



THE NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE

edition of The United Methodist Reporter

Reaching out to the Heart of North Texas

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Message From The Bishop

Michael McKee

Dinner Bell fills souls as well as stomachs

In the early evening when my father whistled, I knew that dinner was ready, and it was time to come home and sit at the family dinner table. My grandfather, who worked on a ranch, spoke of the dinner bell calling ranch hands for dinner.



When Judy Gilreath, a layperson at First UMC Sulphur Springs, asked me to come to the Dinner Bell at her church, I envisioned people gathering for dinner.

What I learned is that the Dinner Bell was the dream of a man who sensed God's calling to do something. The idea was a simple one — feed anyone in Sulphur Springs who needed a meal. Each Wednesday, the Dinner Bell at First UMC Sulphur Springs opens for lunch.

A few weeks ago, I was privileged

See **DINNER**, Page 2A

3 named district superintendents

Dr. Ron Henderson
North Central District

"As a superintendent before, I loved being an advocate for pastors, churches and those entering the process of ordained ministry. I embrace this opportunity to serve the church and conference to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

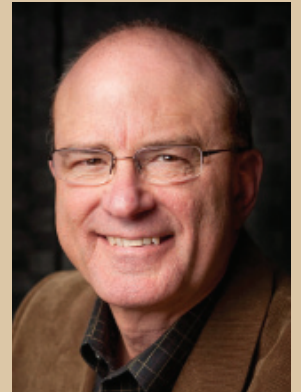


The Rev. Cammy Gaston
Metro District



"I can see so many possibilities for our future. As I look at the names and faces that make up the Metro District, I see faithful people. I pray that I will lead faithfully as well."

The Rev. Vic Casad
East District



"I was born in Paris, toddled in Roxton and grew up in Greenville. In some sense, it is a return to my roots and to the great heritage the East District bestows upon not only the North Texas Conference, but upon all of Texas Methodism."

Bishop appoints Henderson, Gaston and Casad, effective in July

By **SHERON C. PATTERSON**
Editor

Bishop Mike McKee, episcopal leader of the North Texas Annual Conference, has announced changes to his Appointive Cabinet. Effective July 1, Dr. Ron Henderson

will become North Central District superintendent, the Rev. Cammy Gaston will become Metro District superintendent, and the Rev. Vic Casad will become East District superintendent.

"As I made these appointments, two things

were vital," Bishop McKee said. "First of all, I thought it was important to have people who knew the North Texas Conference well. By that, I mean knowing the laity, the clergy, the churches and the mission field. As we look at the three people I appointed,

they each have a long record of service in the annual conference. They share that particular gift of knowing the conference, and that's helpful.

"Secondly, each one of them represents something different and unique," he said.

See **HENDERSON**, Page 2A

INSIDE

Wil Murphy talked about strategy during the Communicators Jam for NTC local churches. Find out all about it, and, if you're a communicator, join the Facebook page, **4A**.



What are you doing for Lent?

For the Rev. Seong Joon Park, it is a reminder to go outside the church doors to spread Jesus' word, **5A**



UMC must find strength in tumult, regain joy, Perkins lecturer urges

By **SHERON C. PATTERSON**
Editor

At the Perkins Lecture Series in Wichita Falls, Dr. William Lawrence, dean of Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, spoke of strength and joy in a time of transition for United Methodists.

The March 3-4 lecture series, begun in 1943, has brought national notables such as Dr. Norman Vincent Peal, Rabbi Harold S. Kushner and Dr. Zan W. Holmes Jr. to the First UMC Wichita Falls pulpit.

This year, Dr. Lawrence started his

See **DEAN**, Page 2A



Sheron C. Patterson

Dr. William Lawrence, dean of the Perkins School of Theology at SMU, drew from Texas history during his lecture on joy at First UMC Wichita Falls.

Next edition: **SMU Perkins Dean William Lawrence's column on Easter**

The Bishop

Dinner Bell fills the soul and stomach

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to work in the lunch line. I served chicken. The Rev. Pete Adrian, pastor of FUMC, served mashed potatoes, and Dr. Joan LaBarr, East District superintendent, served gravy. On that day, we took the places of the volunteers who normally serve.

It is impressive to see dozens of volunteers mobilize to feed people who need a meal. But that was not the most impressive or important activity I observed.

As people came through the line, I heard Rev. Adrian and other volunteers not only banter back and forth with them, but I also heard the volunteers ask about their health, their families and their searches for employment.



From left: Sharon Burnett, Judy Gilreath, Mark Benton, Gene Prickett, Lindsey Caldwell, Janet Hamner and Debra Walker get just as much as the diners out of the meals.

Volunteers and staff served not only food, but also Christian hospitality and a Christian witness.

The truth was expressed again!

It is important to give someone food, but it is more important to give of oneself to another. When ministry is enacted *with* another human being rather than *to* another human being, each person is honored. Ministry *with*

people expresses that all are God's children and that all need God's grace. I saw Christian ministry in action, but it was more than dinner — it was Christian compassion for people's health, stability and emotions.

I left Sulphur Springs as I have many places where vital Christian ministry occurs. I left knowing that often we receive abundantly more than we give.

Henderson, Gaston, Casad to be district superintendents

Continued from Page 1A

Henderson, currently senior pastor of Custer Road UMC in Plano, "has served as a district superintendent before," the bishop said.

"He is a leader. He has been a delegate to General Conference. He knows the North Texas Conference, he knows the general church, and he knows the structure," Bishop McKee said. "Ron has been a pastor of large churches and small churches. He is somebody who knows this work, so he brings experience that the team needs."

Bishop McKee knows Rev. Gaston, director of the Denton Wesley Foundation on the University of North Texas campus, through the Perkins intern program, in which they supervised interns.

She "has been mentoring students through the process for candidacy or ordination. She has worked in our residency program with people who are seeking ordination. She has great skills in networking with young

people and mentoring them," Bishop McKee said.

"I became aware of how effectively she was able to supervise and mentor persons coming through the process. As we look for younger persons for ministry or for people to be involved in the church, Cammy has great experience," he said.

Casad, senior pastor at Stonebridge UMC in McKinney, "has been pastoring churches in this conference for a number of years. He is a preacher's kid. He knows the DNA of many of these churches," Bishop McKee said.

"Vic has unique perspectives. He has a very good analytical mind. He will be able to help us analyze the mission field and how the churches are responding," the bishop said.

"He will help us look for new strategies and opportunities, particularly in the East District, and other areas as well. He will help us engage in the process of sustaining and creating healthy, vibrant congregations," he said.

Dean throws in Texas history lesson on Methodists and joy

Continued from Page 1A

series by confronting declining Methodist membership. With the theme of strength, based on Hebrews 12, he urged Methodists to step back amid the anxiety.

His advice: Do not panic.

"On every commercial flight before a plane leaves the ground, the flight attendants tell us that in an emergency, each passenger should take care of one's self before taking care of anyone else. Scholars call this self-differentiation.

"Therefore, leadership means distinguishing oneself from the entanglements of an environment and the systems of panic in the surroundings," he explained. "When a crisis hits, the worst thing a leader can do is getting tangled up and twisted in the crisis. Step back for a moment. Focus on one's integrity, establish one's own identity and take care of oneself first."

On Monday, he spoke of joy, based on II Corinthians 5 and illustrated with a Texas history lesson.

Back when Stephen F. Austin was leading Texas

settlers, Methodists were known for shouting their joy, which Austin thought "indecent."

"Stephen F. Austin tried his best to stop Methodism from crossing the Red River into Texas. In 1829 he wrote that he had no objections to quiet routine in homes and neighborhood, but he did not want 'any Methodist excitement' to come to Texas. He did not want excited Methodist preachers making noise in public.

"In a letter, he wrote, 'It will not do to have the Methodists excitement raised in this country,'" Dr. Lawrence said. "They were criticized for their disordered ways of worship, for their shouting responses from an Amen corner, for their enthusiasm when they gathered in camp meetings and revivals, and for their sheer joy in the Christian faith.

"Well, I guess we fixed that problem," he joked.

"Methodist scholar Kenneth Rowe says, 'It happened when we moved from the back streets to the front streets, when we became respectable, decent and important. Perhaps along the



The Rev. Cameron Greer, left, talks with Dr. William Lawrence, dean of the Perkins School of Theology at SMU and speaker for the Perkins Lecture Series at First UMC Wichita Falls.

Sharon C. Patterson

way, we lost our joy.'"

The Rev. Cameron Greer, pastor of Mount Calvary UMC in Wichita Falls, said he was moved by the series.

"I believe Dean Lawrence helped to remind us that the church is called to speak truth, and in truth we will discover the strength of the church, and in that strength we can find the joy of the Lord, who gives us victory. He challenged us to have a

living faith that doesn't lose faith when a crisis comes our way. He helped us to understand the importance of the church in the 21st century and how we are called to serve a dying world."

Retired clergy the Rev. Michael Daves agreed: "Dr. Lawrence is very sharp, exciting and incisive. He brings a lot to the lectures. He established the history of the lecture in a way that I have never heard before."

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Right: Wil Murphy gives local church communicators ideas on strategy. Far right, from left: Webmaster Patrick Steil, associate editor Linda S. Johnson, UMR liaison Wendy Campbell, NTC communications director Sheron C. Patterson, administrative assistant Rosalinda Luna and strategist Wil Murphy



Communicators Jam gets participants talking — a lot



Linda S. Johnson talks about how to organize a story and what makes a good photo for print.

By **SHERON C. PATTERSON**
Editor

The saying goes, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” That was the driving force behind the Communicators Jam last month.

We gave a warm embrace of concern and support to the 20 people who attended from around the North Texas Conference whose honor it is to communicate within their local churches and to the community. The half-day event was less a conference and more a coming together to lock arms as communicators.

The assignment of local church communicator may seem easy from the outside, but from the perspective of those inside, it is

daunting. The participants quickly bonded and built a community. During the event, they shared concerns

such as how to effectively reach out to their community – and how to effectively reach in. Answers to those questions and more came from the North Texas Conference Communications Team.

I am very proud of my team, because they represent the best and the brightest in their fields. Linda S. Johnson, the associate editor of the *North Texas UMR*, is a top-notch

COMMUNICATORS FACEBOOK PAGE

If you’re in charge of communications for your local church, search Facebook for the North Texas UMC Communicators page and ask to join.

journalist with keen insights on page layout and design. Patrick Steil, the webmaster, keeps the annual conference’s online presence crisp and relevant. Wil

Murphy, our communications strategist, has his hand on the pulse of trends and developments in advertising, marketing and video. Wendy Campbell, our *United Methodist Reporter* representative, creates ways to put the newspaper before new readers, and encourages local churches to start their own editions. Rosalinda Luna, administrative assistant, helps get

our bills paid and manages office duties. As the communications director, I work closely with Bishop Mike McKee to ensure that the NTC stays connected and in tune with the episcopal guidance.

The Rev. Rachel Baughman, of the 2013 Annual Conference design group, presented an exciting glimpse into what we can expect in June at First UMC Richardson. Bishop McKee also dropped by to greet the communicators, shake hands and offer encouragement.

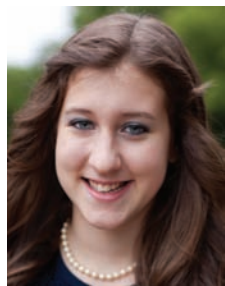
When our event ended at 1 p.m., few people left. There was conversation and dialogue for almost an hour. We decided that the community we experienced that day should not go away, so check out the North Texas UMC Communicators Facebook page.

Hello North Texas: Voices of NTC Laity

Think you can’t possibly do more for your faith? Think again

Hope Rouse, a member of First UMC Wichita Falls and the Conference Council of Youth Ministries, is this edition’s guest columnist.

Everyone knows that person in the congregation who is the ideal.



That person is in the pew or the choir loft every Sunday without fail. That person is at every luncheon, concert and chili cook-off. That person is almost irritating for doing everything and always having the right answers at Bible study. Well, this is me.

I’m in the praise band, in the choir, and I even won a perfect attendance award my sixth-grade year. I did everything I could and was allowed to do. If a volunteer was

needed, my hand was up in the air before the question was asked. I was my idea of an ideal church member. If someone needed an example to follow, I was it.

Until one day, a visitor came walking into Bible study with the proposition of joining this thing called CCYM. Well, of course I wasn’t going to pass up this opportunity to do more tasks within the church. I went to this thing called Youth Annual Conference with a few members of my church. They spoke of “legislation” and “districts.” It was a strange place filled with these weird creatures who were so welcoming and happy to be having a huge business meeting. They were so welcoming that they elected me to their Conference Council of Youth Ministries (whatever that meant).

I left with a bigger list of responsibilities and more meetings to attend than a CEO. Then I went to this even bigger

business meeting called Annual Conference, where I noticed there was a whole other world that I had never known about. It was almost like an alien planet.

I became immersed. I found that I had become one of them. By the end, I had added 200 words to my vocabulary and was forever changed. All my life I had thought that my church was it. But when I entered that new place with a new language and 900 committees, I discovered that I wasn’t doing all that I could.

In fact, I was doing an infinitesimal amount compared with my fellow CCYM members. It’s not as though what I was doing wasn’t important, but that there was so much more to do. I hadn’t reached my full potential. All I had ever wanted to do is reach my potential in the church and do every possible thing.

If I’ve learned anything from joining CCYM and the Board of Laity, it’s that I am

not doing enough. I will never be able to do enough, but I can strive. Even with what I am involved in, it’s not enough. There’s always more that I can do, that you can do and that we can do to be the best we can.

Linda Parks, the North Texas Conference Lay Leader, arranges Hello North Texas. Contact her at ljparks@aol.com or ntclayleader@ntcumc.org.

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John McLarty, left, and Billy Echols-Richter trade thoughts in the Healthy Church Initiative. New sessions start in September.

Learn from each other to reach out in ministry

Churches study best practices and build leadership skills

By **GLORIA FOWLER**
New Church Development and Congregational Transformation
 For a long time, we have looked outside our North Texas connections for the tools and resources to do ministry.

What we didn't realize was that within our own connection, we have great resources and ministries to learn from.

What if we could gather together with those in similar situations and learn from each other about what works and what doesn't, encourage



one another to improve our ministries, reach the unchurched of our communities, and make disciples of Jesus Christ?

The first phase of the Healthy Church Initiative, or HCI, helps develop leadership through groups learning together and from each other. In

Lay Leadership Development and Pastoral Leadership Development, members come together to learn about best practices through relevant curriculums and from each other's ministry experiences.

The goal is to lead change and grow ministry for the sake

of winning more souls for Christ.

Each leadership development group is led by our own North Texas clergy and laity, using our own resources.

This first phase equips pastors and laity to move on to the second phase of the Healthy Church Initiative, a consultation phase to move the whole church toward change and growth.

The next learning groups begin in September.

If your church wants to know more or be part of this learning group to begin the process toward change, please contact gloria@ntcumc.org or 972-526-5038.

What are you doing for Lent?



Follow Jesus' path by going outside with His message

The Rev. Seong Joon Park
 Immanuel Korean UMC Fellowship

Lent is a time of year that reminds me how to follow Jesus.

His travel from one town and village to another (Matthew 9:35) challenges



me to go out, rather than wait, to meet with those who need Christ's help.

Not only for unbelievers but also to those Christians who prefer to watch football than worship God on Sunday, Jesus is holding out His hands all day long even today. He wants me to be His channel to deliver this message that He still loves them and wants them to be closer.

In addition, Jesus entered Samaria, a place Jews scorned. He went to the places others did not care to and to which disrespectful excuses fell to

justify their disregard. Thus, He encourages me to reach out to the places not only that I would like to go, but also those I do not because He wants to go there through me.

Therefore, Lent is a time of repentance as well. I confess I did not always go where Jesus would go, reaching out to those with whom He would grasp hands. I confess I am not all the way crucified yet, to be able to finally confess that "I no longer live but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). A dead body neither has its own will nor becomes arrogant by compliments, and it is not afflicted by blames and reproaches.

Through this opportunity, I suggest to all brothers and sisters of the North Texas Conference and to myself to practice a life of living sacrifice during this season of Lenten. Dead by human will, but definitely alive by Christ's, we live a Christian life.

Turn-Around Bus Tour!



WHAT: HAVE FUN VISITING 3 CHURCHES AND LEARNING FIRST-HAND FROM THEIR CLERGY, STAFF, AND LAITY HOW THEY'VE MOVED FROM "PLATEAUED TO PROGRESS"

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013
 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM



9:00 a.m.
 Meet at Plymouth Park UMC
 We'll enjoy a light brunch.



11:00 a.m.
 Board bus and travel to
 The Village UMC for lunch.



1:30 p.m.
 Board bus and travel to
 The Woods UMC for dessert.
 Return to Plymouth Park by
 4:30pm.

Address:
 1615 West Airport Freeway
 Irving, Texas 75062

WHY:
MANY OF OUR CHURCHES KNOW THEY NEED TO "TURN AROUND," BUT DON'T KNOW HOW. OTHERS ARE STUCK AT SOME GROWTH PLATEAU AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO MOVE FORWARD. LET'S LEARN FROM EACH OTHER!

WHO:
PASTORS AND LAITY OF CHURCHES FEELING THE NEED TO "TURN AROUND"... OR GET BEYOND A PLATEAU... OR WANTING TO GROW FASTER.

Register Now!

Cost: \$19 per person (for meals & transportation)
Register with Liliana Rangel at pena@ntcumc.org
Sponsored by: Center for Congregational Transformation



CORRECTION

On Page 5A of the March 1 edition, the church Jordan Reyes attends was misidentified. He is a member of Camp Wisdom UMC.

Around the Conference

Grief expert debuts brokenheart.com

Grief expert **Julie Yarbrough** has developed a new website at **brokenheart.com**.

The home page features a blog that will be updated about twice a week and a devotional that will change daily.

In addition, all the devotionals in the book *Beyond the Broken Heart – Daily Devotions for Your Grief Journey* can be accessed from the Devotionals tab, with drop-down menus on each page for the topics and categories.

Under Resources there are books, grief program resources and media, with



articles and video clips.

The Groups menu has resources for group leaders and for those wanting to find a group.

There's also a Forums area with two conversation threads: one for registered group leaders, another for anyone in the wider grief community.

Three churches joining in revival March 20-22

Glen Oaks, Oak Cliff and Wheatland UMCs will hold a community revival Wednesday-Friday, March 20-22.

Wheatland UMC, 8000 S. Hampton Road, just north of Wheatland Road in Dallas, will host the revival, which starts at 6:30 p.m. March 20, with Wheatland **Pastor Peter McNabb** preaching and the **South Dallas Concert Choir** performing. Thursday night, **the Rev. Pablo Guardiola** of Oak Cliff UMC will preach, with the **Dallas Police A'Cop'ella Choir** singing. Friday wraps up with **the Rev. Freddie**

Orr of Glen Oaks UMC preaching and the **Chorale Choir** of the **Silver Serenaders** singing. The churches invite all for uplifting messages and music.

Merry Mobile Methodists to celebrate 25th anniversary

Join the fun, good food, worship and fellowship of the **Merry Mobile Methodists** at Whispering Pines RV & Cabin Center near Lindale.

The group is celebrating its 25th anniversary Monday through Thursday, April 8-11.

The rally begins at 5 p.m. Monday, with welcomes, singing, a vesper service, salads and desserts, and games. Each day features breakfast and a dinner, games, singing and devotions. Golf tee times are

scheduled for early Wednesday.

The Merry Mobile Methodists meet the second full week of April and October. Many come in RVs, with hook-ups at \$30 a night, but some rent cabins. For more information, contact Wally or Becky Bradfield at wb3801@peoplescom.net or call 903-967-2032.



Clergy-laity golf tournament is May 7

It's time to start signing up for the **Texas Minister-Layman Golf Tournament** May 7 at Brookhaven Country Club in Dallas.

Cost is \$100 per player, and the tournament is limited to 144 golfers. For details, contact director Don Dendy at 214-957-0544 or dondendy@aol.com.

**Easter Sunday
March 31st**
Invite them to Come Worship with Us

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We help you get more visibility, while giving them a chance to know what you offer.

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**THE UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF NORTH TEXAS**

IMAGINE

2013 NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: JUNE 2-4, 2013

The Apostle Paul once said that God, working through our lives, "is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine." (Ephesians 3:20-21) Can you imagine the church God is calling us to be? Can you dream about being a part of the world God imagines? Our 2013 North Texas Annual Conference theme, *Imagine*, invites us to such dreams.

Let's join together for this time of inspiration, fellowship, worship, learning, serving and imagination.

2013 Highlights:
A new venue: First UMC Richardson
Meals available for purchase on site at FUMC Richardson
Toolbox Sessions led by Clergy and Laity across the NTC
Keynote Speaker Kenda Creasy Dean
Worship led by Josh Wilson and choirs from 10 NTC congregations
Powerful videos of programs *imagined* across the conference

Registration, Conference Workbook download and more information can be found online:

WWW.NTC2013.ORG