

CTCYM serves poor in Mississippi Delta and beyond

By JEFF JONES
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL TEXAS
CONFERENCE YOUTH IN MISSION

More than 1,800 youth and adults from the Central Texas Conference spent a week in June helping those in need in the poverty-stricken Mississippi Delta region and other areas in Louisiana and Texas.

As part of the Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission (CTCYM), the senior high and junior/senior high combination trip participants used their tools and talents to help repair homes damaged by weather and time.

“I haven’t been able to leave my house in almost three years,” said one CTCYM client as he rested in a wheelchair watching a team build a ramp from his four-foot porch.

“Thanks to these kids, I’ll be able to get to my doctor and see my grand kids.”

Similar sentiments were shared along the Delta region, one of the poorest areas of the United States. Many of the residents say they feel forgotten as they see jobs leave the region at the same time relief dollars have been redirected to other areas hit hard by natural disasters.

Working through local agencies and churches, CTCYM participants were able to provide a small bit of much-needed relief to many in the area. The projects included patching roofs, repairing floors, painting



Adding a wheelchair ramp expanded one grateful client’s world.

walls, fixing porches, replacing windows, building wheelchair ramps and much more.

In addition to those served in the Delta region, CTCYM missionaries also helped many families who still need help from the hurricanes of the past few years in Western Louisiana and East Texas.

“They were just about to condemn my house if I didn’t get this roof repaired,” said one woman standing in a home affected by years of water damage. “But now, they won’t have to because I won’t have more leaks. Thank God for

these young people!”

Every summer, CTCYM brings together youth and adults from around the conference to serve in the name of Christ. For a week they live, eat, work and worship together in living centers hosted by churches in different parts of the country.

CTCYM is funded by the fees paid by participants who attend and by donations from other mission-minded individuals.

The junior high CTCYM mission trip is taking place at this time—the week of July 19—at living centers throughout the Central Texas Conference.



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SAVE THE DATE Fall Leadership Summit

Saturday, Nov. 14

First UMC, Mansfield

“The Five Practices of Fruitful
Congregations” and more
with Bishop Robert Schnase

College Preview Day helps high school juniors/seniors plan ahead

By CAROLYN STEPHENS
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR MISSION
MINISTRIES - COMMUNICATIONS

By the time our students begin high school, they are already concerned about college—making the grade, taking the right courses

and wanting to connect with the “right” college or university as early as possible.

It’s a lot of pressure for students. And a lot of pressure for parents who, at the same time, may be caught somewhere between their student’s desires and their financial realities. Sometimes parents’

expectations for their kids are based more on their own college choices or experiences than on matching their student’s career interests, social adaptability and learning styles.

This is where the Central Texas Conference 2009 College &

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The Wilderness Way

By BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

17. In my Episcopal address I shared a brief (and admittedly incomplete) report on my “Shepherd Visits” through the Central Texas Conference. Allow me to lift up that mirror again and invite us to look together at this beloved part of the church universal.

This conference has an enviable record of membership growth. I discovered great things happening. I also encountered some challenging changes that are impacting our communities and our churches.

Learnings from Shepherd Visits

1. *We are strong, very strong, in missional engagement.*
2. *We don't know how to do evangelism and must relearn and engage ourselves evangelistically if we are going to survive!*
3. *Preservation of buildings has often taken precedence over mission.* In my visitations I was struck by how often a Baptist or Assemblies of God church had relocated in order to accomplish the mission of making disciples for Christ, but how rarely United Methodists were willing to relocate. People, especially people who do not know the Lord, have to be placed over property! Mission has to triumph comfort if we are to be both faithful and fruitful.
4. *In many places we have more memories than dreams!*
5. *Young adults are often a missing generation (especially in smaller churches).*
6. *We know we have to change, but are slow and timid about doing so.* (I was amazed at the number of people who made comments to me on this subject. We are late adaptors who have allowed a few people to exercise veto over new ideas and outreach. Our love of comfort negates our need to deal with conflict between mission and preservation.)

7. *Courageous clergy and lay leadership are essential.*

National trends can be seen in the Central Texas Conference. Large churches are growing larger. Smaller churches without a real sense of mission and purpose face problematic futures. Smaller churches that have embraced a real sense of mission and purpose beyond self-preservation are thriving.

Risk-taking leadership, both lay and clergy, makes an enormous difference. The most significant decision an administrative council or board makes is to decide whether they are going to operate as if the new year is 2010 or 1960.

Of our approximately 320 churches, by my conservative count, 116 are a generation away from either becoming a less-than-full-time appointment or closing their doors. Please don't misunderstand me. This will be a slow process, but gradually large clusters of congregations are disappearing from being viable entities.

Some of this is internal to a church's understanding of its mission and purpose. Some of this has to do with the changing demographics of communities. Some has to do with our failure to witness and do evangelism. God is calling us into a great new future. The Word of God from Isaiah still speaks to us this day:

“those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)



College Preview Day | Continued from page 1A

University Preview Day can begin the necessary dialogue and exposure to school choices. This event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Methodist Children's Home, 1111 Herring Ave., Waco 76708.



Nineteen United Methodist-related colleges and universities from across the eight-state South Central Jurisdiction have been invited to participate with representatives from their schools who can talk with the junior and senior high school students and their parents. Four seminaries have also been invited to send a representative for students who may feel a yearning to answer God's call for ordained

ministry.

The Preview Day will begin with a gathering in the Methodist Children's Home's gymnasium from 10 to 10:30 a.m. where schools will have display booths

and handouts related to campus life, study programs, entrance qualifications, financial aid and residences.

Campus ministers from both United Methodist-related and state/private schools will also be on hand to begin a dialogue on the benefits of staying connected with the body of Christ — and with their home church. Knowing a campus ministry is available at your college of choice can be reassuring to students and their parents.


College Preview Day
10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 12 at Methodist Children's Home, Waco


Refugee Services of Texas needs school items and toiletry donations

Refugee Services of Texas invites individuals and churches to contribute in July and August in meaningful ways.

July's donation-of-the-month emphasis is on school supplies. Please donate new or lightly used backpacks and school supplies for incoming refugee clients.

The donation-of-the-month emphasis for August is on toiletries. RST will collect the following toiletry items: toilet paper, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, personal/feminine hygiene products and deodorant.

For more information or directions to the RST office at 5009 Brentwood Stair, Fort Worth 76112, call the RST at 817-457-8110.

High school students will benefit from a panel discussion presented by freshman college students on their transition from home to campus life. Both groups will want to know more about the admissions process and specific school when they return to the MCH gymnasium for further visits with school representatives until 2 p.m.

Academy of Christian Education now registering

BY REV. KAREN GRANDERSON
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR MISSION MINISTRIES-
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The 2009 Academy of Christian Education will be held Nov. 9-13 at Still Water Lodge, Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center in Glen Rose.

Last year 23 Central Texas educators attended this event and were inspired, energized and equipped to do great things in Christian education in their local churches.

For five days, they were immersed in an intense, information-packed, inspiring time of spiritual growth and ministry preparation. During each week, one full day was dedicated to theology (especially concentrating on United Methodist theology, practice and history), Bible and Christian education basics.

Each evening was spent in small groups concentrating on using the information in practical and effective ways, such as writing a Bible study and planning a prayer retreat. Each day ended with a worship service planned by the participants using their "multiple intelligences" or learning styles, and organized for the age groups their



The 2008 ACE class is now applying new methods in their churches.

small group serves in their place of ministry: children, youth or adult.

Other areas of focus included information about Safe Sanctuaries

(abuse prevention), publicizing events and ministries, understanding asset-building and personality types using the Myers-

Briggs Type Indicator.

This event is for all persons who lead education and spiritual formation ministries in our Central Texas Conference churches — for all age levels. A brochure and registration information are on the conference Web site, www.ctcumc.org, or interested persons may contact Karen Granderson at 817-877-5222, 800-460-8622, karen@ctcumc.org. Some scholarship assistance is available for early registrations (deadline is Sept. 1), especially for small and ethnic minority churches.

The co-directors of this event are Rev. Robin Stevens of Keller United Methodist Church and Rev. Judy Richmond of Watauga United Methodist Church.

Other team members include: Rev. Mel Bishara (Saginaw UMC), Joyce Brown (Cokesbury curriculum consultant from Western Hills UMC), Terre McGill (Richland Hills UMC), Kay Lancaster (First UMC Arlington), Rev. Nathan Firmin (Grapevine First UMC), Rev. Philip Rhodes (Hurst First UMC), Rev. Alfie Wines (Grace UMC, Arlington), Rev. David Martinez (El Buen Samaritano) and Joy Roberson and Rev. Karen Granderson (conference staff).

Keeping the Flame Alive gives training to Stephens Ministers, Nurture/Care Ministries

"Keeping the Flame Alive" is a fall training for Stephens Ministers and others involved or interested in nurture and care ministries. It is sponsored by the Crime Victims Council and the Central Texas Conference Mental Health Concerns.

The training will be held at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26, at First United Methodist Church of Fort Worth's Wesley Hall. There is no cost for the training, but pre-ordered lunch is \$7.

Presenters and their topics are:

Lighting a Candle Without Burning Yourself Out! — Bill Crawford, PhD

While being a successful Stephen Minister or Nurture/Care Group leader requires intense passion for helping others, there are many stresses society from

everyday living that make this difficult. Dr. Crawford uses the latest brain research to explain why anxiety is so prevalent and then, in an entertaining style, gives a step-by-step system for accessing the clarity, confidence and creativity they will need to care for themselves and others.

How We Can Be Better Care Givers Than Job's Friends — Rev. Sandra J. Lydick, M.Div., LMSW

Victims of criminal trauma survivors experience a variety of intense emotions. Knowing how to listen and how to respond can provide valuable assistance in the healing process. Lydick identifies the emotions of crisis and describes how the crisis of victimization touches every part of one's being, offers images and

responses from scripture that can hurt and help, and how an understanding of the cross can lead to recovery.

What Victims Want the Church & Its Care Givers to Know — Susan Bragg, M.A.

Susan Bragg will provide

- practical ideas that clergy and church-affiliated helpers can use when providing comfort and assistance to victims of crime, their family members and friends;

- brief discussion on the "intersection" of traumatic loss and the criminal justice system;
- how to make a church victim-friendly.

For more information on this program and to register, contact Rev. Lydick at 817-675-6367 or sandra.lydick@crimevictimsCouncil.org.

Sept. 1 deadline for listing of church fall fundraisers

Local churches are in the planning phase for their annual fall fundraisers, and once again the *Central Link* and conference Web site will carry a one-time listing of all the church and ministry fundraisers in mid-September.

Please get your church's information to Carolyn Stephens at carolyn@ctcumc.org by Sept. 1. This is a hard deadline, so please don't miss it!

Provide your church name and event location, name of the event, date/time, and any activities that make your event unique or special.

This is an opportunity for folks to share in the delight of their own church's event as well as those of neighboring communities.



July

19-24: CTCYM Jr. High Mission Trip

20-24: Voyager 2 Camp at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center

27-31: Voyager 3 Camp at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center

August

1: Nurture Council at Lone Star Cafe, Hillsboro

1: First Saturday Gospel Sing at Trinity UMC, Coleman

2-8: Local Pastor Licensing School at Texas Wesleyan University/Polytechnic UMC, Fort Worth

7-8: Mid-Cities District Live Out LOUD Youth Event at First Euless

12-14: Cabinet meeting

14-15: CTC United Methodist Women Executive Team meeting at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center

17: Weatherford District Pastors Meeting at First Weatherford

18: Central Texas Methodist Foundation board meeting at Conference Center

September

6: Christian Education Sunday

7: Labor Day observance

10: Council on Finance & Administration meeting at Conference Center

12: UM College & University Preview Day for high school juniors/seniors at Methodist Children's Home, Waco

12: Disability Concerns meeting at Glen Lake

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

Journey of Faith UMC, a new church start at Round Rock, begins with missions in its DNA

Journey of Faith United Methodist Church, a new church start in Round Rock, held its first public worship service on Jan. 18, 2004. In five short years, the congregation has firmly established mission work in its DNA, according to their pastor, Rev. Glenda Whitehead, who credits the youth for helping to lead the way.

“2007 was the first year our youth participated in the CTCYM summer mission trips,” Whitehead said, noting that five youth and four adults participated in that first group. They joined several other small membership churches for a project in the Grapevine area.

“They had such a wonderful week that they came home planning next year’s trip,” she said.

In 2008, the group grew to 16—10 youth and six adults—and moved a little farther away to under-take a mission project in Canton. “Again, it was a wonderful experience,” Whitehead recalled. “We returned home and began raising money for the next year.

“This year, 2009, took us even

farther from home and farther from our comfort zone as we made our way to Vivian, La., for yet another wonderful week. Our group numbered 26, with 17 youth and nine adults who provided much of the leadership for our living center,” she reported.

The director, assistant director, construction coordinator and the head cook were all from Journey of Faith. “Pretty remarkable for a new church that averages less than 90 on Sunday mornings,” Whitehead said with pride.

Actually, the annual CTCYM mission trip is supported by the entire church. During the school year, the youth and their families sell breakfast tacos each week before church with proceeds helping to defray the cost of the mission trip. Likewise with a fish fry that covers the cost of transportation and donations to provide scholarships for those who may not have met their fund-raising goals.

Pastor Whitehead: “We at Journey of Faith are very proud of our youth and those who provide leadership for them!”



GOD’S PEOPLE AT WORK IN THE WORLD — At Journey of Faith United Methodist Church in Round Rock, participation in the CTCYM mission trips involves the entire congregation with various supportive fund-raising events. Members

also provide donations for scholarships so that no one would be denied this wonderful opportunity to be God’s people in the world, sharing God’s love and changing lives through mission.

Scholarships awarded at 2009 Annual Conference

Disability Concerns Scholarship Awards

Each year the Disability Concerns Committee of the Central Texas Conference awards the Disability Education & Awareness Leadership



Photos by Troy Chapman,

Jane Gates presents DEAL Scholarships to Kelly Anderson (above) and Michelle Hicks (at right).

(DEAL) scholarship grants at Annual Conference and awards grants to local churches that are recognizing the need for our church facilities to be fully accessible to all, regardless of handicapping conditions.

This year’s DEAL recipients, both considering careers in ministry with the goal of developing ongoing ministries for those with handicapping conditions, are:

Kelly Anderson—senior at Southwestern University, B.A. in child study and language development with minor in special education—member of First United Methodist Church, Fort Worth.

Michelle Hicks—junior at Texas Wesleyan University, B.S. in Christian education—member of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Fort Worth.

Local church project grant recipients are:

Discovery United Methodist Church, Hutto (Temple District) for an accessible parking lot project.

Bangs United Methodist Church (Brownwood District) for accessible rest rooms project.



Clergy named for Board of Ministry scholarships

Each year the Central Texas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry handles and announces scholarships that are awarded to clergy at the Annual Conference in June. Recipients of this year’s scholarships, the benefactors and the persons or organization to be honored are:

Eric Scott Douglas - Board of Ordained Ministry Scholarship given in honor of those clergy who are retiring this conference year and another in honor of Rev. Gil Ferrell and his work with the Methodist studies at Texas Christian University

Bradley Slaten—Guy E and Ama L. Perdue Fund Scholarship and the Aborlawn United Methodist Church Scholarship

Daniel Koos Hawkins—Avinelle McWhirter Ogle Fund Scholarship

Kyland Cason Dobbins—Drummond Scholarship provided by First United Methodist Church of Waxahachie

Leah Suzanne Hidde-Gregory—Sowell Scholarship given to honoring the life and ministry of Rev. Jesse Sowell

Walter Harrell Braddock—Elliott Fund Scholarship in memory of Rev. John W. Elliott