

THE CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES

As with all committees and councils, the Council on Older Adult Ministries faced the challenges of change and transition in 2006. In addition, we were in the last year of the Duke Endowment Caring Communities Grant which supported the vital **Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength Program**. Facing the termination of this grant, the Council made plans to sustain the program through the formation of a sub-committee to facilitate the program, subsequently trained two resource persons in each district, and have enlisted the assistance of the District Superintendents and Congregational Specialists. This program started in 2003, with a grant from the General Conference Committee on Older Adult Ministries using three pilot groups, each of which had an African-American Church and a Euro-American Church. Eleven groups have completed the program and many of the groups continue to work together.

The **Spiritual Retreat**, held each February, remains a vital component of our ministry. Two retreats were held in 2006 with Reverend John Holbert as the leader for both retreats. Reverend Paul Frey and Mrs. Thomasina Conyers were the music leaders at both, while Jim Wall led activities at the first and Roger Maness was the activities leader at the second.

Walterboro District was the site for the **Mission Event** this year. Being true to the mission of relating programs to the local church, older adults worked alongside UMMVIM volunteers and older adults from the four local churches. Churches that were involved were Macedonia, Bethel, John's Chapel, and Jericho - which was the host church. Missioners were able to complete all the needed repairs and goals set by the churches. Completing the work was a great accomplishment but more meaningful for the participants was the fellowship with each other and the spiritual depth of the closing worship.

Our **Fall Event** in 2006 was a trip to Ireland where Reverend A. V. Huff, Jr. served as theologian/historian while participants discovered the development of Christianity in Ireland. Many Methodist beliefs originated with Irish missionaries.

The Council meets quarterly with two of the meetings being held at one of the Methodist Homes and one of the Mission Projects within the Conference. On May 11, we met at The Oaks and on August 24, we met at Bethlehem Center in Spartanburg.

Our purpose is to serve as an advocate for all older adults in the South Carolina Conference and we shall endeavor to provide continuous opportunities for ministries by, with, and for older adults. We are most grateful for the guidance and support of the South Carolina Conference in assisting us to fulfill our purpose.

Betty C. Shuler, Chairperson