

## **'Twas the Night Before Charge Conference**

'Twas the night before Charge Conference, and all through the church  
The copier was churning, as we sat on our perch.

The nominations were made by the committee with fear  
Yet trusting new leadership soon would appear.

Our children were nurtured, loved and adored,  
While the adults were kept working, not one of them bored.

And Ruth in her cassock, and Lisa in her robe  
Were just settling in for a long and hard road.

When out on the lawn there appeared a back hoe,  
We ran from our offices, "Do you know...?"

Away to the door we flew like a flash,  
Tore up the bushes and threw out the trash.

The sun on the new plants placed all in a row  
Made the church look more welcoming to those we don't know.

When what to our wondering eyes should appear  
But Christians praying and living without fear.

In the midst of the people we saw a bright pendant  
And knew in a moment it was our Superintendent.

She looked at the gathered and knew right away  
She had come to celebrate how we live what we say.

With 46 new members so lively and quick  
We knew in a moment our lives were enriched.

More rapid than leopards they leaped to the task  
Of giving and serving, whatever we asked.

Now worship, now prayer, now study and teaching,  
On vision, on mission, on caring, outreaching.

To the quiet of our prayer room, to the streets in our town  
Now share our faith, live our faith, let our love sound!

As fall leaves precede a hurricane's blow  
We plan and prepare lest Down East we must go.

Still staying in touch with the needs of the poor,  
We collected the funds for school desks and much more.

And then with conviction we planned a retreat  
To Aulander youth went, and not to the beach!

As we drew in our heads, and were ready to go  
The church gathered school supplies, what do you know?

So up to the heavens the church bells did ring  
Expressing our gratitude, to God we did sing.

And then with a fury, we heard on the roof  
The voices and laughter of many a youth!

As our heads were a-spinning, with the joy of new faces  
Up the steps came Joe and Gina, taking their places.

With a little persistence from the staff and each member,  
We will pay our apportionments before late December.

With the bundle of gifts we have brought to the altar  
Together we hope that our witness won't falter.

Ministers all, we reach out to each other  
In crisis, in joy, we are sisters and brothers.

And so to our Superintendent, and to all who will hear  
"Thank you, God, for Duke Memorial's ministry throughout last year."