

Charlotte District E-Pistle

September 25, 2008

During an active summer, I sent you word about an exciting and relevant agenda for our Clergy Fellowship gathering on **October 7th at Providence UMC**. The importance of this time of sharing and conversation with colleagues is enhanced by the crucial decisions being made in Washington, DC, concerning the current economic crisis.

Our nation, communities, and churches are even more divided in opinion and ideology now than was the case when our **Clergy Fellowship** officers initiated the planning of this agenda. What is the role of pastoral leadership in such a divisive political climate? How can we foster an atmosphere of civility in Sunday school classrooms and small groups that will produce acceptance amidst disagreement, tolerance within a parish of fragmented political ideologies?

Ken Carter and I will discuss with you the content of Adam Hamilton's *Seeing Gray, in a World of Black and White* and Jim Wallis' volume, *The Great Awakening*. We shall start with coffee and gathering conversation at 9:30 a.m. and move into this timely discussion at 10 a.m.

We encourage you to invite a layperson to noonday lunch at Providence UMC. Certainly, if that person is not coming from work responsibility, he or she is welcome to come to the morning discussion as well. But your guest from work may come at noon and hear **Jennifer Roberts**, Chair of the Mecklenburg County Commissioners, tell us why she (an active Episcopalian) is politically involved. Conversation over lunch will conclude no later than 1 p.m. So, **get your reservations for the meal into DeEtta Rivens by e-mail (Chardist@bellsouth.net) or phone (704-525-3395) by Friday, October 3rd**.

Grace and peace,

George