Louisiana churches receive ‘Open Hearts’ grants

Four local churches in the Louisiana Annual Conference have received matching grants from United Methodist Communications for this fall. Asbury United Methodist Church in Lafayette has scheduled advertising campaigns during the Back to School and Advent flights for the “Open Hearts” Igniting Ministry initiative. Newspaper, radio and cinema ads will run simultaneously with nationally placed television ads that will benefit the entire conference. Broadmoor UMC in Shreveport is receiving a matching grant for the construction of an LED sign for the church. The Well UMC, serving the Tangipahoa area, and Faith Crossings UMC in Denham Springs/Walker are both the recipients of new church start funds for their respective launches in October. Faith Crossings will incorporate a campaign consisting of direct mail and billboards. The Well will use direct mail, billboards, cinema and newspaper ads.

Louisiana Annual Conference votes on new bishops

Three new bishops were elected during the South Central Jurisdictional Conference held July 16-19 in Dallas, Texas. Voting on new Episcopal candidates ran later than expected, pushing back the announcement of assignments until 1:35 a.m. Clockwise from above right, Bishop Hutchinson and his wife Kay are congratulated by delegates Rev. Danny Gleason, Rev. Andy Goff and Dr. Terrel DeVille. Jurisdictional conference delegates are shown waving flags celebrating the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso. Kay Hutchinson is shown welcoming newly elected bishop, Mike Lowry. Bishop Hutchinson helped escort Lowry to the podium.

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Bishop Hutchinson to return to Louisiana Conference

Two hundred and ninety seven delegates from throughout the South Central Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church gathered in Dallas July 16-19 to elect three new bishops.

Bishop William W. Hutchinson, who has served the Louisiana Conference for the last two quadrenniums, was reappointed to lead the conference for another four years. “My greatest hopes have come to be. I’m really excited about the next four years and all the possibilities that are there. The joy of coming home to Louisiana fulfills our spirits,” said Bishop Hutchinson.

Earl Bledsoe, the first new bishop to be elected by the jurisdictional body, will serve the North Texas conference. Mike Lowry will be the new Episcopal leader for the Central Texas conference. Jim Dorff, who was elected on the twenty-third ballot, will be serving the San Antonio area. Bledsoe, 57, has been a district super-See Jurisdictional, page 8
From the Pew...

Cwaaks and Other Exciting News

BY SARAH S. KREUTZIGER
CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

It was family night at the Kreutziger household. Our daughter, Kathy, was helping me set the table as her husband, Jeff, and my husband, Keith, joined our young granddaughters in loud, ever escalating, riotous play. Suddenly, 21-month-old John, who was noisily stacking metal bowls under our feet, stood up, wide-eyed with a pronouncement.

“Cwaak! Cwaak!” he shouted, “Hear it? Hear it?” He repeated his statement several times while I searched my brain to understand what he was saying with such adamantine conviction.

Then I heard. Our grandfather clock was chiming just as it does every hour in every day. Only John, who had been introduced to the clock the visit before, heard its insistent beat and made the exciting connection amid the cacophony of our busy tasks. We had tuned out the bonging years ago, but to John of the “vision thing,” the chimes were a new discovery . . . a wonder.

John’s “cwaak” discovery reminds me of Dr. Leonard Sweet’s recent book on Christian leadership. In Summoned to Lead (2004), Dr. Sweet eschews much of our frantic activity to create vision and mission statements, goals and objectives, outreach projects, and other business-inspired instruments of church planning. Instead, he urges his readers to listen for the “chiming,” if you will, of the Almighty’s voice amid the noisy gongs and clanging cymbals of the spiritual workplaces.

Focusing on the “vision thing,” he believes, promotes alpha thinking and dominance as self-appointed visionaries seek to implement their own will. Listening for “the other,” conversely, produces life and poetic transformation.

“Leaders are summoned,” he concludes. “They are called into existence by circumstance. Those who rise to the occasion are leaders.” Such a hearer, Rev. Sweet exclaims, “is willing to be tuned.”

While I am intrigued with Dr. Sweet’s premise because it has the ring of truth, it strikes terror in my heart. As your newly elected Conference Lay Leader, and by definition, the head of the Conference Board of Laity, my internal discussion with Sweet goes something like this: “So what are we supposed to do? Wait for some extraordinary circumstances and hope we rise to the occasion? Or, should we hold a Quaker-like meeting and listen for the inner witness?”

Can you imagine the flack I would get from the other members if I told them we had no agenda? What would we say about Board of Laity programs that raise money for new church starts, or our Daughenbaugh-Matheny scholarship recipient needs, or our proposed Certified Lay Ministry training? What would I tell the United Methodist Women, the United Methodist Men, or the Youth about our planning and progress? Worst yet, what report would I make to the Bishop? (Can a Conference Lay Leader be impeached? Or recalled? I wonder . . .)

Thankfully, a still, small voice reminds me that John Wesley had such terror-filled moments and not only survived, but thrived. I recalled Wesley’s return from America, a certified failure and disgraced priest and Oxford Don, shortly before his Aldersgate experience. During his dark night of the soul, Wesley wrote in his diary, “I went to convert the Indians, but O! who will convert me . . . What shall I do? . . . Where do I fly from it?”

He answers his own questions. “A wise man advised me some time since, ‘Be still and go on.’ Perhaps that is the best . . . to let it humble me and quicken all my good resolutions, especially that of praying without ceasing and at other times, take no thought about it, but quietly go on ‘in the work of the Lord.’”

So here then is my answer while I await further discernment, I am to “quietly go on in the work of the Lord,” listening for His voice as I continue to pray without ceasing. Dr. Sweet adds to that advice as he urges us to “hire good vibrations and tune your team.”

That’s easy. No terror here. Our Conference Board of Laity members are full of “good vibrations” (i.e. energy) and ready and willing to be “tuned” to what is best for Louisiana United Methodists. Our task is to refine the tuning as we hear you, the clergy and laity, tell us how God is speaking to you. Together we will put those words into action for the ultimate aim of “developing spiritual leaders for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

“From the Pew” will be a series of columns highlighting the work of the Conference Board of Laity. Articles already planned include a spotlight on some of our extraordinary Daughenbaugh-Matheny scholarship alumni; an explanation of the new Certified Lay Minister training proposal; and features on how individual lay people can make a real difference in evangelism. By increasing interaction between the board and the lay people of the conference, we hope to work more closely together in building the Kingdom of God.

Maybe, just maybe, as we really listen to each other, we can hear the “cwaak” of God’s heart beating in each other’s . . .
35th Annual Meeting of Louisiana United Methodist Women to convene September 19-20, 2008
First United Methodist Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana

We United Methodist Women of Louisiana are excited about our Annual Meeting. Our very special speaker is Women’s Diving and in every withering of our Deputy General Secretary Harriett Jane Olson. Be sure to mark your calendars for September 19-20, 2008. Lake Charles District President Taylor Phillips and her Annual Meeting task force have been hard at work planning a very interesting meeting. They have chosen the theme: “Live Simply to Resurrect the Earth”. Genesis 1: 26-30 gives scriptural guidance. Their theme song is “For the Beauty of the Earth”. We congratulate them on such a timely topic. Environmental concerns fill our news media. My message endorses their focus for us. My first scripture verses are a selection from the first chapter of Genesis also:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...(Genesis1:1) Let the earth bring forth the living... (Genesis 1:24) And God said, “Let us make man in our image...and have dominion (Genesis 1: 26) The amplified version tells of each area of living thing that God created in great detail. We are establishing that God created all things. We are awed and humbled that mankind was given dominion over all things. We are in control. We are responsible. We must realize the importance of being wise stewards of God’s creation.

Oswald Chambers chooses this verse as he discusses our responsibility to God for our earth: Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things. (Isaiah 40: 26) Chambers explains: “Nature to a saint is sacramental. If we are children of God, we have a tremendous treasure in Nature. In every wind that blows, in every night and day of the year, in every sign of the sky, in every blossoming and every withering of the earth, there is a real coming of God to us...”If we live simply, not selfishly devouring the fruits of the earth, we becomes good stewards of God’s earth. A very vivid reminder today is the price of oil. Our consumer mentality is eroding all areas of supply. We stand in wonder at the CREATION story. God making all things in heaven and on earth; and, oh, the glory of making us in his image and giving us dominion.

As we continue, we go to the EASTER STORY. Nature’s resurrection every spring as new life comes to dormant bulbs and the brown gloom of winter turns to fresh new growth. Phrases like “a new day dawning from the East”, New beginnings”, and “the new life of springtime”, all of these express transformation.

Now we come to the never ending RESURRECTION STORY’ promising us eternal life with Christ as the ultimate transformation. The Easter Story of Nature parallels the teachings of Jesus Christ as he used parables to help us understand. THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD!

We conclude with praise as our Bible expresses in Psalm 8: 9:

O LORD OUR LORD, HOW EXCELLENT IS THY NAME IN ALL THE EARTH!

In Christ’s love,
Harriette Tucker Elrod, President
Louisiana Conference UMC

UMW Mission Projects for 2008

The Louisiana Conference UMW Executive Committee approved the following Mission Projects for our Mission Agencies for 2008. They are:

Dulac Community Center
Shampoo, lotion, soap (bar or liquid), and coloring books and crayons

North Rampart Community Center
Leather basketballs, heavy duty jump ropes and hula hoops

MacDonell Children’s Services
Personal care items, hair combs, shampoo and conditioner, hair brushes, toothbrushes, and deodorants

These items will be collected at our Annual Meeting which will be held in Lake Charles at First United Methodist Church on September 19 – 20, 2008. Therefore, we are asking all United Methodist Women to put these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. Also, please select from the list above and make every effort to bring one or more of these items. As you know, these are our Mission Agencies and they need our help! We MUST NOT let them down!

If you decide not to bring an item, you can make a monetary donation. If you decide to make a monetary donation, please make the check payable to the Louisiana Conference United Methodist Women, (not to the agency), so that our Conference can get the credit for the Mission donation. Also please put in the memo on the check, the particular agency that you want your contribution to go to. If you do not select an agency, the Conference will distribute funds as best we can, based on the needs of the agencies.

On behalf of Evelyn Martin, Dean and Joyce Thibodeaux, Assistant Dean of our 2008 School of Christian Mission and Taylor Phillips, President of the Lake Charles District and Chairperson of the Annual Meeting Task Force and the Louisiana Conference Executive Committee, Harriette Elrod, President, we hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, please contact me at 225-774-7259. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Edna B. Hickman, Vice President
Louisiana Conference UMC
Introducing the 2008 UMWA Annual Meeting program participants

Harriett Jane Olson has served as deputy general secretary of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church since Sept. 4, 2007. As such, she is chief executive officer of the Women's Division, the national administrative and policy-making arm of United Methodist Women. United Methodist Women is a nearly 800,000 member organization within the United Methodist Church in the United States. United Methodist Women members give about $20 million a year for mission work related to women, children and youth in the United States and around the world.

A Harvard graduate and attorney, Ms. Olson was a partner specializing in real estate and environmental law for the Pitney, Hardin, Kipp and Szuch law firm of Morrisstown, N.J., (1983-1996) before working for the church full-time. Prior to leading the Women's Division, Ms. Olson served at the United Methodist Publishing House as senior vice-president for publishing, editor for church school publications and UM Church book editor. She supervised a staff of 125-150 persons responsible for the development, production and trade distribution of resources from Abingdon Press, Cokesbury and Kingswood Books.

Ms. Olson has a long history of service in the United Methodist Church. From 1988-1996, she was a director of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship and was a delegate to the 1988, 1992 and 1996 General Conferences of the denomination. While serving on a number of committees in the former Northern New Jersey Conference, she had duties with the conference task force on sexual harassment policy and Commission on the Status and Role of Women. From 1985-1996, she spoke and taught "Words That Hurt, Words That Heal", the landmark publication that defined inclusive language needed for the church to embrace all people. Ms. Olson notes that "Women do mission in a unique way. They are empathetic, on-the-ground, standing side by side with women, children and youth. It's a role particularly well connected to our theological DNA as United Methodists: spiritual nurture and action."

It is our delight and pleasure to have as our 2008 Annual Meeting speaker, Ms. Harriett Jane Olson, deputy general secretary of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. She will deliver the Friday evening banquet address and will speak during the Saturday session. Welcome to the Louisiana Conference! Rev. Steven Spurlock is District Superintendent of the Lake Charles District and was appointed to the cabinet by Bishop William Hutchinson on June 1, 2008. He is a native of Louisiana and was appointed as District Superintendent, he served as a pastor of University UMC in Baton Rouge. He is no stranger to the Lake Charles area having also been pastor at First UMC, Lake Charles for seven years from 1992-1999. Rev. Spurlock is a graduate of Louisiana Tech with a B.A. degree in English and graduated from Perkins School of Theology at SMU with a Master's of Theology. He has two children, a son, Judd and a daughter, Whitney. Whitney is a senior at LSU Shreveport and Judd and his wife, Sarah, recently presented Rev. Spurlock with a grandson, a baby boy named Hugh DePrést Spurlock. Rev. Spurlock will bring greetings and welcome the attendees at the 2008 Annual Meeting of United Methodist Women.

Rev. Richard Humphries became Senior Pastor of First UMC, Lake Charles in June of 2007, having served the previous eight years as Senior Pastor of St. Paul's UMC in Monroe. He was licensed to preach in 1977, six months after he married his wife of now thirty-two years, the former Jan Caraway. They are the parents of three grown daughters and two grandchildren. Rev. Humphries presently serves on the Louisiana Conference Board of Trustees as secretary, and is also a member of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. His interests include walking, swimming, hiking and reading books on American history. Rev. Humphries will bring greetings during the opening session of the Louisiana UMC Annual Meeting.

Rev. Angela Cooley Bullhof has been in the Louisiana Conference for 5 years, coming to us from Pennsylvania, where she graduated from University of Pennsylvania in Psychology and Philosophy in 1993 and earned her Masters of Divinity from Drew University Divinity School in Madison New Jersey in 1996. She served as pastor and associate pastor of several Pennsylvania United Methodist Churches until she moved to Lake Charles with her husband, Dr. Johannes Bulhof, Assist. Professor of Philosophy at McNeese State University. She served as part time Assoc. Pastor at First United Methodist Church, Lake Charles, then later at St. Paul University United Methodist of Lake Charles, while also serving as part time Campus Minister at the Wesley Foundation at McNeese. She was named full time campus minister at the Wesley Foundation in 2005 where she serves today.

Rev. Bullhof and her husband are proud parents of 3 boys, Sebald, James, and Roger. Rev. Bullhof will deliver the Saturday morning devotion message as a part of the 2008 Annual Meeting program.

Rev. Eunice Chigumira is a native of Zimbabwe, a country in southern Africa. She is the daughter of Sammie Jo Perkins and Rev. Richard Humphries. She is both a pastor in the Louisiana Conference United Methodist Church. God has blessed them with three wonderful children, two girls and one boy. Their oldest daughter is married and they have two adorable grandchildren, living in Canada. Rev. Chigumira holds a Bachelor of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy studies from the University of Zambia. She also holds a Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She taught both elementary and middle school for twenty years.

In her home church in Zimbabwe, she was very much involved with women and children's ministries. She responded to God's call to ministry in 1997 and began the process, resigning her teaching position in 2000. She enrolled for theological studies at Africa University in Zimbabwe. After a year, she transferred to Emory University, completing her Master's of Divinity in 2004.

Rev. Chigumira enjoys working with people and preaching the good news of salvation. She is serving People's and Brooks-Shaw Temple United Methodist Churches in the New Orleans District of our conference. Rev. Chigumira will deliver the communion message on Saturday of Annual Meeting.

Patti Ezell is a licensed professional counselor and licensed marriage and family therapist in Lake Charles, LA. She is married to Doug Ezell, a United Methodist minister. She states that "sharing life and ministry with Doug is one of my greatest treasures." Patti and Doug share two wonderful grown children and five beautiful grandchildren.

Rev. Angela Cooley Bullhof's hobbies include horseback riding, reading, basket weaving, and fishing. She enjoys speaking in churches and leading retreats because she treasures the opportunity to share about faith and matters of the heart. She enjoys people and believes we each have a life story that reflects God's endless grace.

Sammie Jo Perkins is a church musician, song leader for her local church, Wesley UMC of Deridder. She also serves as Administrative Board and Worship chairperson there. Sammie Jo is very involved with United Methodist Women on the local and district levels. She has held the office of Secretary of Program Resources for the Lake Charles District and is the current District Spiritual Growth coordinator. She is also director of the Methodist Learning Center, she coordinates a busy schedule for the students, faculty and staff, and of course, for family. Sammie is married to Mr. Charles Perkins and they have four grown children, two sons and two daughters who also juggle busy schedules of medical school, science teacher, the practice of Veterinary Science, and plant supervisor. There are eight beautiful grandchildren who play a very important part also. Sammie Jo Perkins will serve as song leader for the 2008 Annual Meeting.

Gay Arnold is a retired educator at the Lake Charles Parish School System, having worked as a classroom teacher and coordinator of several special projects with both children. She plays for several vocal groups at First UMC. She is married to Paul Arnold and they are parents of three grown children. Gay will be the musician for the opening session and the banquet of Annual Meeting.

Bruce Allured and the Bayou Bell Choir - Bruce Allured is director of the Bayou Bell Choir, a community based handbell ensemble. These twelve ringers perform on a five octave set of Schulmerich handbells provided by the First United Methodist Church of Lake Charles. The 61 bell set is augmented by the use of the five and one-half octave Lee Edward Allured Memorial Chimes. The volunteer members exhibit remarkable musicianship in making the separate pitches of the bells sound as though only one instrumentalist is playing. Organized in 1999, the group has appeared in concert in and with several Louisiana settings and groups. Their Christmas concert has been aired on NPR’s KRSV, and in 2007 they were honored with the Mayor’s Arts Organization of the Year Award.

The Bayou Bell Choir will provide musical entertainment during the banquet.

Mary Blankenbaker is the Organist for First United Methodist Church of Lake Charles, LA.

Ms. Blankenbaker will provide music during the Saturday session of the Annual Meeting.

Other Program contributors and participants not pictured include:

Faye Broussard is the designer of the 2009 Mission Ribbons for 2008 UMW Annual Meeting theme “Live Simply to Resurrect the Earth”. She is a member of First UMC of Lake Arthur, LA.

Jane Reynolds is a member of First UMC, Lake Charles and served as chair of the 2000 Annual meeting when last held in Lake Charles. Jane is an active person in the United Methodist Women. She will install the incoming Conference officers at Annual Meeting.

Melba Stein is president of her local unit at St Luke-Simpson UMC in Lake Charles and is a former member of the Conference Committee on Nominations. She will recognize the Conference retiring officers at this year's Annual Meeting.

Betty Verette is a member of St Luke-Simpson UMC in Lake Charles and is the designer and maker of a special banner being presented for use of this year's Annual Meeting.
Conference committee on nominations report

LUEBURDA JAMISON MYERS, Chairperson
As usual, it is my pleasure to extend the "invitation to serve" to all UMW women who are interested. The Potential Leaders Information Form is on the conference website http://www.lacomm.org/laity/docs/talent.doc. The committee has worked diligently to seek out those women who are able at this time to say "YES" to leadership roles to help fulfill the PURPOSE of United Methodist Women for 2009-2010. Our work has been a "labor of love.'

The offices to be elected for the 2009-2010 term are:
- Vice-President, Treasurer, Social Action Coordinator, Spiritual Growth Coordinator, and Chairperson of Committee on Nominations.
- Committee on Nominations members to be elected are two (2) for the class of 2012; One (1) to complete the class of 2010.
- The slate of nominees will be prepared for voting on by delegates at the September Annual Meeting in Lake Charles (September 19-20, 2008). The names of the candidates will be in print on the website (http://www.la-umc.org/laity/docs) and in each district newsletter.
- Please continue to pray for your committee on nominations as we work to perpetuate the life and service of our Louisiana Conference United Methodist Women.

A word from the LA. UMW Treasurer

JEANETTE MCCALMAN, Treasurer

The year is half over and we still have time to reach our pledge for 2008 of $226,500.00. We did not reach our pledge in 2007, or in the past few years, and it is time for us to turn this trend around! There are several ways we can help to do this:
- If every woman in the conference would increase her pledge by $1.00 for 2008, do you have any idea how much mission money could be accrued just through that one little effort?
- If any Unit that has a money-making project will give 50% to Mission Giving and use the balance for other projects, there would be a huge jump in meeting our pledge.
- If ALL Units will empty their treasury of un-used and undesignated funds by the fourth quarter, this will also help.

Don’t let September slip up on you without giving your offering to honor the District and Conference Officers who have given their time and energy to keep our UMW running for the past four or eight years. In addition, your District Treasurers need to receive from you the Mission Candle forms in August or early September to get the names in the Candle Book.

We’re looking forward to seeing everyone at the Conference UMW Annual Meeting!

La. membership gains recognized at West Gulf Regional School

ETHEL LILLY, Conference Membership Nurturer and Outreach Coordinator

The West Regional School of Christian Missions is always a spiritual treat as well as inspirational. This year the school was held June 12-15, 2008, in Winfield, Kansas. Regional schools are annual delegated leadership events sponsored by the Women’s Division. My officer focus group was Membership, where we met to pray and to discuss what is going on in our local units as well as what should be going on in our units.

This Conference year, we want to put more emphasis on organizing new units as well as re-organizing older units, identifying their needs and seeking strategies for those needs found. Louisiana Conference UMW was the recipient of a recognition award for the start of new units during the year.

We are proud of that accomplishment and want to foster even more of this.

Thanks again for your Membership Reports and we all look forward to a greater conference year ahead.

“Go forth and don’t be afraid to do great things for God and God’s people.”

NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

Acadiana District 2008 Change Agent Award Program Held

MARGERY MANUEL, Acadiana District

The Ann Dalme and Martha Susanna Wesley Circle of First United Methodist Church in Lafayette was presented the Change Agent 2008 Award by the Change Agent Network, Inc. on April 12, 2008. Mrs. Dalme accepted the award on behalf of all members of Martha Susanna Wesley Circle. Mrs. Dalme and the Martha Susanna Wesley Circle were nominated for this award by Ms. Victoria Dickson a refugee from West Africa.

As an outreach mission project, Martha Susana Wesley Circle has given of their time and financial resources to help Ms. Dickson as she became settled and established in their community. It has been an enriching experience to have this opportunity to express God’s love and concern for Victoria.

Change Agent Network is a registered non-profit, non-political Christian oriented charitable organization which strives to initiate programs that foster the mental, social, economic and educational status of less privileged members of our society currently with particular emphasis in Africa, motivating growth and optimum development.
31-DERFUL WAYS TO SAY THANKS

October 2008

Living the Sacred Daily, through Mission Giving

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Memorial Candle to remain significant part of Annual Meeting

The lighting of the MISSION CANDLE will again be a significant part of our Conference Annual Meeting, to be held on September 19-20, 2008, in First United Methodist Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana. The Candle was first burned at the 1979 Conference Annual Meeting as a Centennial Celebration of women Organized for Mission. Because of the loving and diligent promotion of Shirley Hoffpauir, then serving as Conference Treasurer, the tradition of the mission candle has evolved to represent our past, present and future as women organized for mission. Units and individuals will want to be a part of this meaningful expression of our united commitment to a worldwide program of mission outreach.

Gifts may be given IN MEMORY or IN HONOR of persons whose names will be inscribed by district in a CONFERENCE MISSION BOOK displayed near the candle. Each district will take home its list of names to display at District Annual Meetings. PLEASE NOTE that the person or unit giving the gift is responsible for notifying honorees and/or families of those memorialized. The MISSION CANDLE will burn for the exact length of time our total gifts will support mission through the Women’s Division.

Proposed Goals for 2009 (Voting Item)

In keeping with the Purpose of the United Methodist Women, in 2009 our goals will be:

I. To be a Community of Women, accomplishing a 2% increase in membership by:
   A. Seeking to charter new units in churches where units do not exist.
   B. Revitalizing units that have limited resources.
   C. Creating teen, college/university age and newly retired women’s circles in each district.

II. To encourage children, youth and women to know God by:
   A. Promoting conference, district and local unit mission studies as outlined by the Women’s Division. Promote increase attendance at School of Christian Mission, Annual Meetings and Spiritual Retreats.
   B. Incorporating the use of the Prayer Calendar in daily devotions.
   C. Implementing a Children’s Reading Program in each of the seven districts.

III. To continue to Develop a Creative, Supportive Fellowship by:
   A. Observing UMW Sunday in January 2009 in every unit throughout the conference.
   B. Collecting items as outlined in the current Material Resources for Mission Catalog, and presenting these items at the UMW Annual Meeting to support Women’s Division Mission Projects in Louisiana – Dulac Cooperative Ministry, MacDonnell United Methodist Children’s Services and North Rampart Community Center.
   C. Encouraging mission Volunteer work at Sager-Brown/UMCOR, and education field trips to Women’s Division Projects in Louisiana.

IV. To Expand Concepts of Mission by:
   A. Encouraging District and Local Units to use the 2009 Program Book, Response Magazine and the Prayer Calendar in program planning.
   B. Promoting and assisting each Local and District Unit in becoming a Mission Today Unit.
   C. Completing the requirements for membership in the Charter Club for Racial Justice.
   D. Increasing the number of participants in the Reading Program by 2%.
   E. Participating and supporting the programming of Church Women United, and the World Federation of Methodist Women.
   F. Increasing the number of Five Star Giving Units by 10%.

V. TO Participate in the Global Ministries of the Church by:
   A. Paying our MISSION GIVING pledge in full.
   B. Supporting and promoting our Mission Candle and Mission Ribbons.
**The Academy for Spiritual Leadership 2008 - 2009**

**THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

The Path of Spiritual Leadership is a four retreat course that empowers laity and clergy to grow in their faith and deepen as spiritual leaders in their congregation or ministry setting. The retreats begin on Thursday with registration at 5 p.m. and close on Saturday with lunch. They include time with nationally known retreat leaders, time in small groups, time apart in Sabbath Rest to reflect and ponder, and time to worship. For many, these retreats become a time of discernment and a defining moment as they search for direction in their lives from God.

The registration fee of $375 includes double occupancy room and all meals for the four retreats. It can be paid half in 2008 and half in 2009. Register at www.la-umc.org

Quotes from past participants:

- "I teach Sunday School, lead a prayer group, help design worship and sometimes lead Bible study classes. A chance to “fill up” my own spiritual cup has been most life-giving for me. Hearing the stories and suggestions has breathed new life into me.”

- "Excellent balance of content and experience. I loved the use of music and movement. This experience has given me a greater sense of direction for the next stage of my journey.”

- "I learned new and innovative ways to worship and be in the presence of the Holy. The group fellowship was wonderful!”

**THE PATH OF REUNION RETREAT**

April 2-4, 2009

This retreat is designed to call together those who have been a part of the Academy in any of its offerings through the years. It gives an opportunity to connect with persons who have shared a similar life-changing season and want to have a time of renewal. All retreats are held at The Wesley Center in Woodworth, La.

**LOUISIANA SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS TO HOST**

"Spirituality & Transition: Hearing and Telling our Stories”

October 27 -30, 2008

Bishop Susan Hassinger and Dr. Dwight Judy, Retreat Leaders

This national event, to be held at The Wesley Center, will involve persons from across the country who are engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction. It will provide an opportunity to hear and tell our stories while sharing in the presence of God. It is our joy to host this first time regional gathering for the Fellowship.

For more information contact either Cherri Johnson, cherri@firstmethodist.org or Carole Cotton Winn, cottonwinn@bellsouth.net.

**THE DISCERNERS ACADEMY**

March 13 – 15, 2009

Dr. Laecye Warner, Retreat Leader

Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C.

The Discerners Academy is held each year in the Louisiana Conference as a way of recruiting persons who may be hearing a nudge toward full time ministry. This retreat gives them a chance to be among peers who are asking similar questions and seeking guidance for the process of Candidacy. They are given a glimpse into a class at seminary by hearing a faculty person from a United Methodist School of Theology. The staff is made up of Elders, Deacons, and Local Pastors.

**THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

The calendar dates for this cycle of training are:

- October 13-16, 2008
- February 9-12, 2009
- May 4-7, 2009
- October 4-8, 2009
- February 22-25, 2010
- April 3-6, 2010

Quotes from former participants:

- "Through this training my vocational call has gained a much broader clarity. Spiritual direction is now a part of everything I do in ministry. I have become comfortable in my own skin, not just for myself, but in relation to where I am in ministry for God in this present season of my life. This is a huge shift for me. I have probably spent most of my adult life trying to get to the next station and wanting to be somewhere else. Now I trust God's voice and have found a place of acceptance in where I am.”

The Path of Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Formation in the Congregation by Carole Cotton Winn, Director

"A Spiritual Director is, then, one who helps another to recognize and to follow the inspirations of grace in life, in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading.”

Thomas Merton

This course is designed for persons who want to explore and hone skills in spiritual formation within the congregation, as well as spiritual direction in a one on one setting. It involves a six week course which extends from Monday afternoon at 3 p.m. through Thursday morning at 11 a.m. Our faculty person is Rev. Wendy Miller, from the Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisburg, Va., where she teaches spiritual formation in the seminary. Each retreat includes required reading and assignments. Persons who complete the training and engage in the assignments become certified in Spiritual Direction in the Louisiana Conference. The registration fee is $300 per retreat, which includes a private room and all meals.

For more information contact Linda Gregg via email at lindagregg@la-umc.org or via telephone at 225-346-1646 or 888-239-5286.
Jurisdictional, from page 1

intend since 2002 for the Bryan/West District in the Texas Conference. Lowry, also 58, comes to the Episcopacy after serving as executive director for New Church Development and Transformation for the Southwest Texas Conference in San Antonio. Dorff, 61, has been serving as area provost for the North Texas Conference.

A standing ovation was given to the Louisiana Annual Conference in recognition of the conference paying 100 percent of its apportionments. “As they have sought institutional support, they have not given up their responsibilities,” said Daniel Ivey-Soto, referring to connectional financial assistance given to Louisiana for hurricane recovery.

During a video report from Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center in Fayetteville, the Louisiana Conference was recognized for the recent building and opening of the Friendship Plaza, located at the retreat center. The plaza was constructed as a “thank you” from the United Methodists of Louisiana to the center and to the many volunteers from throughout the South Central Jurisdiction that assisted Louisiana with hurricane disaster response.

Rev. Darryl Tate, executive director of the Louisiana Disaster Response Ministry, thanked the South Central Jurisdiction for the financial help, volunteer hours and prayers that have helped the hurricane devastated state on its road to recovery.

Delegates Rev. Andy Goff and Dr. Anita Crump take a short break.

Bishop Charles Crutchfield, Arkansas Conference, spoke about a mandate stemming from the 2008 General Conference to reduce the number of Episcopal Areas in four of the five denominational jurisdictions.

A projected timeline for planning the reduction spans the next quadrennium, and includes the gathering of feedback from conference leadership teams and groups. In June of 2009, the College of Bishops will meet with the SCJ Committee on Episcopacy to receive any recommendations they wish to give. In January of 2010, the College will develop its first draft of a proposal. The final proposal will be presented to SCJ Conference delegates in November of 2011.

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Delegates from the Louisiana Annual Conference pray for discernment during the Episcopal election process, which lasted until 10:26 p.m. on Friday evening.

A resolution affirming the South Central Jurisdiction Mission Council’s action which supports the use of SMU property to house the proposed George W. Bush library, museum and institute passed by a show of hands.

Just prior to that vote, a substitute petition that would prevent leasing, selling or otherwise participating in or supporting a George W. Bush policy institute on the property of South Methodist University was defeated.

Defenders of the substitute resolution argued that the institute will support a pan-ideology that could be in conflict with some of the focuses and Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. Those speaking against the substitute resolution stated that the presence of the Bush Institute would not taint or damage Southern Methodist University’s reputation, but would instead strengthen the university and its resources.

In a post-vote press conference, Dr. Gerald Turner, president of SMU, was “delighted” that the conference had, through the vote, affirmed the actions of SMU and of the Mission Council. “Nearly every presidential library has created a controversy... It will all work out,” he said.

In that same press conference, Rev. Dr. Tex Sample, professor emeritus at St. Paul School of Theology, was extremely disappointed by the outcome of the vote. Sample stated that the institute could become a “very, very loud trumpet” for the ideals and goals of the Bush administration. The timetable for the completion of the complex on SMU’s campus, said Turner, could include a groundbreaking as soon as the spring of 2010, with the opening of the facilities in the fall of 2012 or the spring of 2013.

On Thursday morning of the Jurisdictional Conference, Bishop Ann Sherer of the Nebraska area delivered an Episcopal Address on the State of the Church. “Christ is not just for us. Christ is for those persons outside the church... for the whole world,” she said.

Bishop Sherer described United Methodists as deeply and institutionally connected in 38 countries. “Who we are is changing. We know ourselves to be a part of the same church. We and the persons in every conference in this jurisdiction who are opening themselves to these relationships... are privileged to get a whole perspective on the whole world that many do not know,” Sherer added.

The bishop from Nebraska added that the church should be concerned with the issues of equity, justice, shifting power, and sharing resources.

“Every time we come together we call it conferencing, whether we do it or not. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The best way to do this mission is to engage in holy conferencing together,” said Sherer.