

THE BOARD OF LAITY

The Conference **Board of Laity** welcomed seven new District Lay Leaders to its membership and thanked the seven outgoing District Lay Leaders during the Laity Luncheon at the 2008 South Carolina Annual Conference. The new District Lay Leaders are Freda Brock (Anderson), June Willson (Charleston), Brenda Hook (Columbia), Barbara Ware (Greenville), David Salter (Greenwood), Robert Barrett (Orangeburg) and Earline Powell (Spartanburg). The Board held its first of four meetings during Laity Convocation at Lake Junaluska in July 2008. A *Day of Training* to ensure the District Lay Leaders were prepared for their work was held in August 2008. A Day of Visioning (November 2008) was held in order to strategically plan for the new quadrennium. Rev. James Arant led that day of visioning. As a result of the process the board reaffirmed its core beliefs and will continue to offer support, training and direction for laity in the conference. As a result of the visioning process one new Task Group was added – Task Group on Communication/Networking - and we added Heritage to the Task Group on Leadership Development (Leadership Development and Heritage). We celebrate the work of our District Lay Leaders who have spent time within the districts working closely with the District Superintendents.

During the year the Conference Lay Leader was active in representing the Board as the newly elected President of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders. Meeting with the Extended Cabinet provided many opportunities to keep the Cabinet abreast of the workings of the laity in the conference. Continuing our efforts of partnership between clergy and lay, the District Lay Leaders attended Clergy Set-Up meetings, some Charge Conferences and were actively involved in the training of Lay Delegates to Annual Conference. The Conference Lay Leader, the Associate Lay Leader (Kathryn Scarborough) and the Columbia District Lay Leader (Brenda Hook) serve as members of the Lake Junaluska Assembly Board of Directors.

Task Group leaders continued their work in areas of (1) Laity Convocation, (2) Lay Speaking (3) Leadership Development, (4) Spiritual Formation, and (5) Stewardship. A summary of their activities follows:

Laity Convocation (Lisa Livingston) - is promoted as "A Weekend of Personal Spiritual Growth and Practical Ideas for Your Church" and offers workshops and speakers covering a variety of topics including but not limited to leadership development, spiritual formation, health and wellness, prayer, natural church development, aging gracefully, stewardship and fundraising and safe sanctuaries. This three day weekend is held at Lake Junaluska and all laity and clergy in the South Carolina Annual Conference are invited and encouraged to attend.

In 2008, Rev. Tony Campolo was our worship leader and in 2009 we welcome Rev. Dr. Connie Shelton from Galloway UMC in Jackson, MS as our worship leader. We are delighted to have Bishop Woodie White joining us as a workshop presenter and also as Lake Junaluska's guest minister for Sunday morning worship. We are hopeful that the Hope for Africa Children's Choir will perform as well.

The Laity Convocation Task Force is committed to making significant changes to the weekend schedule and constantly reviewing the workshops in order to provide information on the most appropriate topics to meet the needs of the greatest number of attendees. Through conversations about and evaluations from the 2008 event, we have identified ways to strengthen Laity Convocation in 2009. One such change is adding an opportunity for districts to meet together with their congregational specialists and other Conference Center staff. In addition, Bishop Taylor and Dr. Heyward will again dialog on the laity/clergy partnership. Offering a variety of workshops covering topics that are relevant to everyone is crucial to the success of this weekend.

Please mark your calendars now for Laity Convocation 2009, July 10-12, and July 11-13, 2010. Feedback is encouraged and should be directed to Lisa Livingston at llivingston@columbiasc.edu or 803.960.3675.

Lay Speaking Ministries (Mike Cheatham) - The mission of Lay Speaking Ministries is to provide training for the laity of the South Carolina Conference to create effective leadership in local churches. Local church leaders have taken courses to improve their leadership and communications skills. Local church and certified lay speakers are active in our local churches, in the districts and at the conference level. Lay Speaking Ministries classes are available in every district. Several districts offer multiple schools each year. Lay Speaking Ministries offers courses in leadership, communications, and caring.

Lay Speaking Ministries also equips the laity to be involved in ministry serving their local church in every area of leadership, mission, and ministry. Lay Speakers are developing many ministries across the conference. Lay Speakers are active in prayer groups, prison ministries, Bible studies, homeless ministries through local soup kitchens and food banks, ministries for women, and many more. Frances Gilliam, a certified lay speaker and author of our Instructor Training program was invited by the California-Nevada Conference to teach a weekend session for instructor training. Our conference director, Michael Cheatham, continues to serve as president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries.

*Lay Speaking Ministries – Equipping United Methodist Laity for Ministry
It's not just filling empty pulpits.*

Leadership Development (John Mason Allgood) - The Task Group on Leadership Development has designed a multi-faceted curriculum for emerging local church leaders—LeadershipNext. LeadershipNext is a 36-hour modular curriculum that consists of one-day-a-month seminars over a six-month period. Because of its modular design, LeadershipNext can be delivered at the district level across the Conference, making it possible to

train 240-300 local church leaders per year. In a three-year period, this training could be delivered to nearly 1,000 leaders. There are 24 modules in the curriculum covering such topics as who we are in Christ, spiritual gifts and gift-based ministry, our connectional system and local church mission and ministries, evangelism, Natural Church Development, stewardship, discipleship, building teams for ministry, spiritual disciplines, teaching skills, and leadership skills. From January to May, 2009, the Task Force is conducting a pilot project of LeadershipNext in the Walterboro District. Our goal is to have LeadershipNext ready for conference-wide use in 2009-2010. A training event for instructors is planned for the fall of 2009.

The Task Force is continuing to sponsor leadership and clergy-lay partnership workshops at the Laity Convocation in Lake Junaluska. Two workshops were very successful in 2008 and we plan to hold two or three workshops in 2009. The Task Force is continuing its work on the development of an electronic leadership manual for local church lay leaders.

Spiritual Formation (Kathryn Scarborough) - The Spiritual Formation Task Group sponsored two breakout sessions at the **2008 Laity Convocation**. Rev. Dr. Tom Albin led a session on "Becoming a Praying Church: Appetizer or Main Course?", and Mary Lou Redding led a session on "Finding a Way Everyday: Rebuilding Devotional Foundations". Four breakout sessions will be offered at the 2009 Laity Convocation to include a session designed to introduce persons to the Five-Day Academy. The second Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation is planned for 2010.

Funding was provided for workshops led by Rev. Larry Hayes, "**A New Nominations Process: Prayer Focused, Spirit Led**". These workshops were hosted by the Orangeburg/Greenwood Districts and the Greenville/Spartanburg Districts. **A Two-Day Prayer Conference** will be held **October 16-17, 2009** (Friday evening through Saturday afternoon) at Lexington UMC in Lexington, SC. The theme is: "**Prayer Changes...Each Person, Family and Church**". Keynote speakers will be Rev. Dr. Tom Albin and Rev. Jeff Kersey. Participants will also choose two of the seven workshops offered on Saturday.

Members of the Spiritual Formation Task Force: Rev. Nellie Cloninger, Earline Powell, Rev. Ellis White, Jr., Dr. Robert Barrett, Clayton Easter, Suzy Speas, Linda DuRant, Betty Kay Hudson, Faye Love, Kathryn Scarborough, Rev. Tiffany Knowlin, Rev. Miyoung Paik and Jim Arant. We continue to seek God's will in all that we do to resource the needs of the Local Church in the area of Spiritual Formation.

Stewardship (Donald Love) - Since our last conference report progress has been made in some areas of the five primary goals previously adopted by the Stewardship Task Group. Although we are pleased with the progress made, we realize that there is much work needed in this area of ministry. A brief summary of progress and plans are listed below:

1. The Stewardship page on the Board of Laity website has been up since June 2008. It provides a resource of information on stewardship resources and links to other related sites. Additional information with updates is planned. The Stewardship Manual, "Gifted to Give: Stewardship Alive" has been loaded on the Stewardship Web Page for use on line or download.
2. Stewardship Courses have been offered during District Lay Leadership Training Events, and Lay Speaking Schools. We encourage the use of these schools for promoting the importance of stewardship. Stewardship was also offered in the Conference 2008 Lay Speakers Instructor's School.
3. In July of 2008 a Stewardship Workshop "How to Create a New Spirit of Giving" was offered and led by Pat Luna. The workshop was well attended and provided attendees with valuable information and practical ideas to enhance giving in the local churches.

A March 28, 2009 Stewardship Training Workshop for members of the Stewardship Task Group, District Lay Leaders and other interested persons is complete. This workshop was led by Pat Luna. Session I covered **The Theology of Stewardship, Why People Give** and **Year-Round Stewardship**. Session II was a meeting of the Stewardship Task Group with Pat Luna to discuss plans to develop a Conference Stewardship Ministry that will be used in assisting our churches in the South Carolina Conference.

Dr. Joseph E. Heyward, Conference Lay Leader