

June 6, 2008

Electronic
Newsletter



Charlotte District

E-Connections



Huntersville UMC new facility.

Huntersville UMC Holds First Worship Service in Its New Facility

Over a decade of planning and hard work was celebrated at Huntersville United Methodist Church when they opened their new facility on Sunday, April 20, 2008. There were no Learning Hour classes that day; rather, the congregation was invited to come early, enjoy refreshments, and explore the new building. A crowd of nearly 700 joined Pastor Billy Rintz and staff for an open house and special worship service that included the largest communion (five stations) in their church history. Special guests included Charlotte District Superintendent George Thompson and his wife Pat, Lake Norman District Superintendent Lillie Jones and her husband Frederick, and Huntersville Town Commissioner Sarah McCauley. A Service of Consecration was held on Sunday, May 4, 2008.



Worship Center/multi-purpose room.

HUMC's new facility is located at 14005 Stumptown Road in Huntersville, approximately two miles north of the former church. Plans for the church's relocation began ten (10) years ago at the request of the Charlotte District to place a "regional" church in the Huntersville area. Sitting on the 30 acre site is a new 38,000-square foot facility which contains a worship center/multi-use area, preschool and youth wings, children's and adult education space, staff offices, and production suite. To accommodate three of the church's on-going ministries—Room in the Inn, Salkehatchie (a youth home-repair mission), and the community food pantry—shower stalls and a larger food storage space were included in the design.



A full house was gathered.

The vision of Huntersville United Methodist Church is to attract, welcome, and empower people to develop a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and to build and nurture connections within the congregation and into the community.

Through the summer months HUMC's schedule will include the Learning Hour at 9:15 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m. Clergy assigned to the congregation include Billy Rintz, Senior Pastor; Byron Alexander, Associate Pastor; and Monica Hum-pal, Children's and Family Minister.

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Reflections of Gratitude from our District Superintendent

The events of the month of April have brought me to the realization that a life worth living is always in the context of gratitude. As I write these lines on the one-month anniversary of surgery, I am overwhelmed by an enormous sense of thankfulness for the gift of life, the sacredness of friendships, and the fact that the tides of time move under the providential authority of a gracious God.

Each evening I open cards from the many of you who have written messages of encouragement. I must confess that I have not consulted my computer for any e-mail messages since April 20th but know that many of you have communicated through this medium. In the time before this medical experience, I was the one who voiced the joke about an Administrative Board sending a get-well card to their district superintendent, with a vote of 19 for and 18 against. In reality I have felt the genuine love and appreciation of churches and pastors throughout the district, regardless of the quality of my performance in this office. Pat and I have been profoundly touched by every meal, message, phone conversation, and words of encouragement from around the Charlotte District and beyond.

On May 21st I met with the surgeon, Dr. Eric Skipper of the Sanger Clinic who seemed pleased with my level of progress since beginning physical therapy and my departure from CMC on May 8th. He reminded me that five-way bi-pass surgery requires approximately eight weeks before returning to work and that this advent must be carefully planned in stages to avoid over-exertion. He discouraged me from any thoughts of attending Annual Conference. I was very displeased by this mandate but knew that events at Lake Junaluska would effectively and efficiently take place without the encumbrance of my presence. I especially regret missing the Commissioning/Ordination services as well as the retirement acknowledgements of my classmate Denny White and Cabinet colleagues Bishop Lawrence McCleskey and Hurley Thomas.

I am ever so grateful to Jim Trollinger and Cabinet friends who have responded to the very few crises or immediate needs in the Charlotte District. We now fully understand that nearly everything of any administrative importance is very professionally executed by DeEtta Rivens to whom we are each indebted.

I am thrilled with the unanticipated change in leadership announced by Bishop McCleskey through his appointment of Dr. Lillie Jones as the presiding elder of the newly formed Lake Norman District. I have worked closely with Lillie on several projects and can confidently predict that the churches of this district will thrive with renewed vision and a convivial spirit of connectional excellence. Lillie and I both attended the first service at the new facility for Huntersville UMC that is featured in this edition of *E-Connection*.

Recuperation is requiring from me many hours of additional sleep and relaxation. Sometimes I feel as if I were trying to recover from forty years of a workaholic life-style. My mind quickly grows tired, but I shall read a pile of some postponed volumes during these weeks. I began by completing Miriam Herin's extraordinary work of fiction, *Absolution*. Her story is expansive in scope—covering the decades of my active ministry through the narrative of a tragic murder of a Vietnam War veteran. The narrative provides suspense as the story evolves through flashback episodes from the war era, and it speaks with relevance to a culture still plagued by war and divided national values. Miriam, the wife of our colleague Tom (now serving College Place UMC in Greensboro), richly deserves the Novelle Award that prompted this much-awaited publication.

I thoroughly enjoyed James Howell's newest publication, *Conversation with St. Francis*, which is the product of James' lengthy absorption into literature surrounding this Thirteenth Century iconic figure and several trips to various Francis shrines in Italy. My challenge now is to begin reading the biblical text from the faith perspective of the one who constantly sought to imitate literally the life of Christ.

Currently I am finishing N. T. Wright's brilliant volume, *Surprised by Hope*. Many of you are acquainted with my appreciation of Tom Wright's exegetical contributions, his extensive publications related to the apostle Paul, and his monumental work on the resurrection of the Christ. As Bishop of Durham in the Church of England, Tom has continued the classical heritage of the office of episcopacy—namely, the defender and interpreter of the Christian faith. In this volume, Bishop Wright speaks with simplicity and clarity about the scriptural understanding of resurrection hope. He has some poignant things to say about the parables of Jesus, second coming, God's judgment, purgatory, the liturgical calendar, omissions in the lectionary, and the Kingdom of God. This volume challenges the church to be God's resurrection people in both worship and mission, present to the world as sign of hope and a foretaste of God's defeat of sin and death.

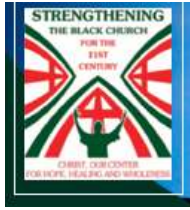
In a few more weeks I shall gratefully return to the privilege of my office in order to articulate, administer, and embody this confident message of resurrection reality.

Grace and peace,

George

George E. Thompson, Charlotte District Superintendent

Opportunities to Grow



SBC21 Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21), an initiative of the United Methodist Church. SBC21 is designed to build stronger and more relevant ministries by providing professional development and training resources for ministry and lay leaders. This year's conference will be held September 10-13 in Dallas, Texas. To view the monthly newsletter and learn more visit www.SBC21.org.

Asian American Ministries

The Second Annual Celebration of Asian American Heritage was held on May 24, 2008, at Christ Boulevard UMC in Statesville, NC. Participants from across the Western NC Conference participated in this ecumenical multi-cultural celebration, praising God and God's wonderful diversity. Members from Cambodia Mission (Charlotte), First Hmong Mission (Charlotte) and Dega Congregation provided enriching entertainment, while Mike Collins shared stories from his mission days in Cambodia. These congregations welcome the opportunity to share their culture with others. Contact: First Hmong, Pastor Tou Her (704-503-1156), Cambodian Mission, Pastor Sam Om (704-566-9155).



Latino Ministries Growing By Design How do you grow a church? Candido Albino and his wife Pilar Perez say it is satisfying and fun. The Blair Road UMC Spanish Language Worship has grown to over 45 regular attendees after just over a year of operation.

Candido has a lively, emotional worship style that is familiar to Latin Americans. "We have to release our emotions to let the spirit of God overcome our daily pressures," he says. His animated sermons are complimented by lively Latin rhythms and active participation by the congregation. Singing, swaying and waving hands indicate the joy and emotion that are clearly present. The worship services are complimented by Spanish language Bible Study, the study of the life and teachings of John Wesley, leadership training, youth activities, weekly prayer vigils, and fellowship meals.

Once a month, the Blair Road Latinos have an Evangelism Dinner where each member is invited to bring one guest for food, fellowship, music, games and invitations to attend church services. The real key to success in Cando's words is, "our church is like a family. We eat together, we pray together, we worship together, we suffer together and we celebrate together. We take care of each other's problems, and we thank God and Blair Road UMC for the opportunity to share with our Christian friends."

Sounds a lot like non-Latino Methodists, doesn't it?

~Alex Smythers, Charlotte District Co-chair Latino Ministries (704-545-3144)

Native American Leaders Honored at General Conference On April 28th fifty Native American leaders and supporters from across the United States—in Fort Worth, Texas for General Conference 2008—attended a dinner sponsored by the Native American Comprehensive Plan. Hymns were sung in Choctaw, Kiowa and Creek tribes set a spiritual tone for the celebration. Two Native American leaders were honored at the celebration for their longtime service: Reverend Homer Noley, retired clergy and former executive director of the National UM Native American Center at Claremont School of Theology and Reverend Alvin Deer, executive director of the Native American International Caucus. We acknowledge our Native American congregation, Victory UMC, in recognition of this historic event and the progress of Native American ministries. Contact Pastor Greg Collins (704-201-9009) to experience their worship, and learn more about the local outreach Victory provides and their *Storehouse Ministry* in Marble City, Oklahoma.





WNCC Vision Emphasis 4: Support a Conference-wide Mission Initiative Goal \$2,000,000 for Africa University

Update: \$1,086,271.50 pledged and/or paid through April 30, 2008
Visit www.wnccumc.org/vsn/au5.htm for details.



UMW's Mother-Daughter Banquet The Trinity UM Women held their annual Mother-Daughter Banquet on May 4, 2008. This year's banquet was hosted as a baby shower to assist Charlotte's Florence Crittenton Services which provides comprehensive health, educational and social serves for pregnant women and their families. The women, their friends and family members, donated over 600 diapers, 1,000 baby wipes, 80 bottles & nipples, 40 onesies, 29 receiving blankets, 15 sleepers, 13 outfits, and financial support all valued at \$1,846.00.



July 16th at Blair Road UMC—7 p.m.

African Children's Choir

Blair Road United Methodist Church will host a concert by the internationally acclaimed African Children's Choir. The choir is comprised of 25 children from Uganda, ages 6-10. Many of these children have lost one or both parents to extreme poverty or to AIDS. There is no admission to the concert. A free-will offering will be taken to support the choir's efforts in Africa. Contact Lynn Smith at brumc@bellsouth.net or visit www.blairroadumc.org (704-545-6785) for additional information.

Interested in increasing Young Adult Attendance and Involvement



Contact Reverend Steve Cheyney, Campus Pastor, UNC-Charlotte. Steve is an ordained elder in the UMC. The university has over 23,000 students and United Christian Fellowship, the UM campus ministry is very active. This campus ministry is declaring 2008-2009 a year of *Jubilee*. Steve would love to visit your church and present a video-program about campus ministry, teach a Sunday school class, supply preach, consult with your church on how to increase young adult attendance and involvement, or facilitate a church training session. *Steve can be reached at 704-549-8291 (ofc) or steve@campus-ministry.org.*

“Breaking Up Is Hard to Do”

May 27th Clergy Family Farewell at St. Mark's UMC

Each year clergy families gather near the end of the conference year to say “farewell” to pastors retiring (1) and/or moving to new districts (9). This year’s expression of farewell included clergy families that will become a part of the newly formed Lake Norman District (27) effective July 1, 2008. Special guests included the newly appointed Lake Norman District Superintendent, Lillie Jones, and spouse Frederick.



Frederick and Lillie Jones are served a scrumptious meal hosted by St. Mark's.



Luci Blizzard, moving to Gastonia District, in conversation with Trinity pastor Rick Auten. Trinity will be in the Lake Norman District.



St. Mark's host Pastor Donnell FitzJeffries and spouse Kathy.



Fellowship and sharing among the clergy families. *Left:* Tony and Gail Smith (New Covenant), Fredrick Bowman (Plaza), Wade and Ruth Childers (New Covenant). *Center:* Jim Howell, Sr. and guest (Asbury), Jill Smith (Mt. Zion Assoc.), Mary and Albert Perkins (Tucker's Grove). *Right:* Dawn Revere (Ebenezer), Kellie and Mike Carr (Hawthorne Lane).



Everyone enjoyed the entertainment Rev. Mark Larson provided along with the two D.S.'s declaring the separation of Charlotte District churches into the new Lake Norman District complete.



Lillie Jones, Lake Norman D.S. and George Thompson, Charlotte D.S. share in the cutting of the cake “breaking up is hard to do”.



St. Mark's member, Chip Hand, prepares to serve a special dessert. Leaving the district would not be complete without a banana split.

“Public Launch—Greater Vision’s New Facility”

Greater Vision United Methodist Church

11901 Eastfield Road
Huntersville, NC 28078

Reverend Alexis W. Anthony, Sr., Pastor



And

The Dream Continues ... The New Edifice

You are cordially invited to celebrate with us as we enter the new edifice of Greater Vision United Methodist Church.

Beginning, Friday, June 27, 2008, 6:30pm – 9:30pm “Fun Friday”

Saturday, June 28, 2008, 11am – 4pm “Greater Vision Fun Fair.”

Continuing, Saturday evening 7pm “Praise Gala.”

Concluding Sunday, June 29, 2008, 10am, morning worship service with Reverend Alexis W. Anthony, Sr.

We look forward to having you join us. As members of Greater Vision United Methodist Church, we are called to be a worshipping body of believers whose desire is to conform unto the image of Jesus Christ as we respond to His unfailing Love. We look forward to having you join us.

Upcoming Events/Activities

June

- 14 12 pm– 6 pm, St. Mark's UMC Gospel Extravaganza, 917 Clanton Rd., Charlotte
food, fellowship, liturgical dance, gospel music.
- 24 Clergy Move Day, keep these families in your prayers.
- 29 First Sunday in pulpit for incoming clergy.
- 29 10 am public worship celebration, launch of Greater Vision UMC new facility, 11901 Eastfield Rd.,
Huntersville

July

- 4 District Office closed in observance of Independence Day.
- 6-10 Lake Junaluska Ministry Summit (formerly Ministers Conference). Register at www.lakejunaluska.com
- 16-19 SEJ Conference—Election of Bishops
- 24-27 2008 School of Christian Mission, "Living the Sacred", Greensboro, (www.wnccumw.org)

August

- 9-11 SpiritUs 2008 #1, Oak Island, Rising 7th graders through rising 12th graders and counselors,
details: 704-535-2260, ext. 117 or 199
- 15-17 SpiritUs 2008 #2, Oak Island, Rising 7th graders through rising 12th graders and counselors,
details: 704-535-2260, ext. 117 or 199
- 15-17 A Gathering of the Laity, "Laity Transforming the World", Lake Junaluska, brochures available at the
District Office (704-525-3395)

September

- 5-7 Annual Meeting of the UM Women, "Called by Name:", Lake Junaluska, (www.wnccumw.org)
- 15 Deadline to submit District Mission Society Grant applications. Form available at www.chardist.org,
downloads.
- 18 Clergy Welcome Gathering,, 6:30 pm, location TBA

October

- 5 World Communion Sunday
- 24-26 World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church women, Norcross, GA (www.wnccumw.org)

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. E-news can be viewed at www.wnccumc.org/nws/news.htm

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