

Messenger

The Memorial

A Publication of Memorial Drive United Methodist Church

Volume 50 Number 8

Dr. Charles B. Simmons, Senior Minister

April 25, 2008

Sign Up to Donate Blood

The blood shortage is real; a church member recently had to wait two weeks for a blood derivative. Each unit of blood helps three lives. Since there is no substitute for blood, it must come from caring individuals. It is truly a Gift of Life.

It is easy to donate and it's even easier to make an appointment. Appointments determine the number of personnel the Blood Center will send. Appointments may be made on Sundays in Friendship Court or by contacting George Byers at 281/497-3599 or gtbyers@att.net.

The blood drive will be held Saturday and Sunday, May 3-4, from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. each day in the gym. **Donors for this drive will receive a T-shirt.** Each time you donate blood, you earn valuable points which can be redeemed at the blood center store. You are eligible to donate if 12 weeks have elapsed since your prior donation.

Make a difference in someone's life... please donate at this drive!



Worship at Memorial Drive UMC

Sundays

- Services at 8:15, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.
- Contemporary Service at 10:55 in Wesley Hall

Wednesdays

- Mid-Week Worship at 6:30, Friendship Court

Thursdays

- Lunch & Worship for Senior Adults at 11:30, Connection Center

Fridays

- Epiphany at 6:35 p.m., Youth Lounge

Shepherd Drive Fellowship

- Sunday Service at 11:00 a.m.

Spring Concert Series presents...

"Elijah"

by Felix Mendelssohn

with Chancel Choir
& 31-member Orchestra

Sunday, May 4

7:00 p.m.

Sanctuary



The concert tells the Old Testament tale of Elijah. Soloists featured in this performance are Randy Wagner as Elijah, Patty Albers, Richard Bain, Faith Hebard, Trudy Nix, Terri Padgett, Marc Shellum, Elizabeth Taylor, Carolyn Thompson and Patsy Willis. Admission is free. Don't miss a note!

Feel the Wind of the Spirit on Pentecost

The birth of the Church is celebrated on Pentecost, the day the Bible (in the book of Acts) tells us that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples like tongues of flame. Each person present was able to hear the good news of God in their own language. It is a tradition within the church to wear red on this special day. On Sunday, May 11, come worship in the wind of the Spirit and be open to the presence of the Divine.



Holy Conferencing

By the time you read this, I will be in Fort Worth, along with more than a thousand other lay and clergy delegates from across the nation and the world. We will be gathered for the General Conference, the quadrennial meeting of our denomination's governing body. We will be in session for ten long days praying, praising God, learning together and mostly focusing on numerous issues. Dialogues will be held and decisions made on matters regarding doctrine, Annual Conference organization and responsibilities, ordained ministry, local church concerns, mission initiatives, financial proposals, the globalization of the church—the list goes on and on.

On the surface some matters appear significant and others a waste of time, yet it will all affect our life and work as United Methodist Christians.

There will also be issues of an explosive nature on the agenda that simply must be aired. If past experience is any indication, the media will have a field day as they sensationalize stories of news interest. What you will hear most about are the discussions over economic sanctions, whether to ordain homosexuals or bless same-sex marriages—important matters, to be sure, but not the most salient or even the priority for Christ's transformation of the world. It is therefore important to remember that only The General Conference, as it takes a stand or specific action, speaks for the United Methodist Church.

Rather than be upset, United Methodists should rejoice that the Fort Worth gathering is an example of pure representative democracy at work. Any member of any local church can petition this body for a decision on any matter whatsoever, and get a hearing! Thus, the wide range of the thousands of proposals that will be brought before us delegates in no way reflects a majority opinion or the official position of the church until voted upon by the body. Of course, this frees the press to scoop the most bizarre ideas and headline that such is under consideration by United Methodists—never to report the later rejection. However, it also frees our church to be a truly representative people of God, open to one another and the full wisdom of the Spirit's leading. Our founder John Wesley called it, "holy conferencing."

Along with rejoicing, I suggest members of Memorial Drive UMC do this:

1. Pray for your pastor and the General Conference.
2. Accept that in a large, inclusive church there will be differences of opinion.
3. Have confidence in the integrity of our elected Texas Conference delegates—a fine group of the lay and clergy that represent all constituencies.
4. Get all the facts before you worry with half-true reports.
5. And trust the Holy Spirit to lead the respectful and prayerful discernment among us!

Upon return, I will find a way to share with our congregation what was actually done in Fort Worth and answer individual questions. Meanwhile, please know that I feel privileged to represent you and our fellow church members in the Conference. I am proud to belong to the family of faith known as the United Methodist Church, and I am confident that, by God's grace, the actions of this General Conference will be in accord with God's will and benefit our members and institution, the world and Christ's Kingdom.

Shalom,

UMC General Conference Begins

Every four years, the larger body of the United Methodist Church gathers to do the business of the church. In prayer and dialogue, delegates work to discern who and where God is calling the church to be in the world. Beginning on Wednesday, April 23, General Conference will be meeting in Fort Worth. Dr. Simmons will be present to participate in this gathering. During these ten days, be in prayer for the UM church and delegates as they gather in conversation and work to make disciples of Christ for the world's transformation.

Senior Sunday

MDUMC is proud of its soon-to-be-graduating high school seniors! We'll celebrate by recognizing these youth and their families on Sunday, May 4, at 11:00 a.m. Be present as we give thanks and send these students off to their futures surrounded by God's blessing and our love.

Join Us for Contemporary Worship

Come one, come all, to the Live @ 10:55 contemporary worship service! With an average attendance of 96 in 2007, the contemporary service is a growing and vibrant part of our congregation. Rev. Collin Taylor preaches most Sundays, but staff member Daniel Scholl has the opportunity to preach as well. If you've never been, we invite you to come and check it out! Beginning in May, Rev. Taylor will begin a series called *Our Faith in the Movies* during which we will look at a short movie clip every Sunday. If that is not your cup of tea, come in mid-June when we will take a humorous, yet serious look at the *Dysfunctional Families of the Bible*.

UMW General Meeting

Please join United Methodist Women on Tuesday, May 6, for the final General Meeting of the 2007–2008 year. At this meeting, checks will be presented to organizations that support women and children. The funds come from the proceeds of the 2007 Hearts and Hands Holiday Market. The organizations are selected by nominations from the Mission Evaluation Committee and approved by the Finance Committee. Special Mission Recognition pins will be presented to individuals in the Memorial Drive UMW unit that have gone above and beyond during this year. Also, the 2008–2009 slate of officers will be installed. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. in Wesley Hall and lunch follows. Childcare is available. All women of the church are invited to attend.



Attend an Old Bethlehem Workshop

In December, MDUMC will present *An Evening in Old Bethlehem*, an event that is like stepping back in time 2000 years where participants journey through “villages” and experience life at the time of Jesus’ birth.

Join us for a workshop to learn more about getting involved in this program. At the workshop on Sunday, May 4, from 12:00–2:00 p.m., a light lunch is available for \$5 (reservations are needed). On Monday, May 5, the workshop will be presented twice; from 9:15–11:15 a.m. and from 6:30–8:30 p.m. The same material will be presented each session. There is no charge.

If you have questions, contact Millie Eads at 281/870-1607 or gleads@sbcglobal.net. To sign up for the workshop, contact Sabrina Whitehurst at 713/468-8356 or sabrinagallegos@mdumc.org for lunch reservations on Sunday and childcare reservations for Sunday or Monday.

Give Love, Give Hope... Give Back to God!

How do the dollars you give make a difference in the world? This week, over 450 children and adults will eat a nourishing sack lunch, 500 children will hear about God’s love in Sunday School, 200 preschoolers will learn and grow in a loving environment, over 600 adults will study scripture, 200 youth will gather for fun and laughter at the Refuge, more than 25 individuals and families will receive emergency assistance, 50 Alzheimer’s patients will be cared for while their caregivers take much-needed time for renewal of their spirit, and more than 1,400 will gather in worship and praise of God. These are only a few of the many ways we love God and love neighbor each week at Memorial Drive UMC. Please ensure that your covenant contributions are up to date so that our work in the world and our community continues!

An Urgent Message to MDUMC’s Membership!

As you read above, MDUMC is Loving God and Loving Neighbor in many ways every week. Each year, our ministries and outreach opportunities expand. When the Soupmobile began, for example, it served 5,200 lunches in the first year. The goal for this year is 26,000! Imagine the difference that will make in the lives of the hungry of our city.

In 1999, the first adult mission teams were commissioned, one to Alaska and one to Russia. Since then this congregation has supported thirty missions, not including the recent hurricane relief projects. In addition to five summer missions this year, we will initiate a new mission partnership with the people of Slovakia.

In 2001 our membership was at 6,000. In April, our membership is almost 7,000; truly we are growing in our faith as we worship God.

As these numbers demonstrate, our faith-based budget is always about God’s work enabled by our gifts. However, we can’t enable these many ways that we love God and love neighbor without our gifts.

Our spiritual stewardship continues to grow; so far in 2008 our financial stewardship has fallen short. The first quarter income was about where we were in 2003—mostly due to January’s giving being the lowest in eight years. As a result, we are now over \$100,000 behind where we expected to be at this time of year.

Faithful financial stewardship from everyone is needed to immediately address this shortfall and put us back on track to be able to meet God’s many callings.

—Scott Brown, Finance Chair

Weekly Events for Middle School & Senior High

- 4/27 Youth Confirmation Class; 8:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
High School Sunday School, Youth Lounge; 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School for 7th & 8th Grade, F223/224; 9:30 a.m.
MS MYF: Unbirthday Party for the Guys at Butte Park; bring your birthday boxes and money for lunch; 12:00–2:30 p.m.
HS MYF: Gym Games; 6:30 p.m.
- 4/28 MS Hangout at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00
- 4/29 Fat Tuesday: Bonker Bowls Refuge Style, \$5; 5:30 p.m.
- 4/30 PB&J for 7th & 8th Graders (Memorial MS at Einstein's; Spring Forest MS at McDonalds); 7:30 a.m.
MS Hangout at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00
- 5/1 Soupmobile; 3:15 p.m.
- 5/4 MS Workcamp Service & Commitment Points Due
HS Worship together, no Sunday School; 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School for 7th & 8th Grade, F223/224; 9:30 a.m.
Youth Confirmands join MDUMC; 11:00 a.m.
Senior Luncheon at The Refuge; 12:00 p.m.
Snack Supper, \$3; 6:00 p.m.
HS MYF; 6:30 p.m.
MS MYF, F223/224; 6:30–7:30 p.m.
- 5/5 Happy Birthday, Ryan!
MS Hang Out at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00 p.m.
- 5/6 Fat Tuesday Special: build your own pizza!; 5:30 p.m.
- 5/7 Last PB&J for 7th & 8th graders (Memorial Middle School at Einstein's; Spring Forest Middle School at McDonalds); 7:30 a.m.
MS Hang Out at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00 p.m.
- 5/10 Loaf; meet at The Refuge, earn service points; 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- 5/11 HS Sunday School, Youth Lounge; 9:30 a.m.
MS Mother's Day Brunch, Refuge; 9:30 a.m.
Worship; 11:00 a.m.
No HS/MS MYF: Spend quality time with your mom!
- 5/12 MS Hang Out at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00 p.m.
- 5/13 Fat Tuesday Special, \$5; 5:30 p.m.
- 5/14 MS Hang Out at The Refuge; 3:00–6:00 p.m.
- 5/16 End of The "S" Word Dance for 7th & 8th Graders, \$5; 8:00–10:30 p.m.
- For more information on all youth activities, visit www.mdumcyouth.org or call the Family Life Center at 713/468-8356 ext. 155.

High School Workcamp 2008

Workcamp 2008 will be on June 8–14 in Brady, Texas. The cost is \$200. Forms are due now. Earn service points by volunteering at The Refuge, the Soupmobile and Loaf. Pick up commitment points by attending Sunday School, youth worship, worship and Bible studies. The youth staff wants you to be at workcamp, so do all that you can to be there!

MS Workcamp 2008

Get your forms in now for MS Workcamp on June 22–26; don't miss out on this week of helping others, having fun and strengthening your faith! The cost is \$125. You need to earn your spot by getting the required commitment points (10) and service points (10). The forms can be found at the FLC office, the Refuge or online at www.mdumcyouth.org.

Youth Confirmation

All middle school and high school youth who have not yet been confirmed are invited to participate in youth confirmation, on Sunday, April 27, from 8:10 a.m.–2:30 p.m. This includes lunch and a service project. Please call Lynell or Sedonia in the FLC at 713/468-8356 ext. 155 for more information.

Mission Op & Early MYF

On Sunday, May 18, bring soft drinks, Gatorade, Powerade, clean white socks and short sleeve T-shirts for our friends at Butte Park. We'll leave the Refuge at 10:45 a.m. and return at 1:30 p.m. Bring money for lunch at Prince's Hamburgers.

End of the "S" Word Dance

All 7th and 8th graders, come to The Refuge on Friday, May 16, from 8:00–10:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 and bring extra money for food. Bring your friends! And you'll get to meet the Summer Staff!

MS to SplashTown

Celebrate Memorial Day and take a break from studying for finals! Join us on Sunday, May 25, from 11:00–5:00. We leave from The Refuge. The cost is \$30, which includes lunch and admission. Permission slips can be found at the church, the Refuge or online at www.mdumcyouth.org. The deadline for signing up is May 18.

Mother's Day Brunch for Middle School Mothers

All Mothers of Middle Schoolers (MOMS) are invited for a wonderful brunch and great program on Sunday, May 11, at 9:30 a.m. at The Refuge.

Outreach

It's I CAN Time!

Sunday, May 4, will be the first opportunity to bring the I CANs to Friendship Court to be added to the big Soupmobile Soup Pot. As our spirits are fed during communion, we will be reminded that there are those whose physical bodies need food as well. You can also support the Soup Pot Challenge by wearing your Soup Pot pin. Be as generous as U CAN and keep the Soupmobile rolling!

Didn't get an I CAN? Pick one up in Friendship Court or at the reception desk near the offices.



Make MDUMC Missions Marvelous

As mission teams leave for various destinations, you can participate as well. On Sundays in May and June, you will find Mission Collection Boxes in Friendship Court. Please bring the listed items so that the people and children in faraway places may experience the love that MDUMC has for others.

Things that are needed include new underwear and socks for men, women, and children; toothbrushes; small Matchbox-type cars for children; small- and medium-sized crosses for gifts (new, gently-used or handmade); VBS materials (English and Spanish storybooks, posters, etc.); crayons (new or used); soccer balls, softballs and baseballs; fragrant soaps, small perfumes, and lotions, etc.; empty prescription bottles with labels removed; and small stuffed animals (like Beanie Babies).

Make a difference by helping the mission teams!

Thanks from a Rita Recovery Family

The most recent Rita Recovery mission took an MDUMC team to the Port Arthur area where they helped repair a home. That grateful family sent a note:

To All Our New Friends,

God bless you all. "From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another" (John 1:16). Words cannot express the gratitude we feel. I can't find the words to say what is in my heart. You are the greatest and my family would like to say "Thank you and God bless you." We will keep you in our prayers. We are so grateful to you for giving us back our home. Sometimes our lives are blessed by people who are so special that we are happier just because we know them. We want you to know how very special you are to us.

As you can see from these words of gratitude, serving on a Hurricane Relief mission has an impact far beyond nails, hammers and paint. These missions give participants an opportunity to witness to their faith. Through their work and witness, the love of Christ restores more than just houses.

If you would like to serve on a future relief mission, please contact Rev. Susan Wiley at 713/468-8356 ext. 161 or susanwiley@mdumc.org.

MAM and the Merry Month of May

MDUMC has agreed to provide Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM) with cleaning products for their Home Care Packages during May. Individuals who come to MAM usually have many needs. If they cannot afford to feed their family, it is unlikely they would have enough money for cleaning products. Home Care Packages help meet that need. In May, donate the items listed and place them in the collection bins located on campus. Cleaning items requested include liquid dish detergent, powdered laundry detergent (no larger than 40 loads), household cleaners (such as Mr. Clean, etc.; no larger than 32 ounces). Your generosity helps restore families to healthy, whole lives. Thank you!

Sock Hop Was a Blast!

The Sock Hop was an incredible event! Hundreds of folks of all ages and stages ate, danced and be-bopped the night away to the sounds of Rev. and the Rockers, a.k.a. Dr Simmons and friends. Many thanks to Jubilee Chairperson Janie McPhail and her Sock Hop chairs, Karen Martin and Mary French. We appreciate the many singles who worked hard for the event's success. We offer a special thanks to the facility staff who helped in countless ways. If you missed this outstanding event, check out the photo gallery by visiting the church's website, www.mdumc.org, and clicking on Jubilee.

The church continues to celebrate its 50th birthday all year. Make plans to attend the next celebration in July. The good times have just begun to roll as we celebrate 50 years of ministry!

Caring & Sharing: Can I Give Back?

We need additional facilitators for Grief Share and DivorceCare support groups. If you have benefited from either of these ministries, we are especially hoping that you are willing and eager to give back. Training will be held in August. If interested, please contact Sheri Kelley immediately at 713/468-8356 ext. 119 or sherikelley@mdumc.org.

Singles

Activities are open to anyone who would like to attend. For event flyers, tickets for fine arts and sporting events, and registration forms, please visit the singles webpage at www.mdumc.org/learn/singles.aspx. For more information, contact Singles Director, Sheri Kelley at 713/468-8356 ext. 119 or sherikelley@mdumc.org.

- 4/25 Kickback Koffee House with bands Through the Roof and Dec!ded, 6:45 p.m., Connection Center
- 4/26 Let's Get Physical Interest Group hosts Kemah Sunset Sail and Seafood Buffet, limited seating
- 5/2 Ragamuffin Class: Soupmobile lunches, 5:15 p.m.
- 5/2 First Friday Flicks: *Into the Wild*; Nightlights
- 5/3 Tennis Under the Stars at Briargrove Park courts, 6:30
- 5/10 Singles serve breakfast at St. John's, leave at 7:15
- 5/11 No council meeting/Mothers' Day
- 5/16 Sunrizon Class: Soupmobile lunches, 5:30 p.m.
- 5/17 New Horizon: House of Amos Food Fair, 10:00 a.m.
- 5/17 Ragamuffin Class Movie-Dinner Night; for details or to sign up, contact heather-menzies@sbcglobal.net

Even the Ants are Invited!

Come join the Singles Ministry for a Candlelight Picnic in Wesley Hall on Sunday, May 18, at 6:00 p.m. We'll have a delicious barbecue meal catered by Ben's Catering and fantastic entertainment provided by the FX Quartet, which is comprised of members of the Houston Tidelanders Barbershop Chorus and the Barbershop Harmony Society. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased in the Friendship Court on Sundays or by contacting the SAM office during the week. You do not need to be a member to attend! All are welcome!

Fabulous Fridays!

First Friday Flicks– 6:45 p.m. at the Connection Center, 13194 Memorial Dr.

Fourth Friday Kickback Koffee House– 7:00 p.m. at the Connection Center, 13194 Memorial Dr.

Fifth Friday Footworks– 7:00 p.m. at the Refuge, 13150 Memorial Dr.

Weekly Offerings

- Singles Sunday School classes meet at 9:30 a.m.
- C.S. Lewis Forum on 1st & 3rd Sundays
- Bike at Terry Hershey Park on 2nd & 4th Sundays
- Singles Bible study on Wednesdays at 7:15 p.m., D219
- Open tennis for mid-upper levels at 6:30 p.m. at Briargrove Park courts on Thursdays
- Golf lessons on designated Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. at Connection Center

Shepherd Drive Fellowship

Vision Team

In January, the Vision Team was commissioned to discern, through prayer, God's vision for Shepherd Drive Fellowship. We looked at the biblical principles of God's people called in community, we investigated demographics and wrestled with core values.

This congregation is 108 years old in the midst of a diverse community. Most of our neighbors are 25–42. If they have children, the children are under age 5. They are well-educated, tech-savvy and looking for a meaning in their lives. They value relationships, physical health and preserving our environment. Spiritual matters interest them, but organized religion is unappealing.

From I-10 South to Memorial, inside the loop, there are few elementary schools and one public magnet (High School for Law Enforcement). Our area has no grocery stores. The major point of connection appears to be Memorial Park. Our local civic organizations do help to draw the neighborhoods together.

SDF recognizes the need to provide our community with a connection point. Therefore, our Mission Statement is... *Connecting People to God and Neighbor.*

After identifying the needs of our community, we brainstormed a variety of ideas to fulfill our mission. We are exploring a variety of ideas from collaborating with the local elementary schools, farmers markets, a coffee house, hosting Meet Your Neighbors events in neighborhood parks and working on area homes. To make connections in the context of community, we are also working on greeter ministries, shut-in visitation and hospitality. In the future, we will look at the areas of study, worship and prayer. Our vision for Shepherd Drive Fellowship is to *be the light of Christ shining into a diverse community.*

Mother/Daughter Banquet

The Annual Mother/Daughter Banquet will be held on Wednesday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall and the guest speaker will be CeCe Gordon, teacher and Methodist minister. All women of the church are invited and we encourage you to invite your mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, co-workers, neighbors or friends. This is one of the favorite events of the year, so don't miss the fun!

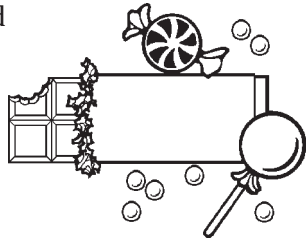
Mother's Day Breakfast

Set your alarm clocks to get here early on Mother's Day, May 11, to enjoy a fabulous breakfast that will be served from 8:15–9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall! The men and children will prepare a scrumptious meal for the special ladies of SDF—complete with pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits, gravy, fruit, milk, juice and coffee.

Children's Ministries

Teachers Are the Sweetest!

Children's Sunday School and Weekday teachers were honored this past Sunday at a Teacher Appreciation Banquet held at the Refuge. It was great fun! Thank you to all our teachers and volunteers for all they do to make MDUMC a great place for children.



Come One! Come All!

You are cordially invited to the annual Children's Choir Spring Show on Sunday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m. in Wesley Hall. We are celebrating the joys of friendship! There will be songs, skits and wonderful food! There will even be selections from our wonderful STARS Bell Choir! We'd love to see you there!



Celebrating Confirmation

What a great day it was! On Sunday, April 13, the church gained 50 new members when the Confirmation Class of 2008 was confirmed in each of the four services. Congratulations to this wonderful group of sixth graders and to their proud parents!

Summer Letters to Parents

Soon parents will receive letters with their summer Sunday School teaching assignments. In order to give the regular Sunday School teachers the summer off, all parents who do not teach during the school year are asked to take a couple of Sundays during the summer to help out. It's fun and easy... and the kids love having their parents in the classroom! Keep an eye open for the letters as we prepare for another great summer.

Third Graders Had a Blast!

The Third Grade Bible Academy class had an overnight at MDUMC last Friday. It was beyond fun! We played games, got presents, won prizes, answered trivia questions, went to the Refuge for breakfast, and even participated in a Biblical meal. Wow! Thanks to Cindy Pike, third grade teacher extraordinaire, for putting the event together!

Children's Weekday School

Have you had a chance to visit our award-winning garden? The Weekday School recently received the Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children (HAAEYC) Award for our celebration plans for the Week of the Young Child. The Week of the Young Child is a nationally-recognized event honoring young children, their families, and early childhood professionals who make a difference in the lives of young children.

Each child planted a flower during the week. On Friday, April 18, the students, parents, teachers and members of the Vision's Sunday School class gathered at the garden site with Rev. Susan Wiley. Rev. Wiley beautifully expressed our thanksgiving for God's creations and for the helping hands of MDUMC Vision's class. The children released ladybugs into the garden as a benefit to the flower garden and the bird sanctuary. Balloons were released into the air in celebration.

We are so grateful for the helping hands of the MDUMC Vision's Sunday School class; they gave a gift that keeps on giving.



Don't Forget... Register for Summer Activities for Children!

Go online to www.mdumckids.org to explore the many summer activities planned for children this year at MDUMC. There's plenty of fun for pre-schoolers and elementary-aged children. Sign up the children and grandchildren for an exciting week of Vacation Bible School. If you have questions about the activities you find online, call 713/468-8356 ext. 136.

Adult Education

Gold Standard Graduates

All Gold Standard graduates are invited to a reception to hear words of wisdom for your great teaching ministry from Dr. Chuck Simmons and to welcome the Gold Standard Class of 2008! Please join us on Thursday, May 8, from 7:00–8:00 p.m. in D126! Please RSVP for the reception and childcare with Sabrina by Monday, May 5. You may contact her at 713/468-8356 or sabrinagallegos@mdumc.org.

Adult Class Leaders Meeting

Need help in planning curriculum or finding teachers for your class? Do you need a teacher for your class next week? Are you screaming “Help!” or do you just need some ideas? Tara Hunsucker and Maggie Parker will discuss Curriculum Planning and the process they use in their classes (Discovery and Friendship) at the next Adult Class Leaders Meeting. The meeting is on Sunday, April 27, from 12:00–2:00 p.m. in Room D126. This meeting is for all class officers and programming people; **please be sure your class is represented** at the meeting. Lunch is a delicious brisket meal (at no charge). Please RSVP to Vicky Harris at 713/468-8356 ext. 129 or vickyharris@mdumc.org for lunch and childcare reservations.

Bible Study Celebration

Celebrate a year of studying God’s Word with a potluck supper, student and leader recognition, and worship with Dr. Simmons. You and your spouse and/or friends are invited, especially those interested in Bible study next fall. Please bring a dish to share. Last names that begin with A–H, please bring a salad; I–P, a side dish; and Q–Z, a dessert. Entrée, bread and beverages are furnished. Please RSVP by May 18 if you are attending and if you need childcare, which is available by reservation only. Contact Sabrina Whitehurst in the Spiritual Life Office at 713/468-8356 ext. 134 or sabrinagallegos@mdumc.org.

Calling All Young Adults

Join us for Young Adult Bible Study on Tuesday nights at 7:15 p.m. The group meets at Collin Taylor’s house for a study of the book of James. Pizza is part of the evening; come ready to eat! We also have Young Adult Sunday School every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in room D221. We are doing a book study on United Methodist beliefs.

For directions to Collin’s house or more information about the Young Adult program, contact Collin Taylor at 713/468-8356 or collintaylor@mdumc.org. We’d love to meet you and get to know you.

Senior Adults

Hear Councilwoman Pam Holm This Friday

Councilwoman Pam Holm will be the speaker for April’s Prime Timer’s Covered Dish Luncheon this Friday, April 25. The luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. in Wesley Hall. Bring a dish and join us. You will want to be here to hear Ms. Holm update us on the latest news in City Council’s District G.

Join Us for a Senior Adults Retreat

The Texas Conference Senior Adult Retreat is Tuesday through Thursday, May 6–8. It is being held at Camp Allen this year, a beautiful Episcopal retreat center located just outside of Navasota. Dr. Richard Gentzler, the United Methodist Board of Discipleship’s Director of Older Adult Ministries, is the keynote speaker. The accommodations are in their motel building and the food is excellent. This will be a fun and inspiring event with plenty of time to walk and enjoy the beautiful setting. The cost of \$160 covers all expenses. For more information, brochures and registration form, please contact Rev. McPhail or Barbara Leflar at 713/468-8356.

May Day Trip

The Prime Timers will travel to Washington-on-the-Brazos on Friday, May 16, to visit historic Barrington Farm and other exhibits at the state park. We will picnic under a covered shelter on the banks of the Brazos River. The cost for this trip is \$15 per person which includes admissions and a boxed lunch with beverages. A county bus will leave the Connection Center at 11:00 a.m. A one-hour tour at the farm starts at 2:30 p.m.

Senior Adult Luncheon at Conference

The Senior Adult Luncheon at this year’s Annual Conference will be held on Monday, May 26, at noon. The speaker is Rev. Dr. Helen Appleberg, an ordained Episcopal Priest and Visiting Scholar at the Sealy Center on Aging, Department of Geriatrics, UTMB Galveston. Annual Conference will be held at the Woodlands UMC. A church bus will leave at 11:00 a.m. from the west parking lot. Tickets are \$14 and reservations must be made by Friday, May 2. Contact Barbara Leflar at 713/468-8356 ext 237 or barbaraleflar@mdumc.org for reservations.

Wednesday Night Worship

Join us each Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. in Friendship Court for a time of worship and prayer. Mid-week worship allows you to stop in the middle of a busy week and reflect on God’s presence in your life. Come be a part of this contemplative service led by Suzy Reedstrom.

Our Church Family

Baptisms

Caroline Clark, daughter of George and Meg Basu, baptized on April 13.
Logan Rex, son of Shawn and Melissa Ayers, baptized on April 20.
Mason Dale, son of J and Robin Oliver, baptized on April 20.
Ilene Avery, daughter of Gerry and Kim Elphingstone, baptized on April 20.
Paige Ellen, daughter of Bill and Jodi Dibala, baptized on April 20.

Marriages

Joanna Denson and Jimmy Board, married on April 19.

Sympathy to...

Helen Hester on the death of her husband, Bill Hester, on April 16.
Steve Manry on the death of his mother, Frances Manry, on April 10.
Staff member Howard Fowler on the death of his father, J.D. Fowler, on April 11.

Memorials & Gifts

Memorials have been received in memory of... John Brice; Duane Neal; Dan Scholl III, father of Daniel Scholl; Ray Stratton; Rufline Toliver, mother of Sherman Toliver; and Jack Tulloss.

New Members

Dan and Brenda Worden joined by transfer from St. Luke-Simpson UMC, Lake Charles, LA.
Bill and Billie Curtis joined by transfer from another Methodist church in the city on April 20.
Scott Farmer join by transfer from another Methodist church in the city on April 20.
Ashley Brockett joined by profession of faith on April 20.
Karen Parker-Trees joined by vows from Second Baptist, Houston on April 20.
Joe and Anita Hopson joined by transfer from Mercer Island UMC, Mercer Island, WA.

Confirmation Class of 2008

On April 13, Confirmation Sunday, 50 sixth graders joined Memorial Drive United Methodist Church! They are Jacqueline Estelle Bartling-John, Anna Blair Bergersen, Jonathan Russell Bouwhuis, Kevin Jackson Bradshaw, Murphy Joseph Brennan, William Spence Bridges, Jr., Graham Bucklen Burns, Emma Martin Center, McGregor James Dalton, Emily Elisabeth David, Turner Shaw DeVaney, Allison Michelle Eggert, Bennett Charles Ferrari, Leann Marie Ferrell, Cody Kyle Finger, Sarah Anne Finkelstein, Alexis Morgan Frederick, Garrett Russell Hogue, John Ryan Hormell, Arden McKenna Johnson, Hilton Wayne Karisch III, Sandhya Cecila Kaur Sihra, Trevin Robert Kurtanich, Brian Matthew Linderman, Marissa Taylor Lloyd, Austin Warren Matthews, Meg Eileen McConville, Lauren Michele McDaniel, Reid Cunzalo Nagle, Haley Louise Newbanks, Annie Gilham O'Keefe, Keller Matthew O'Malley, Ryan Eric Ogilvie, Jacob Silas Pennington, Ashley Brenna Pilcher, Riley Lauren Reese, Kylie Anne Schaper, Matthew Charles Schwarz, Casey Elizabeth Sparks, Rachel Eileen Standefer, Stephen Gregory Swank, Jennifer Ann Swanson, Taylor Hope Traugott, Claire Carson Van Wart, Lillian Elise Weaver, Abigail Katharine White, Alexandria Kaitlin White, Sarah Margaret Wilson, Raymond Scott Wimberley and Cole Stephen Zander. Please welcome these new members to the church family, and celebrate with them as they made this important decision for their lives.

In Loving Memory

Frances C. Manry

April 10, 2008

*Who Has Joined
The Church Triumphant*

In Loving Memory

William R. Hester

April 16, 2008

*Who Has Joined
The Church Triumphant*

Your Online Resource

Communication is vital in a church as large as MDUMC, and the church's website is an important source of information for members and others in the community. If you haven't seen the site in a while, visit www.mdumc.org, and check out what's available online. You will find an updated look with current information available at your fingertips. With a click or two of the mouse, the week's calendar can be read or Dr. Simmons' sermons can be heard. If you want to find out more about a specific ministry, it's likely that you can find what you need on the site. Use the website as a tool for finding ways to worship, grow, witness, and give at Memorial Drive UMC.

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Dated Material
April 23, 2008

Annual Foundation Banquet

We want to see you at the annual Caring Forever Foundation banquet on Monday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. We are very excited to have as the guest speaker Dr. Mouzon Biggs, Senior Pastor of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was the first Associate Minister to serve at MDUMC.

Make your reservations as soon as possible. The cost is \$50; you are asked to pay at the door. Call the reception desk at 713/468-8356 to make your reservations. Questions about the banquet or the Caring Forever Foundation? Contact Ben Taylor at 713/468-8356 ext. 244 or bentaylor@mdumc.org.

Commission & Ordination Service

The church will take a bus to the Ordination and Commission Service at Annual Conference on Tuesday, May 27, when Dr. Bob Pierce will be commissioned. Dr. Simmons is chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry and will have a prominent role in the ordination service. Bishop Janice Huie will preach. Since this is both an ordination and commissioning service, it will be a long service with a large attendance.

The service will be held at The Woodlands UMC, the host church for the Texas Annual Conference. The bus will leave from the west parking lot at 5:30 in order to be on time for the service which begins at 7:00 p.m. Eat before you come or bring a snack for the bus. The cost is \$5 per person to cover gas expenses. After the service, there will be a reception to greet the newly ordained. The bus should return to the church before 10:30 p.m. For reservations for the bus, call Barbara Leflar at 713/468-8356 ext. 237.

MDUMC Enters the Blogosphere!

What's a blog? Something like a combination of journaling, reading a good book and a conversation between friends—all over the web. If you've never read a blog, responded to a blog or written a blog entry, here's your chance! During the season of Pentecost, MDUMC is going to enter the world of blogging. Our blog, entitled *Thru the Eyes of...*, you'll read of church members' experiences of the Holy Spirit's presence in their life through worship, spiritual growth, the witness of their faith and their giving back to God. And, you'll be able to respond by adding your own experiences, asking questions of the writer or by simply commenting on what's been written. Join us, as we discover God's presence thru the eyes of... **you!**

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