

# North East News

Dearhearts,

I have seen the summary of our District's connectional giving for last year, and I want to commend you for your faithfulness. Our total giving was \$ 1,961,906 out of \$22,307,562 for the whole Florida Conference, which means that we have made a substantial contribution to the work of the Church beyond the confines of our local parishes. While our giving was 2% less than last year's total, the same was also true all across the Conference. And if you place these numbers next to the demands of a huge increase in our insurance costs, amounting to an additional \$6,000,000 in total premium payments for the Conference, we have done an amazing job on apportionments.

Within the totals for the North East District, there were 41 churches that paid 100%, and 10 more that paid between 90 and 99%. Four churches that had not paid out the year before made a special effort and did so this year. Several more made dramatic increases in what they were able to give. And I know that the other churches worked hard and did their best to meet the fair share goal set before them. God bless you for what you were able to accomplish.

To my way of thinking, the story of the Widow's Mite remains the quintessential measure of our stewardship. Jesus commends the widow, not for the amount of her gift, but for giving no more or less than all she could give. It is a story that puts me in mind of worshiping in a small Methodist Church in the Bahamas one Sunday long ago. In one corner of the sanctuary was a large model sailboat on wheels. When I asked what it represented to the congregation, I was told it was the "mission boat," which was pulled through town by the children of the church. As they went up and down the narrow streets of their community, people would put in the ship's hold their contributions for world missions. "This boat reminds us of the people who brought us the Gospel, and reminds us of our opportunity to be in mission for the sake of others too." In that modest little church, there was a genuine understanding of the widow's mite.

Grace and peace,



Richard W. Neal, Superintendent





# renovaré conference

march 2-3, 2007

St. Augustine will be the site of a RENOVARÉ' Regional Conference on March 2-3. Co-sponsored by many different churches and Christian organizations, the conference will utilize the facilities of Anastasia Baptist Church. Christian in commitment, ecumenical in breadth, and international in scope, RENOVARÉ' is committed to the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ in all her multifaceted expressions. Featured speakers at this conference will be Richard J. Foster and John Ortberg, author of The Life You've Always Wanted and If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat.

The Mandarin United Methodist Men would like to extend an invitation to all our Christian brothers and sisters in Northeast Florida. Dr. Riley Short will be speaking at two special services at 7:00 pm on February 17<sup>th</sup> and again at 7:00 pm on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Short will speak at all three worship services (8:30, 9:45 & 11:00 am) on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Riley Short retired as Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church in Lakeland. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Candler School of Theology and has a Doctorate from Bethune Cookman College and a Doctorate of Divinity from Florida Southern College. Story telling is his specialty. He is a master at using this ability to teach Biblical truths.

If you have heard Dr. Short speak before you know the kind of message he brings to the table. If you have never heard him you need to come & hear his unique story telling bring the Bible alive. There will be a casual dessert time following the Saturday evening service.



The Florida Conference is now offering online training courses. The featured courses now are Trustees, Finance, Staff-Parish Relations, and the Bible Study, Where is the Fruit? Just look for the icon that says Florida Conference e-learning opportunities shown here to the left, on the bottom left hand side of the conference home page [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org).

On Friday, February 16, 2007, Faith UMC will be hosting author and humorist, Jonathan Richard Cring and conductor Janet Clazzy for a performance at 7pm. An evening of music and monologue, including readings from Mr. Cring's book, Living a Legendary Life.

Mr. Cring is an author and an acclaimed musician, winner of a Billboard Music Award.

Ms. Clazzy is the first female conductor in the state of Tennessee. She has played oboe in orchestras for thirty years from coast to coast.



# MOVING

We have had some changes in our district.

- Linda Standifer has retired after over 18 years of ministry.
- Barbara Riddle has now been appointed to Asbury UMC in Orange Park.
- Jennifer Stiles-Williams has moved to a new position of ministry in Orlando. Frank Seghers will be filling the pulpit at Avondale UMC.
- Karah Young has moved to Texas to be with her ailing father-in-law. Cleon Spencer is filling the pulpit at Inman UMC.



## Clergy Pancake Meeting

February 20, 2007 we will be having our clergy team meeting as a pancake breakfast/supper. As any other clergy team meeting attendance is expected by all appointed clergy. The morning meeting will begin at 8:45 am and will be held at the IHOP on Baymeadows Road. The evening meeting will be 6:30pm at First UMC in Starke. Reservations are needed for both meetings, however there will be limited space at the morning meeting, so make your reservations soon.

For a reservation contact Gentry Moore.  
904-396-3026  
flumc-ne@flumc.org



## Institute of Preaching



The format of the Institute of Preaching is making a major change in 2007. The format will be *“an intensive formation experience.. (focusing) on personal mentoring in a one on one and small group format, so that preachers’ unique gifts may be nurtured and enhanced.”*

- There will be three sessions
- September 10-14– The Preaching Life- R. David Thomas Center in Durham, NC.
  - November 12-14- The Heart of Preaching- TBA (Florida )
  - April 1-3– Sustaining Growth in Preaching– TBA (Florida)

All the details, including how to apply, about the new institute including the partnership of the Center for Continuing Education at Duke Divinity School are available on the conference website [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org), under the Ministries Tab.

## Year End Statistic Reports are due February 12th.

### February

- 10** Lay Speaker Training  
Calvary UMC, Orange Park
- 17** Lay Speaker Training  
Calvary UMC, Orange Park
- 18** President's Day  
District & Conference Closed
- 20** Clergy Pancake Breakfast, 8:45am  
IHOP, Baymeadows Road  
Clergy Pancake Supper, 6:30pm  
First UMC, Starke
- 26** New Church Development Meeting  
10am– noon  
District Leadership Council  
7pm OPUMC

### March

- 3** Conference Table  
Harvest UMC, Bradenton
- 17** Healthy Church Academy  
Spiritual Formation  
First UMC, Starke

### May

- 22** Annual Conference Forum  
(Formerly Annual Conference Orientations)  
Asbury Orange Park 6:30pm

### Community Outreach Board Meetings

Tuesday January 16  
Thursday March 22  
Tuesday May 15  
July none  
Tuesday September 18  
Thursday November 15  
All meetings at 7:00pm at the District  
Office

