

Celebrating 100 years as the Central Texas Conference

Greetings and good wishes were heaped on the people of the Central Texas Conference last Saturday, Oct. 23, at their 100th anniversary Centennial Celebration in Fort Worth, but the biggest greeting came in the forms of a gigantic birthday card from Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology.

From official government sectors, Texas Gov. Rick Perry sent his congratulations saying: "As you gather, it is indeed an occasion for giving thanks and celebrating, as your congregations reflect on your wonderful history as a spiritual beacon in your communities.

"The United Methodist Church has a rich tradition of perseverance and deep faith. You have worked to establish a legacy of excellence that has touched the lives of many through the years."

And, to be politically correct, gubernatorial hopeful Bill White sent his greetings. "It is great to live in a country with the freedom to

worship and to have so many Texans who share my faith in one place. I've been privileged to attend Methodist services all over our state and most of these congregations have been growing. I have also seen that so many in our state rely on our church and others for so many basic social services for the most vulnerable among us."

Closer to conference headquarters, Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief, a Methodist himself, proclaimed Oct. 23, 2010 to be Central Texas Conference Centennial Day. "For the past 100 years, The United Methodist Church has been helping to build and sustain healthy communities and enhance the quality of life in Central Texas, in the nation, and in the world," he proclaimed along with recognition of our churches' role in health care, higher education, social justice, and ministries with the impoverished, physically challenged and victims of natural disasters.

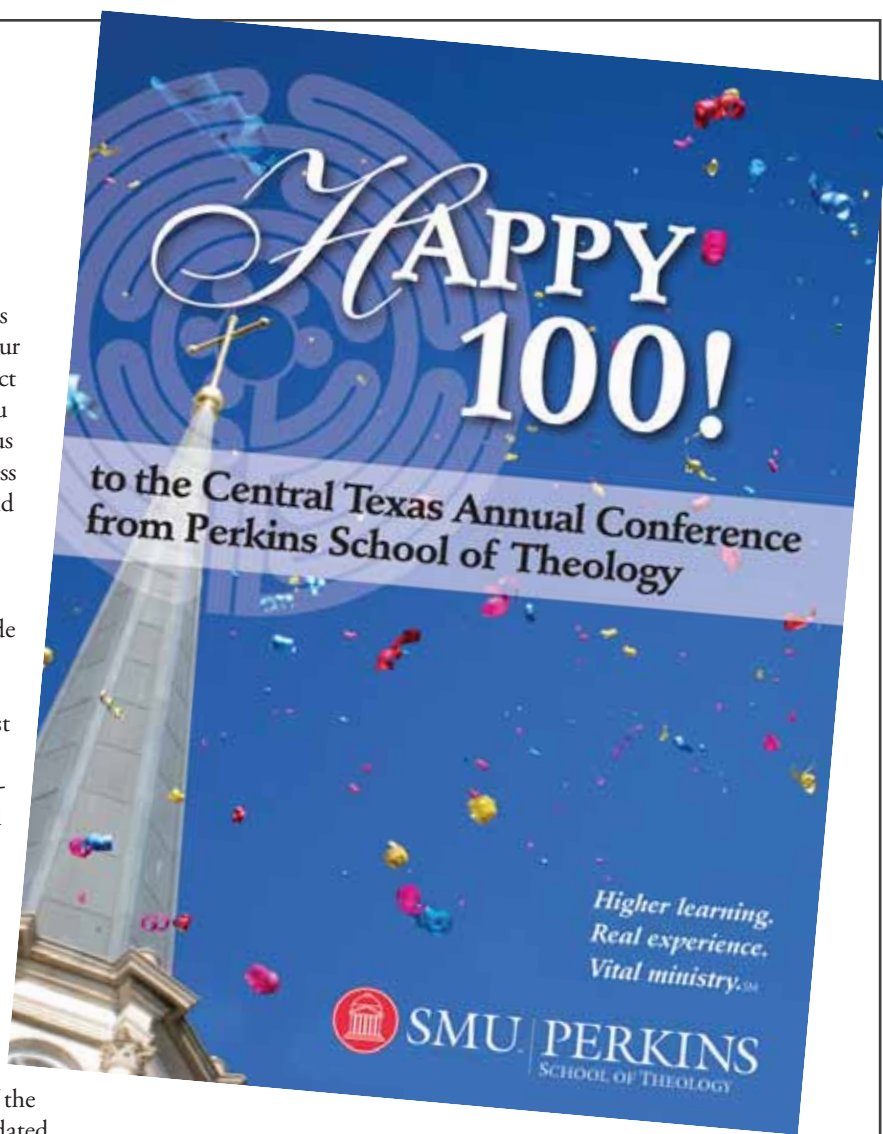
Bishop D. Max Whitfield, episcopal leader of the Northwest Texas Conference with which the Central Texas

Conference has its roots, sent this greeting: "It is my prayer that your Centennial Celebration will reflect your glorious past and enable you to move toward a more marvelous future. May God continue to bless and keep you as you faithfully and fruitfully fulfill your mission."

Also sending his greeting was Bishop James E. Dorff of the Southwest Texas and Rio Grande conferences. "I'm grateful for your ministry and the ongoing work you do on behalf of Christ and the Church," he wrote.

"The Texas Methodist Foundation congratulates the Central Texas Annual Conference on a century of fostering life-changing ministry in the heart of the great state we serve together," states the message of TMF President Tom Locke.

Among the most meaningful presentations at the centennial event was the naming of the still existing churches that pre-dated



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Homeowner Brenda Curry (at far left) and the mission work crew takes a short break from their labors on the porch.

Mission team discovers the joys of serving in the Red Bird Mission

The cold wind will not blow through the cracks and holes of the Curry house this winter. The frigid air will look for a place to enter, but it will be stopped because of the work of a team of volunteers to the Red Bird Mission.

The construction team from the Central Texas Conference consisted of nine women and one very patient man. The team arrived at Red Bird Mission in Beverly, Ky., on Oct. 3 after a day of travel from their respective churches in Arlington, Benbrook, Burleson, Cleburne,

Acton and McGregor to become one in serving the Lord.

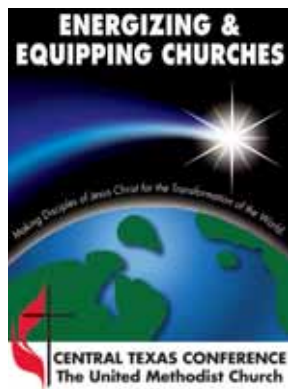
The group gathered in the evening to meet up with other teams from Delaware to Tennessee and places in between. From the Body of Christ came those eager to work and help others in need.

And work they did. They carried, measured and cut heavy sheetrock and attached it to the ceilings; used electrical saws with no loss of limbs; stuffed and mudded holes big enough to put your fist through; cut and nailed wall boards and corner rounds

on irregular walls and floors; and painted ceilings and walls.

There is another kind of warmth that can be felt in the Curry home this winter. It comes from the team's expression of God's love for them left on the newly painted walls. At the request of the family, the crew leader made a frame out of corner round and nailed it into the wall. Framed in that space are the signatures and messages of those who went to serve, work and ask God's blessings on this home.

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the
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The Wilderness Way

BY BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

46.

In my Shepherd Visits to the churches, I sat in one of our small churches in the Waxahachie District and visited with four wonderful couples. They've been leaders in their congregation who were deeply committed to the Lord and His church. One of the women commented to me that for a couple of decades the church had been full of children and vibrant. Their own children (now grown) had been raised in the church, but now it was devoid of a younger generation.

She spoke movingly about the church, and then remarked: "Our life together has meant so much to me. I don't understand how people make it without a shared life of faith. This group of friends has been a joy and strength for us as a couple for the last 30 years." I think of those four wonderful couples when I reflect on the wilderness journey we are in. Their church and ministry engaged deeply and effectively with an earlier generation but struggles today not from lack of commitment or depth of faith, but rather from a need to realign their ministry to reach a new generation in a new age.

I recall another visit with a similar congregation. This congregation, however, was multi-generational with new professions of faith. Both the lay leadership and the pastor spoke with some eloquence about how they were going through a season of Pentecost in new growth and missional outreach. They commented, interestingly enough, on the struggle to align the church with the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Both churches are on a wilderness journey. When I first came upon you as a bishop, I opened my writing with a quote from Exodus 13:18. "So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness towards the Red Sea." I entitled this column *The Wilderness Way* out of my conviction that we live in a post-Christian world. I have written about our living in a wilderness of disestablishment; a wilderness of indifference; a wilderness of rapidly dwindling membership; a wilderness of the ignorance of the basics of the Christian faith; and a wilderness of a lack of theological coherence. This is "exodus" time. We are traveling through the wilderness to a new land, a land of promise.

Our current Alignment Task Force is a way we realign ourselves to journey through the exodus time that we are in. We are moving from the perceived security of Christendom (Egypt) through the wilderness towards the Promised Land. Hence, in a deep sense, what we are engaged in is our own institutional exodus.

Whereas in the past we would realign ourselves for mission and the alignment would last for many years, we are now into a future for which the better thinkers forecast we will need to do a realignment far more frequently, probably in the neighborhood of every three to five years. The alignment of resources means integrating decisions about structure, people, districts, buildings, budgets, etc. with decisions about the desired outcome the Central Texas Conference is seeking "to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The desired outcomes of this wilderness way movement we are engaged in are to realign so that we might (1) cast and carry out a Christ-honoring mission for this time in our history; (2) energize and equip local churches to become more faithful and fruitful in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; (3) to improve operational function and flexibility for improved communications and connection; (5) for more efficient use of financial resources (reduction of conference costs – the projected realignment for simply seven months of 2011 is over \$500,000); (6) accountability yielding results and better morale as we make disciples for Jesus Christ for

the transformation of the world. To reflect the biblical reality we face, we propose calling the Alignment Task Force *The Exodus Project*. In the alignment report for the called session (Nov. 13 at Mansfield First United Methodist Church), there is an in-depth biblical and theological explanation drawing the connections in clear terms.

As I visited in all seven districts, engaging in dialogue with both clergy and laity groups, it's been fascinating to notice that in the first five laity groups (that is, before the publication of the alignment material) the laity show very little interest in alignment. Their passion, repeated over and over again, was how the church engaged in mission and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the world. The pain was in the wilderness changes that we are going through and the struggle to reach a new generation. Their hope from the conference was for resources to help – located not in a program, but in their local church in concrete and specific ways. Over and over again, when alignment finally did come up, lay people usually had two basic questions that I will loosely paraphrase as: (1) Will there be more help in discipleship development in our local congregation from the conference? and (2) Will this save money?

The alignment project is designed to put flexibility back in the system as we learn how to reach out, faithfully and fruitfully, to live through the wilderness way. It takes something like 30 pages to list all of our committees and boards in our *Conference Journal*. Our standing rules take nine and one-half pages to write (in small print!). It takes something like 20 pages to list all the committees, commissions, boards, etc. and their members in the *Journal*.

Regaining missional flexibility focused on the local church is crucial. I am convinced the laity have it right. We need to orient our conference in helping our local churches be the point of impact to make disciples for the transformation of the world. I am also convinced there is a practical reality we must face in saving money relative to our apportionment dollar. I commend to you the alignment report which can be found at www.ctcumc.org in preparation of our called session of the Annual Conference at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 13, at Mansfield First United Methodist Church. By this time, informational meetings will have been held in each district and a live streamed event will have been available to all on Oct. 24 at www.ctcumc.org.

Page 41 of the Alignment Task Force's report entitled *The Exodus Project* notes that the estimated prorated savings for seven months in 2011 amount to \$549,806. This savings is already included in the budget we passed at Annual Conference in June 2010. In addition, the estimated prorated savings for an entire year comes to \$949,547. These are significant savings. Where has the money gone? Because of these substantial savings, our apportionments were not increased more than they were. Alignment results in greater missional flexibility and greater financial savings.

The Exodus Project Alignment Task Force Report is something that calls us to live into the future with a great deal of flexibility and deep faith and trust in the Holy Spirit's leadership. I am constantly reminded of the great Christian leader of the 13th century, Prince Henry the Navigator. Mapmakers in his time would put on the edge



CTC team prepares the way for future mission trips to Haiti

Members of the recent mission trip to Haiti shared almost daily their work and faith experiences on the conference website (www.ctcumc.org/news/detail/142). Brief excerpts from the messages by Rev. Laraine Waughtal, conference coordinator for Disaster Response and pastor at the Bluff Dale and Morgan Mill United Methodist churches, and Rev. Lara Whitley of Joshua United Methodist Church appear below.

The full body of messages is especially good reading for those who are considering a future mission trip to Haiti. The need is so great for help with clearing debris, medical treatment and supplies, construction and helping with children.

Thursday 10-07-10 | First Work Day

We arrived safely in Haiti. ... The ride to the Methodist house took 3 hours to go 10 miles, because the roads are so narrow, still so damaged, and there are so many cars. ... The devastation is amazing.

Today was our first day at work. We traveled by van through heavy traffic for about an hour, passing the realities of life in Haiti: tent cities, meals prepared on sidewalks and children playing atop the debris that is still very present amid structures that inexplicably survived the earthquake.

... Our translator is Joseph. His job is to help us build relationships with our new Haitian friends, bridging the gaps that exist between their Creole, our English and the broken French and occasional Spanish our Texas team kept trying in vain to use. He is a kind man with a beautiful smile, and he takes great pride in working with his Methodist teams.

Friday 10-08-10 | Shared Holy Communion

Today I want to write not about our restoration work on the house, but the work of God. After lunch,

we moved into the house and had a service of Holy Communion. We invited the Haitian workers to join with us. ... The only table we had was a bucket we were using for removing the debris. We flipped one upside down to place our bread and juice on. We share in Holy Communion through the ancient method of intinction.

After communion, we joined in a circle and sang "Amazing Grace," each in our own language and united as one through Christ. ... We did not speak the same dialect, but our hearts spoke the same language of the love of Christ. What an amazing day of blessing!

Sunday 10-10-10 | Sharing the Sabbath

Sabbath is observed in Haiti, and you do not work. After lunch we asked the driver to take us to the Hotel Montana. For those who don't know the hotel, it is where Sam Dixon, the head of UMCOR, Clint Rabb and Jim Gulley were trapped in the rubble during the earthquake. Sam and Clint lost their lives and Jim survived.

We were only able to get to the entrance site, since they are still working on excavating the property. It was then we learned that our driver was probably the last one to see them alive. He shared his story with us.

How privileged we are to be involved with the wonderful people of Haiti and to be allowed into such an important part of their lives. ... I pray that many of you will consider coming to Haiti to help rebuild this country, to be the light of Christ, and to receive the light of Christ from these deeply faith-filled people.

Tuesday 10-12-10 | Moving Mountains

Talk about work! The last two days we have moved mountains of cement, rock and more. ... The house we were working on was covered in

piles of debris from the earthquake. We formed a shovel and bucket brigade and removed all of it in less than two days. We celebrated our mountain of debris along with the Haitian workers. They couldn't believe how hard the Texans worked!

Friday 10-15-10 | We Will Return

Our final day in Haiti was a wonderful and heartbreaking experience like so many other days. We went to Grace Children's Hospital, which was founded in 1967 ... flagship ministry of International Child Care ... with United Methodist support. ... The hospital lab is incredibly small, yet eight to 10 workers filled the room, diligently doing their work. They have no computer, so all the results are logged into a book by hand.

... Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. One of our team members who has served in both Haiti and Mexico said that Mexico's worst is Haiti's best. Eighty percent of the families live in poverty, surviving on as little as \$1 a day. They



are incredibly resourceful people with everything they have. They make our recycling programs look like a beginner's class.

... As we drove the streets, there is no place to escape seeing the tent cities and the poverty. Over one million people are still homeless. Large buildings still lay crumbled to the ground containing the bodies of loved ones trapped inside.

Some water lines have been set up, but people must walk for miles with their five-gallon buckets to bring water to their homes. ... Despite all of that, we saw hope each and every day.

For more details on mission opportunities in Haiti, visit www.umvimhaiti.org or contact Rev. Waughtal at revlaraine@yahoo.com.

Psalm Bible Study Assignment

Rev. Laraine Waughtal has been leading a Bible Study in Bluff Dale and Morgan Mill United Methodist churches when she left on the mission trip to Haiti.

"I gave them an assignment while I was gone," she said, "to pick a Psalm and, using it as a model, then write their own psalm."

"This has been so powerful," she said. "I promised them I would write a psalm related to Haiti, and chose to model it after Psalm 4. It is written in honor of Joseph, our interpreter in Haiti, and all the courageous men, women and children of Haiti who, despite moments of doubt, strive forward praising God for seeing them through such a devastating disaster."

Modeled after Psalm 4

By Rev. Laraine Waughtal

Answer when we call, O God, who is our strength and shield.
Our distress is deep from the earthquake and government corruption.
Be compassionate and hear us as we cry to you.

How long, O God, must we suffer in the cement rubble?
How long must we feel like we are the "trash can" of the world?
How long must we suffer from the lies and corruption of government?
How long must we suffer without clean water, from sewage and trash in the streets, and little food to fill our bellies?

We know, Lord, in our hearts you remember us,
And we believe that you hear us when we cry out to you.
Our hearts are deeply troubled and the nights seem so long as we listen for your voice.

We will continue to praise and worship you as we bring our "widow's mite" in an offering to you because we trust in you and praise you.
There are so many here who believe and say we will see good!
May the light of your face shine on us!
Because of your love for us, there is gladness in my heart!

Even though I may not trust the earth not to shake again;
And I do not trust staying inside buildings;
I lie down and sleep in peace knowing you are with me.

Wilderness Way | Continued from page 4A

of the map the notation "Here be Dragons." Prince Henry, the great navigator who launched people like Columbus and Vasco de Gama into the great new world of the future, wrote something different. As a deeply committed Christian, he would write on the edges of his maps "Here be Christ."

As we move into the wilderness way, the Lord will lead us in the exploration of a new and wonder-

ful future of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As with the original Exodus journey, you may be assured that the Lord will go in front of us "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 they might travel by day and by night." (Exodus 12:21) The Lord is leading us through the wilderness into a new tomorrow.



November

- 6: Connecting People to the Body of Christ at St. Andrews UMC, Fort Worth
- 8-9: Self-Care for Clergy at Summer's Mill Retreat Center, Belton
- 13: Called Session of Annual Conference at Mansfield First UMC
- 13: Faithfully Fit Forever at Keller First UMC
- 14: Conference UMW Charter Committee at Grandview First UMC
- 16: Central Texas Methodist Foundation at Conference Center
- 16-17: Cabinet
- 20: Conference Student Leadership Team (SLT) meeting
- 23: Extended Cabinet Leadership Training
- 25-26: Conference Center office closed in observance of Thanksgiving

December:

- 11: Conference UMW Team Christmas (location to be announced)
- 14-15: Cabinet meeting
- 17: Last day to mail apportionments
- 23-24: Conference Center closed in observance of Christmas
- 31: Conference Center closed in observance of New Years

January:

- 4: Last day for online apportionments
- 5: Last day to hand deliver apportionments
- 6: District funds due
- 7: Online checkout begins

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

Listing of churches | Continued from page 1A

the establishment of the Central Texas Conference in 1910 — a time when the explosive westward movement of the denomination was said to have been “building 10 churches a day.”

That may be an exaggeration, but before the General Conference voted to split the Northwest Texas Conference of the then Methodist Episcopal Church into two conference areas, Methodism was already spreading across the Central Texas landscape. The currently active churches existing in 1866 that were recognized along with their founding date are listed here (as they will appear in the official conference history book).

- 1847—
Richland
- 1848—
Red Oak
- 1849—
Georgetown, Waxahachie
- 1850—
Belton First, Waco First,
Temple Hall (MP)
- 1851—
Corsicana First
- 1853—
Grandview, Bethel (Ellis County)
- 1854—
Fort Worth First, Gatesville First,
Grapevine First, Salado
- 1855—
Meridian
- 1856—
Central Corsicana, Hillsboro First
- 1857—
Covington, Round Rock,
Springtown, Weatherford First
- 1860—
St. Luke Mexia (Launza - Jones Chapel
joined to form St. Luke)
- 1862—
Chatfield, Florence
- 1863—
Alvarado
- 1866—
Hurst (Isham's Chapel ME), Mexia First
- Still existing churches that were established between 1867 and 1910 when the Central Texas Conference was formed are:
- 1867—
Wortham
- 1869—
Cleburne First
- 1870—
Iredell
- 1871—
Granbury First, Itasca, White's Chapel
- 1872—
Jarrell, Lebanon, Perry
- 1873—
Coolidge, Waco Mt. Zion, Wesley
Chapel
- 1874—
Evant, Georgetown St. Paul, Groesbeck
First, Sardis
- 1875—
Blooming Grove, Waco St. James,
Whitney King Memorial
- 1876—
Bethesda, Euless First
- 1877—
Belton Mt. Zion, Handley, Moody
- Leon, Temple St. James
- 1878—
Arlington First, Lanham, Spring Hill
Palmer
- 1879—
Round Rock
- 1880—
Holders Chapel, Hubbard, Kell's
Branch, Morgan, Ovilla, Streetman,
Troy
- 1881—
Hutto, Lorena
- 1882—
Georgetown St. John, McGregor,
Moody First, Pelham Wesley Chapel
- 1883—
Christ, Joshua, Killeen First,
Temple First
- 1884—
Ennis First
- 1885—
Annetta, Bluffdale, Blum,
Mansfield First, Millsap
- 1886—
Central Waco, Glen Rose
- 1887—
Hico
- 1888—
Burleson First, Crowley First, Faith,
Fort Worth St. Andrews, Meier Settle-
ment
- 1889—
Nolanville
- 1890—
Aledo, Bardwell, Bethel (Parker
County), Clifton, Cransfills Gap,
Italy First, Jonesboro, Oglesby,
Thompson Chapel
- 1891—
Couts Memorial, Kerens, Oak Park
- 1892—
Corsicana St. Andrew's,
Polytechnic, Poolville
- 1893—
Little River, Watts Chapel
- 1894—
Azle First, Cahill, Groesbeck
Dennis Chapel
- 1895—
Copperas Cove, Kennedale,
Mt. Calm, St. Matthew
- 1896—
Corsicana Wesley, Holland, Prairie
Hill, Saints Delight
- 1898—
Barry
- 1899—
Britton, McMillan
- 1900—
Acton, Bartlett, Corsicana Eleventh
Avenue, Emhouse, Hewitt, Mart First,
Midlothian First, Mosheim, Purnela,
Rogers, Silver Creek, Speegleville, Tolar
- 1904—
Diamond Hill, Hillsboro Line Street
- 1905—
Arborlawn, Frost, Haslet, Kopperl
- 1906—
Cayote, Everman
- 1907—
Pidcoke, Rio Vista, Smithfield
- 1908—
Brock
- 1910—
Valley Mills
Kirvin

Pumpkin Patch draws 1,500 kids, 1 bishop

More than 1,500 children have been scheduled to visit First United Methodist Church of Killeen's Pumpkin Patch this year with their families and as part of school field trips.

The response has been so great that members of the Harker Heights Police Department offered their services to stop traffic on FM 2410 so that children and adults could safely cross the busy road to the Pumpkin Patch.

Mountain View Elementary School in Harker Heights, located just a few blocks from First Killeen's new church location and site of the Pumpkin Patch, brought about 100 children, teachers and parents to the patch.

Children's Ministry Director Debra Longley believes the Pumpkin Patch is “about getting into our community and reaching people. We reach out to the children on their field trips. We demonstrate God's love with our actions.”

Proceeds from this 4th Annual Pumpkin Patch will help to support various children's ministries at the church, including scholarships for the WinShape C3 Camps and the annual children's camp program.



Bishop Mike Lowry stopped by the Pumpkin Patch Oct. 17 after blessing the steeple for First Killeen's new church. The burgeoning congregation has outgrown its landlocked downtown location and is building on a new site in Harker Heights.



Conference seeks applicants for 2 positions

Qualified applicants are being sought for two staff positions for the Central Texas Conference office in Fort Worth. The first position is benefits administrator to handle the day-to-day operations of the three major benefit programs: HealthFlex, Retirement and Flex-spending.

Requirements are a servant's heart to help people with benefit issues, knowledge of The United Methodist Church, excellent interpersonal skills, strong organization skills, ability to work on current projects, stay current with benefit regulations

and trends, and excellent computer skills in Microsoft Office. Knowledge of United Methodist Pension Plan design and Health Insurance Plan would be a plus, as well as an willingness and aptitude to learn plan designs. Attendance at national United Methodist benefits meetings is mandatory.

The second position is benefits assistant to assist in the day-to-day operations of the three major benefit programs while serving as front desk greeter of the Conference Center.

Requirements include superior communication skills; good math skills; customer service focused, self-starter and details oriented; work with minimal supervision and perform thorough follow up; excellent computer skills in Microsoft Office; familiarity with databases including the ability to do accurate data entry, data search and reports general knowledge of The United Methodist Church.

Submit resume for either positions by Nov. 15 to Rev. Harvey Ozmer at harvey@ctcumc.org.

Joys of mission at Red Bird | Continued from page 1A

Team members said their hearts burned with the warmth of God's presence in their work and in their relationships with each other. This winter, the Curry family will look upon their wall and bask in the warmth of God's love.

Red Bird Mission is nestled in the Kentucky Mountains where thousands of volunteers gather every year to serve

those in need and to share the love of Christ. The mission serves the people of the Appalachians through the ministries of health care, work camps, community outreach, education and a community store offering low-cost and free items.

Others who are interested in serving the Red Bird Mission are urged to contact Rev. Dawne McAlpin

Phillips at 817-326-4242 for future mission trips. You can also serve at home by collecting brand labels (see www.rbmission.org/support/collectibles.php for details) and giving through the Red Bird Mission Advance #773716, Red Bird Mission School Advance #773728 or Red Bird Clinic Advance #773724.