

# November 2007



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Dearhearts,

I hope you enjoyed a thoroughly spooky Halloween, and will have an equally spiritual All Saints Day. For every time we said, "Boo!" yesterday, I trust that today we will voice a hearty "Amen!" for a saint who touched our lives. Some of those saints we have been privileged to know in this life and others are known to us only in story and song, but we stand on all their shoulders. So let us be thankful for them in season and out.

And we ought to act out our thanksgiving, which means honoring those souls with the excellence of our ministry. In this spirit, let me underline some up-coming meetings to sharpen our skills:

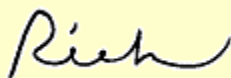
The first is an orientation and training session for pastors on the Bishop's capital funds campaign, now officially known as *TOGETHER! Bringing Hope, Changing Lives*. Bill Barnes and Tom Wilkinson will be meeting with us on Wednesday, November 14 at Orange Park UMC, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This meeting will not only outline the strategy for this appeal in particular, but offer some tools which can be applied to any giving emphasis in the local church. Pastors do not want to miss it.

The second is the SPR/PPR Training Event we have been highlighting at Church Conferences. You are to choose one of the following and encourage both old and new members of your Committee to attend because of the significant procedural changes that begin as soon as your Church Conference is past. One choice is an evening meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday, November 29, at OakLeaf UMC located at 6225-2 Lake Gray Boulevard in near Blanding Boulevard and I295; the other is a day meeting at 10:00 AM on Saturday, December 8, at Keystone UMC located at 4004 South SR 21 in Keystone Heights.

The third is a training event for pastors mentoring candidates for Ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry is holding this program on Tuesday, January 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the United Methodist Building in Lakeland. We are blessed with an increasing number of candidates and we need to give them caring and well-versed mentors. Existing mentors who are due for re-certification as well as new mentors should be there.

The fourth is the District's Local Church Leaders Training Event we have also been lifting up at Church Conference. It begins at 8:45 and ends at 12:30, on Saturday, January 19, at Orange Park UMC located at 2051 Park Avenue in Orange Park. We will have a worship time and then two hour-long sessions featuring excellent leadership on a variety of topics, of both the nuts and bolts and the big picture sort. Some of the courses and leaders are still being settled, so look for further word as we get closer to the event.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rich", is written on a light yellow rectangular background.

# **Mark your calendars for the Annual District Leadership Training Event**

**January 19, 2008 from 8:45am-12:30pm**

**To be held at Orange Park UMC Classes will be offered on Celebrate Jesus, Disaster Response/Recovery, New Church Development, Lay Leader, Trustees, Finance/Church Treasurer/Financial Secretary, Outreach Ministries, Church Council, The Methodist Way and Campus Ministries Representatives. All classes will be led by Florida Conference staff and District Leadership.**

**More details to follow.**



**Clergy Epiphany Open House**  
Join us for lunch and fellowship on  
January 6, 2008 between 12:30pm– 4:30pm  
To be held at the District Parsonage at  
2228 Cheryl Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32217  
Mark your calendars!!!

## **Cuba Caravans 2008**

We are pressed to fill our 2008 caravans. Now that we must send in visa info to Cuba 4 or 5 months ahead, and it takes a very long time to get new passports (or renew), we need commitments very early. You saw on my September 30th email to the sister churches how far ahead we need them.

Here is the summary:

Caravan 1: Feb. 1-5 (approximate) Clergy trip (contact Rick Neal). CLOSED

Caravan 2: April 22 - 29: Commitment date: Dec. 1, 2007

Caravan 3: YOUTH CARAVAN July 22-29: Commitment date March 1, 2008. We are seeking groups of 3 travelers from 4 churches. Each church group is to consist of one adult and two youths age 16 - 20. The caravan will be led by Jose Lantigua of Orange Park UMC, who is a Cuban-born American fluent in Spanish, and an experienced traveler who has been to Cuba on a recent caravan.

Caravan 4: November 4-11: Commitment date June 15, 2008

Currently we have the following:

April - 6 commitments

July - 3 commitments

November - 6 commitments

## **Politics and the Pulpit**

In our corner of the state, Coral Ridge Ministries and the Christian Coalition often distribute unsolicited "Christian Voter's Guides" to local churches. Also, some of our churches have public visits from political candidates. Some of the larger non UM African American Churches in S. Florida who had been receiving "Faith Based Initiative Federal Funding" had their federal funding dropped and their tax exempt status challenged in court after visits from Democratic presidential candidates.

Each election year I have complaints from laity about the "voter's guides" that some pastors have distributed. I plan to share this link with our pastors when we meet next week.

On the GCFA website [www.gcfa.org](http://www.gcfa.org)

Look in the lower right hand corner "GCFA Resources"

In the "I am looking for" box, click

"Resources"

Click "local church"

Click "Politics and the Pulpit"

This will take you to "Politics and the Pulpit, 2004: A Guide to the Internal Revenue Code Restrictions on the Political Activity of Religious Organizations" by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

# Community Outreach Agency News



Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida is pleased to present the 23rd Annual Empty Bowls Luncheon benefiting the Second Harvest Food Bank. The luncheon will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2007, from 12 noon – 1 p.m., at the PrimeOsborn Convention Center.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the 21st chapter of the gospel of John, Jesus twice commands us to "Feed my sheep (lambs)". And praise God.....you and your churches are doing just that - LITERALLY!

In support and celebration of how you serve those whose needs are so very basic and urgent as HUNGER, I am inviting you to join with us at our table at the Lutheran Social Services Annual Empty Bowls Luncheon. (see attached brochure)

Your NE District Community Outreach has reserved a table in the name of our Methodist connection to show our support of the work of LSS and their Second Harvest ministry. Most of our United Methodist food ministries rely heavily on them for us to be in ministry to our neighbors.

Last year we sponsored a table filled with Methodists. If you would like to join us - please reply to this email with your RSVP. The requested donation is \$30 per person (scholarship as requested). I was uplifted last year as I attended for the first time and saw the response of our larger community to the issue of hunger. I hope you too will come and be part of this important community event.

Peace,  
Pam

Reverend Pam Hall, Director, Community Outreach Agency

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## **Community Outreach Agency needs the scoop!**

COA and it's Board are gathering information on your current outreach into your neighborhood to get the "Scoop" on how your church is engaged in serving it's neighbors. Many of you have received calls about this from our Board, and we just want to encourage all churches to have someone from your church respond to this survey. We hope to compile a District profile of how "Salty of Servants" we are now, as the Bishop continues to encourage local congregations to engage in outreach into their communities. By gathering this information we can then see where we might be helpful to one another across our District connection, and identify where potential partnerships exist. We also know there are many community outreach ministries in our NE District that would be great *learning laboratories* for other UMC's to gain insights and experience before launching out on your new outreach ministry, or expanding a current one.

We would like to hear about ministries that your church engages in that provide assistance to your neighbors at *their* point of need. These are not necessarily evangelistic programs your church does to attract new members, but indeed those ministries that encourage an external focus, allowing your members to be the "hands and feet of Christ to a hurting world." Ultimately we hope to add these ministries and the opportunities to serve within them to our soon to be birthed web site that hopefully will allow your outreach and missions teams to have a "one stop shopping" opportunity to partner within our connectional system, and with other agencies outside our churches.

Please go to [www.OutreachUMC.net](http://www.OutreachUMC.net) to complete this quick survey.

**And**.....as you plan your worship calendar for 2008, please don't forget to add a "**Camp AMP Sunday**." The dates are set for this summer's camp on June 8th and June 15th, and many of the leaders are in place already. Promotional materials will be sent to each congregation in February to aid in engaging your congregation in our 15th year of our District camp for needy children. Go to [www.CampAMP.net](http://www.CampAMP.net) for ongoing information.

Meetings:

COA Gala Planning Meeting	4:00 District Office	Thursday, Nov. 8
Empty Bowls Luncheon	12:00 Prime Osborn	Tuesday, Nov. 13
COA Board of Directors	6:30 District Office	Thursday, Nov. 15

## Calendar

### November

- 13** Empty Bowls Luncheon– noon
- 14** Bishop's Together Appeal– 10am  
Orange Park UMC
- 15** DCOM Paperwork due to District Office
- 22** Thanksgiving Day– District Office Closed
- 23** District Office Closed
- 26** District Leadership Council -7pm
- 29** SPRC Training 7pm-8:30pm  
Oakleaf UMC

### December

- 8** SPRC Training 10am-11:30am  
Keystone Heights UMC
- 13** New Church Development– 10am  
District Office
- 20** DCOM Meeting– 8am– District Office
- 24** District Office Closed for holidays

### January

- 2** District Office Reopens
- 8** District United Methodist Men Meeting– 6pm  
Location TBA
- 19** Leadership Training Event– 8:45am  
Orange Park UMC

### February

- 5** \*Clergy Pancake Breakfast– 9am  
Faith UMC
- 9** Celebrate Jesus Information Gathering-10am  
First UMC, Starke
- 11** Celebrate Jesus Information Gathering– 7pm  
Riverside Park UMC, Jacksonville

