

St. John's United Methodist Church

Charge Conference

October 30, 2005

Attendance

In attendance were Charge Conference members Bill Aiken, Brenda Aiken, Jay Bilyeu, Judy Bilyeu, Brent Boore, Tom Brown, Alison Carpenter, Mae Croft, Bob Clyburn, Elizabeth Dill, Terry Fleming, John Geiger, Walter Guy, Archie Hargett, Jim Holly, George Howle, Ray Hydrick, Billie Johnson, Dave Kelly, Donna Caprell-Kraft, Sam Marcengill, Ray Massey, Nancy McKnight, Ellen Miller, Cary Milliner, Marc Nadeau, Mary Alice Nadeau, Joan Nagle, Frances Osteen, Allen Radcliffe, Jim Ross, John Stapleton.

Also attending were District Superintendent Ron Pettit and visitors Alice Burdette, Harry Burdette, Sally Ewing, Spence Grotheer, Anne Hawkins, L.S. McCormick, Michael Norton, Jennifer Pettit, Shelly Ross, Carole Smithe, Mimi Wiland, and Bud Zobel.

Opening

Senior pastor George Howle opened the meeting with prayer. He then introduced District Superintendent Ron Pettit to chair the meeting. Ron read from Matthew 28, Jesus' last words to his disciples, calling them to make disciples. The first question before a charge conference, he said, is "What are you doing to make disciples?"

Reports

Church Council — He then called on Council chair Archie Hargett to answer this question on behalf of the congregation.

Archie thanked the members of Council for "what you did in the spirit of Christ this year." Council held 10 meetings, with an average attendance of 60 percent. He listed highlights of the Council's actions during 2005:

- A budget was adopted; it included pay raises for the staff.
- The Dupree parsonage was sold.
- A housing allowance of \$22,000 per year was approved for the senior pastor.
- The responsibilities of the youth director were increased to include that of facilities manager.
- The request of the administrative services director to become a part-time employee was granted.
- A stewardship campaign was conducted, and it was successful.
- The organization of Council committees was revised, to provide a more programmatic, missional approach.
- A joyous reception was held for former associate pastor Ken Nelson and his fiancée.
- The appointment of two volunteer coordinators to the staff was approved.

Senior Pastor — George said he was pleased to give his first report as senior pastor of St. John's. "It is a rare event [in the United Methodist Church] for a minister to be appointed to a charge for the second time. St. John's was a

great church when I was here before, and that continues today. Its strength is its people. They look beyond the church walls; they have a heart for mission.

“My first four months here have been more than I could have anticipated ... and I know there are better days ahead.”

He said that the church’s reception of him and his family showed overwhelming love, and that he hopes to stay as long as possible.

“We have a dedicated and talented staff,” he said. “I have no doubt that our programs are the best in the district.” He also noted that it has been a pleasure to work with Sam.

“I sense an enormous turnaround in the life of the church. Attendance is up; giving is up; new members are coming in. We are making a difference in the life of the community. We have given assistance to a total of 25 evacuees from hurricane Katrina. And we have found helping others to be a most rewarding experience. We have received more than we have given.”

During 2005, St. John’s received 76 new members. He read three lists of members whose names will be removed from the rolls; reading of the third list is action for removal.

Ron noted that these people will be kept on the rolls as “removed by Charge Conference”; they may be reinstated at any time by request.

Associate Pastor — Sam said that, after six years, he has finally finished seminary. He thought that when he completed his work at Erskine he could give 100 percent of his time to St. John’s. But now he finds himself involved in the probationary elder process, which is time-consuming. “It has been an absolute pleasure and joy to work with George and our staff and this congregation. They are all special people,” he said.

Other Clergy — Elizabeth Dill, diaconal minister, said that even though she retired from the staff, “My heart has always been at St. John’s. When George arrived, I offered my services to him, and he gave me a job [organizing cottage meetings] right away!”

Dr. John Stapleton expressed approval for the support of the congregation. He said that he will be joining with 19 other ministers at Princeton for the coming weeks to study the denomination’s theology, and in that sense this church is again reaching beyond its walls.

Rev. Bob Clyburn announced that he will be supplying the pulpit at the Jackson church for the next three months, while the appointed pastor accompanies his wife to Emory for a stem cell transplant.

(Ron asked us to keep this woman in our prayers, and also Ellen Miller, who is facing surgery.)

Trustees — Allen expressed his appreciation to all who helped with the sale of the parsonage.

Lay Leadership — The report of the Lay Leadership committee, comprising a slate of officers for the coming year, was distributed. Ron asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, Dave moved to accept the report, Jay seconded, and the report was accepted.

Staff-Parish Relations — Ron read the details of the pastors’ compensation packages recommended by this committee. There was no objection to acceptance of this report.

Lay Leader — Brent said that it is a great honor to serve in this way. “I believe the health of the church is very strong right now,” he said.

Endowment — Ray Massey read a list of revisions to the church’s endowment policy that his committee recommends. The revisions had already been presented once; this is the final reading. The recommendation was accepted.

Ministry candidacy

Ron asked Terry to present himself as a candidate for the ordained ministry. “Carla and I came here in September 2001,” he said. “The first Sunday we attended was the first Sunday after [the events of] 9/11. There wasn’t an empty seat in the sanctuary.

“Since then I have been watching the church wrestle with itself, and the staff wrestle with itself. And I have wrestled with a call to ministry, which I have decided to answer.

“It has been a joy to have been here [as Director of Christian Education and Programming]. Carla and I don’t know what tomorrow will bring. We hope to stay for some time to come. But that’s up to the district superintendent!”

Ron said that in voting whether or not to approve Terry’s candidacy (as recommended by SPRC), we should ask ourselves whether we would accept this person as our pastor.

The Discipline requires a two-thirds, written vote for approval; George and Anne distributed ballots. The vote was unanimous in favor of the recommendation.

George joined Terry and Ron, while the latter prayed that God would bless Terry in his efforts, that he would “open doors that need to be opened, and close doors that need to be closed. And all the people of God said, Amen.”

Lay Speakers

The applications of Zoom Heaton, Paul Rideout, and Jim Ross to be certified as lay speakers was approved by consensus.

Apportionments

Ron noted that the South Carolina Conference has given more than \$1 million for hurricane relief, and that all this money goes directly to the cause, through apportionments. “This is part of what it means to be a connectional church,” he said. Also, six tractor-trailer loads of relief supplies have been sent to the Gulf Coast, and a seventh to Florida.

George responded that St. John’s hopes to pay 100 percent of its apportionments in 2006.

Closing

Ron asked the attendees to stand for the reading of the list of members who had gone on to the church eternal during the past year (attached).

He then closed the meeting with prayer.



Joan G. Nagle
Secretary

Members removed by death:

Phyllis G. Cooper
Richard G. Gunter
Margaret R. Fookes
Joseph W. Graves
Newton H. Seebeck, Jr.
Kathleen P. Fowler
Dorothy M. Schroff
James A. Collins
Vera J. Gober
Jean M. Gunter
Earl D. Shealy
Emma A. McIntosh
Duncan Randall
Edna A. Thomas
William C. Rogers
Geneva M. Sayers
Joan H. Marine
Theresa K. Juffman
Reese N. Heaton
Emily L. Forstner
Charles P. Powell