

## *Charlotte District E-Pistle*

Colleagues:

When we are meeting with our mission/outreach commission, or equivalent group, during this fall; we shall all be discussing strategies regarding “the Power of Three” goals for our church. Bishop Larry Goodpaster has challenged the WNC Conference to develop approximately **3,000 mission teams** to be sent in the name of Christ into the world, both near and far. All churches in the Charlotte District have a unique opportunity to participate in a mission team project called “**Circles**” that is bringing together the resources of both the **Urban Ministry Center** and the **Crisis Assistance Ministries** through a time-tested methodology that provides a way for impoverished families to attain economic self-sufficiency and a new direction for their lives. Participation in “Circles” or Crisis Assistance’s “WISH” requires training through the “**Class Matters**” seminar taught by **Paul Hanneman, Wanda Anderson**, and the staff of the Urban Ministry Center. *Class Matters* is a six-hour seminar that reveals the profound differences between the survival-based culture of poverty, the achievement-based culture of middle class, and the connections-based culture of wealth. Participants learn how to build relationships across cultures that help people in poverty move toward economic stability.

*A Class Matters seminar for laity* for your church will be taught on **Sunday, October 11, 2-5 p.m., with a light dinner at 5 p.m.**, followed by a concluding session at **6-9 p.m.**, at **Hawthorne Lane United Methodist Church**, 501 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, 28204. I urge you to recruit a team from your church to attend this training. This is indeed a unique opportunity!

**Clergy will be trained the following day, October 12, beginning at 9 a.m., with lunch at noon, and the concluding session at 1-4 p.m.** The lunch will be provided. Even though I shall have Charge Conferences scheduled for Sunday, I shall be present with the clergy on this Monday. This training is essential if we clergy are to understand the issues of poverty in the Charlotte region.

“**Circles**” is an action plan that brings together the best efforts and resources of individuals, organizations, communities, and government in a program proven to raise people out of poverty. **Class Matters** opens up the different world of people in poverty, revealing how the survival-based mentality of poverty impacts learning, work habits, and decision-making. Recent research has provided a deeper understanding of how people in poverty face challenges virtually unknown to those in middle class or wealth – challenges from both obvious and hidden sources. Participants will learn the “hidden rules” of poverty, middle class, and wealth – and the assumptions which people in middle class bring to encounters with people in poverty. Those trained will discover how grief and trauma keep many people locked in poverty. **Class Matters** participants will begin to explore practical, yet compassionate, strategies for engagement that can have positive impact on people’s lives.

More than 3000 people from the Charlotte area have taken **Class Matters**--from congregations, non-profit organizations, social service agencies, businesses, and educational institutions, as well

as interested individuals. The curriculum that will be taught at Hawthorne Lane on October 11-12 is undated and revised to apply to the uniqueness of our economic times.

How is your church planning to respond to Bishop Goodpaster's challenge to employ the Power of Three? The Class Matters training will be an excellent option to contribute toward the formation of small groups that will be working with families of poverty toward lasting financial solutions and spiritual liberation.

**I urge your participation.** If you have questions, please contact me at the district office. **Register now for the seminar by calling us at 704-525-3390 or emailing to [Charlottedistofc@wnccumc.org](mailto:Charlottedistofc@wnccumc.org) or responding to this message ([Charlotteds@wnccumc.org](mailto:Charlotteds@wnccumc.org)).**

**Grace and peace,**

*George*