

## THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

As we enter a new quadrennium, the S.C. Annual Conference owes a great debt of gratitude to the Rev. Patricia J. Parrish, and the members of the Board of Ordained Ministry 2004-2008. As we transition, their work made it possible for this board to begin the new quadrennium on sure footing. We are mindful that to whom much has been given, much is required. With deep reverence and profound gratitude, this newly elected board accepts the mantle entrusted to us and vows to remain open to the fresh winds of Spirit blowing in the midst.

Additionally, a word of appreciation is due Bishop Taylor for the meticulous attention given to selecting a new board. Arguably, this board represents among the youngest and most diverse boards in the recent history of this annual conference. The new board, under the leadership of Bishop Taylor, met in August of 2008 to elect officers. The complete listing of officers, members, and committee assignments of the board may be found on the conference website at [www.umcsc.org](http://www.umcsc.org) under the Office of Clergy Services.

The primary purpose of the Board of Ordained Ministry continues to be the recruitment, examination, and credentialing of candidates for ordained ministry. Additionally, this board often deals with confidential and agonizing responsibilities that can not be discussed publicly. In every case, this board has sought to be just, consistent, and faithful to the *United Methodist Discipline*, the Board of Ordained Ministry Handbook, and the Policy Guidelines of the S.C. Annual Conference. Furthermore, the Board has also tried to decide in grace and humility the best interest of clergy and congregations of this annual conference.

As the quadrennium unfolds, key priorities and opportunities that Board seeks to address include:

- Strengthening both the annual and long term offerings of continuing education for clergy with an end goal of moving all clergy towards excellence in ministry.
- Working with the Bishop and Cabinet in addressing the question of "how do we exit pastors who are ineffective within an ecclesiastical system that guarantees appointments?"
- Increasing our emphasis on recruitment and retention of young clergy.
- Strengthening the relationships between the Board of Ordained Ministry and persons/ candidates from this annual conference who are attending seminary.
- Assisting candidates fund the cost of their theological education.

As this new board begins its work, it has chosen to adopt a covenant that gives shape and definition to our life and work together. This covenant serves as reminder of sacred, confidential, and servant nature of the ministry to which we have been entrusted. The Board has sought to refine its interview process by adding a composite review of each candidate by a joint subcommittee after the interviews with our four primary subcommittees. There have also been some minor internal changes in guidelines of the four primary subcommittees which will be shared with candidates at the annual orientation held each June for persons seeking a change of status at the next session of the Annual Conference.

Each year, the Board reviews the policy guidelines of the Board of Ordained Ministry and offers to the Annual Conference recommendations for review, action, and adoption. This year, most of the changes are editorial, such as changing paragraph numbers to match the *2008 Book of Discipline*, changing the wording from "probationary" to "provisional," changing the three-year provisional period to a two-year period, and the deletion of 1992 Disciplinary matters. At the start of this new quadrennium and after meticulous revision and editing, the board has chosen to print the entire document for review, action, and adoption. Pending its adoption by the annual conference, the new guidelines will be posted on the conference website on the Clergy Services page.

Perhaps the most significant policy change this quadrennium is the change in number of years required as a part of the provisional period. In concurrence with the *2008 Book of Discipline*, the S.C. Board of Ordained Ministry has elected to change provisional period **from three to two years with candidates having up to eight years to complete the requirements for full membership**. Those commissioned at the 2008 session of the S.C. Annual Conference would be the first class eligible for ordination at the 2010 session of the Annual Conference.

Although this Board has been together for a short season in time, the bonds of servant ministry and covenantal affection for one another grow deep. The commitment to work to which we have been called is apparent. I rejoice in the faithfulness of those who share in this work who accept without hesitation the hard and often times difficult choices that must be made. By God's grace, much has been achieved and there is reason to rejoice in hope!

We are pleased to recommend 14 candidates for provisional membership and commissioning, 1 candidate for associate membership, and 20 candidates for full membership and ordination. These persons have been nurtured through the candidacy process and have shown themselves ready and effective for a life of licensed, ordained, and servant ministry.

We rejoice that to date, 225 persons have received the training needed for service as mentors to candidates and clergy navigating the candidacy, licensing, and ordination process. We are deeply indebted to these persons who serve in this capacity who give sacrificially of their time and energy.

While the cost of theological education continues to rise and is perhaps outpacing our current revenue streams, we give thanks to God that during the course of the fall and the winter semester of 2008/9, we have been able to assist no fewer than 31 persons at 12 different university senate approved seminaries with the cost

of funding their theological education in the amount \$119,800! We further rejoice that the recipients of these resources are persons called to licensed or ordained ministry. We have been able to offer these resources through the Ministerial Education Fund. Thus, I remind our clergy and lay delegates of importance of supporting our General Conference apportioned funds. The future leadership of your church may be dependent upon it! We also have been able to assist a significant number of other students through six additional scholarships offered through the board.

Alas, the work of this Board would be impossible without the outstanding support that we receive from the Rev. Tim Rogers, Coordinator of Clergy Services, and Mrs. Bonnie Speas, the administrative assistant to that office. These persons go above and beyond the call of duty in making effective the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry and deserve our gratitude. We do rejoice in hope and look forward to the day when every congregation is served by a pastor who is equipped for effective servant ministry. Our promise is to work toward building that future in hope. May God prosper the work of our hands for the sake of God's great kingdom!

Blessings for the journey,

*Kenneth L. Nelson, Chair  
South Carolina Board of Ordained Ministry*