

ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT

We print our church calendar on the back of the bulletin each week, and the first scheduled activities in the life of our church on a consistent basis are the "Wesley Singers"--a children and youth choir--and "Going on to Salvation"--an adult Sunday School class which explores the Wesleyan understanding of the life of a Christian. We may think that these two small groups lead our list of activities for the week by mere coincidence, because they meet at nine o'clock on Sunday morning. Mere coincidence, however, seldom enters the vocabulary of a church in the Wesleyan tradition, because we believe that our life together experiences the grace of our LORD at every step. We begin our life together as the church--the Body of Christ--at nine o'clock every Sunday morning with a small group of children and youth who love to sing and another small group of young adults who hunger and thirst for salvation.

I contend that the "Wesley Singers" and the "Going on to Salvation" class are microcosms of the emerging revival here at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church. Great singing epitomizes the Methodist movement which remembers its musician, Charles Wesley, as fondly as it remembers its preacher, John Wesley. Great singing epitomizes the emerging revival at Duke Memorial, and the "Wesley Singers" represent this revival very well indeed. I find their very name, "Wesley Singers," to be inspiring, and my hope and prayer for Duke Memorial is that our whole congregation can become Wesley singers in morning worship as we catch the joy and enthusiasm that we experienced on Laity Sunday when our choirs were dedicated. I also find the ages of the "Wesley Singers" to be significant, since this group of third to seventh graders continues to grow in number, as reflected in this choir as well as Sunday School classes and the youth group. In other words, the "Wesley Singers" also reflect the dynamic children and youth ministries here at Duke Memorial which are drawing new families to our church and reclaiming old families from our church. I find this healthy mix of new members and old members also in the "Going on to Salvation" class where persons who are preparing to join our church as well as persons who are beginning to take leadership positions in our church meet together to search the scriptures and to pray together. Both these newcomers and these emerging leaders come from a variety of traditions, and I believe that exploring the Wesleyan understanding of salvation provides a crucial common ground for our life together here at Duke Memorial. The "Going on to Salvation" class consists of men and women, both married and unmarried, both with and without children, who are in their thirties and forties--in other words, "Baby Boomers." Like the "Wesley Singers," this group continues to grow in number, as reflected in this class as well as other Sunday School classes and small groups, such as the "Celebration Singers," which again reflects the real significance of music in our emerging revival here at Duke Memorial. Like the "Wesley Singers," I find the name itself to be inspiring for this young adult class, "Going on to Salvation," since my hope and prayer for Duke Memorial is that our whole congregation can become focused on this theme of salvation.

This report focuses on two small groups because I believe that small groups are the key to our going on to salvation through our life together here at Duke Memorial. Until every member of our church is a member of a small group which sings, studies scripture and prays together, we will be unable to sustain this revival that is emerging. I thank the LORD for new leaders who are developing in these and other small groups, because it is in just such a setting that Jesus made twelve disciples who changed the world. Surely we can change Durham!

