



Southern  
Conference  
edition

**section C**

**Associations met In  
October**  
(meeting photos  
by C. L. Stumb  
represent 2005 scenes)



Eastern North Carolina  
Association  
at Franklinton Center



Eastern Virginia Association at  
Lynnhaven Colony UCC,  
Virginia Beach



Western North Carolina  
Association at First Reformed  
UCC, Lexington

[www.soc-ucc.org](http://www.soc-ucc.org)

*Jesus came into the world with everything: a love so vast and deep, eyes shining wide with God's vision of shalom for all.*

by Mike Hooper

**The Crèche: Symbol of Christian Unity**

Traditionally the season of Advent is a time for us to prepare for the "coming" of the birth of Jesus. As we await his birth during the weeks preceding Christmas we enter into a time of penitence and spiritual searching. Wreaths, candles, bells, and Christmas trees are important symbols that assist our Advent journey. Another symbol that has been important for the Hooper family through the years is the crèche or nativity scene, originally inspired by St. Francis of Assisi. As a matter of fact we have numerous crèches distributed throughout our house during the season: one is diminutive and hangs as an ornament on our tree, another is large and we have been adding a new piece to it each year; others of different size and shape are perched on tables and shelves and window sills. One crèche is made up of carved flat pieces that include the typical figures: Mary and Joseph; the baby Jesus in a manger; an ox, sheep, and donkey; the wise men, the shepherds and an angel. This nativity set was designed to spread throughout the house; then each week family members bring one of the figures to a table until all are there for Christmas Eve as disparate parts coming together finally in unity of purpose.

The crèche that we cherish most is one that we have had the longest. My wife gave it to my mother early in our marriage. Later after the death of my father, my mother began leaving it out all the time. Then after 12 years of enduring the slow eroding affect of Alzheimer's disease mother died peacefully. When we began spreading her few things out to the siblings, of course our family received and embraced the crèche we had given her. As did my mother, we now leave this crèche out year-round. It sits perched on a shelf in our den where we seldom go long without seeing it. It has become a warm, loving reminder of mother and her marvelous faith in God and love for Christ. It reminds us of the unity of spirit that Christ draws out of us when we focus on him. It is as if we are pulled into the crèche to experience anew God's love revealed in the manger. Somehow it

*Continued on C-2 - Celebrate Advent*

by Julie Peoples

Many years ago on a chilly Advent evening, my husband and I attended the open house for a new transitional home that had been set up for families seeking to break the cycle of homelessness. As we



climbed the narrow stairs up to the small third floor, a seven-year-old boy named Philip led the way, skipping every other step in his zeal to show us his new room. When we got there, catching our breath, we looked and saw what most of us might consider a large walk-in closet, but which was now young Philip's new bedroom. His eyes shone wide. "Look how big it is!" he exclaimed, as he turned somersaults on the new carpet.

My thoughts shifted back to the scene at the manger 2,000 years before. Perhaps that cave felt big to Mary and Joseph after their search for shelter, or at least big enough. Jesus came into the world with so little. Yet Jesus came into the world with everything: a love so vast and deep, eyes shining wide with God's vision of shalom for all.

Advent calls us to come closer, to draw very near to God's grace and exclaim with little Philip, "Look how big it is!" There is no barrier, no division, no old grudge, new resentment, or centuries-old fear that Christ cannot overcome. Where we see a small, restrictive room, there exists in fact a home of abundant blessing, welcome, and new beginnings. Let us, together, be watchful for the Advent of God's grace, that we, like Philip, might exclaim, "Look, how big it is!"

**Youth Empowered by Planning Process**

by Irwin Smallwood

ELON, N. C. - Workshops on denominational identity, the generation gap, contemporary music, drama, and liturgical dance were among the major ideas that surfaced here Nov. 5 when the planning committee for next summer's Southern Region Youth Event met to begin solidifying details for the gathering of young people from the Southern, Southeastern, Florida, and South Central conferences of the United Church of Christ.

The June 22-25 event, to be held on the campus of Elon University, expects a turnout of between 300 and 400 youth from the region, which includes some 500 UCC congregations. Early registration deadline is April 1 and the final cutoff date for participation is May 15.

Much of the early interest is

being fueled by the positive experience a number of those on the planning committee had when they attended the UCC's national youth event in nearby Knoxville, TN, in the summer of 2004.

According to 16-year-old Davis Litzenberger of Cary, N.C., one of the committee members, the Knoxville experience was highlighted by "meeting so many people from so many places." He sees the Southern Region event as a similar opportunity "to meet new people from our denomination." Darian Jackson, a 13-year-old from Elon's new Vessels of Clay UCC, also was at Knoxville and particularly liked its workshops - "one of them was sort of the church's version of hip-hop." He's looking forward to some of the same at the gathering here next June.

Litzenberger has already made a major contribution to the planning.

With the help of his sister who attends N.C. State University, he has put together a web page that will grow as final plans are made. It is already up and running on the internet at [www.godsaysistime.net](http://www.godsaysistime.net) and includes all of the basic information on the event.

The Rev. Kelly Barefoot, pastor of Calvary UCC, Thomasville, N.C., who is co-chair of the event with

Brenda James of Greensboro's St. Stephen UCC, also sees the event as a major opportunity for the young people of the region to get an up-close glimpse of life on a college campus. Daily activities will include three hours for free time and recreation in addition to a worship service, two workshops and one devotional service.

*Continued on C-2 - Youth Plan*



Irwin Smallwood interviews youth delegates at planning meeting -Steve Camp photo

# Rosa Parks Sparked a Movement with her Tired Feet

## Camp's Notes

by Stephen W. Camp  
Conference Minister



At the writing of this edition of Camp Notes, I am saddened by the news of the death of Rosa Parks. Her life lived, was a testament of committed faith. All of us are the beneficiaries of her high estate.

History records that Rosa Parks stood tall, rather, she sat down. Her feet were tired. In the very act of not relinquishing her seat, she decided to not give over her dignity to an unjust law and deeply conflicted society. In the very act of remaining seated, she did not give in to the one ordering her removal. By her very act of staying put, she made a difference.

Think if you will, of the bus driver, a sad and sorry representative of a corrupt system, a dying dinosaur system dominated only by the color of skin, a system that belittled her simply because it was always done that way and accepted. All of it, furthermore, was backed by the state, the region and the nation. This racially restricted woman, with tired feet, defiantly touched off a movement, sparked an action that not only changed all of us and our nation, but also influenced the world.

The change could be seen from here to South Africa, seen then and can be seen in our lifetime too. 281 days followed that significant day, a portrait of justice was drawn by the bus boycott that followed. Life circumstances were about to change. The world would change too. Because of her act, the nation was embracing a new future. It would not be easy, but necessary. God can use tired feet to make a difference and did so.

**In the very act of not relinquishing her seat, she [Rosa Parks] decided to not give over her dignity to an unjust law and deeply conflicted society.**

This rebellious act, indirectly freed a man named Nelson Mandela from twenty-seven years of unjust jail time years later. It gave a young person in China the strength to stand in front of a tank. What Rosa Parks did then profoundly affects us now. What we do now, profoundly affects the generations to come.

When the clear yes is said; when we stand for what is right, act justly, the no's and the negatives fall away. It's an eternal flame that can still be seen from time to time in our midst and in our day. Simple acts turned scared. It's the same *still speaking* voice heard often in human history. God still speaks!

At Advent time we hear this call again, and are reminded of God's presence and power in the world. In this season we hear the voice of God reminding us that we are not alone, not unaccompanied in a world that feels so often to have abandoned us. We in fact are reminded that we are in the hand and wholeness of God's love. It is our faithful, just and peaceful actions that keep us there.

Rosa Parks sparked a movement with her tired feet. She wasn't the first nor will she be the last. Maybe we should use this Advent time, this season of giving and reflection to remember how good God has been to us, finding ways to be a blessing to others as the season unfolds, and again praise God! After all, my mother taught me at a very young age, maybe yours did too, just, how much more blessed it is to give, than it is to receive.

On behalf of the staff of the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ, may your season of Advent be one of joy and reflection upon the goodness of God.

## Peace on Earth, Good Will toward All

### Cutting Edge Approach Promises New Day

*"Come to the edge," he said. They said, "We are afraid." "Come to the edge," he said. They came. He pushed them and they flew.*

-Guillaume Apollinaire/French Novelist

This season of our shared life in the Conference has the feel of moving toward just such an "edge." Simultaneously faced with challenge and great possibility we move toward the "edge" of a new day.

"Live the Vision," the Capital Campaign of the Southern Conference, affords us a decisive moment in history where we venture to the "edge" and trust both the Divine and one another that we will be provided with the wings of flight. By participating in "Live the Vision" we invest together in our shared hopes for our future.

On December 6-8 Visitation Teams will be trained in each Association and equipped to begin church visits in January. Hopefully each church will begin even now making plans to hear from one of the "Live the Vision" teams. Participation in this Campaign will allow us to creatively approach the future in the ways we evangelize, equip leaders, assist churches, train youth, declare our identity and much more. No doubt, these priorities reflect the highest end of the work to which we have been called.

Call Phil Hardy at the Conference office for more information about scheduling a Church Visitation Team or to express interest in being a part of such a team.

Continued from C-1 - Celebrate Advent

is all the more important to us knowing that the wood of the manger gives way to the wood of the cross. In our year-round crèche Jesus is the only one in the scene with a halo. That is the way it should be. He would earn the right to be adorned with the symbol of his Lordship. He would pay the price with his life. Even in death Jesus draws us into unity. As recorded in the Gospel of John, Jesus said "...and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

This year as I focus more often on my mother's crèche during the weeks of Advent, I will be reminded of Jesus' desire to unite us all. I will think again of General Synod 25 and the words in the "Reaffirming Jesus Christ as Our Lord and Savior" resolution stating in the rationale section that: "While the United Church of Christ has always been a theologically diverse community, our diversity has a center - Jesus Christ, in whom God became a human being.....and our Christ-centered witness for justice and peace all testify that this faith is still foundational for our Church." And I will remember the words in the final paragraph of the resolution: "Be it finally resolved that the Twenty-Fifth General Synod encourages all who proclaim the sovereignty of Jesus in their words to discern the implications of that proclamation for the way they live their lives."

For me, Jesus, in the manger, on the cross, in his teachings, is drawing all people to himself. We cannot avoid it anymore than I can avert my eyes from my mother's crèche. Jesus woos us all. He wants

to live our lives with compassion, tolerance and understanding of others. He wants us to serve and to give the cup of cold water in his name. He establishes no litmus test other than that we love him as the shepherds and wise men did. He receives all, regardless of age, gender, race, creed, or sexual orientation. He wants us to come to him so that he may mold our character and nurture us to wholeness.

The impress of our Lord's grace inspires us to internalize the nativity, to cultivate an inner manger scene of the soul where we, like Christ, receive friends and shower them with unending love. It is a place of birth and rebirth. It houses a love that does not gloss over differences, but looks to celebrate that which unites, and that of course is the amazing profession of faith we all are invited to share - "Jesus is Lord". It was the Apostle Paul who expressed this earliest statement of faith. Much window dressing has been added over the years resulting in various creeds and obligatory rites. But that which unites us was, is, always will be simply what the wonderful crèche conveys: "Jesus Is Lord."

OCWM deadline for 2005 will be December 31, 2005. The books will close for the year after that date. Treasurers, please remit all money to the conference office by that date. Please know that the Southern Conference thanks you for your faithfulness all year long. You have made a huge difference!

Continued from C-1 - Youth Plan

The \$300 registration fee (\$275 for early birds who register by April 1) will cover eight meals (dinner Thursday night through breakfast Sunday morning), room for three nights, a T-shirt, a name badge, a small book bag and fees for performers and workshop directors.

Theme for the event is "God is still speaking and it's time" -- for change, celebration and action. And the action part has special interest for Regina Kepley, a 17-year-old on the planning committee from Second UCC in Lexington, N.C. She hopes the event will include at least one service project. "I have been to five work camps (in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana) and really got a lot out of it," she said.

A service opportunity is very much on the planning agenda, Barefoot said, though those details are still to be worked out by the planning committee of some 30 youth and adults. Conference Minister Stephen Camp and his executive administrator, Janelle Bunn, also took part in the Nov. 5 planning meeting, as did Betsy Flory of the Southeast Conference, who is program coordinator for the

event and planned the regional youth event two years ago. Flory will assist in selecting and setting up the workshops.

Others taking part in the Nov. 5 meeting included Sonya Bedi, who chairs the Fellowship Committee of Good Shepherd UCC in Cary, N.C., her daughters Andrea, 15, and Ellyn, 17, and Allison Weller, 14, also from the Cary church.

The next planning session for the event, according to Bunn, is scheduled for Jan. 7, 2006, at Elon. "Youth leaders from all the churches are encouraged to attend and bring two or three of their youth with them," she said. "At that time we will seriously jumpstart the detailed planning, including the selection of workshop leaders, speakers and entertainers."



### SOUTHERN SPIRIT

The Reverend Stephen Camp .....Conference Minister and Editor  
Janelle Bunn ..... Administrative Secretary and Managing Editor  
C. L. "Curly" Stumb, Irwin Smallwood, Linda Carter, Lois Myers ..... Communication Team

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**Associate Conference Ministers Reflect on October Meetings**

**Can Anything Good Come out of Eastern North Carolina Association?**

-by Vertie Powers

In recent years there have been many meetings and issues that were divisive. Many people were heard to mumble and grumble about the goings on that were happening in the Eastern North Carolina Association (ENCA). People had unfavorable views of the Association and a number of those were within the Association. A few of those deemed it necessary to disassociate themselves from the Association, Conference and wider Church. Pain and grief were seen, heard and felt and people were heard to murmur: "Can anything good come out of the ENCA?"

Let me give a big resounding YES! Even in the years when it felt that nothing good could come, come it did. These are some of the good works that were happening in the midst of the controversy and the good works that are continuing:

- Venues for dialogue between congregations and Association Staff and the ongoing of conversation
- Relationship building within the Association
- Vision, Planning, Organizing and Implementing of the Pastoral Leadership Development Program
- Grants received for the ongoing work of the Pastoral Leadership Development Program
- New Church Development Strategies for new and affiliating churches
- Five New Church Start Ministries

While big thanks go to the staff of the Association and Conference past and present, know that the biggest thanks goes to you, the members of the local congregations. Without your dedication and commitment gifts and skills none of this would have happened.

I appreciate you, I give God thanks for you, and I wish you health and that you may prosper.



Rev. Vertie Powers, Eastern North Carolina ACM, speaks with Felix Castro during lunch break and prior to communion shared around a table setting.

**"Coming as One, Leaving as Many" rallied persons to a day in Eastern Virginia Association**

-by Drew Morris

The annual meeting of the Eastern Virginia Association was held on Saturday October 15, 2005, at Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Church (UCC), Virginia Beach. It was a beautiful day and an equally beautiful setting for what became a very pleasant and meaningful meeting. The planning committee, chaired by Chris Cohoon, made certain that the theme "Coming as One, Leaving as Many" was central to every segment of the day's activities. From the opening presentation by the Christian Social Ministries Commission to the closing worship stressing our unity, every attempt was made to remind us that we are a family united in our love of Jesus Christ.

The noon meal was a very special event served family style with tables color-coded with balloons matching colored dots on individual nametags. The purpose was to expand our circle of friends and to share information about events in our individual congregations. Sharing this well prepared meal and engaging in some very enjoyable conversation proved to be an excellent experience and received a great number of compliments. People felt that it created just the right atmosphere and did much to prepare us for our closing worship.

The service of worship, which concluded our meeting, was a celebration of our unity with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper conducted by Lynnhaven Colony's Pastor Rev. Valerie Coe Lowder, and the lighting of a unity candle by representatives of our EVA churches. Spontaneously everyone formed a large circle around the sanctuary for our final hymn; to me this was a special and very spiritual moment.

As I reflect on the meeting and especially on the comments I received, the planning committee's wish to emphasize our unity was welcomed as something we have needed for quite some time. This theme of unity in Jesus Christ is one that I plan on making central to all that I do as your Associate Conference Minister for the Eastern Virginia Association.

**"Can't we all just get along?" was question posed to Western North Carolina Association**

-by Larry Walser

It was a very long day! For all of those who participated in the 2005 Annual Meeting, this is probably the very first thought that comes to mind. It was a long day, but a productive day in the life of the Association.

The highlight of the day, for me, came early on as we began with worship. As I stood in front of the congregation and listened to the singing of the hymns, there was a unity of voice that I have not heard before in the Association. The truly inspired preaching of the Rev. Vertie Powers was, I felt, the word of God for our place and time - for truly the prayer of many is "Can't we all get along?" As the cup and loaf was shared, truly we were the body of Christ. As worship ended, I had experienced the "best" of the Western North Carolina Association.

The rest of the day brought home much of the division within the Association. Had we already forgotten what we experienced and celebrated just a few minutes earlier? There were close votes which, for me, were not surprising. As the meeting came to a close, I overheard many saying that there is division, but we must move on.

My prayer is that we can move on in the spirit of our worship together. There is much more to do - more that we can do - as the whole body of Christ.



Rev. Larry Walser, Western North Carolina Association's ACM, sits with Eulene Shepherd during meeting's election process.



Rev. Drew Morris, ACM for Eastern Virginia, speaks with delegate Myrtice Deshield after adjournment of meeting.

**Catawba College Hosts Service of Appreciation to Mark Campus Ministry Endowment**

SALISBURY, N.C. - Catawba College Trustees in town for their semi-annual meeting, along with donors, friends, students, faculty and staff members gathered recently in the Omwake Dearborn Chapel to mark the establishment of the Porter and Maria Seiwell Endowment for Campus Ministry. The establishment of the \$1 million endowment fund was a very significant way for two couples long associated with the College to both honor and remember their roots.

Richard "Dick" '67 and Linda Seiwell of West Chester, Pa., and Jim '64 and Martha "Marty" '63 Dayvault of Lakeland, Fla., took the initiative to set the endowment campaign into motion, according to Catawba College President Dr. Robert Knott.

Dick Seiwell and his sister, Marty, are the children of the late Catawba College Campus Minister, the Reverend Porter Seiwell, and his wife Maria. Through the establishment of this endowment, they recognized not only the importance of campus ministry to their parents but also to generations of Catawba students, and they spearheaded the endowment efforts as a way to sustain that ministry. They pledged up to a total of \$250,000 to match contributions to this effort and encouraged others whose lives had been touched by Catawba's Campus Ministry to provide financial support also.

Many did, including Catawba Alumni Tom '77 and Mary Jo '75 Dennard of Charlotte, who provided a \$50,000 early lead gift. More than 100 other individuals also participated in this campaign, including Catawba College Trustees the Rev. Drs. Richard Cheek '47 and Billy Joe Leonard '50, both of whom served as honorary chairmen for the campaign effort.

"On behalf of the Dayvault/Seiwell families, I thank you all," Richard Seiwell told those gathered. "We are inspired and humbled by the generosity, love and support. It's been years since Marty or I have spoken in this Chapel.... It was when our dad asked us one question and we said, 'I do,' two words that changed both of our lives forever."

Marty Dayvault noted, "Dad was fond of saying, 'Remember your roots,' and today, all of us say thank you for remembering your roots and for keeping the spirit of Mom and Dad alive through campus ministry."

College President Knott called the late Pastor Porter Seiwell "part of Catawba's lore," and thanked the Seiwells and the Dayvaults for leading the effort toward endowing campus ministry.

**Celebrating the Good Life Event Benefits Elon Homes for Children**

As Elon Homes for Children anticipates its one hundred year anniversary in 2007, its Second Century Countdown Campaign has entered its final phase. Funds raised by the campaign will enable Elon Homes to begin a second century of providing quality services and programs for those entrusted to its care.

In early November, an exciting fundraising event was held in support of the Second Century Countdown Campaign. The unique event, which was called Celebrating the Good Life for the Good of Children, honored excellence in fashion, fine food, floral design and furnishings.

Mary Elizabeth Francis, the campaign's honorary chairperson, and Catherine and Quincy Collins, general co-chairpersons, were on hand to thank the one hundred and fifty guests for their support of the campaign. Elon Homes President Dr. Fred Grosse shared what will be accomplished for children and families thanks to the \$1.8 million campaign.



L to R: Catherine Collins, Elon Homes President Dr. Fred Grosse, designer Gail Brinn Wilkins honored for excellent in furnishings, Quincy Collins. -photo by Chip Padgett

**Asheboro Site Breaks Ground**

October 5, 2005 was an historic day for Black Lake Retreat Center. Through the support of many benefactors and the generous donation from Mrs. Jacquie Leonard, ground was officially broken for the Leonard Lodge. Although the weather was threatening, 62 people attended a wonderful service and dedication.

The ground breaking ceremony was presided over by the Rev. Dale Kennedy, Board President. Southern Conference Minister. Rev. Steve Camp offered greetings and support from the Conference. Asheboro/Randolph County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, George Gusler, introduced local dignitaries who were present and gave words of gratitude from the community. The first Executive Director, Rev. Bill Willet, shared a history of the retreat center and importance of the day in realizing the mission of Black Lake. Tom Benedict, current Executive Director, acquainted listeners with current site activities and the design for the new Leonard Lodge.



Holly

Photographed at Johns River Valley Camp by C. L. Stumbo

# 2005 Calendar

## DECEMBER

- D**ec. 8: NC Council of Churches
- D**ec. 9: ENCA Board
- D**ec. 13: VA Council of Churches
- D**ec. 25: Christmas

## 2006

- J**an. 11-12: SOC Conversations with Rev. John Thomas
- F**eb. 10-12: Ski Retreat at BRCC
- F**eb. 23-24: SOC conversations with Ron Buford
- M**ar. 3-5: Middle High Youth Event at BRCC
- M**ar. 11: Johns River Valley Camp Workday
- A**pr. 28-30: JRVC Mothers' Retreat
- J**une 8-10: SOC Annual Meeting, Catawba College
- J**une 22-25: Regional Youth Event, Elon

The Johns River Valley Camp Board has proclaimed 2006 as a year when:



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

**God is still speaking,**

## Good News Rings with Stories from across the Conference

### Local Congregation Leverages Funds for Economic Development



Marc Mullinax (left), Moderator of the Circle of Mercy Congregation, and Rev. Nancy Hastings Sehested, co-pastor (right) present investment checks to Joyce Harrison, director of the Asheville, N.C., office of Self-Help Credit Union and Greg Walker Wilson, director of Mountain Microenterprise Fund. Also pictured is co-pastor Ken Sehested.

Members of the Circle of Mercy Congregation in Asheville, N.C., have devised an unusual form of stewardship. They have created a "contingency fund," investing the money in microcredit and community development organizations which put working capital in places it's most needed. And they're encouraging other congregations to do the same.

"Good stewardship involves having a 'rainy-day' fund for emergencies," according to Ken Sehested, one of the congregation's three co-pastors. "But we need to put the money to work according to our values."

This past Sunday evening, in its weekly worship service, the congregation heard from Greg Walker Wilson, director of Mountain Microenterprise Fund, and Joyce Harrison, Asheville director of Self-Help Credit Union. The former makes small business loans in the Asheville area; the latter, home ownership loans in North Carolina.

Circle of Mercy's initial \$2,000 investment is split between these two and one other agency: Oikocredit, started in 1975 by an international body of churches. All three agencies provide loans at reasonable rates to people with little access to conventional lending institutions.

In his sermon, Rev. Sehested said "the Bible is very nearly obsessed with the question of wealth. Being formed spiritually is intimately tied up with decisions about money."

Preaching from the story of Zacchaeus in Luke's Gospel, Sehested noted that "when the 'wee little man' made his profession of faith in Jesus, he did so by saying, 'Lord, half of my good I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone, I will restore it fourfold.'"

That confession of faith is con-

fusing to some, he said, "because of a crippled spirituality that has little capacity to connect faith and economics."

"Our leaders appeal frequently to religious faith," Sehested said. "And yet we live in a nation more deeply segregated by economic class than ever before, and in a world where the majority of people live on less than \$2 per day. There is something terribly wrong-politically wrong, economically wrong, spiritually wrong-with this picture. We have reason to be frightened."

One of the ways local congregations, and individuals, can redress this inequity, Sehested said, is by making investments like the ones Circle of Mercy has undertaken.

"We don't make quite as much interest income," he continued, "but we consider that part of our missions contribution. It leverages a much larger amount of money in strategic forms of economic self-development for those most in need. Charity will always be part of our work. But stimulating economic development within marginalized populations will have a much longer effect."

"We're a very small congregation," Sehested said. "Can you imagine the amount of money that could be redirected if most of the 400,000 Christian congregations in this country were to do something like this? Then you add others from the tens of thousands of other communities of faith who share common convictions about justice?"

"People of faith have access to far more wealth than we imagine, if we're willing to work together," according to Sehested. "We can't do that, however, until our convictions about Gospel responsibility trump those of fiduciary responsibility."

*Circle of Mercy Congregation is dually affiliated with The Alliance of Baptists and the United Church of Christ.*

The Reverends Beth and Jay Kennett were installed as co-pastors of Hillsborough UCC on Oct. 23, 2005.



Beth comes to Hillsborough after serving on the staff of the Eastern North Carolina Association starting as education consultant for local churches and then serving as Interim Associate Conference Minister. Previously, she served as Associate Pastor of First Christian UCC in Burlington NC. Additionally, Beth works with the Center for Congregational Health as consultant for local churches and Director of the Center's faith and vocation program. Jay comes to the church from 14 years of pastoral work with Hospice, most recently serving as Director of Chaplain and Bereavement services at Hospice of Alamance-Caswell. Both are active parents to their two children.

Members of Children's Chapel MUCC prepared kits for hurricane victims. Most of the supplies came through church members, Margaret Cook and Delores Fuller. Jessie Warren Vinson, financial consultant to SOC, is pictured with health kits assembled by members of her church. About 125 kits were sent to Church World Service to distribute to those in need in the Gulf area and Florida.



In the spirit of intentional listening and dialogue, Holy Covenant UCC (Charlotte) recently invited Rev. Barbara Belle to its pulpit. Pictured are (left to right) Nancy Allison, (pastor) and Barbara Belle (guest preacher).

First UCC Hampton's team, "The Wild Things", was honored for seventh highest amount of money gained (\$38,000) in the Commonwealth of Virginia at a Relay for Life event. Receiving the award was Relay Captain Bobbie Corbett and member Karen Detweiler. More than 1000 bracelets of hope, designed by member Robyn Gallagher, reminded supporters of the benefit to cancer research.



SOC women (28) attended the 14th Biennial Southern Regional SUCC Women's Meeting, hosted by Epworth by the Sea. The theme, "Living with Bifocals" was a study of Paul's letter to the Philippians. Bible study leader was the Rev. Mary Bruggemann. From the national office in Cleveland, Deborah Bailey brought information about the current Mosaic Series program materials, Common Lot, and information regarding the combined meeting of UCC women and Disciples of Christ women to be held in Indianapolis, June 21-25, 2006. The 15th Biennial will be hosted by Southern Conference in 2007.

