

CONNECTION

Getting connected...

By REV. JIM OZIER
New Church Development Officer



Dr. Ozier

Remember the days without cell phones, voice mail, text messages and answering machines? I do.

I grew up with six sisters and sharing telephone time was a major family feud.

For years, the closest I came to making a phone call was showering with Dial soap. I was fourteen before I even knew it was called a telephone ... I thought it was an "IGotIt!"

If you have kids this may have a familiar ring. Now, I don't want to make it sound like this is some kind of big hang up with me, but not being able to use the phone was a problem that needed fixing. By sheer extension of imagination and proving ourselves adept operators, a friend and I set about finding a solution.

Mark lived across the street and two houses down. Realizing we would never get to visit via Alexander Graham Bell, we tried a number of things, but the best was this: we came upon two old Korean War field phones and a spool of wire. Then, climbing from tree (to us, a telephone pole was some kind of Gallup survey or something) we strung the wire and set up our own phone line from his bedroom to mine.

What had God wrought! It worked perfectly and for two years we had our own direct communication network.

In today's world it is sometimes difficult to feel we are able to 'communicate directly' with aspects of life that deeply impact us ... like government, community, schools systems, or even the church. It is so hard to have OUR voice heard, and CLEARLY hear the voice of others.

Strange isn't it, that in our world of instant, constant communication we often feel less and less connected?

'Connection' brings 'communication' and communication brings 'community' and from community comes our 'culture'. That's why in my new position

Rev. Fred Durham offers workshops

NTC Director of Connectional Ministries Rev. Fred Durham is conducting a series of District workshops on "How Connectional Ministries Can Help Your Church Become Fruitful."

The workshops, based on Bishop Robert Schnase's book, "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations," will focus on five key areas of church life, Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity.

In the introduction to his best-selling book, Bishop Schnase writes: "The most visible way God knits people into community to fulfill the mission of Christ is through congregations, and these five practices give congregations a common language. As a result of working through a common language, faith communities become clear about their mission and confident about their future. Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations are those that naturally practice these qualities and constantly seek ways to develop them further."

Rev. Durham plans to shape the workshops to help participants to:

- Explore each practice.
- Use Bishop Schnase's framework to cast a vision for creative ministry.
- Learn about resources available through

as the New Church Development Officer for North Texas, I am dedicated to being a part of building a stronger sense of "community" and "culture" among us. So I want to hear from you, and to dialogue with you, the members of the Annual Conference, as I put together our strategic plan for starting new churches with a strong culture and DNA of Wesleyan values and character.

I look forward to being in your churches, in your pulpits, in your strategic planning meetings; to visiting with people in the hallways and to listen to their ideas and concerns about how we "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World" by starting new churches.

If "starting new churches" is seen as just another 'thing' that we attempt to do,

NTC Connectional Ministries.

- Make a plan for getting started. All workshops are held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The schedule includes:

- Ridgewood Park UMC, Dallas - April 3
 - First UMC, Duncanville - April 7
 - Chapel Hill UMC, Farmers Branch - April 15
 - First UMC, Tom Bean - April 21
- March workshops were held in Decatur and Commerce.

For more information, or to register for a workshop, please call Rev. Liz Moen, Associate Director of Connectional Ministries, 972-526-5000, 800-969-8201, or e-mail: moen@ntcumc.org.

NBN basketball playoffs at General Convention set

Opponents in the April 26 General Conference playoff from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at First UMC, Fort Worth, will be from the Central Texas Conference. Match-Ups include Whaley Men vs. First UMC Fort Worth men, Hamilton Park boys vs. Alvarado UMC boys, and Custer Road girls vs. First UMC, Richland Hills, girls.

it is unlikely to have the results we all so hope and pray for. Rather, "starting new churches" must be intimately 'connected' to everyone and every church in our conference. I pray it will emerge from our sense of "community," and advance our dedication to growing our faith community that arises from a culture of risking and reaching out to new people ... more people, diverse people, younger people, un-churched people.

So let's get and stay connected! You can call or e-mail me anytime. Visit my blog "New Churches Now!" at <http://jimozier1.wordpress.com> to keep up to date on what's going on and to weigh in with your thoughts, questions, and suggestions.

Now, I've got to go ... I think I hear the phone ringing.

INFORMAtion:

Pleasant Grove area residents showed up in force at a Feb. 18 **Town Hall meeting** hosted by **Pleasant Mound–Urban Park UMC**, and agreed that providing safe activities for youth is the highest priority in reducing crime and making their community more attractive.

Dallas Bethlehem Center (DBC) Auxiliary presented the **2008 Remembrance Benefit** on March 13 at the Great Hall of **Highland Park UMC, Dallas**, selling unique Easter baskets.

On Feb. 17, more than 1,200 worshippers gathered for the consecration of the 23,000 sq. ft. **Robertson Activity Center** at **Stonebridge UMC, McKinney**, and celebrated over 50 years of ministry by the building's namesakes, **Rev. Pete and Jane Robertson**, formerly of McKinney.

Men from across the NTC will gather at **Christ UMC, Plano**, April 5, for a time of spiritual renewal. The theme for this year's Summit is **"Taking the Word into Your World."** Two keynote speakers will offer inspiration: **Rev. James W. Moore**, retired after a long ministry at **St. Luke's UMC, Houston**, and Emmy winning broadcast news journalist, **Jody Dean**.

1986, **Rev. Kathleen Baskin-Ball** moved to Denton to begin serving as the first appointed woman associate pastor in the 130 year history of **First UMC, Denton**. More than 20 years later, she returns to the church's pulpit on April 6-7 as the **2008 Hopkins Lecturer**.

In the spirit of peace and in memory of the **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, **Munger Place UMC, Dallas**, will present its first **Peace Concert**, **"I've Been to the Mountain Top"** from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on April 4, at 5200 Bryan Street in East Dallas.

UMCOR Relief Supply warehouse, **Sager Brown Depot** in **Baldwin, LA**, needs much-needed bedding, sewing and layette kits for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. They are especially requesting donations for **33,000 layette kits, 64,000 sewing kits and approximately 1,000 bedding kits** to meet upcoming needs. For more information, please visit <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/work/sagerbrown/>.

Bishop Alfred L. Norris Sr. "GANGed up" on about 500 confirmands Feb. 24, at **Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas**. He said, "I want you to join my gang. We won't rob or hurt people or create havoc. I call it my **God And Neighbor Group** or GANG.

Camp Wisdom UMC, Dallas, celebrated its **25th Anniversary** on March 9, with worship by **Bishop Alfred L. Norris, Sr.**

Christ UMC, Farmers Branch, will offer a seminar, **"Shaping your Child's Sexual Character,"** from 7:00–8:30 p.m. April 26, led by nationally recognized children's educator **Mary Flo Ridley**. The cost is \$20 per couple, or \$15 per person. Free childcare is available. For more information, please call **Holly Manna**, 972-416-8543.

Cornerstone UMC, Garland, will feature humorist and story-teller **Dave Lieber**, at the church's 16th annual **Day Apart** from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. April 12.

James Lee Tarr, 88, who introduced a way to fund the scouting ministries office of the **UMC**, died in Dallas on Feb. 27. A member of **Walnut Hill UMC, Dallas**, served as a Boy Scout employee for more than four decades.

Lambuth UMC, Dallas, recognized veteran writer and **UMW** leader **Denise Johnson Stovall** during the March 16 morning worship service.

AU Choir schedules NTC performances

Beginning April 25, Africa University will share one of its greatest blessings with the NTC as the Africa University Chorus.

The traveling ensemble of the famed Africa University Choir, will present a series of concerts in churches throughout the conference. By the end of the itineration on May 11, the choir will have toured in all six NTC districts.

Some 16 students from seven African countries will share their faith and musical gifts throughout the conference. And families from the host congregations will share their homes and a warm Texas welcome and hospitality during the tour.

The scheduled performances are:

April

- 27 St. Andrew UMC, Plano – Worship Services 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
- 27 Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas – Concert 7:30 p.m.
- 30 First UMC, Coppel – Concert, 7:00 p.m.

May

- 2 First UMC, Sherman – Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- 3 Hamilton Park UMC, Dallas – Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- 4 First UMC, Richardson – Worship Services 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.
- 4 St. Luke "Community" UMC, Dallas – Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- 7 First UMC, Sulphur Springs – Worship Services, 7:00 p.m.
- 9 Glen Oaks UMC, Dallas – Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- 10 First UMC, Wichita Falls – Concert, 7:00 p.m.
- 11 First UMC, Wichita Falls – Worship Services 10:30 a.m.

This event is sponsored by The **UMW** of Dallas Northeast, Dallas-Denton and Dallas South Districts. For more information, please contact Mary Helen Bradford, mhbradford@tx.rr.com or Gale Ragland, gragdoll@ticnet.com

UMW DISTRICT SOCIAL ACTION EVENT

'Living Faith - Seeking Justice'

April 19, 2008

Highland Park UMC
3300 Mockingbird Lane
The Great Hall



8:30 a.m. Registration and light breakfast
9:00 a.m. Reverend Owen Ross, Founder and Pastor of Christ's Foundry Church in Dallas

ALL ARE WELCOME—PLEASE JOIN US