



Charlotte District Connections

Volume 29, Issue 5

November-December 2004

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Special Points of Interest:

- ◆ Methodism in Mecklenburg
- ◆ MLK: Making His Dream Our Dream
- ◆ DLC: "Living God's Vision"
- ◆ Communication Reminders
- ◆ Songs of Bible Women

The Charlotte District at Worship

Thirty-five years of my spiritual life was guided by the discipline of preparing to lead services of corporate worship. My mornings were devoted to the study of scripture, the stimulation of reading volumes on theology and exegetical reflection, and the inspiration of spiritual classics. Preaching was a creative challenge and the natural product of my spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage.

That all changed sixteen months ago. The Bishop asked me to superintend, teach, and consult with the churches and pastors of the Charlotte District in order to share my knowledge and experiences as a pastor.

In these months, Pat and I have now worshipped in seventy-five different houses of worship on Sunday mornings, and sometimes attended two services. On every occasion we have entered the sanctuaries with high expectation - opening our lives to the possibility of sacred encounters.

What constitutes a vital, transforming worship experience? What have I encountered as I have moved from pulpit to pew?

Last week Pat and I heard the brilliant Gray Lectures of Marva Dawn at Duke Divinity. I have long considered her to be a kind of Protestant Mother Teresa. Few people have better comprehended the essential nature of corporate worship. One of her book titles defines Christian worship as *A Royal Waste of Time*. In moments of sacred encounters, we corporately enter into a unique relationship with time; for within our sanctuaries we experience God's eternity. Authentic worship is always an encounter with holiness. People enter our houses of worship with hopes of meeting God.

Thus, I offer these five observations as a result of my experiences in worship services and communion within the Charlotte District:

1. *Quality and faithfulness is that which characterizes authentic worship.*

The issue is really not style—traditional, blended, or contemporary. I have participated in marvelous contemporary worship styles that motivate the spirit and challenge the mind. I have felt elevated by the *mysterium tremendum* (awesome



George and Pat at Duke Divinity

mystery) of traditional worship conducted with dignity and creativity. The important thing is for us to offer to God the best we can give, bringing our sincere expressions of praise and thanksgiving.

2. ***Worship is vibrant and captivating when our faith experience is being formed by an encounter with scriptural holiness.*** A scriptural theme should dictate the choice of each hymn, the moments of praise, anthems sung by choirs, drama presentations, interpretive dance, or visual arts. The act of worship is high drama; and the narrative of the Bible should drive this drama. The scripture (lectionary or carefully chosen texts by a team of worship planners) holds together all components of our time spent in these moments of holy encounter.
3. ***Preaching contributes to worship's vitality by being both faithful to the text and relevant to the times.*** The two most common errors in the preaching I hear demonstrate these polarities: (a) Some sermons are relevant and are focused upon life-application, but not grounded in scriptural authority or the theological doctrines of our faith. (b) Other sermons are equally deficient because they are obsessed with the text and its historical context, but rarely does the sermon apply scripture to anything relevant. The rubber never hits the road. Both of these extremes should be avoided.
4. ***The sacraments are the most significant events in Christian worship and are to be administered with reverence in the spirit of celebration and joy.*** When the liturgies for the Eucharist and baptism are recited with energy and feeling, and when the church's ministry of nurture and mission are strong, the sacraments become exciting, vibrant, and life-transforming experiences.
5. ***Worship is authentic when God's people arrive with a sense of urgency.*** Each Sunday we deal with matters of ultimacy. This is not a casual nod to God. We should all come to our places of worship expecting our lives to be transformed. High expectation and urgency has always been the milieu of worship in the Wesleyan spirit. When John Wesley preached in open fields and houses of worship, he expected people to respond to his message. Those who came forward in response to his invitational preaching were, consequently, placed into a Society—a small accountability group that met weekly. High expectation resulted in decisions of commitment to Christ. This commitment through worship was reinforced by the nurture and accountability of the Wesleyan small groups—the Societies.

I am generously blessed by this opportunity to worship amidst such a variety of worship styles through which God is glorified. My life is being spiritually formed in new and unpredictable ways. Let us all strive to offer our very best when we gather to receive grace from above and to be “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Grace and peace,

George

YEAR-END DEADLINES

- **Nominations for District At-Large Members to Annual Conference 2005 are due on November 5, 2004.** Please submit a letter which includes the nominee's name, address, phone number and a brief paragraph as to why the person(s) should be elected. Direct these letters to ATTN.: District Superintendent.
- **District and Conference Apportionments should be paid by December 31, 2004.**
- Charge/Church **Year-end reports** are due in the District Office no later than **January 19, 2005** to allow time for the data to be compiled and sent to the conference office.
- **Clergy Profiles, Church Profiles, Clergy Evaluations and PPR Clergy Evaluations** must be in the district office by **December 1, 2004.**

Preparation for Charge Conferences

Charge Conferences are well underway. The following paperwork is needed in the district office a minimum of 10 days prior to your Charge Conference:

- (1) Pastor's written report;
- (2) Charge Conference Apportionment Acceptances for 2005 - Page 1;
- (3) Charge Conference Clergy Compensation Acceptance for 2005 - Page 2.

Please remember to use the blue checklist in your packet to be sure all forms are completed and in the packet on the day of your Charge Conference.

All Charge Conference material must be in the district office by December 1, 2004.

APPORTIONMENTS UPDATE

The good news is that the Charlotte District always leads the WNC Conference in the amount our churches pledge toward the support of the Conference programs and outreach budget. We have collectively pledged to pay \$2,937,017 in 2004.

The bad news is that we currently are 12th among the 14 districts in our payment schedule—55.85% or \$1,640,448 paid to date. This means that many of our churches are holding out until the end of the year before sending their checks to Bill Wyman's office.

This pattern is much like one's personal payment on the local church pledge: unless the contribution is methodical, it is delayed until the last minute or squeezed entirely out of one's stewardship performance.



Clergy: Update Your Calendars

November 4 - District Clergy Meeting, Dilworth UMC, 9:30 a.m., [Educational Workshop](#)

*** November 16** - Clergy Servant Hood Day, 11 am to 2 pm, Emergency Winter Shelter

December 6 - Christmas Gathering, 6:30 p.m. (Gathering 6:15 p.m., Providence UMC Atrium, 2810 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC) **[Please note this is a change in the date originally published.]**

January 6, 2005 - District Clergy Meeting, Bethlehem Center, 9:30 a.m., [Worship Experience](#)

*** January 20, 2005** - Clergy Servant Hood Day, 11 am to 2 pm, Urban League of Central Carolinas

February 1, 2005 - Mission To Ministers, Hickory, NC, Location TBA

March 3-5, 2005 - District Clergy Meeting, Location TBA, [Educational Workshop](#)

*** March 17, 2005** - Clergy Servant Hood Day, 11 am to 2 pm, Med Assist in cooperation with Community Works

May 19, 2005 - District Clergy Farewell, 6:30 p.m., Location TBA

*** Please contact the district office (704-525-3395) and register for these events 10 days prior to the event.**

We recommend that each church treasurer become accustomed to making payments each month so that the ministries which we have pledged to support can continue throughout the year without the anxiety caused by insufficient funds until Christmas. Timely payments will enable the global and local ministries to function without interruption.

Please remit payments to the Conference and District Treasurers no later than December 31, 2004. The close-out date is January 11, 2005, which means checks must be cleared from the bank to be credited to your Apportions account.

Every healthy congregation in the Charlotte District should become involved now in some facet of Hispanic ministry!

“To inspire participation in Hispanic Ministries and provide initial training for local churches.”

Saturday, November 13, 2004

8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Providence UMC

(2810 Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC)

Cost: \$5.00

To Register call: Alex or Ann Smythers
704-545-3144
by November 9, 2004

Please bring non-perishable food to donate to the Agua De Vida Mission.

For more information, visit the chardist.org Bulletin Board

DISASTER RESPONSE

The western North Carolina counties were struck by two hurricanes - September 7-8, 2004 (Frances) and September 16-17, 2004 (Ivan). Five districts of the WNCC were affected by the storms. Wide-ranged flooding averaging eight inches (Frances) and 17 inches (Ivan) overflowed the lakes and water reserves causing water to flow down the mountains into the valleys below. Mud slides in the mountains of Macon and Jackson counties caused WIDE-spread damage throughout the area, literally wiping one community off the side of the mountain. Preliminary FEMA information shares an expectation of 31,000 households or

a quarter of a million persons affected. It is estimated that 33 – 40% of the survivors will not qualify for SBA disaster loans, and the government assistance for repair will end at \$5,100 with an unmet repair average need to be \$8,890. The United Methodist Church estimates it will be helping approximately 700 families over the next 18-24 months (or longer). Pictures and stories may be found in [The Christian Advocate](#) and on-line at www.wnccumc.org.

If you wish to receive “Early Response Training”, email your information to the address below.

Early Response Training, Saturday, November 13, 2004 at St. Luke’s UMC
52 16th. Ave. NW, Hickory, NC - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Cost: \$5.00 (luncheon)/reserve through: Pveazie@wnccumc.org
(Limited to first 50 persons)

District Mission Society Banquet

The annual meeting/banquet of the Charlotte District Mission Society will be held on Thursday, November 4, 2004, 6:30 p.m. at Trinity UMC, 6230 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, NC 28216. This year’s keynote speaker will be Reverend Alexis Anthony, pastor of the newly formed congregation, Greater Vision. Reservations must be made in advance. See your pastor for a registration form or contact the district office no later than October 29, 2004.

Condolences to...



the family of Rev. Ann Gibert in the passing of her father, *Dr. James M. Gibert, Jr.* who passed on September 3, 2004.

the family of *Mrs. Margaret Brain* (widow of Rev. George Brain) who passed on September 11, 2004

the family of *Bishop L. Scott Allen* who passed on September 18, 2004.

the family of Rev. Richard Randolph in the passing of his mother, *Mrs. Erma Randolph*, on October 9, 2004.

Charlotte District Lay Speaking Ministries

What is Lay Speaking Ministries?

It is *not* just filling in when the Pastor is away or being the speaker at a special program. In the United Methodist Book of Discipline it explains this ministry as “*a means of serving in roles beyond what we have believed in the past.*” Teaching, serving, training, leading, participating, caring, loving and communicating are all part of Lay Speaking Ministries. What you can do as a Lay Speaker is only limited by your imagination and willingness to serve as a representative of Jesus Christ.

The Charlotte District is dedicated to making it possible for any member of a United Methodist church to be a part of the Lay Speaking Ministries by offering classes in Basic Study and Advance Study. You must be recommended by your Pastor, Church Council or Charge Conference to attend these classes. Those enrolling for the first time, will enroll in the Basic Study class. Those who have completed Basic Study will participate in the Advance Study class along with others who are renewing their certification.

“A means of serving in roles beyond what we have believed in the past.”

Classes are held every Monday evening in February beginning at 6 p.m. A light supper will be provided. This year we will hold classes at two sites in the Charlotte area. Simpson-Gillespie UMC and St. Paul UMC have graciously offered their facilities for these classes. The cost will be \$25.00 without the meal and \$35.00 with the meal. The study materials and directions to the churches will be mailed after your registration has been received. Registration forms will be mailed to pastors, local church lay leaders and to lay speakers in December. If you find that the February classes conflict with your schedule, you may wish to attend Lay Speaker Classes in one of our neighboring Districts. That information can be obtained by contacting the Charlotte District Director of Lay Speaking Ministries, Michelene Mathews or the District Office.

The “*Lay Speakers Certification Celebration*” will be held on Sunday, March 6, 2005 at Dilworth UMC at 4:00 p.m. At this special occasion, all participants, their families and their pastors can share in this great celebration.

We look forward to seeing you in February as you prepare to become representatives of Jesus Christ in the community.

George Thompson
Charlotte District Superintendent
704-523-3395

Michelene Mathews
Charlotte District Director
Lay Speakers Ministries
704-759-3360

Rick Moore
Charlotte District Laity Council Chair
704-483-4365

The United Methodist Women Calendar of Events

UMW Officer Training for local unit officers will be held on Saturday, November 6 at Denver UMC, 9:30 a.m. and Sunday, November 7 at Mouzon UMC, 2:30 p.m. Please elect to attend on the day that best fits your schedule.

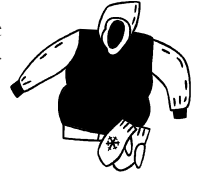
UMW District Mission Study on Cuba with Lunch, Saturday, January 22, 2005 at Salem UMC in Denver, NC (9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

UMW District Prayer Breakfast, Saturday, March 12, 2005, Myers Park UMC, Jubilee Hall. Breakfast and fellowship, 9:00 a.m., worship at 10:00 a.m., District Superintendent George Thompson will be the celebrant for Holy Communion. For information related to these events contact your local church UMW President or the Charlotte District UMW President, Sandy Hieronymus (704-545-6910).



Greetings from Bethlehem Center

Due to the generosity of the United Methodist Women and the United Methodist Churches, eighty-nine campers received scholarships to go to Camp Tekoa and Camp Mount Shepherd; more than one hundred families with children received school supplies at our Back-to-School Fair; and eight of our students are in college with the help of Bethlehem Center scholarships. There are now more than 140 children enrolled in our 4 star child development program and 858 children enrolled in the Bethlehem Center Head Start program. The Head Start children (3 and 4 year olds) need warm jackets or coats for the winter.



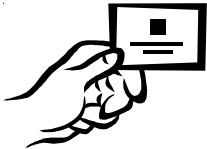
There is always a tremendous need for funds for our Emergency Assistance program. The Emergency Assistance Fund helps persons who are unable to pay for their medications and utilities. I know that this winter, many folks who had their heat cut off last spring will be needing to heat their homes this winter. We are helping as our funds allow and referring persons to other agencies who can help as well.



Bethlehem Center's Holiday Sharing program has begun. We will have more than 1000 children's names and 40 Senior Citizens' names for our Angel Tree, 200 families for Adopt-a-Family for Christmas, and 350 families needing food for Thanksgiving. The names and size information will be available on November 5, 2004. If you would like to help provide non-perishable food and a frozen turkey for a family for Thanksgiving; a sweat suit and a \$15.00 toy for our angel tree "angels"; a sweater or a sweat shirt and warm socks for our senior citizens; or sponsor a family for a complete Christmas, please call me at 704-371-7427 or call Liz Holbrooks at 704-371-7433. Call to place your name on the volunteer list as soon as possible if you would like to participate.



There is also another very small way you can help: Just link your Harris Teeter VIC card to our account #5609. Harris Teeter will donate 2% of your purchase of store brand products to Bethlehem Center. Just give the cashier our account number when you make your purchases. Bethlehem Center is dependent on volunteers, your contributions, and your prayers as we continue to provide for persons who are struggling to make ends meet.



Thanks for all you do to help "the least of these".

Love and peace,
Irma Ellwanger, Director
Church/Agency Relations/Missions
iellwanger@bethlehemcenter.org

Methodism in Mecklenburg

This is the title of a delightfully resourceful volume written by Russell Ford, long-time member of Hawthorne Lane UMC. The author is a well-known servant within this region. Russ is a Pfeiffer College graduate who recently retired from a distinguished career as chief editorial writer for WBT and WBTV. He joined Hawthorne Lane in 1967 and has maintained a fascination with the development of Methodism in his beloved Mecklenburg County.



In this delightful book, Russ provides some information and historical background related to all

current and active congregations in the county, including the recent ethnic mission churches that have so blessed the diversity of contemporary Methodism in Charlotte.

Each church and pastor in the Charlotte District will want to own a copy. You may place orders through the District Office. Copies will be circulated at the November 4th clergy fellowship meeting at Dilworth UMC.

We are all indebted to Russ Ford for his countless hours of research and his labor of love as he tells the story of our noble heritage.



2005 WNCC Martin Luther King Celebration

MAKING HIS DREAM OUR DREAM

Youth Essay, Poem and Art Contest

WNCC Commission on Religion and Race, in conjunction with the Charlotte District MLK Celebration Planning Committee, invite the youth of the Western North Carolina Conference to participate in a Martin Luther King Essay, Poem and Art Contest:

- ◆ Scholarships will be awarded to the conference finalists in each category (essay, poem and artwork) and age group (elementary, middle and high school).
- ◆ Finalists will be invited to present their essay, poem and artwork at the WNCC MLK celebration on **January 15, 2005 at University City UMC, 3835 WT Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269, 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.**
- ◆ All entries will be displayed at the January 15, 2005 WNCC MLK Celebration.
- ◆ Suggested Resource: www.thekingcenter.com
- ◆ ***CONTEST DEADLINE:*** Entries must be submitted in your District Office by November 15, 2004.

Elementary School Contest Theme

***What was Martin Luther
King's Dream?***

- double spaced
- maximum 100 words

Middle & High School Contest Theme

***God's Plan and MLK's Dream:
How are we Living Today &
Where Do We Go From Here?***

- double spaced
- Middle school maximum 500 words
- High school maximum 800 words

“District Leadership Conference”

"Living God's Vision"

Sunday, February 13, 2005
University City United Methodist Church

(3835 WT Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28269)

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: Bishop Lawrence McCleskey

Our workshops will include:

Adult Workers with Youth	Conflict Resolution
Church Council/Organizational Body	Evangelism
Finance	For Pastors Only (w/Bishop McCleskey)
Hand-in-Hand	Hispanic Ministry
Parsonages	Sabbath
Safe Sanctuary (as it relates to Trustee Issues)	Stewardship
Worship in the Wesleyan Tradition	Youth

This event is for pastors, Christian educators, church leaders,
and all people interested in ministry.

Brochures and registration forms will be mailed at a later date.

For more information contact Sandy Devoid, Chair of DLC Planning Committee,
at 704-846-6177.

UM MEN HOLD DISTRICT-WIDE MEETING

The United Methodist Men of the Charlotte District will hold their first District-wide organizational and planning meeting at:

~~~~~  
**Providence United Methodist Church  
(Wesley A-101-3)  
Saturday, November 13, 2004  
10:00 a.m.**  
~~~~~

Hank Dozier, the new District President, will propose new initiatives to enhance the EMS program as well as recertification and chartering of all local units.

Hank says: "It is our goal as servant leaders, to encourage *intentional discipleship* and spiritual growth throughout the district". One strategy that will be introduced is the cluster program which is designed to foster a partnership in missions and evangelism with smaller churches.

If you need additional information, contact Hank at 704-532-1070.

An Opportunity to Serve

St. John's UMC is seeking a Part-time Organist or Pianist. Resumes may be mailed to Mrs. Pat Barnette, St. John's UMC, 4305 Monroe Road, Charlotte, NC 28205. Please call 704-537-9976 for additional information.

A Baby Grand piano in great condition needs a home. Contact Carole Moore at 704-367-2286 to obtain more information. You will need to make arrangements for transportation/delivery.



Songs of Bible Women

Diane Stanton-Rich - a United Methodist Deaconess in Japan and Judy Newton - a UMC missionary in Japan - collaborated and created two new CDs about Women in the Bible.



The CDs contain songs in a variety of church musical styles that describe Bible passages about fascinating women in the Old and New Testaments. The song lyrics and music are resources for women's church groups, personal devotion and church group discussions. Both CDs include suggested Bible scriptures and study questions for individual devotions or group use.

Visit <http://www.cdbaby.com/sobw1> (***Songs of Bible Women: Old Testament***) to hear samples of the music and see suggested bible passages.

Visit <http://www.cdbaby.com/sobw2> (***Songs of Bible Women: New Testament***) to hear samples of the music and see suggested bible passages.

Diane and Judy hope you enjoy their music and that it inspires you in your journey toward a closer walk with God.

District Communication Reminders

The *Charlotte District Connections* Newsletter is published bi-monthly (January, March, May, July, August, & November). If you need to place an article, ad or announcement in the Newsletter, please email the information to the District Office by the 14th of the month prior to the publishing month. If you wish to include a photo, please send it in jpeg format.

If you have an announcement, job opening or etc. that needs to go out before the newsletter is published, you can enter the information on the 'Bulletin Board' on the chardist.org website.

Visit the chardist.org website to read and view information that can not always be published in the newsletter. Pictures of many occasions that George has attended can be seen in the 'District Gallery' on the chardist.org website.

District Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

- 4 District Clergy Meeting, Dilworth UMC, 9:30 a.m., Educational Workshop
- 4 District Mission Society Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Trinity UMC, 6230 Beatties Ford Rd., Charlotte, NC
- 13 United Methodist Men's District-wide Meeting, Providence UMC, 10:00 a.m.
- 16 Clergy Servant Hood Day, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Emergency Winter Shelter
- 17-18 **Cabinet Meeting**
- 25-26 **District Office Closed/ Thanksgiving Observance**

DECEMBER

- 6 Clergy Christmas Gathering, 6:30 p.m. (Gathering 6:15 p.m.), Providence UMC Atrium
- 22-27 **District Office Closed/Christmas Observance**

JANUARY, 2005

- 3 **District Office Closed/New Year's Observance**
- 6 District Clergy Meeting, Bethlehem Center, 9:30 a.m., Worship Experience
- 15 Martin Luther King Celebration, University City UMC, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- 17 **District Office Closed/MLK Birthday Observance**
- 25-26 District Committee on Ordained Ministries Meeting, Providence UMC, 8:30 a.m.
- 21-22 District Program Council Retreat, Trinity UMC, Time: TBA

FEBRUARY, 2005

- 13 District Leadership Conference, University City UMC, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

GEORGE THOMPSON, District Superintendent
DELTA RIVENS, Administrative Assistant
Marcella Cook, Editor/Publisher

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