

Remembering a good and faithful servant —Rev. Dr. Ken Diehm

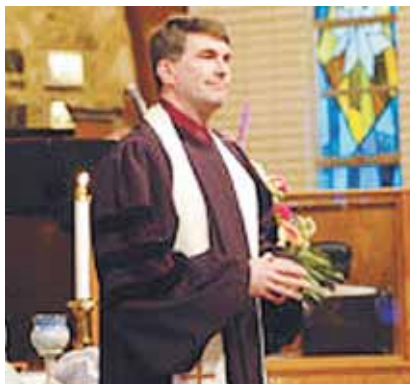
By CAROLYN STEPHENS
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCE

It was the Sunday immediately following the Super Bowl in Arlington, and members at First United Methodist Church of Grapevine were looking forward to their pastor's annual sermon on the messages "we wish were in the previous Sunday's Super Bowl commercials."

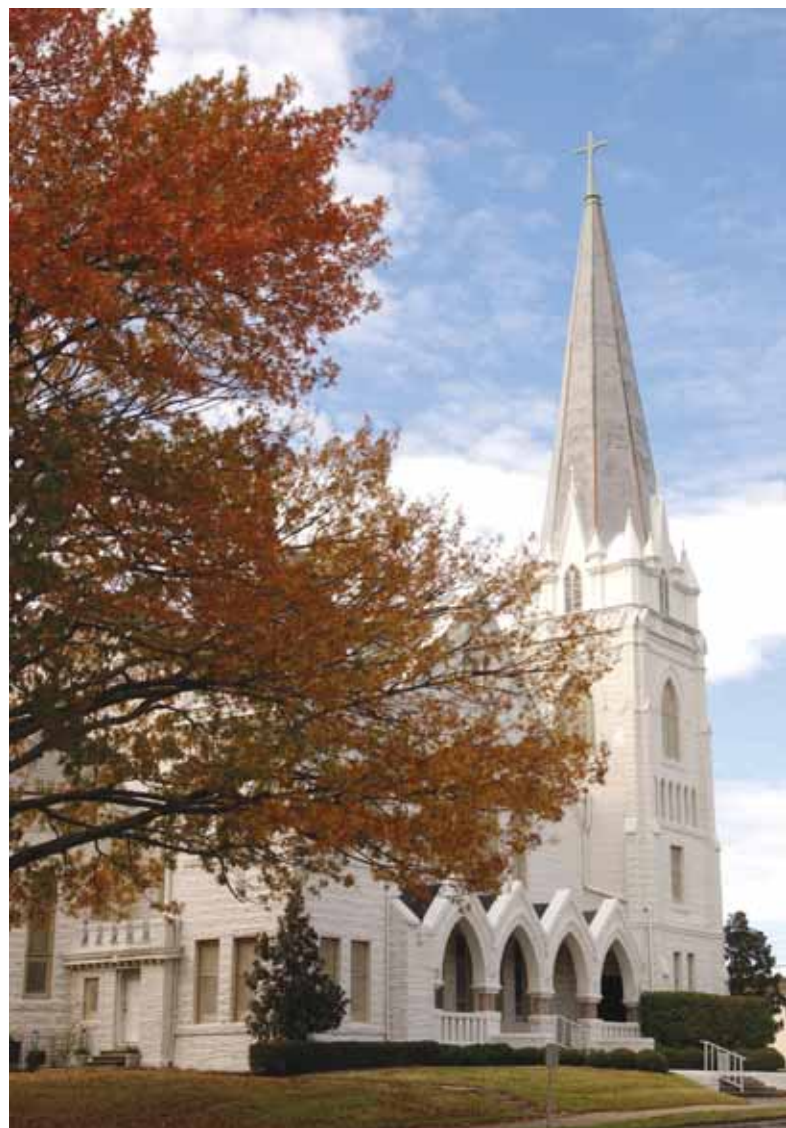
Dr. Ken Diehm always said, "I think the Super Bowl's a cultural event in our society ... providing the church an opportunity to comment on what is going on in that culture." In fact, a story about his upcoming sermon was carried worldwide on the United Methodist Church's official website and on the Central Texas Conference website.

Instead, grieving members and friends came to the church in northeast Tarrant County on Sunday, Feb. 20, to mourn the unexpected loss of their senior pastor. Dr. Diehm fell ill on Friday afternoon with a severe headache and was taken to Texas Health Resources' Harris Methodist Hospital in downtown Fort Worth.

| Continued on page 8A



A single red rose rested in what would have been Dr. Ken Diehm's seat for Sunday worship services Feb. 20 at First United Methodist Church of Grapevine.



First Corsicana celebrates 160th anniversary on Sunday, March 13

First United Methodist Church in Corsicana will celebrate 160 years of ministry on Sunday, March 13, combining both traditional and contemporary worship services with one great celebration service at 10 a.m.

Bishop Mike Lowry will bring the message with Waxahachie District Superintendent Rev. Don Scott, Senior Pastor Rev. Mike Alexander and Associate Pastor Rev. Steve Moss participating in the service to honor the church's history while also looking forward in a way that energizes the future.

The first permanent settler in Navarro County in 1847 was a Methodist lay preacher, Hampton McKinney. He brought his family from Illinois and built a home, board house, post office, tavern and early ten pen alley. There was no church building, so all Christians met and worshiped together.

In 1851, land was deeded for a Methodist, a Baptist and a Presbyterian Church. First United

Methodist church of Corsicana dates its beginning to the land deed by tradition. In 1866, a building committee was appointed and the first Methodist Church building was begun and completed in 1870.

Since the railroad had not yet come to Corsicana, wood for the building was hauled by wagon from Groesbeck and Houston. The building had not been dedicated when the first Texas Democratic Convention, after the Civil War, met there to take state politics back from the carpetbaggers.

This early wooden building, still not formally dedicated, was the location of the famous "Flea Convention" of Texas Democrats. The convention was held in the Methodist Church because it had the largest auditorium around. For the use of the building, the convention paid the church \$200 per day, which enabled them to retire the building debt, after which it could be dedicated.

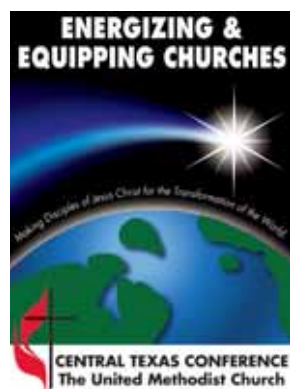
Unfortunately, at the time

there were no laws regarding the containment of livestock, so the town hogs took up shelter from hot weather under the building and the resulting fleas created a great disturbance to the delegates. Hence, the unwelcome name of "Flea Convention."

In 1896, the current large sanctuary was begun and completed in 1900. The wonderful stained glass windows, manufactured by the Kansas City Stained Glass Works, were dedicated to families of the church who had been longtime members and supporters.

First United Methodist Church of Corsicana has long been active in community affairs, and has had a Boy Scout Troop charter since 1915. Today, Troop 258 meets at the church and will be recognized in the special worship service on March 13. In addition, Billie Love McFerran will be honored for her 67 years of teaching of Sunday school classes.

| Continued on page 4



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The Wilderness Way

BY BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

52.

“Thomas Hoving was in the 1960s the Commissioner of Parks for City of New York. He had a Ph.D. from Princeton University in Art History. He was really not well placed being in the administration of Mayor John Lindsey as the Commissioner of Parks; but he did that job for a while. Then he was approached by the board of the very prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art, which, for a person with a Ph.D. in art history would be the Mecca.

They invited him to apply to be the director of the museum. He was most eager. In fact, they offered him the job. He'd just been working for the mayor for a short time. He went to Mayor John Lindsey, and he said, 'I've been offered the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I'd like to take it.' Lindsey said, 'Well it's kind of dead over there; but you should go there. Because you could make the mummies dance.'” (Richard Allen Farmer, “Making the Mummies Dance: Bringing Life to Words & People”)

Jesus can “make mummies dance.” In truth, that is what we are to be about both for ourselves and for others in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In *The Wilderness Way* #51 I wrote about the importance of scriptural study and reflection (what John Wesley would call searching the Scriptures).

The critical distinction is that biblical study must be transformational and not merely informational. A vital Wesleyan imperative is to understand Scripture as a “means of grace.” Bible study as training in righteousness (which must be connected with concrete service of love towards God and the neighbor in need; more about that in an upcoming *Wilderness Way*) is a foundational element of faith development.

Study after study points to the fact that people come to church because they both need and want spiritual guidance (which is a way of talking about growth in discipleship). What we seek is to live the prayer of Aelred of Rievaulx – “To know Him (Christ) more clearly; to love Him more dearly; to follow Him more nearly.”

In *Focus*, the third booklet of the three-booklet series *Reveal: A Spiritual Growth Conversation*, the authors state: “If a church must choose to do only one thing incredibly well, spiritual guidance is the runaway first choice.” (*Reveal: Focus*, Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, p. 43)

Hopefully every church will choose to do more than one thing incredibly well, but the importance of spiritual growth in making disciples is difficult to underemphasize. Spiritual formation includes worship, but it is more than worship. Searching the Scriptures (i.e. transformational Bible study) is critical. There are an abundance of excellent Bible study resources which, if properly used, are

transformational. My favorite is *Disciple Bible Study* by Abingdon Press.

Try this as a spiritual formation/disciple-making check list:

1. Help people develop a personal relationship with Christ
2. Challenge people to grow and take next steps (which includes Bible study and serving the last, the least, and the lost)
3. Provide a clear pathway that helps guide spiritual growth
4. Have church leaders (both lay and clergy) model and consistently reinforce how to grow spiritually
5. Help people understand the Bible in greater depth
6. Help people “feel” like they really belong to the church, the Body of Christ (Recognize the importance of fellowship and support. Methodism grew both evangelistically and in service to others when class meetings prospered.)
7. Encourage people to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth (in partnership with the church)

The above list is paraphrased with adaptation from *Reveal: Focus*, Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, p. 44f)

A prayer from my daily devotional guides stays with me to enhance my spiritual formation:

“By your tender mercies, O God,
by the unceasing ministry of your Spirit,
open the meaning of the ancient documents
handed on by communities of believers,
so that in this time and place
I may better understand how I may best work
to heal your fractured world:
in Jesus' name. Amen.”

(*This Day: A Wesleyan Way of Prayer*, Laurence Hall Stookey, p. 75)

“Open the meaning of the ancient documents handed on by communities of believers.” What priceless advice. In transformational Bible study and reflection on the meaning and application of Holy Scripture disciples are made. Where disciples are made, the world is transformed ... “on earth as it is in heaven.”



160 years in ministry at First Corsicana and still energized for the future | Continued from page 1A

She began teaching in the Intermediate Department, Junior High School and then moved up as her classes did. Today, she teaches the Christian Adults Class, and a few of the members have been in her classes since they were teens.

First Corsicana's members today are very active in ministry within the church and in outreach projects including Sunday school classes,

Bible studies, the Food Pantry, Food for Fitness, neighborhood garden, Meals on Wheels, Christmas in Action, Heifer Project, Older Adult Ministry, visitations, Emergency Response, Imagine No Malaria, the Texas Ramp Project, and supportive to the campus ministry at Navarro College through the United Christian Fellowship.

The church members support

youth groups and mission trips as well as strong children's ministries. This includes the popular Preschool program, Vacation Bible School, and a Christmas pageant performed by children and youth.

First Corsicana is dedicated to preaching and teaching the saving message of Jesus Christ, while supporting the larger church to “go into all the world and preach the

gospel.”

“We are growing in our walk with Christ as we offer our members ways and places to serve, to feed and welcome our community, and to live in gratitude to God through our ministry in the world,” states Associate Pastor Rev. Steve Moss.

Principled Christian Leadership

What can one small group, one community do to stop the injustice of human trafficking today?

BY CAROLYN STEPHENS
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One by one, a few dozen women meeting at First United Methodist Church in Stephenville took turns forcing push pins into a large world map mounted on the wall.

Each pin identified a spot that represented good experiences for them — where they were born or grew up, had vacationed, served in mission, or dreamed of traveling to some day.

Then came some hard facts that left them flabbergasted: human trafficking is taking place everywhere they had identified on the map and beyond — even in the Brownwood District.

Nancy Brown, president of the Brownwood District United Methodist Women, led the meeting Saturday, Feb. 19, that awakened the group to the reality of human trafficking. It is part of a UMW study titled “Human Trafficking: Not In My Neighborhood.”

Acknowledging the reality of human trafficking is essential for spiritual growth and acting on the loving impulse to eradicate this practice, according to the UMW program. “Knowing the truth can help set the prisoners free,” the women heard.

One of the youngest women in the Brownwood District group is Wing Shar Wu, an exchange student attending Stephenville High School. She “tagged” her own home of Hong Kong of the world map. Another in the group recalled a wonderful vacation in Thailand for her push pin, only to learn that it is considered one of the most prevalent locations in the world for



Push pins helped a group of Brownwood District UMW members identify places of joy and places of horrific human trafficking activity in the U.S. and around the world.

the sexual exploitation of young children and women.

United Methodist Women can be a formidable force as followers of Jesus Christ who live their faith through acts of justice and mercy. By the end of that Saturday afternoon, ideas were surfacing for how they might contribute to ending these modern-day forms of slavery.

It is helpful to first understand what human trafficking is and what it looks like in our communities.

It is the process of enslaving a person — recruiting, transporting and harboring of persons by use of threat, force or deception for the purpose of exploitation. There are an estimated 27 million people living as slaves today, and they fall into three primary forms of modern-day slavery:

- Bonded labor — forced labor and child labor;
- Chattel slavery — where especially women and children are bought and sold;

- Sexual exploitation — where mostly children and women are used for commercial sex and forced marriage.

In Central Texas, we are most likely to see bonded labor, which accounts for 20 million of the world’s slaves among migrant workers in commercial agriculture and construction.

It also includes child labor in sweatshops, domestic situations, and even restaurant and custodial work. Generally, their bonding begins with a loan that will never be repaid because of low or nonexistent pay. There is little chance for escape.

Chattel is an egregious term for most of us to utter because it means buying and selling human beings. It exists mostly in parts of Northern Africa, but it can happen in our own communities.

Sexual slavery is the fastest growing and most hideous form of modern-day human bondage. The recent influx of thousands of Super Bowl fans in the Fort Worth/Arlington/Dallas area brought attention to how sexual exploitation follows major events to communities around the nation. Foreigners are trafficked into the U.S. from at least 35 countries, but most often from China, Mexico and Vietnam.

Victims of sexual exploitation can be found in massage parlors, escort services, adult bookstores, modeling studios, and bars and strip clubs. A 2005 UNICEF report estimated that 1.2 million children are sold into sexual slavery every year. The United Nations International Labor Organization believes that number is as much as 4 million children.

The Polaris Project, one of several intervention organizations, even names the most offending states in the U.S., what they called the “Dirty Dozen.” They are Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

The Brownwood District UMW group read aloud several real-life slavery stories, discussed which category of slavery they represented and what form



Photos by Carolyn Stephens



Conference Calendar

March:

- 3: Council of Finance & Administration at Conference Center
- 4-5: CTC United Methodist Women Spiritual Growth Retreat at Lakeview Camp & Conference Center
- 8-9: Appointive Cabinet
- 8: Extension Ministries Luncheon at First UMC, Fort Worth
- 11: Content deadline for content for the Preliminary Report
- 23: United Methodist Women Realignment meeting at Conference Center
- 26: Board of Laity meeting at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center, Glen Rose
- 26: Conference United Methodist Women Committee & Team meetings at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center, Glen Rose
- 31: General Board of Pensions & Health Benefits Retirement Seminar at St. Luke UMC, Fort Worth

April:

- 4-6: Board of Ordained Ministry meetings/interviews at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center, Glen Rose
- 5: Extended Cabinet Leadership Training
- 6-7: Residency Orientation Seminar at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center, Glen Rose
- 9: CSCM Planning Team meeting, location TBA
- 9: CTCYM Advisory Committee, location TBA
- 10: Crime Victims Council’s Interfaith Worship Service of Help at Arlington First UMC

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

| Continued on page 8A

Remembering Dr. Ken Diehm | Continued from page 1A

The diagnosis was grim — bleeding in the brain and an acute form of leukemia. Despite surgery to stem the bleeding, he never awoke and passed away at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, about the same time a prayer service on his behalf was in progress at First Grapevine.

While family, friends and conference leaders kept vigil at the hospital, the church kept members informed with periodic e-news blasts. It was all to swift, all to unbelievable for most to comprehend.

During the Sunday morning worship services the next day, Associate Pastor Dr. Cindy Ryan conveyed that very thought. “There is nothing about today that is as it is supposed to be,” she said. “Sometimes life takes a horrible, unexpected turn and we become awash in grief.”

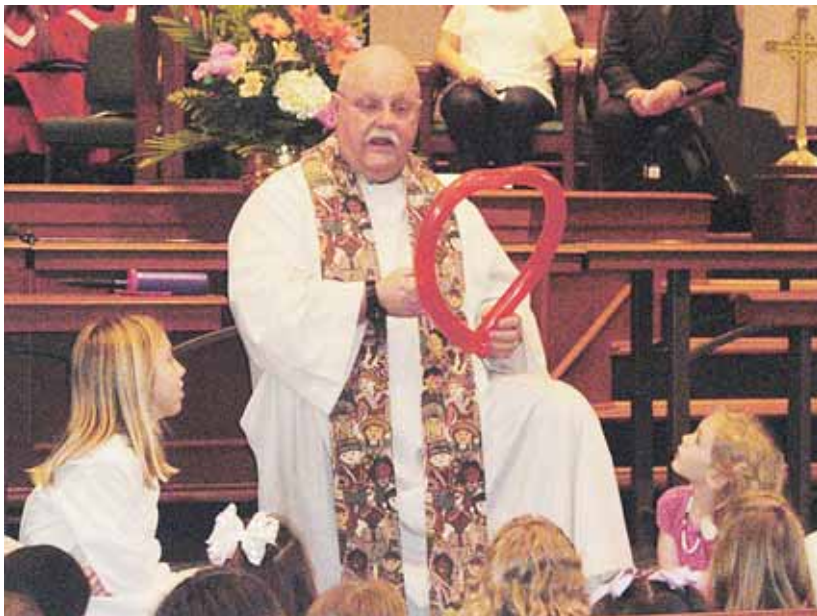
“What in the world do we do when the unthinkable has occurred?” she asked. “We do what people of faith have always done — listen for what God would have us do.” She shared five thoughts with the congregation.

First, we worship. Worship is our sanctuary, she said, and it’s through worship we are able to continue to stand.

Second, we hold on to the Bible — the world of God, the promise that God is generous and God is good.

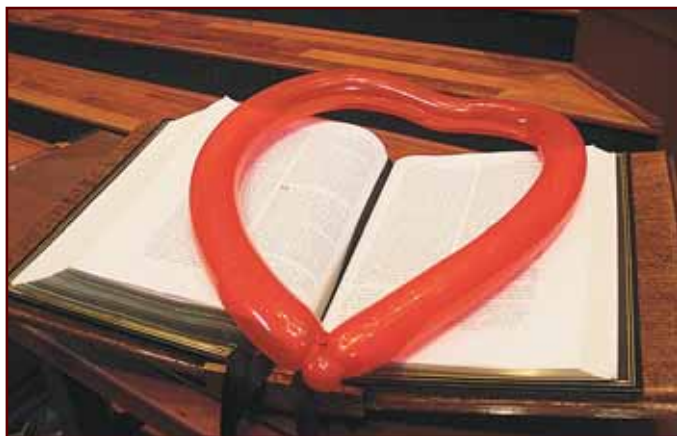
Third, we express ourselves. “Ken loved questions,” Dr. Ryan reminded the congregation, saying that it’s o.k. to ask our questions about illness and loss. She also reminded the congregation that Dr. Diehm had just recently completed a series of sermons based on his parishioners’ questions about living a life in faith. Saying that those last sermons may have been prophetic, she recalled one of Dr. Diehm’s often-shared messages: “God does not cause bad things to happen, but God is with us every step of the way.”

One of those questions he addressed was why don’t we see miracles like we read about in the Bible? We do, was his reply. Every time a life is transformed, it is a miracle. “We’ve seen this church transformed under Ken’s leadership,”



Associate Pastor Rev. Nathan Firmin crafts first a circle of love and then a heart to help the children of First Grapevine understand that their “Dr. Ken’s” love for them was like the love Jesus has for them. The heart rested on the pulpit Bible throughout the remainder of the worship service.

Photos by Carolyn Stephens



Dr. Ryan said. “We’ve been part of a miracle, a miracle of healing.”

Fourth, we hold on to each other. Dr. Ryan said this is what the Diehm family, the church staff and members have been doing throughout their vigil and even this day. One of Dr. Diehm’s favorite quotes was from the writings of C.S. Lewis that went something like this: Grief is the price we pay for love, but we would never trade the loving to escape the grief.

And fifth, we look up — because God is faithful. Dr. Ryan shared that when things would get difficult around the church, “Ken would say, ‘All is not lost, just look up.’”

So the grieving people of First United Methodist Church of Grapevine are taking a deep

breath and doing what the people of God do. Bishop Mike Lowry, episcopal leader of the Central Texas Conference, and Mid-Cities District Superintendent Rev. Randy Wild were on hand at each of the church’s five worship services on the downtown and Heritage campuses, to bring messages of hope and inviting people to prayer.

Bishop Lowry: “It is here, at the juncture of loss and faith, that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to all of us. Let there be no denial of the hurt present this day, but in our pain let us live as people in the manner in which your senior pastor, Rev. Ken Diehm, so ably lived and taught. It is here the word of faith, hope and love must be lifted up in the face of life’s cruel

Memorials to Dr. Ken Diehm

For those who wish to provide a remembrance of his life and ministry, the Diehm family has suggested memorials be made to one of the following:

Villages - First United Methodist Church Grapevine.

The Villages are three areas of mission work — in Grapevine, Costa Rica and Kenya. Ken had a vision that First Grapevine could completely change things for the better in these villages by focusing our efforts. If you would like to give to this work, mark “Villages - Diehm Memorial” in the memo of your check. Mail checks to: FUMC Grapevine, 422 Church St., Grapevine 76051.

Church Growth & Development.

The United Methodist Church has set a goal of equipping 1,000 church planters to start 650 new congregations by 2012. Your gifts to Church Growth & Development will help reach this goal, enabling us to offer Christ to all people in all places. If you would like to give to this work, make checks payable to “Church Growth & Development” and write “Ken Diehm Memorial” in the memo. Mail checks to: Church Growth & Development, Central Texas Conference, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth 76107.

storms.” For a full copy of Bishop Lowry’s remarks, please read his “This Focused Center” blog on the conference website at www.ctcumc.org.

Outside the sanctuary members wrote on poster boards their messages to the Diehm family, to Pastor Ken and to God. One red, “You have made a profound difference in so many lives.” Others said, “We will make you proud” and “Ken, you changed my life.”

In a special message for the children in worship, Rev. Nathan Firmin pumped a two-foot red balloon with air as he recalled how “Dr. Ken” brought a great love to the children and their church just as Jesus loves. As he spoke, the children watched him tie the ends together in a never-ending circle of love that, through the warmth of his hands, was reshaped into a heart.

There was an outpouring of love and appreciation for the ministry of this 52-year-old pastor at the memorial service held Saturday, Feb. 26, in the church sanctuary. He is survived by his wife Kenda; daughter and son-in-law Kallye and Josh Johnson; son Kody Diehm;

grandson Julius Johnson; his mother Emily Diehm; sister and brother-in-law Jan and Ken Gravenor; extended family, friends, congregants and colleagues. He was preceded in death by his father Floyd Diehm.

He was appointed to First Grapevine in 2005, having previously served for 15 years at St. Andrew’s United Methodist Church in Arlington, four years at Cisco and two years at First United Methodist Church in Burseson.

He earned his bachelor of arts degree at California State University at Long Beach (1980), and went on to Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University for his master of divinity degree (1984) and then Asbury Theological School in Kentucky for his doctor of ministry degree (2002) with an emphasis in Christian Leadership. His dissertation was entitled “How Rapidly Growing Churches Leverage Financial Resources to Facilitate Future Growth.” He was ordained an elder in the Central Texas Conference in 1986, and currently served as chairman of the Conference Board of Pensions & Health Benefits.

United Methodist Women taking a stand against human trafficking | Continued from page 5A

of intervention might take place. Thankfully, there are organizations like Polaris Project that are intervening.

But then came another shocking fact: many of us are supporting the slave trade today!

Industries that support slavery

provide some of the products we purchase regularly: gold and diamonds, fireworks, chocolate, carpet, sports equipment, and products of the service, agriculture and commercial sex industry.

Cynthia Rives, conference UMW president, was quick

to suggest that if we want to eliminate human trafficking, we need to check product sources and to be vigilant in buying free trade products. Other suggested supporting education and business opportunities for women and girls.

Many in the group participated

in making refrigerator magnets that carry the National Human Trafficking Resource Center phone number (1-888-373-7888). They talked of posting the magnets in public places like laundromat bulletin boards and quick shop locations. They will also join in

the UMW Social Action Network. More details are available at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/act/network.

Anyone suspecting human trafficking in their area can contact the U.S. Department of Justice at 1-888-428-7581.