



Sixth Annual Lay Speaker Meeting

Lay Speaker Ministry ... 5A



Nurture & growth ... 5A



Personal prayer books ... 8A

Conference takes action to cope with potential economic shortfall

The Conference Council on Finance & Administration met in called session Dec. 11 to consider the possible impact the current financial situation might have on the Central Texas Conference connectional giving program and the Conference budget for 2009.

Following that meeting a statement was issued jointly by Rev. Harvey, director of Stewardship, Finance & Administration, and Rev. John McKellar, chair of the Conference Council on Finance & Administration.

Because of the current economic uncertainty and the very real possibility that our churches may not be able to meet their apportionment obligations, they said, the Finance & Administration Office has already identified \$149,000 in the 2009 budget that will not be spent.

CFA is also announcing a 90 percent spending plan for the 2009 budget. Historically, the conference receives a little over one third of annual receipts by June. December's receipts can be as much as 25

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FEBRUARY: CHURCH GROWTH SHARES MONTH

Reaching for the goal!

By DR. J. ALLEN GOSS
DIRECTOR, CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The year is 1980, the year Church Growth & Development was created and the total local church membership in the Central Texas Conference is 123,388.

The year is 1980 and the original goal was to secure one SHARE for every 10 members of local churches. That would be 12,338 SHAREHOLDERS giving \$45 per year for a grand total of \$555,210 to start new churches. Wow! What a dream, what a vision, what a goal!

Fast forward to last year, 2007, and the total local church membership was 162,511, and increase of 39,123. The United Methodist Church in Central Texas is growing and making new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, thanks be to God!

Since the original vision was cast in 1980 the Central Texas Conference has started 41 new churches and 33 of those are a viable and vital part of the conference today. In 2007 these churches had 10,933 members and 229 profession of faith.

The original goal was modified along the way to secure one SHARE for every 15 members of the local churches. So, do the math. Today we have 162,511 members and a SHARE is now \$60, so that would be 10,834 SHAREHOLDERS x \$60 for a grand total of \$650,040 every year to start new churches in the right places with the right pastors at the right time.

When every church promotes the SHARES program in February we can reach for the goal.

What a difference our SHAREHOLDERS are making every year by their faithful giving, continuing to start new churches to reach new people, younger people and more diverse people.

Since 1980 the need for new churches has not diminished. The population growth for the conference continues to increase. The opportunity to plant more new churches continues to increase. The opportunity to train new pastors to plant new churches continues to increase.

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Central Korean United Methodist Church is a new church start in the Fort Worth area.



Light of the World United Methodist Church has been underway for several years in the Hudson Oaks area near Weatherford.



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The Wilderness Way

BY BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

5. Facing the abyss of a second world war in 1939, King George VI of Great Britain read a poem written in 1908 by Minnie Louise Haskins, an American lecturer at the London School of Economics, in a Christmas Eve address to the nation.

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.*

And he replied, "Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

So I went forth and finding the Hand of God

Trod gladly into the night

He led me towards the hills

And the breaking of day in the lone east.

So heart be still!

What need our human life to know

If God hath comprehension?

In all the dizzy strife of things

Both high and low,

God hideth his intention.

We do not stand on the abyss of a new world war (at least I think not), but we are caught in the quagmire of an elongated struggle with the forces of terrorism and darkness. Ours is a world of darkness pierced with the moans of hunger, homelessness and hopelessness. As we step into the New Year our Lord speaks to us. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)

This is not a time for silly-minded optimism. It is a time for genuine biblical hope; the kind of hope that springs from the steps of a refugee couple clutching a new born baby. The image of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt is an apt one for the beginning of the New Year. It is not offered in a sense of gloom but rather, with a genuine sense of hope and majesty.

God is at work in a refugee couple. God is at work in our churches,

communities and world. The voice from the throne cries out over our darkness, "See, the home of God is among mortals." (Revelation 21:3) The promise of Exodus is again with a pilgrim church plunging through the wilderness of 2009. "The Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people." (Exodus 13:21-22)

Whatever our planning for the future holds, it must hold room for the leading of the Spirit. Whatever our struggles of the present involve, they must involve the presence of God. Whatever our actions entail, they must entail the way of Christ. Wesley's covenant prayer for the New Year would inform us and most assuredly launch us in the year of our Lord.

*I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by you or laid aside by you,
Enabled for you or brought low by you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you are mine, and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen. (John Wesley)*



Potential shortfall to be averted with 2009 plan | Continued from page 1A

percent to 30 percent of the total budget.

For that reason, it is impossible to have any realistic idea of how much shortfall to expect until the last half of the year.

For spending cuts to reach the desired levels, according to CF&A they must begin Jan. 1. CF&A will closely monitor spending all during the year. If the pattern is better than expected, then the 10 percent spending cut could be eased.

On the other hand, if giving falls significantly below expectations, CF&A will mandate even further

cuts. For that reason, each recipient of conference budget funds must begin immediately to implement the 90 percent spending plan, but also develop an emergency plan if further cuts are necessary.

"We trust that these actions will be temporary as we live out Jesus' call to be faithful," the two men said in their statement.

The congregations of the Central Texas Conference are known for generosity, good deeds and love of God not only in good times but also when times are touch, they said.

New membership vows, ritual now available

The new baptismal and professing membership vows of The United Methodist Church, adopted by delegates to the 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, took effect Jan. 1, 2009.

The new membership vows and ritual are now available on the General Board of Discipleship Webstie at http://www.gbod.org/worship/default.asp?act=reader&item_id=46866&loc_id=9,824.

The resource includes the following information:

- an explanation of the changes made by the 2008 General Conference;
- a reminder, due to changes made at the 2004 General Conference, to please discontinue use of the vows of Baptismal Covenant III, and;
- replacement texts for those portions of the Baptismal Covenant in *The United Methodist Hymnal* that were updated by the 2008 General Conference action.

— Nurture & Growth Opportunities —

**Bridging the Gap:
Connecting Church
& Academy**
Thursday-Saturday
Jan. 22-24
Sheraton Hotel, Arlington
1500 Convention Drive
Arlington, TX 76011



Leaders from United Methodist churches and higher education institutions will gather at five events — one in each of the denomination's five jurisdictions — to discuss how the church and the academy can work together more closely.

One of the goals of these events, organized by the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry, is to consider how to increase the number

of United Methodist students enrolled in United Methodist-related schools, colleges and universities.

"It's imperative that we take a look at our connectional infrastructure and invest in making it stronger. We have to reopen the lines of communication between our schools, colleges, universities and the church. That's the hope for

the future. It's where our leaders come from," said Wanda Bigham, interim associate general secretary, Division of Higher Education, GBHEM.

On the agenda:

- a discussion of the history of Wesley and higher education,
- development of student leadership,
- vocation and discernment,

- resources through church relationships and
- opportunities from United Methodist loans and scholarships.

Those who might be interested in attending include: annual conference chairs of Higher Education and Campus Ministry; college and university presidents and deans; conference and local church youth coordinators; youth ministers and volunteers; Christian education leaders; chaplains; college church-relations directors; directors of admissions and financial aid directors; district superintendents; and directors of connectional ministries.

To learn more about these events, and to sign up for the South Central Jurisdictional event in Arlington, please visit www.gbhem.org/bridgingthegap.

**2009 Lay Speaker
6th Annual Meeting**
Friday-Sunday, Feb.
27-March 1
Glen Lake Camp &
Retreat Center, Glen Rose

Each year the Lay Speaker Ministries offers an introduction to lay speaking and opportunities for lay speakers to further their education and to fulfill requirements for continuing certification.

The Lay Speaking Annual Meeting prepares lay speakers for service with training courses and certification for area of ministry such as leading meetings, prayers and study programs, assisting in worship

services and providing support to care-giving ministries.

There are over 1,000 lay speakers in the Central Texas Conference who provide a wide range of services to their congregations, their districts and the conference.

All interested lay persons are invited to come and enjoy the fellowship, spiritual renewal and the various courses:

- Basic Lay Speaking Ministries
- A Ministry of Caring (new)
- Extending the Table (new)
- Youth Lay Speaking Basic Class
- Leading in Prayer: Let the Whole Church Say Amen!
- Lay Speakers Interpret to Others Our Untied Methodist Heritage
- Lay Speakers Grow Spiritually

Through Daily Discipline

- Lay Speakers Lead Bible Study
- Go Preach!
- Dancing With Words
- You Can Lead in Evangelism
- Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts
- Certified Lay Ministry Class

While an integral part of the Conference Board of Laity, Lay Speaking Ministries relates also to the Witness Council by collaborating with the other ministries in strengthening evangelistic efforts for sharing personal and congregations' stories of Christian experience, faith and service.

A downloadable flyer and more



information on registration and accommodations is available on the conference Website at www.ctcumc.org/page.asp?PKValue-1089. Please direct questions to Susan Jett at sjett@tol-tx.com or 254-385-0130.

**Taking Care ... of
the Body of Christ
Spring Summit**
Saturday, March 21
Central UMC, Waco

The Central Texas Conference Spring Summit will focus on health and wellness — "Taking Care ... of the Body of Christ" — Saturday, March 21, at Central United Methodist, Waco.

This is a comprehensive look at healthy living and how the church can play a meaningful role. Between 9 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. participants will have opportunities to choose from a variety of workshop programs featuring

specialists in wellness care.

Dr. Mark DeHaven, principal initiator of the conferencewide GoodNEWS Project, will lead the plenary session on "Improving Health and the Quality of Life: Why the Church Must Lead." Following that are a number of workshop choices:

- Improving Health and the Quality of Life: Why the Church Must Lead
- Keeping the Flame Alive: How to Light a Candle Without Burning Yourself Out
- Growing Healthy Children
- Living the Last Third Fully and Ending the Race Well
- Spiritual Practices for an Integrated Life

• Community Gardening: The Act of Inspiring and Transforming Communities Through Gardening

- Feed the Body, Free the Mind
- You Gotta Have Heart
- Special People, Special Needs — A panel of representatives from special care ministries in Central Texas

• When Winter Comes: Hospice and Palliative Care: Death Is a Part of Life

- The Recovering Church — Representatives of United Methodist Congregations

For more details, watch the conference Website at www.ctcumc.org and the weekly *E-Link* electronic newsletter.



January

- 9-10: United Methodist Women Executive Team
- 10: Commission on Inclusiveness conference call meeting
- 13: Temple District clergy meeting
- 13-14: Clergy Time Apart at Summers Mill Retreat Center
- 15: Commission on Finance & Administration
- 15: Deadline for submitting spring interview paperwork
- 15-17: Central Texas Singles Mission Trip to DuLac, La.
- 16-17: Glen Lake Winter Bible Retreat
- 16-19: Civil Right Road Trip for Youth
- 17: Waxahachie District Leadership Training Event
- 18: Human Relations Day Offering
- 19: Martin Luther King Jr. birthday observance, Conference Center closed
- 20: Evaluation & Budget Committee meeting at Conference Center
- 21: Last day for local church online checkout
- 22: Agenda Committee meeting at Conference Center
- 22: Extended Cabinet
- 23: Appointive Cabinet
- 24: Nurture, Outreach & Witness councils (MLT)
- 24: Student Leadership Team meeting at Hillsboro UCF



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

— News Briefs —

Bishop Lowry and the Cabinet announce mid-year clergy appointment changes

Bishop Mike Lowry and the Cabinet announce the following clergy appointment changes:

Margaret Friend, full-time local pastor — from pastor at Cross Plains United Methodist Church (Brownwood District) to withdrawn from ministry, effective Dec. 1, 2008.

Donald K. Fillingham, supply pastor — from not appointed to quarter-time supply pastor at Jonesboro Parish: Jonesboro/Bethel/Lanham charge, effective Oct. 1, 2008.

Steve Moss, student local pastor — from not appointed to associate at First United Methodist Church of Corsicana (Waxahachie District), effective Jan. 1, 2009.

Bob Ross, supply pastor — from Jonesboro Parish (Temple District) to not appointed, effective Aug. 31, 2008.

Rickie D. Springer, deacon in full connection — from transitional leave to retired status, effective Dec. 1, 2008.

Candance C. Stroup, ordained ministry from Disciples of Christ (§ 346.2) — to chaplain at Harris Methodist Hospital, Fort Worth, effective Oct. 13, 2008.

Arlene Turner — from the Southwest Texas Conference to supply pastor at Chatfield/Wesley charge in Waxahachie, effective Oct. 1, 2008.

Italy UMC pastor dies unexpectedly

Rev. Beverly Hamilton, probationary elder and pastor at Italy United Methodist Church in the Waxahachie District for the past two years, died unexpectedly of natural causes Dec. 12. A memorial service was held Dec. 19 with her sister, Teresa Koch, suggesting that friends and colleagues write letters of remembrance to her teenage son Michael and her parents who live in North Carolina. Letters and contributions to Beverly's favorite charities are being handled by the church.

Beverly had served as an intern at her home church, Arlington Heights United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, and later as the youth director at Crowley United Methodist Church. From there she served as pastor at the Wortham/Kirvin charge prior to being appointed to Italy. She was a graduate of Texas A&M University (1984) and Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University (2004).

District training events prepare new and returning church leaders for the new year

Waxahachie District: Jan. 17 at

First United Methodist Church, Corsicana

Weatherford District: Jan. 24 at

Couts United Methodist Church, Weatherford

Brownwood District: Jan. 25 at Early United Methodist Church

Fort Worth/Mid-Cities Bi-District: Jan. 25

First United Methodist Church, Arlington

Waco District: Jan. 25 at Cogdell United Methodist Church, Waco

Temple District: Feb. 8 at First United Methodist Church, Belton

Grant enables training of Latin American pastors

The United Methodist Church's General Board of High Education & Ministry has awarded a grant to Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University to expand its theological training for Latin American pastors in the Methodist tradition.

The grant will allow Perkins to invite six pastors each year for the next four years to study theology within the context of the school's regional Course of Study program. In the fall of 2008, Perkins Dean William B. Lawrence paid a visit to three Latin American countries — Columbia, Argentina and Costa Rica — further developing relationships with the Methodist churches and their episcopal leaders in each of those countries.

The regional Course of Study, held during the summer, has an offering of 20 basic courses; 10 of these are taught in Spanish as well as English. Students of the program gather daily for bilingual chapel services and share an array of other cross-cultural learning experiences as well.

For more information, contact Rev. Jeannie Trevino-Teddle, director of the Mexican-American Program and the Regional Course of Study School at 214-768-2768 or jtrevted@smu.edu.

Reaching for the goal | Continued from page 1A

The goal of The United Methodist Church over the next four years is to plant 650 new churches in the United States, and to train 1,000 new church planters. To help reach this goal, we will send at least four pastors to the New Church Leadership Institute to be trained in 2009.

People are longing to be a part of a mission that is bigger than them-selves, a mission that will make a difference in the world and will transform lives. You are invited to join the movement, become a SHAREHOLDER and reach for the goal.

Remember, February is CHURCH GROWTH SHARES MONTH! Will your church be reaching for the goal?



Nueva Vida United Methodist Church is among the 35 new churches begun in the Central Texas Conference since 1980. A goal for the next quadrennium is to build into the DNA of each new church start the mission of helping start another new church by the time they are 10 years old.



Collection of ancient and modern personal prayer books to go on exhibit at SMU's Bridwell Library

An exhibition of ancient and modern personal prayer books will go on display at Southern Methodist University's Bridwell Library Feb. 2 from the library's special collections.

This exhibition highlights 60 books dating from the 13th to the 20th centuries that were intended to direct the soul heavenward in prayer and inward in spiritual contemplation.

Easily held in one's hands, these books reflect a devotional intimacy that helps the viewer

understand the meaning of personal daily prayer and piety in centuries past.

The books include medieval manuscripts of Latin Psalters, Breviaries and Books of Hours; early printed manuals for personal devotion in various languages; Hebrew Psalters; illuminated manuscripts for Muslim prayer; and a variety of modern publications for individual Christian prayer.

These books were designed to enhance private spirituality in ways that extended beyond what could be

achieved through congregational forms of worship. At the same time, many of them were also treasured personal possessions whose physical beauty still engages us today.

The exhibition, on view in the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Galleries from Feb. 2 through May 1, is free and open to the public during regular hours. For further information or to schedule a tour, please contact Eric White, curator of Special Collections, at 214-768-3440.