

CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORT OF ASSISTANT IN MINISTRY
LAURIE HAYS COFFMAN

1991 has seen the rebirth of Duke Memorial's youth ministry. Designed to be a ministry to youth, for youth, by youth, and with youth, it has built on the groundwork of Sid and Julie Allen and Dotty Ritchie, dedicated and ongoing leaders of the JOY Class. This was the year that the church got serious about providing intentional ministry for middle schoolers, grades 6-8. Ann Stallings put out the plea for leaders, invited Ray Warren (Conference youth coordinator) to train and challenge us, and chartered a bus to take 35 of us to Carowinds for an end-of-summer launch. Parents and other volunteers responded. The Nominations Committee gave us the beginnings of a Youth Council with Julie Allen at the helm. Lynn and Steve Guerrant took the reins for a full-fledged UMYF and the program was off and running.

In keeping with the intended design, I have tried to help shape a ministry which meets the needs of young disciples: the needs to know and enjoy others (fellowship), to understand their lives in Christ (discipleship), to reach out in Jesus' name (service), and to have fun as they grow. Sunday School teachers, evening counselors, and special events leaders strive to meet those needs through each encounter.

Thanks to the generous endowment of Mr. Bailey Reade, we have enjoyed retreats to Ocean Isle, Camp Kanata, and Camp Chestnut Ridge. We have benefited from a new youth curriculum, Trek, in our morning classes. We have become involved in District events including placing John McCary as our representative on the District Youth Council. We have reached out to others by volunteering at the Greenery Rehab Center and Habitat for Humanity, and by fund raising (through wrapping paper sales and spaghetti supper) for Christmas gifts. Led by president Caroline Ritchie, we are making plans for a Mission Trip to Oklahoma next summer and continued outreach to the youth of our own community.

Prior to my move to youth ministry, I enjoyed a few months with Nurture and Congregational Care. I visited homebound and hospitalized persons, called on families new to our congregation, and met with families whose babies were to be baptized. Along with my husband Stan I started a Lenten Sharing Group which continues to meet the needs of a small nucleus during weekly gatherings. Part of my ministry with Evangelism included formation of a four-week New Member Class offered quarterly for information, formation and sharing. Other ministerial responsibilities this year involved worship leadership, preaching (twice, including Ash Wednesday), and teaching (a brief stint in the Wesley Class, a study on John for UMW, and assisting with Confirmation.

Presently my work focuses on youth, homebound ministry, and missional outreach. The Outreach Committee, chaired by Leland Phelps, is a component of our newly reformed COM. Having organized our committee and assessed the current outreach of our church, we are now beginning to vision our corporate ministry for 1992.

This first year on the staff has been one of satisfying encounters and difficult growth. Engagement with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry has forced me to reexamine my vocation and its expression. One of my greatest learnings is the vital significance of a minister's own ministry to herself. Unless I give myself perpetually to God, I have no ministry to offer God's people. Therefore I have purposed to make these disciplines a priority: prayer and study, spiritual direction and sharing of faith journeys with other Christians, regular attendance at worship and eucharist, and time apart with God. Amazingly (for a long-term "do-er of good") I have found that all my best efforts at being a good leader/helper still pale in comparison to the profound impact of these quiet marks of faithfulness. Great are the mysteries of God!

