

THE BOARD OF LAITY

The Conference Board of Laity welcomed several new members and thanked others for their service since the 2006 Annual Conference. Mr. Mike McKain replaced Mrs. Brenda Hook as chairperson of the Stewardship Task Group, Mrs. Dona Easterling (Columbia), Dr. Robert T. Barrett (Florence) and Mr. John Allgood (Walterboro) were appointed as District Lay Leaders for their respective districts and Mr. Lou Addison, because of health reasons, resigned as chairperson of the Leadership Development Task Force. These persons, along with many others provided excellent leadership for this conference. We, however, mourned the loss of Mr. John Gass, the Columbia District Lay Leader who died in January 2007.

The Conference Lay Leader continues to be an active participant with the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders on both the jurisdictional and national levels. As a member of the Extended Cabinet, the Conference Lay Leader kept the Cabinet abreast of plans and opportunities being offered, planned or developed by the Board. District Lay Leaders assisted in training of Lay Delegates to Annual Conference and offered orientation sessions where appropriate.

The Board continued its tasks of listening and responding to local church needs, providing training for local church leaders and lay speakers, providing opportunities for spiritual formation, producing and disseminating resources in the area of stewardship, providing support for the United Methodist Women, Men and Youth, and advocating unity among laity in our churches. As a result, the Conference Board of Laity continued its work in the following areas: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Stewardship; (3) Laity Convocation; (4) Lay Speaking; and (5) Spiritual Formation. A summary of the work of those task groups follows:

Laity Convocation (Robert Scarborough)- The 2006 S.C. Laity Convocation, themed "Love God AND Love Your Neighbor" was held July 14-16, 2006 at Lake Junaluska, N.C. and featured Rev. Tony Compolo, Professor Emeritus at Eastern University in St. David's, PA. The Convocation was promoted as "A Weekend of Personal Spiritual Growth for Local Church Leaders and Practical Ideas for Your Church" and featured approximately 25 workshops dealing with church leadership, lay speaking ministries, safe sanctuaries, family ministries and many other topics. These workshops gave the attendees practical and understandable information about how United Methodist laity can serve Christ through the local church.

Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor served as Celebrant for Holy Communion during the opening Worship Service with the assistance of The Cabinet. The Laity Convocation concluded on Sunday at the Lake Junaluska Worship Service with the Rev. Ross Anthony John Olivier, Lead Pastor, Galloway United Methodist of Jackson, Mississippi. Rev. Tony Compolo also led a Bible Study during the Convocation. Traditions continued with the Lake Junaluska Singers in concert and the Convocation Watermelon Cutting. A new tradition, begun in 2005, matured as the Porch Fellowships allow all attendees an opportunity to meet and speak with conference officers and leaders from United Methodist institutions.

The Youth Convocation, merged with the Southeastern Jurisdiction's Jubilee Weekend, and the Children's Convocation gave entire families a complete and focused message, with examples, of the difference that can be made in our world by United Methodists of every age. Organizers and leaders are to be commended for the dedication and effort devoted to executing these events.

The 2007 S.C. Laity Convocation, themed "The Family of Christ" will be held July 13-15, 2007 at Lake Junaluska, N.C. and will feature Bishop Marcus Matthews, Bishop of the Philadelphia Episcopal Area. Bishop Matthews, a South Carolina native, was nurtured at Cumberland United Methodist Church in Florence, SC. Bishop Will Willimon, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference, and also a South Carolina native, will lead a breakout session on Saturday morning entitled "Exploring the Different Images of Family in the Bible". Dr. Paul Chilcote, Visiting Professor at Duke Divinity School and President of the Charles Wesley Society will preach at the concluding Worship Service on Sunday morning.

For the first time, a number of breakout sessions will be offered Friday afternoon. They will be designed to appeal to all participants but some will have a special attraction to Music Directors and Organists. The goal is two-fold, to lengthen the Laity Convocation by ½ day and reach out to a new group of United Methodists who could benefit by coming to the event. Overall, there will be approximately 30 breakout sessions from which to choose.

Rev. Tony Compolo, is scheduled to return in 2008.

Lay Speaking Ministries (Michael Cheatham)- Lay Speaking Ministries is a vital tool in equipping the laity of the South Carolina Conference to be effective leaders in the local church, in the districts, at the conference level and beyond. Lay Speaking Ministries offers classes in every district. Many districts offer multiple schools each year. Lay Speaking Ministries offers courses in leadership, communications, and caring. Lay Speakers are developing many ministries across the conference, in addition to providing pulpit supply when requested. Lay Speakers lead prayer groups, prison ministries, Bible studies, homeless ministries through local soup kitchens and food banks, ministries for women, and many more. Lay Speakers serve their local church in leadership of church committees, as well as worship leaders and liturgists, choir members, ushers and greeters. Lay Speakers communicate their faith in words and in their daily lives. Lay Speakers participate in care giving ministries in retirement, assisted living, and nursing homes, and through hospital and membership visitation programs.

Sixteen representatives from South Carolina attended the Association of Conference Directors of Lay Speaking

Ministries Education Convocation in Nashville, TN in January 2007. Conference director Michael Cheatham and Frances Gilliam from the Anderson District were program presenters. Our conference director also serves on the executive committee of the association as chair of the Communications Committee and also serves as the webmaster for the association's website, layspeakingministries.org. He will also complete his term as president of the South-eastern Jurisdiction Association of Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries in June.

Our conference continues to lead Lay Speaking Ministries in the training of qualified instructors. Each August, nearly 100 certified lay speakers attend the annual Instructor Institute in Columbia. Conference Director Michael Cheatham taught the first instructor training class in the Virginia Conference in February.

**Lay Speaking Ministries – Equipping United Methodists for all facets of Lay Ministry
It's not just filling empty pulpits.**

Leader Development Task Group (Louis Addison)- The task group continues to review possible opportunities to offer to church leaders in the form of leadership development. One such model is Leadership UMC which is an initiative of the North Georgia Conference as well as offerings from the jurisdiction. Mr. Lou Addison, due to health reasons, has resigned as leader of the task group and a replacement will be named.

Spiritual Formation Task Group (Kathryn Scarborough)- Eighty-six people attended the one-day event, “**Moving Beyond Business as Usual - Transforming Church Boards**”, held on April 29, 2006. Evaluation responses were used in planning a follow-up event. “**Choosing Spiritual Leaders – Transforming Church Boards II**”, will be held on **April 28, 2007**. Rev. Larry Hays will be the workshop leader.

Three events, “**Multiplying your Ministry: How to Recruit, Train, Develop, and Sustain Volunteers**”, were held in the fall of 2006. These were held in three areas of the state, and were led by Church Volunteer Central (Group Magazine Ministries).

We will sponsor **two spiritual formation workshops at the 2007 Laity Convocation**: Jan Johnston will do workshops on prayer on Saturday, and Rev. Marjorie Thompson, Director for Pathways Center for Spiritual Leadership with the Upper Room, will have a session on Sunday morning. The task group is supporting **Natural Church Development**, with special emphasis on the area of “**Passionate Spirituality**” and has started the planning process to sponsor a **5-day Academy for Spiritual Formation in SC in 2008**. God is continuing to reveal to us opportunities for working with the Local Church in this process of Spiritual Formation.

Stewardship (Mike McKain)- The Stewardship Task Group began the year under the leadership of Mrs. Brenda Hook and we thank her for her leadership. Stewardship was a presence in most of the districts during District Laity Orientation events. Persons from local churches requested and received the services of the Stewardship Task Group. Lay Speakers who have successfully taken the “Lay Speakers Lead in Stewardship” course will be asked to provide assistance to the Task Group.

Mike McKain began leadership at the end of 2006 and the task group continues to provide leadership and support in the conference. The task group has also established several goals that will be the main focus during 2007. They are as follows: (1) To establish the Stewardship link to the Conference web site and maintain and update the link as needed. The manual **Gifted To Give: Stewardship Alive** will be loaded on the site; (2) To train leaders within our Task Group and others to lead local churches in stewardship programs; (3) To develop and maintain a resource list of companies and individuals who lead capital and stewardship campaigns as information to share with local churches; (4) To develop and maintain a list of local churches that have undergone recent campaigns that we can share with other local churches; and (5) To update the stewardship manual **Gifted To Give: Stewardship Alive** to include a chapter on “Year ‘Round” giving.

Joseph E. Heyward, Conference Lay Leader