

Pastor's Report  
Ruth Harper Stevens  
November 8, 2001

This has been a good year for solidifying some of the changes that have been taking place for several years. I want to center my comments around the old campaign slogan which touted this year's product as "New and Improved." While we don't have a product to sell, we do have a Savior to present and we pray that each year our witness will be "new and improved."

Statistically there are some numbers to celebrate:

1. A look at this year so far reveals that the peak in worship attendance came following the September 11th Terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, that number didn't remain.
2. However, through the past several years we have seen a steady increase in our attendance.
3. Membership is on the rise as well after several years of cleaning the rolls
4. Our youth fellowship is over double what it was last year.
5. Our Wonderful Wednesday has had more participants each week since September.

We have gone in programs and ministries and spirit as well as in numbers

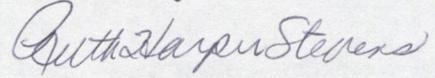
1. Our membership is growing with 48 new members who brought with them 20 children. During the past year we have had 8 births and presently there are 7 babies to be born between now and May. More of our new younger members are taking key leadership positions. We have a new neighborhood visitation program that continues to effectively bring visitors back to church. And we have been trained to track them on our new ACS Visitation Module. We thank God for the assimilation of so many new members.
2. Our spiritual life is new and improved with a new Spiritual Life Committee that is making plans for Spiritual Formation studies, a revival in May and prayer chains. The first Companions in Christ group has been organized. Following September 11 we held two very meaningful prayer services. Early worship has improved with contemporary music and an early service bulletin. We have also brought our spiritual life to the homebound through World Communion and the Stewardship Coffees and Teas.
3. Our emphasis on nurture has had some first with a newborn visitor, a lullaby room, a class on Active Parenting Today, a college aged class, a new circle calling themselves "Soul Sisters," and a Hidden Talent Show. We have three more Stephen Ministers recently trained, more children visiting the homebound each year, and more participation in Dinners for 8 with the inclusion of lunch groups.

We thank God for our continual improvement in being a nurturing congregation.

4. Our efforts to be in mission continue to expand. This year our youth joined an interfaith home repair ministry in the West End. This newly formed outreach is called "Shalom Builders." The Middle School went on their first overnight Mission Work Team to Aulander, NC to help "All God's Children UMC." For this ministry in Aulander we collected money to purchase 18 school desks and school supplies were also purchased and collected. A new ministry of mission to our own congregation is just underway with 3 Men and a Hammer. This will help those in need of minor repairs and safety inspection around the house. In addition to our new ministries of mission, we have added to our West End Scholarship Fund and our Clothing Closet, adding a second. In addition to collecting clothing for the Methodist Mission Society, we now collect for All God's Children UMC and for Cristo Vive UMC.
5. One of the areas of greatest growth during the past year has been our Youth Ministry. We now are organizing a youth choral group as well as a youth instrumental group. There are two Wednesday night offerings, an intensive Bible Study and a week-to-week discussion of hot topics. There is a new Sunday School Class for those youth who have felt it difficult to fit into the regular classes. And we now have a group of seniors in High School who meet each Monday night for dinner and conversation. Our attendance has over doubled and we continue to draw new youth from the community. This year we have placed more youth on boards and committees than before.
6. Last, but certainly not least are the strides we have made in the whole area of communications. We have a story to tell to the nations, but we haven't in the past had the necessary tools to tell it. This year we published our first program book. We got a new telephone system which includes voice mail. We also went on line with our web site [www.dukememorial.com](http://www.dukememorial.com) and a peer-to-peer network that lets us work on the same documents together. We now have email as well so that communication with members is easier, and we are discussing the publication of an email directory. We added a column in the "Insights" called "Do you know...?" It includes all the juicy tidbits of information that may not be widely known to members of the congregation. The youth have a newsletter which has been improved and there is a bi-monthly newsletter for parents called "Parent's Page." Our insights has a new format which is more readable and interesting, and includes the minutes of each Administrative Board meeting. There are newly decorated bulletin boards throughout the church which are changed regularly.

All in all it is wonderful to be a part of this faithful, growing, challenging congregation.  
On behalf of the church staff I submit this report. To God be the glory.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Harper Stevens".

Ruth Harper Stevens  
Senior Pastor