



# Southeast District

of the Texas Annual Conference  
of the United Methodist Church

MARCH 2014

## REMINDERS:

- 2013 Fund Balance Reports, 2013 Year End Financial Reports, 2014 Budgets are **due to the district office now**.
- **Registration NOW for TAC 2014** in Houston. Register as a "guest" at [www.txcumc.org/sereregister](http://www.txcumc.org/sereregister).

## CALENDAR

**March 24**—Proposals due to District Office for Moody's Permanent Endowment Fund Grant

**March 31**—DCOM; 8:30am-3pm

**April 3**—DLT; 4pm

**June 16-20**—District Camp at Lakeview

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## Notes from the District Superintendent

In last week's *Houston Chronicle*, there was an article about a boy with Asperger's Syndrome. He told his mother that he did not want an eleventh birthday party because he had no friends to invite. Heartbroken, his mother decided to set up a Facebook page asking for members of the online community to "Like" her son's page. The result was overwhelming. Her appeal received over two million "likes." This feel-good story touched the producers of ABC's *Good Morning America*. They invited him to appear as their guest and told him on the air just how many new friends and likes he had received. *GMA* also sent him and his mother on an all-expenses paid trip to Disney World.

Now if this were a fairy tale we would expect the traditional ending, "And they lived happily ever after," but since this is not, it leads me to wonder if online friends are enough. Do two million strangers constitute real friends or is it just an illusion?

In this age of instant communication, real personal interaction has suffered tremendously. Who of us have not witnessed couples sitting in a restaurant staring into their cell phones instead of talking with one another? I have seen college students texting to one another while sitting in the same room. If our grandparents had witnessed this, they would have thought the world had gone insane.

While I enjoy the convenience of voicemail, email, text messages, and Facebook, these do not replace the need for one-on-one human relationships. A text cannot communicate emotion, voice inflection, or body language. An email may allow us to vent, but we end up breaking relationships in the name of being right. Everyone suffers.

In an age of high-tech communication, the need for high-touch interaction cannot be underestimated. The more important the relationship, the more important the need for personal interaction. Face to face meetings, telephone calls, even letters make a greater impact than convenient electronic communication.

In this season of Lent, let me encourage you to fast from technology, and focus on personal relationships. Turn off the TV, put away your cell phone, and fight the temptation to respond to email, Facebook, and Twitter. Pay attention to those who are around you. Give them your full attention. After all, when God acted to reveal the extent of his love for the world, he sent his Son. God came in person, so we might see with our eyes, touch with our hands, and hear with our own ears, him who is eternal life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have a blessed Lenten observance.

Grace and Peace,

*Dick*

## Permanent Endowment Fund Grant Deadline

Proposals for Moody's Permanent Endowment Fund Grant are due to the district office by Monday, March 24, 2014. Your proposal should include a project description, cost, and a time frame. The grant is designed to help fund mission and outreach projects.



# New Lay Servant Ministries



Lay Speaking Ministries has changed to Lay Servant Ministries based on Jesus' words and actions in John 13.

In 2012 the General Conference of The United Methodist Church approved to change the name of Lay Speaking Ministries to Lay Servant Ministries. The term servant was chosen because it best describes what Jesus told his disciples in John 13 after he himself had performed the duties of the lowliest servant. We should be honored to serve as our Lord and Savior did. We are called to live out our discipleship as servants in leadership!

There is no change in the process of becoming a local

church or certified lay servant from the former lay speaker process. There was, however, a **role of lay speaker added to the program**, which includes specific preparation and accountability processes.

A **Local Church Lay Servant** serves primarily in the local congregation after completing the "Basic" course.

A **Certified Lay Servant** is Local Church Lay Servant who has taken an advanced course in LSM and serves in the local congregation and beyond.

A **Lay Speaker** is a Certified Lay Servant who provides pulpit supply. There are six required course of study: Lay

Servant basic course, leading worship, leading prayer, discovering spiritual gifts, preaching, and United Methodist heritage, and United Methodist polity

A **Certified Lay Minister** is a Certified Lay Servant or Speaker who provides lay servant leadership in a ministry/church as part of a ministry team

Classes are taught each January/February in the SE District. This year the district will also be offering a summer class to include UM Polity. Watch for more information on the district website.

## 5 Stars of Excellence in Christian Education

The **Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education** recognizes congregations in the TAC that are committed to effective ministries in Christian Education. The Five Stars of Excellence in Christian Education program has three levels of awards:

- The **annual Five Stars of Excellence Award** recognizes congregations that fully qualify in five designated areas of excellence.
- The **Rising Star Award** recognizes the work being done

in churches that are striving to improve, create, or strengthen their local Christian Education program; a church may receive this award one time.

- The **Shooting Star Award** recognizes exemplary programs, events or ministries in 5-Star congregations. This award may be received every two years by churches that have achieved 5-Star status in last year and quali-

fy this year.

Churches should submit applicable information and the completed form to the program administrator by **Wednesday, April 30**. Information and forms available online: [txcumc.org/fivestarsofexcellence](http://txcumc.org/fivestarsofexcellence) and [tcef.org](http://tcef.org).

**NEW:** The criteria have been updated. Also, submit photos of ministries described in the application.

### Joys & Concerns

- Rev. Ben and Rebecca West (Wesley Bmt) and the birth of Stacy Elizabeth West on March 5, 2014.
- Rev. Joe Miller (Retired, Newton)
- Rev. Kevin King (Winnie FUMC)
- Rev. Byron Jarratt (Retired, UM Temple)
- Sympathy to Rev. Wayne Hargraves (Retired, Fredrickburg) on the death of his wife, Dixie Hargraves on March 8, 2014.

## District Snapshot

YEAR	TAC Apportion % Paid	Total SED Apportionments	Professions of Faith	Average Worship Attendance	Hands on Missions	Small Groups
2014		\$ 390,789				
2013	94%	\$ 321,579	252	5,849	2,860	721
2012	92%	\$ 258,146	250	5,606	1,565	744
2011	93%	\$ 251,821	357	5,939	3,489	755
2010	90%		416	6,222	6,114	825
2009	100%		334	5,966	4,544	
2008	100%		317	5,906	2,058	

How can you, your church, and the district GROW this year?



this summer, June 16-20.

Contact Rev.

Mark Bunch to pick your favorite spot!

It's not too early to start recruiting camp counselors! Please note, all pastors who have not worked district camp in the last four years, need to volunteer for camp