

Report from the Eastern North Carolina Association 2009

The Eastern North Carolina Association continues to seek ways to unite together in ministry while honoring the diversity that is ENCA.

In October 2008, The ENCA held our annual gathering at Oak Level UCC in Henderson. The Reverend Nancy Hastings Sehested delivered the sermon and called upon us to face the challenges of ministry as we proclaim the Good News in wherever we are. Our meeting celebrated the varied gifts of ministry we have both those who have served many years and those whose service will be in this century. We honored some of our leaders in faith; Bill Andes, Harry Carr, J. C. Cheek, Mary Davis, Emmett Floyd, Ervin Milton, Eddie Weathers, and Leon White.

We celebrated new voices of the church by listening to two of our youth, Brittany Bullock and Dyasia Mitchell who challenged us to look to the future by sharing their vision of the future church. Brittany reminded us that as God's children we are a family and family "loves unconditionally. The people in the family always have the best interest at heart for one another. . . . A family can be honest, it can be caring, trusting and it can be rewarding." Additionally she declared that the church needs to reach beyond its doors. "The church should do more . . . giving to people living in poverty. The only way a church will prosper is if it gives and gives sincerely." Dyasia challenged us by stating, "[The church] should become a positive church. [We] should stay away from negativity among each other and help lift each other's spirits. I want to be a part of a church that praises the Lord at all times. I want to be a part of a church that always has the children's best interest at heart. I want [the church] to become a church that welcomes everyone"

The Association's Church and Ministry Council celebrated the calling of persons to ministry and to new places of ministry. ENCA ordained five ministers, granted Privilege of Call to one minister and installed four ministers in new places of ministry.

The Association's Ministry Council continued to recruit champions from each of our churches. We now have 35 champions and growing. The council is continuing to explore positive ways to connect to our churches and opportunities for the Association to be involved in Christ's ministry together.

The Association's Scholarship Committee granted 8 persons scholarships totaling \$7,000 to affirm the response to God's calling to ministry by our Students in Care and show our Association's support to the hard work each one has committed to that calling.

The staffing of our Association continues to change but we celebrate the gifts of our ministers Vertie Powers, Phil Hardy and K Ray Hill during this past year. The ENCA Staff has been engaged in ministry to churches within the Association and has sought to build up our churches by helping to create vital and engaged churches. Three workshops were held on Church Vitality throughout the Association as well as a workshop on creating church constitutions and bylaws and the meaning of covenant. We honor and celebrate the work of the Reverend Phil Hardy whose work with the Association ended in March and The Reverend K. Ray Hill whose work will conclude in June. Finally, as we face the challenging economic times and changes our board remains committed to be about the ministry of Christ together and to seek ways to include and celebrate our diversity by seeking to minister as a united church.

Respectfully submitted,
J. Jay Kennett
President Eastern North Carolina Association