

## *Charlotte District E-Pistle*

September 19, 2007

I am really looking forward to our Clergy Fellowship gathering tomorrow at Providence UMC. It seems that we have been apart for a long time, and each of us has a myriad of interesting things to share about summer experiences and fall expectations. Moreover, we have planned an extraordinarily helpful and relevant program through a presentation on the Enneagram by Jody Seymour, our clergy colleague at Davidson UMC. Park in the Providence Road side parking lot, come through the front double-doors, and signs in the corridor will direct you to upstairs room 219 B, the Chipley Class. Coffee will be provided in this place of our gathering, and lunch will be served downstairs for those who have made reservations through this office. But come for the 9:30 a.m. fellowship, even if you cannot stay for lunch. You will not regret this investment of your time!

Last week the Cabinet met at Lake Junaluska in the placid setting of the choir rehearsal room at the back of Stuart Auditorium. Our agenda included a preliminary report from Bishop McCleskey regarding the work of the special Annual Conference Task Force on Reorganization. This carefully chosen group of laity and clergy has spent almost a year in study and dialogue related to its task to propose a structural and programmatic plan for the Western North Carolina Conference that will give greater efficiency and effectiveness to our mission as United Methodists. Throughout the presentation our bishop reiterated to the Cabinet that **this is not a done deal**. Many aspects of the proposal will likely be altered after a series of “listening sessions.” These sessions are so important that our overly-scheduled bishop has insisted upon attending one in each of the fourteen districts! The task force will continue to invite input from all of us. But in February a special session of the Annual Conference will meet in Hickory, and a final version of the report will be placed on the agenda for adoption. The consensus we reach on that date will likely affect our performance as an Annual Conference for many decades to come.

So, the “listening session” at University City UMC on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. will be important. I recommend that all clergy and lay delegates to the 2007 Annual Conference attend, along with all persons who serve in the committee structure of the Charlotte District. In fact, I encourage you to make your whole congregation aware of this opportunity to learn about the proposed restructuring and this opportunity to influence the shape and content of our conference and district organization. Get out the word through e-mail, bulletin, newsletter, or other appropriate communication.

Thanks for giving attention to this important matter.

Grace and peace,

*George*