes and have started games in the late evenings. Our presence and the chance at a game spreads by word of mouth and the children seem to come from out of nowhere.



**80-year old Fatima Mohammed fled the war and drought in her country. She rests outside her makeshift hut in the Bulabakti section of the refugee camp in northeastern Kenya. Photo Courtesy of Paul Jeffrey, ACT Alliance.**



**A Somali woman carries her child on her back as she waits to be processed into the Dogahaley section of the Dadaab Refugee Camp. Photo Courtesy of Paul Jeffrey, ACT Alliance.**



**In the midst of trial and turmoil, there are smiles for simple pleasures, like playing ball with a child.**



# rist among the world's poor

They have taught us Ethiopian dancing and told us of their life on the streets. We are deeply touched by their smiles and their joy at the simplest of things - a touch of a hand, a smile, a kind word that says, "I see you and you matter."

We are out each morning to buy bread (our mainstay, with a few

their gnawing hungry and yet, Lily was skipping ahead of us when we came out this morning with the joy of a child at the gift of life, even as tough as hers is. And Martha was so delighted to have a ball to kick and throw and someone to play with today that she squealed with joy - even though her reality is a 3 ft. by

what Jesus calls us to do - could we not all simplify our lives enough so that the children of the world might just live with sufficiency? These children relish the chance to learn and hope to be able to go to school - some of them we have been able to help and they are working hard in school and have a chance at

going to a university. The rest of them deserve the same chance.

I cannot dismiss the words of Matthew

**“I cannot dismiss the words of Matthew 25:31-46 as I look into the eyes of these children - “for as much as you have failed to do it unto the least of these my children, you have failed to do it unto me.””**

raw vegetables and an occasional piece of fruit from the open market). A “6 inch subway” size baked loaf costs about 5 cents and yet most of these children cannot afford even that for their day’s food - they find other ways to quiet

5 ft.’ “cabinet” on a street corner where she sleeps each night with her grandmother.

I am left with this gnawing sense that this need not be if the church universal would decide that poverty was not acceptable and act - that is

25:31-46 as I look into the eyes of these children - “for as much as you have failed to do it unto the least of these my children, you have failed to do it unto me.” May God help us and show us a better way.



A young girl visits a health clinic in the Somali bush country.



Top Photo: Newly arrived refugees carry their belongings through the Dadaab Refugee camp. Middle Photo: A Somali woman cooks over a fire in front of a hastily constructed hut. Bottom Photo: Adow Ibrahim Ali (right) provides water to Ibrahim Mohammed in a remote section of eastern Kenya, near the Somali border.

Photos Courtesy of Paul Jeffrey, ACT Alliance.



## Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education program honors 2011 winners

*Continued from page 2*

ley@mdumc.org or 713-468-8356.

### **Terrace UMC, Houston** *Life Skills Retreats for Women*

The Outreach Ministry Team organizes a free Life Skills Retreat three Saturdays per year for female clients of Santa Maria Hostel, Turning Point Center, and Garden Place Apartments. The women are in various stages of crisis: residential drug treatment, homelessness, or transitional housing.

The retreats include worship, lunch, and workshops on topics such as health, finance, self-esteem, job skills, parenting, living in sobriety, spirituality, and dealing with loss. The workshop leaders volun-

teer their expertise, and church members host as greeters, lunch servers, and transportation providers.

The program is having a significant impact on the participants and the community. For more information, contact Kathy Gilbert at kgilbert@terraceume.org or 713-686-4328.

### **Churches with Outstanding Christian Education Programs**

In addition to honoring seven churches as "Shooting Stars" for their exemplary programs or events, an additional 14 churches also were recognized as achieving the specified criteria within five categories critical to an outstanding, ongoing Christian

Education program.

"It is especially gratifying to note that the size of these churches is not an indicator of the innovation or quality of their ministries," said Ellen Edwards, Christian Education Director of St. Paul's UMC, who chaired the awards program this year. "Church membership among the Shooting Stars ranged from 200 to thousands."

The five categories considered critical for an outstanding, ongoing Christian Education program in order to earn the Five Stars of Excellence recognition are:

- Adopting mission statements and goals for Christian Education that reflect a connection to the

mission of the local congregation

- Involving clergy in Christian Education
- Calling, equipping, and affirming leaders
- Caring, inviting, and reaching out
- Providing resources and support for all persons involved in Christian Education

The churches meeting the Five Stars of Excellence criteria for the 2010-11 year were Chapelwood UMC, Houston; Chapelwood UMC, Lake Jackson; Cypress UMC, Cypress; First UMC, Groves; First UMC, Houston; First UMC, Jacksonville; Holy Covenant UMC, Katy; Klein UMC, Spring; Mission Bend

UMC, Houston; Pollard UMC, Tyler; Rose Hill UMC, Tomball; St. Paul's UMC, Houston; St. Peter's UMC, Katy and Wesley UMC, Beaumont.

All churches in the Texas Annual Conference are invited to participate in this program every year. "The Five Star Award is an excellent tool for evaluating effectiveness, developing strategies for growth, and celebrating and promoting strengths in the educational ministries of your congregation," concluded Edwards.

The program runs from April 15 to April 15, and the entire packet is available online at [www.tcecf.org](http://www.tcecf.org) and within Congregational Excellence at [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org).

## Back-to-School

### Diverse ways to prepare for school by helping others

By Shirley Broome  
Center for Missional  
Excellence

In Cote d'Ivoire, thousands of children lack the opportunity to attend primary school. Through its Adopt-A-Student program, the Texas Annual Conference is working to change that reality and make disciples of Jesus Christ at the same time.

Working together across the connection, we are doing together what we cannot do alone – transforming the world by making disciples of Jesus Christ, one student at a time. For \$600 a year, a child in Cote d'Ivoire can attend a United Methodist primary school where they not only learn reading, writing, math and other subjects, but also hear the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ for their lives.

**How can you help?** More children need to be sponsored through the Adopt-A-Student program and those who have been sponsored need that sponsorship renewed each year.



**The grand-daughter of Rev. Chuck Simmons, senior pastor of Memorial Drive UMC is excited about modeling her new apron.**

It's a tall order, but working together as a connected people, each contributing what they have - whether it be money, time, talents or all of the above

– we can get the job done. (That's actually not only a Wesleyan model, but also a Biblical one – check out Acts 2:42-47.) **Here is what you can do:**

**Sponsor a child as a church or as a Sunday school class** – if 60 people gave \$10, together you could sponsor a child and transform a life in and through the gospel.

**Sew items for sale at your Fall and**

**Christmas Bazaars and/or Festivals and donate the proceeds to the Adopt-A-Student program.** If you can sew or your church has a sewing min-

istry, we will give you the fabric without charge in return for your commitment to sew and donate the proceeds.

**Sew items for sale at Conference/District events and donate the proceeds.** We supply the fabric you need at no cost to you. You supply the talent and time. If you would like to join in the on-going fun, please contact Shirley Broome, Administrative Assistant for the Center for Missional Excellence at 713-521-9383 or [sbroome@txcumc.org](mailto:sbroome@txcumc.org).

Fabric is available at the conference office or your district office for this project. Here is a list of the items that sold the best or were requested: Children's and adult bib aprons, casserole covers, prayer squares, lined/unlined bible covers, tissue holders, quilts, pastors stoles, altar cloths, placemats and napkins. Check out the pictures on the Conference web site, [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org) of all the items we had for sale.

Following is a list of events that are on the calendar and for which help is needed to make items for sale:

- REAP (GHLES) at Memorial Drive UMC - Sept. 16-17
- North District Mission Forum – October 1st
- Adopt a Student Fundraiser & the Mission Store
- Christmas Bazaar at the Conference Office/ Thursday, December 1st



# Ministry Snapshots

## Spreading the gospel from the inside out

John Wesley UMC to host evangelism conference

By **Thelma Jones**  
Editor, Cross Connection

The word *evangelism*, according to Webster's dictionary is a noun that means zealous preaching and dissemination of the gospel (the good news), as through missionary work. That meaning certainly fits the upcoming evangelism conference hosted by John Wesley UMC in Houston, Texas.

Saturday, September 24, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. is the time and date for a conference whose focus is showing practical ways for churches and individuals to share the gospel



Rev. Rudy Rasmus

through their lives and their ministries.

The theme is, "Outward" and the event is designed to

show ways to be more "outward directed," moving beyond one's comfort zone to make a difference in the world through grace and love of Jesus Christ. Rev. Rudy Rasmus of St. John's UMC, Houston will be the guest speaker. In addition to being the pastor of a church, Rev. Rasmus is an author and humanitarian with a passion for reaching the world for Christ. During the conference, he will offer ideas on how the Church and individuals can participate in God's redeeming work in the world today.

Associate pastor, Rev. Matthew Smith says, "We are hosting this event to encourage

churches to embody radical hospitality and to be devoted to being outward directed in all areas of ministry. The Great Commission, "to make disciples of Jesus Christ," is best fulfilled when Christians look beyond the walls of the church building and see with compassion a world in need of good news."

He continued, "This idea of seeing outward then compels the Christian to make a difference in their community, but sometimes it's more difficult than anticipated. There are many questions and risks associated when churches desire to encounter a diverse and ever

changing culture with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We envision as a result of this conference communities being changed, lives transformed, and vibrant growing congregations because the church was willing to open its doors and step out into the community."

The registration deadline is September 20 and child care will be offered for children 5 years and younger.

For more information about the conference or to register, visit the church's web site, [www.jwumc.org/resources/registration](http://www.jwumc.org/resources/registration) or email Rev. Smith at [msmith@jwumc.org](mailto:msmith@jwumc.org).

## St. John's UMC Texas City breaks ground on new church building

By **Gary Scoggin**  
St. John UMC Texas City

On a Sunday afternoon in July, St. John's UMC of Texas City broke ground on a new church building. The original

**"Bringing our newest members together with our founders was a way we could demonstrate that we are proud of our heritage and excited about our future."**

of sand. Three members of the church's recent confirmation class joined eight of the original charter members from the formation of the church in 1958. "Bringing our newest members together with our founders was

Rev. Mike Tyson  
St. John's UMC Texas City

building was destroyed by a fire on September 10, 2009. After the fire, St. John's met at Calvary Baptist Church until May of this year. The church now meets at the Mall of the Mainland.

A combination of the church's oldest and newest members had the honor of turning the first ceremonial shovels

a way we could demonstrate that we are proud of our heritage and excited about our future," says Pastor Mike Tyson.

The new building will be located at 25th Avenue and Amburn Road, one block north of the College of the Mainland and next door to the Hearthstone Assisted Living

Center. This is a new location for St. John's. After the fire, the church decided to relocate to a different part of Texas City in order to minister to the families moving into the fastest growing part of the city. The original church building, built in 1961, had been located at 1432 16th Avenue North in Texas City.

Although the decision to relocate was a difficult one for the congregation, charter member Ben Bozeman summed it up by saying, "Fifty years ago we built on what was then the edge of town because that's where the growth was. That's what we're doing again today."

The new building will contain a worship center that will seat 300, a children's wing, a youth facility, and a full service kitchen. The worship center will be used for other functions such as meals, concerts and other gatherings.

The new building has a planned completion date of spring, 2012, just in time for

worship services for Easter.

St. John's UMC is a member of the Southeast District of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Dr. Roy James is the District superintendent; Bishop Janice Riggle Huie leads the Annual Conference.

If you would like additional information about the project, contact the church pastor, Rev. Mike Tyson, at 409-948-2466 or the church lay leader, Gary Scoggin, at 409-771-1345.



Charter Member Ben Bozeman turns the first shovel as Charter Members Tomy Hamon and Jim Blankenship watch.



## Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

### Learning Opportunities

#### St. Paul's UMC Provides Free Employment Seminar

Even in tight job markets, it can be possible to find the right employment niche. St. Paul's UMC is offering a three-week employment seminar to help people find their niche.

Organized by recruiting and staffing consultant Mac MacLaren, who also is a St. Paul's member, the seminar will be from 9 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays from August 23 to September 6. Sessions will include a time for networking and lead sharing, plus these specific topics:

**August 23** - The "Total Package" which consists of your resume, and your accomplishments worksheet.

**August 30** - Concentrating on interviewing; telling your story and building a job search strategy

**September 6** - Your hidden network; effectively using your network, job lead sources such as the internet, recruiting firms, job fairs.

Anyone may attend this seminar. Register via 713-528-0527 or [info@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:info@stpaulshouston.org). For more information, contact MacLaren at 281-229-9296 or [mac@mac-maclaren.com](mailto:mac@mac-maclaren.com).

#### 3rd Annual Week of Prayer and Service for Children and Youth!

August 11, thousands of people will come together to pray in unity around specific topics that children face everyday.

Dr. Bob Sanborn, CEO of CHILDREN AT RISK will bring an update on the seven

issues that will be the focus for prayer by the Faith Community in the greater Houston area.

Following, the week of August 14-20, the Week of Prayer and Service for Children and Youth begins. The event will take place at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Bagby Parish Hall, 717 Sage Road, Houston, Texas at 10:30 a.m.

Visit [www.childrenatrisk.org](http://www.childrenatrisk.org) for a universal prayer guide for your use, as well as an updated agenda for the Summit. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Nelson at 713-869-7740 or [lnelson@childrenatrisk.org](mailto:lnelson@childrenatrisk.org).

#### REAP What You Sow

On September 16-17, gather seeds for sowing at REAP, a conference to be held at Memorial Drive UMC in Houston.

REAP, "Renewing, Equipping, Affirming, Preparing," is a regional event sponsored by the Christian Educators Fellowship of the Texas Annual Conference which is affiliated with the General Board of Discipleship.

Guest speakers include Dr. John Holbert from Perkins School of Theology, Mary Jane Pierce Norton from the General Board of Discipleship, Dr. Gladys Childs from Texas Wesleyan University, Rev. Greg Davis of the Louisiana Conference, and Dr. Will Reed from the Misión Milby Community in Houston.

Registration is open to clergy and laity who serve in children, youth, adults, and spiritual formation ministries. For more information or to register online, go to [www.ghles.org](http://www.ghles.org).

#### Theophostic Prayer Ministry – Healing Life's Hurts

August 27, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Mission Bend UMC will host a discussion entitled, Theophostic Prayer Ministry – Healing Life's Hurts by the Rev. Kathy Eason, Founder and Executive Director of Serenity Retreat for Healing and Spiritual Renewal in Houston and Bellville, Texas.

Rev. Eason is an ordained Deacon in the UMC and earned an M. Div. from Perkins School of Theology, SMU. Her specific calling is to bring renewal and awareness to the church about God's healing power through Jesus Christ.

For more information contact Pat Howell, 281-498-5701 or [pthowell@hotmail.com](mailto:pthowell@hotmail.com).

### Fellowship Opportunities

#### Aldersgate UMC Presents – "Nite At The Improv"

The 7th annual dinner theater and silent auction is a fundraiser to benefit Aldersgate's Drama Ministry.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, August 20, 6:30 p.m. at the church located at 13217 FM 1764 in Santa Fe, Texas.

The cost for adults is \$15; seniors, \$10 and children, \$8. For the cost for a group or corporate rate, call 409-925-2552.

#### Family & Friends Day at St. Paul UMC Port Arthur

On Sunday, August 14, at 10:45 a.m., come and experience Christian fellowship and discipleship during the church's annual Family & Friends Day. Contact the church office to

schedule transportation to the event or for more information, contact Rev. Patricia Wells or Kristal Whitley, church secretary at 409-985-9977.

The church is located at 821 Freeman Avenue (formerly Texas Avenue), Port Arthur, Texas 77640.

#### Houston St. Mary's UMC Anniversary

Connected is the theme for the upcoming celebration during the month of August for the 62nd anniversary of St. Mary's UMC.

Kicking off the anniversary month, The Anointed Voices of St. Mary's choir will host a Choir Concert, Sunday, August 7 at 5 p.m.

Featured performers include the New Beginnings Ministry Choir of Blueridge UMC; the gospel singing group, Equipped; gospel recording artist, Michael Lofton and The Community Music Center of Houston.

Bring family and friends to Family Night Café, Friday, August 19, 2011 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00 per person.

Worship service will begin at 10:15 a.m., Sunday, August 21. Our Anniversary guest speaker will be Dr. Robert McGee and the members of Trinity UMC at 4 p.m. For more information, contact the church at 713-747-1150.

#### Mission Opportunities

##### Cote d'Ivoire Fabric

When someone asks me if we have more Cote d'Ivoire fabric,

I usually just chuckle. Yes, there is **lots** more fabric.

As we found out, selling handmade items is appreciated as much as buying the fabric by the yard.

There are many more sewing ministries in our churches that do great work making items for the elderly or those who are hospitalized or in hospice. We have no desire to impose on this important work. Perhaps some of you may want to do something for another cause by making items for us to sell at events that are scheduled for this Fall.

If you or your group is interested in helping, we would love to hear from you. We supply the fabric you need at no cost to you. You supply the talent and time.

Contact Shirley Broome at the conference office at [sbroome@txcumc.org](mailto:sbroome@txcumc.org) or 713-521-9383 and find out how you can help.

#### Back-To-School Bible Giveaway

As a part of its outreach community service, Crestmont UMC Discipleship Committee, through its Fishers-of-Men ministry will distribute 500 New Testament bibles for students at five apartment complexes, a car wash and on the church's parking lot, August 6, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

For more information about these events, contact James Jennings at 713-738-8188 or Rev. Curley Laster at 713-733-1020.

Send Spotlight submissions to:

[thelmaj@methodists.net](mailto:thelmaj@methodists.net) or call 713-521-9383