

October 1, 2006

North East District United Methodist Church

# October Newsletter

Dearhearts,

In one of my High School literature classes, we were required to memorize the prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in Middle English. When we asked our teacher why we were given this seemingly pointless assignment, she told us, "So you can recite it at your class reunions."

I am approaching the fiftieth reunion of the class of '60, and I have yet to join my classmates in a recitation of those immortal lines that begin: "Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote, the droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote..."

In fact, while I have learned and recited many other bits of poetry and passages of scripture over the years, I have never had any occasion to recount this description of the season for going on pilgrimages. Until now this is. As it turns out, 2007 will be a year of pilgrimages, or least a year with considerable travel for me. And what I hope might make this topic of interest to you is the fact that several of them may involve some of you as well. So, let me tell you about several opportunities that may make you long to "be gone on a pilgrimage" too.

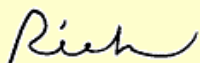
First, a certain new DS, Wayne Wiatt, has been invited to go on an orientation visit to the Bahamas Conference, and he is inviting some pastors to go with him, including any from the NE District who would enjoy the opportunity. Under the guidance of old Bahamas hand, Gene Zimmerman, we will spend Monday, January 15 through Friday, January 19 on Eleuthra for what is styled as a retreat with a work day. The exact details and cost are being finalized, but it will probably be in the neighborhood of \$800.00. Stay tuned for further details.

Second, we will continue to send Caravans to our sister Havana District in the Cuba Conference of the United Methodist Church. Clergy and Laity alike are invited and encouraged to go, especially but not necessarily if your church has a sister church in the Havana District. I will be going with some other clergy to the District Conference that usually falls in early February, but there are other opportunities at other times. Contact Linda Zelenka, our Cuba-Florida Covenant Coordinator for details.

Third, I will be taking renewal leave next summer and it will include one week in Belfast, Northern Ireland with my friend Gary Mason, the pastor of the East Belfast Mission. We will take several days to confer on East Belfast's Skainos redevelopment and mission project as well as do some sight-seeing. Many of you heard about this work last fall during Gary's visit, or more recently when his associate, Mark Sweeney, was here in July to visit Beach, CrossRoads, Orange Park and First Church, Jacksonville. Details will be forth-coming shortly, but if you are especially interested in hearing more about this trip, let me know.

So, here are three opportunities that may incite you to hear Chaucer's invitation: "Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages..."

Grace and peace,



Rick



## Bahamas Clergy Retreat

Interested in getting away after the busy Advent/Christmas Season? Dr. Gene Zimmerman has offered to lead a Pastor's Retreat to the Bahamas from

January 15-20. The itinerary would include meeting with the President and Leading Clergy of the Bahamas Methodist Church to hear about their ministry and needs in the Bahamas Islands. We would then travel from Nassau to the Island of Eleuthera and be housed at Camp Simmonette, a Youth Camp near Governor's Harbor, Eleuthera. While there, we would tour and participate in their Methodist Habitat Project, lead worship for area churches, and familiarize ourselves with the needs of the Methodist Churches in the area. This would be a wonderful opportunity to set up mission trips for your church during 2007-08. We will build in some time for touring the island, fishing/snorkeling, group building and sharing. The cost for the week would be approximately \$800 per person which would include travel, lodging and meals. This will be a joint trip with the North East District clergy as well. If you are interested, please let me (Wayne) know by November 1 so that we can make travel arrangements for the group.

Please contact: Wayne Wiatt, East Central District Superintendent at: [flumc-ec@flumc.org](mailto:flumc-ec@flumc.org) Please copy correspondence to Richard Neal at: [DS-NE@flumc.org](mailto:DS-NE@flumc.org)

## Upcoming Events

**October 23**– Health Benefits Webcast at Crossroads UMC **10am-12pm**

**October 26**– Pastor Appreciation Dinner @ Southside UMC **7pm**

**November 9**– Clergy Team Meeting

**11am**- Asbury Orange Park– Followed by lunch at 12:30pm

**7pm** - Isle of Faith

**November 17-19**– Exploration 2006 for Youth and Young Adults

This is a national event being held at the Hyatt in Jacksonville for young adults from high school seniors to 24 years old who are interested in exploring ministry. If you wish to help please contact Jennifer Stiles-Williams at Avondale UMC 904-389-1175.

**November 30**– Staff-Parish Relations Committee Training @ First UMC, St. Augustine **7pm**

**December 2**– Staff-Parish Relations Committee Training @ New Life Community **10am**

**January 13**– Igniting Ministries Training @ Life Enrichment Center in Leesburg, Florida

**The Health Insurance Webcast on October 23 is along the same lines as the webcast for the pension. If you do not have access to high-speed internet service, then you will want to go to Crossroads UMC and watch the live webcast there. It should be very informative on what your options are and the changes in the health plans for 2007.**

# A New Employee

By now, I hope that many in the North East District have met our new secretary serving on our district staff– Gentry Moore. Gentry came to fill in for us on a temporary basis when an opening occurred. She has been so efficient and more than met our expectations for this position, so we have asked her to remain as a permanent, full time part of the staff. She has agreed to do so and I hope you will join this committee in making her feel welcome.

Frances Jennings  
Chair, Superintendency Committee



## Need a new job?

**Beach United Methodist Church** is seeking an innovative, creative person to join our leadership team in the position of **Minister of Children**. Candidates must have minimum of 2 years experience in a purpose-driven children's ministry in a large church setting and at least a 2 year college degree. Must have a passion for working with children, equipping volunteers, building ministry teams, and display an obvious ability to organize, lead, and nurture a children's ministry in a large, growing purpose-driven church. Contact: Jerry Sweat. Email: [jerry.sweat@beachumc.org](mailto:jerry.sweat@beachumc.org). Church Phone: (904) 249-2343. Church Address: 325 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. Jacksonville Beach, FL 32224. Church Website: [www.beachumc.org](http://www.beachumc.org).

### **Director of Children's Ministry**

**Mandarin United Methodist Church** is looking for an energetic individual to lead our Children's Ministry (birth – 5th grade). This person must be committed to Christ, have the gift of leadership, recruit and supervise volunteers and be able to relate well with this age group as well as the other ministries at the church. Must also be able to develop a vision for the children's ministry. Would be responsible for all programming, curriculum and budgeting. Our children's program has grown exponentially in the past few years. Full-time flexible schedule (30+ hours/wk). College degree in education, early childhood education or similar field is preferred and previous experience working with this age group is required. Please fax resume to 904-268-8586 or email to- [jhunter@mumc.net](mailto:jhunter@mumc.net).

### **Wanted Administrative Assistant**

Experienced Administrative Assistant needed. Approximately 30 hours per week professional, organized, able to multi-task, excellent written and verbal communication skills, able to deal with the public and confidential matters, Supervisory experience helpful, MS office programs and other computer skills a must.

Email resume with references to [pastorrafe@aol.com](mailto:pastorrafe@aol.com)

For more information contact Reverend Rafe Vigil at 355-5491

### **Riverside Park United Methodist Church**

819 Park Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204



# *Curtain goes up for church Drama Camp*

**An e-Review Feature by Jenna De Marco**

Organizers and participants of Swaim Memorial United Methodist Church's Velvet Curtain drama camp learned a lot this summer about being able to improvise when necessary.

With the Jacksonville church launching its first drama camp some of the best-laid plans had to be changed before the camp started. Originally planned for 30 middle school children and four weeks, the camp instead ended up with nine students and lasted for three weeks because of difficulties recruiting participants. But organizers were still able to "ad lib" their way to success, according to the Rev. John Bennett, pastor of the church.

"We did the camp with nine kids and we have learned a lot from this," Bennett said. "... I am very impressed with Jason (Collins, the camp director) and the work that he is doing with these kids."

Collins, a longtime professional actor and private school teacher, praised the participants for their efforts.

"We had to adjust and adapt a little bit," Collins said. "... We ended up with kids that have been very, very solid children as far as their attitude."

The youth attended the camp, which included daily lunches, at no charge as part of the church's outreach mission. The goal was to enroll children whose families would not otherwise be able to afford a drama camp. Funding came in part from a grant by the Jacksonville Children's Commission, which gave \$4,200 to the Community Outreach Agency — an extension ministry of the Florida Conference's North East District — to help the church launch the venture.

Collins selected three single-act plays of Appalachian folklore known as "The Jack Tales" to have the children rehearse and perform for an audience.

"The great thing about these three tales is that every child (had) a big part, a medium-sized part and a small part," Collins said.

That choice also gave participants a chance to learn about designing a scaled-down size of the final set, as well as finding costumes and props; research the Appalachians; learn about voice, diction and proper breathing; and advertise the event.

Although the drama was secular, the camp offered the children a chance to make a connection between God and the arts.

"The best way I found to incorporate God was just plain faith," Collins said. "... I always reminded them before rehearsals (to have) faith that you can do this."

There also was enough time in the camp for Collins to teach the campers about the art of journaling. In the journals, the students would write about their camp experiences — good or bad.

"Ironically the one thing that they wanted more of was more rehearsals," Collins said. "Getting them to keep writing in their journals is going to be hopefully the one thing that they will continue on an everyday basis."

All the campers were girls between the ages of 12 and 14. Carey Sellers, an eighth-grader this year at Landon Middle School in Jacksonville, said her favorite moment from the experience came during the performance of the plays. "We did the play and my parents and mama's friends were all proud of me, and they said I wasn't even being shy."

Sellers, who would like to become a doctor or an artist when she's grown, also enjoyed preparing the set.

"(Collins) made us draw some ideas and he used some ideas on the set and that's what I liked about it," Sellers said, adding, "I would say that if you want to do a drama camp you should go to the Methodist church ... if you like to do art or write or do a play of your own."

The performance took place in mid-July and went well, with about 75 people attending, according to Bennett. He and Collins both hope to offer the camp again next summer, as well as offer periodic drama workshops throughout the school year.

"We've been in conversation with another Methodist church ... about possibly doing some joint ministry in drama over the coming year," Bennett said. "Maybe doing a Saturday once a month and having that build toward next summer and three two-week sessions."

"In a way I am very happy that I only had (nine campers) to start," Collins said. "(You) start with a small foundation and you grow."