

# Cross Connection

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## What's Inside

- A Labyrinth Pilgrimage 2
- Gil Hanke Named Men's Ministry Specialist
- A Spiritual Recovery 3
- St. Paul UMC To Host Craven-Wilson Lectures
- Bishop Hayes To Speak 4  
At Native American Fellowship Event
- Texas Conference 5  
Selected As Pilot Conference For Scouting Ministry
- Lovelady Circuit Donate Funds To Church In Need
- Give Your Diet A 6  
Nutritional Tune-Up
- TAC 2009 Schedule 7  
For Meals
- Spotlight On Local 8  
Church Ministries

*Vibrant, growing congregations changing lives and reshaping futures for Jesus Christ*

## Pension initiative donations to aid pastors worldwide

### From the Office of the Bishop

After years of ministry to faithful members of The United Methodist Church, retired pastors and surviving spouses in the United States receive significant pension benefits. However, most of the central conferences (conferences outside the United



**Bishop Janice Riggle Huie**

“These pastors dedicate their lives to serve a dramatically growing faith community despite the knowledge that at the end of their careers in the church, they might struggle simply to survive,” wrote Bishop Ben R. Chamness and Bishop Janice Riggle Huie in a recent letter.

“Unfortunately, this situation is all too common in the central conferences of our United Methodist Church, where the vitality of our denomination is evident in the faces of these individuals. Their faithfulness and contributions

**“These pastors dedicate their lives to serve a dramatically growing faith community despite the knowledge that at the end of their careers in the church, they might struggle simply to survive.”**

**Bishop Janice Riggle Huie and Bishop Ben R. Chamness**

States) provide little or no pension support for pastors or their families—after 30, 35 or even 40 years in ministry.

have made manifest the promise and hope of the Gospel and God’s transforming power for individuals and communities.”

The United Methodist Church in the U.S. and West Europe now has a unique opportunity to provide a more secure and dignified retirement to our brothers and sisters through the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI). Bishop Chamness, who is the Chair of the Campaign General Committee, Central Conference Pension Initiative, recently shared these facts with Texas Conference clergy at informational events at St. Paul’s UMC Houston and First UMC Longview.

The seven central conferences include: 67 annual and provisional annual conferences; 3.5 million church members; 8,300 active clergy members, and 2,000 retired clergy and surviving spouses.

### Genesis of generosity

General Conference 2004 approved legislation authorizing the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to “create, administer, and encourage funding for programs of the CCPI, in consultation with the

General Council on Finance and Administration, and supported by a multi-agency task force.”

The General Conference Board of Pensions is develop



**Rev. Francisco Macitela Macie of Mozambique, lived through his country's struggle for independence and the birth of his nation. At 83, he is now dependent on his children to survive.**

*Photo courtesy of United Methodist Communications*

*Continued on page 3*

## Gil Hanke named men's ministry specialist

Gil Hanke, former president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men has been named one of seven men's ministry specialists.

After completing training sessions with Orlando-based Man in the Mirror, courses in United Methodist polity and history, safe sanctuary training, and hands-on experience in men's ministry in a local church, Hanke was certified to assist Texas Conference congre-

gations in the difficult work of reaching men.

Hanke, the director of music and president of UM Men of Perritte Memorial United Methodist Church in Nacadoches, was certified during a March 5-8 meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents.

He will also be recognized during the 10th National Gathering of United Methodist Men July 10-12 in Nashville

where there will be training sessions for other men interested in becoming men's ministry specialists.

Hanke has served on the Perritte Church Council and has served as lay leader. He has led 18 mission trips to Haiti and six to Costa Rica where he has provided hearing aids for children and youth.

He has served as district president, conference president, and national president of United

Methodist Men prior to being elected president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. He is now president of his local church unit of United Methodist Men.

The Rev. David Adams, top staff executive of the Commission on United Methodist Men, said the creation of men's ministry specialists is a response to the shortage of qualified leadership in

*Continued on page 2*



The mission of the Texas Annual Conference is *to equip congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world to the glory of God.*

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The Cross Connection is the official publication of the Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.



## “A Labyrinth Pilgrimage” New Lenten devotional guide

“A Labyrinth Pilgrimage” introduces readers to the Cross Labyrinth and connects the pilgrim journey with the season of Lent.

C. A. Radke has published a new Lenten devotional guide, “A Labyrinth Pilgrimage: A Pilgrim Journey to the Foot of the Cross,” available now from [CrossLabyrinth.com](http://CrossLabyrinth.com).

This 112-page book leads the reader on a spiritual pilgrimage from creation to Easter, following the path of the author’s Cross Labyrinth. A devotion is provided for each day from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday.

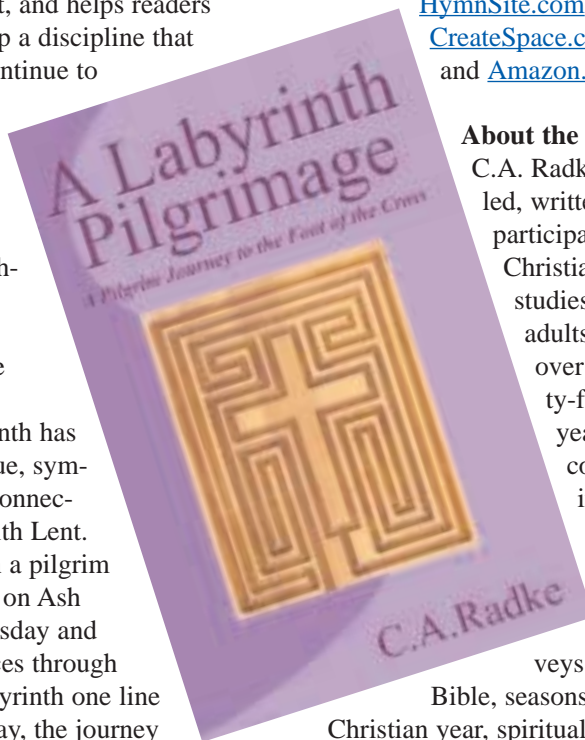
Radke, whose online resources at [HymnSite.com](http://HymnSite.com) have been used by churches, small groups, and individuals for more than a decade, encourages all Christians to take this sacred journey. “A prayer labyrinth has one entrance and one destination. In the Cross Labyrinth, that destination is the foot of the cross.

A Labyrinth Pilgrimage provides a daily focus for the pilgrim journey during the season of Lent, and helps readers develop a discipline that will continue to enrich their spiritual lives throughout the year.”

The Cross Labyrinth has a unique, symbolic connection with Lent. “When a pilgrim begins on Ash Wednesday and advances through the labyrinth one line each day, the journey arrives at the center—at the foot of the cross—on Easter Sunday,” said Radke.

In addition to distribution

from [CrossLabyrinth.com](http://CrossLabyrinth.com), A Labyrinth Pilgrimage is available through [TheHymnStore.com](http://TheHymnStore.com), [HymnSite.com](http://HymnSite.com), [CreateSpace.com](http://CreateSpace.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).



### About the author

C.A. Radke has led, written, and participated in Christian studies for adults for over twenty-five years, covering individual books and surveys of the

Bible, seasons of the Christian year, spiritual gifts, current issues, and other faith topics.

He has written and published suggested hymns for use

with the Revised Common Lectionary along with notes on Featured Hymns which have been posted for over a decade on his website, [HymnSite.com](http://HymnSite.com).

He earned his bachelor’s degree from Oklahoma City University, holds a law degree from the University of Oklahoma, and completed classes at Southern Methodist University’s Perkins School of Theology.

Born in North Carolina, he has lived in six U.S. states from coast to coast. He presently resides with his wife and family in Spring, Texas.

For additional information about *A Labyrinth Pilgrimage*, to purchase a finger labyrinth, or for permission to use C. A. Radke’s Cross Labyrinth design, contact Mr. Radke at [CARadke@CrossLabyrinth.com](mailto:CARadke@CrossLabyrinth.com) or visit [www.CrossLabyrinth.com](http://www.CrossLabyrinth.com).

## Gil Hanke named men's ministry specialist

*Continued from page 1*



**After receiving certification and a ring, Gil Hanke is congratulated by Dr. Zawdie Abiade, staff executive with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.**

*UMNS photo by Linda Green*

men's ministry and the leadership emphasis of the church's four areas of focus. The possibilities for the denomination are diminished by the spiritual condition of men, he said.

The specialists will motivate, inspire and serve as "coaches for the conference and district to connect with local churches and connect to the commission," Adams said.

"The program motivates

leaders through vision, inspiration, cooperation and encouragement," he added. "This is about men helping men know Christ so that others can find Christ."

Hanke was approved for the position by a review panel chaired by Dan Ramsey, Houston, Texas. Panel members include the Rev. David Adams, general secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men; John Dowell, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents and Dr. Zawdie Abiade, a staff executive with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

For additional information, contact Gil Hanke ([ghanke@sfasu.edu](mailto:ghanke@sfasu.edu)) 936-560-6746 (home) 936-569-5802 (cell).



# A spiritual recovery

By Rev. Melvin Amerson  
The Texas Methodist  
Foundation

Today, we are faced with a terrifying financial crisis in both domestic and global financial markets. The economy is in dire straits according to leading economists. We are experiencing record foreclosures, bankruptcies and unemployment. Our gross domestic product is in steep decline.

Gross domestic product (GDP) refers to all the goods and services produced by workers at companies located in the United States.

Sadly, the gross domestic product for the United States and many of the developed nations throughout the world has experienced at least two consecutive quarters of decline. Those declines mean we are in a financial recession.

The lingering economic woes, centered around the lack of faith and confidence in the financial markets, are hindering a recovery. Yes, faith. "Faith is the evidence of things hoped for, the substance of things not seen."

There is a parallel between our economy and our churches. For more than two consecutive quarters, many of our churches have been in a deep recession.



Rev. Melvin Amerson

churches. GDP stands for *God's Discipleship Production*.

**The formula for God's Discipleship Production (GDP) lies within a simple equation of: prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. That simple spirit-filled equation will help forge our way through any financial or spiritual recession to recovery.**

Unfortunately, a number of our churches have fallen into a spiritual recession.

The formula for God's Discipleship Production lies

Again, it is a contraction or shrinkage in GDP.

I have coined a new meaning for GDP as it relates to

within a simple equation of: prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. That simple spirit-filled equation will help forge our way through any financial or spiritual recession to recovery.

Many of the issues and challenges that we are faced with in our economy and our church will be resolved over time, but what will we have learned in the process? Apostle Paul, in

his letter to Timothy in chapter 6, shares sound wisdom for the business world and Christ's church, for any economic period.

In I Timothy 6:18, Paul states it profoundly with faith, "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share."

If we decide to do those few things with our whole heart, we would experience a sound spiritual recovery of church, nation and world.

*Melvin Amerson is a stewardship consultant with the Texas Methodist*

*Foundation and author of, Stewardship in African American Churches (Discipleship Resources).*

# Pension initiative donations to aid pastors worldwide

*Continued from page 1*

ing a country-by-country-plan, beginning on the continent of Africa, to help annual conferences outside the U.S. to develop a long-term, self-sustaining pension plan. They will need financial help from us in the beginning.

To date \$14.5 million dollars of the \$20 million goal has been raised or pledged from Annual Conference "Cokesbury checks," foundations and large donors. We are now inviting all our pastors and congregations to join them.

"As clergy, it is our responsibility to lead by example, and thus it is our hope that you will consider a pledge to this campaign that is representative of your leadership," the Bishops wrote. "We have an incredible opportunity to help change the lives of thousands of people, and we know that you will be generous."

Pledges and gifts are accepted by check or credit card. Gifts of stock, securities and real estate also are welcome.

IRS regulations prohibit clergy from transferring funds from their pension accounts. But automatic bank drafts may be established to direct funds from one's compensation.

Several giving options are available:

Add the Central Conference Pension Initiative to your church's budget.

Host a donor reception. Initiate a pledge weekend or designate a Sunday for a special offering.

Among the countries with retired clergy who will benefit



**At 80 and retired, Rev. Peeter Piirisild continues to serve a small group of Estonians who gather each week for Sunday worship and midweek prayers at the United Methodist church in Narva on the Estonia-Russia border.**

*Photo courtesy of United Methodist Communications*

from your gift are in Europe – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Yugoslavia; in Africa – Angola, Burundi, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe; and The Philippines.

Make checks payable to the Central Conference Pension Initiative, and send pledges to: Central Conference Pension Initiative, 1201 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

Visit [www.ccpi-umc.org](http://www.ccpi-umc.org) for pledge cards, promotional materials or more information.

## St. Paul UMC Houston to host the Fellers Symposium

The Craven-Wilson Lectures - "The Question of Providence"

How should Christians understand God's involvement in the events of their lives and their world?

This core question will be addressed at the Craven-Wilson Lecture by Dr. Charles M. Wood, 7 p.m. Monday, March 23, in the Sanctuary of St. Paul's UMC, Houston, 5501 Main Street.

The Craven-Wilson Lecture Series is sponsored by a generous endowment from the late Evie Jo Craven Wilson. A long-time St. Paul's member, she created



Dr. Charles M. Wood  
Perkins School of Theology

the series in memory of her parents, the Rev. and Mrs. W.A. Craven, and her husband, Arthur Wilson. Previous lectures have included Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, Dr. William Willamon, Bishop John Wesley Hardt, Dr. Arthur Caliandro, and Dr. Ted A. Campbell.

For more information about the lecture series, contact Donna Adair at 713-528-0527 or [dadair@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:dadair@stpaulshouston.org).



# Bishop Bob Hayes, Jr. is guest speaker for Native American worship and fellowship event

By Glenna Kyker-Brayton

Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr., currently serving the Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences, will



**Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr.**  
Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences

return to his home state of Texas April 5, to preach at the Native American Worship and Fellowship event.

A native Houstonian, Bishop Hayes is the son of Dr. Robert E. Hayes, Sr. and Dorothy Willis Hayes. He is the second child and only son of four children. Bishop Hayes was ordained an Elder (third generation of Methodist ministers in the Hayes family) by Bishop Kenneth Copeland on June 7, 1973.

Prior to his election as Bishop, Dr. Hayes served as the Conference Treasurer of the Texas Annual Conference and District Superintendent of the Southwest District, both in Houston, Texas.

He served his student pastorate at McCabe United Methodist Church, Longview, Texas. He was also the College Chaplain and an Instructor of Religion and Philosophy at Wiley College, Marshall, Texas from 1972 - 1975.

He served as a delegate to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the United Methodist Church in 1996, 2000, and 2004, and has served as an alternate delegate in 1992 and 1988.

At the General Conference in Cleveland, Ohio (2000), he chaired the legislative Committee on Faith and Order.

St. Mark's UMC will host the service on the *first* Sunday, April 5, 2009, 3:30 p.m. instead of the regularly scheduled third Sunday service.

The two and a half year old Fellowship serves Native Americans in the greater Houston area, providing a place to meet, experience praise

and worship in traditional Native American style, using Native Christian hymns such as "Choctaw Hymn Number 48" and "Cesvs Purke Likan" [Creek]. The Fellowship also provides an opportunity to become involved in outreach ministries, "Native American-style."

Renee Ramos works with the outreach ministry by distributing cards with contact information to people she meets on the street and in shelters, inviting them to church. She also helps with the Shoes for Shepherds project, where gently used athletic shoes and

hiking boots are sent to the Four Corners Mission thrift store for distribution to elders who still herd sheep on foot.

Richard Greenlee of Kingwood, Texas has found a "home" where he worships with other Native Americans. Richard was adopted out of the Assiniboine tribe as an infant and learned only two years ago that he is Native American. "God is going to use this ministry in a mighty way, I'm sure of it," he said, "and I want to be part of it."

A young woman from the Ponca tribe living in Spring, Texas said she hopes the fellowship becomes a church soon because this is where she wants to establish her membership. Being brought up in the United Methodist faith and also in the

traditions of the Ponca tribe, she serves unofficially as the resident expert on things Native American.

The March 15 fellowship witnessed its first baptism of a baby, performed by Rev. Gregory Johnson at St. Mark's UMC.

The conference web site encourages everyone interested in CONAM (Committee On Native American Ministries) to get involved. Several small groups have meet regularly in Katy, Spring, and in Kingwood, Texas.

Some reports indicate that there are approximately 100,000 Native Americans in the greater Houston area.

That number of persons reflects the need for this type of fellowship; a place for Native

American people can connect with others and learn from others through personal experiences and the stories of the elders.

St. Mark's UMC is located at 1615 Patterson, Houston, one block south of I-10. The worship service will be followed by a pot luck supper. All are welcome.

Third Sunday Fellowship is a ministry supported by individuals and church units of the Texas Annual Conference through the Conference's Committee on Native American Ministries.

For additional information, contact Rose [713-880-3845] or Glenna [713-557-8756] or see the web site [www.txcumc.org](http://www.txcumc.org).



**Rev. Gregory Johnson (center) of St. Mark's UMC performs the first child baptism of the CONAM Third Sunday Fellowship. The fellowship was held on March 15.**



## Texas Conference selected as pilot conference for scouting ministry

Texas Conference selected as pilot conference for scouting ministry

The UM Scouting Ministries Committee has selected Texas Conference as a pilot conference to test a volunteer position to help local churches establish and expand scouting ministry opportunities.

Meeting last August, the committee noted that there are over 40 churches in each of the ten Texas Conference districts. A volunteer district scouting coordinator cannot effectively work with that many congregations.

In an average district, 14 churches sponsor one or more Scout units. District scouting coordinators spend most of their time resourcing these churches; they seldom have the time to help the other churches understand how scouting can enrich the lives of their youth and reach non-churched members.

"To say that our current model is flawed would be an understatement," said Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries and youth-serving agencies for the General Commission on UM Men. He noted that most general church programs effectively reach the 488 district superintendents across the nation, but the pro-

grams seldom reach the 26,000 pastoral charges.

The solution: a "Scouting Ministry Specialist."

Patterned similar to the Men's Ministry Specialist, a Scouting Ministry Specialist will help up to five churches understand the importance of scouting and help them launch Cub packs, Girl and Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. They will:

- provide information about national awards;
- introduce churches to the God and Country series;
- encourage church leaders to attend regional and national training opportunities;
- assist with bishop's dinners and other district and conference events; and
- cultivate relationships with conference and district leaders.

Assuming each Scouting Ministry Specialist will work with five congregations, the denomination will need 7,000 volunteers to serve the 35,000 local UM churches. While that sounds like an overwhelming number of persons to recruit, Coppock said an experimental ad for persons interested in aiding scouting ministries in the Tennessee Annual Conference newspaper resulted in 300 responses.

In order to become a Scouting Ministry Specialist, a candidate must:

- be 21 years of age or older
- provide proof of Youth Protection Training and/or take an online Sexual Ethics and Safe Sanctuaries course
- show a record of scouting/youth ministry experience
- read Scouting Guidelines
- attend Philmont or another scouting-ministry training experience
- submit registration of \$30

An initial test of recruiting and training these specialists will be conducted in four annual conferences in 2009: Louisiana, Mississippi Tennessee, and Texas. An application form is available at the GCUMM.org website under the "Resources" section. an application form is available at the GCUMM.org website under the "Resources" section.

For further information, contact Larry Coppock, [lcoppock@gcumm.org](mailto:lcoppock@gcumm.org), or Marc Stowe, [mstowe@gcumm.org](mailto:mstowe@gcumm.org).

*The Scouting Ministry Committee is an arm of the Nashville-based General Commission on United Methodist Men.*

## Correction

In the article on conference apportionments in the March 6 edition of the Cross Connection, please note the following change:

Rev. Sam Smith is not the pastor of Montgomery UMC in Montgomery, Texas. He is the pastor of Montgomery UMC, China Chapel.

Rev. Nancy Kellond is the pastor at Montgomery UMC in Montgomery, Texas.

## Lovelady Circuit Churches donate \$800 to church in need



Rev. Marty Dotson of Bay Vue UMC proudly shows off the \$800 gift card from Home Depot given by a team of pastors from the Lovelady Circuit in East Texas.

The effects of Hurricane Ike remain visible along the Texas Gulf Coast. Families continue to rebuild and help is still needed.

Pastor Arnold Harden, part of a team of pastors serving the Lovelady Circuit (East District), made a recent trip to Crystal Beach to meet with Bay Vue UMC Pastor Marty Dotson.

Pastor Arnold brought with him an \$800 Home

Depot Gift Card, presented on behalf of White Rock, Alexander Chapel, Pleasant Hill, and Anderson Chapel UMCs.

"Our four little churches have big hearts when it comes to helping those in need", said Harden, who along with Connie Swanson, Bettye Drummond and Bob Johnson make up the team based out of Windsor Village UMC



Bay Vue UMC suffered extensive damage during Hurricane Ike.

A work team comprised of members from the four churches that make up the Lovelady Circuit and Windsor Village UMC recently visited the church.



# Give your diet a nutritional tune-up

March is National Nutrition Month

## Balanced Living Provided By The Center for Clergy Excellence

Between spending long days at work and evenings and weekends attending to personal and family concerns, few Americans have time to eat right. But you don't have to remodel your diet to improve its healthfulness.

"There are easy and delicious ways to regularly add healthful foods to your diet,"

says Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D., dietitian and author of several nutrition books, including, *Intuitive Eating*.

Ms. Tribole suggests the following tips for tuning up your diet.

### Fruits and vegetables

Eating five to thirteen servings (or 2½ to 6½ cups) of fruits and vegetables each day can help you prevent cancer, heart disease, and other health problems.



### Low-fat dairy products

Low-fat dairy products are high in calcium, which helps prevent bone-weakening osteoporosis. Your diet should consist of at least three servings of calcium-rich foods a day. Drink calcium-fortified orange juice instead of the regular kind. You'll get as much calcium as if you drank a glass of milk. Try eating cooked oatmeal and other hot cereals with low-fat milk instead of water.

### Iron

Iron deficiency can be caused by too little iron in your diet. (Other reasons for iron deficiency are inadequate absorption of iron and excessive blood loss.) Because iron helps carry oxygen to the blood and deliver it to cells, you may feel sluggish and fatigued without enough of it.

Women of childbearing age (especially those who have heavy menstrual periods), pregnant women, pre-term and low-birth-weight infants, older infants and toddlers, and



teenage girls are at greatest risk for developing iron deficiency anemia because they have the greatest need for iron.

For these people, iron supplements may be necessary to prevent iron deficiency anemia.

To add more iron to your diet, include red meats, fish, and poultry. Plant foods (such as lentils and beans) are iron-enriched and iron-fortified; foods that are common sources of dietary iron.

### Fiber

A high-fiber diet reduces the risk of heart disease. In

order to include more fiber in your diet, try mixing beans into salads and soups, sprinkle wheat germ on yogurt or into a cobbler or a crust. Serve brown rice or wild rice instead of white rice; buy bread and crackers with "whole wheat" listed as the first ingredient. If the label just says "wheat," the product probably contains white flour, which is low in fiber," says Tribole. For more information on eating right, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

This article was published through MHN Employer Services Division.

## Embracing Conflict as the Soul of Your Working Marriage

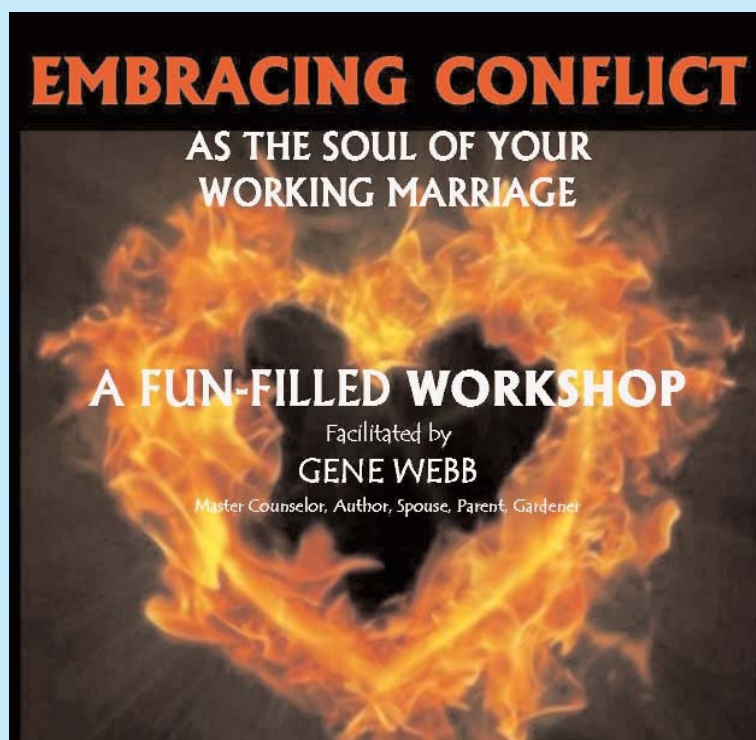
By Sally Penning  
Communications Ministry  
St. Luke's UMC Houston

How can conflict be more positive than negative? Twenty couples will find out on Saturday, March 28 at a fun-filled marriage workshop hosted by St. Luke's UMC.

"*Embracing Conflict as the Soul of Your Working Marriage*" is a one-day event planned for Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Led by Gene Webb, one of Houston's most respected marriage counselors, this workshop is for spouses who desire insight on managing normal every-day conflict more creatively and constructively in their life partnership.

Couples will learn how to discover new energy and



strength because of their differences, not despite them.

This hands-on workshop includes time for personal and

group dialogue, and is thus limited to 20 couples.

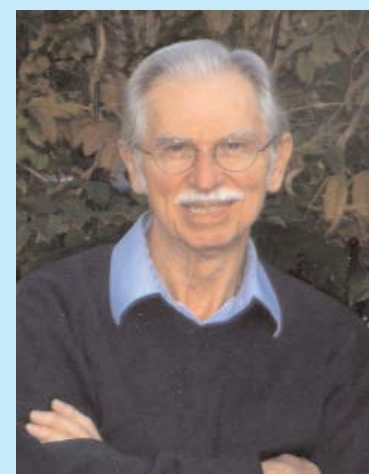
Gene Webb has been a psychotherapist for 43 years, working with individuals, couples, and families, and he has published six books in his career. His wife, Dr. Marty Webb, is the founder and head of The Monarch School for children with neurological differences.

This St. Luke's event is co-hosted by United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and The Center for Counseling & Life Enrichment. Advanced registration is required.

Call 713-402-5046 or

email [counselingcenter@stlukes-hou.org](mailto:counselingcenter@stlukes-hou.org). The fee is \$50 per couple, which includes lunch.

St. Luke's UMC is located at 3471 Westheimer, Houston, Texas 77027.



Gene Webb  
Psychotherapist



# Texas Annual Conference 2009 Scheduled Meals

GROUP	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Cabinet Dinner (No tickets required for Cabinet staff and spouses)	Saturday, May 23	6 P.M.	
BOM Dinner (No tickets required for BOM Members. Contact BOM)	Sunday, May 24	5:30 P.M.	Lupe Tortillas
Memorial Service Reception (No tickets required, all are invited)	Sunday, May 24	9 P.M.	Wesley Hall
Restorative Justice Ministries Breakfast. Tickets are \$10. Contact Allen Rice, 218-813-0093	Monday, May 25	7 A.M.	
UMM District Board Members Breakfast. \$10, pay at the door.	Monday, May 25	7 A.M.	
Brite Divinity Alumni Luncheon. Tickets are \$15. Contact Rhett Ansley, 903-589-4003.	Monday, May 25	11 A.M.	
Breaking the Silence Luncheon. Tickets are \$20. Contact Laura Young, 936-581-9401.	Monday, May 25	11:30 A.M.	Marriott Waterway
Confessing Movement Luncheon. Tickets are \$18. Contact Terry Loughbridge, 281-297-5932.	Monday, May 25	11:30 A.M.	
Clergy Spouses Luncheon. Price has not been set.	Monday, May 25	Noon	
Fellowship of Older Adults Ministries Luncheon. Tickets are \$16. Contact Dorothy Fontana, 713-402-5031.	Monday, May 25	Noon	Aldersgate Hall
UMW Luncheon. Tickets are \$17. Contact Jerry Barber at 409-948-0420.	Monday, May 25	Noon	
TAC Awards Banquet. Contact Steve Woody for Evangelism awards and tickets, 281-487-8787. Contact Jeff Powers for Small Church Membership awards and tickets, 254-739-2095.	Monday, May 25	5:30 P.M.	Wesley Hall
Spotted Owl Gathering. No charge. Contact Cindy Hassey, 713-521-9383.	Monday, May 25	9 P.M.	The Loft
AssociateMembers/Local Pastors Breakfast. Tickets are \$15. Contact Judy Morgan, 979-244-8033.	Tuesday, May 26	6:30 A.M.	
Order of Deacons Breakfast. No charge. Contact Pam Besser, 409-892-7733.	Tuesday, May 26	7 A.M.	
Southwestern University Alumni Breakfast. No charge. Contact Amanda Randall, 800-960-6363.	Tuesday, May 26	7 A.M.	
Communications Ministry Breakfast. Tickets are \$10. Contact April Canik, 713-402-5047.	Tuesday, May 26	7:30 A.M.	
Celebration Women's Ministry Luncheon. Tickets are \$16. Contact Linda Johnson, 936-435-9989.	Tuesday, May 26	11:30 A.M.	Asbury Hall
Lon Morris College Luncheon. Tickets are \$12. Contact Susie Holle, 903-589-2469.	Tuesday, May 26	11:30 A.M.	
BMCR Luncheon. Tickets are \$25. Contact Eleanor F. Colvin, 713-695-2469.	Tuesday, May 26	Noon	
Candler Luncheon. Tickets are \$15. Contact Christie Hale, 409-985-5581.	Tuesday, May 26	Noon	
Laity Luncheon. Price has not been set. Contact Leah Taylor.	Tuesday, May 26	Noon	The Loft
Retiree Luncheon. No charge for retirees. Contact Barbara Kilby, 713-521-9383.	Tuesday, May 26	Noon	Wesley Hall
Ordination and Commissioning Dinner. No tickets required for those being ordained or commissioned.	Tuesday, May 26	5:30 P.M.	Wesley Hall
Small Membership Church Celebration. Tickets are \$12. Contact Carolyn Huntsman, 936-222-4489.	Tuesday, May 26	5:30 P.M.	
UMW Dinner.	Tuesday, May 26	5:30 P.M.	
Friends of Asbury. Tickets are \$18. Contact Jessica LaGrone, 281-297-5932.	Tuesday, May 26	6 P.M.	Asbury Hall
Ordination and Commissioning Reception. No tickets required. All are invited.	Tuesday, May 26	9 P.M.	Wesley Hall
"I Say Hello" Luncheon. No charge. Contact Cindy Hassey, 713-521-9383.	Wednesday, May 27	Noon	



## Spotlight on Local Church Ministries

### Fellowship Opportunities

#### Older Adult Ministries

##### Retreat

##### *Renewing Your Body, Mind and Spirit*

The FOAM (Fellowship of Older Adult Ministries) Retreat is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28 through Thursday noon, April 30. 2009 marks the 60 year anniversary of the event.

The Retreat will be at Camp Allen, the Episcopal Diocese Conference Center. The cost is \$160 per person double occupancy and \$230 single occupancy.

The guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg. She is an ordained Episcopal priest and a Visiting Scholar at the Sealy Center on Aging, UTMB Galveston. The Bible study leader will be Rev. Lawrence Young, District Superintendent of the South Central District. Rev. Young is an outstanding preacher and teacher. The worship and song leader will be Rev. David Henry from First UMC, Bryan.

Other special events planned include entertainment by the Dignity Memorial Singers, an ice cream social, board games, exercise classes and more. To register, contact Mary Magnusson, 281-361-9298 or dandmmag@cebridge.net

#### UMW To Sponsor 2009

##### Lenten Study

Women, men, and families are invited to the 2009 Lenten Study, "Come to the Cross" by John Indermark and presented by Bible Study University and Seminarian Instructor, Liz Vondy at the First UMC, Houston Westchase Campus.

Sessions will be held March 4, 11, 18, 25 and concluding April 1. The registration fee is \$8. Contact persons are Charlotte Newton, at 281-980-1918, Celainenew@aol.com or Jane

Thompson, at 832-264-9001 at Bob.jane.3214@comcast.net.

#### St. Luke's UMC Introduces

##### Improvisation: Jazz Worship

March 1 through April 5 each Sunday, St. Luke's UMC will offer a new style of worship service, combining the less formal style of jazz music and casual dress with traditional elements of worship.

Improvisation will feature rotating ensembles of jazz musicians including Rob Landes, Joey Love and Taylor Davis. More information is available on line at [www.stlukesmethodist.org](http://www.stlukesmethodist.org).

#### TAC To Host 'Astros Baseball Night'

The last two years have been such a success that the Texas Annual Conference decided to do it again!

There will be 1,000 Field Box seats available on a first come, first serve basis.

Each ticket is \$21.50; there will be no special seating selection, however, districts will have the option to be seated together if all tickets are purchased at the same time.

Contact your district office for tickets.

#### Generational Healing Service

Struggles, depression, financial burdens, addictions, and divorce...have you ever noticed that many of your trials seem to be similar to ones your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, struggle with? Unrepentant sin can leave a spiritual weakness in a family that keeps generations of family members from God's best.

Discover how to detect family sin patterns, learn God's remedy, and how to break the curse and set your family free.

Freedom and Healing Ministry invites you to attend a

Generational Healing Service on Thursday, April 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Worship Center at Grace Fellowship UMC, 2655 S. Mason Rd. Katy, Texas 77450.

No child care provided. Sign up at Prayer Kiosk beginning Sunday, March 8. Contact Pam AlSheikh at 281-346 0555 or alsheikh67@comcast.net.

#### Living Last Supper at First UMC Houston

First UMC Houston, located at 1320 Main Street, Houston, Texas presents, Living Last Supper, Thursday, April 9, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

The service will include music and monologues by each of the 12 disciples and participation by the Sanctuary choir.

Participants in attendance will share in the Passover table with the disciples. The event is free to the public. No photos, please.

For more information, contact Linda Calvert at 832-668-1816 or lcalvert@fmhouston.com.

#### AC Accommodations at the Cramer Center

The Cramer United Methodist Retreat Center has rooms available for those attending Texas Annual Conference 2009.

Guests must register before May 10 using the on-line registration form found on the web site: [www.CramerCenter.org](http://www.CramerCenter.org).

Contact Nanette Radke, Property Manager at 281-350-1355 or NERadke@CramerCenter.org for details.

#### Learning Opportunities

##### St. Paul UMC to host Talk about the Children's Health Insurance Program

Barbara Best, the Texas

Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund, will speak about the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to the Monday Night Circle of the United Methodist Women at St. Paul's UMC, 5501 Main at Binz/Bissonnet. The meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 23.

Best will discuss pending legislation on this topic and where it stands in the committee. As CDF's Texas Executive Director, Best has overseen the growth of the Texas office from a staff of one to 27 statewide, with a \$1.7 million budget.

For more information, contact Kim Mabry, Director of Young Adults and Evangelism/Staff liaison for UMW at [kmabry@stpaulshouston.org](mailto:kmabry@stpaulshouston.org) or 713-528-0527.

#### First UMC Bullard Offers Marriage Seminar

April 24-25, 2009 is the date for, Improving Communication in your marriage seminar.

The workshop will focus on strengthening your relationship with practical insights. Discover how to gain intimacy in your relationship and overcome the barriers to communication.

The cost is \$40 per person (lunch is provided). For more information, contact the church at 903-894-6762.

#### A New Church for a New Day

42nd Annual Meeting for BMCR - March 25-27  
The meeting will focus on congregational development. The program will focus on new church development, congregational transformation, revitalization, and sharing ministry models that reach new people for Jesus Christ.

The fact that there are different challenges for different churches will be examined and the reality that historical Black con-

gregations are being closed and/or merging with other churches. Many existing congregations lack the human and financial resources to develop and maintain effective ministries in the communities. For additional information, go to [www.bmcrcumc.org](http://www.bmcrcumc.org).

#### Mt. Sequoyah Offers Three Conferences in 2009

Mt. Sequoyah will host the following event:

Caring for Creation Conference, March 27-29 - A conference designed to educate, network and inspire faith communities to initiate, develop and sustain stewardship programs that will protect and celebrate God's creation.

#### Outreach and Mission

##### Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. Luke's UMC has made over 250 shawls which have been given to others as tangible expressions of the love and concern of a community of faith. The ministry meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month.

On April 18, St. Luke's and Chapelwood's prayer shawl ministries will meet with others throughout the city for a retreat lead by Janet Bristow and Victoria Cole-Galo, co-founders of the international Prayer Shawl ministry and authors of, *Prayer Shawl Companion*. For more information, visit [www.stlukesmethodist.org/prayer](http://www.stlukesmethodist.org/prayer).

Do you have information about your church or ministry you would like to share with others?

Contact Thelma Jones at 713-521-9383, ext. 335 or [thelmaj@methodists.net](mailto:thelmaj@methodists.net)