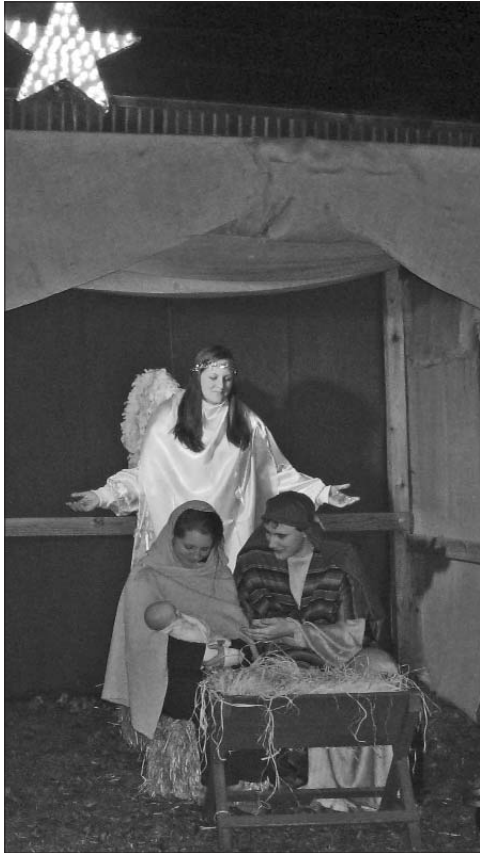


O HOLY NIGHT



UPUMC youth re-enacted the night of Jesus' birth for the annual Live Nativity on Dec. 23. The four performances of the Live Nativity drew large crowds to the church's front lawn. See more photos of Advent activities on page 4A.

*Photo courtesy of Garth Allen.*

## Come hear Proyecto Abrigo leader

Come hear the Rev. Jose Luis Portillo, director of Proyecto Abrigo, speak at the next Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me men's speaker series at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 19 in Fellowship Hall.

Everyone – not just men – are welcome to share in the story of Portillo's faith journey. Breakfast will be served and costs \$5 at the door. RSVP to 972.733.5352 if you intend to eat.

Juarez, Mexico, where Proyecto Abrigo builds cinderblock houses for families in need, is close to Portillo's heart. He grew up there as one of 10 children, and he experienced firsthand the struggles that many of the families helped by Proyecto Abrigo endure.

When Portillo was a child, he helped provide for his family by selling cigarettes and cigars on the streets of Juarez, according to

See "Portillo," page 5A



## Let God get you ready for new things

by Karen Lewis

Every single house that is built through Proyecto Abrigo begins with a cinderblock foundation, followed by cinderblock walls that are raised along a plumb line.

A foundation and a plumb line.

That sounds so simple, doesn't it?

But those walls don't raise themselves, no more than the lot of land on which the house is being built was already cleared of brush and trash, nor the mortar and concrete pre-mixed. What is needed in addition to that foundation and plumb line are the hands and feet that labor to mix the mortar and move the cinderblocks – to raise the walls and to actually build the house.

God calls each of us to be His hands and feet in the world. It is an enormous commission, and one that we each fulfill in a unique way. Several years ago, I felt the pull to fulfill part of my own commission by joining a team from UPUMC to Proyecto Abrigo.

Just before that first trip, I was filled with apprehension. For weeks, people had been telling me that it would be an incredible experience. They also told me to prepare myself for service by letting go of expectations, of control, and even

See "How," page 5A



## Plans are under way for 2008 Youth Auction

For one Sunday every other year, Fellowship Hall is transformed into an auction house, with items up for bid rivaling anything sold through the world's best auctioneers.

Well, not quite. But, with

your help, the 2008 Youth Auction on March 30 will be an event to remember – and will raise \$60,000 for youth projects and trips over the next two years.

The youth at UPUMC par-

ticipate in a variety of outreach programs each year. Most recently, 24 youth spent a week in Mississippi and Louisiana working on cleaning and building projects to

See "Youth Auction," page 4A



Embrace the winds of change

5A



Farewell from the Rev. Phil Mercer

5A

### IN WORSHIP JAN. 13, 2008

Traditional, 8:30 and 11 a.m.  
Baptized, For What? Mark 1:4-11  
the Rev. Leighton Bearden

The Bridge, 11 a.m.  
Sprinkled, Splashed, Soaked,  
Matthew 3:13-17  
the Rev. Rebecca Frank

### IN WORSHIP JAN. 20, 2008

Traditional, 8:30 and 11 a.m.  
Blessing the Ordinary, John 2:1-11  
the Rev. Leighton Bearden

The Bridge, 11 a.m.  
Facing our Fears, Psalm 27  
Garth Allen, preaching

## SING, EAT, BE MERRY



All of UPUMC's choirs came together on Dec. 16 to perform in the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols. Following was the much-loved Church Family Christmas Dinner in Fellowship Hall. See more photos of this and other Advent activities at <http://upumc.shutterfly.com>.

*Photos courtesy of Quentin Dudley*

## Youth Auction is March 30

Continued from page 1

restore homes to victims of Hurricane Katrina. And the Aldersgate Chorale has performed fully staged Christian musicals all over the United States and Canada. In 2008, they will travel to the U.S. West Coast with a new production of "Godspell."

These projects are fully funded by the Youth Auction and Luncheon held every other year.

This year will be a little different from years past in that an online portion of the auction will begin on March 5, followed by the in-person silent auction, live auction and luncheon at noon on March 30 in Fellowship Hall.

More information about the online auction will be coming soon, but first things first. Right now, the Youth Auction Committee needs your help.

There are several ways to participate.

- Make a monetary gift either by sending a check with "Youth Auction" in the note section to the church, or go online to [www.upumc.org/pages/Online\\_Giving\\_One\\_Time](http://www.upumc.org/pages/Online_Giving_One_Time). Your donation is tax-deductible, and all guests at the luncheon will receive a program recognizing your contribution.

- Attend the auction and luncheon on March 30. Tickets for the luncheon are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. UPUMC member Kim Wooldridge will be preparing a wonderful homemade meal. Buy your tickets on Sunday in the Information Center or reserve your space online at [www.upumc.org/pages/Youth\\_Luncheon\\_Tickets](http://www.upumc.org/pages/Youth_Luncheon_Tickets).

- Contribute auction items worth at least \$25. Ideas for items include sports or entertainment tickets, sports memorabilia, gift certificates, children's items, collectibles, airline tickets, spa packages, gently used furniture, art and small appliances. Bring your donations to the church by Feb. 17 or contact Dawn Moore at [Dawn\\_Moore@swbell.net](mailto:Dawn_Moore@swbell.net) to have your donation picked up.

## Upcoming UMW Circle Meetings

## Circle 1

Monday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m.

Leaders: Diane Williamson & Cynthia Mills  
Location: home of Barbara Jackson,  
7857 Caruth Court

Speaker: Andy Roughton/his prison ministry

## Circle 3

Monday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m.

Leaders: Kathy Krueger and Marie Head  
Location: home of Kathy Kruger, 7415 Caruth  
Speaker: Donna Bearden/get acquainted meeting

## Circle 5

Monday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m.

Leader: Kelli Sander  
Location: home of Chrys Franklin, 3020 Rosedale  
Speaker: Jan Karns/Palestinian Israeli conflict

## Circle 8

Monday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.

Leader: Reggie Campbell  
Location: Parlor  
Speaker: Reggie Campbell/Journey Through the Psalms

## What will the winds of change bring to you?

by the Rev. Dick Wilson, adult spiritual formation

Every new year brings change, and with each new year, many of us make plans for how to accomplish that change. Some of us sit down and write out our resolutions, our plans for action. Others of us just think about our resolutions. And then some of us just don't try anymore to make resolutions. We just let the new year take its own course and see what happens.

Last week I was thinking about my resolutions, and I started thinking about whether God makes new year resolutions. Maybe God thinks about doing something better in the new year and plans for it, or maybe God decides to create something new in the coming year, or to let us humans discover something new like a cure for a disease or a hidden treasure from an ancient society.

Does God really do that?

Or does God blow a new wave of change into our human minds to allow us to participate in changing ourselves? I like to think this is what God does because I like seeing change within me and knowing that I was part of it.

So I guess the question is "How do we change ourselves and allow God to blow through our minds?"

The answer: Find a time every day to allow God to have time with you. Yes, that is it. A God time to patiently wait to feel the spirit of God blow through your mind and speak change to you. A time to know that you are sharing time with God.

Psalm 121:1-2 says, "I look up to the mountains; does my strength come from mountains? No, my strength comes from God, who made heaven, and earth, and mountains."



## Mercers show appreciation

by the Rev. Phil and Mary Mercer

The Mercers thank you! We thank you for receiving us graciously after our first retirement and for allowing us to work with you over the past 5½ years.

Sunday was a wonderful, gratifying day for us. Thank you for the gentle roasting, your generous love offerings and your good wishes.

We know God's blessings will continue for University Park United Methodist Church. As Paul exhorts us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances ..."



The Rev. Phil Mercer stands with his wife, Mary, left, and Diane Brooks, a member of the Evangelism Committee, during his farewell celebration on Jan. 6. Mercer left his role as minister of evangelism at the end of December.

## Portillo to share story of faith journey at Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me event

Continued from page 1

his biography at [www.proyectoabrigo.com](http://www.proyectoabrigo.com). He and his sister Juana received scholarships to the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, a United Methodist high school owned by the South Central Jurisdiction where many Mexican children get their chance at an education.

At Lydia Patterson, Portillo heard God's call on his life. He went on to graduate from John Wesley Seminary in Monterrey, Mexico, and was appointed to minister to a church in Juarez.

That appointment was the beginning of a dream come true for many Juarez families.

Portillo invited volunteers to come help him build the church building. Those volunteers saw the residents of Juarez living in cardboard houses and asked what they could do to help. Thus was born Operacion Hogar (Operation Home) in 1992, which Portillo started with the help of Volunteers in Mission.

Operacion Hogar used teams of volunteers from the United States to build concrete block houses for fami-

lies living in cardboard shacks. Most of the houses were built in Tierra Nueva, a community on the outskirts of Juarez.

Portillo left Operacion Hogar in 1996 and founded Proyecto Abrigo, doing the same type of home building. Between these two organizations, Portillo has been responsible for building more than 1,000 houses over the past 15 years.

UPUMC has sent many teams of volunteers to Mexico to help build houses with Proyecto Abrigo, and they'll send another team over

President's Day Weekend - Feb. 15-18. Applications are due Jan. 20 and are available in the Information Center.

If you feel called to take part in this worthy act of service, come to an informational session in Fellowship Hall after the 11 a.m. worship service on Sunday. You'll get answers to your questions and get a chance to speak with some of your fellow churchgoers who have experienced past Proyecto Abrigo builds.

For more information, contact Karen Lewis at 972.241.3529.

## How can we stay true to God's plumb line? Serve one another in Jesus' name

Continued from page 1

my sense of time. Whatever preconceived notions of concrete-mixing I possessed, I could let go of those. But this was my first mission trip, and on top of that, it would be my first trip outside the States, and to a country whose language I did not speak. Would I ever be prepared?

Just as God calls us to be His servants to one another, He also provides a community that surrounds and supports each of us and that helps us fulfill His call. In that first trip to Juarez, I experienced love and shared devotion to God in a multitude of ways: in the relentless encouragement of my fellow

UPUMC team members as we took turns mixing concrete by hand, in the passion with which Jose Luis Portillo shepherds the mission, and through the patient instruction of the maestros who oversaw the building of the house. My apprehension had melted away and been replaced by gratitude, energy and passion for those with whom I had worked to build the cinderblock house.

I was transported back to Juarez several months ago, when our pastor gave a sermon that included this passage of scripture in which Amos describes a vision: "This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb

line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by."

The analogy to our experiences in Juarez left me speechless.

As the church universal, we, too, have a foundation and a plumb line. Our foundation is Jesus Christ, and God is holding the plumb line. To stay true to the line, we are to serve one another.

Will you come join us as His hands and feet, and help raise the walls for a family in Juarez?

**Submit your photo by Sunday**

Jan. 13 is the last day to submit your original photo for the 2008 church pictorial directory if you did not participate in the photography sessions last year. Even if you have requested that your photo from the last directory be used, you must still submit the original to us. We cannot scan it from the previous directory. Put your photo in Carolyn Washburn's mailbox in the church office, and we will ensure it is returned to you. For information, call Carolyn at 469.916.9611.

**It's not too late to pledge**

If you haven't already made your commitment for 2008, you still can. There are several ways to submit your pledge: complete the online form at [www.upumc.org/pages/Pledge\\_Card\\_Form\\_2008](http://www.upumc.org/pages/Pledge_Card_Form_2008), fill out a pledge card and put it in the offering plate, or call the church, 214.368.1435.

**Cinnamon rolls are coming!**

The Collage Sunday school class will be selling the infamous UPUMC homemade cinnamon rolls before and after all worship services on Sunday, Jan. 27. If you haven't had these rolls, you haven't lived. Put away your eat-better resolution for one day and help the Collage Class purchase a bell for the Christ's Foundry 1000 Bells Campaign to fund a new facility for the growing congregation. Rolls are \$5 per pack.

**PRAYERS**

(Names will remain on the prayer list for two weeks. To extend, call 214.368.1435, ext. 104.)

John Lehman; Lu Patterson; Sofia Nicole Conshafter; Dorothy Russell; Julia Frazee; Luther Pully; Carol Bennett; Otis Willingham; Alva Clutts; Mary Stueber; Willena Dupree, mother-in-law of Justin Tull; Lynn Bruce, wife of Dan Bruce; Ruel Pruett, father of Nelson Pruett; Nick Holt, father of Roxanne Holt; Ken Rumbaugh, father of Susan Cummings; Willie Daniels, husband of Sandra Flanagan Daniels; Philip Sturlin, father of Mike Sturlin; Paul Stuart, stepfather of Eric Kraft; Jordan Brantley, father of Dan Brantley; the Rev. Kathleen Baskin-Ball; Hannah Barnes.

**Deaths**

Christine Williams, sister of Nellie Benson, sister-in-law of Charles Thomas and cousin of Ricky Flanagan and Sandra Flanagan Daniels, on Dec. 22 • Barbara Washburn, mother of Ellen Templin and Lee Washburn, on Jan. 6. Memorial service was Jan. 11 at UPUMC. • Lucille Kersey, former member, on Jan. 6. • Val Chambers, mother of Candy Hearne, on Jan. 7. Service is pending.

**Clean closets; help others**

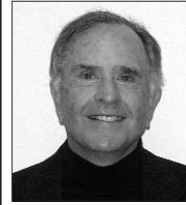
Throughout January, bring your gently used children's clothing, books and toys to the Information Center to be donated to the Family Place. The Family Place is the largest family violence service provider in the Dallas area. For 29 years, this agency has reached out to thousands of victims of family violence each year with award-winning programs that keep women and children safe.

**Midweek Meals are under way**

Be sure to make your reservation by Tuesday of each week to participate in the Midweek Meal. Join your church family at 5:45 p.m. each Wednesday in Fellowship Hall for a meal catered by Marc Hall. Check [www.upumc.org/pages/Midweek\\_Meal](http://www.upumc.org/pages/Midweek_Meal) for the menu and more information. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$3 for children. Reserve your space in the Information Center or call 214.368.1435.

**Gift program is year-round**

The Share the Light gift program is a wonderful way to share God's love at any time of year. Please consider this year-round program for birthdays, anniversaries, graduations or any occasion. Give the gifts that truly last and make a difference in the lives of others. To purchase a gift, visit [upumc.org/pages/Share\\_the\\_Light](http://upumc.org/pages/Share_the_Light) or call 214.368.1435.

**WELCOME REPORT****New Members**

Charles Holland joined Dec. 9 by transfer from a local church. He is single and retired.



Jeff and Katie Ritcher joined Dec. 16 with their children, Eliza and Jack. Jeff is a member of The Bridge Band.

**Baptisms**

Bailey Frances Lake was baptized on Sunday, Dec. 9. She is the daughter of Mike and Chelsea Lake and the sister of Annabelle (not pictured) and Benton.



Margaux Claire Lapeyre was baptized on Sunday, Dec. 23. She is the daughter of Jean-Marc and Ann Lapeyre, granddaughter of Dick and Linda Taylor and niece of Katherine Taylor.



Tatum Elizabeth Kraft was baptized on Sunday, Dec. 23. She is the daughter of Eric and Amy Kraft and the little sister of Blayn.

**Worship and visitor attendance**

Dec. 2	549	18
Dec. 9	588	46
Dec. 16	555	40
Dec. 23	600	65
Dec. 30	460	33
Totals:	2,752	202

Festival of Lessons & Carols 358  
Christmas Eve (3 services total): 1,041

UPUMC welcomed 24 first-time visitors in December.