



# Charlotte District E-Connections

December 6, 2011

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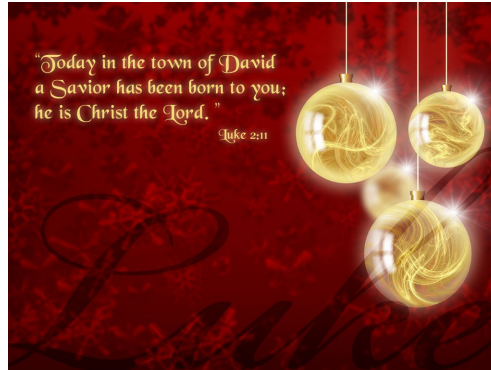
Electronic Newsletter  
Charlotte District Office  
of the  
United Methodist Church  
Western NC Conference

## Special points of interest:

- Vitality Rally (DLC 2012)
- Worshipping by Feeding
- Developing Tippers into Tithers

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## Christmas is Upon Us

Christmas is upon us and this means that YOU had better get out there and buy those gifts before they are all gone. Giving gifts is a long tradition which goes back hundreds of years. Our own "Santa Claus" tradition goes back to St. Nicholas of Myra, born in 270 AD, who had the reputation for secretly giving gifts to people to bless them. Of course, THE reason we give gifts at Christmas is to reflect THE gift given to all people, as the angel told the shepherds: "for unto you is born this day in

the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

When we take a close look and "unwrap" the swaddling clothes in the manger, what is the gift we discover? Is it pure, unconditional, unbounded love. It did not come to us in an abstract concept, but rather in a real, touchable, crying baby. This baby would grow up to reveal to us truths from the other side. He told us not to fear, but trust; not to hate, but love; not to be discouraged, but to know that each of us is here for a designed purpose with eternal meaning. He knew we could never, in our own strength, reach the level of relationship which God desired to have with us. So, he not only came to teach us, but to be the bridge who would bring us and God together in peace and harmony. He was the messenger of God's forgiveness to us and our strength as we extend this forgiveness to others. He is God's "final answer" to us that He loves us and will never leave us. This is THE gift above all gifts which will fulfill the desires of our heart.

If this is so, why do so many people become depressed after Christmas? What is it which they are not receiving from the manger? The only answer I can think of is this: people are unwrapping the gift in the manger looking for an END to their suffering, an ANSWER to their questions and REALITY for their ultimate hope. Christmas gives to us the promise of these, but not their fulfillment. Christmas is the "already" of hope, but also the "not yet" of its completion. Christmas means he has already come to us as one of us, but it also means he is coming again to finish what he started. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." So, with patience, perseverance and hope, let's sing: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come."

Merry Christmas,  
*Gary C. Royals*  
Dr. Gary C. Royals  
Charlotte District Superintendent

## Lands of The Bible Cruise Planned

Bishop Larry Goodpaster will lead a 13-day faith-based cruise, “Lands of the Bible”, with departure on November 9, 2012. We invite you to join pastors and laity from sister churches throughout Western North Carolina for this exciting adventure. With only a year left before departure, a number of persons have already indicated their plans to participate. Let us know of your interest and a descriptive brochure will be sent to you detailing the cruise and land excursions.



*The Temple Mount in Jerusalem*

After our flight to Rome, we will board the Norwegian Jade, a 2,400 passenger, fully equipped cruise ship. As we trace a number of our biblical roots, shore explorations will include Alanya and Perga, Turkey; Limassol, Cyprus; the Galilee and Jerusalem regions of Israel; Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt. Pre and Post-tours are available to Rome and additional sites in Italy.

Land travel will be by deluxe motor coach. Qualified and experienced guides will lead these excursions. In addition to a large number of shipboard activities, passengers will have the opportunity to attend lectures by both Bishop Larry Goodpaster and Dr. Bob Tuttle.

Prices begin at \$3,596 from Charlotte (Asheville, Atlanta and Greensboro departures slightly higher). This all-inclusive price includes: international air fare, air fuel surcharges, cruise ship cabin and meals, guided shore excursions, port charges/taxes and administration fees. Trip insurance is available at additional cost for any who wish to purchase it.

Any clergy or church leaders wishing to serve as tour hosts in order to earn travel credits should also contact Dr. Sigmon for detailed information. Clergy should note that, in some instances, partial scholarships for clergy and spouses may be available. Educational Opportunities is the sponsor for this biblical journey.

Please give prayerful consideration to joining us for this exciting and transformational experience. This is a wonderful way to renew and strengthen your faith journey. Inform yourself right away, and invite your friends to join you. Consider sponsoring your pastor or a special Sunday school teacher. And, what a wonderful Christmas gift Christian travel to the “Lands of the Bible” would make.



*Norwegian Jade Cruise Ship*

Brochures with complete details are available by contacting District Superintendent, Dr. Gary C. Royals (704-525-3395 or [groyals@wnccumc.org](mailto:groyals@wnccumc.org)) or from Dr. Thomas R. Sigmon, project coordinator (704-362-2398 or [trsigmon@carolina.rr.com](mailto:trsigmon@carolina.rr.com)).

## 2012 IRS Mileage



The IRS has not yet released the **standard mileage rates for 2012**. The rates are typically updated in December for the upcoming year. The link on the WNCC website page (<http://www.wnccadmin.org/>) will be updated as soon as this information becomes available.

## Worshipping By Feeding



On Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup> Good Shepherd United Methodist Church made the following announcement:

**Next Sunday, October 30, we are worshipping by feeding.**

As part of their strategy of **Radical Impact Projects**, Good Shepherd converted the Worship Center into a mass production line on Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> to prepare and package meals to be sent to famine-ravaged Uganda.

Whether you came for the 8:30 am, 10 am, or 11:30 am "shift" the people of Good Shepherd experienced ... Instead of rows of chairs in the Worship Center, dozens of assembly line tables; Instead of a band leading them in praise, a gong that banged to mark every 1,000 meals packed; Instead of a bulletin, ingredients for Meals Ready To Eat; Instead of a sermon, a hair net and gloves; Instead of starvation, nutrition; And instead of pity, compassion. Children & youth 6th grade and up were co-laborers in the Worship Center. Pre-schoolers through 5th graders attended their regular K-Zones where they worked on age specific service projects. The church worshiped by feeding. Instead of hearing a sermon, they were being the sermon.

Hunger and poverty kills over 27,000 people a day. In partnership with *Stop Hunger Now* **2,300** people at Good Shepherd prepared and packed **192,320** meals for Uganda, a country in East Africa . The congregation also donated **1,800** non-perishable items for local hunger initiatives.

*Stop Hunger Now* ([www.stophungernow.org](http://www.stophungernow.org)) is a faith-based hunger relief agency out of Raleigh. The meal packaging program provides volunteers the opportunity to package dehydrated, high protein, and highly nutritious meals that are used in crisis situations and in school feeding programs for schools and orphanages in developing countries around the world.

How did this idea of worshipping by feeding originate? Pastor Talbot Davis shared that when some of his colleagues on the staff first mentioned devoting a Sunday to something other than the usual Sunday to something other than the usual Sunday fare (music, message, creative element), he hemmed. He hawed. He gradually came to see the wisdom of this particular Radical Impact Project, especially one that follows so closely on the heels of the launch of Good Shepherd's mission: **inviting all people into a living relationship with Jesus.**



*"Because if people can't live in the first place they can't even begin to think about a living relationship with a living Lord. It is possible to do good on the Sabbath and to make radical impact on our globe and in our community,"* Davis said.



*The children's ministry also made 275 care bags for the upcoming Room In The Inn season of hospitality to people who are homeless.*

Good Shepherd UMC  
13110 Moss Road, Charlotte NC 28273  
<http://www.gsumc.org/>  
Rev. Talbot Davis, Pastor

## *How to Develop Tippers into Tithers*



**A workshop for church teams of pastors and  
3 members of finance and stewardship**

*“Just in time training for these difficult economic times.”*

**When: February 4, 2012**

1:30 p.m. – Registration      2-5:30 p.m. – Workshop

**Where: Assurance United Methodist Church, 9700 Mt Holly/Huntersville Rd,  
Huntersville, NC 28078**

**What:** This workshop will help church teams learn:

- Principles in Giving
- Re-thinking Motives for Giving
- Re-thinking the Stewardship Letter
- Helping People Grow in their Giving

**Who:** Our leader will be Paul Nickerson, Senior Associate with Griffith Coaching

**Registration:** The cost is \$100 per **church team of 4**.

(Pastor must bring a team of 3 lay people and they should include both stewardship people as well as financial people, such as a treasurer or financial secretary)

This cost includes all materials and a copy of “Turning Tippers Into Tithers.”

Deadline to Register is January 20, 2012. Limited to 50 church teams.

Sponsored by the WNCC Office of Congregational Development

To register go to: <http://bit.ly/nfDY2t>

## January Clergy Meeting

**Myers Park UMC – 1501 Queens Road– Charlotte NC**  
**Tuesday, January 10, 2012 – 9:30 AM Gathering/10:00 AM Session**



Dr. Ben Witherington, III

We are blessed to have Dr. Ben Witherington with us on January 10th to share biblical and theological insights on the topic – “Preaching the Atonement.” Dr. Witherington is professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary and the author of numerous books. He holds the Ph.D. from the University of Durham in England and is a United Methodist Elder. We believe this experience will enrich the content of our sermons on this difficult subject and increase our confidence in proclaiming it with boldness. We will have a brief business session in conjunction with this event to discuss relevant and upcoming matters. Since we do not have many clergy meetings in the Charlotte District, I am asking you to please plan to attend this event. It will be well worth your while.

## Clergy Profiles

The Western NC Conference makes available online ways to simplify the completion of information. We have great news for you! You now have the capability to review and update your annual clergy profile online. Once you enter your profile and submit online it will remain in the clergy profile database. Each year thereafter you will only need to login, review edit/update. **The deadline to complete this process is January 15, 2012.**

The annual clergy profile is to be reviewed annually by each pastor. It is important to note that annual profiles of pastors are **required of every pastor irrespective of an anticipated change in appointment or not.** Profile information is used to maintain current information files about pastors and churches in the Western North Carolina Conference.

Additional login details were sent to all clergy via D.S. Gary’s *E-pistle* dated December 5th. If you have questions or need assistance please contact the district office at 704-525-3395.

## Reporting Statistical Year-End

The 2011 End of Year reports/statistical information will be **due on Tuesday, January 31, 2012.** Churches will input information into the online system again this year. Access will again be available through the church’s log-in on the WNCC administrative website ([www.wnccadmin.org](http://www.wnccadmin.org)). The system will open on January 9, 2012. Instructions are forthcoming and will be sent via email to pastors. If you need additional assistance contact the district office (704-525-3395).



## 2012 Western NC Annual Conference

**Mark Your Calendar!**  
**The 2012 Annual Conference date is June 20-24 at Lake Junaluska.**

Stay tuned to <http://www.wnccumc.org/ac12/12ac.htm>

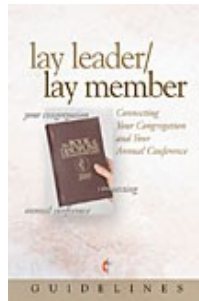
## 2011 District and Conference Apportionments Close-Out

The close-out date for 2011 apportionments is **Friday, January 6th at 3 p.m.**  
The close-out date/time means that your check must be received and posted in the Conference books.

Pastors and Local Church Treasurers can access the apportionments and clergy benefit balances at the WNC Conference Administrative Services website. If they need assistance with log-in contact the district office at 704-525-3395.

## District Lay Leader Training Event

The Charlotte District Board of Laity is sponsoring a training session designed especially for local church lay leaders on **Sunday, January 8**. It will be held at St. Andrews United Methodist Church at 1900 Emerywood Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210. The time is 2:30 to 4:30 PM. We consider it very important for all local church lay leaders to attend. This is for new or continuing lay leaders. Please see that your church is represented.



## Lay Speaking Ministries



Our District Lay Speaking classes will be held **each Monday evening in February** from 6:30 to 9:00 PM at St. Paul UMC, 2830 Dorchester Place, Charlotte, NC 28209. There will be basic classes for first timers and advanced classes for persons who have already completed the basic course. Persons should maintain certification by completing classes every three years.

*All Local Lay Leaders should be certified Lay Speakers.*

**Registration form is available at the district website [www.chardist.org](http://www.chardist.org).**

Register by December 30th.

## Vitality Rally

(District Leadership Conference)



**Hold the Date:**  
**January 22, 2012**  
**3:00 – 5:30 PM**  
**Myers Park UMC**



*Dr. Mark Ralls, Keynote Speaker*

Please plan to bring your leaders and attend our upcoming district leadership conference Sunday, January 22. Our keynote speaker for this event will be Dr. Mark Ralls, senior pastor of the Centenary UMC in Winston-Salem.

It is important that we as the “people called Methodist” once again be the vital agents of grace and hope to a world searching and struggling. Yet how do we do this and what changes do we need to make in order to revitalize our churches? The message and workshops will be designed to look at ways to be vital in our approach and methods that we might offer Christ in greater ways.

*Stay tuned for additional details.*

## 2011 WNCC Journal

The 2011 Western NC Conference Journal is online and available for download. It includes the annual statistical report.



Visit: <http://www.wnccumc.org/pub/2011Journal.htm>



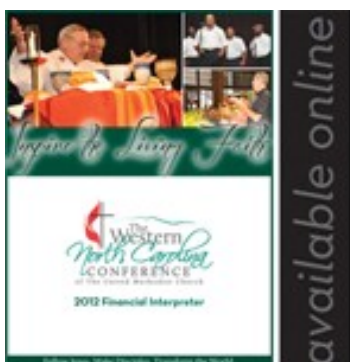
**Saturday  
January 14th**

The Western NC Conference Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration will be held on Saturday, January 14th, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bennett College 900 Washington Street Greensboro, NC

Hosts: WNCC Black Methodists for Church Renewal and the Conference Office of Discipleship Ministry. Details TBA.

<http://wnccumc.org/eth/eth-events.htm>

## Financial Interpreter Available Online



The 2012 *Financial Interpreter*\* is now available online. This valuable tool, produced annually by the Office of Treasury and Administrative Services, will assist congregations in understanding the 2012 Annual Conference Budget, as well as connecting their ministry to larger picture of our connecational church. [Jennifer Burton](#) is Conference Treasurer and Director of Administrative Services, 704.535.2260 or 800.562.7929 x127.

\*<http://www.wnccumc.org/stw/pdf/2012FinancialInterpreter.pdf>

Excerpt from <http://wnccumc.org/>



## Council on Bishops Release Summary Report

More than 110 active and retired members of the Council of Bishops gathered at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina from Sunday, October 30 through Friday, November 4. The week was centered on our life together and our council leadership for the mission of the church, to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. "Ecclesiology" was a theme that ran through much of the week as the bishops entered into conversation about the theology, nature, mission, and character of the church for the twenty-first century.

The summary is available at

[http://www.umc.org/atf/cf/%7Bdb6a45e4-c446-4248-82c8-e131b6424741%7D/COB\\_FALL2011REPORT\\_NOV.PDF](http://www.umc.org/atf/cf/%7Bdb6a45e4-c446-4248-82c8-e131b6424741%7D/COB_FALL2011REPORT_NOV.PDF)

Excerpt from <http://wnccumc.org/>

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Gary C. Royals,  
District Superintendent

DeEtta Rivens,  
Administrative Assistant

## Calendar

### DECEMBER 2011

22-27 Dist. Office Closed: Observance Christmas Holiday

### JANUARY 2012

2 District Office Closed: Observance New Year's  
8 Local Church Lay Leader Training, 2:30 pm, St. Andrews UMC, Charlotte (pg. 6)  
10 Charlotte District Clergy Meeting, Myers Park UMC, Special Guest,  
Biblical Scholar Dr. Ben Witherington (pg. 4)  
14 WNCC Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, 10 am-3 pm, Bennett College (pg. 7)  
16 District Office Closed: Observance Martin L. King, Jr.  
22 Charlotte District DLC, Myers Park UMC, 3 pm, Additional details TBA, (pg.6)  
(Inclement weather date Jan. 29)

### FEBRUARY 2012

4 *Turning Tippers in Tithers*, Huntersville (pg. 4)  
6, 13, 20, 27 Charlotte District Lay Speakers Training, St. Paul UMC, Charlotte (pg. 6)  
9 Mission to Ministers, Myers Park UMC, Additional details TBA.  
11 UM Women Mission Study, Providence UMC (Inclement weather date Feb. 25)  
24-26 Preacher's Kid Weekend, Age 10 to Grade 8, Camp Carolwood, Lenior  
<http://wncumc.org/Cal/pdf/PKweekend2012.pdf>

### MARCH 2012

4 Lay Speakers Graduation, St. Paul UMC  
9-10 Spring Seminar Partnership with Statesville District, Christ UMC-Hickory  
"Positive Changes: One Leader, One Layer at a Time"  
Additional details TBA.  
17 UM Women Prayer Breakfast, location TBA

Learn about other upcoming events/opportunities in the Western NC Conference at  
<http://wncumc.org/Cal/calendar-events.htm>



*Merry Christmas  
May you and your family  
have a joyful Christmas  
season celebrating the most  
precious gift- Jesus Christ.*