

The Charlotte District E-Pistle

December 9, 2004

Gathering together as district clergy in early Advent has always been a delightful experience for me. Through the years, this has been the one district event that I have attended with impeccable regularity because, amidst the table fellowship with colleagues, I have always felt a unique affinity with those who share with me the privilege of pastoral ministry.

Pat and I are grateful to you for your act of kindness through a monetary gift on Monday's festive occasion. Delores Jones certainly satisfied our culinary tastes, and the Chancel Choir from St. Mark's UMC fed our spiritual appetites with their gorgeous advent anthems. This was indeed a delightful district fellowship event that will lodge with longevity in our memory bank.

Our heavy December agendas forces a sort of myopic vision upon us, whereby anything beyond this important month is like an apparition coming out of the foggy future. None the less, I urge you to consider Epiphany Day, **January 6th**, as the culmination of this sacred season. On that day, the Charlotte District Clergy shall gather at the Bethlehem Center (9:30 a.m.) for a service of communion. The inspirational message during that act of worship will be delivered by our colleague Dr. Percival Reeves, pastor at Plaza UMC. He is a native of South Carolina. He received his Master of Divinity from Colgate-Rochester and his Doctor of Minister from United Theological Seminary. He transferred into WNC from the Louisville Conference and was assigned to Plaza. Dramatic growth has occurred under his leadership.

On January 20th we shall experience another of our **clergy service days** by gathering at the **Urban League of Central Carolinas** (740 West 5th Street), 11 a.m.-2 p.m., in order to learn more about the ministry of this marvelous agency. In a climate of uncertainty for many in our job market, the working poor are suffering in a unique fashion. The Urban League is an agency that is making a huge difference in the lives of many who have the willingness, but not the skills, to re-tool and start a different vocation. Gene Buccelli, one of the program directors, is an active layman at Providence UMC and will challenge us with practical insights into how our churches can help address the problem of unemployment in our region.

Please place these two significant opportunities upon your calendar—that is, if the pages are not stuck together from all the scotch tape you are using to wrap packages.

Have a fulfilling Advent and a Christmas that will renew the meaning and significance of the incarnation in your life.

Grace and peace,

George