

June 19, 2007

Electronic
Newsletter



Charlotte District

E-Connections

From the Pen of your Presiding Elder...

Laity and clergy of the Charlotte District played an essential role in this year's inspiring Annual Conference, June 6-10. We are especially indebted to those who served as tellers, distributed ballots, missed much of the Stuart Auditorium agenda, remained in the Harrell Center until late night over-seeing the vote counting, and making sure there were no chad stubs or inaccurate voting procedures. Barbara Ingram came up from Atlanta to serve in this capacity, joined by Billy Rintz (Huntersville UMC) and Dewey Smith (St. Paul UMC). Laity tellers included Brenda Alexander, Bruce Berrier, Peggy Duncan, Bill Kerns, and Michelene Mathews.



George Thompson, D.S.

Captivating worship and perfunctory reports were interrupted by as many as eleven ballots, selecting our representatives to next spring's General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, April 23 – May 2 at the Fort Worth Convention Center. Teila Hand (St. Mark's UMC) and Sandy Hieronymus (Myers Park UMC) will be preparing themselves for this awesome responsibility. They will be joined by clergy representatives Angela Pleasants (arriving pastor at Central UMC), Ken Carter (Providence UMC), Kim Ingram (WNC Conference Secretary-elect), James Howell (Myers Park UMC), and Nancy Rankin (WNC Conference Congregational Development Director). Our district will also be represented at the SEJ Conference in July of 2008 by Kathy FitzJeffries (St. Mark's UMC), Bill Wyman (WNC Conference Treasurer), Percy Reeves (Sanctuary Mission), George Thompson (District Superintendent), and Ken Lyon (Matthews UMC). The Charlotte District will supply alternates to this SEJ event which will elect one new bishop. Those alternates are Lillie Jones (WNC Conference Ethnic and Justice Ministries Director), Jody Seymour (Davidson UMC), Talbot Davis (Good Shepherd UMC), and Donnell FitzJeffries (St. Mark's UMC).

The ordination service last week was especially challenging as Bishop McCleskey welcomed a bright new class of elders and deacons into our covenant fellowship. Paul Craig, Associate Pastor at Matthews UMC, may be the last of our conference's ordained deacons under the guidelines of the 1992 Discipline. He is only nine hours away from completion of his academic requirements at Hood Theological Seminary. Sam Om (Cambodian Mission), Betsy Faughn (Wesley UMC), Jae Lee (Thrift UMC), Fredrick Bowman (Plaza UMC), and Emmanuel Boakye-Yiadom (Hunter's Chapel-Ghana Mission) were among those who (in the words of our bishop) "have endured the Great Tribulation" and were received into the order of elder. Two of the three ordained permanent deacons are from the Charlotte District: Lisa Martinez (senior adult ministry with Centralina Agency and assistant at St. John's UMC) and Brandon Dirks (Minister of Youth at St. Stephen UMC).

Bishop McCleskey announced to the Cabinet earlier this year that he had chosen with enthusiasm Jan Heermans to represent his class of retirees at the service in their honor. He stated that he has rarely known anyone who has enjoyed each of his appointments more than this beloved pastor. Jovial Jan, completing his seventeenth year at Salem UMC, brought tears and laughter to a packed Stuart Auditorium as we made the sounds of Pentecost through an interactive sermon that will linger in the collective memory of a grateful Conference body.

In This Issue...

Page 1-2	Annual Conference, Clergy Welcome
Page 3	Incoming Clergy
Page 4-5	School of Christian Discipleship
Page 5	Confirmation Class
Page 6	Around the District
Page 7	Upcoming Events
Page 8	Connectional Notes

Annual Conference (continued)

Our own James Howell delivered the Memorial Service sermon as we gave thanks for those saints who have passed from the church militant to the church triumphant. We shall long remember James' graphic description of Joseph's solemn grief and faithfulness in the burial of his beloved father, Jacob. Dr. Howell rendered an engaging reflection upon the significance of our mortality and the unique contribution of each pastoral life lived in faithfulness to the covenant of our ordination.

The bishop commissioned Rob Webb, III (Associate Director of Duke Endowment's office of the Rural Church) as a probationary deacon. Gayle Montgomery (Associate, Harrison UMC), Stephen Knopp, II (Associate, Denver UMC), Michael Carr (newly appointed Associate, Hawthorne Lane UMC), and Vincent Harris (new Associate, Sanctuary Mission) were commissioned in an impressive service on Friday. Tom Stinson-Wesley, Chair of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and Senior Pastor at Pineville UMC, gave leadership to the Clergy Session on Wednesday evening and the services of commissioning and ordination.

Denver UMC, with the senior pastor leadership of Jeff Johnsen, was the only congregation in the Charlotte District to achieve the status of "Church of Excellence." We encourage groups from the district to drive to Denver, view the extensive building project underway as the congregation makes room for hundreds of new members, and schedule a meeting with the leadership team. We can all learn from the visionary planning, hospitality, and missional fervor of this church of excellence.

The truly lasting impact of Annual Conference can not be measured or calculated. Sacred relationships forged, enduring childhood memories retained, encouragement received by young pastors mentored by saintly example, and transformed lives fortified through exhilarating worship; this is the essence of our time together in the mountains. Somehow the Junaluska cross, casting its light upon shimmering waters at evening, suggests the peace and assurance that we take home to our churches that are eager for renewal and connectional vitality.

Grace and peace,

George

George Thompson
Charlotte District Superintendent

Annual Conference Petition Results can be viewed at www.wnccumc.org/ac7/007acPetitions.htm

Clergy Dinner for Welcoming New Pastors and Families to the Charlotte District

Thursday, July 19, 6:30 p.m. at Moore's Chapel UMC

The Executive Committee of the Charlotte District Clergy Fellowship is planning a delightful experience for the twenty-one pastors and their families assigned to new appointments this Conference year. Our host church will be Moore's Chapel and the members there take great pride in the food they serve at church gatherings. All new appointees and their families will be the guests of our district. DeEtta Rivens will be mailing and e-mailing reservation forms to all clergy within the district. We shall need to have your reservation returned by Friday, July 13th in order to give time for the folks of Moore's Chapel to prepare accurately for the crowd. Let us demonstrate our Charlotte District hospitality as we extend a gracious welcome to our new colleagues and co-workers. Moore's Chapel is located in Charlotte at 10601 Moore's Chapel Road.



Incoming Clergy



Angela Pleasants
Central



Edward Ingram
Senior Pastor, First



Ann Self
Associate, First



Michael Carr, Associate
Hawthorne Lane



David Wyant
Memorial



David Eggebeen
Morningstar Mission



Robert Symanski
Oak Grove



Ronald Smith, Senior Pastor
University City



Susan Heafner-Heun
Fairfield-Bethel Charge



Byron Alexander, Associate
Huntersville



Greg Collins
Victory Native American



Shirley Canty
Burge Mem.-Rock Hill Charge



Eric Lanier, Assistant
Pineville



Janet Combs
Salem

Clergy Appointment changes within our district: David Carl, Jr. (Big Spring), Fredrick Bowman (Plaza), Percival Reeves (Sanctuary), Vincent Harris (Assistant, Sanctuary), Valerie Rosenquist (Hill's Chapel), Hubert Clinard (New Hope), Gary Fulker (Lebanon), Barbara Ingram (Student appointment, CPE Emory Health Care/Chaplain Wesley Wood Hospital).

Charlotte District School of Christian Discipleship

The first School of Christian Discipleship was housed in the home of Peter's mother-in-law at the Galilean village of Capernaum. Jesus was headmaster and teacher. Perhaps here the content of such documents as Matthew's Sermon on the Mount was committed to the memory that informed the oral tradition of chapters 5-7. In Capernaum it is possible that Jesus repeated his parables and interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures with authority.

Through the centuries, the church has engaged in the joyous task of nurturing disciples by the transformation of the mind. In that initial School of Christian Discipleship (SCD), there was no difference between the lessons taught and the conduct of the rabbi's life. Jesus embodied all that he said; and, by so doing, he established the content and character of all discipleship training.

Any church that brings people to an emotional experience with Christ but provides no discipleship training has failed to be faithful. We cannot effectively follow Jesus unless we know the scriptures of our Lord (namely, the Old Testament). We shall follow the Jesus of our own imagination or the idolatry of our private political persuasion if we are not schooled by scripture (both old and new covenant) and guided in Jesus' path of radical obedience.

Not every local church can adequately offer the resources to train all its members in discipleship. We need one another in this task, and the structure of the Charlotte District can provide much assistance in making disciples.

For this reason we have designated the Charlotte District School of Christian Discipleship as a principle program agency for this district's task of resourcing the local church. Reverend Beverly Copley will be moving to the Salisbury District this month and will serve First UMC, Landis. Since this location is just north of our district, Bev will continue in her very part-time role as coordinator of this school.

The Steering Committee for the SCD met last month in order to develop some long-range strategy. Bev compared our program to a lovely, variegated necklace with a string of multi-sized jewels. Some of our educational events therefore will be large, inviting participation from throughout the district. Some SCD events will be geographically limited in scope and feature a theme that is relevant to only churches of a specific size or location. A small church may host an event for a cluster of neighboring congregations.

Our annual Spring Seminar is an example of a large, comprehensive SCD event. We have designated **March 9-10, 2008**, for our next **Spring Seminar**. We have reduced the time to these two days---Sunday, for involving maximum participation by laity; and Monday for full attendance by clergy. Our resource leader will be Dr. Richard Blackburn, Executive Director of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. The general theme will be "Leadership and Anxiety in the Church." Specifically Dr. Blackburn will address the laity on the subject, "Leadership for Healthy Congregations."

The Steering Committee is guided by the missional objectives of our Annual Conference and has suggested the acrostic "**LEADS**" to give skeletal structure to the body of instructional content for our discipleship training. During this conference year we shall explore **L**eadership in the life of the church. During 2008-2009, we shall explore the many facts of **E**vangelism within our Wesleyan tradition. In 2009-2010, we shall examine and practice the positive nature of **A**ccountability in our corporate life as followers of Jesus. **D**iscipleship will be discussed especially in 2010-2011 with the intent of discovering a more radical and faithful practice of imitating Jesus. We shall come full circle in 2011-2012 as we discover the spiritual dimensions of **S**tewardship. **LEADS**: an exploration into the many facets of following Jesus.

The Steering Committee will encompass plans for the Charlotte District Leadership Conference so that this traditional event will carry out the primary program objectives and needs of the district. During 2007-2008 we have envisioned a two-faceted **DLC**: one set of classes on **October 7, 2:30-5:30 p.m.** (location to be announced), will be for the purpose of inspiring and informing local church members without any focus upon their specific committee or nuts-and-bolts task in the church. Our theme on this date will be "Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition."



The Steering Committee for the School of Christian Discipleship. Seated is Fredrick Bowman, Beverly Copley, and Jenny Riley; standing is Talbot Davis, James Michael, and Chris Westmoreland.

Charlotte District School of Christian Discipleship (continued)

Our keynote speaker will be Richard Heitzenrater of Duke Divinity, arguably the church's most prominent authority on John and Charles Wesley. All the courses will offer insight into what it means to be a United Methodist and how to re-claim our most salient characteristics. An additional DLC will be planned for **January, 2008**, at which time our new local church officers will be instructed in their specific responsibilities.

The Steering Committee for the SCD encourages your church to sponsor a module for instruction that addresses a specific need within your congregation. For example, you may want to develop a more effective website. Upon your request, we then shall recruit leadership and your church will extend invitations to others in the district to learn from those in our district who have experience in website design.

We especially need to know when churches with extensive resources have scheduled speakers with unique, universal appeal who may be shared with the general membership of the district. Providence and Myers Park UMC have been especially generous in the past.

Active on the Steering Committee are the following: Bev Copley (coordinator), Fredrick Bowman, Alisa Lasater, Chris Westmoreland, Jenny Reilly, Talbot Davis, Mary Lou Roller, James Michael, and George Thompson. These solicit your suggestions in the process of planning, recruiting, and providing valuable resources for each of our parishes.

Three Churches, Three Counties, Four Ministers and One Connection...

This year's confirmation class was a unique one for three congregations that combined resources and youth to form a cohesive class of eager learners in the Charlotte District, demonstrating the strength of our connectional identity as United Methodists. The confirmands of Pleasant Grove (Mecklenburg County) joined confirmands from Webb's Chapel (Lincoln County) and Lebanon (Catawba County) in ten weeks of learning and fun. The classes were taught by the four ministers in those churches and included a trip to the Bishop's Confirmation Celebration and a trip to Lake Junaluska. They learned about who God is, how the church grew, United Methodist history and government, creeds, and more as they discerned who they are spiritually with the help of their mentors. Because the class rotated to the different churches during the ten weeks, these young people were able to see how we United Methodist, are different and how we are the same. They learned how we have great strength in numbers when we work in connectional harmony.

Each of these three churches joyously welcomed this year's confirmation class into full membership on Mother's Day. We give thanks to the adult leaders of the class. All of the counselors and mentors gave so generously of their time and themselves to our confirmands. What a lovely gift they have given to these young people!

This proved to be a wonderful experience for these confirmands, their mentors, and their ministers.

*Reverend Beverly Parker-Reece
Minister of Education, Pleasant Grove UMC*



Pictured left to right: Adrienne Reece (Webb's), Rev. Rex Gibbs (PG), Bob Canfield (mentor, PG) Harrison Sipe (PG), Peyton Bruce (Webb's), Clarissa Reece (PG), Julie Costantini (PG), Samantha Tadlock (PG), Shelby Steele (Lebanon), Rev. Ray Surratt (Lebanon), Courtney Hilburn (Lebanon), Seth VanDerwerken (Lebanon), Ginny Ward (mentor, Lebanon), Kyle Ward (Lebanon) and Steve Hilburn (mentor, Lebanon). Not pictured are Ross Baker (PG), Terri Honeycutt (mentor, PG), Elizabeth Puckett (mentor, PG), Rev. Eric Reece (Webb's), and Rev. Beverly Parker-Reece (PG).

Pentecost, May 27th, St. Francis UMC conducted a powerful service that highlighted the reading of Acts 2 in a variety of languages.

Pictured here are clergy from that service: Frank Davis is the newly hired Director of Youth and Evangelism, Ben Lee is a Local Pastor who works especially with Koreans attending St. Francis, Gregory Collins is an active member who just competed Local Pastor's School in May at Duke University's Divinity School and will be assigned to Victory Native American UMC, and Senior Pastor Mark Evans of St. Francis.



Easter Sunday at First UMC, Charlotte.



April 29th Special worship celebration in music at St. James UMC, Denver.



Scripture adorns the vestibule of Ebenezer UMC, Denver.

Charlotte District Mission Congregations participate in the gathering of Asian United Methodists May 19th at Mt. Mitchell UMC in Kannapolis.



Men's choir from the Montagnard Mission which is part of the ministry of Covenant UMC.



Youth dancers from the Cambodian Mission which worships at First UMC.



Dancers from First Hmong congregation which worships at Kilgo UMC.

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendar....

- July 19th, *Clergy Family Welcome Event*, Moore's Chapel UMC, 6:30 p.m.
- September 20th, *Clergy Fellowship Gathering*, location TBA, 9:30 am—Noon with Rev. Jody Seymour on the *Enneagram*.
- October 7th, *District Leadership Conference*, speaker Richard Heitzenrater, location TBA, 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- November 13th, *Clergy Fellowship Gathering*, location TBA, 9:30 a.m.—Noon. Servant Leadership with Tracey Espy of Pfeiffer University.
- December 6th, *Clergy Fellowship Christmas Dinner*, Assurance UMC, 6:30 p.m.
- January DLC for Church Officer Training, date/location TBA.
- January 15th, *Clergy Fellowship Gathering*, Worship Experience in Preparation for Lent, location TBA, 9:30 a.m.-Noon.
- February 12th, *Clergy Fellowship Gathering*, James Howell: *Preaching After Easter*, location TBA, 9:30 a.m.-Noon
- March 9th (3-8:30 pm), March 10th (9:30 am-3 pm), Annual Spring Seminar, *Leadership and Anxiety in the Church* with Richard Blackburn, location TBA.
- April 22nd, *Clergy Fellowship Gathering*, Taize Worship Service, location TBA, 9:30 a.m.-Noon.
- May 15th, *Clergy Farewell Dinner* in honor of those leaving the District, St. Mark's UMC, 6:30 p.m.

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

A Charles Wesley Hymn Festival



Festival participants will be under the direction of **Dr. André Thomas**, the Owen F. Sellers Professor of Music, Director of Choral Activities & Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University.

September 14 & 15, 2007

Providence United Methodist Church
2810 Providence Road
Charlotte, NC 28211

Participation Fee: \$20
For additional information, contact Charlotte Judge
at 704-366-7442 or cjudge@providenceumc.org

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.

Please contact Tom & LaVon Sigmon for detailed information. (phones: 704.362.2398 or 828.452.5609 or email us at: rsigmon@carolina.rr.com). 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.

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.

George E. Thompson, District Superintendent
DeEtta Rivens, Administrative Assistant
Website: www.chardist.org
E-mail: chardist@bellsouth.net

Charlotte District
Western NC Conference
4108 Park Road, Suite 101
Charlotte, NC 28209-2259
Ofc: 704-525-3395 · Fax: 704-525-4238