



Greening the Church Part II

by Kaye Crawford

Has your church appointed an Earth Care Team yet? Many people of faith see care of the environment as one of the church's most pressing spiritual and moral concerns. Escalating energy and food prices have made conservation of natural resources even more imperative. Here are a few more ideas your church might consider in being responsible stewards of the earth. In addition, MONEY WASTED AT CHURCH IS MONEY OUT OF THE COLLECTION PLATE. Do we really want to use God's money for waste?

- * Avoid styrofoam
- * Use Fair Trade Coffee
- * Purchase biodegradable bags
- * Use washable cleaning rags
- * Mix white vinegar & water 1:2
- * Establish Clean Plate clubs
- * Upgrade plumbing fixtures
- * Avoid harmful lawn chemicals
- * Sponsor local-grown dinners
- * Install fans
- * Improve weather striping

[For complete list and details, read more on the SOC web site.]

A Thirsty Church Seeks

Water

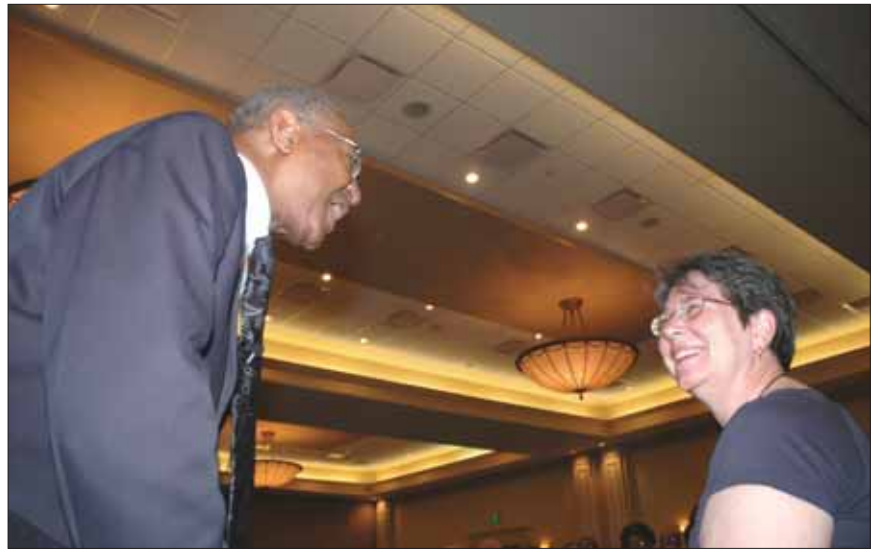
Raleigh Church Sees Climate Change as Justice Issue

by C. L. "Curly" Stumb

Thinking green is more than changing light bulbs, though the switch to compact fluorescent may play a part. There's a new mindset challenging some occupants of planet earth.

Says Steve Halsted, pastor of Community Church (UCC) in Raleigh, "Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth* has been a remarkable resource. The Interfaith Community has distributed 100 copies of the documentary to churches. They [churches] are now coming to us."

Halsted also chairs the NC Interfaith Power and Light, a Program of the NC Council of Churches. It was this committee that facilitated the distribution of



In this day of "preach fast and get us to the cafeteria on time" attitudes, Forbes, one of the great preachers of our generation, took his own sweet time. "Not preaching," he said, "just having a conversation with you." He chatted with us for a good 50 minutes and nobody wanted him to stop. He had whispered and shouted, walked up and down the aisles, across the platform and even sat down for a spell.

(Read Irwin Smallwood's column on page B-2.)

Rev. Forbes 'has a conversation' with Rev. Barbara Rathbun (Congregational UCC, Hendersonville). - Photo by C. L. Stumb

An Inconvenient Truth as part of its education awareness program. The group now stands prepared to resource congregations ready to confront "climate connection" issues. (Tom Mann, another UCC pastor, preceded Halsted as chair of the Interfaith Program.)

Community Church (Raleigh) recently invited neighboring faith communities to a "Green Tea." The event was well attended, and featured only locally grown foods. The sponsors wanted to support local and organic grown food. They also wanted to convey the message that locally produced foods don't demand as much energy, because they reduce or eliminate the transportation component regarding contemporary consumer's dependency on distant

sources of food.

The "Green Tea" was one of a host of actions Community Church has taken since May of 2007 when the congregation committed to initiate a year-long theme of "Justice in the Changing Climate." Halsted maintains that "environmental justice is at the center of all the other justice issues." The church theme was an attempt to wrap the various ministries of the church (i.e. worship, education, stewardship, justice, witness) around that central focus. Community Church continues to work with this theme well beyond the initial proposed year, as demonstrated by an ongoing study group and also their Climate Initiative Blog. (<http://cuccglobal.blogspot.com/>)

With the help of the NC

Interfaith Power and Light of the NC Council of Churches, an energy audit was done for the Raleigh Shelter for Women. The service is also free for churches, and reviews energy conservation, energy efficiency, and helps identify potential for using renewable energy.

An idea for a future project hopes to seed a community garden, creating fresh and wholesome produce for the community food bank, which otherwise contains an inventory of canned and packaged foods. The poor end of the socio-economic scale is often impacted disproportionately, even at the level where the church is reaching out to respond in ministry. "The poorest in the community should be able to eat of the earth as well as other people," states Halsted.

With Boldness A Southern Conference People Is Called

Camp's Notes

by Stephen W. Camp
Conference Minister



The 2008 Annual Gathering was a great success. It was one of the best in years. It was attended by a record number of national staff people and several SOC institutional representatives. We heard amazing reports from many related ministries, many sharing how we are connected in service and mission. The local churches from the mountains to the sea, from the rural areas and city showed up for the yearly event. The food was good; the accommodations were at a brand new hotel in Suffolk VA., the speakers were all first rate, spirited and informative. The theme was fun and focused. "Strike the Rock..!" ...taken from Exodus 17:1-7. The challenge was to be the church together in new ways, in ways that share the gospel and invites all to the table of our conference's conversation. It was a challenge to step out faithfully and with confidence that living waters would come forth for us to drink. Yet we did so, with a bit of boldness, calling each of us to the table, calling for a higher confidence in the notion that our best days are ahead of us in the Southern Conference.

It was a challenge to step out faithfully and with confidence that living waters would come forth for us to drink.

In the midst of the meeting we got a first good look at an emerging mission statement for the conference. It is entitled, "New Occasions Teach New Duties, Hope for the Future: A Statement of Mission." Each Local church is encouraged to discuss the mission document in Bible Study, at local church meetings and gatherings, in clergy and lay groups, in the men's, youth and women's fellowships and as individuals concerned and supportive of the ministry and work of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ. Feedback is needed. Prayer for its use is encouraged. Much of it can be used in local settings, as light posts for the local church attempting to look ahead, looking beyond our recent history. The document can be found on our web-

site at, soc-ucc.org; or call the conference office and we will send you one. No vote was taken on the document. We did not want to suggest that the work contained within the document is finished or completed, but we left knowing that more work and discussion about the document needed to take place. We all knew that it was a promising document that we all needed to live into as we embraced our future.

We also talked about money and stewardship in the life of the Southern Conference. We admitted that money continues to be a huge shared struggle for us. We recognized that this important indicator of the conference's health was lagging. We took comfort in knowing that finances were just slightly behind last year, but that our financial reserves were nearly depleted. "Strike the Rock," we said; let new financial resources flow forth for mission and ministry in the Southern Conference. We were encouraged to ask every local church to give in 2008 \$1000 more in OCWM giving; over and above the current level of giving that each local church has determines to give for the year. We recognized that if every church gave just \$1000; we would arrest our deficit entirely for this year and live within our means for the first time in many years. We covenanted in the annual gathering to do all that we could this year to make that \$1000 challenge happen in 2008. We experienced a great start, as over \$10,000 was raised in the meeting, to encourage us toward our goal.

As the summer unfolds and many take vacations and find rejuvenation and relaxation, enjoy, but let's not forget the work of the Southern Conference this summer. Please be encouraged to maintain your giving and concern toward your local church this summer too. In the summer, the air conditioning we use costs money too. ...Blessings

Want to leave money to your church, but not quite sure how to do it? We can help. Have you considered leaving a gift to your local church and to the Southern Conference that will strengthen the ministry of both the local setting and the wider community? Contact your Conference Minister or your ACM. We will be glad to help you accomplish your goal of helping others long after you have gone on to your heavenly reward.

by Irwin Smallwood . . . Reflections on the Annual Gathering

I don't know about you, but I left Suffolk feeling good about the Southern Conference. I have lost count of the number of conference gatherings I have attended, except that I was at the organizational meeting in 1964 and the most recent one in Suffolk. And I'm hard pressed to recall one that was as encouraging as this summer of 2008 in the beautiful Tidewater area of Virginia.

Not that we have met and conquered all our challenges. Note I did not refer to any of them as "problems." I quit using that word in relation to our beloved church in the 1970s. I was at a meeting in New York and began telling our late United Church of Christ president, Bob Moss, about our perceived "problems" in the Southern Conference. I think it must have been during my term as president.

Whatever, Moss, a son of our Corinth church in Hickory, stopped me in my verbal tracks. "You don't have any problems," he said, "just opportunities for service."

How true. And now as then.

I was particularly proud of the way Steve Camp, our conference minister, met the financial challenge head on in his report to the flock in Suffolk. No sugar coating there. Just cold, hard facts of life that we all must face if we are to remain good stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

I was equally impressed with the way my pastor, Julie Peebles (Greensboro Congregational), and others tackled the budget dilemma. Through it all, proving once again that delightful cliché, "We can disagree without being disagreeable."

But what did more for me than anything else was the way the Holy Spirit engulfed the gathering during the Thursday and Friday night worship services.

Does it get any better than to have Yvonne Delk introducing James Forbes? When the First Daughter of the Southern Conference finished handing him over to us, we had already heard a sermon to remember, and then...

In this day of "preach fast and get us to the cafeteria on time"

attitudes, Forbes, one of the great preachers of our generation, took his own sweet time. "Not preaching," he said, "just having a conversation with you." He chatted with us for a good 50 minutes and nobody wanted him to stop. He had whispered and shouted, walked up and down the aisles, across the platform and even sat down for a spell.

Through it all, this son of Eastern North Carolina made us proud to be Christians and proud to be members of the United Church of Christ and to be the Southern Conference.

And then Nancy Allison, that gifted voice of Holy Covenant in Charlotte, picked up the torch and led us through to a conclusion Friday night with what at least one old-timer who shall remain nameless said was "the best sermon I have ever heard at a Southern Conference meeting." Her words were fittingly wrapped around the graduation of the Pastoral Leadership Development's class of 2008.

As we left the place, one also could not help but recognize the wisdom of our much-maligned brother Jeremiah Wright, who decided to withdraw as the Thursday night preacher and spare the Southern Conference the media circus his appearance almost certainly would have provoked.

We didn't need that. What we needed, we got - a spirit-filled gathering of the family we call the Southern Conference.

From Irwin's Pen



SOUTHERN SPIRIT

The Reverend Stephen CampConference Minister and Editor
Janelle Bunn Administrative Secretary and Managing Editor
C. L. "Curly" Stumb, Irwin Smallwood, Linda Carter Communication 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 252-B West Fifth Street, Burlington, NC 27215. Deadline is the fifth of each month prior to published editions.

Is God Among Us or Not?

by **Dian Griffin Jackson**
President, Southern Conference UCC

Amid the picturesque beauty of historic Suffolk, Virginia, friends, members, and guests of Southern Conference gathered. In this tranquil setting of downtown, we indeed encountered the risen Christ among us. Water flowed from the mighty rock creatively displayed by our visual liturgist. We, like the Israelites of antiquity, responded, "Yes, God is among us!" Those present were touched and transformed by God's Spirit through prayers, music, dance, songs, testimonials, word, and kin(g)dom building. "Is God among us or not?" [Exodus17:1-7] Our hearts, minds, and spirits rejoiced as we were challenged with a resounding "strike the rock!"

Our hearts, minds, and spirits rejoiced as we were challenged with a resounding "strike the rock!"

Yes, there were choruses of concern and dismay as the drought of our financial landscape was masterfully painted before us. Yet, many rose to the challenge to trust God to go ahead and be behind us, to stand alongside us, and to be with us in this financial wilderness. I challenged those present to partner with the Southern Conference by committing to send \$300.00 each to the coffers of our Conference by the end of 2008. This amount is only the tip of the iceberg of what most persons spent in order to participate in this year's Annual Gathering. Putting aside \$50.00 each month is all it would take to be able to make this generous gift to the well being of the Conference, which would total more than \$90,000 in six months. Such a gift would more than reduce our current operating deficit by half. And as only God can do, we

received several checks from partners right there during our time together.

Another challenge came from the floor. Each local congregation was asked to commit an additional (for some) and first (for others) \$1000.00 to our beloved Conference over the same time period, a total of \$167 monthly for six months. You do the math. By the end of December 2008, our Conference would have an increase in giving of over \$340,000. **Totally in the BLACK! Totally SOLVENT!** In the interim, the Board of Directors has committed to being about our God's business of making the hard decisions necessary to assure that we become good stewards of the resources of which God has blessed us. Solvent. And all we have to do is **STRIKE THE ROCK!** Chicken dinners. Fish fries. Talent shows. Rainbow Teas. Car Washes. Piggy Bank Sundays. These are our ROCKS! Trust God to bring forth life, growth, vitality, financial stability--from one or a combination of these rocks.

"Why?" you might ask. You see, those of us who gathered in that setting in downtown Suffolk, surrounded by a gently rolling lake and sleek sailing vessels, share the best kept secret in North Carolina, Virginia, and the whole of the United Church of Christ. **We are the Southern Conference, and our beloved Conference is to die for!** [No pun intended regarding our personal relationship with God -- of course.] That's why we have committed to strike the rock. Purpose in your hearts today, right now, to become a partner of the Southern Conference. Strike the Rock! Truly, God has called us as Conference for such a time as this.

Dian's Thoughts



by Doug Borko . . . The Pension Boards, UCC

It was my distinct pleasure, and honor, to represent The Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ and the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance at your recent Annual Meeting in Suffolk, Virginia. Your warm and gracious welcoming of this "outsider" into your home is certainly emblematic of your willingness and ability to embody the Biblical mandate of welcoming the stranger.

The United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) is blessed with resources that enable us to fulfill the Biblical mandate to care for the family of God. One way in which we live out these mandates is through our ability to provide some form of financial support to 62 families in the Southern Conference.

In addition, there will be at least 45 persons in the Southern Conference who will be receiving a special "Thank You" Gift Check this coming Christmas.

And, 38 of the 1,000 persons who received the one-time, \$200 Emergency Energy Assistance Grants in July 2008 were from the Southern Conference.

These are all examples of the good work enabled through your generous gifts to the annual Christmas Fund Offering of the United Church of Christ and the investment income from planned gifts (endowments) to the UCBMA.

It is my ongoing prayer that the Southern Conference and its member churches will be richly blessed as you provide your wonderful and unique witness to the Good News of the Christ Child.



Name Change Announced: ELON HOMES AND SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN, INC.

The Elon Homes for Children Board of Directors voted to change the name of the agency to Elon Homes and Schools for Children Inc. to better reflect the services offered today by the agency. The board engaged in an eighteen month study, worked with consultants and interviewed individuals connected to the agency to select a name that better identifies the 101 year-old agency today and its anticipated services for another 100 years.

Board chair Rev. Ross E. Marion stated, "We are very pleased and proud to continue our tradition of care for children from all sorts of background, needs and circumstances. The sacredness of all children is of primary importance to us. This name change reflects our continuing commitment to safe haven, life skills and education of the many children in

our care today and tomorrow."

For 101 years, Elon Homes for Children offered 'home' to children of all ages in one form or another including residential care and treatment, family and therapeutic foster care, independent living, sibling houses, and group home care. The agency anticipates offering 'home' in the form of foster care and sibling houses well into its second century of service.

For 21 years, Elon Homes for Children has offered 'school' in various forms including a child development center, a licensed private school, a charter public school for middle and high school students, an assessment academy and an independent high school. The agency anticipates offering 'school' well into this century at The Elon School, an independent high school in Elon, NC, and at its charter school in Charlotte which will

eventually become a K-12 school.

In the last fiscal year, the agency served 1,100 children. The agency owns and operates The Elon School, LLC, Kennedy Charter Public School, the Mary Liz Francis Elementary School, two sibling houses, family foster care programs, the Elon Homes Children's Foundation, Inc., The Boys Town Trust Inc. and Kids Central of the Carolinas, LLC.

The board name was changed to Board of Governors. The name reflects the board model known as Policy Governance which the board adopted in 2002. Under this model the board engages in long-term research, setting goals or Ends and monitoring policies rather than directing daily operations.

President Fred Grosse said, "This has been an interesting and rewarding process of identifying

our new brand which is to match and identify what we intend to do for the next 100 years! We have made changes and diversified our programs and schools to well meet the evolving needs of our children, families and communities. These changes will help us be better stewards of our government funding, tuitions and philanthropic contributions."

Over its 101 year history, the agency has had several names. Founded in 1907 as the Christian Orphanage, it became the Congregational Christian Home for Children in 1956. In 1964, the institution was renamed Elon Home for Children; an "s" was added to Home in 1989 to include both the Charlotte and Elon, NC, campuses. The current change to Elon Homes and Schools for Children became effective May 2008.





Tall Anemone or Thimbleweed
Anemone virginiana
Photographed at Johns River Valley Camp
by C. L. Stumb

2008 Calendar

August 2: Franklinton Center Day

August 27: SOC Structure and Bylaws Committee Meeting

September 4: SOC Executive Committee Meeting

September 11-12: SOC Board of Directors, Burlington

September 16: SOC Staff Meeting, Black Lake Retreat Center

October 4: Western North Carolina Association Meeting, Congregational UCC, Greensboro

October 9-11: African American Women in Ministry Retreat at Franklinton Center

October 11: Eastern North Carolina Association Meeting, Oak Level UCC

October 18: Eastern Virginia Association Meeting, Bayside UCC, Virginia Beach

October 24-25: Christian Education Meeting at Black Lake Retreat Center

November 5-6: Virginia Council of Churches Annual Meeting

December 3-8: National Meeting of Search & Call for ACM's, Orlando, FL



Four Honored at Catawba

SALISBURY - Two Catawba College Trustees and the Catawba's retiring 20th President and First Lady were honored Wednesday, May 14 as the recipients of the prestigious Adrian L. Shuford, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service.

The award presentations were made to Trustees Charles G. Potts '53 of Charlotte and Wade Hampton Shuford, Jr. '50 of Hickory, and to College President Dr. Robert E. Knott and First Lady Brenda S. Knott during the College's annual President's Circle Dinner, held to recognize the institution's major donors, in the Cannon Student Center on campus.

The award is given each year to the individual(s) who has played a major role in supporting the college and its programs through their time, talent and resources. It was established in 1983 in honor of trustee emeritus Adrian L. Shuford, Jr. of Conover, who died in 2000.

Catawba College President Dr. Robert Knott presented the awards to the two trustees in front of an audience of close to 300 individuals. He said Potts and Shuford were men "who have greatly enhanced the institution by their willingness to commit to long-term service on the Board." Potts joined the Catawba College Board of Trustees in 1988, while Shuford joined it in 1960, elected to the post by the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Tom Smith '64, chairman of the Catawba College Board of Trustees, made the award presentation to President Dr. Robert Knott and First Lady Brenda Knott. The couple will retire to Brevard, N.C., at the end of this academic year after Dr. Knott served for six years as Catawba's 20th president. Smith called Dr. and Mrs. Knott "a team which has enriched Catawba College greatly with its service and dedication." He said the couple's history with the college stretched back more than 25 years.

Wade Hampton Shuford, Jr.

An entrepreneur and a lifelong learner, Shuford has worn several very different hats during his professional career. He served as a public school teacher, an associate vice president for a bank, a director of Christian education at a United Church of Christ in Virginia, and as an international tour organizer and guide.

Following his graduation from Catawba, he served a year in the United States Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, as a personnel research technician engaged in psychological testing and evaluation. He later completed graduate courses at UNC Chapel Hill and the University of Texas before earning a degree in Christian education from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

He is an active volunteer at his church, Corinth UCC in Hickory, where he works in its Adult Life program. He is a member of the Hickory Lions Club, various foreign language clubs, and also volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and Cooperative Christian Ministry.

Shuford has consistently supported Catawba with his financial resources, establishing a First Family Scholarship at the institution, and through the early 1990s, providing financial backing for Catawba's annual choir tour. In 2001, Catawba honored him with its Distinguished Alumnus Award during homecoming festivities.

He is married to wife Joanne and is father of two sons.

SOC ANNUAL GATHERING PHOTOS

- 1L: Rev. James A. Forbes, Jr. preaching
- 1R: Rev. Nancy Allison
- 2L: Rev. James A. Forbes, Jr.
- 2R: Rudy Wilson directs Mass Choir
- 3L: Rev. Steve Camp presents award to Ruth McDowell
- 3R: Rev. Yvonne Delk
- 4L: Caleb Tabor presents "A Statement of Mission"
- 4R: Rev. Julie Peebles addresses budget
- 5L: Rev. James A. Forbes, Jr. greets Rev. Warren Casiday
- 5R: Rev. Nora Driver Faust presents Black Lake report
- 6L: President Riess Pottersveld, Lancaster Theol. Seminary
- 6R: Anthony Herman receives communion
- 7L: Rev. Leroy Dukes (former PLD) applauds '08 graduates
- 7R: PLD student Roy Stokes speaks to banquet audience

(photos by Rev. C. L. "Curly" Stumb & Rev. Paul Davis)

SOC Annual Meeting . . . Strike the Rock

