

January 1, 2008

Electronic
Newsletter



Charlotte District

E-Connections

“The United Methodist Way”

Last month I made reference to an experience that touched my life in a very positive and affirming way: the gathering of nearly nine hundred district superintendents and bishops at Lake Junaluska through the sponsorship of the General Board of Discipleship, November 9-11. The event was billed as “A Convocation of Extended Cabinets” with the theme, “The United Methodist Way.” As we approached a year that will include a crucial General Conference, the election of a plethora of bishops at our jurisdictional assemblies, and political candidates as numerous as bunnies at a rabbit farm; no speaker articulated a single politically sensitive statement. This convocation resembled a spiritual life retreat, not a caucus of bureaucratic ecclesiastical brass. In preparation for the event, we were encouraged to read a new little book by Bishop Rueben Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Abingdon Press). Thus, we gave focus to these simple dictums of father Wesley: “Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.” This was the first gathering of bishops and cabinets since 1969, just after the merger of the former Methodist Church and the former Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the UMC. Our purpose was to develop clarity around the church’s purpose, mission, and identity and to prepare to lead the church forward in new ways.



The “ghost” of John Wesley visited the bishops and superintendents at the Convocation at Lake Junaluska.

One presentation that brought particular clarity to this task was led by Bishop Robert Schnase of the Missouri Conference, a former Texas pastor. We were introduced to his new book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. In this easily comprehended little volume, he proposes that the health of each of our congregations is related to their faithfulness to these essential practices: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity. When each of these emphases resonates in the life of a congregation, there is always growth and vitality.

A few days after returning from the event, I was reading the blog from the website of little Fairfield UMC and discovered that the church’s council had just completed a retreat in which all participants had been challenged to read Bishop Schnase’s book and to define the congregation’s vision for the future based upon these five practices. Wow! As usual, some of the pastors in the Charlotte District are way ahead of their superintendent. None the less, I urge all our pastors to read this refreshing volume. Take the initiative to discuss it in a cluster gathering of your colleagues or lead a study of Schnase’s themes with a small group of your most visionary laity.

Perhaps Houston Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, president of the council of bishops, said it best when she urged our ecclesiastical leaders to stop bickering among themselves and focus on spirituality, our identity as UMs, and what God is calling us to be and do. This can only happen if the process starts in each local church. I want the Charlotte District to become exemplary in this resolve.

Two of the stirring addresses at the Convocation were delivered by Dr. Gilbert Rendle, an Alban Institute consultant for the Council of Bishops. I was so impressed by his analytical skills and his gifts as a communicator that I invited him to be our facilitator for the 2009 Spring Seminar. The directors of our School of Christian Discipleship will enjoy planning this event in the spirit that seems to be sweeping our denomination at a crucial time in our collective history.

As we stand at the entrance of an historic calendar year in which the risen Christ beckons us from his future, let us begin our pilgrimage of faithfulness committed to the faithful disciplines that define who we are and whose we are.

Grace and peace,

George

George Thompson
Charlotte District Superintendent

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District Leadership Conference, January 12, 2008

Recently you received a promotional bulletin insert with information related to our Charlotte District Leadership Conference on January 12th to be held at Assurance UMC.

The insert should now be in the hands of all those who will benefit from this training: all members of the 2008 Staff-Parish/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, your 2008 Lay Leader, all Trustees (serving in each of the classes, 2008-2010), members of both Finance and Stewardship Committees, Chairs of Church Council/Administrative Boards, and all members of your Committee on Lay Leadership (Nominations). We include this information once again in this edition of the *E-Connection*.

It is important that this event is promoted in all our churches because, through the encouragement of the School of Christian Discipleship, several features of the DLC are different this year:

1. We are focusing upon only six strategic areas of specific leadership responsibility.
2. We are conducting two DLC's: this one in January that gives focus to several key leadership roles and one in the fall that will encourage all leaders and growing disciples to learn more about some salient theme essential to all followers of Jesus Christ and members of the United Methodist Church. Thus, in October we sponsored a DLC featuring Wesleyan theology with guest lecturer Richard Heitzenrater and other authorities in our Wesleyan heritage.
3. Our January Conference will be held on a Saturday (the 12th) at a central location for the district. Assurance, at 9700 Mt. Holly Huntersville Road, is only minutes away for inter-state 77.

Our task will be both inspiration and information. The UMAR Choir will sing at the plenary session. I shall elaborate on the five themes of Bishop Robert Schnase's *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* and offer practical suggestions on how these practices may be manifested in the program ministries of our Charlotte District churches.

It is the responsibility of each pastor to attend and promote participation among the appropriate laity who serve in these vital roles.



“One Body One Spirit”



Charlotte District of the United Methodist Church

*Inspiration and Training
for
Church Leaders*



“One Body One Spirit”

Saturday, January 12, 2008 9:30 a.m. - Noon

**Assurance UMC
9700 Mt. Holly Huntersville Rd., Huntersville, NC 28078**

9:15 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast

9:30 a.m. Plenary Session by Dr. Thompson

Music from the UMAR Choir

10:30 a.m. Breakout Training Sessions for:

Staff-Parish Dr. George Thompson, Superintendent

Lay Leaders Rick Moore, Salem (Charlotte)

Trustees Dr. Bill Jeffries, Providence (Charlotte)

Finance & Stewardship Dr. Mark King, Centenary (Winston-Salem)

Board/Council Chairs Rev. Bev Copley, District Coach

Nominations-Lay Leadership Karen Lynch-Bromby, Group/Volunteer Central

The event concludes at noon.

This event is for new and continuing committee chairs and their committees.

Help all your leaders get the *inspiration, connections, and training* they need at the time of year they need it most.

For more information, you may contact
Reverend Bev Copley at 704-932-5330.

For carpool information speak to your pastor.

Snow Date: Saturday, January 26, 2008

St. Luke's "Hand in Hand" Orchestra

The orchestra program provided by St. Luke United Methodist Church through its *Hand in Hand* program began a new year October 16th. There are twenty-one students from Shamrock Gardens Elementary School participating. Each Tuesday at the end of the school day, volunteers from the church meet the students and walk them across the street to the church fellowship hall. There the students are provided a snack and help with their homework. The students are broken up into two groups for lessons, those who are new to the program and the second and third year students. Maya Johnson, a member of Assurance Church, and a trained children's music teacher is the director of the orchestra.

The *Hand in Hand* Orchestra at St. Luke began nearly seven years ago and is funded by gifts from the church and a private foundation. The church provides all the instruments, music, and music stands and pays the salary of the director. It is part of the on going ministry with Shamrock Gardens Elementary, which has one of the highest poverty levels in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System. St. Luke's *Hand in Hand* program provides everything from uniforms and other personal items to achievement incentives and field trip support. An annual bar-beque and baked goods sale provides most of the funds for those needs outside the orchestra.

St. Luke UMC is located at 2019 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC 28205. Reverend Richard Clough serves as pastor. Church Tel: 704-537-9286



St. Luke volunteers meet students after school and escort them to the fellowship hall.



A snack is provided before homework begins.

Upcoming Events/Activities in the Charlotte District

January 1st, District Office Closed in Observance of New Year's Day Holiday

Men's Breakfast, January 12th, 9:00 a.m., St. Mark's UMC

Calling All United Methodist Men. Want to meet other United Methodist Men of Faith? Want to Fellowship with other United Methodist Men of Color? Want to be a part of a new and exciting UMM Ministry? Then you're invited to a meet, greet, and eat breakfast fellowship sponsored by the St. Mark's United Methodist Men Fellowship. For additional information contact Mark Sanders (704-968-3884) or Hank Dozier (704-532-1070 / cell 704-965-5951).

Three of Christianity's Most Compelling Questions-January 7th, January 22nd, February 4th

Dr. James C. Howell of Myers Park UMC, 1501 Queens Road, will lead three programs this winter on three of Christianity's most compelling questions: Monday, January 7th at 7 p.m., "Is God Real?" Tuesday, January 22nd at 7 p.m., "What About Other Religions?" Monday, February 4th at 7 p.m., "Who Was Jesus?" Each forum will leave time for questions and conversation. Details at www.mpumc.org or 704-376-8584.

District Clergy Fellowship—Tuesday, January 15th, 9:30 a.m. to Noon, St. Paul UMC

A Celtic Worship Experience in Preparation for Lent led by Rev. Sally Johnston, Associate Rector, Holy Comforter Episcopal Church. Bring your Worship Chairpersons and Music Directors with you! Following our fellowship and refreshments time and announcements, we will have an experiential workshop introducing us to musical and worship resources for the Lenten Season. Rev. Sally Johnston will lead us through sample liturgies, poems and guided imagery experiences with accompanying recorded and live scores that use Celtic harmonies and instruments. These resources are designed to be easily adapted to your particular worship settings: Lenten luncheon services, Ash Wednesday services, evening Vesper Services, Holy Week services, Sunday Worship, etc. 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.

January 21st, District Office Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Lay Speakers' Training—Each Monday night in February (February 4, 11, 18, 25), 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Locations: Pleasant Grove UMC and St. Stephens UMC. Both basic (new) and advanced (renewal) classes will be offered at both locations. Registration has been extended through January 11th. If you would like to enroll contact your pastor or visit the district website (www.chardist.org) to obtain a form. Advance registration is important so that you can receive your assignment prior to the first class.

UM Women District Mission Study-Israel Palenstine by Stephen Goldstein, study guide by Sandra Olewine, February 9th

Saturday, February 9th 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 23rd). Contact your local UMW President or visit www.wncumw.org and click on District Info/Charlotte and print the October 2007 newsletter to obtain the registration form. Deadline to register is January 26th.

District Clergy Fellowship-Tuesday, February 12th, 9:30 a.m. to Noon, 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.

UMW Prayer Breakfast "Pure Hearts"-Saturday, March 8th, 9:00 a.m. to Noon, Pineville UMC

Speaker is Reverend Susan Pillsbury-Taylor. Cost is \$7.50 per person, registration deadline is February 1. Visit www.wncumw.org and click on District Info/Charlotte and print the October 2007 newsletter to obtain the registration form.

Charlotte District Annual Spring Seminar-Sunday, March 9th and Monday, March 10th, Myers Park UMC

"Leadership and Anxiety the Local Church." Richard Blackburn will be the facilitator. Sunday, March 9th, Clergy and Laity, 3:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday, March 10th, Clergy and Church staffs, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Additional information will be mailed soon.

Charlotte District Prayer Breakfast, Saturday, March 29th, 9:00 a.m., Plaza UMC

It is our goal for all laity to attend at least one prayer breakfast during the conference year for fellowship, prayer, inspiration, and renewal. Please advertise this event in your church. All clergy and laity are welcome to attend. Reverend Talbot Davis (Good Shepherd UMC) will be the speaker. Additional information will be mailed to the pastors, lay leaders, and churches. Contact: Mary Lou Roller, District Lay Leader (704-545-2430).

The Western North Carolina Conference Council on Laity

Announces

The LAITY ADDRESS

at the

2008 Annual Conference and Gathering of the Laity 2008

Conference theme: “Follow Jesus. Make Disciples. Transform the World.”

Any United Methodist interested in preparing and presenting a 10 to 12 minute address on the subject of **“Follow Jesus. Make Disciples. Transform the World.”** at the 2008 Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska in June 2008 and the Gathering of the Laity in August 2008 is invited to submit a proposed address for consideration. Separate Laity Addresses will be selected for each event.

Requirements:

1. Submissions must be based on the theme or a closely related one.
2. Submissions must have a cover page with the following information: name of submitter, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address if available, local church, and District.
3. Manuscripts must be typewritten and pages must be numbered.
4. Manuscripts must be received by January 31, 2008.
5. The actual presentation must be as submitted in the manuscript.
6. The invitation is open to all United Methodist Laity in the Western North Carolina Conference, excluding members of the Council on Laity.

Send submissions to: Mitchell Matthews, Conference Director of Lay Speaking Ministries, 110 Auden Drive, Greensboro, NC 27406 by January 31, 2008.

Phone (336) 674-3073, or e-mail MitchMatthews1@aol.com with questions.

Around the Charlotte District



Providence recognized three candidates for full-time Christian service at their Annual Charge/Church Conference: Tara Ebner (Children's Ministry) awaits ordination as an elder, Teresa Dunn (Youth Ministries) awaits commissioning as a deacon, and Marcia Constan will be licensed as a part-time local pastor.



October 28th service at Purcell with time for children's sermon fitting for the season.



Tim Killian (associate pastor), Rob Webb (Duke Endowment Rural Church), and Steve Knopp (associate pastor) on day of celebrating Denver's entrance into its new Family Life Center.



Bishop Palmer (right) of Iowa at the Convocation of Extended Cabinets. The daughter of Bishop Palmer is a member of St. Mark's in Charlotte and he was the church's 2007 revival preacher.



Pastor Dave Eggebeen and wife, Kelly, at a banquet honoring those who sacrificed to make possible the construction of the new sanctuary for Morningstar UMC.



Children's sermon time at the first worship service held in the newly constructed Family Life Center with over 600 in attendance.



Dr. Gilbert Rendle speaks to the Convocation of Extended Cabinets at Lake Junaluska in November. He is the veteran consultant of the Alban Institute who will be our facilitator for the Charlotte District Spring Seminar, March 9-10.

December 6th, Charlotte District Clergy's Christmas Banquet



Friday and Angela Okocha.



Entertainment was provided by "The Beggar Boys".



Bobbie Phillips, Mary Swink, Eleanor Biggers, and Pat Thompson.

Connectional Information

Deadlines

Apportionment payments must be received by 3:00 p.m., Friday, January 11th at the Conference Treasurer office (3400 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte) in order to be applied to the 2007 year.

Year-End Statistical Reports are due in the District Office no later than January 24th. Packets were mailed on December 3, 2007 to each pastor.

IRS Mileage Reimbursement for 2008 is 50.5cents per mile.

WNC Conference Martin L. King, Jr. Celebration

The annual MLK Service will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 19th, 2008 at St. Paul UMC, Winston-Salem. Bishop McCleskey will be the keynote speaker. Breakout sessions will follow. Contact Lillie Jones, at (704-535-2260) or ljones@wnccumc.org for additional information.

WNCC Peace with Justice Funds Provided for Peace Conference

WNCC Church and Society Committee granted \$1,000 for the Lake Junaluska Peace Conference in February. Funding was made possible by the Peace with Justice Funds the annual conference receives as its share of the General Church offering received on Peace with Justice Sunday. The Peace Conference is a joint project that will “look at issues from a Biblical and theological stance, offer insights on peace-making from personal experience, and share strategies from a practical and political view.” Speakers for the Jan. 31 – Feb. 2 conference include Peter Story, Jan Love, Jim Winkler and Bishop Ken Carder. Others speakers will include: Bishop James Swanson, Celeste Zapalla, and Richard Hays. Visit www.lakejunaluska.com/peace.aspx for reservation information.

UM Foundation Receiving Applications for 2008 Reynolds Fund Grants

The grants committee overseeing the Royce and Jane Reynolds Fund is now accepting applications for 2008 grants. The purpose of the fund is to support programs and ministries that further the mission of The United Methodist Church to “make disciples for Jesus Christ.” Through its grants committee, it annually recommends allocations consistent with this purpose. Projects initiated by a local church, a district, an agency of the annual conference or a world Methodist organization may be eligible for support. 2008 applications are being received from now until Feb. 1, 2008. For more information please contact Diana Kauserud at the United Methodist Foundation office, PO Box 18005, Charlotte NC 28218 or call 704-535-2260, ext. 146.

CALLED SESSION OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Bishop McCleskey and the Cabinet have approved a special called session of the WNCC on February 2nd, 2008, at the Hickory Metro Center. Delegates to the June, 2007 session are to be delegates to this called session. A full report of the Conference Reorganization Task Force will be sent to delegates prior to Feb.2nd.

Mission to Ministers 2008, February 5th, Myers Park UMC

Speakers for this event will include Dr. James Howell, senior pastor at Myers Park UMC and Reverend Fleming Rutledge, widely recognized preacher and lecturer. Additional details will be mailed in early 2008. Be sure to register early.

Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

Further registrants are being sought for the Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation. This is an outstanding place for refreshment, renewal and disciplined life for laity and clergy. This is co-sponsored event with The Upper Room.

- Even though this event seems a LONG TIME away, we are required to give a solid number to Caraway Conference Center by very early February, 2008, and we need a certain number to make the event viable.
- Share this information with the laity in your church.
- Contact me with any questions, follow up or other issues that come before you.
- We are making a grant request for some scholarship monies, especially for laity and persons who do not have access to continuing education funds. We would appreciate your support of this grant request.

Any member of the Task Force would be happy to speak further with you about this event. Persons can link to the information at the conference web site at www.wnccumc.org/ced/pdf/2008FiveDayAcademy.pdf

Connectional Information (continued)

There's Still Time to Join Bishop McCleskey and Other WNCC Friends for Paul's First Missionary Journey

Nearly one hundred persons have already registered to date, and we would like to include you among our fellow travelers. **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. Charlotte District clergy and Laity are asked to contact George at the district office for detailed information. (704.525.3395 or email: gthomp43@bellsouth.net). 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!

Scholarship Program

The United Methodist Leadership Scholars (UMLS) program is sponsored by United Methodist Churches in the southeast and 35 United Methodist-related colleges and universities in the southeast. UMLS is supported by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation. This scholarship program was approved by jurisdictional conference and is designed to encourage active UM students to attend a UM-related college or university by offering up to \$3,000 in scholarship funds. The sponsoring colleges and universities intentionally affirm students as God's children through the development of the whole student — intellectually, by developing leadership capability, and growing spiritually through programs that focus on the individual student. We are pleased to remind you that both the interactive and data collection websites for the UMLS program are working well. We invite you to peruse them at <http://ucls.umc.org> and <http://ucls-students.umc.org>.

Additional Copies of Our WNC Conference *Connections for Ministry* Now Available

Numerous requests for printed copies of this year's edition of *Connections for Ministry* prompted a re-print of this interpretation tool of conference funds. It is a valuable resource in helping congregations understand connectional giving by explaining where conference funds are used. To request printed copies, contact Laura Diviney in the WNCC Communication Office at 1-800-562-7929.

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

Subscribe to e-wnccnews, the brief, weekly WNCC e-newsletter, with convenient ministry links. Send your e-mail address to webministry@wnccumc.org with "e-news subscribe" in the subject line. The Conference Center does not share this email list with anyone.

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