

# Cross Connection

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

Two Sections, Section A

076000 Volume 158

Number 12

July 22, 2011

## What's Inside

Member of First UMC  
Sugar Land Certified As  
Men's Ministry Specialist 2

Cokesbury Houston Gets  
A Major Facelift 3

Pastoral Interns Recount  
Summer of Service and  
Discernment 4

Falvey Memorial,  
Kelty's, Josephine  
Churches Unite In  
Service 7

Spotlight On Local  
Church Ministries 8

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

## 'Complete blessing. Life altering. Deeply fulfilling.'

Pastoral interns enjoy and recount their summer of service and discernment

By Eleanor L. Colvin  
Director of Communications  
Texas Annual Conference

*Thirteen college students recently explored their calls to ministry through the Texas Annual Conference College Pastoral Intern Program, which is now in its fifth year. The following are their reflections on their summer experience. Please keep this class and all previous interns in your prayers, as they continue to discern God's will for their life in ministry.*

**Layne H. Davis**  
**Church Home: Marvin UMC Tyler**  
**Church Internship: First UMC Caldwell**  
**School: McMurry University**

"I have been answering a call into the ministry since I was 16," said 19-year-old Lane Davis. "When I heard that the Texas Conference had a program that allowed college students to work in a church in a pastoral capacity, I knew this was something I had to do in order to not only be assured that this is what God is calling me to do, but to get some hands on experience to further prepare me for what I will be doing in the future."

Davis' ministry experiences were diverse, ranging from leading worship and Sunday School, designing and teaching a Bible study, preaching three times, camp, mission trips and more. The future pastor also did work that will last long after he leaves Caldwell, such as working on the church Web site and creating an evangelism campaign.

"I learned that being the pastor of a church is without a

doubt what God is calling me to," Davis said. "I learned that my gifts are in teaching, preaching, and various aspects in pastoral care, and evangelism..."

And, I learned that God will work in unexpected and amazing ways through not only the one He is calling to be the pastor, but also through the lives and ministries of every member of the body of Christ, even when you least expect it."

Welcoming was the first way Davis said the laity contributed to his life altering summer. "This congregation welcomed me as if I had been a member here my whole life," he said. "They also always asked if I needed anything. I received encouraging letters, food, and small gifts. This congregation made sure that every need or want I had was met. And with the help of this congregation, I was able to sharpen and improve my teaching, preaching and various other aspects of my ministry."

Although the summer's lessons seem innumerable, Davis recounted several ways in which he saw God moving: "I saw the power of prayer work



Emily Peterson and Alex Westbrook share their musical gifts and talents during the morning worship service at the United Methodist Service Center.

in amazing ways. In bible study, I saw a deep hunger for the Word and I saw how the Word transforms people into the very image of Christ. I saw how showing love – to those that seem unlovable to those that don't look like us, don't talk like us, don't act like us – can break through even the hardest of hearts. And, I saw that when we – the body of Christ – call upon the name of Lord and ask for His guidance, His blessing, and His intervention, we make the impossible possible."

**Spencer Hickman**  
**Church Home: First UMC Houston**  
**Church Internship: First UMC Hallsville**  
**School: Texas Tech University; entering Perkins School of Theology**

Spencer Hickman said he wanted a fun summer job and a place to see what being pastor was really like. He got just that through the College Pastoral

Internship Program.

His duties included "a little bit of everything a pastor does," he said, from preaching, bible study, summer camp and mission.

And, what did the 22-year-old recent college graduate learn about himself? "I have so much to learn," he said.

When asked to sum up the summer with only two words, Hickman replied: ordered chaos or chaotic order. Both are quite often the perfect scenario to watch God work.

**Cameron Losoya**  
**Church Home: First UMC Bay City**  
**Internship: First UMC Livingston**  
**School: Wharton County Junior College**

Seeds planted by former pastoral interns are already taking root. Cameron Losoya was inspired to apply for the pro-

*Continued on Page 4*



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



## Member of First UMC Sugar Land certified as men's ministry specialist

By Rich Peck  
Communications Writer

Edgar H. Case, a 17-year member of First UMC in Sugar Land, Texas, has been certified as a men's ministry specialist by the Nashville-based General Commission on United Methodist Men.

He is now available to help Texas churches expand their ministries to men.

DISCIPLE Bible Study courses along with *Christian Believer* and *Jesus in the Gospels*. He also participates in two men's Bible study groups along with a Wesley Group at the Sugar Land church.

He is in his 10th year as a teacher of 4th and 5th grade Sunday school classes. He is a member of the men's ministry leadership

**"I believe the most significant challenge facing the church today is to help men understand the critical importance of being the spiritual leader that God designed them to be."**

**We need to give men the tools and spiritual encouragement to become the strong disciples God wants them to be in their homes, their jobs, their neighborhoods, and their communities."**

A graduate of *No Man Left Behind*, a course in men's ministry offered by Man in the Mirror ministries, Case now serves as the first Texas representative of the Florida-based ministry.

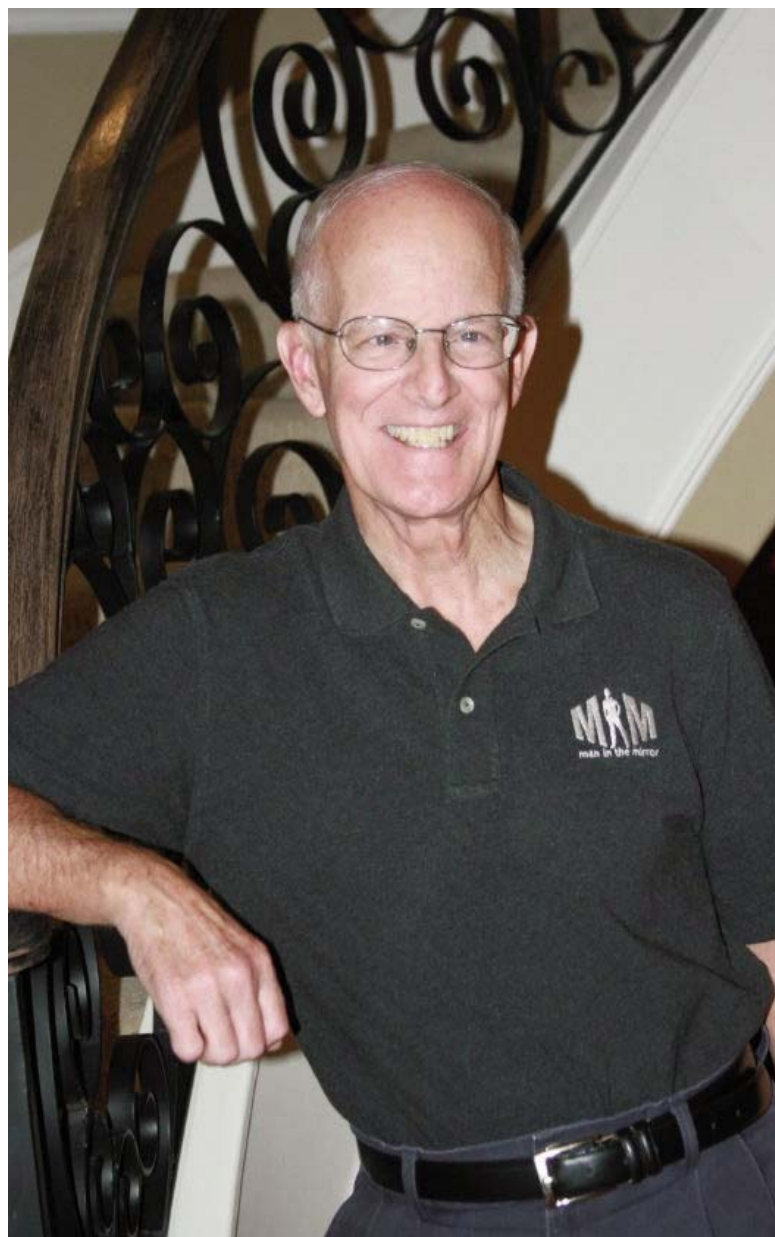
In order to receive certification as a men's ministry specialist, Case had to be certified as a local church lay speaker, and recently he preached his first sermon at Wallis UMC. He also completed an on-line course in the history and polity of the UMC along with safe sanctuary training. The 18-month certification process is coordinated by the commission in cooperation with the Turner Center for Church Development at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville.

This active United Methodist has completed three

team, and he served as lay leader for prayer at two different times. He co-lead a men's prayer ministry group, and chaired the Finance Committee and the Caring-Forever Endowment Fund at the Sugar Land church.

An active member of Sugar Land T-3 Ministry (Titus 3:1-2), Case helps put together sack lunches to distribute to the homeless and less fortunate in downtown Houston. He has also completed chaplaincy training through the Oil Patch Chaplains organization that provides short-term emotional and spiritual support to those who have experienced trauma in the upstream oil business.

"I believe the most significant challenge facing the church today is to help men



**Edgar H. Case was certified a a men's ministry specialist by the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Also, he is the first Texas representative of the Florida-based ministry, *No Man Left Behind*.**

understand the critical importance of being the spiritual leader that God designed them to be," said Case. "We need to give men the tools and spiritual encouragement to become the strong disciples God wants them to be in their homes, their jobs, their neighborhoods, and their communities."

Case plans to begin his ministry with churches in the Southwest District, but he is available to assist other congregations, and he hopes to introduce churches of other denominations to Man in the Mirror resources.

"I believe Ed's vigor and

love of Jesus Christ is the infusion that we need as a men's ministry specialist in the United Methodist Men's organization," said Dan Ramsey, a member of the team assessing candidates for the position. He will work closely with Kenneth Tielke, Texas Conference president of United Methodist Men.

Case may be reached at edgarcase@windstream.net.

Peck is a Communications writer on the staff of the General Commission of United Methodist Men and clergy member of the New York Annual Conference.



# Cokesbury Houston gets a major facelift – still has the same heart

By Gordon Dillahunt  
Manager

Cokesbury Christian Bookstore at 3502 West Alabama has been serving churches, pastors and lay people in the Texas Conference for over 40 years. The tall dark walnut shelves and classic bookstore layout have been a comfortable place for many customers, family and friends over the years. Jerry Garrett was sent to Houston from Nashville in 1968 to open Cokesbury in downtown Houston.

After serving the Texas Conference and Houston area for 10 years, the decision was made to relocate the store off the Southwest Freeway in the Sharpstown area. The caring staff and Jerry Garrett continued to build relationships and help churches find the resources they needed for ministry.

In 1988, The United Methodist Publishing House purchased the facility located at 3502 West Alabama. Cokesbury and its staff have been blessed to be in ministry with so many churches and professional for over 20 years from their current location.

If you have not been in the store lately, you will be in for a

treat. In mid-May, the Cokesbury staff and contractors cleared out the store and started over at the bare walls. Opening up the floor plan, lightening the walls and shelves coloring and moving the check out station to the center makes the store feel spacious, welcoming and new.

The reading area by the front windows draws you in and makes you want to curl up with a good book. Thankfully, there are plenty around.

To celebrate the fresh new look, Cokesbury is having a Grand Re-Opening event Monday, August 15-20. There will be 6 days of savings with 25% off your entire purchase (in-store only). There will be additional unadvertised specials all week. Plus, customers will receive a free drawstring bag gift every day while supplies last.

Check out these daily specials:

**Monday, August 15th** Receive a FREE Common English Bible New Testament (one per customer) while supplies last.

**Tuesday, August 16th** Special Kids Day with Radio Disney road crew on site from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with nonstop music, interactive games and prize giveaways. Chick-fil-A

will also be onsite from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with fresh-cooked food for sale plus great games

and prizes and a special appearance by “The Cow.” There will be story-telling, face painting and balloon animals. Hurry in to get your

copy of The Story Bible for ages 3-8 for 50% off; only \$14.97 while supplies last. Save 30% on all in-store children’s books.

**Wednesday, August 17th** Save 15% on all custom robe orders placed on Wednesday. A representative from Collegiate Apparel will be present to assist you with custom robe orders.

**Thursday and Friday, August 18th-19th** Save 15% on custom paraments

and vestments from *Color 4 the Journey*. Grace Cox-Johnson will hold dyeing technique workshops. Bring your altar guild and learn how to create your own beautiful paraments to help enhance your worship environment.

Contact the store for more information and to register for workshops.

services that help people know God through Jesus Christ, love God, and choose to serve God



Need a gift for someone? Whether it is a gift for a special friend or yourself, it can be found in the gift area in the store.

**Top Photo - The Professional area of Cokesbury houses bibles, study books and other materials that are used in various areas of ministry, such as Bible study, Sunday School and workshops.**

**Bottom Photo: This area is called the, Self-Help and Children’s corner. Books geared toward specific topics and books for children can be found here.**

**Saturday, August 20th** Save 30% on all in-stock Christian gifts.

The Cokesbury Houston staff is proud of the remodel and the opportunities it allows for them to better serve their customers. They believe in the Cokesbury mission, which is to provide quality resources and

and neighbor. Stop in during their grand re-opening and give them the opportunity to help you find the resources you need for your ministry or personal life.

For additional information, contact the Cokesbury store at 713.621.1755 phone or 866.784.5672, toll free.



# 'Complete blessing. Life alt

## Pastoral interns enjoy and recount their summer of se

*Continued from page 1*

gram by interns who served in his church a few years ago.

As an intern, Cameron said he was at the church Monday through Thursday and also on Sunday mornings. He gave devotionals, taught Sunday school, and did some visitations with hospitalized people and nursing home residents.

"I've learned that God might be calling me to something I never thought I would be going to. At the beginning of the summer, I knew exactly that I was going into music and youth [ministry]," he said. "Now I'm a little questionable about it. I think I might be being called to elder ministry."

The experience was "vastly intriguing," Losoya said, adding that he was surprised to find God at work heavily in the youth department. "The youth here have a great love for God. In my home town, the youth are not as motivated for God as

and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

**Patricia Lund**  
**Church Home: Grace UMC Hearne**  
**Church Internship: First UMC Fulshear**  
**School: Baylor University**

Organizing a "Stay Mission" (which is a 3-day project to help those in the Fulshear/Katy/Houston area), for junior high youth and leading a small group for senior high youth girls, were among Patricia Lund's biggest summer responsibilities.

Additionally, the 19-year-old was her mentor pastor's faithful shadow – at hospital and shut-in visitations, at church committee meetings and more. One Sunday, Lund wrote and delivered the children's

I went on a mission trip to Jamaica with my host church. My most important responsibility, though, was to ask as many questions as I could, so I had the opportunity to learn as much as I could about the life of a minister."

Lund, who said she has always been involved in church and contemplated being a minister many times, was encouraged to apply for the internship by the Wesley Foundation leader at Blinn Junior College, from which she recently graduated. "I knew this internship was for me," Lund said. "Being a small town girl, I knew it would take something on such a large scale to help me figure out God's call for me."

"Something I learned about myself through this internship is that I am my happiest when I am working at a church. As many long hours and days I have worked, it has always been fun and I have been very happy the whole time. With that being said, I've also learned I am just a bit of a workaholic and it is something I have forced myself to work on throughout the program."

Where did she see God at work this summer? "I saw God at work this summer through the remodel of the sanctuary at FUMC-Fulshear. So often, small churches don't get enough credit for all they can do. However, this church is proof that a small church can do so much work for God," Lund said. "The church knew their sanctuary needed to be updated to attract younger families to worship God. It has been amazing to see the building transform to match the attitude and level of motivation that the members of this church have. I can't wait to see it completed!"

Rebuilding the youth group represented another move of God. "The youth program here

has kind of been unstable, so a part of what I was supposed to do with my bible study for the senior high girls was to help them get interested in youth again... This is a memory I will always hold in my heart as a reminder that no matter what has happened in the past, the future can always be rebuilt with help, trust, and a lot of faith in God."

**Rebecca Mitts**  
**Church Home: First UMC Conroe**  
**Church Internship: Deer Park UMC**  
**School: Sam Houston State University**

Rebecca Mitts plans to become an ordained minister, so, she had good reason to



answering the phone, crafting sermons and leading the college Sunday school class, to meetings, visits, leading Vespers on Wednesdays at a retirement facility and writing about her experiences for the Deer Park



the youth are here," he said. "There are some that post scriptures on almost every post that they post on Facebook, and after getting to know some of them, they really are trying to live the way of Jesus. It still amazes me that there are youth that are that strong in their faith."

Like those youth, Cameron is growing in faith and especially loves the scripture, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

message. Every Sunday, she helped by serving communion, reading scripture, offering an opening prayer or leading the call to worship.

"One of the greatest things I had the chance to do was be a part of worship planning with the music director and pastor and have my voice be valued and heard," she said. "I preached at the Texas Annual Conference offices and once at the church I was serving. Also,



apply for the College Pastoral Internship Program. "I want to learn as much as I can about the church and to see where I can best serve as well as listen for where God is calling me," she said.

This summer, the 21 year old did everything from

UMC newsletter.

"I learned that I have a lot of gifts — public speaking, listening, interacting with those who are 'on the fringes' — but a lot of areas I still have to work on — spiritual discipline, emotional boundaries, my wounds from my father's death," Mitts said.



# ering. Deeply fulfilling.’

## ervice and discernment

Overall, Mitts described the internship as deeply fulfilling.

When asked where she saw God at work, she replied: “I saw God just about everywhere I turned, everyone here is filled with such love, I always felt comfortable coming into work. I saw God the most, though, work within me,” she said.

“And I do not mean I did anything spectacular, but God has brought me such peace and patience this summer when I had none. I felt God within me constantly now; a warm place inside that glows with joy and serenity. I have never felt it

truth.”

**Michael McVey**  
**Church Home: Texas A&M Wesley Foundation Friendswood UMC**  
**Church Internship: Wesley UMC Nederland**  
**School: Texas A&M University**

Michael McVey said he spent the summer doing everything the pastor of the church assigned him to do. From office work to reading scripture at a funeral to hospital and hospice visits, McVey said through the tasks he “learned how to

came me warmly and with open arms, I feel so loved in their church and I am not looking forward to leaving. They are a true representation of Christ’s love and acceptance,” McVey said, adding that, “It was amazing to watch God change so many lives at the Lakeview Camp that I was overwhelmed. The guys in my cabin were so funny and devoted to Christ it made me sad to leave the camp. My great-great grandfather was Pat Thompson – “Granddaddy Thompson” – one of the founders of Lakeview, and if he were to see all the good that goes on in those summer camps, I know he would be proud.”

“Complete blessing” are the two words that McVey used to sum up the summer.

**Emily Peterson**  
**Church Home: Bulverde UMC San Antonio**  
**Church Internship: Westbury UMC Houston**  
**School: University of Texas at Austin**

For a long time, Emily Peterson has felt a call to ministry, but said she was never able to narrow it down and discern exactly where the Lord is calling her.

“So, I applied for the College Pastoral Internship Program because I knew it presented the best setting in which I could begin the process of really discovering God’s plan for my life,” she said. “Interns do everything! I really have gotten to experience all the ministries on the spectrum.”

During church services, she has read scripture, led prayers, helped with Communion, and preached. In addition, she had the opportunity to lead Bible studies and small groups; chaperone the youth UMARMY mission trip and work with the summer camp program coordinators. Her work didn’t stop



there. Children’s ministries, lock-ins, administrative meetings, church councils, prayer groups, and participating in baptisms and funerals all helped round out her duties.

The laity and leadership of the church were also a great blessing to her: “This summer I saw Christ represented in the community of believers at

me with their open hearts and humble attitudes and with their passionate desires to know and be known by the Lord.”

Transformative and insightful are ways Peterson described the experience, which not only taught her about ministry, but about herself.

“God also did a great work in my own heart this summer,”



Westbury UMC. His love was manifested in their hospitality and service,” Peterson said. “His grace was exhibited in their friendships and fellowship. Each day, the people of Westbury ceaselessly amazed

Peterson said. “He uncovered some truths that were buried deep inside me. He taught me a great deal about my own strengths and weaknesses. Mostly, I saw God tilling the soil of my heart, preparing me



before, and I know it is God.

“Not only that, but I saw God in nature; in the trees, in the clouds, in the wind...it was amazing how much I found myself marveling at God’s creation.”

Worshipping God in nature seems like a natural fit for one whose favorite scripture is John 4:21-24: “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and

interact with the congregation and become a true servant of Christ.”

What else did he learn? “That a minister’s job is not an 8 to 5 job; it is a full time occupation, much like a doctor on call,” he said. “You must be ready to be a servant at any time and be there for your congregation at a moment’s notice. You are the hands and feet of Christ at all times, and in all places.”

Among the most significant moves of God McVey witnessed, were the simple acts of kindness and warmth the parishioners showed him and being a chaperone at Lakeview.

“The people of Wesley UMC Nederland are a special group of Methodists – they wel-



# 'Complete blessing. Life altering. Deeply fulfilling.'

## Pastoral interns enjoy and recount their summer of service and discernment

for what's in store and calling me to join in his plans for the world, the Church, and my own life."

**JC Simpson**  
**Church Home: First UMC**  
**Floydada**  
**Church Internship: League**  
**City UMC**  
**School: Texas A&M**  
**University**

After working as a youth intern during the summer of 2010 at Aldersgate UMC in College Station, JC Simpson said his pastor and youth director urged him to apply for the pastoral internship program. "After looking into it, the idea of getting to explore my call into the ministry in the setting provided by the program, I was more than excited," Simpson said. "Just the chance to serve God and to learn in a new setting was more than enough motivation."

The majority of the 21-year-old's responsibilities revolved around shadowing the host pastor on a day-to-day basis. "I got to be involved in everything from leading the boys' youth group to answering phones in the church office. I had the opportunity to preach on a Sunday morning, participate in UMARMY, make hospital visits, make trips to shut-ins, participate in our homeless ministries, and many other awesome experiences," Simpson said, describing the internship

overall as "humbling" and "awesomeness."

The laity of the church also added to the "awesomeness."

"I had the opportunity to sit down one-on-one with many laity of our church, and they had a large impact on how the church views the pastor and what it means to be in a leadership position in the church," Simpson said. "They allowed me to see many different perspectives of what the church is, what it does, and where it is going, along with my place in it."

When asked where he saw God at work throughout the summer, Simpson responded: "A better question is where did I not see God at work. One of the main places I remember seeing God was in the life of the church staff and in the way they interacted with the congregation. The way that my church's staff was in constant search of the will and face of God stunned me every day."

**Cameron Supak**  
**Church Home: Clear Lake**  
**UMC**  
**Church Internship: First**  
**UMC Port Neches**  
**School: Texas A&M**  
**University**

An invitation from his home church pastor motivated 21-year-old Cameron Supak to spend the summer shadowing a senior pastor and engaging in all forms of ministry, from preaching and teaching to pastoral care.

"I applied because I felt that God was calling me to ministry in some facet and knew that this would be a wonderful opportunity to explore a career in ministry," Supak said. "One of the things that this internship has shown me is that no matter how good I am, I can

do nothing unless it is blessed from God. If God doesn't lead me and prepare the way for me, then I will not be able to succeed."

Supak said he saw God working everywhere from the mission fields of UMARMY to the pulpit of FUMC Port Neches. "Each day I see God change lives for his glory. I have seen God use the gifts he has given me to touch lives in the way I interact and care for the congregation."

And, the laity of the church gave the intern a different perspective on how the church works. "Having interacted with the laity, they have shown me the importance of having dedicated staff members who have the church's wellbeing at the forefront of their minds," he said.

Dedication and love are tenets of Supak's practice in ministry. His scriptural motto: "Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward you serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24), which is underscored by his favorite song – "How He Loves," by the David Crowder Band.

**Alex Westbrook**  
**Church Home: Wesley UMC**  
**Nederland**  
**Internship: First UMC**  
**Chandler**  
**School: Lamar University**

Nineteen-year-old Alex Westbrook applied to the College Pastoral Intern Program to grow closer to God and to better see what God's plan is for him.

Throughout the summer, he participated in every aspect of First UMC Chandler's worship services, and also led worship for the contemporary service; chaperoned UMARMY and summer camp, and while in the church office, experienced the ins and outs of the behind-the-scenes church work. He

described the experience as tremendously life-altering.

The internship's lessons were different from those he learns at Lamar University. "I learned that once God gets a hold of you, He'll never let go and you will be doing things that you never thought you would be doing," Westbrook said.



When asked where he saw God at work this summer, his answer was, "everywhere."

"I have written a few worship songs and one of them is called, 'There With Me,' and God was certainly by my side," Westbrook said. "Every day, I could see Him working and it has just been a wonderful experience."

**Austin Woods**  
**Church Home: Montgomery**  
**UMC**  
**Church Internship: First**  
**UMC Livingston**  
**School: Lon Morris College**

Not only does Austin Woods feel called to ministry, the 19 year old also felt called to his recent summer of exploration. "I was presented with this opportunity multiple times and I just felt like God was calling me to apply," he said.

In addition to leading Bible studies, worship services and youth events, Woods also started a sports ministry and music ministry. Top that off with visitations to church members throughout what he described as a "silently noisy" summer.

"I've learned that I am more independent when it comes to the work place," he

said. "I also show favoritism toward the 'Emerging' style of worship."

Like the other interns, Woods said God was busy this summer. "The real question should be where did I NOT see God during this summer! If I were to choose one big thing (where) I saw God's presence, it would be through the youth,

while they prepared themselves for their mission trip to Belize!"

Additionally, Woods was also impacted by the laity in his ministry setting. "It was astounding to see just how many volunteers it takes to keep the church running!" he said. "I have a sound respect for the laity and all they do!"

The mutual respect for the laity as ministry partners is a solid foundation for Woods, as he strives to live out his calling and commission as defined by his favorite scripture, Matthew 28:16-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

**Other interns include:**  
**Spring Woods UMC member**  
**Ashlie Sivley, who served at**  
**Deer Park UMC, and**  
**First UMC Lake Jackson**  
**member Justin Mikulencak,**  
**who served at First UMC**  
**Atlanta.**





# Ministry Snapshots

## Blessed partnerships

Falvey Memorial, Kelty's, Josephine churches unite and serve others

Falvey Memorial UMC teamed up with Josephine UMC in the North District of the Texas Annual Conference this summer for an exciting mission experience for both churches and the city of Wells.

Josephine UMC brought eight energetic youth along with six exceptionally-talented adults and stayed in the Falvey Memorial fellowship Hall. The team was self-funded and ready to make a difference in the city of Wells.

"Wells has received a blessing by having Josephine UMC in our town," said Pastor Joe Beran. "There's a noticeable difference in our city park, there is an overgrown, city owned lot that was cleaned up, and to area residents were treated to some love filled attention."

Pastor Mark Newsom and his wife Shannon from Josephine UMC, along with Dave

Chamberlain set a great example for their kids, our church, and community. We welcome them back any time!

In another cooperative effort, Falvey Memorial teamed up with Kelty's UMC in Lufkin, and the Wells Independent School District to serve junior high and high school students. Participants enjoyed an open gym, food and an inspirational lesson. The program presenter, Rev. Cindy Parker told the crowd of more than 40 kids the poignant story of Russell Pennington.

Russell's Grapeland high school football team was struck by lightning in 2004. Russell was the only one with injuries – injuries which resulted in his death. A senior at Grapeland High School, Russell made a habit of witnessing to anyone who would listen to him talk about "always being ready if the

Lord called your number."

Rev. Parker was Russell's youth leader at the time. She developed a great study program based on Russell's life and his testimony. She calls it RUE (Are You Ready).

The churches and the school presented the program twice a week for three weeks. In addition, they provided a snack of either, pizza, cheese nachos or hot dogs.

The kids and the school staff also received "Are You Ready" T-shirts with Russell's number 76 on it. It was a wonderful experience for everybody and Rev. Joe Beran, Falvey UMC pastor, highly recommends Rev. Parker's program for any area school group. We thank the school and a special thanks to Rev. Parker, who serves Kelty's UMC.



## "Constructing Character Under Pressure" Is Topic for Perkins Lay School of Theology at St. Paul's UMC

By Donna Adair  
Director of  
Communications  
St. Paul's UMC Houston

"The Gospel of Mark: Constructing Character Under Pressure" is the topic for the summer Perkins Lay School of Theology at St. Paul's United Methodist Church on Saturday, August 13.

The Houston Lay School of Theology is sponsored by SMU's Perkins School of Theology in cooperation with the Center for Congregational Excellence of the Texas Annual Conference. The school meets each January and August, offering an

opportunity for laity and others to explore issues of spirituality, theology, religion, and church leadership with faculty from Perkins. The program is made possible in part by the Howard-Holbert Endowment at SMU.

The course will be taught by Dr. Abraham Smith, Professor of New Testament at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. An enthusiastic and engaged teacher of New Testament, his teaching interests include Mark, Luke, African American biblical hermeneutics, and cultural studies. An ordained minister of the National Baptist

Church USA, he was awarded his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Smith summarizes the course: "The Gospel of Mark has characters (dramatic actors) and builds character (essential values for living). This course will explore how Mark builds the latter through the former. Together we will examine: Mark's overall plot; Mark's negative characterization of the disciples; Mark's positive characterization of Jesus and the 'little people'; and Mark's rhetorical goals, including that of building the character of its readers and auditors as they faced the pressures of tyranny in the late

sixties and early seventies of the first century CE."

Suggested Readings are *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* by Mary Ann Tolbert; and *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* by Brendan Byrne. Students should also read the Gospel of Mark in one sitting and bring to the course a copy of the Gospel, preferably the NRSV.

Gathering and at-the-door registration are from 8:15 to 9 a.m. with the class from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., breaking for lunch. Registration fees range from \$49 to \$65, varying with mode and timing; all

include lunch. Continuing education units are available for an additional \$20.

For additional information or to register, visit <http://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/LaySchools/Houston/Aug2011.aspx> or call 214-768-2251.

At 5501 Main, St. Paul's is modified English Gothic sanctuary on the corner of Main and Binz/Bissonnet, across from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Free parking is available in two lots behind the church on Fannin Street. For more about St. Paul's, see [www.stpaulshouston.org](http://www.stpaulshouston.org).



## Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

### Learning Opportunities

#### 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.

The morning begins at 8:30 with Continental breakfast. Rev. Eason will speak from 9:00 until 11:30 a.m., Following, a volunteer will demonstrate how Theophostic Prayer Ministry works.

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.

Registration fee is \$5 if paid by July 31, \$10 on or after August 1, or it can be paid at the door on August 27th.

For more information contact

Pat Howell, 281-498-5701 or pathowell@hotmail.com.

### Fellowship Opportunities

#### 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.

#### Aging as a Spiritual Journey

"Aging as a Spiritual Journey" will be the topic for the August 11 meeting of the Salt and Light group at St. Paul's UMC. The program will be presented by Dr. Jerry DeSobe, Executive Director of Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education.

Based on the philosophy that the mind, body, and spirit are

interconnected, the Krist Samaritan Center's mental health professionals help individuals grow toward positive mental health.

By using a team approach and drawing upon the unique talents of professionals from the counseling, theological and, medical disciplines, they work together to renew the whole person: mind, body, and spirit.

The Salt and Light gathering begins at 10:30 a.m. with the program at 11 a.m.

A \$7 lunch will be served to those who RSVP by July 12 to [info@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:info@stpaulshouston.org) or 713-528-0527.

For more information, contact Susie Ragsdale, Director of Senior Adults at [jsragsdale@aol.com](mailto:jsragsdale@aol.com), 281-485-4503 or visit the church's website: [www.stpaulshouston.org](http://www.stpaulshouston.org).

#### 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 *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 School of Mission Study

The Texas Conference Cooperative School of Christian Mission is scheduled for July 28-30, 2011 at Lakwview Conference Center in Palestine, Texas.

The event will feature an 8-hour comprehensive adult experiential study and mission studies that focus on forgiveness, restorative justice, and hands-on mission projects.

Texas Conference Partners in Mission Director Kathie Mann will conduct a 4-hour PIM leader training course that is required for anyone who plan to lead a mission team locally, nationally or internationally.

To register for this event, visit the conference web site, [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org).

#### 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.

### Come & Go Reception for Eleanor Colvin

Eleanor Colvin has been a part of the Texas Annual Conference family for six years. As Communications Director for the conference she arrived with many talents and brought a new and fresh approach to the way we had always done communications. Over the course of her tenure she has greatly enhanced many facets of our communications in the TAC. She has helped set a new standard in TAC communications.

It is with mixed emotions that we announce Eleanor will be leaving us. She will be pursuing her seminary education in Washington, D.C., at Wesley Theological Seminary. We are sad to see her leave our TAC family, but happy that she will be returning to school to further her call into the ministry.

Everyone is invited to join us for a "Come & Go" Reception to say "Goodbye and Best Wishes," on Wednesday, August 10 from 1 – 4 p.m., in the Chapel of the United Methodist Service Center.

Rather than give individual gifts to Eleanor, we are asking everyone to contribute to a TAC Money Tree. We will have the tree available for you to place your gift on, in the lobby of the UMSC as you enter the Reception. We will also have a basket available for you to place cards and notes to Eleanor, so that you can personally extend your well wishes and blessings upon her. If you cannot attend the reception you are welcome to mail a card and/or gift to TAC, Attn. Jan Ervin, 5215 Main St., Houston, TX 77002 and it will be added to the tree and/or basket.

Thank you all for helping us to make our reception a grand send-off for Eleanor as she pursues her call into the ministry. If you have any questions, please call Jan, 713-533-3708 or contact her by email: [jervin@txcumc.org](mailto:jervin@txcumc.org).

Submitted by:  
Jan Ervin and Thelma Jones