

SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION CONNECTIONAL TABLE

Greetings on behalf of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Connectional Table and our President, Bishop Lawrence McCleskey. I am pleased to report to the South Carolina Annual Conference on some of the actions and accomplishments at Lake Junaluska and in the jurisdiction.

We were excited to consecrate the Bethea Welcome Center at Lake Junaluska on July 9, 2007. There were United Methodist leaders from several general agencies, colleges and universities present for this historic event. We are happy to report that the building is in use and offers Christian hospitality to Lake Junaluska guests and visitors to Western North Carolina. We thank the South Carolina Conference for your financial commitment to make this symbol of reconciliation a reality.

Lake Junaluska grounds and facilities are a priority. We have completed the new Lake Junaluska golf course clubhouse. This was supported by a number of individuals who use this part of Lake Junaluska's ministry of recreation.

As we prepare and plan for Lake Junaluska becoming a premier conference center for The United Methodist Church, we have a representative group from around the jurisdiction serving on the Lake Junaluska Campus and Stuart Center Design Group to recommend a master plan for the campus. We have Cornell University studying our operations and services to better serve The Church.

Along with looking at our facilities, we have reorganized our ministry area into the Ministry Event Development Office. Rev. Roger Dowdy is giving superb leadership in evaluating our ministries, establishing procedures, and developing partnerships to meet the needs of The United Methodist Church. An agreement has been made to establish Alban Institute at Lake Junaluska. We began to experience this partnership April 13-16, with *Healthy Congregations* seminar led by Alban Institute. The centerpiece of the partnership will be an Alban Institute seminar July 6-10, at the newly envisioned Ministry Summit (formerly the SEJ Minister's Conference). There is a new relationship between Ministry and Marketing at Lake Junaluska. Ken Howle and Roger Dowdy are leading us in considering new possibilities for the future, built on research of needs of The Church coupled with good business practices.

The Ministries with Young People continues to serve the largest numbers of United Methodists at Lake Junaluska. The summer youth events and winter ski retreats are being well attended this year.

An outstanding multi-cultural event, *Embracing God's Diversity*, was held in December. The leadership of the jurisdiction made this one of the most exciting and diverse groups that has ever met at Lake Junaluska.

Below are snapshots of the work of the seven southeastern jurisdiction agencies:

GULFSIDE ASSEMBLY

Mollie Stewart reports the Board feels good about the SEJ and thanks them. A draft of what the new campus might look like has been drawn. Two years after Katrina, during the week of August 13, we sensed a clear direction of hope and a future bright with promise. They began the relationship building in the community, began talking to officials in Waveland and the state and began building partnerships. They are considering senior housing on the gulf and won't be selling any more land but will utilize what they have. When the tax revenues go through, they will redeem 25 acres of previously owned land. They are not duplicating ministry but enhancing what they have. They have a house that is being used as an office and a place to stay when in the area. When the campus is completed, that house will be used for the director's home.

INTENTIONAL GROWTH CENTER

Larry Ousley reports that the Intentional Growth Center has been in business for 30 years and their area shows signs of health. They planned fifty seven (57) events this year. They drew on reserve funds each of the last three (3) years but this year have not and think they will break even at the end of the year. They trained over four hundred (400) interim ministers in this denomination. They are getting a good response from district superintendents all over the country with 1/3 from outside the jurisdiction. They helped with "heads in beds" in the Conference Center with \$175,000 of business. IGC is grateful for the Morgan Charitable Trust that will help as they move into the future. They are planning a major keynoting event in 2008 and look forward to working with the Lay Leaders.

SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTIONAL AGENCY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES (SEJANAM)

Darlene Jacobs reports that SEJANAM became an agency in 1993 to strengthen Native American ministries. It provided advocacy, technical assistance in writing grants with \$250,000 representing almost one hundred (100) tribes and twenty three (23) churches and ministries, over six thousand (6,000) who are United Methodists. They work with churches in rural and urban areas and one of the largest Native American churches with one thousand (1,000) members. They have a platform for holy conferencing and going beyond the boards of the SEJ. They allow for modeling and growth. Programs have increased from 25 to 50% and one of the largest Native American events in The United Methodist Church is at Lake Junaluska. Through mission trips we have erected homes and are establishing health clinics, water systems, and have two hundred fifty (250) team members for that mission

project alone. They are in ministry in Mississippi with Choctaw and in Louisiana where Katrina struck. They have received \$100,000 for the Cummins endowment for the support of SEJANAM's program. They are raising money to name the Cummins and Queen room in the Bethea Welcome Center. Their agency is unique as it is the only one of its kind throughout all the jurisdictions. It gives presence, a voice and visibility in the jurisdiction. They deal with violence, health and other issues in the course of their work and appreciate the support of the SEJ.

SOUTHEASTERN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AGENCY FOR REHABILITATION, INC. (SEMAR)

Chryl Eure reports that SEMAR is the oldest agency – thirty eight (38) years old. The most defining moment in 2007 was the creation of the Laurels of Junaluska, affordable housing for the elderly. October 12 was the grand opening and the residents moved in November 15 to a safe and comfortable place. We appreciate the Western North Carolina Conference and Givens Estates making this a reality. SEMAR provides technical systems to annual conferences for persons with developmental disabilities. They have entered into a contract with Mike Dyson to run SEMAR. He will lead the Board in strategic planning and determine how SEMAR can continue to be effective for The United Methodist Church. They are seeking additional board members, interested people with a passion and desire to be involved with persons with development disabilities.

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION (UMVIM)

Nick Elliott thanks all annual conferences for their support over the last thirty one (31) years. They began in the SEJ and are now national. In 2005, twenty six thousand (26,000) people went out in service and in 2006 it was thirty one thousand (31,000). Half of them responded to the hurricane disasters on the gulf coast. 80% of the Katrina relief people are faith based and United Methodist.

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER

Clay Smith reports that the United Methodist Church has more local churches than there are US post offices. Rural communities are growing for the first time in one hundred (100) years. Hinton does consulting, provides training and builds effective ministries. Mollie Stewart and Clay spent four (4) days in the Virginia conference, three (3) days in the Florida conference and will spend every weekend to Easter next year working with small group congregations. They have a wonderful First Parrish Project for young clergy in small churches. Thirty five (35) came to Hinton for six (6) weeks during the last two years – ten (10) of whom are United Methodist. They work with affordable housing and substance abuse intervention. They have a conference and retreat center which brings in one thousand two hundred (1,200) people a year. At General Conference in April someone took trees from Gulfside Assembly, and is making furniture for general conference. The whole church is committed to Katrina relief and Gulfside Assembly.

ARCHIVES and HISTORY

Nell Thrift reports that Art Swarthout is the interim director of Archives & History and The Heritage Center. The main focus of The Commission is the Heritage Center, which acquires, organizes, preserves and makes available records of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The Center provides training for confirmation classes from throughout the jurisdiction, with approximately one thousand three hundred (1,300) young people using the Center in 2007. The Museum is also part of the tour for youth groups meeting at the Lake. In addition, drop-in visitors, researchers, and mail, telephone and e-mail requests for information make the Heritage Center a vital and lively place. The Center has received several notable acquisitions this year. Anne Blanchard, widow of the Reverend Richard Blanchard, author of the hymn "Fill My Cup", continues to share manuscripts of his music as well as hymnals and other copies of his many songs. The family and friends of Bishop Ed Tullis have recently donated artifacts of his life and ministry, including photographs and diplomas. When you are at Lake Junaluska visit the Heritage Center in the lower level of the Harrell Center.

We were thrilled to host the United Methodist Council of Bishops and the Extended Cabinet in November. In July it will be our honor to welcome the 2008 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference to Lake Junaluska. The SEJ Connectional Table appreciates the support we receive from annual conferences.

Jimmy L. Carr, Executive Director