

## Lay Ministry and Its Impact

“The Lay Ministry program at The Methodist Hospital opened a door for me to explore my inner calling to ministry. With my spiritual gifts affirmed and my skills enhanced, I have offered compassionate and empathic ministry to persons in need in congregational and community settings. This expansion of my ministry has been invaluable to me as I seek to share Christ’s love with others. God has truly blessed me through this life-changing experience!”

**Blair Parker**, Lay Minister  
Christian Church, Disciples of Christ

“Mobilizing and equipping laypersons for the general ministry of the church is a sacred responsibility and exciting opportunity. This is my theology of ministry. The contribution of laypersons whose native gifts are further developed by clergy is significant and, with focused attention, can be massive. Many laity want to be recognized and trained to serve in meaningful ways to further realize God’s Kingdom on earth. To be attentive to God’s movement means, in part, that one becomes an active participant with laypersons as they renew their baptismal vows in their unfolding life as faithful Christians. Thus the vision authored by St. Paul moves closer to fulfillment, ‘...equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:12).”

**The Reverend Thomas J. Pace, III**  
Senior Minister  
St. Luke’s United Methodist Church  
Houston, Texas

## The Rev. Dr. James L. Bankston



Dr. Bankston serves as the Senior Minister of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, Houston, an appointment he has held with distinction for almost 15 years. Jim is a highly respected member of the Texas Annual Conference, having served a number of key leadership positions.

He has also been a delegate to six Jurisdictional Conferences and three General Conferences.

Jim is also an esteemed community leader, serving on numerous Houston boards including the Institute for Spirituality and Health. In addition, he is a member of the Executive Board for Perkins School of Theology.

He has actively facilitated lay ministry throughout his distinguished career. The conference is privileged that Jim will provide a homily on Saturday because of his theological insight, in-depth perspective, and good humor.

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO ST. PAUL’S UMC**

The Organizing Committee expresses deep gratitude to Dr. Bankston and his staff for their hospitality in hosting this event. Their attention to detail and helpful suggestions greatly facilitated the committee’s work. Finally, the beauty of the historic St. Paul’s Church gives the conference added sacredness and depth which will further uplift the spirits of all attendees.

**St. Paul’s United Methodist Church**  
5501 Main Street  
Houston, Texas  
*In the Museum District*

## Conference Schedule

### **Thursday, February 4, 2010**

6:00pm -- 8:00pm

“An Evening with Kathleen Norris”  
Dinner and Conversation

### **Friday, February 5**

9:00am

Kathleen Norris  
“Story Telling as Witness”

Ben Witherington  
“Laying it on the Line: The Role of Laity in Ministry”

12noon Lunch

1:00pm

Kathleen Norris  
“Hope and Healing”

Vance Ross  
“Ministry Of, By, and For the People – In Jesus’ Name”

Worship  
Leah Taylor, preaching

6:00pm – 8:00pm  
“An Evening with Ben Witherington and Vance Ross”  
Dinner and Conversation

### **Saturday, February 6**

9:00am

Ben Witherington  
“We Are All Laity; We Are All Clergy”

11:00am Worship  
Jim Bankston, preaching

### **Registration Fee and Deposit:**

The Conference registration fee is \$145.00. This fee includes the cost of meals. A \$50.00 non-refundable deposit is due with the registration. The balance of the registration is due by Thursday, January 21, 2010.



## *Celebrating a Call to Lay Ministry*

*February 4-6, 2010  
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church  
Houston, Texas*

**Sponsored by  
Spiritual Care and Education  
The Methodist Hospital**

**Endorsed by  
Texas Annual Conference  
United Methodist Church**

## WELCOME

*"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called..."* (4:1). This is Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians about their responsibility as members of the body of Christ.

For Paul early Christians did not receive a suggestion but a *call* to faithfully express their baptism vows. Contemporary Christians are no different. Laypersons are called to serve in accordance with the charisms or gifts they have received through the Holy Spirit in their lives.

*"Celebrating a Call to Lay Ministry"* is a multi-day conference for laypersons and clergy-persons. It consists of plenary addresses by renowned speakers, Q and A sessions, dinner conversations with the speakers, and inspiring worship experiences at the beautiful St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Houston.

### CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES:

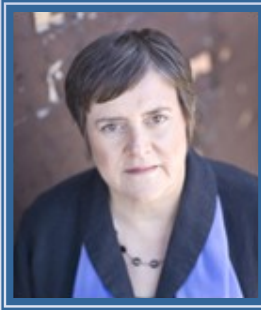
- Laypersons will be inspired to serve thereby expressing their baptismal vows.
- Pastors and laypersons will gain insights about the faith journey and the summons of a call.
- Laypersons and pastors will learn about the biblical and theological authorization of lay ministry.
- Pastors will be inspired to embrace a laity-based model of ministry.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Spiritual Care and Education 713-441-2381

[www.methodistspiritualcare.com/laityconference](http://www.methodistspiritualcare.com/laityconference)

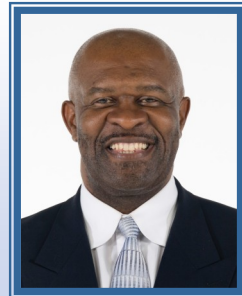
**Kathleen Norris** is the award-winning poet, writer, and author of the New York Times bestsellers *The Cloister Walk*, *Dakota*, and *Amazing Grace*. Ms. Norris is a rare talent. She combines a lively writing style with a personal transparency and intellectual rigor. Her latest book entitled *Acedia & Me* is another example of this engaged approach which captivates the reader.



Widowed in 2003, Ms. Norris now divides her time between South Dakota and Honolulu, Hawaii, where she volunteers and helps teach a spirituality class for teenagers.

Ms. Norris is eminently qualified to speak about the spiritual journey with its differing contours as one seeks to live the life of faithful service to God. She will bring keen insight, unflinching candor, and refreshing wit to our conference.

**The Rev. Vance Ross** serves as the Deputy General Secretary of the General Board of Discipleship for the United Methodist Church.



Before joining the GBOD, Vance served as senior pastor of First UMC, Hyattsville, Maryland, and other pastoral appointments in West Virginia. In addition to several conference leadership duties in the

West Virginia Annual Conference, Vance was elected as a delegate to numerous Jurisdictional and General Conferences.

A native of Bluefield, W.V., Vance has earned degrees from West Virginia Wesleyan College and Gammon Theological Seminary, graduating with honors.

Rev. Ross is a commanding speaker whose experience as a pastor and commitment to lay ministry will provide an essential perspective for the conference.

**Dr. Ben Witherington** is the Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of Durham in England.

Dr. Witherington has written over thirty books, including *The Jesus Quest* and *The Paul Quest*, both of which were selected as top biblical studies by *Christianity Today*. In addition, he has authored six biblical commentaries, ranging from the synoptic gospels, Paul's writings, and the book of Revelation.

His encompassing expertise has been sought by a numerous national media outlets including NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, and The Discovery Channel.

An outstanding biblical scholar, Dr. Witherington will bring a vital biblical and theological dimension to the conference. Ben combines scholarly insights with an engaging presentation style.

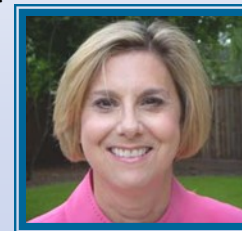


**Leah Taylor** serves as the Lay Leader of the Texas Annual Conference. Leah has given exemplary service to the Annual Conference. That contribution includes membership on the Conference Extended Cabinet, the Conference Core Leadership Team, the Advancing Pastoral Leadership Board.

Leah has also served as a delegate to the 2008 Jurisdictional and General Conferences.

Leah earned two degrees from the University of Texas, a bachelor's in Journalism and a doctorate in Jurisprudence. After working as an attorney for several years, she chose to become a stay-at-home mom which led to numerous volunteer activities.

As a layperson of deep religious faith and articulate wisdom, the conference is extremely fortunate that Leah will serve as the preacher for Friday's worship service.



### *Celebrating a Call to Lay Ministry (Feb. 4-6, 2010) Registration Form*

Name desired on name tag: \_\_\_\_\_

Lay  Clergy  Religious Orders /  Female  Male

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would prefer vegetarian meals.  Yes, I would like information concerning travel and housing.

\$145.00 registration fee enclosed  Make check payable to: **The Methodist Hospital**

6565 Fannin Street, D-102  
Houston, Texas 77030