



North East News

January 2006

NORTH EAST
DISTRICT
FLORIDA
CONFERENCE
NEWSLETTER

UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

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Dearhearts,

The political cartoon was true to long-established form. It showed 2005 as a white-whiskered man, and 2006 as a diaper-swaddled infant. However, the punch line was timely enough. The caption listed all of the preceding year's disasters, both natural and man-made, and concluded with the old timer advising the new kid, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" No doubt, this weary assessment reflects the mood of many after a long, demanding year.



Having shared in more than a few of 2005's ups and downs, I smiled a rueful smile as I looked at that cartoon, but I knew instinctively my advice for 2006 would be different. I would let the Apostle Paul play the role of Father Time, "But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God, and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies." II Corinthians 4:7-10 NRSV

Or maybe, I would have given the role of Father Time to Bishop Whitaker instead. As the old year was coming to a close, the Bishop was visiting the pastors in each of our nine Districts with a challenge for this New Year. He has set the tone for 2006, by giving us goals for 2006 in the areas of evangelism, worship and outreach in the community:

In the area of Evangelism, the Measurable Goal will be to have no "barren churches" in 2006. Every church will report new members joining on Profession of Faith. (In 2004, 25% of the churches in Florida reported no professions of faith!) The Effort Goal will be one evangelism event in every church to invite people into our churches.

In the area of Worship, the Measurable Goal will be a 5% increase in average worship attendance in 2006. (The majority of the churches in Florida did not meet this goal.) The Effort Goal will be to have an active worship planning team in every church.

In the area of Outreach to the Community, the measurable Goal will be a 5% increase among those attending worship who are also involved in ministry to the community. (In a word, for every hundred people in worship, five more need to be added to your list of people in ministry to the community. We need to not only enlist and equip disciples, but engage them.) The Effort Goal is to identify one community need that is to be addressed by your church in 2006.

This is how people of faith have always responded to the challenges that living in any given time invariably bring along in one way or another. We do not waste time wishing we could go back, we determine how we can go forward. The goals set before us by Bishop Whitaker are not only appropriate and achievable; they are an affirmation of faith. At the risk of ending this exhortation with a cliché as familiar - if not more so - than the images in that political cartoon, allow me to remind you, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Let us bring that measure of spiritual maturity and resiliency to the task entrusted to us in this New Year.

Grace and peace,

Richard W. Neal, Superintendent

Calendar of Events

January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 District Office Closed
- 7 Local Church Leadership Training, Mandarin UMC, 8:45am-12:00pm
- 8 Epiphany Open House, District Parsonage, 2:00pm-6:00pm
- 12 Apportionment deadline in Conference Office
- 16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, District Office Closed
- 17 Clergy Consultations, District Office
- 18 Clergy Consultations, Garden City UMC
- 19 Clergy Consultations, Calvary UMC
- 30 Clergy Consultations, District Office
- 31 Clergy Consultations, St. James UMC

February

- 8 Clergy Consultations, Ortega UMC
- 9 Clergy Consultations, District Office
- 10 Year End Statistical Report Due
- 10 Congregational Category Assessment Due
- 10 Annual Workers Compensation Salary Survey Due
- 13 Clergy Consultations, First UMC, St. Augustine
- 14 Clergy Consultations, District Office
- 20 President's Day, District Office Closed
- 28 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast and Supper, Location TBA

March

- 18 N.E. District Open House at Children's Home
- 31 Child/Youth Protection Policy Due
- 31 Fiscal Responsibility & Management Policy Due
- 31 Sexual Harassment Policy Due
- 31 Annual Report to the District Housing Committee Due

Happy Birthday

Bill Sherman	01/18
Marguerite Matthews	01/20
Ralph Young	01/29

We hope your day is a blessed one!

Advertisements & Announcements

Summer Youth Internship: My name is Leigh Canup and I am in my second year at Asbury Theological Seminary. I am pursuing my Masters of Divinity with an emphasis on Youth Ministry. Available Dates May 17th- End of August (May be able to begin before May 17th). Contact District Office for more information.

St. Paul UMC is currently seeking a full-time youth director. For more information please contact Dr. Joe Jursa at (904) 724-0022 or email to joej@stpauljax.org.

Christian Enrichment School Cancellation

During the November Clergy Meetings we had announced that the Christian Enrichment School for 2006 would be held on January 21st. Because the Committee on Christian Enrichment School has encountered scheduling difficulties, we find ourselves needing to cancel the January 21st date that had been announced. Please ensure that those who had planned on attending are made aware of this change.





Have you heard about Souper Bowl of Caring? This very simple, national, youth-led movement is a great way for the youth of your church to get involved in something meaningful on Super Bowl weekend. Youth simply ask worshippers to drop a dollar in a soup pot as they leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday (February 5th). The youth then donate all of the money directly to a local charity that they choose that helps the hungry and the hurting. All you have to do is report those numbers to Souper Bowl of Caring at www.souperbowl.org. Also, if you're looking for something more, the youth of your church could participate in the Service Blitz the Saturday before the Super Bowl by serving at a local charity.

What a simple and meaningful event! If you have participated in this event in the last few years, you should have already received information and free promotional material in the mail. If you have not participated before, please visit www.souperbowl.org to get information about how to be involved and to receive free promotional material.

Last year, over \$300,000 was raised for local charities in Florida alone. Let's see if we can raise even more to help the hungry and hurting in our state. Join churches around Florida and the nation in making this one of the largest weekends of giving and caring in the nation.

If you would like to learn even more, please visit the Souper Bowl of Caring website at www.souperbowl.org.

2006 Institute of Preaching

Theme: "Crossing the Boundaries"

February 13 – 15, 2006

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Hosted by Plantation United Methodist Church in Plantation, Florida

Speakers for this event will be:

Philip Yancey, Christian Author and Speaker. Author of Disappointment with God, Where is God When it Hurts?, The Jesus I Never Knew, and What's So Amazing About Grace?

Linda McCoy, Founding pastor of The Garden UMC in Indianapolis. Author of It's News to Me! Messages of Hope for Those Who Haven't Heard, and co-authored volume 2 of Abingdon's Igniting Worship: Helping and Serving.



Registration is available online at the Florida Annual Conference website, www.flumc.org. Please put these dates on your calendar.