

*Charlotte District E-pistle*

April 16, 2005

Re: Golden Cross

The first Sunday in May is traditionally designated Golden Cross Sunday throughout the Conference. By designating such a time, we are able to inform our members about this significant health-assistance ministry and receive offerings. Last year only six churches gave extra support to the Golden Cross Fund: Cokesbury, Cole Memorial, Mt. Zion, Ebenezer, Plaza and Salem. I think we can do a better job of promoting this ministry in the Charlotte District.

The offering actually accomplishes two things: Golden Cross helps families, lay and clergy, who struggle to pay medical bills and often forego needed medical treatment or medicine; but it also provides good public relations with our congregations. Grateful recipients tell their story about how a Conference program directly pulled them through a tough economic circumstance at a time of great physical crisis.

Funding for Conference ministries in 2005 is only 45% of the amount requested by most of our outreach programs, including Golden Cross. In the past, Golden Cross grants have totaled in the range of \$45,000 to \$50,000. Only \$18,900 is anticipated this year through the apportionments! Thus, if this ministry is to maintain its hope-giving impact, it will require your encouragement.

I urge you to designate a Golden Cross Sunday with the minimum expectation of providing information about the program. I am attaching a half-page information sheet that you may duplicate for promotion purposes. (You recently received this in your *Mission Alive* packet from our Conference Mission/Outreach Office). Choose a time that is appropriate in your congregation's schedule.

Thanks for affirming this ministry that, through the years, has touched the lives of so many grateful United Methodists in our pews.

Grace and peace,

*George*