



Mulberry Presbyterian Church
Phone/Fax (704) 392-1030
Email: mulberrypc@bellsouth.net
www.mulberrypc.com



*Your help is needed
between 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
to host the Presbytery Meeting
on Tuesday, July 20
at Mulberry Presbyterian!*

Opportunities for service include

- Set up Crew (see Linda Sadler)
- Parking Crew (see Earl Springs)
- Greeters & Meeters (see Barbara Campbell)
- Registration Tables: (see Barbara Campbell)
- Help with refreshments: (see Ann Pearson/Linda Champion)
- Clean up Crew: (see Linda Sadler)

Last but definitely not least:

- Plan to attend on July 20 to see your church government at work!

Please contact Linda Sadler with questions

Or Current Resident

Mulberry Presbyterian Church
5600 Tuckaseegee Road
Charlotte, NC 28208

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHARLOTTE, N.C.
PERMIT NO. 1896

Mulberry Messenger

July 2010

A Year of Discernment: What's This Transformation Thing All About?

By Rev. Chris Carrasco

I hear people asking the above question in a variety of ways. Session is asking it among themselves as they go to Leadership Schools and learn more about the process we are a part of. Congregational members are asking it as they see the list of churches in the bulletin every Sunday and wonder what it all means. Yes, even your pastor is asking this question as she prays and discerns what God has in store for this congregation.

Here is what we know so far.

1. **Job #1 is to go and make disciples.** When Jesus gave the Great Commission to "Go make disciples of all nations..." the Christian community received its marching orders. How are we doing in regards to job #1? How many disciples have we made recently? If we are to be faithful to Christ's great commission, we need to focus more on making disciples. That is the entire point of this transformation process, to help us be a disciple making church.

2. **We are an older congregation.** In 10-15 years, many of our current members will no longer be worshipping with us. If we do not do something now to connect with and reach out to others, we will no longer be able to support ourselves as a church. We cannot wait 10-15 years to do something. Now is the time to reflect on how to make the gospel relevant to a culture badly in need of Good News.

3. **We know many things won't change.** The Gospel and importance of Jesus Christ will not change. The Bible will not change. Who we are at our core will not change: the friendly, welcoming people we have always been. The message about God's love for us and all people and His desire for us to love Him and our neighbor as ourselves will not change.

4. **We know many things will change.** We will gain a clear vision and purpose for this church. All that we do will focus on that vision and purpose. We will make visitors feel more welcome and be more intentional about building relationships with others. A more outward focus will be reflected in our programs, budget, and worship. Our congregational prayer will be "Not my will, but thine be done."

5. **We know there's a lot we don't know.** That's why this is the year of discernment. Discernment is the process of discovering the will of God for our lives and this church. We don't know specifically what changes will be implemented. We all are invited to seek God's will as we take one step at a time to become a more faithful and healthy church.

6. **This process involves the entire congregation.** The congregation will be informed, listened to, and engaged every step of the way. There are no closed door conversations. Everything in this process is transparent and open. We are offering a 10 week class to learn more about this. We will have town hall meetings. We will continue to have newsletter articles. We will have small group discussions. We will have a book study. Then we will have more discussions. Finally, we will poll the congregation to find out what direction we are discerning is God's will.

Mulberry, the first weekend of November we will have consultants visit us, listen to us, and reflect back to us what they believe need to be our next steps. Before that time we will continue to learn and discuss why transformation is important. After that time we will discuss and pray about the specific recommendations and if they are God's will for us.

Friends, I implore you to ask all your questions, get all the facts, have lots of discussions, be open to God's will, **BEFORE you make any judgments or decisions about the future of Mulberry.** There will be ample opportunities to share opinions, express concerns, discuss pros and cons. But my prayer is that all this will be done in a trusting, loving, open atmosphere where we can be honest with each other. That's why every Sunday I invite you to pray for all 10 churches in this transformation process. Above all, pray for God's will to be done. After all, isn't that what we're all about?

"Building Healthy Churches" Class Begins July 1



What is a healthy church? Why are some congregations growing exponentially and others in steep decline? Why are some churches exerting tremendous energy and resources, with no measurable forward movement? How does a church become healthy, vibrant, growing? How do we make disciples for Jesus following the Great Commission? How do we at Mulberry become the most effective, faithful church we can for Christ in the 21st century? These questions and more will be discussed during our next series of "Building Healthy Churches." This ten week class led by Chris Carrasco is a DVD presentation by Paul Borden, a national church consultant, author, and leader in the field, and is a wonderful companion to the Transformation Program we are currently involved in. Classes begin Thursday, July 1 through Thursday, September 9, and will be offered at two different times, from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. and again from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Please make an effort to come, learn, and discuss the future of Mulberry Presbyterian Church.

June Session Highlights

1. Earl Springs led us in prayer, devotions and sharing his faith journey. We then proceeded to pray for Mulberry as well as individual concerns.
2. We discussed the importance of the Building Healthy Churches Class starting July 1 and the Transformation process with Statesville Ave. and the recent Leadership School.
3. Various ministry teams updated Session on their work and Annette Pearson asked each Session member to buy a case of water for the Presbytery Meeting July 20.
4. Earl Springs and Barbara Campbell were elected as commissioners to the July 20 meeting for Presbytery.
5. We each shared our initial thoughts and feelings up to this point in our transformation process.

Transformation Thoughts by Hank Sadler

The gospel of Matthew ends with Jesus meeting with His apostles in Galilee. It was a meeting filled with mixed emotions, a one in which Jesus gave His disciples a command. Matthew 28:18-20 commands us: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This command is commonly called 'The Great Commission.' It is great in its authority, for Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, and Jesus certainly deserves our obedience to Him. It is great in mission because we are to make disciples; to teach and develop imitators of Christ. It is great in scope for we are to go into all the world and preach to everyone. It is also great in Jesus' promise to be with us always, and what comfort that provides! But 'The Great Commission' is not limited to just the apostles; future disciples are to observe all commands including this one. So 'The Great Commission' has been given to me, you, and our Church. We can't let Jesus down - he is counting on us!



A short parable: On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little lifesaving station - mostly a hut, with only one boat. But the few devoted members kept constant watch over the sea, going out day and night, tirelessly searching for the lost. So many lives were saved by this wonderful little station it became famous. Some of the saved and various others wanted to give of their time, money, and effort to support its work. New boats were bought and new crews trained and the lifesaving station grew. Some were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped and felt a more comfortable place should serve as first refuge of those saved. So they replaced the furniture and enlarged the building. The lifesaving station became a popular gathering place - a sort of club. Fewer members were interested in going on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do the work. The lifesaving decorations remained, with a liturgical lifeboat in the room where initiations were held. One day a large ship wrecked off the coast. The hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, half-drowned people that were dirty and sick. Some had black skin and some had yellow skin. The beautiful new club was in chaos. So the property committee built a shower house outside the club where victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside. At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities, saying they were an unpleasant hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted on lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked, they could begin their own lifesaving station. They did. Over time, the new station experienced the same changes as the old one, evolving into a club. New lifesaving stations were founded, and history simply repeated itself. If you visit that sea coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore. Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.....

In Romans 12:2 Paul tells us: "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." There are 10 churches on Tuckaseegee Road, and Mulberry Presbyterian is one. If we obey 'The Great Commission' and if we hear and do what Paul tells us in Romans 12:2, then we at Mulberry can become THE 'one of the ten' to make a difference in our neighborhoods, in our church community, in our world.