



Photo gallery highlights 41st SOC Annual Meeting held on Catawba College's campus in June



Randy Onwig moderates meeting attended by ___ delegates



SOC posed its own set of bouncers: Drew Morris and Jamie Orr



Larry Walser and Dale Kennedy serve communion



Vertie Powers and Helen Seldon extend hospitality and greetings



Steve Camp converses with former Conference Minister Rollin Russell

Youth Hear Call to a Faith Response

Sixteen year old Hannah Davis of Congregational UCC in Greensboro confessed her personal feelings about youth events. "Let me tell you a secret. Don't tell anyone, okay? All right, here it is: I didn't want to go to the Southern Regional Youth Event." In spite of her lukewarm review of the most recent National Youth Event, and her hesitation to attend this event, she gave the regional event hosted on Elon's campus high marks. The site, workshops, and speakers all received her praise, and apparently changed Hannah's mind about such big group events. "From the workshops and the worshipping to unscheduled free times (did anyone not feed the ducks and geese after breakfast?) and spontaneous glow-sticking performances," reflects Hannah, "it was a truly unique and worthwhile event. And yeah, you'll probably find me at the next one."

Eric Smith connected with the youth in the way he framed his question, "What good is faith if all we do is talk about it?" Jose Malayung, Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries of the UCC, also latched the attention of his listeners with his statement "You can have the faith, the religion, but you have to have the mind to challenge it." Leah Pantermuehl, a participant from Texas, sited workshops by Ken Brown and Bryan Sirchio as stirring a response toward justice and mission. "I have realized it is much easier to talk the talk of God's love, but by living out the mission we really



Youth create evening of entertainment with their own version of American Idol calibre talent.

-Steve Camp photo

are put to the test."

Elizabeth Jaroszewski, also of Texas, expressed a sentiment that seemed to resonate among participants. "One of my favorite events of the Southern Regional Youth Event was the Brian Sirchio concert. Mr. Sirchio is a very talented song writer." Music sets the tone for

youth events (pun intended), and Bryan Sirchio not only struck a chord with his listeners, but inspired them with his thoughtful lyrics to practice justice and engage in Christian mission.

Says Pastor David of Getsemane UCC in Texas, who made the 2,700 mile trip with youth

from his congregation, "I mark this trip as one of my most treasured experiences in my twenty years as pastor." "It was an awesome event."

Excerpts from youth participants on page B-2

He's coming back

... for a "Revival" as keynote of *Live the Vision Rally*
 by Phil Hardy

"Live the Vision." These three words have been out in front of our Conference for more than a year. In our Annual Meeting in June we once again gathered as a body of believers around this sense of a shared vision which compels us forward. Many of us left that meeting

renewed in the certainty that this diverse community of faith which is the Southern Conference has important chapters left to be lived.

On September 23, 2006 at First Christian United Church of Christ in Burlington, NC the Southern Conference family will again be together for a day of renewal and worship. Let's go ahead and call it a

Alan Miller enjoys final board meeting in Southern Conference, as he accepted call to return to Penn-Northeast Conference as their Conference Minister
 -C. L. Stumb photo



Continued on B-2 - REVIVAL

A Call for "New Conversation" Suggests a Sacred Voice

Camp's Notes

by Stephen W. Camp
Conference Minister



Four years into his role as SOC Conference Minister, Steve Camp again calls wife Pat during SOC Board meeting, to share news of the delegation's decision to extend a call for a second term.

No doubt that some who attended the last annual gathering of the Southern Conference were surprised by the expressions of unity and goodwill that were like a thread woven throughout the proceedings. The Live the Vision theme suggested that the road ahead would be better than the journey past. Even those in the smaller minority of opinion were respected and valued by the majority. A higher echelon of rhetoric offered a luxury not seen in recent years. Worship centered us, presentations and reports inspired us. We were challenged by financial news and we were encouraged by the evidence of how far we have come by having faith in Jesus Christ.

At the end a phase emerged from the meeting, a word to us proclaimed in a preaching moment. It was a serious, even sacred call for a "new conversation" in the life of the Southern Conference. Deeper than a call to talk, the phrase was a summons for us

to find new ways of being together, to walk together and be in covenant with each other despite differences that are present and remain. In that phrase was a call for financial responsibility too, and a vision to share the mission work now before us at higher levels than at present. We agreed to disagree but understood that this agreement means little unless we are working to find a durable unity, constantly seeking to build goodwill among us and in our churches.

The clear encouragement was for those who had been withholding dollars to

stop the practice and start giving to the Southern Conference again. The meeting exposed the truth that withholding dollars is no longer valid. A report of the Committee of Twelve encouraged it, and a Conference Ministry Fund was established by the Board of Directors to ensure that the covenantal action could be achieved. It meant, at the core, that some who could do better should do better. It challenged each church to re-think, reassess and re-commit to the work we do together as the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ. It was suggested that, for those who have been given much, much is required of them in these days as the Southern Conference faces difficult challenges.

As we move into a future together, we can *Live the Vision*, and yearn for this new day. It should be understood that our desire for closer contact and engagement, and our striving for unity could provoke frustrations

and some setbacks. Never-the-less, we are called to experience a new conversation in the Southern Conference. It should be a conversation that values every voice and theological position, but also honors the work and mission of the other. Let's walk together, but walk together requiring the utmost vigilance and understanding. This new conversation may just be a sign of our Christian walk. When we finally take this journey out of our hands and place it all in the hand of Jesus, I think we will get to our desired destination, that place not made with human hands.

Let's walk together, but walk together requiring the utmost vigilance and understanding. This new conversation may just be a sign of our Christian walk.

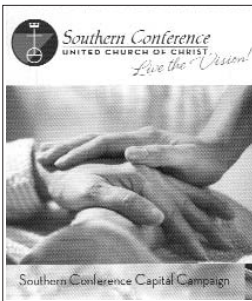
Wanted... Copies of the *Christian Sun*

SPRINGFIELD, MO -- Edward Williamson, Associate Professor at Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, is currently involved in research relative to the Christian Churches that make up a portion of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ. If there are any churches or individuals who have back issues of the *Christian Sun* that they no longer want, Mr. Williamson would like to have them. He will pay postage to have them sent to him. Please contact him at 9330 Hwy 63, Houston, MO 65483.

Continued from B-1 - REVIVAL

and Financial Development. Rodney Milton will serve as our musical worship leader.

Knowing that a shared life in worship and a shared life in mission contribute in irreplaceable ways to the health of any Christian organization it is our hope that the Southern Conference will turn out for what promises to be an inspirational day. If you have not already done so please contact the Conference Office if you plan to attend.



SOUTHERN SPIRIT

The Reverend Stephen CampConference Minister and Editor
Janelle BunnAdministrative Secretary and Managing Editor
C. L. "Curly" Stumb, Irwin Smallwood, Linda CarterCommunication Team

The Southern Spirit is published bimonthly as an edition of the United Church News. The publication is a successor to the *Christian Sun* (1894), *The Standard* (*The College Visitor*, 1887), the *Newsletter* (1951), the *News of Southern Conference Ministries*, and the *Southern Conference News*. News items and pictures of interest are welcome. Send to P.O. Box 215, Elon, NC 27244. Deadline is the tenth of each month prior to published editions.

Youth Share Comments about Regional Event

The workshops were great, but the weekend wouldn't have been nearly as remarkable if it hadn't been for the devotions. Now I will admit that I've never been a fan of large worship services, but these were something else.

The music, largely provided by the wonderful Bryan Sirchio, was upbeat and easy to follow. The speakers, including Southern Conference Minister Steve Camp, Jose Malayung the Executive Minister of Local Church Ministries for the UCC, Eric Smith, and Diane Jackson, the founding pastor of Vessels of Clay UCC and Vice President of the Southern Conference Board of Directors were powerful in both message and deliverance.

-Hannah Davis (Congregational UCC, Greensboro, NC)



"Not only was the Southern Regional Youth Event experience spiritually and emotionally empowering, the bond between the youth was strengthened. I thoroughly enjoyed spending the time together to get to know one another better and make a connection. I have been

inspired by the various workshops.... After attending this event, I feel my personal relationship with God has blossomed."

-Leah Pantermuehl (GethsemaneUCC, Houston, TX)



"During the Southern Youth Regional

Event some of us had the opportunity to meet with a few members of another youth group. They are extremely involved in the daily life of their church and have gained enough respect through the worship services they lead to sway the Open and Affirming vote and the Leaving the UCC vote their way. Their church is now an Open and Affirming church in the UCC. They have also been able to get the services to be slightly more progressive and have five services a year geared completely by and for the youth. I would like the youth of Gethsemane United Church of Christ to have the same respect. Their story has inspired me to work for it."

-Kenneth Loonam, (GethsemaneUCC, Houston, TX)



"The workshop that struck me the most was "Youth Involvement in the Local Church". It discussed how the youth group could be more

involved in the church. I received a lot of helpful ideas such as the youth group could be involved in the worship service throughout the year."

-Nicholas Anselmo. (GethsemaneUCC, Houston, TX)

"The trip to North Carolina for the UCC Regional Youth Event was a spiritually inspiring experience.

The theme "God is still speaking and God says it's time for: Celebration, Action, and Change" was eye-opening.

Spending time with other UCC members made me realize that together we can pioneer change in our church, community, nation, and world. This experience I had has empowered me to "get busy" with justice and compassion so that the dreams we as Christians have along with God can become reality."

-Emily Jaroszewski, (GethsemaneUCC, Houston, TX)

"One of my favorite events of the Southern Regional Youth Event was

the Brian Sirchio concert. Mr. Sirchio is a very talented song writer. I was able to go to one of his workshops and learn about his mission work in Haiti. Another highlight of the youth event was the workshop on diversity/racism.

-Elizabeth Jaroszewski, (GethsemaneUCC, Houston, TX)

Elon Homes for Children Transitioning its Alamance County Campus to an Independent High School

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Elon Homes was established as the Christian Orphanage in 1907 by the Southern Christian Convention and over decades evolved into a home for abused, abandoned and neglected children referred by Departments of Social Services. In 1996, the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act mandated significant changes in child welfare all across the country. The act reduced the children in the child welfare system and demanded children be kept with kin, in community based foster homes or in guardianship families and only as a last resort on a campus based group home setting such as Elon Homes for Children.

Elon Homes has been preparing for the inevitable cutbacks, downsizing and change in service. In December 2005, the residential program and charter school in Elon were closed as the campus was no longer a preferred type placement. The Charlotte campus continues to operate but with fewer beds. Elon Homes has expanded its charter school to admit 250 students, opened a community based mental health counseling service, and provided foster care to 120 children in 75 foster homes in five counties. The number of at-risk, abandoned, abused and neglected children served will continue to increase in these targeted programs.

At the spring board meeting, after two years of study, conferring with consultants and conducting a feasibility study, the directors voted to open an independent high school on the 20 acre Elon campus. Chairperson Dr. Barbara Tapscott stated, "This is a growth and extension of our strong interest in the education of children. Our beautiful campus will soon be full again with young folks from the community. We look forward to the further diversification of our agency while

at the same time significantly increasing our services to at-risk children."

In June, The Elon School hosted over 200 prospective parents for a program and picnic where Elon Homes President Dr. Fred Grosse introduced the head of school and the director of admissions. Hiram Jennings Goza III has 31 years of experience in successfully leading independent schools through expansion of grade levels, capital campaigns, and performance based academic programs. Jay Holt Lasley Jr., a well-known and respected educator and successful athletic director and coach, will be director of admissions. The Elon School will open in the fall of 2007 with 30 students in the ninth grade and 30 in the tenth grade.

Dr. Ned Fox, former head of Charlotte Latin School, is serving as Special Advisor. He and his staff will be involved in all facets of the start up, including curriculum development, setting academic standards, the honor code, admissions criteria and preparing the school for national accreditation.

Dr. Grosse told those attending the parents' meeting, "We believe there is nothing more important than the education and safety of our students. Clearly there exists the need for this high quality college preparatory independent high school. The interest from area parents and students is a strong testament to their desire for the best education possible in preparation for college and lifelong success in the emerging global economy. We are very excited about this high level of interest and our year of preparation leading toward our opening in 2007."

More information is available from Jay Lasley at 336.584.0091, or jay.lasley@theelonschool.org. The website is: www.theelonschool.org.

Deborah Kleiboeker Joins the Back Bay Mission Staff

BILOXI, MS -- Deborah Kleiboeker of Hoyleton, IL will relocate to Biloxi, MS this summer to join the staff at Back Bay Mission as Director of Fund Development. She brings with her the experience of 20 years in the development field and a string of impressive accomplishments. She holds the distinction of having been trained as a Certified Fund Raising Executive.

Prior employment includes a 20-year commitment to Hoyleton Children's Home Foundation. This foundation provides resources to Hoyleton Youth and Family Services who provide care to more than 2,000 persons a year.

Ms. Kleiboeker holds a bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Century University and is a diaconal minister of the United Church of Christ. When asked about her move to Biloxi and working with Back Bay Mission, she quickly replied, "I've long admired the ministry at Back Bay and look forward to playing a role in the rebuilding of the Mission and the Mississippi Gulf Coast."

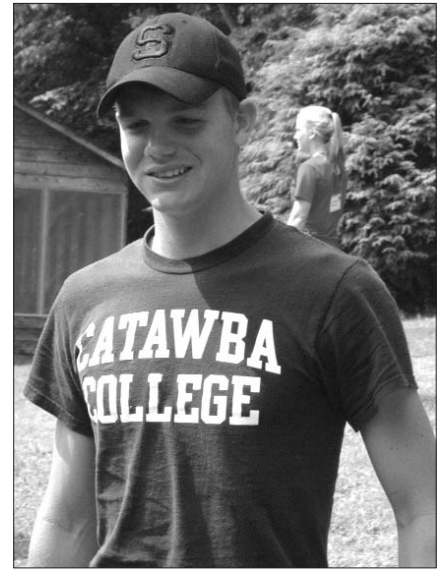
At Back Bay Mission Ms. Kleiboeker will be responsible for research and grant writing, the annual fund, major gifts, planned giving, special events, and public relations.

Catawba College Receives Renewal Grant from Lilly Endowment

SALISBURY, N.C. - Catawba College has received a \$500,000 renewal grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. under its "Sustaining the Theological Exploration of Vocation" program. This sustainability grant will augment a five-year, \$1,999,503 grant that Catawba received in 2003 from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. for implementation of its on-campus program, You Can Make a Difference! A Lilly Program for the Theological Exploration of Vocation. The new grant will allow Catawba, along with 30 other institutions receiving similar funding, to build upon and extend what they have already accomplished through their respective programs.

The original grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. allowed Catawba to establish its Lilly Center for Vocation and Values and to offer programs through that Center for students, faculty, staff, and the larger college community. The focus of these programs has been to help participants, especially students, discover and use their gifts in ways that serve others. A special focus has been to encourage students to consider seriously how they can make a real difference in today's world through the Christian ministry. Lilly Endowment officials acknowledge being thrilled by the impact that the programs at Catawba and other recipient schools has made on campus cultures across the nation. Students are approaching decisions about their life's work and service from a new perspective that employs a value system predicated upon service and responding to meaningful engagement and working for the greater good.

At Catawba, according to Chaplain and Senior Vice President Dr. Ken Clapp, a 1970 alumnus who directs the Lilly Center on campus, "We've made some phenomenal strides in the three years since we received the original grant from the Lilly Endowment." "We have been able to involve a broad cross-section of the college community in our program offerings, including retreats, fora and colloquia. Students often point to experiences made possible by the Lilly Center as having been among their most



A freshman retreat offers one of the many experiences made possible as a result of the Lilly Endowment.

-C. L. Stumb photo

important college experiences. We want to continue and grow that involvement.

"Additionally, four of our students have been able to attend seminary and pursue a ministerial vocation thanks to funding for scholarships that our Lilly Endowment grant has made possible. Four others have gone directly after graduation into service ministries, and at least six current students are on track for ministry vocations"

Founded in 1937, the Endowment is an Indianapolis-based private foundation that supports its founders' wishes by supporting the causes of religion, community development and education.

Franklinton Center Breaks Ground for New Facility

BRICKS, N.C. -- The Board of Directors announces the ground breaking of a \$1.5 million new facility at the Franklinton Center at Bricks to take place this summer 2006. A 10-year vision in the making, "this new sleeping facility will change the dynamics in what we can do for folks and the community," says Reverend Ervin Milton, director and visionary. From its humble beginnings, the Franklinton Center has been a safe and nurturing place promoting and encouraging justice and empowerment, leadership development and education especially for the marginalized, oppressed and poor. Today, the Franklinton Center has evolved into a Conference Retreat Education Facility with a programmatic focus to host and sponsor programs that address similar issues among the youth, church and community leaders. The construction of the new facility will help to continue this long-honored tradition, expanding the Center's program ability. Yet to be named, the sleeping facility will resemble a motel-type setting with 22 double occupancy rooms which include handicap-accessible baths, televisions and telephones in each room, and wireless internet throughout the whole building. In addition, the facility to be located between the residing dormitory and the cafeteria, will be complete with a fitness center and fellowship hall.



Ervin Milton greets guests in the Dining Hall of Franklinton Center at the fall 2005 ENC Association Meeting.

-C. L. Stumb photo

The Board of Directors' fundraising efforts has raised \$500,000 for the new facility. The Center is accepting contributions toward the total costs of the construction of the facility with hopes of completion in early 2007. "Our ultimate goal is to build a retreat center that will become regional and national, not just local attracting folks from all across the country," says Rev. Milton.



Crested Dwarf Iris
Iris cristata Alton
Photographed at Johns River Valley Camp
by C. L. Stumbo

2006 Calendar

August 2-4: Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice Convocation at FC

August 4-7: UCC (National) Musicians Event - UC-Chapel Hill

August 5: Franklinton Center Day

September 11-12: Southern Region Conference Ministers gathering

September 18-22: United Black Christians meet nationally in Cleveland

September 23: Live the Vision Rally in Burlington; Keynote by Alan Miller

September 25: Meeting with Alliance of Baptist leaders

October 7: WNCA Annual Fall Meeting

October 14: ENCA Annual Fall Meeting

October 21: EVA Annual Fall Meeting

October 22-24: SOC Board of Directors Meeting

October 28: Johns River Board meets on site

November 2-4: Southern Regional Rural America Conference at Franklinton Center

November 10-11: Clergy Event (pending)

November 11: "Covenant of Shalom" event at JRVCC, led by Rev. Randall Mishoe (first in series of three)

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

**God
is
still
speaking,**

Gen. Colin Powell discusses leadership, war in Iraq during question-and-answer session

by Jaleh Hagigh, *Elon Staff*

Powell shared his insights into effective leadership and spoke candidly about the war in Iraq to hundreds of students, faculty and staff who packed Whitley Auditorium for a spring event.

A.P. Carlton Jr., a member of the Elon University School of Law Board of Advisors and former president of the American Bar Association, moderated the question-and-answer session.

When asked by Carlton whether leaders are born or made, Powell said it is a little of both. The most effective leaders he said he has known have "had a gift of dealing with people" and "could motivate and inspire others to be more than they thought they were capable of being." Strong leaders, he added, also study good leadership techniques, welcome constructive criticism by those around them and are willing to improve. The qualities they all share are character, integrity, courage and vision. Powell said his mentors and leadership models "were people who passed through my life and touched me in significant ways, and I didn't even know it. You will be a product of everyone who intersected your life."

Powell called the late Caspar Weinberger, former secretary of defense under President Reagan, "a man of great leadership." Weinberger, Powell noted, chose to enlist in the Army after graduating from Harvard Law School because it was the most difficult path to take in the military and he felt he owed his country his service. Powell spoke at Weinberger's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery before arriving at Elon.

Good leaders must also be good followers, said Powell, who received his first lessons on leadership during infantry training at Fort Benning, Ga. "You have to be a good follower so you can under-

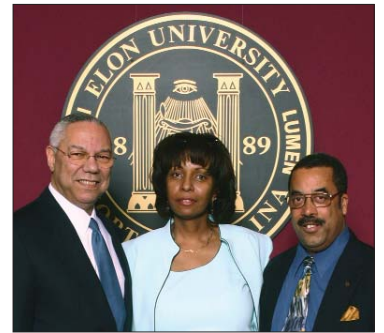
stand those who you are to lead," he said. Effective leaders must support their bosses, even when they disagree with their decisions. Without that, an organization becomes weak, Powell said. "The essence of leadership is trust. Can I trust you? Is your word your bond?"

Leaders also play vital roles in the community, according to Powell. "Everyone should feel an obligation to serve their communities in some way. You have to give back. You're being trained and educated here to lead in your community." He also urged students to choose a career that they enjoy. "Money and promotion will come, but what won't come to you unless you choose it is the opportunity to do what you want."

Powell also fielded questions from students on the war in Iraq, including whether the United States had enough troops when it went to war with Iraq and a plan for removing soldiers. "I don't think we had enough troops," Powell said, adding that there was never a doubt American forces would defeat the Iraqi army. "My concern was when the Iraqi forces were broken, there would be no Iraqi regime and once we take out the regime, we would be the government, the proud owners of 25 million people. I think we would have been better served to have a large force. That didn't happen, and instead we saw an insurgency begin and we didn't smash it, and now the insurgency has grown. We have our work cut out for us."

Powell also disagreed with the decision to disband the Iraqi army. "We didn't need to do it at that point," he said. "We might have been able to bring them back in some form. As a result, we had several hundred thousand unemployed people."

The growing insurgency and other problems in Iraq have many Americans wondering when the war will end, Powell noted. Initial optimism, he



Left to right: General Colin Powell, Ms. Patricia Camp, Rev. Stephen Camp

-photo courtesy of Elon University

said, has been replaced by a feeling of, "Boy, we've got problems, and we don't know where this is headed." Powell said Iraq needs a stable government and military with mutual trust before the U.S. can consider removing troops.

In response to a question about integrity, Powell mentioned his testimony before the United Nations Security Council in 2003 in which he said Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of biological weapons, which turned out to be false. "I didn't make it up or shape anything from the intelligence community," he said. "Nobody told me what to say. The fact of the matter is, we were wrong. The intelligence was wrong, but it was something we believed."

"I have always been able to speak to my bosses and tell them what I thought," he added. "I had hoped to avoid war. I don't like war. I was looking for a diplomatic solution."

David Kelly Receives LTS's Meck Award

by Donald P. Flick

Lancaster Seminary of the United Church of Christ celebrated its 181st Commencement on May 13, 2006 graduating twenty five students with a Master of Divinity Degree and four students with a Master of Arts in Religion Degree. The Commencement Service was held in the sanctuary of Church of the Apostles, United Church of Christ, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. During the events that took place around the graduation weekend, a number of ministers from Southern Conference were involved or honored.

Rev. David G. Kelly, pastor of First Congregational, United Church of Christ of Hendersonville, North Carolina was presented the Allan S. Meck Award during the Alumni Association Luncheon on Friday, May 12, 2006. This award is presented for "Excellence in Parish Ministry." David was presented the award by President Potterveld who spoke of David's leadership not only in the life of a growing and unique local church, but for his leadership in the wider community of Hendersonville. David was given time to make some remarks and he challenged the 2006 graduating class to take seriously the parish ministry and to recognize what an honor and privilege it is to serve as minister of a local church. David challenged the graduates with a scripture verse from II Timothy, "You then my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; what you have heard...entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others well."

Rev. Kelly emphasized seeking out the talents of lay people that are available in any congregation

or creative ministry, and encourage their use in the service of Christ. Discover the enthusiasm of people for a certain idea or program and nurture it. Find and retain clergy in your congregation open up avenues for them to serve, and above all link the deepening of an individual's Christian faith with community service.

Other recognitions included the 50th reunion of the class of 1956 and out of a class of twenty-nine, five were from North Carolina. Those attending the reunion from Southern Conference were; James R. Cress, Donald P. Flick, and Ms. Anne Kreps, who represented her late husband Carl C. Kreps. Donald M. Leonard was a member of the class of 1956, but was not able to attend. Donald B. Orander, who was originally from Winston-Salem, NC now lives in Indiana and attended from that area. The president of the seminary, Rev. Riess Potterveld, told those attending the 50th class reunion that they were a dying breed. Since most of the twenty-nine graduates in the 2006 class are second career, they probably would not live long enough to celebrate 50 years in full-time Christian ministry.

Rev. Dr. Donald P. Flick had the honor of preaching for the Friday morning communion service which centered around the theme, Partners in Ministry. He emphasized the importance of being partner with Christ and with one another. Being partners with Christ means responding to His great commandment, to love one another. It also means helping make one of his greatest prayer, "that we may all be one", a reality. It means taking seriously the part of his most famous sermon, "Blessed are the peacemakers".



Left to right: Rev. Dr. Riess W. Potterveld, President Lancaster Theological Seminary; Rev. David Kelly, recipient of 2006 Meck Award Lancaster, PA; and Ms. Jan Kelly, wife of David

-LTS photo

Lancaster Seminary, while affiliated with the United Church of Christ, is ecumenical and international in nature. The 2006 class consisted of students from a variety of denominational backgrounds; United Church of Christ, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and Baptist. There was a student from Ghana, Africa who was a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian church. The seminary is broadening its scope of theological education by offering a "Summer Academy" to help train and inspire lay-leadership. Through the Lilly Foundation a special program for youth has also been developed. Individuals or congregations seeking new avenues of learning and leadership should contact Lancaster Seminary to see what programs are available. A great deal of information can be obtained from their website: www.lancasterseminary.edu.