

# CONNECTION

## A Personal Note of Thanks!

From Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe and Family

We are so thankful to be assigned as the bishop in residence of the North Texas Conference. We are excited to be in



**Bishop Bledsoe**

ministry together with you.

One of my favorite scriptural passages is found in Philippians 4:6-7 where Paul writes, "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and thanks-

giving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

This passage is a lifesaver in the midst of transition and change. The last few weeks of meeting, greeting, packing, sorting, throwing out, giving away, saying hello, saying goodbye, is enough to cause anxiety in anyone's life. But thanks be to God for the victory through Jesus Christ.

Friends, colleagues, fellow bishops, staff members and family have all pitched in to help through prayer, visits, meals, cards, flowers, telephone calls, e-mails, and letters. This support has truly brought about a sense of peace in our lives. We are especially appreciative for your prayers.

We look forward to getting to know each of you and each congregation over the next year or so. May God continue to bless you!

**Service of Installation  
for  
Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe**

**Sunday, Sept. 28**

**3:00 p.m.**

**First UMC, Richardson  
503 N. Central Expressway**

## A Welcome to Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe

By Richard B. Hearne  
NTC Board of Laity, Chair

This past week I received a note from Bishop Alfred L. Norris and the printed address on the printed return address on the envelope was Bishop Alfred Norris, Retired.

I looked at that and it was the final realization that Bishop and Dr. Mackie Norris have retired to Atlanta, Georgia, and Bishop and Mrs. W. Earl Bledsoe have assumed the Office of Bishop of the North Texas Annual Conference on Sept. 1, 2008.

I believe all the persons that served on the General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation from the North Texas Conference are very pleased and excited that the Bledsoe's have come to be our Episcopal family. You can read more biographical information about Bishop Bledsoe's family and his record of ministry in the Aug. 29 edition of the Reporter.

What I believe many laypersons are asking is "how and who elects the Bishops, how long do they serve, and what do they do?"

Bishops are elected by the General and Jurisdictional delegates every four years (if there is a vacancy) and all ordained Elders are eligible for election. Normally an annual conference delegation will nominate and support a clergyperson from their conference. This is a voluntary process – the Elder must agree to allow his/her name to be put into the nomination process. In the South Central Jurisdiction, the nominees are interviewed by all the different annual conference delegations prior to Jurisdictional Conference.

For example, this past year our Jurisdiction had nine candidates who submitted to an interview process in the fall. Bishops are then elected at Jurisdictional Conference and then assigned by the Jurisdictional Episcopal Committee to one of the Episcopal Areas.

Election to the Episcopacy is a lifetime election and a Bishop will customarily serve two four-year terms in an annual conference. The number of terms is limited by the mandatory retirement age of 72. Because Bishops serve four-year terms, retirement takes place at the Jurisdictional Conference immediately



**Hearne**

prior to the term in which that age is reached.

The Bishops by the church's Book of Discipline are called to "lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs" of the church and to "guard, transmit, teach and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically." (UM News Service)

For me, that is "church speak" to say that Bishop Bledsoe is our leader who is charged with setting the mission and vision for the North Texas Conference over the next eight years. Just as Bishop Rhymes H. Moncure, Jr. led us to build the Ministry Center and Bishop Norris led us to a successful campaign to raise \$1,000,000 for Africa University, I feel confident that Bishop Bledsoe will lead us to a glorious future.

I do know that evangelism is a keen interest of his and I expect that we, as an annual conference, will be focusing on the growing of Christian disciples in the years ahead.

Bishop Bledsoe will have a Service of Installation on Sunday, September 28 at 3:00 p.m. at the First UMC, Richardson. I hope each of you will make every effort to come to join with me and many others in the North Texas Annual Conference to WELCOME BISHOP AND MRS. BLEDSOE.

# INFORMAtion:

## Clergy Retreat, Oct. 13-15

Thirty seven **UM** musicians in *Côte d'Ivoire* received two week training on basic keyboard, choral conducting, music theory and worship leadership skills from a team of six Americans including **NTC's Rev. John Thornburg** and **Dr. Michael Hawn**.

**Flower Mound UMC** was proud to present its first full-scale *musical production* of one of the longest-running Broadway shows in the history of musical theater, "*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*," on May 2-4.

*The Urban Engagement Book Club* meets on the first Thursday of the month at **Highland Park UMC, Dallas**, from 12:00 to 1:15 p.m. for lunch and a synopsis of the book, followed by a group discussion. Reservations are requested by calling Lisa Goolsby, 214-823-8710, ext. 138.

**The Colony UMC** took a mission trip to Liberia, to work at the **Ganta UM Mission School**, rebuilding a home economics building, teaching graduating senior girls how to write and apply for college, providing trauma counseling for children, offering Vacation Bible School for 200 children from **Miller-McAllister UMC**, and training teachers, and reorganizing the library.

**Stonebridge UMC, McKinney's, Upper Alley Student Ministry**, traveled to Beaumont during the week of July 7 to lend a helping hand to the residents there who are still rebuilding their homes after Hurricane Rita. The group has become so proficient in roofing, that **UMCOR** now primarily assigns roofing projects to them.

**The Gleaning Network of Texas** presents its annual *Sweet Potato Round-up*, on Oct. 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. To register, e-mail [susie@gleantexas.com](mailto:susie@gleantexas.com), or call 972-814-0928.

**Sherman-McKinney District UM Women**, will hold their *35th Annual Meeting*, Sept. 20 at 8:30 a.m. at **First UMC, Gainesville**.

*The Hamilton Park Youth Development Corporation* will host the **COOL JAZZ @The Park® FALL 2008 SERIES** featuring a variety of local jazz musicians and vocalists at the **Christian Life Center, Hamilton Park UMC, Dallas**.

*Great Days of Service of Iowa Park* enjoyed increased television coverage from news anchor **Chris Horgen** from **KAUZ Channel 6**. Reporters from both television stations, the **Wichita Falls Times Record News** and the **Iowa Park Leader** reported on the projects throughout the five-day event, July 9, through Sunday, July 13.

For its April 27 worship service, **Lambuth UMC, Dallas**, hosted **Rev. Dennis "Justice" Blackwell**, pastor of **Asbury UMC, Woodlynne, NJ**, and a member of the **UM Judicial Council**.

**Oak Grove UMC, Decatur**, celebrated its *130th Anniversary*, May 18 with its 75-member congregation dressed in 19th century attire and led in its worship by Rev. Fredric Utz.

*The 2008 Judy Award* winners announced at the June 10 **Town and Country Ministries'** luncheon include: **Justin UMC**, Dallas-Denton District, **Rev. Buster Noah**; **Argyle UMC**, Dallas-Denton District, **Rev. Kory Knott**; **Key Memorial UMC**, **Sherman**, Sherman-McKinney District, **Rev. Albert Fisher**; **Whaley UMC**, **Gainesville**, Sherman-McKinney District, **Rev. Rob Spencer**; **First UMC, Henrietta**, Wichita Falls District, **Rev. Christopher Yost**; **Paradise UMC**, Wichita Falls District, **Rev. Michael Langdon**; **Heath UMC**, Dallas Northeast District, **Rev. Scott Holcomb-McClain**; **Miller Grove UMC**, Paris-Sulphur Springs, **Rev. Howard Strickland**, pastor.

Radical Hospitality will be theme for the 2008 North Texas Conference Clergy Retreat set Oct. 13-15 at Tanglewood Resort Hotel and Conference Center near Pottsboro on Lake Texoma.

Activities begin Oct. 13, with registration from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., followed by gathering worship.

Fiona McCleoud Butts of Southwest Airlines will focus on "Creating a Culture of Radical Hospitality" and George Luna of the 4 Seasons Resort in Las Colinas will discuss "Radical Hospitality, Anticipating the Needs of Others."

Dr. John Holbert, Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Perkins School of Theology, SMU, will lead a Bible study on Radical Hospitality.

Registration costs are \$289 double occupancy, and \$374 single occupancy. Add \$60 for a Sunday arrival. For all events but not staying at Tanglewood, cost is \$171 and \$119.50 for Tuesday events.

Clergy may apply for scholarship aid (which can provide up to 1/3 of the Retreat expense), by calling Rev. Kathryn Ransdell, 214 220-2727, or e-mail: [kransdell@fumcdallas.org](mailto:kransdell@fumcdallas.org).

For more information please visit the website: [www.ntcumc.org](http://www.ntcumc.org) and select "2008 Clergy Retreat."

## Project Transformation Opportunities

Project Transformation, a UM affiliated, non-profit organization, is seeking young adults for full and part time positions to work in after-school and summer programs, with underserved children and youth in Dallas from First through 9th grades, on educational, physical, and spiritual needs.

Positions Available are: Full Time Sept 2008 to Aug 2009; Part-Time Sept 2008 to May 2009; Sept 2008 to Aug 2009; and May 2009 to Aug 2009.

Benefits include: Health Insurance (for Full Time), low-cost housing, living stipend, and an education voucher.

For more information, please call 214-946-3600, or visit website: [www.projecttransformation.org](http://www.projecttransformation.org).

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### ADVANCE 273 Hurricanes 2008 Response

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