

# CONNECTION

## Charting the course; leading the way

By Bishop Alfred L. Norris

North Texas Area



Bishop Norris

It always has been my contention that leaders must be willing to go where they are requesting and challenging others to travel. Or, to put it another way, leaders must lead by

example.

The Africa University campaign committee has twenty (20) members, myself included. They are lay and clergy of the North Texas Conference; they are female and male; a few are from the Conference staff; one is a district superintendent. All are committed Christians, and each one is a "leader."

At the most recent committee meeting in December, members were challenged to make a pledge to the campaign, with the understanding that the pledged amount is to be paid by June, 2008. No speeches were made; no questions were asked; no pressure was applied. But commitments were made.

I am pleased to announce that the committee has pledged \$100,000 to this effort. This represents a "tithing" of our established goal. This committee is leading by example. Will you travel with us?

"Miles to go before I sleep,"

Alfred L. Norris

### Historical Exhibition

*Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology, SMU, offers a free exhibition on "Methodism in the American South" at the Prothro Galleries until July 11. The exhibit traces the role of Methodism from Colonial period to WWII.*

## 2007 Apportionment payout was excellent

"Again in 2007 we continued our tradition of excellent apportionment payment," wrote Rev. Marvin Guier, NTC Director of Administration/Treasurer/Benefits Officer in his report to the local church pastors in the conference following the January 11 "Close Out" Day, the deadline for submitting apportionment payments and other 2007 funds to the NTC Treasurer's Office.

"This year's payout of 97.5 percent is a wonderful indication of the faithfulness of North Texas United Methodists and the strength, vitality and pride of the churches of the North Texas Conference!" continued Dr. Guier.

Out of 309 NTC churches with apportionments, 289 paid 100 percent. In addition, 35 churches made Second Mile contributions which total \$49,779 to help others.

Special commendation is due to the Wichita Falls District which paid-in-full for the 16th year in a row, the Paris-Sulphur Springs District which

paid-in-full for the 13th year in a row, and the Sherman-McKinney District which paid-in-full for the second year in a row.

It should also be noted that all 67 churches in the Paris-Sulphur Springs District paid 100 percent this year, without requiring help from Second-Mile giving. And the entire district paid out two days early! Congratulations are due to Rev. Keith Boone, District Superintendent, and all of the pastors and churches of the Paris-Sulphur Springs District.

The total apportionments paid was \$12,174,396, and the total paid for all benevolent causes was \$13,790,201, an increase of \$749,136 over 2006.

"What is more important than the numbers is that the NTC churches did very well for our shared mission and ministry beyond ourselves," Dr. Guier said. "Sincere thanks to all who made truly extraordinary efforts to make this tremendous accomplishment possible."

### North Texas Conference Equipping Disciples Team



with Bishop Alfred L. Norris

And featuring worship leader,  
Celia Whitler

**Sunday, February 24 • 2-5 pm**  
**Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas**

**\$4 per person • Celebration Fair with games, crafts, snacks, Balloon Man**

**Worship Celebration with Bishop Norris and Celia Whitler**

Please register groups by Feb. 19 - [www.ntcumc.org/confirmation](http://www.ntcumc.org/confirmation)

# INFORMAtion:

## 2008 Schools of Christian Mission

◆ **Bishop Alfred L. Norris** has announced that **Rev. Kathleen Baskin-Ball, Sun creek UMC, Allen**, has assumed the responsibilities as the chairperson of the **NTC Board of Ordained Ministry** as of Jan. 1. **Rev. Baskin-Ball** succeeds **Rev. Clara Reed** who has become Superintendent of the **Sherman-McKinney District**. Also announced was **Rev. Gary Mueller, First UMC, Plano**, as Vice-chairperson, and **Rev. Paul Gould** as Chair of the Committee on Probationary Membership.

◆ **Perkins School of Theology, SMU, Dallas**, announces the selection of **Bishop John Wesley Hardt, Bishop-in-Residence Emeritus**, as the **Perkins School of Theology Distinguished Alumnus for 2008**. The award was presented to **Bishop Hardt** Jan. 29, during **Perkins' Ministers Week**.

◆ **NTC Youth Mid-Winter Retreats** are Feb 1-3 for I and Feb. 15-17 for II. **Youth Annual Conference** is Feb. 22-24. Register online at [www.ntcumc.org/youth\\_events](http://www.ntcumc.org/youth_events).

◆ The first annual **SCJ Caring for Creation Conference** will be held March 7-9 at **Mount Sequoyah Conference Center**, Fayetteville, AR. The keynote speaker will be **Dr. J. Matthew Sleeth**, author of *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action*.

◆ **Rev. Kathryn Ransdell, First UMC, Dallas** was one of fifty-three emerging American leaders representing 17 states and the District of Columbia have been awarded the prestigious **Marshall Memorial Fellowship (MMF)** for 2008.

◆ **Christ UMC, Plano**, is hosting the "**Second Annual Men's Summit**," April 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Christian Life Center. Featured speakers are storyteller **Rev. Jim W. Moore**, and KLUV radio host **Jody Dean**. For more information, call 972-596-6073 or visit [MethodistMen.cumc.com](http://MethodistMen.cumc.com).

◆ **NTC deacons** filled boxes of food donations destined for some of the 400 agencies served by the **North Texas Food Bank**, including bags of food for the "**Food 4 Kids**" program.

◆ **Rev. Stephen Lowell Swisher, Executive Pastor/Chief of Staff of Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas**, will open the **U.S. House of Representatives** in prayer on Feb. 6. In 2005 **Dr. Swisher** opened the **U.S. Senate** in prayer and serves as a **Chaplain of the Texas State Senate**.

◆ **UMC General Board of Discipleship**, announces **Children's Ministry Forum '08**, Feb. 26-28 at **First UMC, Richardson**. For more information call 877-899-2780, ext. 1761.

◆ **Project Transformation (PT)** is now accepting applications for **Summer 2008 and 2008-09 Year-Round Internships**. This program is for Christian young adults who have completed at least their freshman year of college. For more information and an application visit Website: [www.projecttransformation.org](http://www.projecttransformation.org) or call 214-946-3600.

◆ **NTC clergy** who wish to offer themselves in ministry as part of a disaster response are urged to enroll in **Disaster Chaplaincy Training**, Feb. 8-9, at the **NTC Ministry Center**, conducted by **Victim Chaplain and Crisis Response (VCAA)**. To apply, call **Rev. Marji Bishir**, 972-526-5000, 800-969-8201, or e-mail: [bishir@ntcumc.org](mailto:bishir@ntcumc.org).

◆ **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** weekends have been scheduled April 11-13 and Oct. 24-26 and one **Engaged Encounter Weekend** March 28-30, all at the Hilton Garden Inn in Las Colinas. For more information on **Engaged Encounter** please call **Rev. Don or Vivian White**, 281-429-7686, cell 832-794-8162, e-mail: [donvivwhite@juno.com](mailto:donvivwhite@juno.com). For **Marriage Weekend**, please call **Mickey or Linda Wheeler**, 972-594-0232, e-mail: [jamesw3681@](mailto:jamesw3681@)

◆ **The India Children's Choir** from Northeast India will perform at **Tyler Street UMC, Dallas**, at 6:00 p.m., Feb. 17. The 22 Hmar children, ages 8-12, are direct descendants of a fierce tribe, who were converted to Christianity and are touring in America to sing about the amazing transformation of their entire tribe. For more information, contact **Billy Woods** at 214-946-8106, e-mail: [billywoods@tsumc.org](mailto:billywoods@tsumc.org).

The NTC Global Ministries Task Force and UM Women announce the 2008 Schools of Christian Mission, "Living the Scared."

The School of Christian Mission is scheduled July 28 - 31 at Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas. For more information, call Dean Mae Alexander, 214-339-1950, e-mail: [mhalexander65@hotmail.com](mailto:mhalexander65@hotmail.com).

The Weekend Cooperative Mission Event is scheduled August 1-3 at Austin College, Sherman. For more information call Dean Ann Kent, 972-721-9316.

## Krum UMC's 'dare' groundbreaking

The little church that dared to dream outdid itself in 2007.

And because it did, 217-member First UMC, Krum in the Dallas-Denton District, broke ground for its new home -- its first since 1924 - on a blustery blue-sky Sunday, Jan. 20.

Last year, early in the church's "Dare to Dream" first-ever capital funds drive, consultant Don Smith and the building committee set three goals: one they were sure of at \$200,000, a challenge of \$250,000 and a "very-best case scenario" of \$300,000.

To everyone's shock and delight, "pilot gifts" -- standard up-front major pledges -- totaled \$287,000. This included \$36,000 from the pastor, the Rev. Christy Thomas, who tapped out her retirement account with the support of her husband, the Rev. J. Keith Cupples of Kirkwood UMC, Irving.

"A week later," the pastor wrote, "we had over \$400,000 pledged. It's unbelievable."

Thirteen years ago the church bought a 10-acre plot on the eastern edge of town for expansion about a mile from the church's historic location in downtown Krum (population 1,979). Both sites are on FM1173.

Groundbreaking was held Jan 20 for the first of three buildings planned for the 10-acre site. It will double the church's current space of 5,700 sq. ft. to 10,400 sq. ft. and provide a center that will be a multi-purpose room with audio-visual capabilities and a kitchen.