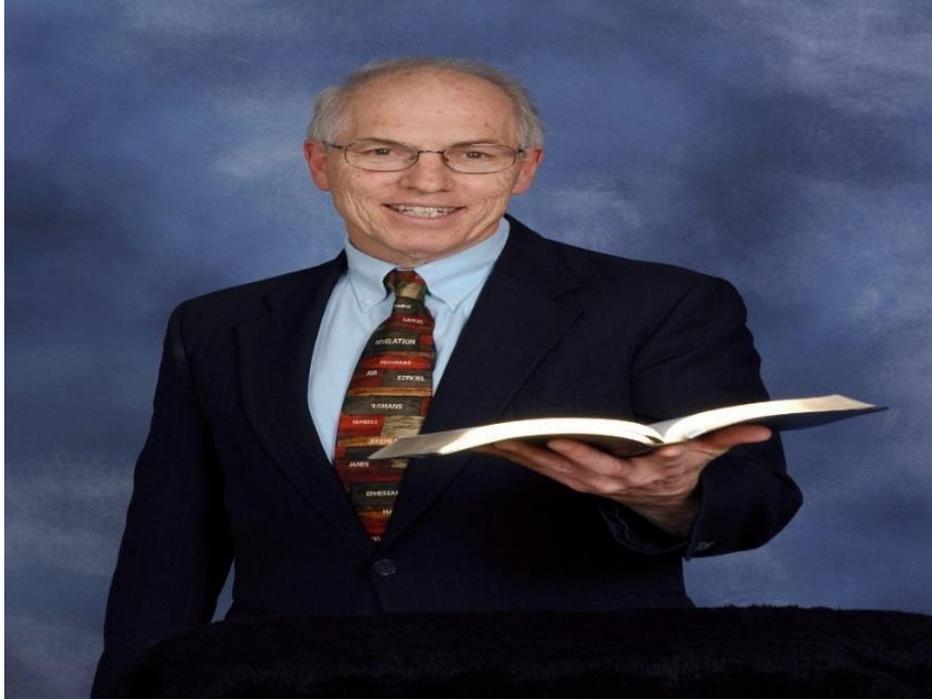


**Texas Conference United Methodist Women  
2017 Special Mission Recognition  
Honoring**



**Reverend J. Clayton Whitaker**

Clay was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota where he lived until he was ten years of age. Then his family moved to Springfield, Illinois and later to Columbia, Tennessee. He graduated from Columbia High School. After several years of wondering, he found Christ in July of 1972. He started his college career at Columbia State Community College. In pursuit of a possible call to the ministry he enrolled in Asbury College, where he obtained a BA in Bible in 1980. He then graduated from Asbury Seminary in May of 1983 with a Masters of Divinity.

His first assignment in the Texas Conference was in June 1983 to the Bremond/Calvert Charge (then the Beaumont District). He has severed several churches in our Conference and is now at Friendship UMC in Porter (Central North District).

Clay has always had a love for missions! In 1996, he was nominated to be the Chairperson of UMCOR – Texas Conference Committee (TACCOR), a position that he held for eleven years. During that time period, he was asked to be the Texas Conference Disaster Response Consultant. When Rita, Katrina & Ike hit the Gulf Coast areas, he was involved in all kinds of relief efforts. He worked closely with Kathie Mann to train teams for relief work. Clay was instrumental in obtaining seven trailers (two districts already had one) and equipping each trailer with tools and supplies so that each district would have a trailer for response work. He was also the District Mission Secretary for the Beaumont District for a number of years.

He has taken multiple teams to UMCOR at Sager Brown in Baldwin, Louisiana and has another one planned for this year. He also works with an organization known as Hands and Feet Ministries out of Adairsville, Ga., taking groups to Mexico to work on orphanages and schools in the Piedres Negres/Nava area. Other areas that he has led mission trips to include: El Salvador, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Chili.

Another one of his passions is music. For approximately 20 years, he led the music at different levels for church camp at Lakeview. While at Airline UMC, he led teams, four to five times a year, to different prison units around east Texas preaching, playing concerts, and praying.

One time he actually led a group to Padre Island at spring break, where they set up on the beach and played Christian music and preached. Currently, he plays in the band and sings in the choir at Friendship UMC. That was the band that played this last Fall Festival on Friday evening.

Clay has also had a heavy involvement in the Emmaus community as a spiritual leader, particularly in the Lufkin/Nacogdoches area). He has probably worked 20-25 walks. From 1992 to 2007, he was on the Conference Staff for Emmaus. For four years, he was also the District Representative for the United Methodist Children's Home in Waco for the Nacogdoches District.

Clay has been responsible for getting the truck to Lakeview every fall for our Fall Festival since 2000.

He has been married to Heather for almost 41 years. They have four boys, three daughters-in-law, one granddaughter and another grandchild due in June.

You may give to this Special Mission Recognition award throughout the year. Please send your mission dollars to your District Treasurer at any time. The Special Mission Recognition Award will be presented to Clay at the Fall Festival in September 2017.