



A Letter From Jim

McEachern Memorial United Methodist Church • 4075 Macland Road • Powder Springs, GA 30127 • (770) 943-3008

May 7, 2008

Dear McEachern Members and Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Father God and of His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ whose Resurrection we remember during the Season of Easter.

General Conference, the highest legislative body in the United Methodist Church has concluded meeting in Ft. Worth, Texas. Highlights of the session include:

- Or mission statement was modified from “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ” to “Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World”. I love this change!
- Established a study committee to consider changing our structure to five regions around the world. The fastest growing part of the church is outside the U.S., but we focus 75-80% of our attention on the United States. This will give the Central Conferences a little more autonomy and attention.
- Four areas of focus for the Church: Developing principled Christian leaders, starting new congregations and renewing existing ones, engaging in ministries with the poor, and improving global health.
- Limited sacramental authority to deacons (Rev.’s Goff and Blocksidge) when an elder is not present.
- Raising the mandatory retirement age of clergy from 70 to 72.
- Retention of our current language on homosexuality. That is, homosexual persons, no less than heterosexual persons, are persons of sacred worth. However, we find the practice of homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching and do not ordain self-avowed, practicing homosexuals. We do not allow our clergy to be part of same sex union celebrations or allow them to be conducted in our churches, chapels, or institutions.
- Lessened the number of years it takes to be ordained in The United Methodist Church.

From the people I have spoken with who have been delegates in previous conferences, this conference had a different “feel” to it. They report that there was more “holy conferencing” and less divisive conflict. That is a powerful witness to the Church and the world.

In April McEachern had offerings of \$164,367 and expenses of \$162,216, leaving a positive balance of \$2,151. Thank you for your faithfulness in giving and for our staff and leaders finding creative ways to keep expenditures down. We have two months left in our fiscal year; let’s finish strong!

This Sunday is both Mother’s Day and Pentecost Sunday. We will recognize our mothers in worship, sing a hymn about the Christian family, and pray for all our families. Our primary focus, however, will be on the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Read Acts. 2.1-21 in preparation for our time together.

Loving Lord, you love the Church so much you died for it. You did not, however, leave us orphaned; you sent your Spirit to guide, comfort, challenge, and equip us. May your Spirit fall on your Church once more. Open us to the moving of your Spirit, that we may be Christ-filled and Spirit-led! All this we ask in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.