

To: Churches of the Southern Conference
From: Reverend Dale Kennedy, President
Re: Meeting of the Boards on June 11-12, 2010

Friends of the Southern Conference:

Greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! I hope you are having a safe and restful and blessed summer.

There is GOOD NEWS in the Southern Conference! There is an abundance of wisdom and ability and hope and energy in the Southern Conference, and these were powerfully present in a meeting of all the boards on June 11 and 12, 2010 at Elon University. During these two days, board members of the Southern Conference, the Eastern Virginia Association, the Eastern N.C. Association and the Western N.C. Association gathered at Elon University to discuss, pray over and deliberate about our life together and how we can best go forward in life and ministry. It was good to be together in the same room, and "at the same table" seeking God's guidance for the days ahead. There was an honest, and loving and sensitive spirit in the room as we came together from our diverse places yet joined by our common love for God and for the Southern Conference. Dr. Riess Potterveld, President of Lancaster Theological Seminary, served as facilitator for our meeting, and I believe we made good progress in discerning how best to face our opportunities and challenges.

I could say a lot about what happened at this meeting, but I know that everyone is interested in decisions made at the meeting. The Southern Conference Board of Directors listened very closely to all that was said, and met on Saturday afternoon following the group discussions. The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Southern Conference Board:

1. We voted to suspend the search for and hiring of an Interim Conference Minister, and instead voted to focus on retaining the service of one or more consultants who can provide assistance in needed areas as we seek to discern the best staffing and structure for our ministry. Our work in this area would result in the preparation of a recommendation to be presented at the June 2011 Southern Conference Annual Meeting. We voted to spend no more than \$40,000.00 on the retaining of any consultants.
2. We voted to retain Associate Conference Ministers for Eastern Virginia and Western N.C. Association at $\frac{3}{4}$ time, who would work from July 1, 2010 until the June 2011 Conference Annual Meeting. We voted to accept the Rev. Tom Hamilton for Western N.C. and the Rev. Drew Morris for Eastern Virginia, who were the recommendations from their respective association boards.
3. Since the Rev. Vertie Powers would be completing her role in our present structure as Associate Conference Minister for Eastern N.C. Association on September 30, 2010, we voted to retain her as Associate Conference Minister for Eastern N.C. at $\frac{3}{4}$ time from October 1, 2010 until the June 2011 Southern Conference Annual Meeting. This vote also included retaining her an additional

- ¼ time as Resource Person to the Southern Conference from October 1, 2010 until the June 2011 Annual Meeting. The Rev. Emmett Floyd will be completing his time with us as Transitional Conference Minister on September 30, 2010.
4. We also voted to keep the Conference and Association secretarial support staff in place at their present compensation until at least the June 2011 Annual Meeting, and to keep the offices open at their current schedule.
 5. We voted to hold the 2010 Southern Conference Annual Meeting on Friday and Saturday, September 17 and 18. The location will be determined and announced as soon as it is secured.

This letter was ready to send out on June 15, but circumstances developed which necessitated delaying the sending out of the letter until these circumstances fully developed. Conversations in the Western N.C. Association resulted in the Reverend Larry Walser being recommended by the WNCA Board of Directors to be the Interim ACM for WNCA, and the Conference Executive Committee on June 29 accepted this recommendation on behalf of the full Southern Conference Board of Directors. I believe having Drew Morris, Larry Walser and Vertie Powers carry forward in the interim positions will give us needed continuity, stability and wisdom as we transition to the future.

Also, we have negotiated with Franklinton Center to be the location for our September 17 and 18, 2010 Southern Conference Annual Meeting. More information will be sent out in the near future regarding this meeting.

My commitment and the commitment of all the boards of directors is to provide for the best ministry we can for the benefit and vitality of our churches and people. I am grateful for the prayers and patience of the people of the Southern Conference during these challenging times. Let us continue to work and pray together as we follow God's guidance. And let us continue to give thanks for God's abiding presence and grace and blessing for the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Dale Kennedy, President