

# CONNECTION

## Getting your priorities straight

By Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe  
North Texas Conference

The words from Bishop Alfred L. Norris' sermon at Africa University this past summer still linger in my heart and



**Bishop Bledsoe**

mind: "We Care!" Bishop Norris preached the sermon on the occasion of the dedication of the new Health Clinic in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, Africa. The words lingered as I

witnessed firsthand what a difference people who care can make in the world when we unite around a common cause.

That same feeling welled up inside me as I traveled a few weeks ago to New York City to the United Nations Foundation to hear a presentation on the elimination of malaria on the continent of Africa by 2015. Why the urgency? Why now and not later? Well, every thirty (30) seconds, a child in Africa dies from malaria. Only one in five children will live to see their fifth birthday.

Malaria is treatable and preventable. The only difference between it being eliminated and prevented is whether there are enough people in the world who care enough to put our discipleship into action. Anyone who has lost a child to death knows how devastating it is to have to go through that kind of pain and agony. Any pastor who has had to comfort a family or conduct the service of a child knows how inadequate words can be in the situation.

The 2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted global health as one of our four areas of focus in the upcoming quadrennium. I, for one, will do all that I can to join with others in helping to eliminate this disease. I ask you to join me in this worthwhile effort.

Over the next few months you will be hearing and receiving information about an initiative called "Imagine No Malaria." It is an effort by the entire denomination to do all we can to help save

## Dallas South new church starts moving forward

When The Woods UMC, Grand Prairie, gathers to consecrate its new facilities on Dec. 13, it will be the first of three distinctively different Dallas South church starts that will begin new phases of life as worshiping communities in the coming weeks.

The Woods is a unique new congregation formed from the merger of two other churches, Trailwood and Inglewood UMCs. The decision to create one new congregation from two came in the spring of 2007 and led to the purchase of new property at Bardin and Lake Ridge Roads, where the new building now stands. It is within sight of where the President George Bush Turnpike (Hwy. 161) and I-20 will soon intersect. A bustling shopping center nearby is another factor making the property an ideal place to plant a church.

Founding pastors Revs. Jill Jackson-Sears and Terry Ann Moore worked together to help launch The Woods. Rev. Moore has since moved on to a new appointment after giving leadership to the effort to help members adjust and look to the future.

The two other congregations planning to launch soon are New Beginnings, Grand Prairie, and St. Luke "Community" South, DeSoto.

lives and to help alleviate the suffering of God's children on earth.

"Imagine No Malaria" will expand grassroots programs like the highly successful "Nothing but Nets" campaign and develop comprehensive efforts to promote prevention and education activities, strengthen health delivery systems and train health care workers to treat the disease more effectively.

Why was the UMC approached to be a partner in this effort? One main factor is that the denomination has an intact infrastructure for health delivery systems in Africa. According to my colleague Bishop Thomas Bickerton of the Western Pennsylvania Conference, who chairs the Global health Initiative for the Council of Bishops, it is our distinctly Methodist

New Beginnings Fellowship, under the leadership of Rev. Perry Crenshaw, will begin its regularly scheduled Sunday services at Homestead Funeral Home, where it has been holding preview services for the past several months. The building is a large modern structure near the heart of the church's target area, close to South Grand Prairie high School, with elementary schools, businesses, apartments and homes all located nearby. The address is 2951 S. Belt Line Road.

The St. Luke "Community" South campus will meet in a soon-to-be-renovated shopping center space near the intersection of I-20 and North Hampton Road. When complete, the facilities will include a contemporary worship center and ample office and classroom space. The address is 1615 North Hampton, Suite 140. Rev. Derek Jacobs is campus pastor for St. Luke "Community" South, and Rev. Tyrone Gordon is senior pastor of St. Luke "Community," Dallas.

Dr. Jim Ozier, Director of New Church Development and Transformation, stated that of the seven NTC new church starts birthed in the last two years, four are in the Dallas South District, two are in the Wichita Falls District, and one is in the Dallas Northeast District.

system, the connectional system, that binds our churches together around the world in a manner that serves as a model for the campaign. I pray that we will do all we can to help eliminate malaria through connectionalism!



Children from Fairfield Children's Home in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, recite a poem teaching them to beware of the malaria mosquito.

# INFORMAtion:

Several UMCs in the Philippines were either destroyed or badly damaged by recent typhoon force winds, mud slides, and four to twelve foot high flood waters. **Highland Park UMC** has added the Philippines Ministry to its annual Holiday fund raising event, “*Gifts of Grace*” and UMCOR is providing aid to the flood-ravaged population. Donations to UMCOR flood response should be sent to the **North Texas Conference Treasurer**, P.O. Box 866128, Plano, TX 75086, with **Philippines Emergency, Fund 268**, in the memo line. For more information, or to join in the **Highland Park UMC** mission, please e-mail Steven Raynor at [stephen.raynor@yahoo.com](mailto:stephen.raynor@yahoo.com).

Approximately 90 youth choir students from the North Texas area joined together to participate in the **Dallas Chapter of Choristers Guild Youth Choir Festival** Oct. 25 at **Plymouth Park UMC, Irving**. Churches represented were First Baptist Church of Valley Mills, **First UMC, Azle; First UMC, Irving; First UMC, Rowlett; First UMC Wichita Falls, and Plymouth Park UMC.**

**Suncreek UMC, Allen**, will feature “*The Lost Girls of Sudan*,” with **Beverly Moss**, author and guest speaker, Dec. 6 at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. in **Palmer Hall**.

## Cochran House to be restored

The committee leading the campaign to renovate the 114-year old W.P. Cochran home place on the Cochran Chapel UMC campus in northwest Dallas hosted a Nov. 1 reception to show off the newly cleaned out facility.

The Cochran family represents the foundation of Methodism in North Texas. Nancy Jane Cochran deeded three acres of land to the church in 1856, making it the oldest deeded church property in Dallas County.

The goal is to restore the home, preserving its historic exterior and making the interior useful for office space upstairs and group meetings, receptions and church and community functions downstairs.

For more information, see website [www.cochranchapel.org](http://www.cochranchapel.org).

A cash crisis threatens to close the 38-year-old **Open Door Preschool** at historic **Grace UMC, Dallas**. **Dolena T. Westergard**, the preschool's trustee chair, said she hopes a silent auction at the church at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11, will raise enough funds to meet the December payroll. Donations of items to be auctioned are welcomed. Contact the church at 214-675-1530. The church and preschool are located at 4105 Junius Street in east Dallas.


**Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas**, will hold consecration services for its new facilities on two consecutive Sundays, Dec. 6, with consecration of the **Tom Shipp Chapel**, and Dec. 13, with consecration of the remainder of the extensive construction project that includes **Aldersgate Hall, Watson Hall, Heritage Hall, Connection Corner, Beginnings Place, Twenty One: Twenty Five Bookshop and Administrative Hall**. For more information, log on to [www.llumc.org](http://www.llumc.org).

Students at **Wesleyan Academe**, the early childhood through fifth grade school affiliated with **Plymouth Park UMC, Irving**, studied **Native Americans** and had an opportunity to share with others through a display seen by an estimated 50,000 patrons of the **Irving Public Library** during the month of November. Also, **Plymouth Park** staff member **Anna Bullard**, a member of the **Chickasaw Nation** spoke to the children about **Native American** heritage and governance.

For Churches of the North Texas Conference

### Mother-Daughter Church Assessment and Training

- How to know IF your church has the right DNA to be a Mother Church
- How to know WHEN your church is ready to plant a new church or faith community
- What are the EXPECTATIONS of being a Mother Church
- What are the BENEFITS of being a Mother Church
- How YOU can help shape the NTC strategy to plant new churches



Jim Griffith has planted 6 churches and coached/consulted with more than 7000 new church starts across the country. He is author of "10 Most Common Mistakes Made by Church Starts."


**Thursday—Friday**  
**January 28-29, 2010**

**Thursday: 1:00-6:00pm**  
**Friday: 9:00am-12:00pm**


Conference Ministry Center

This is a rare opportunity for pastors of churches with potential to start new churches or faith communities in the NTC to spend quality time with Jim Griffith, one of the country's leading resources regarding planting new churches!

To register, email Holly at [Holly@ntcumc.org](mailto:Holly@ntcumc.org)



**Bishop Bledsoe will share his vision of "churches planting churches!"**



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

## Tamales link San Juan Fellowship within NTC

**San Juan United Methodist Fellowship**, a Hispanic-Latino congregation in Garland, survives each month on sales of its delicious homemade tamales to other churches.

On Oct. 25, in a celebration service hosted by San Juan at **Axe Memorial UMC, Garland**, visitors attended from at least a dozen churches, along with **Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe** and his wife, Leslie.

The event included a tamale-making lesson for the bishop and recognition of the 12 NTC congregations that help the Fellowship.

## Bridgeport Summer Camps

**Bridgeport Camp is pleased to announce Bridgeport Camp 2010 Summer Early Registration has begun. Early Bird registration will run until February 28 - offering a savings of \$24 per child.**

**Registration is available on-line or from printable download at the website: [www.bridgeportcamp.com/register](http://www.bridgeportcamp.com/register).**

**Don't have computer access? Call the Bridgeport Camp office toll free at 1-877-683-2555.**

## South Central Jurisdiction EXTREME YOUTH CAMP for the DEAF

**June 24-27, 2010, at Cross Point Camp, Kingston OK, for ages 7 to 17. Visit website: [www.missionumc.com/extremecamp](http://www.missionumc.com/extremecamp)**