



Next Sexual Harassment Misconduct Prevention Training is offered March 6 at Crowley UMC

The next Central Texas Conference Sexual Harassment Misconduct Prevention Training for elders, local pastors, deacons and probationary members will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at First United Methodist Church of Crowley.

The training will be led by First Crowley pastor Rev. Mary Gean Cope and Rev. Karen Granderson, conference director of Christian education.

There will be no charge for this training; lunch will be on your own (bring a brown bag lunch or visit one of the area restaurants).

This training is offered periodically for church professionals and records are maintained to assure currency for all those related to the Central Texas Conference.

To register or to find out if you are due for retraining, contact Susan Briles at 817-877-5222, 800-460-8622 or susan@ctcumc.org.

The policy of the Cabinet and Bishop Ben Chamness is that all clergy must complete Sexual Harassment Misconduct Prevention Training every four years in order receive an appointment.

Pre-General Conference Briefing

Central Texans share messages of hope as lead delegates & communicators prepare for 2008 General Conference

Leading off the 2008 Pre-General Conference News Briefing Jan. 24-26 in Fort Worth was the Apostle Paul, portrayed by Rev. Jim Onley, superintendent of the Central Texas Conference's Brownwood District.

Paul's message was aimed at the lead delegates to General Conference — the first-elected lay and clergy from each annual conference — and communicators as they prepare for the 2008 General Conference April 23-May 2 in Fort Worth.

"I have come to let you know of my concern for you and for those you represent, and to remind you of what the Church represents," Paul told delegates. He shared with them



The Apostle Paul has words of wisdom for General Conference delegates and communicators at Pre-General Conference Briefing.

several Greek words:

- *Agape* — a specific kind of love that Christ expected his followers to have for one another regardless of their differences.

- *Ekklesia* — the Church Universal, the love of God that draws people together to be the Body of Christ in the World. "Because the *Ekklesia* is made up of human beings, there will be differences of opinion. God created the Church that way," he cautioned delegates.

Centuries earlier Paul guided the Ephesians similarly, "Be angry but do not sin," and to the Romans he wrote, "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor."

He warned delegates, "The greatest evil that infects the *Ekklesia* today is not evil from the secular world but the evil that surfaces from within. It is evil that pits belief



against belief, cause against cause and person against person within the Body. It is evil that forgets the compassion of Christ."

- *Koinonia* — He contrasted *Koinonia*, meaning "partnership," with the word *Pleonexia*, meaning "out for one's self." He characterized *Koinonia* as the generous spirit of giving away and sharing, while the *Pleonexia* as the selfish spirit of keeping and holding on.

Your task, he told the delegation heads, is to "Be filled with *Agape*, Christ-like unconditional love for one another. Be the *Ekklesia*, the Church, the Body of Christ, with Christ in your head, in your seeing, in your speaking and in your hearts. And practice *Koinonia*, a partnership that helps each other accomplish for Christ."

Bringing the worship message

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Quality of foster child care is high priority at Methodist Children's Home-hosted conference



Leaders in Christian child care organizations focus on what the faith-based community can offer the foster care system in Texas. MCH President Bobby Gilliam is at the far left.

Methodist Children's Home hosted a four-day statewide conference Jan. 15-18 to dialogue on the state of child care in Texas and what the faith-based community

offers the foster care system.

The more than 100 attendees were invited by Methodist Children's Home and Judge Carole Clark of Smith County. Attendees included Texas district court judges,

social workers, attorneys, CASA volunteers, juvenile probation staff, Texas Department of Family Protective Services and Child

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Central Texas Conference
United Methodist Church

the Central Link

an edition of The United
Methodist Reporter

February 8, 2008
Volume 154 | Number 40

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

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

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

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The *Central Link* edition is published every other week and is the official publication for the Central Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107-2153.
Annual subscription: \$20.

Church Growth

Meeting your spiritual needs — priceless

BY DR. ALLEN GOSS, DIRECTOR, CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

In Rev. James Moore's book, *There's a Hole in Your Soul That Only God Can Fill*, he tells about the little boy who was asked why he was a Christian. The boy answered, "I don't know for sure, but I think it runs in my family!" Moore goes on to talk about the fact that we can ride on the coattails of our family for just so long, and then each one of us individually has to make his or her own personal decision for Jesus Christ.

I have before me one of the original Church Growth brochures produced by the late Dr. Ed Otwell back in the early 1980s. Dr. Otwell said, "The need for establishing new congregations is immediate, each of the seven district will experience areas of substantial growth between now (around 1980) and the year 2000. A conservative projection in the next 20 years," he says, "reveals that a minimum of 30 new church

sites must be purchased and 30 new congregations must be organized just to keep pace."

Dr. Otwell says that in the 1970s it was common thinking that \$50,000 was all that was needed to

the activation of the SHARES program. Originally one SHARE was \$45 a year and if 10,000 United Methodists participated there would be \$450,000 a year for new church starts. The SHARE amount was raised to \$60 per year and we raised a little over \$207,000 through the program in 2007.

Dr. Otwell's visionary goal of 10,000 SHAREHOLDERS was never reached. Just think, 10,000 SHAREHOLDERS at \$60 per year would result in

\$600,000 for new church starts each year, almost tripling our current income. We have over 161,000 United Methodists in the Central Texas Conference so 10,000 SHAREHOLDERS is not just a dream, it is a possibility.

We can't ride on Dr. Otwell's coattails and vision forever, at some point in time we have to make our

For the persons who find a church that meets their spiritual needs, the experience is priceless. Among the 35 churches established since the early 1980s there was an average of 4,723 in worship and 200 professions of faith in 2007.

start a new church. He says that in the 1980s the cost ranges from \$200,000 to \$400,000. The cost in 2008 to start a new congregation is much more than he ever anticipated, between \$400,000 and \$600,000 plus the cost of the land and buildings.

Dr. Otwell's vision to raise the money to start new churches was



own personal decision to become a SHAREHOLDER. Maybe we are not dreaming big enough, maybe we need to envision a 10th of our conference membership supporting the program with over 16,000 SHAREHOLDERS and almost a million dollars a year for new church starts.

Remember, "It's not about what it costs, it's about what it is worth." For the persons who find a church that meets their spiritual needs, the experience is priceless. The 35 new churches started since Dr. Otwell's vision for the SHARE program had an average worship attendance of 4,723 in 2007 and had 200 professions of faith.

Children in foster care | continued from page 1A

Protective Services staff and other agency personnel.

"We have reached a saturation point, with 33,000 children in out-of-home care in Texas," Bobby Gilliam, MCH president, said. "By bringing together major stakeholders in Texas foster care, we can promote an open dialogue and exchange ideas for providing our children with effective resources and systems that address the social issues they face."

The agenda included training on MCH's "strength-based" philosophy of care. Also, internationally renowned psychologist Karyn Purvis of Texas Christian University, who was recently quoted in a *Newsweek* magazine article on international adoption, presented training on attachment disorder.

"There's so much we can do, and none of it's rocket science; this is everything your grandma knew about taking care of children," Purvis said. "By caring for a child in intentional ways, we teach him he's safe.

Attachment will tell a child he's precious, and healthy attachment is the basis for healthy growth and development."

The conference concluded with two panel discussions. The first focused on what the faith-based community offers the foster care system, and participants included:

- Don Forrester from Children at Heart Ministries in Round Rock,
- Ed Knight from Presbyterian Children's Home in Austin,
- David Capers from Boles Children's Home in Quinlan,
- Kerry Fortune from Ben Richey Boy's Ranch in Abilene, and
- Bobby Gilliam from Methodist Children's Home.

"Our society is throwing away a generation of young people," Gilliam said. "We see what's not working and we base our philosophy on something different — we offer hope."

The second panel discussion included:

- Judge Scott McCown from the

Center for Public Policy Priorities,

- David Capers from Boles Children's Home

- Joe Gagen of Texas CASA, and
- Colleen McCall, Department of Family Protective Services field director.

The second panel discussed why the Child Protective Services system is at a saturation point and addressed the capacity crisis of caring for these children and improving the child welfare system as a whole.

About Methodist Children's Home

Methodist Children's Home provides services to more than 800 children and youth daily through residential care in Waco, the Boys Ranch near Axtell, and foster care and other services through outreach offices in San Antonio, Houston, Tyler, Dallas, Lubbock, Corpus Christi, El Paso and Albuquerque, NM. For more information, please visit www.methodistchildrenshome.org.

CVLI video licensing available to local churches

The Central Texas Conference invites its churches to be under the conference umbrella policy for Christian Video Licensing.

The cost for coming under this umbrella policy is \$171 for new participants. The effective date is Feb. 1, 2008 through Jan. 31, 2009.

The deadline to register is Feb. 15.

If your church would like to participate in this program or if you have questions about the policy, please contact Susan Briles at 817-877-5222, 800-460-8622 or susan@ctcumc.org.

Conference seeks Morris Walker Award nominees

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2008 Morris Walker Award, presented each June at the Central Texas Annual Conference.

Two Morris Walker Awards are given — one an outstanding clergy person and one for an outstanding lay person.

The Morris Walker Award recognizes the “above the ordinary” service of a lay and a clergy person to their local church, community and within the Central Texas Conference. The award carries with it a special plaque and a \$500 scholarship for

continuing spiritual education.

Nominations are normally a letter of recommendation signed by one or more nominators, accompanied by supporting materials or other letters of recommendation.

Nominations should be mailed to Ed Komandosky, Conference Lay Leader, 2207 Gladnell St., Taylor, TX 76574 or e-mailed to ekomandosky@yahoo.com. The deadline for nominations is April 30.

The awardees are selected by an awards committee and presented at Annual Conference.

Conference youth receives national award

Dan Plorin, a member of First United Methodist Church of Colleyville, will receive the top youth award from the Nashville-based General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Dan will receive a Good Samaritan Award before his own congregation during the Feb. 10 Scout Sunday service at the Colleyville church.

Dan is one of the youngest people to receive the national award. He is only a second-class Scout, but Boy Scout Troop 28 Chaplain David Ball describes him as “a bright, enthusiastic soul who is naturally liked by his peers and lives up to the



Dan Plorin is one of the youngest people to receive the GCUMM Good Samaritan Award

Scout Oath and Scout Law.”

Last fall, when Dylan, one of Dan's friends experienced the sudden tragic death of his teenage sister,

most of Dylan's friends were uncomfortable with such an emotionally charged situation, and they shied away from him.

“Dan stuck by his friend, kept him positive, and lent a sympathetic ear,” said Ball. “At the painful visitation and funeral for the sister, Dan kept by Dylan's side — his presence and steadfast friendship added emotional stability in a time of extreme need.”

“It is my opinion, as troop chaplain,” said Ball, “that Dan clearly lived by the teaching of Luke 10:25-37, showing tremendous strength and comfort in a time of need while setting aside his fears in order to serve his fellow man.

“His actions at this critical period prompted me to submit his name for a Good Samaritan Award.”

Committee on Disability Concerns seeks grant applicants

A goal of the Committee on Disability Concerns is education and awareness of handicapping conditions and issues facing an individual having a handicapping condition.

Because of this goal, CDC is awarding two grants to an upper classman or returning United Methodist college student — one grant to a student who has a handicapping condition and a second grant to a student who has a declared major in assisting individuals with handicapping conditions (special education, speech pathology, hearing and visual impairment, social work, counseling, physical and/or occupational therapies, etc.)

Both grants will be awarded in May and be presented at the 2008 Central Texas Annual Conference in June. Eligibility requirements for the Disability Education and Awareness Leadership (DEAL) grant include:

- Active United Methodist lay or clergy person
- Junior or senior classification or returning to college for graduate hours or a declared major with at least 60 hours of college credit
- Ten to 20 sentences as to why you should be awarded this grant (designate your handicapping condition and/or how your course of study will aid individuals with handicapping conditions)
- One letter of recommendation from a lay United Methodist
- Completed application form (with your minister's signature) and a letter to be postmarked no later than April 30

Mail to: ????????????

Opportunities Await

Confirmands needed for General Conference worship

Congregations interested in getting some of their confirmands involved in the morning worship at General Conference Saturday, April 26, are invited to contact Rev. G.W. “Dub” Shepherd at dub@trinityumcarlington.org.

The worship design team is hoping to involve as many as 70 confirmands from around the Central Texas Conference. Participants would be required to be at the Fort Worth Convention Center early Saturday morning to rehearse for their participation in the 8:30 a.m. service which will conclude at 9:15 a.m.

Choirs needed for Annual Conference

If your church's choir would like to be considered to sing at the 2008 Annual Conference (June 1-4) in Fort Worth, please send a CD recording of your choir to Rev. Tom Robbins at First United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 773, Temple, TX 76503.

Annual Conference suggestions sought

The Conference Mission Ministries office is accepting through Feb. 18 suggestions for the 2008 Annual Conference offering. Any agency or cause may submit their suggestion for consideration for this offering which is received each year at the Annual Conference in June.

The group receiving the offering is responsible for the promotion of the offering in the conference. Suggestions must be submitted in writing and include:

- Name of the organization with contact person, address, phone, e-mail
- Name and position of the person submitting the request
- Brief description of the mission/ministry of the organization
- Brief description of how the funds would be used (if selected)

Send requests by Feb. 18 to Dr. Doyle Allen, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107-2153.



February

- 8-9 Mid-Winter #1 at Glen Lake Camp
- 9 UMW School of Christian Mission Planning Team
- 9 Stewardship Task Force at First Cleburne UMC
- 10 Deadline for District Nominating Committee's Talent Bank Forms to be delivered to Conference
- 10-15 Appointive Cabinet/Inventory
- 12-13 Board of Ministry at First Fort Worth UMC
- 15-16 Intensive Spanish Weekend at First Mansfield UMC
- 16-17 Mid Winter #2 at Glen Lake Camp
- 18 Conference Executive Ministry Team at Conference Center
- 21 Metropolitan Board Annual Dinner at Will Rogers-Round Up Inn, Fort Worth
- 23-29: Adult UMWIM Mission Trip to Reynosa, Mexico
- 22-24 Fifth Annual Meeting/Training for Lay Speakers at Glen Lake Camp
- 25-27: Appointive Cabinet at Conference Center
- 26: Finance & Admin. at Conference Center
- 26: 2nd Annual Faith Community Leadership Summit at Fort Worth Convention Center
- 29-March 3: United Methodist Women Spiritual Growth Retreat at Lakeview Camp

March

- 1: Mission Ministries (MLT) Annual Meeting at Arlington Heights UMC, Fort Worth
- 6: Health & Welfare
- 6: Sexual Harassment Misconduct Prevention Training at First Crowley

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

Acton UMC strengthens neighborhood with Community Center

From its beginning, the Wesleyan tradition has strongly supported education and health care as concrete ways to carry out Christ's mandate "to love one another." Methodist universities and hospitals, many in our Central Texas area, are living testimony to this.

Five years ago, Acton United Methodist Church, located in Hood County, built a Community Center in the low income community of Rancho Brazos. Under the leadership of Rev. Dawne McAlpin, minister of missions and adult ministries at Acton, and Janice Whitecotton, chair of the Rancho Brazos Leadership Team, Acton United Methodist Church continues to be faithful to this Methodist tradition in its Rancho Brazos Community Center.

In the fourth quarter of 2007, AUMC sponsored an immigration clinic at Rancho Brazos to help



immigrants who wish to become citizens. The speaker at this clinic was Mary Beth Garcia, an outstanding immigration attorney from Justice for Our Neighbors, a free immigration clinic sponsored by the Central and North Texas conferences.

Help was provided in both English and Spanish. The session was well attended by residents of Rancho Brazos and surrounding neighborhoods. Judging from the number of individual case questions, there will surely be follow up visits by immigrants to

the Justice for Our Neighbors office in Fort Worth as they pursue the path to becoming part of the American mainstream.

In cooperation with Harris Methodist Hospital, Acton UMC also sponsored a free health screening and information clinic at the Rancho Brazos. Flu shots were given, and blood analysis for total cholesterol (and its HDL, LDL and triglyceride components), and blood glucose levels were run. Bilingual pamphlets with information on healthy diet, exercise and healthy lifestyle choices were given to all participants.

Community building was at the heart of the church's Fall Festival, held on Halloween with a "trunk-or-treat" for children in the area. A letter was sent to residents in the neighborhood inviting them to bring snacks enough for themselves and one other family. Acton UMC hopes to continue to strengthen a sense of neighborhood in

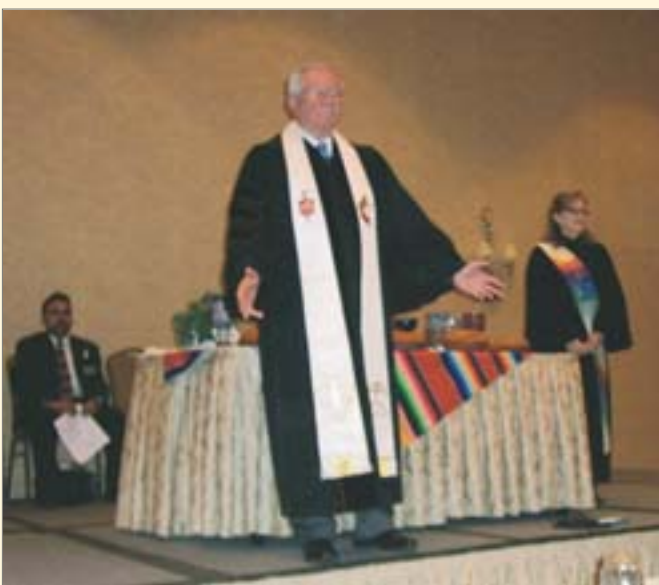
the community with similar events.

AUMC sponsors a satellite of the Granbury Boys & Girls at its Rancho Brazos Community Center, providing a safe after-school learning environment for neighborhood children. In addition, a cadre of AUMC volunteer tutors help children with their school work.

AUMC also has English-as-a-Second-Language classes and provides a meeting place at their Community Center for a Girl Scout Troop and for family meetings of Head Start.

For those who would like to learn more about how to set up a similar activity in their community, contact Rev. Dawne McAlpin at 817-326-4242 or Janice Whitecotton at 817-326-2042.

Pre-General Conference Briefing | Continued from page 1A



on the second day of the Briefing was Bishop Ben Chamness who drew from Jeremiah 29:11 to elaborate on the General Conference theme of "A Future with Hope," followed by a service of Holy Communion. His message was streamed on the www.umc.org Web site (click on General Conference at the far right of the menu bar) and a print form can be downloaded from the Central Texas Conference Web site at www.ctcumc.org.

The closing devotional message was brought by Rev. Beverly Gilliam, pastor at Morningside United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, who reminded Briefing participants of the importance of community building.

General Conference is the top decision-making body for the denomination. The Briefing precedes each General Conference as a means of introducing the major issues that will come before the General Conference and as well as an opportunity to clarify points with those who are involved in submitting the petitions.

All together, 18 Central Texas Conference volunteers participated in providing the worship experience under the leadership of Worship Team members Rev. Judy Sands, Rev. Laraine Waughtal and Rev. Suzanne Boeglin.

Each day the worship table communicated God presence in the Briefing events as delegates and communicators prepared for the weighty decisions that must be made in less than three months at General Conference. The cross was the central element each day with vines symbolic of the Jeremiah passage, candles that represent God's light in the world, changing altar clothes representing our diversity, and houses (one imperfect) to represent the community of faith coming together.

On the leaves of the vines, Briefing participants were invited to write words that represent their own prayers for a future with hope as they prepare for General Conference. Some of those vines will be available at various Central Texas Conference meetings and events and in the Conference office, and others

are invited to share their words of hope. They will be used as part of the worship experience at General Conference.

The Briefing was among the first events where Central Texas volunteers were called to action — preparing the event packets and setting up registration, greeting our visitors to Central Texas and even driving some to dinner, conducting an information table and selling General Conference tote bags and T-shirts, leading daily worship and video taping all the sessions.

The video taping was introduced at this event for the first time in order to share the Briefing information more equitably with delegates and communicators outside the United States. Too often, the cost of travel and limits on visas into the U.S. prohibits members in the Central Conferences (Africa, Europe, Asia) from benefitting from the Briefing. By providing videographers, the Central Texas Conference was able to show "gracious hospitality" to the world with Web streaming for some of the presentations and providing the full Briefing on DVD for play among the delegates on multiple continents.

"Gracious hospitality" is the Central Texas Conference's goal for all our hosting opportunities. Your volunteer participation is needed and appreciated.

