

February 10, 2009

Electronic
Newsletter
Charlotte District
of the United
Methodist Church



Charlotte District

E-Connections

The Charlotte District Leadership Conference

The context for leadership in the church is always a Christ-centered community that clearly defines its vision and mission. Thus, the training of leaders for specific roles is never an exercise that separates the office or function from the vision or mission. Leadership training is a corporate experience, and the exercise of each office within the church's structure has the context of the community's defined purpose and adopted priorities. We function best when we train teams from each church, and the members of those teams are attuned to the unique mission of their congregation. The Charlotte DLC is designed in accordance with this theological understanding. The specific task of a leader (chair of trustees or SPRC, for example) is defined by the central mission of the congregation—not the personal preferences of the members of the committee.



This is precisely why the planners of this year's Charlotte DLC have designed the training of local church leaders to begin with an introduction to the principles of **Natural Church Development--NCD**. The simple thesis of this remarkable program of congregational renewal is that there are eight essential facets of all healthy, growing churches: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, inspiring worship, need-oriented evangelism, holistic small groups, functional structures, passionate spirituality, and loving relationships. If your church does a thorough NCD survey and discovers that the congregation is deficient in *passionate spirituality*, then the leader who is trained on **February 28th at St. Stephen UMC** will be compelled to direct the attention of their appointed committee toward this specific concern. The leader will then engage in developing strategies for cultivating passionate spirituality in the life of the trustees or SPRC.

The flow of this exciting morning will begin with a time of worship with a keynote address by **Dr. Robert L. Kerr**, entitled, "**Building Healthy, Growing Congregations God's Way.**" We shall then assign each participant to one of four seminar classes. These hour-long sessions will be followed by another hour of twelve corollary workshops that are designed for specific tasks and expectations to be led by those elected at Charge Conference. Thus, the morning will be of interest to all elected officials as well as to those who hold no particular office, but wish to contribute to the revitalization of their church.

The leadership of both the **four NCD seminars** and the **twelve task-oriented workshops** is spectacular. **Dr. Kerr** is pastor of Rehobeth UMC in the Lake Norman District. He is the coordinator of coaching for our Conference's Natural Church Development team and has taught in DLCs throughout Western North Carolina. **Rev. James T. "Chip" Webb, Jr.**, is currently the pastor of Brookstown UMC near Winston-Salem and chairs the Congregational Development for that district. **Dr. Karen Wiseman** is Professor of Homiletics at Hood Theological School and will address the theme, "Inspiring Worship." **Dr. Percy Reeves**, the pastor of our newest church—Sanctuary UMC—will address Passionate Spirituality and Loving Relationships.

We are privileged to have just the right expertise in leadership for each of our nuts and bolts workshops: **Dr. Nancy Rankin** will lead the topic, *Facilitating with Ease*—a course (continued on page 2)

In this Issue...

- ▶ Page 1-2 DLC
- ▶ Page 3 District Spring Seminar
- ▶ Page 4 Radical Hospitality in D.C.
- ▶ Page 5 MLK Celebration
- ▶ Page 6 Upcoming Opportunities

The Charlotte District Leadership Conference

(continued from page 1) especially helpful for any leader or one who wishes to improve leadership skills. **Neil Brown**, church architect and member of University City UMC, will guide discussion on the topic, *Building Blocks*—a course primarily about church property. Committees of Trustees will certainly want to be present. **George Thompson**, our DS, will provide important insights to the SPRCs and PPRCs of the Charlotte District. **Dr. Phil Wingeier-Rayo**, Associate Professor of Religion at Pfeiffer University, will lead a session entitled, *Methodism 101*. **Rev. Ken Lyon**, the very effective Senior Pastor of Matthews UMC, will guide a discussion on *Building a Generous Church*. In this time of economic challenge and uncertainty, Ken's class will have a strong general appeal. **Dr. Bill Jeffries** of Providence UMC is a favorite for this occasion, and he has been asked to lead a discussion on the missional theme, *The World is Our Parish*. We are all excited about the theme chosen for the class to be taught by **Ms. JoAnn Horstman**, Business Administrator of Myers Park UMC, with the provocative title, *From Wall Street to Church Street*. **Rev. Talbot Davis**, the creative pastor of Good Shepherd, will offer a stimulating course on small group ministries entitled, *High Impact Ministry*. **Ms. Kathy James** comes all the way from Spartanburg, S.C., in order to be our leader in the engaging subject, *Energizing Children's Ministry*. Kathy is Congregational Specialist for the Rock Hill and Spartanburg districts in the SC Conference. One of the very effective programs reaching a large population of youth is directed by St. Stephen UMC's associate pastor, **Rev. Brandon Dirk**, who will inspire and instruct those who are seeking to develop in their church *Irresistible Youth Ministry*. There will be training for leaders who will care for retirement age members through a course entitled, *Senior Adult Ministry*.

All pastors are responsible for both recruiting lay participation and attending the event. A special class is designed for our clergy—*A Pastor's Non-Anxious Presence in Time of Anxiety*. Leading our clergy in discussion will be **Dr. Jim Dudley**, Ph.D., an experienced mentor to pastors of varying denominations and Professor of Social Work at UNC-Charlotte.

We encourage all pastors to recruit teams of leadership for attendance on Saturday, February 28th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at St. Stephen UMC. The training of church leaders for a specific task will be null and void unless that well-trained leader is working in the context of a healthy church with all eight facets of a vibrant congregation reflected in its corporate life.

Grace and peace,

George

George E. Thompson, Charlotte District Superintendent

Leading Change in the Congregation

The 2009 Spring Seminar, March 8-9

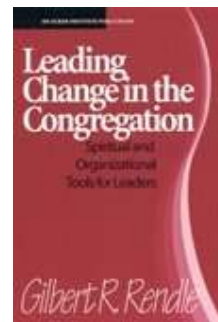


Rev. Dr. Gil Rendle, Facilitator, is a United Methodist clergy who has served as a consultant to congregations across the country.

Through the years our Charlotte District churches have benefitted substantially from the insights gained from the annual Spring Seminar through the teachings of such illuminating lecturers as Doug Anderson, Kennon Callahan, Ed White, and Robert Blackburn. Last year the planners of this event moved away from the three day (Thursday-Saturday) format to a more condensed agenda in order to maximize the participation of both lay and clergy. Again this year we shall follow that practical pattern by assembling our lay leadership teams on Sunday (March 8th) and our clergy with staff teams on Monday (March 9th) at Myers Park's Jubilee Hall. We do encourage the attendance of at least one pastor from each church at the Sunday event in order to coordinate and lead the laity in the implementation of what is learned.

Dr. Gilbert Rendle is broadly experienced as a denominational consultant for the United Methodist Church in contexts such as our Spring Seminar. We encourage your reading a couple of Gil's books: *Leading Change in the Congregation* and *Holy Conversations* in order to get a feel for the themes that Dr. Rendle will likely emphasize. He has a national reputation for his expertise in understanding and managing constructive change in the life of a congregation. Dr. Rendle's years as a consultant with the Alban Institute (1995-2007) honed his skills for counseling congregations in conflict. He has helped vast numbers of churches to build effective staff teams. He is especially attuned to matters related to a post-Christian culture and the challenges of the emerging church in this unique era. He is a graduate of the Boston University School of Theology (M.Div.) and Temple University (Ph.D.). Gil served as Senior Pastor of Ridge Avenue UMC (1972-1980) and Central Park UMC (1980-1986) in the Pennsylvania Conference.

When we conduct the 2009 Charge Conferences next fall, the local church agenda will center upon the practical things our seminar teams learned at this event and what new initiatives our churches have developed as a result. Thus, the role of the pastor is crucial in making the seminar a transforming experience. Each church has received a registration form with recruitment goals based upon the size of worship attendance. Please complete and return the registration information by **February 25th** so that our laity team and staff at Myers Park can be prepared with printed resources and meals for all those in attendance.



South Tryon Community UMC Members Attend Presidential Inauguration

January 20th was an historic day for the nation and an exciting time especially for approximately forty members of South Tryon Community UMC of Charlotte. They were the guests of Capitol Hill UMC on Pennsylvania Avenue, near the nation's Capitol. Rev. Alisa Lasater served as an associate pastor at Myers Park UMC and worked closely with the South Tryon Community congregation--a mission church in partnership with the Myers Park church. Rev. Lasater is now the newly appointed pastor of Capitol Hill UMC in the heart of Washington, DC. Her congregation there had planned for a week of hospitality on behalf of the throngs that were anticipated to attend the inauguration. She invited her friends from South Tryon to be part of this experience by working with her church's program of radical hospitality and viewing the inauguration event on the Mall.

While snow was beginning to fall upon the city of Charlotte on Monday night, January 19th, a bus load of excited members departed for the nation's Capitol, equipped with parking pass and official invitation from Alisa's church. Sleeping bags, cots and couches provided for a much-needed rest before an eventful Tuesday. Rev. Charlie Rivens and the church leadership organized the experience and helped prepare for serving a warm bean soup to the myriad of visitors who appeared by sunrise from destinations from around the globe. The *New York Times* featured a cover page interview with Rev. Lasater on the day of our departure and included a comprehensive story about the ministry of this church on its website.

George Thompson, the Charlotte District Superintendent, was a guest of South Tryon for the occasion. He and many from the group made their way into the masses that populated the Mall for this historic event. Large transmission screens had been erected for the benefit of those who viewed the occasion from as far away as the Washington Monument. It was a powerful emotional moment to be present with millions of voices as Rev. Rick Warren invited the throng to join in reciting the Lord's Prayer. We heard the Inaugural Address amidst interruptions from ambient sounds of police sirens and surveillance helicopters. A significant relationship was forged between these two servant congregations, both of which seek to minister at the cross-section of urban poverty and plenty.



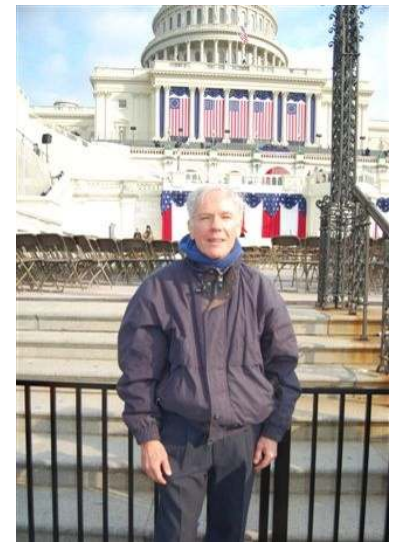
Pictured here are George Thompson, Charlotte District Superintendent, with Alisa Lasater, Pastor of Capitol Hill UMC, and Charlie Rivens, Pastor of South Tryon Community UMC.



Capitol Hill UMC where Rev. Alisa Lasater is pastor.



A group of South Tryon Community UMC members dressed for the 17 degree temperature crossing North Carolina Avenue at Pennsylvania Avenue on their way to the Capitol Mall already crowded with about 2 million visitors.



Our DS near the Inauguration Day platform.

Re-Membering the Body of Christ: A Celebration of the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Dr. Broadnax

Those attending this year's commemoration at Coburn Memorial UMC in Salisbury received the hospitality of a church that has developed a cross-ethnic ministry and reflects many of the ideals of Dr. King. The Charlotte District was well represented. Dr. Reginald Broadnax, Dean of Academic Affairs at Hood Theological Seminary, is married to Teila V. Hand Broadnax of St. Mark's UMC in Charlotte. In Dr. Broadnax's keynote address, he observed the unique historical context for this gathering, indicating that a new generation of African Americans is now providing leadership in our nation and local communities. These have not experienced the level of persecution that was endured by their parents but are the recipients of the fulfillment of many dreams articulated by Dr. King. The observance in Salisbury preceded by only three days the inauguration of President Obama—the first American President with African heritage. Dr. Broadnax encouraged those in attendance to maintain the church as a reservoir of memory that will sustain the story of the Civil Rights movement and its origins in the liberation message of the Gospel. Broadnax cited three aspects of social justice, which were integral to King's dream:

race, economics/poverty and non-violence. Though race was one part of the dream, Broadnax said it was “the least part.” To focus solely on racism was to miss the message of King. “Let's remember that his dream was for more than blacks and whites being able to live and go to school together, but that his dream was for an end to what we call the giants of racism, materialism and militarism....”

A diversified panel of participants discussed contemporary obstacles that endanger the realization of Dr. King's dream. Lisa Hughes, pastor of Coburn Memorial, described the complex mission of her diverse congregation and the difficulty encountered by Latinos who come into a Caucasian culture of suspicion and prejudice. Alston Howze, a young adult member of St. Mark's UMC, shared a perspective from the eyes of a young adult Christian who is facing the economic inequities within a culture of fear. Patricia Pegram, a commissioned deacon and practicing attorney, is an advocate for Latino aliens in the Charlotte District. She eloquently articulated the plight of these who have come into North Carolina seeking what all other immigrant groups have sought: namely a new life of freedom and opportunity in a nation founded upon Christian principles. She recited the lines printed upon the foundation stone of the Statue of Liberty.



Patricia Pegram

Jung Woo Lee of Wesley UMC, son of Rev. Jae Lee and Kim, delivered an essay in tribute to Dr. King, citing the enduring relevance of this great prophet and martyr.



Jung Woo Lee

Bishop Larry Goodpaster's sermon reflected upon the geography of the Civil Rights movement which was the terrain for his former Episcopal appointment. Thus, he was immersed in travels through Selma, Montgomery (Alabama), and had served churches throughout the landscape of Mississippi. These places remain salient reminders of the cruciform character of the movement led by Dr. King and continue to inspire our denomination in Methodism's witness for a just and peaceful future. The gathering concluded with the Holy Eucharist and a singing of “We Shall Overcome.”

Upcoming Opportunities

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEMINARS

Hosted by WNCC Christian Educators Fellowship

PURPOSE:

Provide support and information for persons who are responsible for Christian Education and/or Program Ministries in their local church or District – both volunteer or employed.

February 19 | Charlotte
March 5 and 7 | Location TBA
April 16 and 18 | Location TBA
May 7 and 9 | Location TBA

Additional Information
<http://wnccumc.org/ced/ced-events.htm>

Gloria Simmons, 704.784.9388 | Gloria Hughes, 704.535.2260 x113
Stephanie Hand, 704.525.1326

The Western NC Conference of The United Methodist Church
presents Phase 2 of A Summit on Poverty and Suffering

Stepping
into
Springtime

March 28, 2009

First UMC

410 First Ave, N | Conover

Phase 2 of 'A Summit on Poverty and Suffering' is a timely program to assist our churches in their preparations to hear and respond to the cries of those in need



Training and ideas that work for implementing ministry to transform the lives of the poor and suffering

Details:

<http://wnccumc.org/chs/summit3.htm>

Charlotte Cokesbury Sponsored VBS 2009 Showcase Previews



<http://wnccumc.org/ced/pdf/2009CokesburyVBSPreviews.pdf>

2009 DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDY TRAINING EVENTS

All 4 levels of DISCIPLE Bible Study will be covered including DBOM's new youth curriculum, RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP.

February 28 - Winston-Salem - Ardmore UMC
March 28 - Gastonia - Myers Memorial UMC
May 2 - Asheville - Trinity UMC
May 23 - North Wilkesboro - Wilkesboro UMC
8:45 AM – 3:00 PM

Free to all laity and clergy in the WNCC and NCC. \$5.00 for lunch.

Register online at www.disciplebibleoutreach.org



WNCC CLERGY SPOUSES'

2009 SPRING RETREAT

MARCH 27—29, 2009



DECLUTTER

AND BE
INSPIRED



Would you like to be less cluttered
and more inspired?

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- clear it away and
- make more room in your life for inspiration

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United Methodist Men of St. Mark's UMC, Belmont

On January 25th the United Methodist Men of St. Mark's UMC, Belmont, met after worship to plan for their BBQ fund raiser. In the morning's sermon Rev. Caren Morgan addressed the anxiety that many are experiencing related to the economic crisis. Referencing the theology of Psalm 62, she preached a creative message entitled, "Christianomics," citing verse 8: "Trust in the Lord at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."



Healing of the Nation Banquet and Worship Service

The Charlotte District Laity Council, with the leadership of District Lay Leader **Irma Ellwanger**, began planning for a special banquet in the fall of the year, before the general election in November. The Council recognized the divisions within the general culture that have adversely affected the church. They chose the theme, "Healing of the Nation," for a banquet that would bring together people from a variety of political and cultural backgrounds in order to pray for oneness, healing and the guidance of God. This special meal was held in Jubilee Hall of Myers Park on January 26th--just days after the inauguration of a new President and the installation of a new Governor in North Carolina. **Dan Bishop**, a recent Mecklenburg County Commissioner, Republican and member of Providence UMC, offered a powerful prayer that invited all to join with him in a time of confession and to unite in the spirit of a forgiving Christ. **John Harmeling**, a member of Myers Park, provided a thoughtful and provocative reading entitled, "From Darkness to Light." **Mrs. Fannie Little**, a member of St. Mark's UMC in Charlotte, read a prayer written by City Councilman **Anthony Foxx** who could not attend in person due to the Council's session that night. The Keynote address was enthusiastically delivered by **Bishop Larry Goodpaster** (pictured here) who weaved together several biblical texts in order to address the theme. He made references to his pastoral experiences in Mississippi during an era of great political upheaval and pointed toward the future God intends for his faithful Church. Intercessory prayers were offered as candles were lit, calling for the healing of nation, state, counties, cities, congregations, ethnic groups, and divergent cultural entities. The many in attendance concluded the evening with the singing of "For the Healing of the Nation," led by the remarkable musician Dr. Thomas Moore.



Cole Memorial UMC

Cole Memorial joyfully received these persons into our membership on Sunday, December 7: Jim and Glenda Grant, Joe Richardson, Cathey Grant, Eric and Donna Baker, Michael Johnson, Andrea Peterson, and Ben Goryl.



Mission to Ministers with Brian McLaren

The Finch-Hunt Lectures on Preaching, held on Tuesday, February 3rd at Myers Park UMC, provided one of the best attended experiences in the long series of this event's history. Brian McLaren, who is often identified with the "Emerging Church Movement," was the lecturer and Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster provided the sermon at day's conclusion. Dr. McLaren used much humor in his power-point talk. He was dialogical, inviting the tables of pastors and guests to discuss the content of his assertions. He began his presentation by having the clergy to assist him in singing a chant in the word of the Apostle Paul contained in Philippians 2. He challenged us to reclaim the wisdom of the ancient saints of the church in moving toward a new posture of authenticity in the emerging church. In the dialogue he stated that, while Methodism has a vibrant, life-changing message and Post-modern theology, we ironically have many depressed pastors. He suggested that our concept of itineracy has run beyond its usefulness. Among his many books referenced during the day were his recent entitled, *Finding Our Way Again* and the very influential, *A Generous Orthodoxy*.

Pictured here enjoying the Mission to Ministers are Charlotte District associate pastors Stephanie Hand, minister of Education at Mouzon, Rich Tuttle of Good Shepherd, and Judi Hunt of Matthews UMC.



Charlotte District Clergy Fellowship, January 13th

An abundant breakfast awaited those clergy who arrived at Sanctuary UMC for our fellowship's first gathering in the New Year. Radical hospitality was experienced by all, thanks to the members of the church and the preparations of the Executive Committee of the Clergy Fellowship. The musicians pictured here took time off from their day jobs in order to participate in a worship and praise experience. Dr. Percival Reeves preached a challenging and hope-filled gospel message as we all received a portion of the Sanctuary experience. Dr. Reeves reviewed the creative structure of the church's administration since launching. He confessed that his greatest challenge is to train and equip leaders who comprehensively understand the nature and joy of spirit-filled discipleship. Getting the numbers into worship is not a successful achievement if these are not being challenged to become self-giving, growing and mission-directed evangelists for Christ. The musicians played their instruments with riveting energy, and the soloist joined them by inspiring all in a spirit of celebration, hope and renewal.



Blair Road Celebrates Half a Century of Ministry

A congregation of well over 600 packed into the multi-purpose family life center of Blair Road UMC on February 1st in order to commemorate fifty years of vibrant ministry. Psalm 33:4 was chosen to express the mood of the moment: “For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”

Three former pastors participated in a spirited, joyful act of worship: Dr. Frank Stith led an opening litany; Dr. Wannie Hardin provided a reflective morning prayer; and Paul Lowder read the scriptural lesson from I Peter 4:7-11. The congregation was introduced to an emotionally powerful video history of the church’s glorious history. The present pastoral team provided connection with the current theological and programmatic theme: 40 Days of Community. Dr. Nancy Rankin preached on the subject, “Serving Together,” as she encouraged the members to respond to God’s call upon their lives through acts of costly service. Associate pastor Rev. Johnny Lord led the affirmation; and Candido Albino, the pastor to Latinos, prayed in Spanish as Pilar, his wife, translated. Dr. George Thompson led the opening call to worship that began a powerful service blending the congregation’s appreciation of the past with its affirmation of a present and relevant mission.

The crowded room emptied into the educational building and lawn while a plethora of volunteers re-arranged the versatile space for a covered dish meal following the benediction.



First Row: Dr. George Thompson, Dr. Wannie Hardin, Dr. Nancy B. Rankin, Pastor Candido Albino. *Second Row:* Rev. Paul Lowder, Rev. Nelson Melvin, Rev. Johnny Lord, Dr. Frank Stith.

Calendar

February 2009

- 2, 9, 16, 23 District Lay Speaking Training—Dilworth UMC, 6:30 p.m.—9 p.m.
- 23-27 Cabinet Meeting
- 28 Charlotte District Dist. Leadership Conference, St. Stephen UMC, 9 a.m.— 1 p.m.
- 21 or 28 Bishop's Confirmation Celebration, 9:30 am (21st @ Long's Chapel, Lake Junaluska and 28th at Myers Park, Charlotte)
(Registration: <http://www.wnccumc.org/yth/pdf/2009BCCweb.pdf>)

March 2009

- 1 Graduation service for 2009 Lay Speaker's Training, 4 p.m., Grace UMC
- 8-9 District's Annual Spring Seminar, Facilitator Gil Rendle, Myers Park UMC, Jubilee Hall
- 14 Early Responder Training, Clyde NC, (<http://www.wnccumc.org/vim/dsr-Training.htm>)
- 27-29 WNCC Clergy Spouses' Spring Retreat, Catholic Conference Center (see page 5)
- 28 Charlotte District UM Women Prayer Breakfast, Sharon UMC
(Registration: http://www.wnccumw.org/District%20News/CHA_200901.pdf)

April 2009

- 19 Project AGAPE Sunday—Conference Wide
- 24-26 Kaleidoscope Middle High School Weekend Event
- 24-26 United Methodist Men's 29th Annual Spiritual Rally

Visit the Western NC Conference Calendar at <http://wnccumc.org/Cal/calendar-events.htm>

Free Download Worship Planning Calendars:

2009 (<http://www.gbod.org/worship/2009cwrplanningcal.pdf>)

2010 (<http://www.gbod.org/worship/2010cwrplanningcal.pdf>)

Bishop Initiates Weekly Message to WNCC Clergy, Laity

Beginning this week, Bishop Larry Goodpaster will offer his thoughts and insights in a weekly letter to WNCC clergy and laity. Bishop G's E-pistle will be emailed to all clergy and laity who subscribe to WNCC e-NEWS. The bishop is looking forward to the future in utilizing electronic technology to share his letters, reflections, thoughts and ideas. Persons who would like to receive the weekly message may contact Laura Diviney (ldiviney@wnccumc.org) at 800-562-7929, ext.121.

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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