



Cross Connection

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

Out of the ashes, local church emerges stronger



A metal box is found among the charred ruins of Russell Memorial UMC in the Northwest District of the Texas Annual Conference. The fire that destroyed the sanctuary is the news for the front page headline of the Wills Point Chronicle. See the story on page 4

Serve one another in love

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

Reviewing the 2009 milestones and accomplishments of local churches, districts and Centers for Excellence, is the work to which the Core Leadership Team devoted its first meeting of the year, while simultaneously considering the course for transforming the world in 2010.

Northwest District Lay Leader Stephanie Griffin led the group's devotion, which centered on Galatians 5:13-14, *"You my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge your sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

Holding a handmade cross she received on a visit to Russell Memorial UMC in Wills Point, she called the team to hold the congregation in prayer, since arson devoured the church structure February 4.

"They are a very, very precious people," she said. "They love the Lord and I know they're going to get through this. But, they do need our prayers."

And while the Wills Point tragedy is closest to home, it was not the only one Griffin lifted up. "There's been an enormous amount of challenges already in 2010," she said in reference to the earthquake in Haiti.

The year's early turmoil compelled her to revisit her journal entries from January 2009. At the time, Colossians 1:9 was the scripture on which she was meditating. *"For this reason,*

since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

In times of turmoil – whether in the early Colossian church or today – praying for one another is essential.

"Intercession – standing in the gap, plugging the dyke, holding the burden for someone who cannot hold their own is Christ-like," Griffin said. "As a disciple, I think, what's the most powerful thing I can do? What can change lives more than anything else?"

The answer: prayer. "We call on the only power that can make a difference, change a heart, heal a body, fill [us] with power and make the Lord of Lords smile, because we've stepped outside our

selves," Griffin said.

Making a difference

When the goal is as complex as transforming the world, workers occasionally wonder if they are making an impact – making a difference.

Griffin reported that she spent virtually every weekend in the Fall 2009 traveling with District Superintendent Rev. Sandra Smith to attend 88 charge conferences.

"What I found was churches whose hearts are the mission of the Texas Annual Conference," she said. "They are out in their communities touching lives and making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

"From food pantries and clothes closets to mission teams

Continued on page 8



Annual Conference 2010

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

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Scheduling Meals

Following are guidelines to use when scheduling meals during Annual Conference 2010. By phone or email, contact the Assistant to the Bishop's Office to ensure your event is approved for scheduling.

For more information regarding costs and menus, visit the Conference web site, www.txcumc.org.

Marriott Waterway Hotel

If you choose the Marriott Waterway Hotel, the Assistant to the Bishop's Office will provide notification to the hotel that you have been approved. You will not be able to make arrangements at the Marriott until an approval has been given and they have been notified that you have been approved.

When approval has been given

to the hotel, contact Nancy Oka at 281-367-9797 to make your arrangements.

On-Site Food Service The Woodlands UMC

If you choose the on-site food service at The Woodlands UMC, contact Jan Ervin in the Assistant to the Bishop's Office. Pre-set meals and their costs are:

- Continental breakfast is \$6 per person
- Breakfast buffet is \$10 per person
- Plated lunch is \$13 per person
- Plated dinner is \$19 per person

The payment for the lunches served by The Woodlands on-site food service should be paid directly to The Woodlands UMC, 2200 Lake Woodlands

Drive, The Woodlands, Texas 77380 (Attn: TAC 2010 Facilities Coordinator).

Payment for your meal selections must be received by May 1.

The Columns Cafe

If you choose The Woodlands *The Columns Café* for a boxed lunch or a salad, this on-site food service will be paid directly to *The Columns Café*, 2200 Lake Woodlands Drive, The Woodlands, Texas 77380.

The cost for a boxed lunch is \$9 and the cost for a salad is \$7. Payment for your meal selections must be received by May 1.

The Loft

If you choose The Woodlands UMC, *The Loft*, you may select from the following caterers:

Carrabba's Italian Grill (281-367-9423); Catering for All Occasions (281-364-8470, Marsha Lamb); McKenzie's Barbeque (936-539-4300); Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen (713-952-9782); Santa Fe South Catering (281-367-3663, Lisa Green); or The Chef's Table (713-706-3111, Rachel Plunkett).

After all details are finalized, complete the reservation form (forms can be downloaded from the web site) and submit it to the Assistant to the Bishop's Office along with your check for the room set-up fee.

For additional information, contact Jan Ervin at 713-521-9383, ext. 308 or jervin@txcumc.org.

Scheduled Meetings

GROUP	DATE	TIME	ROOM
Cabinet Meeting	Sunday - Wednesday	As Needed	Galaway Conference Room
Celebration Women's Prayer Room	Sunday - Wednesday	All Day	Chrysostom Chapel
Core Leadership Team	Sunday - Wednesday	As Needed	Rehearsal - A
DOVE System	Sunday - Wednesday	All Day	TWUMC - D205
Youth Activities	Sunday	3 p.m.	"The Loft"
Clergy Spouses Hospitality Room	Monday - Tuesday	All Day	
Conference Office	Monday - Wednesday	All Day	Lenox Parlor
TAC Worship Planning Team	Monday - Wednesday	All Day	Music Library
Gathering of Candidates	Monday	8 a.m.	Robb Chapel
Clergy Spouses Executive Committee Meeting	Monday	9:30 a.m.	
Gathering of Candidates	Monday	1 p.m.	Robb Chapel
Spotted Owl Gathering	Monday	9 p.m.	"The Loft"



Cokesbury UMC sends more than medical help to Haiti



Volunteers gather supplies that will be used in the mobile medical unit funded and built by the church.

Cokesbury UMC, in partnership with Christian Alliance and UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) will be sending medical resources to the earthquake victims of Haiti.

During 2009, the congregation of Cokesbury funded and built a mobile medical unit that will be dispatched to Port au Prince, Haiti, in February 2010. What started as an empty, metal shipping container is now a bright, clean, temperature controlled, traveling health clinic,

complete with medical and dental stations, as well as office and storage space.

Tom Roper, one of the many volunteers who helped build the Mobile Medical Unit said, "We wanted the Mobile Medical Unit to be the best we could make it, because it represents the love of Jesus made real. Our hearts are going to Haiti with it."

The generous Houston community helped the effort by donating medical supplies that will accompany the medical unit on its journey to Haiti. "We sent out the call to other churches, area high schools, and our neighbors asking for help," said Patti Akkola, Cokesbury's coordinator for this project. "We were blown away by the response."

In all, more than 250 wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, and even some prosthetic limbs

were donated. In addition, 3,100 one-gallon size and 460 two-gallon sized health kits were assembled.

"We had to stay laser focused on counting, packing and documenting every item we received, so it could make it through international customs," Akkola said. "If you took the time to think about the devastating need in Haiti, or the beautiful hearts of all the people who came to donate or help, you could just cry. We don't have time for crying right now. There are hurting people who need our help."

On Saturday, January 30, Cokesbury UMC invited the public to an Open House / Packing Party. The Mobile Medical Unit was open for tours and a companion container was packed with more than 116 boxes of health kits and medical supplies. Special activities were provided to help small children understand the impact of the earthquake in Haiti, and how their help here can change the life of someone far away.

Help came from all over Houston. Employees of Fondren Orthopedic Group in Sugar Land saw the story on the news and brought two truckloads of equipment and supplies to the open house. A family from Spring, heard Pastor Bill Newcomb on the radio and drove over 40 miles to bring 20 health kits they had put together.

The mobile medical unit was dedicated to the Lord's service during Sunday morning worship, January 31. Special guests included Rev.

Cynthia Harvey, Texas Conference Director of the Center for Missional Excellence who is on loan to UMCOR to coordinate Haiti relief, and Fran and Jess Stokley of Christian Alliance. The family of Cokesbury UMC

prayed for the people of Haiti and others that may be served by their medical unit.

Now that this project comes to a close, Patti Akkola looks back on the last few weeks with wonder. "We've been given a rare opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus to people who need him so desperately. When someone in Haiti opens one of the health kits we're sending, they're getting so much more than band-aids and hygiene supplies. That's a package of God's Love."



Church member, Johnny White collects crutches and wheelchairs for use in Haiti.

The Cote d'Ivoire annual conference responds to the tragedy in Haiti

**By Isaac Broune
Cote d'Ivoire Conference
Communicator**

The Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church wants to be part of the vast solidarity shown by the World to the tragedy on January 12 that devastated Port-au-Prince, the Capital of Haiti and caused the death of more than 170,000 people, left hundreds of thousands homeless and many victims.

The Church could not remain silent in front of many sufferings hearts. It organized a remembrance and offerings service at the United Methodist Church of Plateau, downtown of Abidjan.

The word HOPE summarizes all the process that took place during the entire service from the choir entrance to the dismissal.

The service started by the singing of three stanzas of "Nearer, My God, to Thee." For people who wonder why God

seemed so far away, the message was to comfort them that even the painful times should drive us nearer to God.

After a time of prayer and meditation, Rev. Michel Lobo, Plateau UMC pastor and the Conference Administrative Secretary, invited the congregation to reflect on Psalms 39:8 "O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you."

In the silence, he invited the congregation to get into the skin of Haitians and realize how difficult their suffering is. However, he assured that there is a God in whom there is Hope. "The Lord is present to support these people and gave them a reason to hope," he said.

Then the choir sang "on the ocean in dementia ... when there is no hope to arrive safe and sound, let Jesus Christ be your captain." The song was fol-



Members of the United Methodist Church of Plateau in Abidjan pray for the people of Haiti during worship.

lowed by a time of intercession. Rev. Pierrette Ayité Beugré prayed for the leaders and the people of Haiti; and Rev. Philippe Adjobi lifted the grieving and mourning families to God. He also prayed for UMCOR and GBGM staff and the Global Church. Both asked God that they should find in Him assurance and consolation.

Besides prayers, the representatives from various local churches brought financial con-

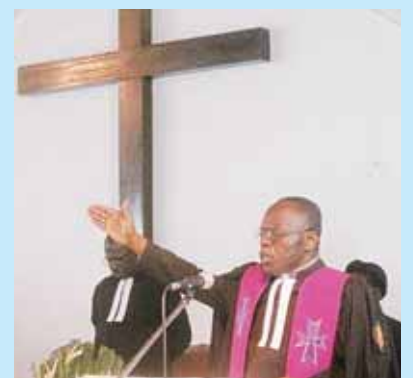
tributions to support the Church efforts to the people of Haiti. Praying for the offering, M. Kragbi asked God to multiply it for the benefit of the people of Haiti.

Addressing officials of the Annual Conference of Côte d'Ivoire as well as church mem-

bers and a few Haitian families present, Bishop Benjamin Boni has criticized those who easily condemn. For him, "God did not abandon Haiti - that is why he is putting the hearts and hands of men in motion to relieve these people."

Bishop Boni invited them to have on these people eyes of compassion which means to "suffer with."

The United Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire expressed its condolences and sympathy to the Global United Methodist family, particularly UMCOR who lost in this tragedy, Sam Dixon, General Secretary of UMCOR and the Rev. Clinton Rabb, coordinator of mission volunteers. The choristers were singing "Amazing Grace" when Bishop Boni prayed and asked for God's blessings upon everyone.



Clergy members who officiated the service, also collected financial contributions in support of the churches' efforts.



Fire burns sanctuary,



Hedges covered in debris remain untouched in the shadow of the shell of the church after the fire.



On behalf of the Texas Annual Conference, Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Rick Goodrich offers Dr. Darrell Coats a check to aid in church recovery.

By Jill Krone
TAC Communications

Only days after fire destroyed their historical sanctuary, Russell Memorial United Methodist Church members move forward with their mission and ministry. During worship service on Sunday morning, the church offered prayers and began the healing process as over 300 persons gathered only yards from where agents for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms sought the cause of the fire.

“They got the building – not the church,” stated member Nathan David only hours after the Thursday morning, February 4, blaze. Even as the fire still burned and the church roof collapsed, church members were already witnessing to God’s presence in their midst as they began setting up chairs in two-year-old Dean Hall in anticipation of Sunday worship.

As he opened worship on his first Sunday to lead the congregation as their interim pastor,

Dr. Darrell Coats proclaimed, “This is not Easter, but we do have Good News to celebrate today.”

Rev. Rick Goodrich, Assistant to the Bishop, offered

“I believe you will find your faith deepened and strengthened as you remember God is with you. God will lead you and bring you on to greater triumph.”

greetings from Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and the entire Texas Annual Conference Cabinet, who were in session when they learned of the fire. In addition to sharing prayers, Rev. Goodrich presented the congregation with a check for \$10,000, on behalf of the entire Texas Annual Conference, to assist with their recovery. “I believe you will find your faith deepened and strengthened as you remember God is with you. God will lead you and bring you

on to greater triumph,” Goodrich said.

Rev. Sandra Smith, Northwest District Superintendent, recalled a time in her ministry when she was

**Rev. Rick Goodrich
Assistant to the Bishop**

pastor of a church set on fire by arsonists and told how that church’s new cornerstone includes the verse Isaiah 43:2, “...When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned...,” Smith offered her support and that of the churches within the Northwest District as Russell Memorial moves forward.

“I can’t begin to understand the depth and degree of hurt and pain you are feeling. Then to add grief on grief when you factor in that this may have been

intentional,” Coats shared as he held up the local Wills Point Chronicle displaying headlines and pictures of the burning building. He continued, “We must mourn before we can celebrate. Still, we don’t have to live in fear. That’s the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ; we don’t have to be afraid.”

Coats challenged those present to recognize that: God is God – not the cause of the fire,

but the One who can redeem good from these things; that God is good, as evidenced by the actions and offers of help and resources received; and that the risen Christ is still with us. Coats concluded with the words of their closing hymn, “Because He Lives, we can face tomorrow, because He lives all fear is gone, and we can face the future together.”

A member since early childhood, Sherry Moore said,



Brass offering plates recovered from the sanctuary ashes.



not church

“There is a great feeling of unity. We can get pass this and we will rise above it.” Theresa Turner expressed that the serv-

Long-time member Mary Helen Castleberry said, “This was a lovely service. The kind of service we needed.”

“... That’s where our strength comes from – our spiritual support. I’ve seen the miraculous and transforming grace of God. I’m seeing it in this church.”

Dr. Darrell Coats
Interim Pastor, Russell Memorial UMC

ice “was healing and we needed to cry. Finding the crosses – that’s healing,” she stated of the two charred crosses, which were pulled from the sanctuary ashes and propped against the brick wall during the service. She noted that brass memorial plaques have been found intact in the remains and the hand bells have been located and readied for next Sunday.

Regarding the healing and rebuilding process, Dr. Coats offered appreciation for the amazing support received, noting the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church, “that’s where our strength comes from – our spiritual support. I’ve seen the miraculous and transforming grace of God. I’m seeing it in this church.”



Top Right Photo: During Sunday's worship, children lead in recovery through their song "We are the Church Together." Over 300 persons attended the worship service in the fellowship hall.

Bottom Right Photo: Damaged but not destroyed. The cross that previously adorned the sanctuary wall is flanked by two brass crosses pulled from the fire. The crosses are representative of the congregation who make up Christ's church. The smaller brass cross (left) was once on a pole and used to lead the procession in worship.

Bottom Left Photo: Fallen gutters replace stained glass windows, giving a view into the destroyed sanctuary.





Information for potential Haiti volunteers



After the earthquake in January, patients wait for medical care at an outdoor clinic in Port-a-Prince.

All team members interested in volunteering in Haiti in the next year must register on-line at www.umrespond.org/Haiti. You will not be considered as a team member unless you register on this site.

Once your name is registered, Partners In Mission (PIM) will receive your

information and contact you.

Medical volunteers must also sign up on this web site. Medical specialists are being deployed now and working with groups already set up in Haiti.

All recovery team members must be Early Response and Team Leader trained. Safe Sanctuary training must also be completed and a background check must be current.

Volunteers who have previous experience in Haiti will be considered first. Persons who speak French or Creole with Haiti experience will be on the top of the list.

No volunteers will be going to Haiti until an invitation comes from the

Methodist Church of Haiti and the UMCOR offices.

What steps should you take now?

1. Register on the national database, www.umrespond.org/Haiti, scroll down to the picture marked, "Register to Volunteer in Haiti."
2. Sign up for Team Leader Training – call Jan Bierwirth at 713-521-9383.
3. Sign up for Early Response Training – call Rev. Clay Whitaker at 281-452-2761.
4. PIM office will identify team leaders and help formulate teams.
5. Be ready when teams are allowed in and

project scheduling begins.

6. Check passport expiration dates and immunizations. Check with county health or CDC for needed shots.

Kathie Mann
Director, Partners In Mission
Texas Annual Conference



One Great Hour of Sharing - coming in March

When a massive earthquake leveled the capital city of Port-au-Prince in Haiti and decimated outlying areas last month, UMCOR was there to bring comfort to survivors and set a direction for long-term recovery efforts. UMCOR used 100 percent of your donations to respond to the tragedy, just as it did after a series of typhoons struck the Philippines last fall and when a tsunami devastated Indonesia in 2004.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing this spring, your gift will help cover UMCOR's cost of doing business and allow us to keep our promise that 100 percent of every other contribution you make to a specific UMCOR project will be spent on that project and not on administrative costs.

One Great Hour of Sharing is March 14.

Order your free offering envelopes or posters by calling 888-346-3862. Check the

UMCOR website for worship materials in support of this important offering. Gifts to this fund can be made all-year long. Please give now.

UMCOR provides emergency relief in many areas of the world. To find out more about UMCOR's ministries, please visit umcor.org. You can donate to any project by placing a contribution in the offering plate at a local United Methodist church; by sending a check to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087-9068; or by calling 1-800-554-8583, where credit card donations are accepted. You can also give online by clicking on any of the "Give Now" links. UMCOR is exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States and qualifies for the maximum charitable contribution deduction by donors.

And, please pray for those who are hungry, displaced, sick or in poverty because of these

and other natural and human-made disasters, and for the workers who minister to them.

Top Photo: Mothers with children line up to see a doctor at Grace Children's Hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose/UMNS.

Bottom Right: Residents of Mellier, Haiti, leave an aid distribution sponsored by the United Methodist Committee on Relief carrying food parcels on their heads.

A Photo by Mike DuBose/UMNS





Ministry Snapshots

Happy Birthday to PM Pals!

St. Luke's UMC Houston celebrates its' respite program



PM Pals is a free respite program offered to the community through St. Luke's UMC. This year, the program celebrates its 5th anniversary!

The volunteers provide individualized care for each child and participate in activities and events according to each child's interest. Nurses and therapists are also present to assist with any medical needs.

The volunteers also provide a "kids night out" program to families with children with special needs and their siblings up to age 13.

PM Pals is held on the third Friday of each month from 6 p.m. - 9:45 p.m.

For more information or to be get involved, please contact Bevin Barrett at 713-402-5014 or pmpals@stlukes-hou.org.

John Wesley UMC hosts Centenary College choir in concert



The Centenary College Choir

"America's Singing Ambassadors," the Centenary College Choir, will be in full voice as it presents a concert on Sunday, February 28, at 4 p.m. at John Wesley UMC in Houston.

The internationally known choir

will present a varied selection of music that is sure to offer something for everyone.

The 2010 choral season continues the unmatched history and tradition of the choir as it celebrates its 68th year of local, regional, national, and interna-

tional performances. The choir's singing, showmanship, character, and visual appeal make for a concert not to be missed.

The church is located at 5830 Bermuda Dunes, Houston, Texas 77069.

Historical African American church continues its legacy of hope and faith

Trinity UMC celebrates 145 years of ministry in Houston

By **Thelma Jones**
Editor, Cross Connection

On a Thursday afternoon of March 5, 1865, members of a small mission church and their preacher, Rev. Elias Dibble, held a meeting for the purpose of organizing a Methodist church. On February 3, 1866, a deed was filed and Trinity UMC was born.

The faith and hope of those few still resonates today with the members and pastor of Trinity UMC, Dr. Robert E. McGee.

A New Beginning, God's Grace in Our Space is the theme for the Founder's Day celebration. The two day event will include a silent auction and dinner on March 6, culminating on March 7 with a special worship service and guest speaker, Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister Emeritus of The Riverside Church in New York, New York and President of the Healing of the Nations Foundation.

Guest Speaker

The Riverside Church is an interdenominational, interracial and international church built by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in 1927. Forbes, who was installed as the fifth Senior Minister of Riverside on June 1, 1989 and retired June 1, 2007, was the first African-American to serve as Senior Minister of the multicultural congregation.

Known in national and international circles as the *preacher's preacher* because of his extensive career and charis-



The design in the window is a Black art form that claims the past and present of African heritage.

The churches' stained glass windows are famous for depicting African American history. The design for the windows on either side of the choir loft is derived from triangles in Afro-American quilt designs.

The triangles form the eight-point star motif; the symbol of the North Star.



Dr. J. A. Forbes, Jr.

matic style, Dr. Forbes has a long list of honors that include, being recognized by Newsweek Magazine as one of the 12 "most effective preachers" in the English-speaking world. He has also been recognized as one of America's greatest Black preachers by Ebony Magazine in 1984 and 1993. He holds 13 honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees and sits on many interdenominational boards and agencies.

For more information on the Founder's Day celebration, contact Georgia Nolan at 713-851-4490 or Trinity UMC at 713-528-2356.



Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

Learning Opportunities

Texas Youth Academy Student Application Deadline is March 5th

This deadline is right around the corner! Sophomores and Juniors in High School may apply.

Two letters of reference and two student essays are also due March 5.

Encourage your youth leaders to identify your youth candidates for this year's academy.

For more information, contact The Center for Congregational Excellence at 713-521-9383.

Boundaries in Marriage

Join Judy Entzenberger for a three-week seminar that will teach you how to establish individual boundaries and respect the boundaries of your spouse.

Learn to identify healthy communication styles that will enhance your marriage, and how boundaries will aid in resolving conflicts. The seminar, sponsored by St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment, is free of charge.

Sessions will be held at St. Luke's United Methodist Church located at 3471 Westheimer (near Buffalo Speedway) on Tuesdays, 23, & March 2, 2010.

The seminar is from 7-8:30 p.m. and is held in the Parlor. A love offering will be appreciated.

Child-care is provided with advance registration. Contact 713-402-5046.

Get connected with Wesley Ministry Network ONLINE!

Do you wish you could deepen your faith, but you're just too busy to attend a class or join a small group?

Through a partnership with The Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship, Wesley Ministry Network is beginning to offer its acclaimed lay education courses on-line. Three courses begin on February 22: Simply Christian, Devotion to Jesus, and Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth.

Each course features streaming video segments and on-line discussions with other students and experienced Wesley Ministry Network teachers. Courses are open to everyone, and CEUs are available for pastors.

Connect with other Christians to deepen your faith and grow in discipleship. Learn more and register at <http://www.beadisciple.com/wesleyministrynetwork.html>

On-line Dating Workshop

St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment presents, *The Myths and Magic of Online Dating: The Right (and WRONG) Ways to Use Dating Sites to Meet Your Perfect Partner.*

The workshop will be held Tuesday, March 9 at 6:30 p.m.

The workshop, presented by Mary Ann Fisher, Self-Empowerment / New Reality Coach is free, but reservations are appreciated.

For more information or to register, contact Amy Birchill, Director of St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life

Enrichment at 713-402-5056 or counselingcenter@stlukes-hou.org.

St. Luke's Center for Counseling and Life Enrichment is located at 2719 Joanel, Houston, Texas 77027.

Tax Seminar Offered

HeartSpring Methodist Foundation and the Texas Annual Conference Center for Connectional Resources are sponsoring seminars for clergy, as well as staff and laity who participate in the financial management of a local church.

The cost is \$45 per session and the cost includes all books and materials. The seminar is scheduled for Thursday, February 25 at Marvin UMC in Tyler. Frank Sommerville will be the presenter.

For registration and additional information, call 713-533-3780 or 1-800-521-9617.

Save the Date of October 22-25

The 2010 National Christian Educators Fellowship Conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky.

Rev. Rudy Rasmus, pastor of St. John's UMC Houston and Dr. Sherry L. Daniels, pastor of Norfolk UMC in Virginia will be the keynote speakers and presenters.

Visit cefumc.org for early bird registration for members and non-members of Christian Educators Fellowship.

Mission Opportunities

Many women do not have swaddling clothes with which to welcome their child into the world. Layette kits provide basic supplies for their baby's

needs.

Layette Kit Assembly & Shipping Instructions

Layette Kit Items Value: \$35 per kit

6 cloth diapers
2 shirts or 2 one-piece body suits

2 baby washcloths

2 gowns or sleepers

2 diaper pins

1 sweater, open in the front

2 receiving blankets

Bundle the items inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with the diaper pins.

All items included in kits must be NEW items.

All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items-nothing more. Do NOT include any personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.

Packing Kits

Box Weight: Each packed box cannot exceed 66 pounds.

Shipping Kits

Complete 2 packing lists - one for your records and one to put on the shipping box.

Paste the shipping label / packing list on the outside of each box you send. The shipping list helps the depot to quickly process kits.

Processing & Shipping Costs:

Please enclose an envelope containing at least \$1 for each kit you send. This donation enables kits to be sent without delay to areas in need. For Cleaning Buckets: \$1.50.

Serve one another in love

Continued from page 1

and youth ministry, I found brothers and sisters in Christ who are busy being disciples."

And, although there are some struggling churches, Griffin said even many of them are making a difference. She told the story of one such church that recently sold their parsonage.

"They took their windfall (if you call \$40,000 a windfall in a sea of so much need) and first paid their apportionments in full and then began a project to house office space for legal aide to our Hispanic population in the area," Griffin said of the new ministry that is in partnership with the Catholic Church in Tyler. "Because a congregation of 11 to 13 were open to serving a special need, the community of Tyler is going to have another point of light."

Even in a time of "enormous challenges" God can use a congregation of 11 or a single disciple.

"Christ takes what we offer and makes a difference in the world. We all need visions, goals, and accountability to be productive. But mostly, we just need to love our neighbors the way Christ loves them," she said. "When I empty my cup and invite the Spirit to fill it daily; when I live each day pouring out all that He has given me, I go to bed blessed...Everything done in love for Christ makes a difference."

Send Spotlight submissions to:

thelmaj@methodists.net or call 713-521-9383