



Cross Connection

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Prepare now

Partners in Mission to train disaster recovery team leaders

Fifteen months after Hurricane Rita visited Southeast Texas, many are still struggling to rebuild. The more than 800 families on the Texas Annual Conference Rita Recovery waiting list prove daily that there is still a need for volunteers.

"Most of these folks were in dire straits before Rita, and Hurricane Rita pushed them over the edge," said Angela Baker, director of Rita Recovery. "We're talking about the poorest of the poor."

To help meet people's needs by answering the continuous call for volunteers in Texas and throughout the nation, Partners in Mission will host seven Team Leader Trainings throughout the conference in January and February.

Baker often refers to volunteers as the "hands and feet of Jesus Christ," recognizing the essential Christian witness of those who volunteer to serve others.

Any church that is interested in

sending a work team to an affected area in 2007 must have a trained team leader. Consult the following training schedule for the most convenient date and location:

Jan. 13 – St. Luke's UMC, 3471 Westheimer, Houston, 77027, 713-622-5710

Jan. 20 – Marvin UMC, 300 W Erwin St,

Tyler, 75702, 903-592-7396

Jan. 27 – Aldersgate UMC, 2201 Earl Rudder Freeway S, College Station, 77845, 979-696-1376

Feb. 3 – First UMC Lufkin, 805 E Denman Ave., Lufkin, 75901, 936-639-3141

Feb. 4 – Winterfield UMC, 2616 Tryon Road, Longview, 75605, 903-753-4825

Feb. 17 – St. Luke's UMC, 3471 Westheimer, Houston 77027, 713-622-5710

Feb. 18 – First UMC Beaumont, 701 Calder Ave (corner of Calder & Pearl), Beaumont, 77701, 409-832-0295.

Saturday trainings are from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday trainings are from 2-7 p.m.

The cost is \$15 per person, which covers the training manual, Safe Sanctuary training and a light meal.

Make checks payable to Partners in Mission and mail to Partners in Mission, 5215 Main Street, Houston, Texas, 77002.

More registration information is available on the Partners in Mission web site at www.partnersinmission.org or by calling 713-521-9383 x316.



Southeast Texans still need help recovering from Hurricane Rita. The pictured home -- with its roof blown off in the storm -- illustrates Rita's wrath.

Apply now for local pastors Course of Study



The Perkins School of Theology Course of Study Extension School is now accepting applications for the spring semester of 2007. The first class is Saturday, March 3. The spring 2006 Course of Study class is pictured above with instructor Rev. Rita Sims, who teaches Pastoral Care for Spiritual Formation.

See story on page 4.

Restorative justice jumpstart

Workshop designed to inspire, engage more congregations in prison ministry

By Eleanor L. Colvin
Director of Communications

Trinity East United Methodist Church will host a Restorative Justice Ministry Awareness Conference Saturday, January 20, from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Rev. Jim Welch, Central South District Superintendent, and the Rev. Shirley Allen-Jenkins, senior pastor of Trinity East are excited about the conference being held in the Houston Central South District.

"Restorative Justice is the terminology we've used to replace what was once called prison ministry," said the Rev. Jim Welch. "But what we're really in the business of is redemption -- proclaiming the Lord's redemption to folks who stand in need of that redemption, and to work with those folks who - for good or ill reason - society has marginalized."

Texas has the second largest prison system in the free world, which makes restorative justice a priority.

"We've marginalized an entire generation of young men through our drug laws and in reaction to perceived threats," Welch said. "I think it's important for the church to respond to the needs of families and ex-offenders - to assist in creating the possibility for a whole and vital life."

"Restorative Justice is a vital ministry that we need to be about."

What is it?

"Restorative Justice is a ministry that is three-tiered, and the three tiers minister to offenders, victims and correctional profes-

"What we're really in the business of is redemption -- proclaiming the Lord's redemption to folks who stand in need of that redemption."

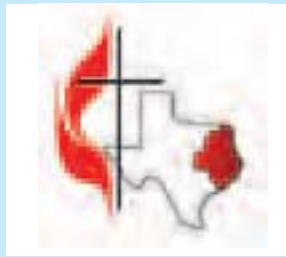
*Rev. Jim Welch,
Central South District Superintendent*

sionals," said Rev. Marvin Hood, associate pastor of Faithbridge UMC and Restorative Justice minister throughout the Texas Annual Conference. "Our goal is to get the churches involved in one of the tiers."

All churches are invited to send one or more representatives to the workshop to receive valuable information on the diverse mission opportunities related to Restorative Justice. The hope is that people will understand Restorative Justice ministry does not have to be one-size-fits-all. There are a variety of ways for congregations to engage in justice ministry that is most appropriate for their setting.

"Restorative Justice is not just prison ministry to prisoners," Hood said. "It's a ministry that's inclusive of the entire community."

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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.

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

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Covenant College workshops equip laity and clergy for vital ministry

Adding Our Stanza to the Great Hymn of the Church is the theme for Covenant College 2007. Always inspirational and educational, this year's event will take place Saturday, February 3 at The Foundry UMC, 8350 Jones Road.

The keynote speaker is Dr. C. Michael Hawn, professor of Sacred Music and director of the Master of Sacred Music Program at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, where he has served since 1992.

All Covenant College attendees will participate in the morning lecture and workshop with Hawn and select one additional workshop for the afternoon.

The following is a list of workshop topics:

Being Formed by the Spirit of Christ: Becky Oates, Tom Bain and Wayne Corprew. Seeking a closer walk within

your Christian life? The Holy Spirit works in amazing ways through Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Direction, and by creating a personal space for prayer. Come and be prepared for a Pentecostal experience!

Restorative Justice

Ministries:

Rev. Marvin W. Hood.

Interested in beginning a restorative justice ministry at your church?

Come gain the principles,

applications and implementation information you will need...all from an experienced restorative justice pastor. The workshop will include a discussion of the Texas Criminal Justice

System.

Just Say YES!: Rev. Cynthia Harvey. This workshop will help participants discern their call to lay ministry and provide practical ways to develop leadership skills. This workshop could prove to be the beginning of a new you!

How to be an Effective Lay Delegate:

Jim Moffett and Donna Schlitt. What constitutes an effective lay delegate? What leadership skills do you need to develop? Come gain some very practical knowl-

edge to help you lead your local church into a successful future!

Stewardship: James Varner. Brought by the Texas Methodist Foundation Stewardship Services,



Course of Study accepting applications for spring

The Perkins School of Theology Course of Study Extension School is now accepting applications for the spring semester of 2007.

The first class is Saturday, March 3, at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, Texas. Classes will continue on April 14 and May 12.

The student body of part-time local pastors has grown to more than 100 students, and shows signs of continued growth with the addition of local pastors from the Louisiana, Southwest Texas

and Northwest Texas annual conferences.

Course offerings include Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit, Pastoral Care for Spiritual Formation, Hebrew Bible I, the Practice of Preaching, Pastoral Care and Counseling.

In addition to course studies, students will have the opportunity to attend worship services, share stories and ideas, and develop new friendships across the annual conferences represented.

Dr. Jimmie Reese, director of the Course of Study, urges all

part-time local pastors to apply as soon as possible for the spring 2007 semester. Students will receive their pre-class assignments and a list of needed textbooks.

The Course of Study faculty includes: Dr. Bert Affleck of Perkins School of Theology; the Rev. Rita Sims, pastor of Winterfield United Methodist Church in Longview; Dr. Jack Albright, retired member of the Texas Annual Conference and adjunct professor at Lon Morris College; Dr. Jim Killen, retired

member of the Texas Annual Conference; and Dr. Starr Bowen, a United Methodist Missionary serving in Cleburne, Texas, and a professor in the Hispanic Division of the Regional Course of Study School at Perkins.

To receive an application, contact Dr. Jimmie Reese at JAREESE@aol.com, 903-585-4116, or 1803 Turney Circle, Jacksonville, Texas, 75766. The application deadline is February 16.

Restorative justice

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Rev. Welch agrees that the potential for Restorative Justice ministries is limitless.

"Obviously, Restorative Justice is more than going into jails," Welch said. "It's working with people after they get out. That seems, to me, to be the most pressing need we have.

"We have all types of ministries in prisons -- Kairos volunteers are in prisons everyday and the work that Marvin Hood is doing is extraordinary. But it is

"Restorative Justice is not just prison ministry to prisoners. It's a ministry that's inclusive of the entire community."

*Rev. Marvin Hood
associate pastor, Faithbridge UMC
TAC Restorative Justice Pastor*

Remember to register

The registration deadline is January 17 at wfox@firstdallas.org, jjackson3014@sbcglobal.net or you may call 713-743-5385.

A \$10 fee to cover the cost of handouts, breakfast and lunch can be paid at the door.

Workshop speakers and topics include: Rev. Marvin Hood on *Encouraging Pastors of Methodist Churches to Become Involved in Restorative Justice Ministry*; Dr. Barry Roberts on *Why the Church Should Be Involved in Prison Ministry*; Jerry Groom on *Re-entry Back in the Free World* and Larry Frank on *Mentoring is Critical to Men Staying Free*.

Trinity East is at 2418 McGowen Street at St. Charles. *Juanita Jackson of Trinity East UMC contributed to this report.*

Nothing But Nets campaign gets \$3 million boost

United Methodists collaborate with partners to provide mosquito nets that combat Malaria

NEW YORK: The *Nothing But Nets* campaign will receive a \$3 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the purchase and distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets to prevent malaria among children and families in Africa.

The people of The United Methodist Church and other *Nothing But Nets* partner organizations – the United Nations Foundation, NBA Cares, *Sports Illustrated* and others – are working together to raise donations for bed nets that save lives.

The grant will match those contributions dollar to dollar up to \$3 million.

The *Nothing But Nets* campaign was inspired by *Sports Illustrated* columnist Rick Reilly who wrote a column by the same name appealing to his readers to donate money for bed nets. Joining in the campaign is just the latest step by The United Methodist Church to prevent and control malaria.

“For decades, the denomination has been working in African communities to combat diseases of poverty through education, prevention and treatment,” said the Rev. R. Randy Day, the chief mission executive of The United

Methodist Church. “Now by partnering with other organizations, we are able to reach more people and have a greater impact.

Mosquito bed nets are a simple and cost-effective way to prevent

sleep under a mosquito net.

“Coming so soon after the Christmas season, this is great news because bed nets represent the gift of life,” said Bishop Thomas Bickerton, president of the General Commission on Communication. “Among the poorest in Africa, the struggle to preserve life occurs every day ... The Gates Foundation challenge grant, and the response of generous people, will make a real difference in this effort to save lives.”

So far, *Nothing But Nets* has raised more than \$2 million, and 150,000 nets have already been distributed in Nigeria. Those were the first of many that will be shipped through the campaign, which is working through one of its partners, the Measles Initiative, to deliver nets to even hard-to-reach areas within Africa.

Contributions can be made to the campaign through the Advance for Christ and His Church, the designated mission giving channel of the denomination. Donations, designated for Advance No. 982015, can be made online at <http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/advance/donate.cfm?code=982015>, by phone at

888-252-6174, or by mail at Advance GCFA, P.O. Box 9068, GPO, New York, NY 10087-9068. Checks also can be placed in the offering plate of any United Methodist congregation. One hun-

dred percent of every Advance gift goes to the designated ministry.

For more information about the Nothing But Nets campaign, visit www.nothingbutnets.net or www.umc.org.

‘Among the poorest in Africa, the struggle to preserve life occurs every day ... The Gates Foundation challenge grant, and the response of generous people, will make a real difference in this effort to save lives.’

Bishop Thomas Bickerton
General Commission
on Communication President

malaria.”

Malaria infects more than 500 million people each year, and more than a million die from the disease. Insecticide-treated mosquito nets can reduce the incidence of malaria by half in areas of high transmission, yet fewer than 5 percent of African children

More on Malaria

1 *Malaria has been brought under control and even eliminated in many parts of Asia, Europe and the Americas. Yet in Africa, with increasing drug resistance and struggling health systems, malaria infections have increased during the last three decades.*

2 *Bed nets are effective tools in the battle against malaria. They create a protective barrier against mosquitoes at night, when most transmissions occur. A family of four can sleep under an insecticide-treated bed net, safe from malaria, for up to four years. The benefits of bed nets extend beyond the family. When enough nets are used, the insecticide used to deter mosquitoes makes entire communities safer – including those individuals who do not have nets.*

3 *Malaria accounts for up to half of all hospital admissions and outpatient visits in Africa. In addition to the burden on the health system, malaria illness and death cost Africa approximately \$12 billion a year in lost productivity. The effects permeate almost every sector. Malaria increases school absenteeism, decreases tourism, inhibits foreign investment and even affects the type of crops that are grown.*

Source: *NothingButNets.net*

Upcoming Events

Prayer Seminar: Saturday, January 13, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., John Wesley UMC, 5830 Bermuda Dunes, Houston, Texas (Champions Area).

Presenter, Dr. Terry Teykl's warm, humorous style makes him a highly-sought after speakers and seminar leader.

Call 281-444-2112 to register for seminar and lunch. Register on site for seminar only without lunch.

Cost for lunch: \$6 adults; \$3 children. Seminar materials: \$15 and may be purchased on the day of the seminar.

Details: www.jwumc.org.

Healing and Prayer Service: The Second Sunday of each month, beginning at January 14, 6:30 p.m., First UMC, Hinson Chapel, Westchase Campus, Sam Houston

Tollway at Westpark Drive.

Contact: Dionne Holbert, 713-458-4758 or dholbert@fmhouston.com.

We have been blessed by the testimonies of God's healing power in many lives. Let us share in your journey of faith.

Conference-wide Senior High Camp Leadership Opportunity: Tuesday, January 16, 1 p.m., First UMC, 1105 E. Main Street, Henderson, Texas, 75652.

Contact: Kelly Sullivan or Tom Tekell, ksullivan@stpaulshouston.org; tom@sfawesley.org.

The Leadership Team needs small and large group leaders, curriculum planners and talented craft people to energize, brainstorm and enlist lay and professional youth directors, youth coordinators and pastors for this summer's Camp.

Perkins Lay School of Theology, Semi-Annual Lecture Series: January 19–20, St. Paul's UMC, 5501 Main at Binz/Bissonnet, Houston, Texas, 77004.

Contact Rev. Gail Williford, gailwilliford@stpaulshouston.org or Sandra Obregon, smo@smu.edu.

Series includes dinner with speakers Dr. Joerg Rieger, Barbara Wendland, and Dr. Frederick Schmidt Friday at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday activities include communion, lectures, and lunch.

Cost: \$40 per person for one lecture and meal; \$70 for Friday evening, one Saturday lecture and both meals. Vegetarian options available. For continuing education units, add \$5 per day extra.

Details also available at www.stpaulshouston.org.

Third Sundays: 6 p.m., Shepherd Drive Fellowship, 600 Shepherd Drive, Houston, Texas.

Celebrate Christ in the Native American United Methodist tradition. Preacher and song leader to be announced.

Contact: kyker.brayton@juno.com or bobpierce@mdumc.org. Pot luck supper following.

Great Minds in Methodism Sunday, January 21, morning worship and 6 p.m. discussion; Monday, January 22, 8 a.m. complimentary Insight/Discussion Breakfast (RSVP), First UMC, 1320 Main Street, Houston, Texas, 77002.

Contact: Judy at 832-668-1836.

Speakers: Bishop Scott Jones,

Kansas West Annual Conference; Dr. Greg Jones, Dean of Duke Divinity School will discuss critical issues affecting you and your church.

Being One: A Marriage Seminar: Saturday, February 10 (offered four times/year), 9 a.m.-2 p.m., St. Paul's UMC, S-312, 5501 Main at Binz/Bissonnet, Houston, Texas, 77004.

Contact: Rev. Gail Williford at 713-528-0527 or gailwilliford@stpaulshouston.org.

This seminar is for engaged and newly married couples.

Cost: Free to couples married at St. Paul's UMC; otherwise, \$60/couple.

More details available at www.stpaulshouston.org in the weddings section.

A day apart

Cramer Center retreat empowers women to carve sacred space for God

By Lisa Mage
Cramer Center Board of Directors

The Cramer United Methodist Retreat Center invites all women to experience "In God's Time – A Day Apart for Women."

Slated for Saturday, January 20, the retreat promises to equip women with tools to help them set aside moments in the day to be present to God.

Designed to intentionally provide sacred space and holy time with God, the retreat will include time to reflect, meditate, journal, walk the Labyrinth and come to stillness in the midst of the constant movement of living.

The world is scheduled, calendared, managed and organized to such an extent that women of

God often are in constant tension trying to juggle the demands and busyness of life, so that they may enter into a holy time with God.

The Cramer Center is offering this opportunity to live in God's holy time, and for one day set aside the doing to tend to the being. Bring a Bible, a favorite pen and journal. Continuing education credit is available.

The cost is \$20, which includes supplies and lunch. Please RSVP.

The Cramer United Methodist Retreat Center provides sacred space for Christian spiritual growth through faith-forming opportunities. For a map and directions visit www.cramercenter.org or call 281-350-1355.

Stormy new year

Tornado strikes Lakeview Assembly



Lakeview Methodist Assembly experienced a devastating tornado December 29.

The storm destroyed most of the forest between the Fair Village Road and Lake Lemons, while missing the major tree farms on campus.

The tornado then headed northwest, taking out the trees on the dam and much of the forest behind it, including all of the wilderness trail and the forest area along the creek.

The Fair Village Road is completely covered with debris from the area near Cabin 7 to the spillway near the sewer plant.

There is extensive damage to the Great Hall roof and minor damage to the roofs on several other buildings.

Additionally, the boat house was blown apart, several fences are down, and Vesper Point 2 is destroyed.

The worst of the wind damage was on the West part of the property and, fortunately, not in the middle of the camp.

Photos and video of the damage may be viewed online at <http://www.lakeviewmcc.org/tornado06/tornado.htm>.

Covenant College

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involvement, and support. A few areas to be considered will be mission organization in the local church; how to set up a mission committee; resources for mission; the work of the General Board of Global Ministries; mission education, theology, and philosophy; along with other areas pertinent to God's challenge to all of us to seek and pray for our unique place of missionary service.

Senior Adult Ministries:

Rev. James H. McPhail. With the new conference structure, are you wondering just how senior adult ministries fits in? Jim is chairing a task force on how senior adult ministry will function within the new structure. Part of the new development is the "Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries," which was recently inaugurated. Find out what else is being planned for the months ahead. Ample time will be devoted to enhancing senior adult ministry in your own local church.

Finance: Brenda Porter and Cynthia Cox. The up and down world of church finance! While we'd love to promise you keys to never being behind on your church budget, what we can offer are important tips to managing the financial life of your church.

Stewardship — Developing Extravagant Generosity in the Local Church: Rev. C. J. Taylor. Christian Stewardship is most effective when it is a year-long endeavor with a clearly defined plan. This class will look at various ideas and strategies to develop stewardship and encourage extravagant generosity in the congregation.

Introduction to SPRC: Rev. Jim Welch, Rev. Gail Ford Smith and Rev. Jack Shelton. Come for an insightful overview of the roles and responsibilities of the members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. The role of the members in relationship to the pastor, staff, and overall church will be discussed. This workshop is highly recommended for newly-elected members of Staff Parish Relations Committees.

Trustees: Rob Maxwell, Allen Langston and Bob Barfield. Trustees play an extremely important role in the life of the local congregation. Whether you are a new trustee or have served

for years, come hear about the dos and don'ts of being on the Board of Trustees of your church from some experienced trustees.

Emerging Issues in the Center for Congregational

Excellence: Dr. Karen Dorris. Learn about progress in the transformation program for 225 conference churches, places where new congregations will be started in 2007, leadership training opportunities to be offered through the Center, updates on the conference camping program, and new initiatives in youth ministry.

What's Happening in the Center for Clergy Excellence:

Rev. B.T. Williamson and Rev. Carol Bruse. The new Center for Clergy Excellence is busy creating opportunities for clergypersons to pursue excellence through building better relationships with God and with one another, and through participating in on-going self-discovery and professional learning. The new Center is also creating opportunities to communicate Christian vocation as a viable option among young people, such that the Texas Annual Conference will continue to be blessed with diverse, gifted, young clergy.

Worshipping Across Cultures: Pitfalls and Possibilities:

Dr. C. Michael Hawn. Spend another session with our keynote presenter, Dr. C. Michael Hawn. Based on his travels and studies in many different cultures, Dr. Hawn will discuss the very timely, but sometimes tricky, issue of worshipping cross-culturally.

Mentor Training: Rev. Rusty Watkins. Participants in this class will receive training to serve as mentors of individuals going through the process of becoming ordained. To participate in this class you will need to register through the Board of Ordained Ministry.

More about the speaker

A student of global music and worship, Dr. Hawn has taught and studied in locations around the globe including Nigeria and

Who: Anyone hoping to transform their life or ministry.

What: Covenant College

When: February 3

Where: The Foundry

Want to know more?

www.txcumc.org or contact Sharon Krowl at sharon@southwestdistrict.org

Kenya (for the Association of Theological Schools); Cuba, Haiti, Mexico and Nicaragua; Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand and Hong Kong (on a grant from SMU); and Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Japan and Korea (on a grant from the Louisville Institute).

Recently he served as the music director of the IX Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

His publications – in addition to more than 200 articles – include: *For the Living of These Days: Resources for Enriching Worship*; *Stepping Stones: An Ecumenical Children's Choir Curriculum*; *The United Methodist Reporter* weekly column entitled "History of Hymns;" *Worship Arts* journal bi-monthly article on a global hymn; *Halle Halle: We Sing the World Round*; *Gather Into One: Praying and Singing Globally*; *One Bread, One Body: Exploring Cultural Diversity in Worship*.

Worship and the morning workshop with Hawn will begin at 10 a.m., immediately after the registration and fellowship period that begins at 9 a.m.

There will be a lunch break, and afternoon sessions will begin at 1 p.m.

Need more details?

Brochures may be downloaded from the conference web site at www.txcumc.org.

Mail registration forms and payments to: Sharon Krowl, Central South District Office, 3900 Lexington Boulevard, Missouri City, Texas, 77459. Make checks payable to Central South District Covenant College. The cost is \$20 until January 27, and \$25 thereafter.

Childcare will not be available for this event.

For registration information, please contact Sharon Krowl at 281-499-3700 or sharon@southwestdistrict.org.