

December 1, 2007

Electronic
Newsletter



Charlotte District



E-Connections

Advent/Christmas Greetings

On the recent week-end of November 9-11, I participated in an historic event that may well become a transforming episode in the life of the United Methodist Church. Over two years of planning had gone into this gathering of over 850 bishops and superintendents at Lake Junaluska. We were all asked to enter into the discipline of shared meditations and readings in preparation for this occasion. When we finally gathered from all over the globe, we did not discuss any General Conference agenda. We debated no conflicting social issue. We shared corporate worship, prayed together, and listened to very inspiring messages delivered by some saints of the church. The theme was “The Methodist Way.” All the lectures reminded us of our Wesleyan heritage and the spiritual disciplines of our shared faith. I could feel the smiling presence of ole John in our conferencing. We sang the hymns of Charles as if he were a current composer. We concluded on Sunday with excerpts from the Wesley Covenant service as we pledged ourselves to maintain our focus upon our central mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ, thereby transforming the world which our Lord came to save. You will hear much more from me about this unique experience in the months ahead. After all, the last time such a gathering has taken place was in 1969—my second year as a pastor!

As we enter the paradoxical climate of Christmas, with its frantic activity and message of peaceful solemnity, I give thanks for all of you—my colleagues within the Charlotte District who are giving the full measure of your devotion in the privileged task of disciple-making. May the profound blessings that you administer to your parishioners be received reciprocally during this season that celebrates Christ’s nativity. Pat and I are grateful for the warmth of your friendship, the ardor of your fruitful labors, and the strength of your sacrificial love.



Grace and peace,

George & Pat Thompson

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Sanctuary UMC Launched

After several years of study, much prayer, and the collaboration of the Charlotte District Committee on Congregational Development, the Charlotte District Mission Society, and the Conference planners of 20/20 Vision; Sanctuary United Methodist Church was launched in southwest Charlotte on November 4th. The sponsoring congregations are Plaza and Matthews UMC. The leadership team for this new congregation consists of several who are new to United Methodism and are residents of this growing region of Mecklenburg County.

Publicity for the launch focused upon an anticipated 3-D spiritual experience: Discovery, Discipleship, and Deliverance. From August 25th through October, the planners have provided several *preview worship services* that were not publicized for those outside the core team and sponsoring churches. Dr. Percival Reeves, whose calling and vision was in response to the study of the Conference Committee on Congregational Development, insisted that public worship should take place only after the rough places are ironed out and the flow of the service reflects quality and vitality.

This was certainly achieved on the week-end of November 3-4. On Saturday author/poet/actress Bern Nadette Stanis, who played teen daughter Thelma on TV's "Good Times" in the 1970s, conducted a workshop on relationships and responded to questions at the evening dinner theater. Around 200 persons came to this relaxed program of music, drama, interpretive dance, and dialogue with Ms. Stanis. She also attended Sunday's service and, after the inspiring service, signed photographs and her book.

Sanctuary's offices, small group meetings, and worship space is located at 13331 York Center Drive (off South Tryon Street in the Steele Creek area just south of Westinghouse Boulevard). Worship services, which will feature an extraordinary quality of music, will begin at 9 a.m. on Sundays and 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. Once a month, Sanctuary will also provide a Christian dinner theater production. The theology and structure of this ministry is purely Wesleyan, but the style of Sanctuary will appeal especially to young adults who do not have a formative church background. The meeting space is a renovated warehouse, fully funded this first year by the Charlotte District Mission Society. Sanctuary UMC's leadership team envisions a multi-cultural, multi-racial church.

Dr. Reeves is a native of Irmo, S. C., is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, where he was also a three year letterman in football. He is a graduate of both Colgate School of Divinity in Rochester, NY, and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Reeves was called to preach at the age of 22. His more than 25 years of ministry have taken him to churches in cities across New York, Kentucky, and North Carolina. He pastored across town at Plaza UMC for the last 13 years. His wife Mayea joins him on the worship team as a singer. They were married this year at Matthews UMC, and Bishop McCleskey conducted the service. We rejoice as a district in the beginning of this wonderful pilgrimage of discovery, discipleship and deliverance.



The music team includes vocalists, saxophone, electric guitar, keyboard and drums.



An inspiring and uplifting worship service.



Mayea and Percival Reeves

Homestead United Methodist Church's 75th Anniversary

Homestead United Methodist Church celebrated its 75th anniversary on October 21, 2007. Some two hundred people--members, former members, two charter members, former ministers and friends--filled the sanctuary for a morning of rejoicing and reflecting.

The church had its beginning as a Sunday school meeting in a vacant house in Homestead Village. Leaksville Woolen Mill provided work and homes for the families of the village; so it was great to have a place to meet to worship. When a community building became available, Sunday school began meeting there. After a revival in the fall of 1932, a survey concluded that there was interest in beginning a Methodist Church. Thus, on October 30, 1932, ninety-two people joined hands around the community building and Homestead Methodist Church was chartered. There are seven of the ninety-two people still living and two of them were at the Homecoming on October 21st. Homestead shared ministers with Duncan Memorial and then Pleasant Grove until 1948 when it became a station church. Rev. J.O. Ervin was the first minister. Membership grew, and the need for a larger facility became necessary. Acreage was purchased less than a mile from the village, and the present sanctuary was built. In January, 1959, Homestead Methodist Church was dedicated with the Rev. Dwight Pyatt as minister. A parsonage was built in 1960, followed by a gymnasium and bell tower to house the bell from the village.

In its time, Homestead has literally been a home to many families and twenty seven pastors. The members look forward to many more years of worship, fellowship and service as a vibrant congregation. Approximately ten months of planning by a diligent committee helped make this celebration a success. Ole fashioned hand fans and "dime-on-pins" were distributed as memorabilia.

--submitted by Jeannie Upton, Anniversary Planning Committee



Charlotte District Clergy Christmas Banquet, December 6th

Shortly after last year's Yuletide celebration e-mails came into the district office requesting that we return to Assurance UMC for the 2007 banquet. Jim Humphries and the Clergy Executive Committee contacted the office of Assurance in January with this appeal. The delicious meal, the ambiance of that decorated room, the music, and inspiring program is now a sacred, cherished memory.

So, with the bar of expectation raised so high, how can we possibly approximate last year's experience? Well, Mark Larson has contacted the Charlotte Folk Society and booked "The Beggar Boys"--a professional Celtic group that tours the east coast. Several of their members happen to be available on our special night; and, as a tribute to this gathering of clergy, they will provide our program after dinner for a very affordable price. (A regular concert with their full band costs \$2,000). Several in the group lead music in churches; so, they are delighted to provide this service. Weaved into the program will be some group singing of traditional Christmas carols. The singers will be accompanied by a vocalist/flutist, guitarist and fiddle player.

As clergy we shall have several occasions during Advent/Christmas to share a festive meal with the beloved of our parishes; but this is the one time early in the season for us to affirm our colleagues through expressions of love joyous song. (The cost of dinner is \$10.00 per person. Child care available by reservation (from 6:15 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.). An email reminder including the reservation form has been sent. Please **contact Hubert Clinard no later than Monday, December 3, 2007** to make reservations.



"The Beggar Boys"

The Beggar Boys took their name from an old English dance tune. They play Christmas music from Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Their concerts include instrumental numbers, upbeat dance tunes, holiday sing-alongs, and original Beggar Boys compositions. They tour the east coast during the holiday season and their shows are very family-friendly. Band members sing and play multiple instruments: violin, whistles, English guitar, harpsichord, bouzouki, viola, bodhran, wooden flute and guitar. True to the Celtic heritage, with tunes passed down through the generations in homes, churches and pubs, their music is earthy, joyous and fun to listen to. The Beggar Boys have recorded one Christmas CD, "The Darkest Midnight: A Celtic Nativity" and it will be available for sale at the banquet.

2008 Lay Speaker's Training



Lay Speaking Ministry

Charlotte District
2008 Lay Speaker's Training

The Charlotte District is excited to announce its 2008 Lay Speaking training courses.

The training is open to all. You will have the opportunity to gain valuable experience, knowledge, and confidence that will serve you in your ministry. Lay Speaking courses are offered in basic and advanced classes. The goal is to provide effective leadership in our churches through the laity. Whether you teach Sunday school or lead a Bible study you will gain valuable insights into how to become an effective leader in your chosen ministry. The basic (new certification) curriculum focuses on the many ways lay speakers are called to be in ministry. Our advanced (renewal certification) curriculum this year is "Lay Speakers Are Accountable Disciples".

Visit www.gbod.org to obtain information on Laity and Lay Speaking Ministry.

In His Service,

Irma Ellwanger

Irma Ellwanger

District Director of Lay Speaking

Mary Lou Roller

Mary Lou Roller

District Lay Leader

2008 Basic/Advanced Lay Speaker Training

Dates: Monday nights in February (Feb. 4, 11, 18, and 25)

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Locations: *Select the most convenient location.*

Pleasant Grove UMC, 1915 Oakdale Rd., Charlotte, NC 28216

St. Stephen UMC, 6800 Sardis Rd., Charlotte, NC 28270

Cost: \$25.00 (Includes all course materials)



Registration Form for Lay Speaker's Training – Charlotte District

February 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2008

Please indicate your location choice: St. Stephen UMC _____ or Pleasant Grove UMC _____

Name: _____ Church: _____

Street Address: _____ City, State Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Office Phone: _____

___ Basic (New Certification) or ___ Advanced (Renewal Certification)

\$25 cost per person = Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Pastor's Signature _____

Make check payable to Charlotte District UMC Office and mark for LSCS and mail by December 20th to:

Charlotte District Office, The United Methodist Church
4108 Park Road, Suite 101 - Charlotte, NC 28209-2259

District Upcoming Events/Activities

2008 Conference-Wide Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance

We encourage every Charlotte District church to send a delegation of members to the MLK Service on **Saturday, January 19, 2008**, beginning at 10 a.m., at St. Paul UMC in Winston Salem. Bishop McCleskey will be our keynote speaker, and breakout sessions using models from the Lake Junaluska Multicultural Workshop (December 13-15) will follow. More details are forthcoming.

Saturday, January 12th—9:30 a.m. to 12 Noon

DLC (District Leadership Conference) Church Officers Training
Assurance UMC, 9700 Mt. Holly Huntersville Road, Huntersville, NC 28078

The following training workshops will be offered along with others: Administrative Board/Church Council, Trustees, Finance/Stewardship, Staff-Parish Relations (PPRC), Lay Leadership/Nominations, Lay Leaders. More details are forthcoming via mail.

Tuesday, January 15th—9:30 a.m. to 12 Noon

District Clergy Fellowship—A Celtic Worship Experience in Preparation for Lent

St. Paul UMC, 2830 Dorchester Place, Charlotte NC 28209

Please contact the district office (704-525-3395 or chardist@bellsouth.net) no later than January 9th regarding your plans for attendance and lunch fellowship.

UM Women District Mission Study- *Israel-Palestine* by Stephen Goldstein, study guide by Sandra Olewine, Saturday, February 9 at Hickory Grove UMC beginning with registration at 9:30 a.m. The cost is \$7.50 per person and includes lunch only. (Rain/snow date is February 23). Contact your local UMW President or visit <http://www.wnccumw.org/> and print the October 2007 newsletter to obtain the registration form. Deadline to register is January 26.

District Clergy Fellowship – Tuesday, February 12th, 9:30 a.m. to noon at Myers Park UMC.

Educational Experience: Dr. James C. Howell, *Preaching After Easter*. Please contact the district office (704-525-3395 or chardist@bellsouth.net) no later than February 5th regarding your plans for attendance and lunch fellowship.

Apportionments

Pastors and local church treasurers, the end of the year is here. Take time now to review your apportionment payment records, and make plans for completing your church's apportionments before year's end. Our connectional ministries are counting on your faithful support.

Clergy and Church Profiles

Due in the district office on *December 3, 2007*.

Year-End Report

The Year-End Statistical Report will be mailed to pastors in our District on December 3, 2007. The reports are due in the District Office *no later than January 24, 2008*.

Conference 2008 Upcoming Events/Activities

BISHOP MCCLESKEY TO LEAD PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

March 31, 2008 is the departure date for a twelve day visit to Christian sites in Greece, Turkey, the Holy Land and Cyprus. Led by Bishop and Mrs. Lawrence McCleskey, the pilgrimage will focus on Paul's First Missionary Journey with guided visits in Athens, including Mars Hill, Antalya, Aspendos, Perga, Tarsus, Antioch and Cyprus. Our cruise ship, the Orient Queen, will also take us to the ports of Haifa and Ashdod in the Holy Land to allow guided visits to sites in the Galilee region and in Jerusalem. Bishop and Mrs. McCleskey will lead a lecture series on Paul's life and ministry. Prices start at \$2,298 and include roundtrip airfare, deluxe motor coaches, the chartered cruise ship, guided shore excursions, breakfast, lunch and dinner when aboard ship, a study guide and entrance fees to sites. Post and Pre-tour extensions are also available for those who wish them. They include Istanbul, Crete, Athens and Delphi, and Cairo and Luxor. If you wish to learn more about this opportunity, contact our DS, George Thompson at the district office: gthomp43@bellsouth.net or phone 704-525-3395. We encourage early registration since this is Bishop McCleskey's last trip with members and friends of the Western North Carolina Conference before he retires. This will truly be the journey of a life time!

January 22-25 – Funding Ministry in a New Economy, Eighth UM Convocation on Development, Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL; To register, contact Robbie Jones, Registrar, at rjones@gbod.org; 615-340-7054 or 877-899-2780, ext 7054; or register online at www.gbod.org/development-convo.

Saturday, February 2 – 9:30 a. m. - Special Session of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, Hickory Metro Convention Center, Hickory, NC (Snow Date: February 9). The purpose of this called session of the annual conference is to act upon the final report of the Task Force on Conference Reorganization

March 7-9 – Kaleidoscope, Lake Wylie, SC. Youth grades 6-8 and counselors. Visit <http://www.wnccumc.org/yth/kaleidoscope.htm> for details and registration.

April 12 – Bishop's Confirmation Celebration, Catawba Valley Community College, Hickory. A special event each spring for confirmands. It is designed for youth who have completed or are in the process of confirmation studies to celebrate faith in Christ and our connectedness through the UMC.

June 5-8 – WNCC Annual Conference, Lake Junaluska

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord, may we share with others the love He came to bring. Season's greetings from the office staff of the Charlotte District.



The District Office will be closed in observance of the holiday during the week of December 24th, re-opening on December 31, 2007.

George E. Thompson, District Superintendent
DeEtta Rivens, Administrative Assistant
Joelle Leboa, Administrative Support
Web Site: www.chardist.org
E-mail: chardist@bellsouth.net

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Western NC Conference
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Ofc 704-525-3395—Fax 704-525-4238**