



THE VOICE OF EVA

May/June 2010
Newsletter
Volume 14 Issue 14

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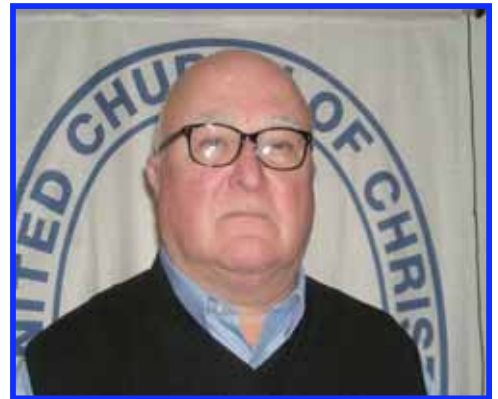
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GREETINGS

*From Rev. Drew Morris
Associate Conference Minister for
The Eastern Virginia Association*

I hope each of us has a great and restful summer, with the opportunity to refresh, relax, and restore our souls.

I am certain by now you have heard in the Southern Conference, “*The Times—They are a Changing,*” to quote Bob Dylan. Be assured, however, we and I do include myself, will not allow the mission and the work of EVA to be effected and we will continue to be of assistance and support each of you in every way we can.



The EVA Board of Directors met on May 6th to discuss and plan a way of being self-sustaining without breaking our historic link with the Southern Conference. A letter and a proposed mission plan for the remainder of 2010 will be sent to each of your congregations within the week. While change is inevitable, we intend to make certain that in the midst of change, our covenant with EVA congregations will be maintained and in fact, reinforced.

God Bless all of you,
Drew



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GREETINGS

From Dr. Julia Avery Muse,
EVA President

GOD IS STILL SPEAKING is the common theme that all faith believers can relate in UCC. In difficult times, it is important for all of us to stop and listen to what God is saying and remember our covenant with him. It is so common for man to assume **he** has to “solve the problems” instead of waiting, listening, and obeying what God has to say to each of us.



The 2009 Conference/Association year was a very difficult one. Budgetary cuts in staff's salary and other budget trimming by the Southern Conference (SOC) caused a ripple effect from a decline in the morale of staff to a delay in hiring a new Conference Minister. It has not been an easy journey for anyone. The SOC Executive Board (EB) and Board of Directors (BOD) worked hard to address the financial issues that appear to swallow the real mission of getting back to “ministries,” building relationships and stability between the local church, the Associations, and the Conference.

On April 19, 2010, the SOC BOD approved a plan that caused drastic adjustments for EVA. Among the many items within the plan: It dissolved the Association offices, Secretaries and the ACM's position ended as of June 30, 2010. As you may imagine, this was not received well by the Associations. Because of the “discomfort,” felt by members/churches within the three Associations, several meetings occurred and on **May 17, 2010**, the SOC BOD voted on four recommendations from the SOC Executive Board. All four recommendations were voted on and passed by the SOC BOD. Three of the four recommendations directly affecting the Associations were: (1) A joint meeting of the four BODS from the three Associations and the SOC BOD on June 11-12, 2010; (2) Postponement of the SOC Annual meeting/Gathering until September or October. A date has not been scheduled; but should be forthcoming; (3) Extending operation of the Association offices and secretaries until December 31, 2010. For your convenience, a copy of the results of the April 19th and May 17th SOC BOD decisions follows this Greeting.

I will continue to share with you SOC BOD actions/decisions as they occur. The EVA BOD and I plan to meet with local churches to seek their opinions about the SOC BOD decisions and what best works for EVA. **Most importantly, EVA will continue its covenant with the local churches.**

Remember, GOD IS STILL SPEAKING all we need do is listen and obey.

GOD BLESS



LETTERS FROM THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

The following letter was sent to local churches summarizing the decision made by the SOC BOD, April 19, 2010 by Rev. Dale Kennedy, President, Southern Conference.

April 2010 Letter to the churches

Dear Friends,

As I begin this letter, I want to thank you for your faithful support of the Southern Conference over the years. The Southern Conference is what it is as a faithful witness for Christ because of your love and prayers and support. It is in the spirit of covenant partnership that I share with you a decision that your Board of Directors has come to.

For the past several years, we have been dealing with engaging in Christian ministry with fewer financial resources. O.C.W.M. giving and other income sources have not been what they have been in past years. For some years, the Board of Directors has been struggling with balancing our ministry needs and actions with our financial support. Two years ago at the Annual Gathering in Virginia, a resolution was passed that charged the Board of Directors with finding a way to reduce the deficit and work to bring our spending in line with our income. In December of 2008, a plan went into effect that reduced the salaries of our staff and sought savings in other ways. At the 2009 Annual Meeting/Gathering in Salisbury, we were again charged to keep working and bring our budget into line. With the sale of the church formerly known as Christian Temple in Virginia in the spring of 2009, we gained some income, but only to help shore us up for a little while.

We began 2010 with hopes that this would be a better year, but that has not been the case. As of March 31, 2010, we have received \$78,906.98 in O.C.W.M. contributions, putting us cumulatively \$39,346.86 behind this time last year in O.C.W.M. giving. This is also \$41,093.02 behind where we need to be to meet the O.C.W.M. goals for our 2010 budget. Giving is down, and the number of contributing churches is down. The continuing economic conditions and other factors are contributing to this situation. Early this year, I engaged the officers of the Conference and the Board of Directors to find some way to address our situation. We have been in touch with national church staff, seeking their wisdom and help. We have looked at what other Conferences have done and are doing as they find themselves in a similar situation. The officers, Executive Committee and the full Board have met throughout the early part of this year working to discern a way forward. This has not been easy work.

As a result of our discussions and deliberations, we came to a decision at our Board meeting on April 19, 2010. A plan for moving forward was adopted that will be phased in starting July 1, 2010 and be fully in place as of October 1, 2010. Here is the plan that was adopted by the Board of Directors.

Professional Staffing

We will seek and hire an Intentional Interim Conference Minister who will help guide us and facilitate a transitional period for the next 18-24 months. This person will be especially charged with addressing our ministry and organizational needs in light of current financial resources, as well as leading us in strategic planning for the future. The job description for this position is on our Conference website. Annual compensation package for this position is \$90,000.00, the same as for our previous Conference Minister.

As of July 1, 2010, Conference level funding for the position of Associate Conference Minister will be suspended. Three part time assistant Conference Ministers, one for each Association, will be secured who will give 20 hours per week to church relationships, church and ministry, and search and call matters. These persons will receive a stipend of \$1,500 per month. To help with the transition to this new model, the current ACMs will be asked if they will remain on board at current pay and benefits until the new Intentional Conference Minister is in place.

Reverend Larry Walser has announced his retirement from WNCA as of June 30. Reverend Drew Morris has submitted his resignation from EVA as of June 30. Conference leadership will be working with Association Boards of Directors to provide appropriate leadership for the associations. (Note: The current structure and boundaries of our associations are not being changed!)

Administrative Staffing

In this new model, the following staff will be funded at the Conference level:

- Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister/Office Administrator, full time. Linda Carter will be asked to remain in this position. (\$35,900.00/year)
- Administrative Assistant to the Conference and Associations, part time (20 hours/week). Janelle Bunn will be asked to remain in this position. (\$11,200.00/year)
- Financial bookkeeper, full time. Elaine McAdams will be asked to remain in this position. (\$30,400.00/year)
- Conference level funding for the Association administrative support staff positions will be suspended. Associations may make their own arrangements for additional support staff.

Conference Offices

- The Conference Office in Burlington will operate four days a week, Tuesday-Friday.
- Conference level funding for the association satellite offices in Salisbury and Virginia will be suspended.

This model of ministry is seen as a temporary way to serve us as we transition from what we have been to what the future is calling us to be. As we move through the time of the Interim Conference Minister, we will work to discern the best way to move forward over the long haul as a faith community. The plan outlined in this letter will not get us fully to a balanced financial picture immediately, but will move us significantly to a place of greater stability.

Some will say that this is the beginning of the end, and signals the death of our beloved Southern Conference. A more appropriate image is that of a birthing of a new Southern Conference. The Scriptures often use the image of labor and childbirth to speak of God's new doings. Pregnancy, labor and childbirth are often painful as new life comes to be among us. What we once knew as the Southern Conference is becoming something new as church life, cultural dynamics, ministry opportunities, and financial resources change. However, our call and our commitment remain the same. Our love for God and our love for one another remain strong. We remain a people who follow a still-speaking God, and we remain determined to courageously follow our God as the way opens up before us.

I know that this change may be greeted with much concern and debate. As long as we are talking with one another, even if in intense conversation, that means we are still in the same room and at the same table. And, as long as we are talking with one another, we are open to what God may wish to say to us through one another. We must talk about this. We must talk to each other, and we must listen to each other. There will be significant time at the upcoming Annual Meeting for discussion and feedback on this. And I am sure that we will continue to talk about this as we make our way forward in the coming months. The Board of Directors is open to this conversation, and is working on ways that will make this time as productive as it can be.

The strength of the Southern Conference has always been our love for one another, and our determination to work together and make our way forward, even when the challenges have been great and the future seemed uncertain. Since our birth as a Conference in 1965, this has been who we are, and for thirty-two years as a minister serving in this Conference, I have witnessed firsthand how we have come through these hard times, and we are still together and we are still faithful. I have no doubt that we will make our way through this current time and move forward as we continue to love one another and work together. May our faith remain strong, and may our prayers remain steadfast. And may God's blessing be with all of us in the Southern Conference.

Dale Kennedy, President

The following letter summarizes the vote and decisions made by SOC BOD on May 17, 2010

The following is what will be sent out on an email blast and included on our website concerning the May 17, 2010 phone conference. A letter will also be going out, but please communicate this in those places and to those persons who need this information.

"The Southern Conference Board of Directors took the following actions during a May 17, 2010 meeting:

1. Acting upon a recommendation from the Eastern N.C. Association Board of Directors, the Southern Conference Board of Directors voted to postpone the June 11 and 12, 2010 Annual Meeting of delegates and churches to a time in Sept./Oct. 2010. A joint meeting of the Boards of Directors of the Southern Conference, Eastern Virginia Association, Eastern N.C. Association and the Western N.C. Association will be convened for June 11 and 12, 2010 at Elon University. This joint meeting will discuss where we are as a Conference and the April 19, 2010 action of the Southern Conference Board on restructuring of ministry and staff. This joint meeting will also work to discern a way forward using the broader wisdom of the elected leadership of our Conference. A consensus plan of going forward will be developed which will be presented for discussion across the Conference and for action at a Fall 2010 Annual Meeting of the Southern Conference. Anyone who has sent in registration for the June Annual Meeting will be refunded their registration fee.
2. The Board voted to retain a consultant who will facilitate the joint meeting of the Boards on June 11 and 12, 2010.
3. The Board voted to keep the Association offices opens at their current level of operation and their secretarial staff in place at their current level of compensation until at least December 31, 2010. (Emmett Floyd is instructed to communicate with the staff on this matter.)
4. The Board voted to suspend the search for an Intentional Interim Conference Minister.

Dale Kennedy, President
Southern Conference Board of Directors

EVA COMMISSION NEWS

EVA Commission (contact information)

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Commissions through the EVA office at (757) 934-3146. If you, as a member, or your church, have ideas, questions, comments or problems. We are always here to serve you.

Church and Ministry Commission

Happy Spring (and Summer, soon) to all of you. The Church and Ministry Commission has been very busy for many months. We have tackled very serious situations; some of which still remain unresolved.



Helen Seldon

First, we would like to ask each of you to pray for our commission, our churches, our people, our association and our conference. This is a difficult time for all of us; however, with the prayers and faithfulness of our people, and most importantly the wisdom and goodness of our GOD, we will survive and continue our work for God and His people.

If you have problems or needs, please contact Church and Ministry Commission through the EVA office. We are always here to help, to listen and to do whatever we can to make things better for our people and our churches.

God bless you all.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Bonnie Dingus

John's River Valley Camp

Hope all the churches in our Eastern Virginia Association are planning on sending kids and youth to summer camp.....

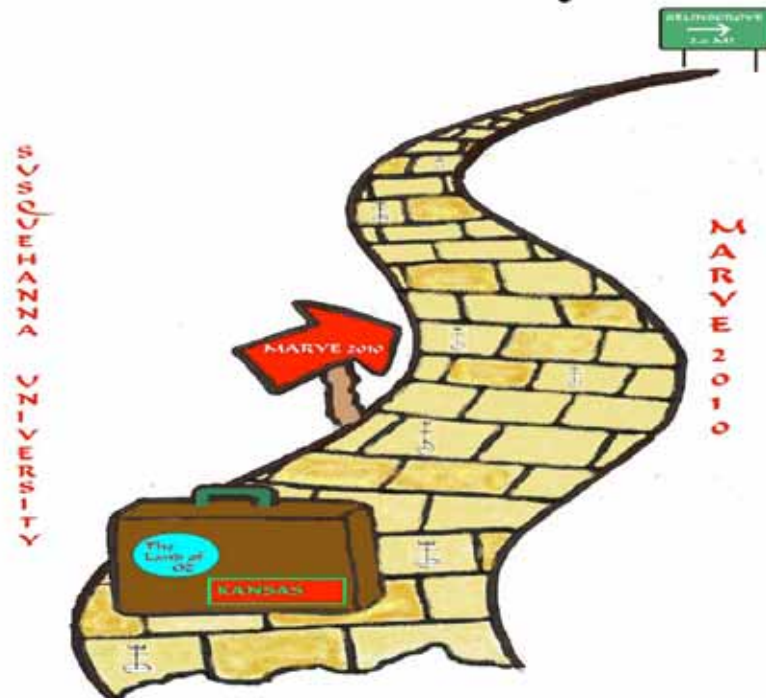
Need information? Check out the Southern Conference website.

Need help with transportation? NO PROBLEM ONCE AGAIN, OAKLAND CHRISTIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL BE UTILIZING THEIR CHURCH VAN BY HELPING TRANSPORT KIDS TO CAMP. Call their church office (255-4353) to get your name on that mailing list.

What do they need? There is a small fee for sharing the cost of gas along with some lunch money both ways. Also there is a special transportation permission slip that needs to be completed. Please don't let the issue of transportation

be a reason for missing out on a GREAT EXPERIENCE!!!!!!

EVA COMMISSION NEWS - Christian Education (Continued)

Take the Journey...

TAKE THE JOURNEY... FOLLOW THE HOLY BRICK ROAD
JULY 21-25 2010

Follow the Holy Brick Road

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT

JULY 21-25, 2010

Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA

Calling all youth aged 13-18 of the Eastern Virginia Association!

You are invited to attend the Mid-Atlantic Regional Youth Event.

Registration cost BEFORE May 31st is \$300.00 per person AFTER JUNE 1, but BEFORE July 1st \$325.00 per person. If your church will be attending this youth event please contact Rev. Lisa Gaul at First UCC, Hampton (757-826-7560) so we can coordinate travel arrangements. If we have enough youth going we can charter a bus. Hope to see you this summer on the Holy Brick Road.

EVA SPECIAL PROJECTS:

FROM THE EVA COOKBOOK COMMITTEE

SPRING IS HERE & SUMMER IS NOT FAR BEHIND



At This time of year, we begin to think of some really great food; such as ripe, red homegrown tomatoes; juicy, sweet watermelon and cantaloupe; luscious corn on the cob with lots of butter, grilled steaks or burgers, creamy homemade ice cream and friends and neighbors gathering and enjoying the outside, the warm weather and the joy of friends.

Our committee has not yet received enough recipes to fill our cookbook.

PLEASE send your RECIPES! Send as many as possible - to the EVA office or to me at 210 Constitution Avenue, Portsmouth, VA 23704.

You can mail them to me if it is inconvenient to take them to the office.

If you have any questions, please call me at 399-1309. If I'm not at home, leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.

As you may know, there are changes coming through the Southern Conference due to lack of funds. We need to help raise funds in any way we can and we need to submit our OCWM. For these reasons, it is imperative we make this fundraiser a profitable and successful venture. EVA needs these funds to continue to do the work we do on a daily basis for the churches in our association. Please contribute whatever recipes you think are really tasty; such as. refreshing summer drinks, desserts, salads, main dishes, sides, breads, etc. If your family likes a recipe, no doubt all the rest of us will also.

I want to send out a big THANK YOU to those of you who have submitted recipes. We are grateful.

KEEP THEM COMING!!

Helen Seldon, Chair, Cookbook Committee

Susie Keele, Committee Member

Lillian Wells, Committee Member

Looking for Good Southern Cooks!

Announcing
The EVA Cookbook

Support your Eastern Virginia Association in a tasty and delicious way. Encourage your fellow members to participate in our new cookbook program.

We need tried and true, great-tasting recipes to include in our upcoming EVA Cookbook. Submit your favorites (as many as you like). The final publication will be available for purchase. Proceeds from the sale of this book will go toward funding the many worthwhile programs of the EVA.

Remember, cookbooks make great gifts, too!

Please see:
for more information, or call:
Helen Seldon
(757) 539-3198



EVA SPECIAL PROJECTS :(Continued)

Upcoming Events/Projects (This is a reminder to all pastors and churches)

EVA SPECIAL RECOGNITION BANQUET:

"The Outstanding Service Award." Each year local churches identify one parishioner who has been faithful to church and community in working with and for others by giving their time and talent(s). The Banquet is where EVA **RECOGNIZE and CELEBRATE** those persons in our churches who have labored so faithfully in the church and community. The Banquet is their night to shine and for EVA and the churches say, "Thank You" for all that you have done for GOD and man!

A letter will be sent out to all EVA pastors and church congregations announcing the date, time and place. Last year everyone had a wonderful time and our recipients were outstanding! The event usually takes place in September. EVA thanks Laurel Hill UCC for being the perfect host for this event and of course, our Banquet Committee led by Ms. Angela Artis, Mrs. Jean Copeland, Ms. Shelley Robertson, Ms. Faith Whitfield, and the Women's Fellowship Committee at Laurel Hill UCC.



LABOR OF LOVE

The Labor of Love is a fundraising project that raises money for local charities and churches in Eastern Virginia over the Labor Day Weekend. It is also an excellent way to broadcast what our United Church of Christ churches are doing for their communities. Envision this, all the churches in EVA completing a **LABOR OF LOVE** on the Labor day weekend for the sole purpose of benefiting our communities. GOD will love you and so will we.

The common thread of the Labor of love is that each church creates a fundraising project and picks a local charity to support. The donations raised will be distributed 25% to church, 50% to the charity (the church is supporting), and 25% to EVA. The Labor of Love is hoping it will have the support of all EVA churches in 2010.

Last year was the pilot test year for this project. The following UCC churches hope to participate in the 2009 Labor of Love pilot project: Lynnhaven, Bayside, Chapel Grove, Oakland, St. Mark, and Union. This year, we expect many more churches to participate, especially since last year was so successful. Ideally, the dated time is the Labor Day weekend; but the activity/event can take place when it "fits" well into the churches schedule. Start thinking now about a fundraiser and let the EVA office know your choice of organization, date and time.

EVA thanks Mr. Tom Cantrell for bringing the project to the Board and implementing it in the churches and communities.

HISTORY AND POLITY WORKSHOP

Rev. K. Ray Hill, Pastor-Teacher at Maple Temple UCC in Raleigh, NC and UCC History,



Theology & Polity instructor for the Pastoral Leadership Development Program (PDL) in Burlington gave a superb presentation to EVA members on April 10th at Lake Prince Woods in Suffolk, VA. The four areas covered in the presentation were: History, Polity, theology, and Ministry.

History and Polity is one of the areas most needed by our UCC churches/members. It is one of EVA's 2010 goals to provide more workshops on History and Polity to its members. The biggest problem facing our congregations is their lack of knowledge about UCC History and Polity. UCC has a rich and rewarding history. The vision is expressed in our motto, "That they may all be one." The challenge is how to make the vision work. Through the years, UCC has always been in the forefront of change, especially when it involved social issues, equal rights, and justice for all. There was a lot of information shared, but three points highlighted were:

- Something to remember: Although the local church has autonomy, it should never undermine the covenant with UCC.
- Our polity allows us the freedom to select and become better informed.
- Suggestion: Put into the Sunday morning service, "A UCC Moment."

Another learning tool in teaching History and Polity is the video, "Fifty Years." It, too, is quite informative. Knowing UCC history and polity can reduce church conflicts and improve the Search and Call process. Be sure that you sign up for the next History and Polity workshop!



Mrs. Bunnie Williams, K. Ray's mother



Participants were quite intrigued with Rev. Hill's unique way in presenting History and Polity.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY**DEBORAH'S WOMEN IN MINISTRY OF GREATER HAMPTON ROADS**

Clergywomen Support Group Following Deborah's Lead...



Judges 4: 4-5

Deborah's Women in Ministry (DWIM) of Greater Hampton Roads was organized on Saturday, July 12, 2008 under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Madelene F. Beard, Director and five other charter members. They are Rev. Rita Cargill-Brown, Assistant Director; Rev. Patricia Crawley-Ricks, Administrative Assistant; Rev. Sheila Parker, Treasurer; Rev. Gail Henderson, Financial Secretary; and Minister Eula Manley-Marshall, Chaplain. Elder Miranda Turner, Rev. Janice White, Dr. Elva Ward's and Dr. Lessie Leary joined the group later.

The organization's name and symbol (a palm tree) in the Bible, where Judges 4:4-5 tells the readers, "*And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.*"

The vision of DWIM is to embrace women in ministry of all faiths, races, and ethnic backgrounds who will carry out the service of God.

DWIM's mission is to prepare, equip, and empower women in ministry.

The purpose of DWIM is to help support clergywomen using a holistic approach, to spread the Word of God, to unite and train clergywomen.

The members of DWIM meet monthly to pray, share their experiences and to encourage one another; to plan evangelistic work and educational opportunities.

Deborah's Women in Ministry was set apart on Sunday, April 11, 2010 during a Dedication Service that was held at Galatians UCC, Suffolk, Virginia.

CONGRATULATIONS ---GRADUATES

**Rev. Dr. Madelene F. Beard**

On Saturday, May 1, 2010, the Faculty, Trustees and President of Virginia University of Lynchburg (VUL), Lynchburg, Virginia, conferred the *Doctor of Ministry degree* upon the Reverend Madelene F. Beard. Beard's dissertation was entitled "*How to Encourage Members of a Congregation to Tithe According to Biblical Principles*", which has motivated members of her congregation to tithe during these tough economic times. Dr. Beard is the senior pastor of Galatians United Church of Christ, Suffolk, which served as the context for her doctoral project. In 2005, VUL awarded Rev. Dr. Beard with an *Honorary Doctorate of Ministry* for outstanding service to the ministry and to the community at large.

Beard also earned the following degrees: the M.Div. from Virginia Union University - Samuel DeWitt School of Theology, Richmond; a B.S. from Norfolk State University; and a M.Ed. from Virginia State University, Petersburg.

Rev. Dr. Madelene F. Beard is married to Mr. Arnold H. Beard, Sr., and they have two adult children: Sirvonner B. Nelson (George) and Arnold Jr., (Cheryl), and one grandchild, Arielle Nelson.

Rev. Jamytta Bell Graduated with a Master of Divinity Degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary on May 15, 2010.

Rev. Mamette Hilliard of The Great Awakening UCC received her Doctor of Ministry Degree from Virginia Union University, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of theology.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ordained

Rev. Julie Lindsey was ordained and installed as Associate Pastor for The Great Awakening UCC, May 2, 2010

RESIGNATION

Rev. Valerie Coe-Lowder has resigned as pastor of Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Christian UCC effective, June 18, 2010. Valerie's husband, Pat, has accepted a position with a law firm in Washington, D.C. We wish Valerie, Pat, Noland, and Reno, God's blessings and we will especially miss Valerie. She has been very active in EVA, serving as Vice President of our Board, President of the EVA Clergy Association and assisting with many other projects. Valerie's final worship as Pastor will be June 13, 2010.

EVA Clergy will not meet again until September, 2010.

EVA Annual Meeting:

Save the date and plan to attend EVA Annual Meeting on **Saturday, October 16, 2010 at First UCC Hampton, VA.** More information about our annual conference will be given in the September and October issues of, "*The Voice of EVA.*"

Four Facts of Life

Happiness keeps you sweet.
Trials keep you strong.
Success keeps you growing
But only GOD keeps you going!

May GOD keep you safe and continue to bless you

