

August 13, 2008

Electronic
Newsletter



Charlotte District

E-Connections

Introducing our New WNC Bishop, Larry Goodpaster



Bishop Larry Goodpaster

I am grateful for the privilege of attending the Southeast Jurisdiction's Conference at Lake Junaluska, July 15-19th. With the task of electing only one bishop, the tone of these days was far more reflective and tranquil than the previous ones I had experienced. The cross placed on the altar was made of glass from shattered debris caused by the force of Hurricane Katrina. A rustic pulpit was substituted for the formal one that usually punctuates the Stuart stage. Bishop Hope Morgan Ward reminded the delegates of the grace of God and the three years of connectional relief work accomplished by a constant stream of sacrificial volunteers.

The mood of the gathering was never contentious. We were enlightened by informative presentations regarding the theme, "Living the United Methodist Way," by such Wesleyan scholars as Professor Randy Maddox of Duke Divinity. Paul Leeland of our sister North Carolina Conference was elected after only six ballots, even though the initial voting was uniformly split between him and South Carolina's Tim McClendon. Paul's first response to the surprise announcement of his selection was a prolonged pause for prayer before arising from his seat in order to be escorted to the podium.

My former Cabinet colleague, Frank Smith, provided a verbal and inspirational video tribute to his life-long friend Bishop Lawrence McCleskey—the only retiring Episcopal leader in the SEJ. Margaret McCleskey provided comic relief from the seriousness of this emotional tribute, and once again demonstrated that she could provide an adequate replacement for Jay Leno on the Tonight Show. Lawrence was chosen by his Episcopal colleagues to preach the sermon upon Saturday's service of consecration. He used the biblical image of shepherd to define the historical role of this significant ecclesiastical office. In order to demonstrate how the good shepherd guards the entrance to the sheepfold, Lawrence departed from the pulpit and knelt before the delegates in a poignant moment. After the service, I observed to him that he proved that his retirement was not obligatory due to his quick return to an erect posture following this sermonic illustration. Lawrence could not have offered a more appropriate conclusion to his legacy as a didactic theologian/bishop.

Our delegation was very pleased upon the assignment of Larry Goodpaster to WNC. Back in 2000, when Larry was the endorsed candidate of his home Mississippi Conference, I arranged for an informal luncheon at Providence UMC for the benefit of neighboring delegates who wanted to meet him. At the time one of his two daughters lived here in Charlotte. When I spoke with him and his wife Deborah at the SEJ Conference, they each expressed a genuine level of excitement about the assignment here.

I encourage you to consult our WNC website for a more extensive biographical sketch. But it is important for me to emphasize that Larry brings the depth of experience that we need upon the retirement of a wise and seasoned veteran, Bishop McCleskey. Our new bishop served as a pastor and district superintendent in the Mississippi Conference, including service at a five-church rural charge, a new congregation and several larger membership churches.

On April 19th of this year, the Council of Bishops selected Larry to preside over that body, beginning in 2010. He is truly recognized by his Episcopal
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Introducing our New WNC Bishop, Larry Goodpaster (*continued*)

peers as a distinguished and capable leader. This laudatory choice was not unexpected because our new bishop has given leadership for eight years to one of the fastest growing conferences in United Methodism. In recent weeks I have carefully read his book of reflections upon his initial years as an Episcopal leader—*There's Power in the Connection: Building a Network of Dynamic Congregations*. This is a **must** read for all our clergy and laity who wish to know the emphases that Goodpaster will bring to this annual conference. This is a bishop who accurately diagnoses the deficiencies of our denomination and offers practical remedies to many of our ecclesiastical illnesses. His practice in Alabama-West Florida was to elevate the importance of accountability for both pastors and congregations. He clearly states that “unless one is centered in Christ and is nurturing and growing in that relationship, the remaining competencies become mere job descriptions and standards of behavior for a career rather than grace-signs of effective leadership for our vocation of loving and serving God.”

Bishops are often asked to comment on their philosophy regarding appointment-making. In this case, Larry validates theory with performance. In the words of the baseball great Dizzy Dean, “It ain’t braggin’ if you’ve done it.” Larry observes that the average length of an appointment in the Alabama-East Florida Conference on his watch has been almost double the national average. His formula is to match gifts of the pastor with the needs of the church.

Our new bishop is a voracious reader and will challenge all of us to grow intellectually and spiritually. He contributes to his present conference’s website helpful book reviews, featuring his vast scope of interest in theology, history, the arts, and evangelism. Ordination, according to Larry Goodpaster, implies “a lifelong covenant of learning.” His book delineates ten vital signs of a dynamic congregation—each emerging from the practical experience of a bishop with a pastor’s heart. He firmly believes in the dictum that “a leader is a dealer in hope.” He recognizes, affirms and rewards effective leadership. Each chapter is punctuated by bracketed quotations from the sermons and bulletins of unknown pastors who serve faithfully in churches of a variety of sizes—ordinary pastors doing extraordinary ministry.

I have had the honor of serving in Cabinet capacity under the leadership of two gifted and committed Episcopal leaders and am thoroughly convinced that their legacy of competence and vision will be continued and enhanced by the advent of Bishop Larry Goodpaster. I shall join with you and your congregation, offering prayers of intercession and thanksgiving for this man of vision, compassion and competence.

Grace and peace,

George

George Thompson
Charlotte District Superintendent



Convocation & Pastors' School
Duke Divinity School, Durham
For speaker information, seminars, schedule and online registration visit the event website:
<http://www.divinity.duke.edu/cps/leadership/index.html>

Fall 2008 Charlotte District Church/Charge Conference Schedule

SEPT 09, Tues **DIST CLERGY RETREAT**
 Sept 09-11 **CABINET**
 Sept 14, Sun 3 pm Aldersgate
 Sept 14, Sun 5 pm *Ghana -Hunter's Chapel
 Sept 18, Thurs **DIST CLERGY WELCOME**
 Sept 21, Sun 3 pm Purcell
 Sept 21, Sun 5 pm Big Spring
 Sept 22, Mon 7 pm Spencer-St. James*
 Sept 24, Wed 7 pm St. Luke
 Sept 28, Sun 3 pm *Kilgo-First Hmong
 Sept 28, Sun 5 pm Commonwealth
 Sept 30, Tues 7 pm Zoar
OCT 01, Wed 7 pm Victory
 Oct 02, Thurs 7 pm Light of Christ
 Oct 05, Sun 3 pm Belmont: South Point
 Oct 05, Sun 5 pm Belmont: Ebenezer
 Oct 06, Mon 7 pm Grace
 Oct 07, Tues 7 pm *Memorial, Agua de Vida
 Oct 08, Wed 7 pm Wesley
 Oct 09, Thurs 7 pm Blair Rd.
 Oct 12, Sun **CROP WALK-Charlotte**
 Oct 13-15 **DUKE CONVOCATION**
 Oct 16, Thurs 7 pm Cole Memorial
 Oct 19, Sun **CROP WALK-Gaston County**
 Oct 19, Sun 3 pm *St. John's-Cambodian
 Oct 19, Sun 5 pm Cokesbury
 Oct 20-21 **CABINET**
 Oct 21, Tues 7 pm Belmont Park Street
 Oct 22, Wed 7 pm Plaza
 Oct 23, Thurs 7 pm Simpson-Gillespie
 Oct 26, Sun 3 pm Dilworth
 Oct 26, Sun 5 pm Calvary
 Oct 27, Mon 7 pm Central
 Oct 28, Tues 7 pm St. Paul
 Oct 29, Wed 7 pm Hickory Grove

NOV 02, Sun 3 pm Mt. Holly: First
 Nov 02, Sun 5 pm *Burge Mem-Rock Hill
 Nov 03, Mon 7 pm Sharon
 Nov 04, Tues 7 pm Charlotte: St. Mark's
 Nov 05, Wed 7 pm Pineville
 Nov 06, Thurs **DMS BANQUET**
 Nov 09, Sun 3 pm Belmont: First
 Nov 09, Sun 5 pm Belmont: St. Mark's
 Nov 10-12 **ORDER OF ELDERS**
 Nov 12, Wed 7 pm St. Francis
 Nov 13, Thurs 7 pm Good Shepherd
 Nov 16, Sun 3 pm Charlotte: First
 Nov 16, Sun 5 pm Hawthorne Lane
 Nov 17-18 **CABINET**
 Nov 17, Mon 7 pm Providence
 Nov 19, Wed 7 pm Harrison
 Nov 20, Thurs 7 pm Matthews
 Nov 23, Sun 3 pm Sanctuary
 Nov 23, Sun 5 pm Morningstar
 Nov 24, Mon 7 pm *Myers Pk.-South Tryon
 Nov 25, Tues 7 pm St. Andrew's
 Nov 27-28 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
 Nov 30, Sun 5 pm St. Stephen
Dec 04, Thurs **DIST. CLERGY CHRISTMAS**

Note:

*Kilgo-First Hmong

* indicates location of Charge Conference.

Charge Conference packets will be mailed to pastors on August 15th.

Paperwork due in the district office 10 days prior to Charge Conference date. This provides the D.S. an opportunity to review paperwork in advance and make contact if there are any questions/concerns.



"Making disciples through Bible study to bring God's grace to a hurting world."

August 24th **Special Sunday Offering** ***"Disciple Bible Outreach"***

Thank you for your faithful service in the prisons, jails and youth development centers. I thank God for you! As you know, each year DBOM is supported through a special offering taken in the churches of NC. August 24, 2008 has been designated DBOM Sunday in both the WNCC and NCC. The last two years we have received approximately \$80,000 from this offering making DBOM Sunday a central element of our yearly fundraising efforts. Each year, however, we still have churches that do not participate. You can be of great help to us by promoting the offering in your own church! In preparation for the offering, the DBOM office has done the following:

- Supplied offering envelopes to every UMC church in NC based on their average worship attendance. Envelope packets for each church have been delivered to the district offices.
- On August 1, a letter was mailed from Bishop McCleskey or Bishop Gwinn to every UMC pastor in NC promoting the offering and asking for the pastor's support.
- On August 14, a letter and an offering envelope will be sent to previous donors asking for their support.

You can help in the following ways:

1. Check to see if your church has their envelopes. If not, please pick them up from the district office.
2. Speak to your pastor about DBOM Sunday, and if possible, ask for time to speak at August 24 worship services.
3. Obtain a promotional DVD from the district office to use at your church.

On behalf of DBOM, I want to thank you for all of your support for this ministry! You are the heart of DBOM and we are grateful!

If I can be of any assistance in getting ready for the offering, please give me a call or e-mail.

Yours in Christ,
Mark Hicks, Executive Director
Disciple Bible Outreach
Tel: 336-454-5348

Should Your Church Begin an ESL Ministry?

Charlotte's immigrant population is growing rapidly and a great many of these people need to learn English. Immigrants know that mastering our language is essential for jobs, for medical appointments, for helping children in school, for shopping, for participation in the life of our community and for making English-speaking friends. A recent survey indicates a severe shortage of affordable, accessible ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in Charlotte. Maybe your church should begin an ESL program this fall as a Christian service of hospitality to your immigrant neighbors and to make some new friends.

Frequently asked questions:

Do we have to speak the foreign language of our students in order to teach them? No, you are teaching them English, not Spanish or Chinese.

Is this an expensive ministry? No. Volunteers from your church can be trained to be teachers. Some churches teaching ESL provide free child care, which is a good idea for the students and may involve expense for the child care providers, if you don't have child care volunteers.

Will the students all have legal documents? Probably not. There's no need to ask them this question when they come to class. Your church will not get in any legal trouble for teaching English to students without asking to see their papers.

Are any other United Methodist Churches teaching ESL? The following churches have taught ESL in the past or are teaching now: Cokesbury, Oak Grove, Fair View, University City, Memorial, Blair Road, Pineville, Harrison, Good Shepherd, and Grace. Other churches are planning to start this Fall.

Do we have immigrant neighbors near our church? Probably so. We can help you find out. (We were surprised to learn that 5,000 Russians are living in the Mint Hill/Matthews area!) If you'd like to teach ESL but don't have immigrants near your church, consider helping in an existing program somewhere else or starting a satellite program close to where immigrants live.

How can people be trained as ESL teachers? SIM is a Christian organization which helps churches engage in ministry to immigrants, and they train ESL teachers as part of their service to the community. Their training is efficient, practical and inexpensive. For \$40 (if you register early) they will teach you on a Friday evening and a Saturday what you need to know to get started.

When is their next training and how can I get more information? **The next teacher training will take place at Calvary Church (on Route 51) on September 19th and 20th.** Contact Gene Toombs at gene.toombs@gmail.com and he will send you complete information and registration details.

We still have questions. Contact Alex or Ann Smythers of the Charlotte District Committee on Latino Ministry at (704) 545-3144. Most of the ESL classes are on vacation this summer, but you could also plan to visit some existing classes after September 1.



Gail Beisiegel teaches her ESL class at Blair Road UMC.

Upcoming Events/Opportunities



August 15, 16, 17 - A Gathering of the Laity “*Laity Transforming the World*” Don’t miss the 43rd gathering. All persons are invited to attend. The keynote speakers are Dr. John Mathison, pastor of one of the fastest growing UM churches, Frazer Memorial UMC, Montgomery, Alabama; Dr. Maxie Dunnam, president of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky; Rev. Angela Pleasants, pastor of Central UMC, Charlotte, NC. Attend 1, 2, or 3 days. Laity Service Award program is Aug. 16 at 1:15 p.m. Registration is required, Friday, Aug. 15, 1-7 pm, Harrell Center or Saturday, Aug. 16, 8-12 noon in Stuart Auditorium.

September 9 - Charlotte District Clergy Retreat - A Day Apart for “*Thirsty Water-Givers*” As water-givers we’re often so busy doing the work we often fail to drink from the well ourselves. This retreat invites clergy to explore and strengthen the vital relationship between the inner life and Spirit and the outer life of work and service. For additional details and registration form visit www.chardist.org. *Registration deadline is Sept. 1.*



September 18 - “*Clergy Welcome Gathering*” at 6:30 p.m. The event will be held at Simpson-Gillespie United Methodist Church. This will be a time for clergy families to extend a warm welcome to our new clergy and their families. This will also be a great opportunity for us to visit with one another and renew the ties that bind us together in ministry. New clergy officers will be introduced. Dress is casual. Stay tuned to the e-group email notification system and snail mail for reservation form.



October 7 Clergy Fellowship Gathering • 9:30 a.m. • Providence UMC, 2810 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC 28211



Reading material for the fellowship is *Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White* (Adam Hamilton) and *The Great Awakening* (Jim Wallis). Ken Carter (Providence) and D.S. George Thompson will lead a discussion of the content of these books and the pastoral role in this political season. Let us acknowledge that we can learn from those whom we disagree. Let us avoid political absolutes and perceive the gray in a world of black and white. Let us permeate the atmosphere of our congregations with a spirit of prayer and civility of debate, rejecting the cynicism and arrogance of a polarized culture.



October 12 - Charlotte Memorial Stadium, 2 p.m.

October 19 - Gaston County, Forest View High School (Time TBA)

Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty Walk

Neighbors from different faiths, cultures, and ages, walking together to take a stand against hunger in our world. Together raising awareness and funds for international relief and development, as well as local hunger-fighting agencies. If you’d like to educate your congregation, Sunday School, Wednesday night program, or an information educational gathering, contact Jennifer at 704-333-9255.

Educational Opportunities

Dr. Gonzalez Coming to Charlotte

Many United Methodists know Dr. Justo Gonzalez as one of the host-presenters of the Disciple Bible Study series. Others know him as a Latino historian, theologian, author, and influential contributor in the development of Hispanic or Latino/Latina theology. A leading voice in the growing field of Hispanic theology, Dr. Gonzalez taught eight years at Candler School of Theology followed by eight years at United Seminary. He recently published his 100th book.

Pfeiffer University and the Hispanic Leadership Academy are pleased to announce that Dr. Gonzalez will present three lectures on **September 5 and 6, 2008** in the Charlotte area. As part of the Pfeiffer convocation, his address "When the Spirit leads to Trouble," will be at 10 a.m. on Friday, September 5. At 1:30 that afternoon his topic will be "Hispanic Ministries: Challenges, Opportunities and Pitfalls." Both lectures will be held at Pfeiffer University on the Misenheimer campus near the intersection of HWY 52 and HWY 49. Both lectures (in English) are open to the public and are free. There will be a lunch offered between the two events for \$10.

On Saturday, Sept. 6, Dr. González will present (in Spanish): "Lo que la Biblia nos dice como Latinos," (What the Bible Says to Us as Latinos) from 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. at Memorial UMC located at 4012 Central Ave. in Charlotte. Lunch is provided and the cost is \$10.

For more information or to register for any of the above sessions, contact Dr. Phil Wingeier-Rayo at (704) 463-3100 or Phil.Wingeier@pfeiffer.edu.



Dr. Justo Gonzalez



September 13 - Christian Education at the Heart of Strengthening, Equipping and Empowering the Local Church The 2008 Christian Education Institute will be held at Bennett College in Greensboro NC, Saturday, September 13, from 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The Rev. Dr. James Graves, ministries team coordinator for WNCCE Ethnic and Justice Ministries, says, "The Institute is open to all." Graves defines "All" as Clergy, Sunday school teachers, youth directors, Christian Educators, lay people youth, children and persons of all ethnicities. "All are welcomed at the feast. Christian Education is not a program in the church it is the mandate to the church. Matthew 28:20."

Visit www.wncce.org/eth/ChristianEduInstitute.htm to obtain brochure and registration details.



**"Renewing your...
Head, Hands,
Heart, Health"**

Attention: Church Secretaries/Administrative Assistants

October 3-5 WNC PAUMCS Fall Retreat Hollifield Leadership Center, Lake Hickory

PAUMCS (Professional Association of United Methodist Church Secretaries) provides a supportive base for secretaries unity and fellowship, individual growth, professional development, continuing education and spiritual enrichment. All volunteer and paid staff secretaries/administrative assistants are invited to attend this exciting retreat. Pastors and S/PPRC's are encouraged to support the participation of their church secretaries/admin. assistants in this United Methodist ministry. Contact the district office (704-525-3395) to obtain a registration form. Visit www.paumcs.org/index.htm to learn more about PAUMCS.

We Extend a Hearty Welcome to the Belmont and Mt. Holly Churches

At the special session of the WNC Conference in February, delegates voted to add the 15th district (Lake Norman District) to be poised for the projected growth in this area of the conference. Changes primarily affected the Charlotte and Statesville Districts from which the majority of the churches came to create the new district. The Charlotte District's reconfiguration now consists of 55 churches, six of which were previously under the guidance of the Gastonia District. Join us in welcoming these six churches into the Charlotte District.



Belmont: Ebenezer UMC



Rev. Angela Barr Hollar and husband, Mark. Angela is a second-profession pastor and the daughter of retired Rev. C.B. and Betty Jo Barr.



Belmont: First UMC



Rev. Mark Andrews has been the senior pastor of First UMC for eight years. - Mark's wife is Denise.



Belmont: Park Street UMC



Rev. Harold Schwantes. Harold's wife is Darlene.



Belmont: St. Mark's UMC



Rev. Caren Bigelow Morgan and husband, John.



Belmont: South Point UMC



Rev. Barbara Mayo has returned to the Charlotte District and will serve as a clergy fellowship officer.



Mt. Holly: First UMC



Rev. Larry L. Kimel has been the senior pastor of First UMC in Mount Holly over the past eight years. Even though the church has been part of this district in the past, we greet this return with enthusiasm because of the strength that it brings to our connectional ministry on this side of the Catawba River. Larry's wife is Diane.

Web Connections

Visit the Western NC Conference website
<http://www.wnccumc.org/min/ministries.htm>
to obtain information about the
various ministries throughout our Conference.

In search of various Conference publications
visit <http://www.wnccumc.org/pub/publications.htm>

E-wnccnews

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