

PASTOR's 2009 Annual Report

The year 2009 will be remembered historically for the Inauguration of Barack Obama, our nations first African-American President. For a Southern Conference congregation like CUCC, which was so strongly involved in the Civil Rights Movement, this is the fulfillment of a "Dream" in the tradition of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I delivered a sermon in January to celebrate this historic event and I was also invited to participate in the M.L. King, Jr. Worship Celebration at Meymandi Hall, mostly filled with African-American Obama supporters and well represented by other CUCC'ers !

In January we also celebrated the Re-dedication of our Sanctuary after the Property Ministry led by Joan McAllister arranged for beautiful new light fixtures and sheet rocking the walls and repainting the interior. God said, "Let there be light" and we responded! All to the Glory of God! What a tremendous transformation and improvement.

The year 2009 will also be sadly remembered as a year marked by the deaths of too many of our dearly beloved who held prominent places in our faith community. Mary Pickering's Memorial was held here on January 25. Joan Little's Funeral Mass was held at her Catholic Church on February 10, after which we held the reception in our Vaughan Fellowship Hall. A Memorial Service for Joan was held here on February 22, enhanced by a very special picture display on our big screen TV, narrated by her husband John and assisted technically by Lavon Page.

Ruby Lamb died in March and her Memorial was held here on May 3rd. Her son Bill, a former Chair of our Deacons and present Chair of the Caring Committee spoke beautiful words of remembrance, along with his brother Jake.

After a couple of quiet summer months we found ourselves faced with another group of deaths in August, September, and October. Memorials were held for Scottie Bell (Aug. 11), Sonny Spicer (Oct. 3), Dot Littleton (Oct.5) and Richard King (Oct. 14). We grieve the loss of all these wonderfully gifted people who have passed on to the Heavenly Community of the Saints of God and we continue to pray for their loved ones who so deeply miss them.

On the brighter side, I also conducted two infant Baptisms this year; Avery Ella Black (my grand-daughter) on April 19, and Anna Belle Burkhardt on April 26. On March 22, Robert Parrish (Chair of Deacons) and I represented our congregation at the Installation Service of our friend and "In Care" student, Hunter Thompson as a Licensed Minister in Semora, NC, where he serves Lebanon Christian UCC.

April proved to be a very special month at CUCC. On Palm Sunday, April 5 we hosted Rev. Sandra Gourdet and Rev. LaMarco Cable from the UCC Global Ministries, assigned to issues in the Congo (DRC). They spoke at Forum and then we had a wonderful worship, which joined CUCC and KCC (Congolese Church) together in a spiritual unity of purpose, and then a fabulous Congolese Feast followed. On April 12, CUCC hosted the University Park Area Churches for an Easter Sunrise Service which was very well attended.

In May I attended the Southern Conference UCC Annual Meeting at Catawba College. A big topic of discussion concerned the selling of Black Lake Campground in Asheboro, NC. Sale of this property could aid in solving some of our Conference budget problems. I continue to represent our congregation by serving on the Board of Directors of the John's River Valley Camp UCC, which is near Blowing Rock, NC. I was co-director for a summer camp for youth in grades 4-6 during the week of July 5-11. I also led a "Fall Foliage Retreat" at JRVC in October.

On November 14 we held our Annual Turkey Dinner Fundraiser. Great food as always thanks to Anne Pope and her team, but with an added Variety Show that I suggested to Santi Matthews that the Youth Group might like to lead. Thanks to all who participated, it was a great success and attracted a larger crowd, and I hope it will become part of this annual event.

I continue to work closely, meeting regularly and collaborating with our excellent staff of Carol Clark in the office, Doug Barrick and Anne Moorman-Smith in music, and Anne Bailey Zschau and Santi Matthews in Christian Education and Nurture. Thanks to each of them for their gifts in ministry.

As the year closes out with Christmas observances symbolized in the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, I am grateful to all of you for the ministry we have done together here at CUCC in the past year. We may not have solved all the problems of the world, but together we can and do make a difference in working toward the Kingdom of God that Jesus envisioned.

Respectfully Yours in Christ, Steve Halsted