

Methodist Children's Home students join CTCYM program

It seems like only yesterday when summer was beginning, yet Methodist Children's Home residents have already volunteered many hours to minister on mission trips.

In June, two groups of youth from MCH served on short-term mission teams through the Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission program.

Youth from the Home's Waco campus served the community of Mt. Pleasant, Tex., alongside young people from several other United Methodist churches — Austin Avenue of Waco, Dido of Fort Worth, Good News of Cedar Park/Leander, First UMC of Mart and Palo Pinto. The youth build wheelchair ramps, repaired roofs, painted homes and shared the love of Christ.

Anthony, a Methodist Children's Home resident, said the trip was the perfect combination of meeting new friends and serving people in need. "I loved helping clean up this one woman's house. She really needed help power washing the outside and then repainting it," he said. "She was really grateful."

MCH recently began a residential program in Waxahachie. Youth from this program teamed up for their first mission trip with members of First United Methodist Church of

Waxahachie to serve in Monroe, La., where they also helped paint, rebuild and restore homes. Working alongside youth from First United Methodist Church of Graham and First United Methodist Church of Weatherford allowed them to build relationships with other young people as they served.

Amy, a Waxahachie campus resident, enjoyed working with youth from First Waxahachie, where MCH youth attend worship services and youth events. For Amy, the trip was a unique way to cement friendships with members of the youth group while learning more about service.

"It was really neat to see the people's faces when we made the wheelchair ramps," she said. "They were all so happy and excited about what we did."

Amanda Sargent, director of children and youth at First Waxahachie, was excited when MCH residents started attending their youth group. She sees working with the Home as an important way to support members of her church.

"Methodist Children's Home youth aren't any different from our kids," Amanda said. "We do our best to always make them feel like they are a vital part of our group — because they are."



By completely replacing the roof on this carport enabled the residents to get their previously denied homeowner's insurance. The junior high CTCYM students persevered in accomplishing this large task through their commitment to serve God's people.

CTCYM junior high students exceed expectations with talent and enthusiasm

By JEFF JONES
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL TEXAS
CONFERENCE YOUTH IN MISSION

Whoever said junior high youth don't work hard has never met the junior high youth of the Central Texas Conference. During the last week of July, more than 700 junior high youth and adults proved that projects often reserved for other volunteers were no match for them.

This year, the Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission (CTCYM) brought the talents and enthusiasm of junior high youth to the communities in and around 10 Central Texas Conference churches.

Projects tackled on this year's

trip ranged widely. One work team cleared enough brush to fill a 15-foot trailer eight feet high — twice. This work opened up access to a door of a home the resident had not been able to use for several years. Another team completely replaced the siding on one side of a house damaged by a neighbor's house fire.

"These kids work harder than anything I've ever seen," said one woman as she watched a CTCYM youth put caulk around her bedroom windows and listened to another group scrape three layers of flooring from her kitchen so they could lay down new linoleum.

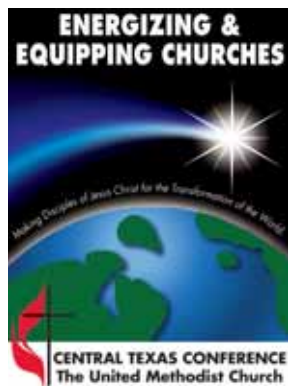
In another location, junior high teens demolished and rebuilt the roof of a client's carport. With the carport repaired, the family will now

be able to purchase homeowner's insurance that had been previously denied. Throughout the Conference, many elderly and sick received wheelchair ramps that will greatly improve their ability to leave and return to their homes.

At one worksite, unique motivation made sure the project was completed by the end of the week. Michelle Freeman, center director at the Hico United Methodist Church Living Center, promised one work team she would put pick hair extensions in her hair if they finished their project on time. True to her word, when the team finished painting the very large community center for the elderly,

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The Wilderness Way

BY BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

19. The Lord is leading His church through the wilderness in the 21st Century. What will it take to survive and hopefully thrive on this wilderness journey?

Recently I found myself stuck in a small regional airport trying to catch a flight home. Bad weather had delayed flights all over the region. Because of those weather delays other flights had been cancelled as well. The small size of the airport meant there were very few options. The airline counter attendants were overwhelmed by people trying to change plans so they could get a flight home. One attendant kept repeating to everyone who asked, "We are not responsible for the weather." When I got to her, she repeated the mantra. "We are not responsible for the weather."

"I know," I replied. "It never occurred to me that you were responsible for the weather. What you are responsible for is how you respond to bad weather." We needed help in making connections and developing alternative ways to get to our destinations. What was not helpful was the refusal of the airline attendant to offer timely, meaningful assistance.

The same issue can be put to us. We are not responsible for the decline of Christendom. The enlightenment is not of our making. But, we are responsible for how we respond.

In the wilderness it is massively tempting just to repeat a mantra placing responsibility on someone or something else. The list can be almost endless. Blaming is a game any can play. It is not helpful and, even more, it is not faithful.

The wilderness way calls us to walk faithfully into an uncertain future.

Rather than just plow ahead, as opposed to bewailing the demise of a church culture and seeking someone to blame, faithfulness calls us into the wilderness walking in faith. That is to say, we need to move forward in ways that paradoxically gain strength from past faithfulness and yet are open to a new and unknown future. This can only be accomplished through a deep connection to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



While there are many elements to faith-walking into an uncertain future, I lift up five for our thoughtful reflection:

- (1) deep covenant commitment;
- (2) heightened worship and spiritual connectedness to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- (3) unflinching perseverance;
- (4) real courage; and
- (5) tough trust in divine leading.

In upcoming *Wilderness Way* articles, I hope to explore each of these topics. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

CTC now online at Portal to Texas History

http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/FWHT/browse/?fq=untl_institution:ACTUMT

A sample of the Central Texas Conference's 100-year history is now online at the Portal to Texas History project in conjunction with the University of North Texas.

The Portal is a gateway to Texas history materials. "You may discover anything from an ancestor's picture to a rare historical map," says Conference Archivist Carol Roszell. "From prehistory to the present day, you can explore unique collections from Texas libraries, museums, archives, historical societies, genealogical societies and private family collections," she adds.

Since the Portal will continue to grow as additional partners contribute digital versions of their collections, Roszell urges folks to return often to discover the conference's latest additions.

The UNT Libraries began planning the Portal to Texas History in 2002 as a digital gateway to historical materials from a multitude of collections. Their goal has been to structure the Portal in a way that would ensure long-term sustainability.

Our Conference archives were invited to participate in this project, says Roszell, with our partnership listing notes under "Where the West Begins: Capturing Fort Worth's Historic Treasures - 227 objects." Photographs and archival documents, from as early as 1912, include portraits of staff and church events at Glen Lake and

Rainbow Camp.

With a ground-swell of support from interested parties, UNT received a Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund grant from the State of Texas to begin the project. By the end of 2004, the Portal was online with five collaborative partners and over 6,500 digital images. About 1,000 visitors a month were using the online collections.

Since 2005, more partners, funding and content have been added and the collection has grown. By 2009, the Portal now hosts over 420,000 digital images from 95 partners. Every month over 115,000 visitors from around the world use the collection.

The Portal to Texas History is created and maintained by the UNT Libraries' Digital Projects Unit, which provides support through guidance and various digital services.

The sampling of digital images from the Archives of the Central Texas Conference on the Portal to Texas History can be accessed at: http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/FWHT/browse/?fq=untl_institution:ACTUMT

For more information, contact Carol Roszell at the CTC Archives 817-531-6550 or 817-877-5222.

Stewardship: A journey of discovery

By DR. VIRGINIA BASSFORD
SUPERINTENDENT, WEATHERFORD DISTRICT

August is here which means that stewardship season is just around the corner! We've had a number of conversations around the Weatherford District office lately regarding such things. Stewardship is one of the many topics about which I'm pretty passionate!

Ken and I have not always been tithers — but something happened along the way. Ken lost his job during the crash of the oil market in '86. We had two brand new babies at home and had just built a new home and moved in before our first child was born.

That fall, Ken's mom was diagnosed with cancer. His dad was in the end stages of colon cancer. In January and February of the new year, life all came crashing down. Ken's dad died just two weeks after Ken lost his job. Our son Matthew became critically ill with a stomach bug and was admitted to the hospital the day Ken's dad died. We had no

insurance, no savings, and I have to admit — not much hope.

But somehow we made it through. There were times over the next nine months of unemployment that we only got through because friends would bring us a bag of groceries — literally. Somehow we managed to beg, borrow (and we thought about stealing) enough resources to keep our house from going into foreclosure. It was a humbling time.

In the middle of all that, I went to work as a youth director in addition to my "day job." The first week I was on staff, the pastor asked all the staff to give up a full week's salary (and he did the same) so that he could use the staff as an example to challenge the congregation.

Wow! That was sacrifice! It started a new understanding for us. We didn't die. Our children didn't starve. Somehow we managed. There was enough.

We began to give our time — lots of time. We didn't have much more than that. But the money gradually followed. It seemed really weird — the more we gave the more we made

saving and putting money aside a challenge game. We became frugal — no, that's not precisely true — I became frugal. Ken had already been that way!

Once we began to live generous lives it got easier to give of our time — and our money. In the year before we left the local church, we gave about 15 percent of our annual income to the church — plus offerings to other charities as well. We've never, ever run out. Never. Some seasons have been a little learner than others, but the oil and the meal have never run out.

I heard Lyle Schaller a few years back. He said the Church is just like a M.A.S.H. unit. There are never enough supplies; never enough people; never enough resources; but we are called to deliver the best care possible on the front lines of the war. How true! If we wait until there is "enough" we may never get around to doing what needs to be done!

When I served our first congregation I asked them for \$1,000 to do something radical in children's ministry. They trusted me with the money. The next month I went back and asked them for another sum — again they let me have the funds because our bank account was growing, not declining.

Again, a third month I went back and asked for even MORE money. The lay leader (who had been lay leader for 17 years) said, "Preacher, I don't get it! You keep asking us for more money, and the more money we spend the more money there is in the bank to spend!" Yup. It's the paradox of stewardship.

In these economic times, we have to be very discerning. We also have the most wonderful opportunity perhaps ever given as Christians who live in these United States.

What if we live generous lives, not because we are wasting, but because we believe in a God who is generous to the core? What if we give generously to our churches, to charities, to the waitress at the downtown cafe — not because we want to be known, but because we want God to be known!

I believe that kind of generosity has the power to change the world! If nothing else, it will change our own souls.

I invite you in the dry days of August to let the oil and the meal flow in a spirit of generosity and thankfulness! Let us, the Church, take our stance in opposition to the world as we live out our trust in a bighearted God!



August

22: Student Leadership Team at UCF, Hill College, Hillsboro

September

6: Christian Education Sunday

7: Labor Day (Conference Center closed)

9: Board of Ordained Ministry dCOM training at Central, Waco

9: Candidacy Mentor Training at Central UMC, Waco

10: Board of Ordained Ministry dCOM training at Arborlawn UMC, Fort Worth

10: Candidacy Mentor Training at Arborlawn UMC, Fort Worth

10: Evangelism Task Force at First Hillsboro

10: Council on Finance & Administration at Conference Center

12: UM College & University Preview Day for high school juniors/seniors at Methodist Children's Home, Waco

12: Disability Concerns Committee at Glen Lake Camp Reception Room

13-18: Disaster Response Mission Trip to UMCOR Sager Brown Depot, Baldwin, La.

14-16: Cabinet meeting

15: Deadline to request Board of Ordained Ministry spring interviews

19: Conference Mission Leadership Team/ N.O.W. Councils at Glen Lake Camp

26: Training for Stephen Ministers, sponsored by Outreach Council's Mental Health Concerns

Sept. 1 is deadline for listing of church fall fundraisers

Local churches are in the planning phase for their annual fall fundraisers, and once again the *Central Link* and conference Web site will carry a one-time listing of all the church and ministry fundraisers in mid-September.

Please get your church's information to Carolyn Stephens at carolyn@ctcumc.org by Sept. 1. This is a hard deadline, so please don't miss it!

Provide your church name and event location, name of the event, date/time, and any activities that make your event unique or special.

This is an opportunity for folks to share in the delight of their own church's event as well as those of neighboring communities.

College Preview Day helps high school juniors/seniors plan ahead 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at Methodist Children's Home, Waco

2009 Licensing School trains 13 for ministry

The Local Pastor Licensing School began for local pastors but soon was extended to include all those who are in the process to become ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church.

The school is provided through the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Each year the Local Pastor Registrar, a member of the BOM, donates his/her time to recruit volunteers to teach the classes and oversees the one-week school designed to help candidates fulfill one of their requirements for obtaining a license to preach. Rev. Darren Walker has been registrar for 2008 and 2009.

This year's class was relatively small with 13 participants from several conference areas, including out of state. They all are seeking licensing in The United Methodist Church, which comes only after meeting the following eligibility requirements:



- being a certified candidate of The United Methodist church;
- having attended a licensing school;
- receiving an episcopal appointment; and
- applying to the office of the bishop for a license on a specified form (downloadable on www.ctcbom.org).

For the latest updates on the conference and youth calendars, visit regularly www.ctcumc.org

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Michelle made an appointment with a local hair salon.

Throughout the week, the work accomplished each day is fed by daily devotionals and worship that keep participants' eyes and efforts pointed toward God. This combination of word and deed help deepen their understanding of what it means to be disciples of Christ.

Every summer CTCYM brings together youth and adults from around the Conference to serve in the name of Christ. For a week they live, eat, work and worship together in living centers hosted by churches in different parts of the country.

CTCYM is funded by the fees paid by participants to attend and by donations from other mission-minded individuals. In September, CTCYM will introduce CTCYM: Beyond Our Borders, a fund-raising project for local youth groups to help bring clean drinking water to people in Liberia.



ABOVE: Opening worship at the Breckenridge UMC living center revolved around a cross the youth had made. Each individual participant lighted a candle and by the end of worship they had melded together to complete the cross. AT RIGHT: Junior high school students get practical experience in proper power tool usage and how to level their work while serving God and community through life-changing missions.



Spotlight on History

Rev. George Tittle was the pastor of the Red Oak Mission in 1848. An absent-minded man with a poor sense of direction, he frequently became lost.

While wandering on the high prairie one day he came across the home of Maj. E. W. Rogers. Major Rogers had been a member of the Kerr Settlement Methodist Church in Washington County, so he invited the Rev. Tittle to preach.

Rev. Tittle did so for the few families who had settled in the area and formed a Methodist class meeting. The little settlement became known as Waxahachie and the class became the city's First Methodist Church. — By Rev. Michael Patison, History Committee

The Central Texas Conference's 100th anniversary will be observed next year with the creation of a conference history book and special anniversary events.

For those who wish to make a contribution to help defray the costs, a check marked "100th Celebration" may be sent to Central Texas Conference, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107. One suggestion is for individuals to contribute \$1 per year for the number of years they have been in the bounds of the conference.

Contacts for questions or to volunteer in the anniversary observance are Rev. Henry Radde (hradde@tmf-fdn.org), Rev. Michael Patison (mpatison@charter.net) or conference archivist Carol Roszell (carol@ctcumc.org).

CTCYM reaches Beyond Our Borders

This morning, when we turned the tap to wet our toothbrushes and brush our teeth, the water flowed without us giving it a second thought.

When we filled our glasses or bottles with water, tea or coffee, we never worried about whether the water was clean enough to drink.

For many people in Liberia, Africa, that is not the case. They walk miles, carrying heavy jugs, just to find water clean and safe enough to drink. This year, the Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission (CTCYM) has set out to help change that.

On Sept. 19-20, CTCYM is inviting youth groups around the Conference to reach Beyond Our Borders and raise \$16,500 for Water for Life, a project constructing wells to provide clean water and bring dignity of life to

communities in Liberia.

For the first time ever, CTCYM is organizing a concerted effort to raise



funds for an international project. Participating youth groups will pick and implement a local fundraiser to raise money for this important project.

Water for Life is an Advance project with an annual financial goal of more than \$66,000. The long-

term goal is that more than 50,000 residents in 40 communities will have access to safe and clean drinking water, thus reducing water-borne diseases and improving the health situation of residents. Dependence on creeks, rivers and streams will be eliminated.

The Advance is an accountable, designated giving arm of The United Methodist Church that ensures 100 percent of each gift is used for its intended mission or ministry. All gifts to Advance projects made through your church count toward your church's annual giving.

Ask your youth leaders how you can support them in this effort. To learn more about Water for Life, log on to ctcym.org and click "Water for Life."

Thanksgiving Offering addresses hunger

The Central Texas Conference Task Force on Hunger has designated the 2009 Thanksliving Offering, generally taken in November, for two ministries that address hunger.

The General Board of Global Ministries Advance #982029 for Hunger & Development will be recipient of 90 percent of the offering and the remaining 10 percent to go to the continuation of the Central Texas Conference Hunger Ministries grants.

The Hunger & Development Advance works globally with people of faith and conscience to alleviate hunger and poverty

by funding health and agricultural development projects. The mission is to enable funding for short and long-term development programs and activities that address the root causes of hunger with special emphasis on nutrition for children.

The CTC grants to local churches are for initiating and/or building hunger ministries and the continuation of ongoing ministries that fight hunger.

For more details, please visit the conference Web site at www.ctcumc.org.