

Duke Memorial United Methodist Church
Council on Ministries
Report to Charge Conference
17 November 1993

Council on Ministries has witnessed to God's presence and has responded in many concrete ways to God's promptings. God, through Christ, gave to the church the task of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. God, through Christ, sent the disciples out to make other disciples and to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus told us to love our neighbors as ourselves and also gave us a clear mission when he warned that what we do for the least among us, so we do for Him. When we feed, clothe, shelter and love our neighbors, we feed, clothe, shelter and love Christ. As Christians, our purpose is to love God and be in fellowship with God. This we do through our ministry.

Council on Ministries has engaged itself collectively and communally in the mission God has given us. As the programming body of Duke Memorial, we have faithfully abandoned the busy-ness in which we are tempted to engage in favor of meaningful discernment of our task at Duke Memorial for our community of faith and neighborhood. My report will focus on the ways in which Council on Ministries has ministered within our congregation and in our larger community.

With the new year, Duke Memorial returned to the Discipline's outline of a full Council on Ministries, with a chairperson for each committee. While some were more active than others, the Council as a whole was effective in its planning and carrying out the ministry of the church within our church and outside our block into the Durham and global communities. Organizationally, Council on Ministries adopted a bi-monthly meeting format which, although it was more difficult to plan further ahead, better used our time and enabled the committees to do a better job planning their time.

We formed a Mission Statement Committee which, over several months, faithfully met, prayed, discussed and wrote our new Mission Statement. Its approval by Council on Ministries and Administrative Board was a significant step for us since the last statement was made in the 1980's. Our Mission Statement reflects our beliefs about God's first giving grace to us, God's calling us to ministry and our faithful response. Our Mission Statement calls us to respond to God's gifts and blessings outside ourselves.

Our response during 1994 has a rich variety of expression. With the crisis in housing for homeless families, Duke Memorial agreed to open its rooms for the Interfaith Hospitality Network. We anticipate continuing this ministry by working for a permanent solution to this

problem in Durham. We have been a faithful presence in the West End neighborhood as that community works to overcome its problems; we have hammered and marched in solidarity with the residents against the drugs which plague the area. We have tutored the children and worked in their summer care program and provided willing hands, hearts and materials for the art experiences. We have reached out to our police officers across the street, given office space to DCIA and the St. Andrews Gleaning Project. We continue to share in the mission of the community shelter, Genesis Home and the Urban Ministries Center. Many of our members, through their affiliation with Duke Memorial, are regulars who work at the Mission Society and cook and serve meals at the shelter. These ministries are nurtured by the relationships of our members and staff with these communities in the ministry setting.

Globally, we have continued some of our outreach and have added to our mission focus. We continue to support the Heifer Project and the Blanket Project. We responded to the call for disaster relief. We have learned a lot about our sister church in Peru with which we are in covenant and have supported the mission trip fully. We have given our endorsement and support to the Wesley Heritage Foundation which is working on the translation of the works of John Wesley into Spanish. We continue to support and pray for our missionaries. During our mission saturation weekend, we hosted the Foglemans and heard about their work in Africa. Our congregation is more acutely aware of its need to respond to the opportunities which we are given to minister to those farther away.

Council on Ministries has continued to be willing to step out in faith. Last summer, Duke Memorial successfully sponsored its first all summer day camp. The members and staff who brought the program to fruition worked faithfully to consider the needs of the children. The result was a summer of fun and God's Spirit for those involved. Vacation Bible School, the day camp week at Chestnut Ridge and the all summer day care were three important ministries for the children. The important quality they share is their invitation to children outside Duke Memorial.

Duke Memorial continues to disciple its youth. Our confirmation class began during Lent and will continue to meet until Easter of 1994. This has been a time of discipleship for the confirmands and a time of reaching out to others. Through their experiences in confirmation, this class has been in ministry also. They have visited the Retirement Home, planted flowers in beds around the church, and engaged in other service activities while learning about the Wesley family and how the Annual Conference works.

God also has commanded that we love God. We love God by learning about God and growing in our faith. Toward nurturing our faith, a partnership of clergy and laity started two very important ministries for the Christian journey at Duke Memorial: Disciple Bible Study and

Covenant Discipleship. Two groups of Disciple are well into the thirty-four week commitment of intensive Bible study and three pilot Covenant Discipleship groups have been meeting and watching over each other in love since January. Sunday's altar call from Rev. David Lowes-Watson brought 54 adults and 16 youth to begin new groups which will build their spiritual muscle.

God calls us to be in community with all of God's people. This year, Duke memorial and St. Mark A.M.E.Z. Church have shared times of love, fellowship and preaching. As we continue to nurture this relationship faithfully, we will continue to live out the coming of God's kingdom on earth, when all God's children will love each other.

Reflecting upon this report, one theme seems to be "continue". Duke Memorial is truly on the Christian walk. It is a walk of one step at a time, some back, some forward, but continuing on in faith, accepting the love of God and returning that love from God into its relationship with its community and with God. So many times we wonder if we are doing enough, especially when we see so many of our congregation hurting and when we see the lines of the hungry and homeless lengthen as we work harder and harder to feed and shelter more and more. God calls us to love God. God does not call us to look for the end of the line; God calls us to love him and have faith that God will provide all we need to serve the next one. And we will continue.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Drake,
Chairperson*

Duke Memorial United Methodist Church
Mission Statement
Approved by the Mission Statement Task Force
June 6, 1993

Because God graciously creates and redeems us, we live in the world as the body of Christ.

In gratitude, we accept the privilege and responsibility to share God's grace within our church, our neighborhood, and the world.

Because God has made us partners in the coming of God's reign, we seek to be faithful in our discipleship through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In gratitude, we accept the call, as instruments of God's grace, to challenge our culture and to seek justice, serving the oppressed and the poor.

We covenant with each other to be in mission where life is broken; we celebrate with each other where life is transformed and made whole.

