

CONNECTION

Home for Easter includes Africa theme

NTC Igniting Ministry is introducing a new Africa-theme oversize postcard for the 2008 “Home for Easter” inviting and welcoming emphasis. The theme coordinates with the Bishop’s Initiative for Africa University materials without being so specifically related that it cannot be used for other purposes.

“We believe that the new design will offer creative opportunities for our churches to open their arms, as well as their hearts, minds and doors, to seekers who have a heart for Africa and our outreach to God’s children around the world,” says Director of Communication Dr. Joan G. LaBarr.

Dr. LaBarr added that even though the NTC is investing the bulk of the Igniting Ministry advertising money for Spring 2008 in the cooperative positive messaging campaign with the Central Texas Conference and United Methodist Communications, arrangements have been made to offer the Africa-theme cards to NTC churches at a discount.

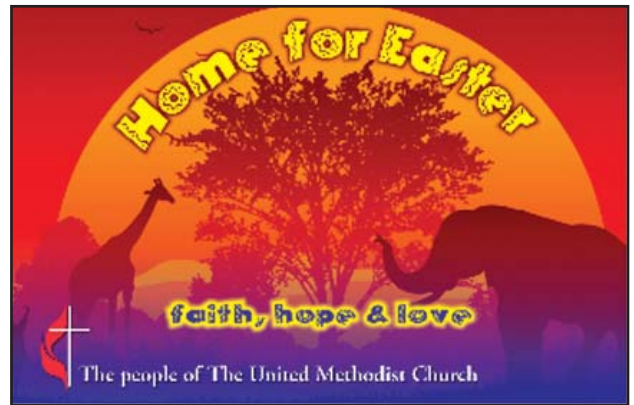
While individual cards normally cost 15 cents each, through a special agreement with The Crouch Group, the NTC advertising agency, the Africa theme cards will be 12 cents each for orders up to 2,500 and 10 cents each for orders of 2,500 or more. Imprinting and other special handling is available through The Crouch Group for a modest additional fee. Call 888-211-0273 or e-mail: tim@thecrouchgroup.com or ron@thecrouchgroup.com for more information, or online: www.thecrouchgroup.com to view all of the Lent/Easter designs.

Other NTC advertising for the Lent/Easter season to support local church inviting and welcoming efforts by making United Methodism especially visible during the two weeks prior to Easter will be special ads in *The Dallas Observer* and *Dallas Quick*.

Both publications have readerships fitting the “seeker” demographic, and we have also purchased Easter ads in the *Star* newspapers that have readerships in the Metroplex suburbs,” Dr. LaBarr notes.

The national *Igniting Ministry* campaign is also aiming for a “seeker” audience, and is planning to air the “Finding Yourself” spots on major cable outlets the two weeks prior to Easter on March 23.

For more information, call Dr. Joan LaBarr, 972-526-5036, 800-969-8201, or e-mail: labarr@ntucumc.org.



Six NTC pastors have formed a band of a different kind, for spiritual nurturing and more. This band is a group of musicians in love with great music of the past, who gather to make music that feeds their souls and to raise money for UM missions.

The band is known as *Connections*, in recognition of their clergy connection, to great music, and the calling as UM to be connected to those in need through giving to missions.

Connections has raised more than \$20,000 for UMCOR and *Nothing But*

Nets. Musicians donate their time, and UM churches provide the venues for the coffee house-style concerts.

No tickets are sold, but throughout the concert the band actively promotes donations to the mission offering for the evening,

'Connections' 2008 Spring/Summer Schedule

Friday, March 7, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 5, 7:00 p.m.
Friday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.
Friday, June 13, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, July 27, 6:00 p.m.

"Chicago/Eagles"
"Chicago/Eagles"
"Dan Fogelberg"
"Chicago/Eagles"
"James Taylor/Carole King"

First UMC, Sachse
First UMC, Grand Prairie
Lovers Lane UMC, Dallas
First UMC, Richardson
Walnut Hill UMC, Dallas

INFORMation:

◆ **First UMC, Wichita Falls,** presented the **2008 Perkins Lecture series** March 2-4, with **Dr. R. Maurice Boyd** returning as guest lecturer. Theme for the series was **"The Action of Mercy."** To order DVDs, tapes, CDs and videos of this and past series, contact **Rev. John Dillard** at 940-766-4231, ext. 227, or e-mail: jdillard@fumcwf.org.

◆ Feb. 10 was a glorious Sunday as the congregation of **Plymouth Park UMC, Irving,** gathered to worship and celebrate **"Scout Sunday."** As a token of appreciation, the Troop, Pack and Venturing Crew presented the church with a copy of Norman Rockwell's painting, **"A Scout is Reverent."**

◆ The **Nothing But Nets (NBN)** anti-malaria campaign kicked off a week of activity in the Dallas area Feb. 5 as **NTC** and campaign leaders addressed a laity and clergy luncheon at **Christ UMC, Plano.** NBN held a series of Dallas events as **Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert** declared Feb. 4-10 to be **"Nothing But Nets Week"** as part of the city's commitment to the cause.

◆ The annual **Art is Ageless** is "home" at **The Point Center for Arts and Education,** located on the C.C.Young campus at 4847 West Lawther Drive in Dallas. The **2008 Art of Ageless** celebration of art and the human spirit is scheduled for April 12 at 2:00 p.m.

◆ **Dallas walkers** from congregations and organizations across the city will line up and step off to help fight hunger in the annual **CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty)** Hunger Walk on April 6. For information, contact **Edward St. John,** 214-801-0263, e-mail: edward@rebusbusinessystems.com.

◆ The **UMW Tri-District Social Action** event, **"Living Faith - Seeking Justice"** will be April 19, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at **Highland Park UMC, Dallas.** All are welcome. Sponsoring districts include **Dallas South, Dallas-Denton,** and **Dallas Northeast.**

◆ **UMCOR** is responding to victims of tornadoes that struck five southern states the night of Feb. 5. Contribute to **UMCOR** by sending checks to: Treasurer, North Texas Annual Conference, P.O. Box 866128, Plano, TX 75086 with **NTC Advance No. 258.**

◆ **United Methodists** from across the **Wichita Falls District** gathered Jan. 20 for the third annual district-wide evangelism event **"Hearts Afire 2008."** This year's theme **"Ponder Anew What the Almighty Can Do: Living in Covenant with God and One Another"** was ably and powerfully addressed by **Bishop Alfred L. Norris.**

◆ On Feb. 17 glorious sounds from inspirational messages, powerful prayers and electrifying music rang out far beyond the walls of the newly completed **Robertson Activity Center** at **Stonebridge UMC, McKinney.** More than 1,200 worshippers gathered for the consecration of the 23,000 sq. ft. addition to the church facilities. The activities included celebrating 50 years of ministry by the building's namesakes, **Rev. Pete and Jane Robertson,** formerly of McKinney.

◆ Churches learned to develop their own **Master Emergency Operation Plans** at the **Disaster Response Task Force** sponsored, **"Developing a Plan for Your Local Church"** training on March 6 at the **NTC Ministry Center.**

◆ **First UMC, DeSoto,** hosted the **Bread for the World "Offering of Letters"** workshop, March 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information, please call 888-257-0239, or e-mail: breadtx@bread.org.

Larry Cox needs more wheelchairs

Juntos Servimos Ministry, based in Matamoros, Mexico, is seeking 24 "traditional" wheelchairs for use in several nearby villages.

Larry Cox, Juntos Servimos executive director, reports that the ministry is moving close to collecting a thousand wheelchairs, primarily through the organization Joni and Friends and efforts by First UMC, Mansfield, and individuals in the Brownsville area.

Cox cites an example of the kind of persons who need the chairs. A young man named Cuco had a diving accident that left him motionless from the neck down. Over the years his condition has improved, and with an appropriate chair, he would be able to participate on a wheelchair basketball team. He has learned to use a computer and is, as Cox describes, "a courageous, wonderful kid."

For more information or to contribute chairs, contact Cox at 956-763-0326 or e-mail: larry@juntosservimos.org.

DVDs featuring the **Bishop's Initiative for Africa University** are available free of charge to churches by contacting the **NTC Communications Office,** 972-526-5036, 800-969-8201, or e-mail labarr@ntcumc.org.

SCJ episcopal candidates



Among the candidates for the office of bishop interviewing with the South Central Jurisdiction Women's Leadership Team Jan. 28 at Highland Park UMC, Dallas, were from left: Revs. Earl Bledsoe, Texas Conference; Jim Welch, Texas Conference; Tim Bruster, Central Texas Conference; Roberto Gomez, Rio Grande Conference; Jim Dorff, North Texas Conference; Cheryl Bell, Kansas West Conference; Rodney Steele, Arkansas Conference; Mike Lowry, Southwest Texas Conference, and Steve Rankin, Kansas West Conference. Elections will take place during the Jurisdictional Conference in Dallas July 16-19. At this point, four bishops are expected to be elected.