



**CTCYM Leader Training ... 8A**



**Serving where you are ... 5A**



**Advancing the Kingdom ... 8A**

## The Exodus Project Timeline

*A Transformational Roadmap for a Church in Transition*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Nov. 13, 2010</b>	<b>Adoption of Plan</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dec. 15, 2010</b>	<b>Naming of Center Directors (ahead of Jan. 15, 2011 schedule)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Jan. 15, 2011</b>	<b>Naming of District Superintendents</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Jan-April, 2011</b>	<b>Begin to plan Centers &amp; Teams / work on best practices</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>May 1, 2011</b>	<b>Staffing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>June 2011</b>	<b>Implementation / vote on best practices</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Through end of the year</b>	<b>Transition and learning</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Jan. 1, 2012</b>	<b>Fine tuning</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>June 2012</b>	<b>Forward-adjustment</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Post June 2014</b>	<b>Review by outside consultant</b>

## A Message from Bishop Mike Lowry

"I am pleased to announce the Center Directors for the Central Texas Conference, who will be taking office at the Annual Conference session in June 2011," stated Bishop Mike Lowry on Dec. 15.

The Center Directors are:

- Assistant to the Bishop and Executive Director of the Center for Leadership: **Dr. Georgia Adamson**,
- District Superintendent for New Church Starts and Executive Director of the Center for Evangelism & Church Growth: **Rev. Gary Lindley**,
- Executive Director of the Center for Mission Support: **Rev. Randy Wild**.

"In making this announcement, I also wish to extend special honor and recognition to Rev. Harvey Ozmer who comes to the end of a full six-year term as the Director of Stewardship, Finance & Administration," states Bishop Lowry. "Rev. Ozmer has provided invaluable leadership to the Central Texas Conference, especially in the areas of pension and health



**As part of The Exodus Project for aligning the Central Texas Conference, Bishop Mike Lowry, pictured at far right, announced Dec. 15 the new Center Directors who will serve in the conference office: (from left to right) Rev. Randy Wild, Dr. Georgia Adamson and Rev. Gary Lindley. They will take office at the Annual Conference session in June 2011 in Waco.**

insurance."

Announcement for the five District Superintendents will be

released in the next *Central Link* and on the conference website (www.ctcumc.org) on Jan. 15.

### CTC Treasurer Rev. Harvey Ozmer addresses clergy pension and C.P.P. plan

As 2011 gets underway, the new Pastor's Support and Compensation forms have been received, the data has been entered and now the new Pension and C.P.P. (Comprehensive Protection Plan) billing for the January 2011 statement has been prepared.

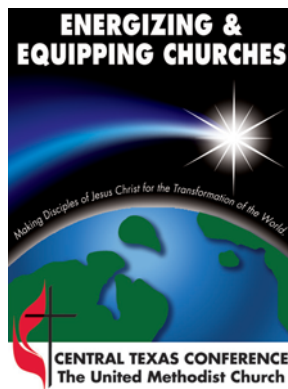
Persons involved in the plans should receive that billing statement soon.

#### Two Reminders:

(1) Clergy Pension billing amounts have changed. We trust that you have adjusted your local church budget according to the new formula for all enrolled clergy.

On your statement, you will see one amount for the two components

**| Continued on page 4A**



the  
**Central Link**

An edition of  
**The United Methodist Reporter**  
January 7, 2011  
Volume 157 | Number 36

*Central Link*, an edition of *The United Methodist Reporter*, is the official publication of the Central Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Opinions are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect official United Methodist positions. The Central Texas Conference does not endorse any product or service advertised.

#### Editor

Carolyn E. Stephens,  
Associate Director for Mission Ministries  
& Director of Communications  
carolyn@ctcumc.org

#### Bishop

Bishop Michael Lowry  
bishop@ctcumc.org

#### Mission Ministries

Dr. Georgia Adamson,  
Assistant to Bishop/Executive Director  
georgia@ctcumc.org

#### Circulation/Subscriptions

Susan Briles  
susan@ctcumc.org

#### Production/Publishing

UMR Communications Inc.,  
Dallas, Texas

The mission of *Central Link* edition of *The United Methodist Reporter* is to inform, enlighten, inspire and equip leaders for mission and ministry in our connectional church.

For circulation and/or advertising policy, contact Susan Briles 817. 877. 5222, 800.460.8622 or susan@ctcumc.org. Subscriptions: \$20/year.

Central Texas Conference  
464 Bailey Avenue  
Fort Worth, TX 76107-2153  
817.877.5222, 800.460.8622  
Conference Website:  
[www.ctcumc.org](http://www.ctcumc.org)

The *Central Link* edition is published every other week and is the official publication of the Central Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107-2153.



# The Wilderness Way

BY BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

## 49.

A simple sentence is tucked so simply into the story of Joseph and the angel's visitation at the close of the first chapter of Matthew's gospel. "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife."<sup>1</sup> Likewise, a similar innocent sounding verse is placed in the story of the Angel Gabriel's visitation of Mary. "Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'"<sup>2</sup> In each sentence we are given a profound example of what true discipleship is.

Joseph, as with Mary, was faithfully obedient to God. Human desire would have dictated that he take the more politic course and break the engagement. This man of faith lived as a person of faith. He honored his commitment to the Lord. "He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him."<sup>3</sup>

John Killinger, a noted preacher of our day, recalls a philosophy professor he had in graduate school. A brilliant thinker and scholar, "he had been an agnostic, suspending commitment to any final system of thought, lest it hamper him in his exploration of other systems. But he told of an experience he had when his second child was only a few months old. She had fallen ill with a high fever and the doctor put her in the hospital. The mother was exhausted and the father told her to go home and get some sleep while he stayed in the room with the child.

'I was sitting there feeling so helpless,' he said. 'My mind raced from one thing to another, from this idea to the other. Finally, when I thought I would go crazy with worry and grief, I began thinking the words of an old hymn I must have learned when I was a boy: *O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end.*

'Over and over I sang them in my head, until finally I found myself singing them aloud. I got down on my knee by my daughter's bed and prayed, "Lord, I did promise, I remember, but I have gone away from you. I have let all my learning turn my head. In searching for the truth with a little t, I have lost the Truth with a capital T.'

"Before he got up, he committed himself to Christ again, and then committed his little daughter to God's care. During the night her fever broke, and two days later she was able to leave the hospital. 'But even if she had died,' he said, 'I believe I would have remained committed to Christ. I learned that night that there isn't any truth apart from Him.'"<sup>4</sup>

It is this truth that Joseph lives. His will is bent to God's will. His commitment is complete. It is all there in that little phrase of verse 24.

Consider Mary. We must not make of Mary some porcelain beauty kept on a mantle or set up only in nativity collections. The incredible majestic saving work of God pours through a live flesh-and-blood woman. Her initial response of fear and questioning is most common, even sensible. Only an oblivious frill would react with equanimity. Yet here lives her greatness. Despite her youth, despite her fear, Mary

responds with the very essence of faithfulness. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."<sup>5</sup>

"For centuries the church erroneously heard this response as a paradigm for feminine docility and passivity. But such an interpretation fails to read Luke's whole story about Mary."<sup>6</sup> This "little girl of a woman who finds herself great with child," an unwed mother to be, responds with neither docility nor passive acquiescence. She embraces God's work within her. "Raymond Brown [the great Roman Catholic New Testament scholar] says that Mary is properly regarded by Luke as 'the first and the ideal disciple.' In her free assent to the divine demand, she becomes the model for all the rest of us who would be part of God's work."<sup>7</sup>

Mary was faithful to God's way. Luke tells us that she went and did what the angel Gabriel had instructed her to do. Her response to the divine encounter with the angel offers us a vision of faithfulness.

The ancient Greeks reported that "when Cicero had finished speaking, the people said, 'How well he spoke.' [But] when Demosthenes had finished speaking, the people said, 'Let us march.'"<sup>8</sup> Mary wasn't content to merely wonder at what she was told. She was faithful to God's way.

This is a hard lesson. To learn to seek and prefer God's will to our own cuts across the conventional wisdom of our age. Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded. Mary was obedient to God's will. Discipleship, following and serving God, begins at this juncture. "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife."<sup>9</sup> "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."<sup>10</sup> From these model disciples, we learn discipleship.

- 1 Matthew 1:24
- 2 Luke 1:38
- 3 Matthew 1:24
- 4 John Killinger, *Best Sermons*, "What Is Truth? Or, Shirley McLaine, Meet the Master
- 5 Luke 1:38
- 6 Willimon, *On a Wild and Windy Mountain*, p. 20
- 7 Willimon, *IBID*, p. 21
- 8 Taken from a poster on the wall of an ice cream parlor in Austin, Texas
- 9 Matthew 1:24
- 10 Luke 1:38



## Conference clergy pension and C.P.P. plan | Continued from page 1A

of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP).

(2) C.P.P. (Comprehensive Protection Plan). In prior years, every local church received an apportioned amount for C.P.P. This amount was a segment

of the Conference Claimants apportionment. Beginning January 2011, C.P.P. was removed from the apportionments and is direct billed to local churches whose pastor(s) is an eligible participant in the plan.

Therefore, some local churches

will not be billed C.P.P. at all, while others will be billed at 3.1 percent of Plan Compensation.

If you have questions after receiving your statement, please contact our conference benefits administrator Shawn-Marie Riley or

conference benefits officer Rev. Harvey Ozmer at 817-877-5222 or 800-460-8622.

## Engaging in Ministry with the Poor and Sick

# Finding a way to be in mission and ministry wherever you are

BY CAROLYN STEPHENS  
EDITOR & DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout our lives — no matter what our circumstances — most people have an overwhelming desire to be useful and to help others.

It's that desire and her faith that have driven Susan Smith, who turns 90 on Jan. 7, to organize a craft group that has produced 530 hand-crafted items for people in need over the last year.

The group of 25 participants are residents at Wesleyan Homes, Inc. in Georgetown. They add to their numbers one Wesleyan visitor from Minnesota who donated her hand-made shawl to the cause.

"Being together, having fellowship and doing something for others is what brings us joy," says Mrs. Smith who came to the Wesleyan from Temple where she was a member at the Church of Christ. She and others at her church had been knitting and crocheting caps and blankets for children in Temple area hospitals, so Mrs. Smith began by using those established contacts to disseminate their gifts.

The purpose of the activity, says Mrs. Smith, was to make caps, blankets, shawls and lap robes that were donated to children and adults at the Mental Health Mental Retardation facility; for children at the S&W Oncology Hospital in Temple; Oncology Rehab in Austin; women and men at the Marbridge in Austin; children with emotional problems; items for babies of unwed mothers at Annunciation Maternity Home; nursing home residents; and children at the Methodist Children's Home in Waco.

Many of the Wesleyan crafters were already skilled in knitting and crocheting, but others joined the classes that Mrs. Smith and others led weekly and began their ministry



**Knitting and crocheting caps and blankets for infants and young children gives pleasure and purpose to many at Wesleyan Homes, including Susan Smith (left) and Ruth Shaw (right).**



**June Winters (left) loves the fellowship and working with her hands, while Susan Smith is crafter, teacher and organizer at Wesleyan.**

for the first time. Unfortunately, knitting needles and arthritic fingers were not always compatible, so several ladies had to discontinue the classes. Most continued to come, however, for the welcome fellowship.

Ninety-nine-year-old Irene Hudson uses a special magnifying light to create her baby blankets. Some of her blankets will be given to babies at the maternity home and others to oncology patients.

June Winters loves the fellowship and working with her hands to knit shawls and baby blankets. Like

several of the others, however, she is rather immobile and cannot go to the stores to buy supplies. She must rely on donated yarn and the supplies others share with her.

The group gets together for one hour each week to work on their projects, but most of them continue their needlework for at least an hour each day throughout the week.

Mrs. Smith says the work challenges their aging hands, "but we feel we are doing something for a child, a sick person or for a family and that makes us feel like we are

making someone happy."

They've spread a lot of happiness over the past year:

- 365 caps for children/adults
- 7 shawls (previously delivered)
- 43 baby blankets
- 15 baby caps
- 54 shawls
- 9 fleece shawls
- 39 fleece lap robes

Mrs. Smith likes what someone once wrote: "There is a prayer in every stitch" and chooses to embrace that idea for their work.

The Wesleyan residents were delighted to welcome Trey Oakley, vice president of Methodist Children's Home, as a guest speaker this past year. Mobile members of the group made a field trip MCH in last June and made the decision to provide caps to the children and youth.

Other field trips included the Annunciation Maternity Home and area nursing homes. "At Christmas time we can know of the joy brought to some besides our own families," Mrs. Smith reports.

The greatest challenge for these industrious women is getting supplies. "A supply of yarn and a few needles are provided for the convenience of some residents," Mrs. Smith explains, "those who are unable to ride the bus or walk long distances in the stores to correlate different colors or textures."

Assistance in the cost of the supplies comes from donations by some of the residents, their families and friends. Other donations have come from Wesleyan Nursing Home (\$60), Wesleyan Retirement Home (\$130), Wal-Mart gift certificate (\$50), Hobby Lobby (\$50) and gifts from several Wesleyan residents.

They would welcome 2- and 4-ply yarn, fleece fabrics for blankets, and financial gifts from others who believe in their cause. A Sunday school class, women and/or children's groups would make good partners in ministry with this dedicated group. For more details on how to help, contact Wesleyan Homes President Chris G. Spence in Georgetown at [cspence@wesleyanhomes.org](mailto:cspence@wesleyanhomes.org) or 512-868-1205.

of 2011 by fully utilizing both their 2010 and 2011 extensions.

If you are not yet eligible for this provision, you may want to share this with loved ones, friends or fellow church members so they can take advantage of this effective way to support their church or favorite charity. For more details, contact Charitable Services at 800-933-5502.



### January:

- 6-8: Desert Stream Event for Clergy at Stillwater Lodge, Glen Rose
- 7: Online checkout begins
- 8: Conference United Methodist Women Committee & Team meetings
- 8: Student Leadership Team (SLT) meeting
- 11: Health & Welfare Task Force meeting at Conference Center
- 12: Commission of Finance & Administration at Conference Center
- 13: Extended Cabinet Leadership Training
- 16: Human Relations Day (offering in churches)
- 17: Conference Center closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday
- 18-19: Cabinet meetings
- 18-25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 20: Check-out deadline
- 21-22: Transforming Men for Christ Conference at New World UMC, Arlington
- 22: CTCYM Advisory Board meeting at First UMC Hillsboro
- 22: CTCYM Group Leader Training
- 23-25: UMW Legislative Event in Austin
- 27: Conference Board of Pensions meeting at Conference Center
- 29/30: "How to Volunteer Like a Pro" training events (2 locations): 29 at Arborlawn UMC, Fort Worth 30 at Georgetown First UMC

## Update on tax-free IRA gifts

A directive from the Texas Methodist Foundation at year end shares some important news regarding charitable giving for the end of 2010 and into 2011.

Individuals age 70 1/2 or older with individual retirement accounts can once again make outright

gifts using IRA funds without tax implications.

In December, President Obama signed into law a bipartisan tax compromise package that extends tax-free distributions from IRA for charitable contributions. The extension is effective for 2010 and 2011.

It permits annual tax-free distributions from a traditional or Roth IRA directly to charity, up to \$100,000 per taxpayer.

A special provision allows interested donors to make distributions that will be treated as made in 2010 if completed by Jan. 31, 2011. In some cases couples could direct IRA gifts up to \$400,000 between now and the end

## New Churches for New People in New Places

# Church Growth SHARES are advancing the Kingdom

By Rev. Gary Lindley  
Executive Director for Church  
Growth & Development

For more than 30 years, United Methodists throughout the Central Texas Annual Conference have invested in Church Growth SHARES to start new churches. These investments are paying high dividends in 2010.

In May Wesley United Methodist Church — A Ghanaian Community of Faith — began in Arlington with the help of SHARE funds. The church is primarily serving those who have immigrated here from the West African nation of Ghana. Since May, the average attendance has grown to over 100. Aldersgate United Methodist Church is “parenting” this new congregation.

This fall, St. James United Methodist Church in Temple began parenting a new African American community of faith in



Rockbridge Church in Round Rock, with over 100 in weekly worship, will be moving to a new facility.

Killeen. The St. James church is providing leaders, teachers and a meeting place in Killeen for Bible study.

It is the vision of the St. James church that, in partnership with Church Growth & Development,

this community of faith will continue to grow and become a worshipping congregation.

New Day Church in Mansfield moved out of the community center into a beautiful new worship center in an office park.

Since moving into this new facility, the average attendance has doubled. Rockbridge Church in Round Rock is now worshipping over 100 and will be moving out of the school in February into a new facility in an office park.

The new facility will provide 7,500 square feet of space for worship, youth, children and adult ministries, and missions.

As we look toward 2011, Church Growth & Development hopes to start two new churches in June. To make this happen, CGD needs more United Methodist churches through SHARES.

The words of Dr. Ed Otwell, the first executive director for Church Growth & Development, still challenge us today: “If you want to start something that will be a spiritual blessing to an increasing number of people for a hundred years or more, start a new church in the right place at the right time.”

Today is the right time and there are right places. Church Growth & Development needs the United Methodists of the Central Texas Annual Conference to purchase SHARES at \$60 a year. This is a small investment that pays divine dividends.

## Energizing & Equipping Church Leaders

### January Events for Youth & Adult Youth Workers

- 7 Registration deadline for Mid-Winter, but registrations will still be accepted after this date with a \$10/person late fee.  
<http://ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1133>
- 10-13 Perkins School of Youth Ministry 2011 at Southern Methodist University.  
<http://www.smu.edu/Perkins/PublicPrograms/PSYM.aspx>
- 22 CTCYM Group Leader Training at Hillsboro First UMC (required for church leaders who have not led a group on a CTCYM trip in the past 5 years)  
<http://www.ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1443>
- 29 “How to Volunteer Like a Pro” training event for anyone who volunteers with youth / Author Jim Hancock leading at Arborlawn UMC, Fort Worth  
<http://ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1444>
- 30 “How to Volunteer Like a Pro” training event for anyone who volunteers with youth / Author Jim Hancock leading at Georgetown First UMC, Georgetown  
<http://ctcumc.org/pages/detail/1444>



### Clergy Time Apart: Yearning for Spring Feb. 1-2 in Salado

The 2011 Clergy Time Apart features Dr. Elaine A. Heath, the McClellan Associate Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology and Director of the Center for Missional Wisdom at Southern Methodist University.

She will lead three sessions as keynote speaker as well as preach at the closing worship service. Several Central Texas Conference clergy will lead various workshops.

The time apart will be held Feb. 1-2 at Summers Mill Retreat & Conference Center (1991 Stagecoach Road/Hwy. 35 N, Salado) with free time on Tuesday evening to relax, share, fellowship and community build.

This event is open to all ordained, commissioned and/or licensed and appointed clergy. For more details, visit [www.ctcumc.org](http://www.ctcumc.org) and click on “New” in the menu bar and scroll down to “Clergy Growth Opportunities.”

### Transforming Men for Christ Conference Jan. 21-22

The Transforming Men for Christ Conference will be hosted Friday evening and Saturday morning, Jan. 21-22, at New World United Methodist Church, 2201 N. Davis Dr., Arlington. Speakers for the event are:

Bishop Mike Lowry — Friday from 7:15-9 p.m.

Rev. David Mosser, senior pastor at First Arlington United Methodist Church — Saturday at 9 a.m.

Dr. Todd Renner, teaching pastor and provost at White’s Chapel United Methodist Church, Southlake — Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Advance registration is required at <http://sites.google.com/site/newworldumm>. For more information, contact [gordon@nwumc.org](mailto:gordon@nwumc.org) or 817-460-4212.

### Faith Community Leadership Summit • Feb. 16

The 4th Annual Faith Community Leadership Summit will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at Round Up Inn, Fort Worth.

Faith leaders from Tarrant and surrounding counties will gather to focus on end-of-life care, support and ministry. For more details and online registration, visit [www.texashealth.org/faithsummit](http://www.texashealth.org/faithsummit) or call 877-THR-WELL (1-877-847-9355).