



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

**July 20th
Save the Date!**



**Presbytery of Charlotte
to be held here at
Mulberry**

We are the host for the July Presbytery of Charlotte meeting and need your Help! We need our church to be spotless. There is plenty of work for all of us. More details to follow...

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 May 2010

A Year of Discernment: Change or Die!

By Chris Carrasco

“Mulberry Presbyterian Church will die in about 10 years.” This statement jolted me out of my complacency as I re-focused on what Bob Meyer, national church consultant, was saying at the last Pastors Transformation Meeting. “Either you will continue to do the same thing you are doing, and eventually die. Or you will make deep and significant change, dying to the way you are doing church now and therefore grow in membership. Or you will sell your building dying to your current location, relocate to a different neighborhood similar to the majority of members in the congregation, and grow. In any case, your congregation will die as you currently know it, either by losing membership or by growing in membership through change or by growing by being in a different neighborhood. Your choice is not IF the church will change, but in which direction you want the church to change.” Bob has a way of not mincing words. He can’t. After all, when you’re in the business of consulting stagnating or dying churches time is of the essence.

Bob is the lead consultant that the Presbytery has hired to help ten churches to engage in a transformational process. There is a sense of urgency in this process. Our community is in need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Who will share it with them? Will it be shared in a way that people today can understand? Our churches have lost significant members, we are growing older, there will be a large change in membership in ten years. If we don’t do something now, soon it will be too late. Bob’s message to us ten churches in this transformational process, “Change or Die!” Like I said, he doesn’t mince words.

“Growing churches are changing and adapting to the culture around them. The culture changes with every generation. This is our greatest challenge in revitalizing a declining church. It cannot be done without change! Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results! If we want different results in our membership, we can’t keep doing church in the same way. Growing churches make reaching lost people their first priority.”

OK, Bob, we get it! If we want to grow, if we want to reach lost people, we need to change. But how? When? In what way? Well Mulberry, that’s what 2010 is all about. We are entering a Year of Discernment. We are at a time when we must listen to our community, what their needs are, and how we can preach the good news of the Gospel to them. We are at a point when we must listen to God, getting on our knees and praying, “Not our will, but yours, O God. Lead us in the way we should go and give us courage to be obedient.”

“But Bob, what if people don’t want change, don’t like change, and resist change?” His response, “People do not resist change. They resist the loss of what was comfortable, provided status and influence, and made them feel significant. Change agents must understand this and try to mitigate at least some of these losses.” So as we move forward in this process, as we discern what

GOD has in store and the path GOD wants us to follow, we must understand how difficult this process is and the loss many of us will feel as we move forward.

Yes, Mulberry will die as we know it. But we have to die in order to be resurrected. In order to be a new creation, the old must pass away. We must die to self in order to find our true selves. The Bible is full of hope and promise in this process of change. God will be with us in this transformational process. And what is God's message to us over and over again in the Bible, "FEAR NOT!" So take heart, resurrection, new life, and a new future is all a part of God's plan for Mulberry and it can be exciting and life giving and energizing. We are at a pivotal point in the life of this church, and I am honored to be your pastor as we enter into this transformational process together. Join me in praying for God's guidance, God's vision, and God's will in the months ahead.

April Session Highlights

1. The Treasurer reported we were \$2,414.15 in the hole for the first quarter of 2010. This is partly due to first quarter payments such as insurance and Presbytery.
2. Pastor handed out her vacation and continuing education plans for 2010. It was noted that Session would like to see such plans before the time off is taken.
3. Mulberry is hosting Presbytery July 20th and everyone is encouraged to attend and help. A planning meeting will be held Thursday, April 29 at 6:30 PM.
4. Business recommended using \$1600 from undesignated memorials to buy a new computer for Lisa's office and update our network system. Motion was approved unanimously.
5. Personnel explained the recent change in our administrative assistant position.
6. Reach out described their plans to reach out to our community through the Hot Dog Lunch On the Lawn May 8 from 11:00–1:00. They also proposed that the new name for the former Scout Hut be "Chrysalis." A chrysalis is a cocoon that moths go into to be transformed and renewed. The hope is that this building will be used by our community for renewal and transformation. Specific plans have not yet been determined. Finally, Reach Out proposes we adopt a school, Thomasboro Elementary. 100% of the children live at poverty level and a significant number are homeless. The principal will attend out worship on June 20 to explain the school's situation. Session was in consensus these plans.
7. Anyone is welcome to call the church office to sign up to receive the Presbytery's newsletter Concordance to find out more about Presbytery's work.
8. Annette Pearson and Vance Schrum are the commissioners to the May 18th Presbytery meeting at 1:00 at Bethpage in Kannapolis.
9. We ended out time together by noticing our community around us eating dinner, imagining their needs, and brainstorming how Mulberry might meet those needs. The goal is to become more outward focused and community minded. A summary of the discussion will be available in the church office.

Congratulations Earl Springs!

Earl is Mulberry's Outstanding Older Adult Award Recipient for 2010. On May 11, he along with 10 other people from the Presbytery, will be honored at a special luncheon sponsored by the Presbytery of Charlotte. We are so proud of Earl for all he does for this church to the glory of God as he serves on Session, takes care of our building and grounds, sells pecans, and cracks those eggs for all the church breakfasts. And he does it all never thinking about being recognized or thanked for all his hard work. So next time you see Earl, pat him on the back and thank him for his countless years of service to Mulberry. But be careful, he might just ask you to pitch in on a Saturday to cut some weeds in the cemetery or buy more pecans!

Pilot-Cluster project – Transformation thoughts

by Bev Sadler

I love Springtime! I love the warmth of the sun and the budding of the trees and flowers – God's creation in full bloom. Granted, we do have to suffer through the pollen and the havoc it brings to our sinuses, not to mention the nasty blanket of yellow dust covering almost everything. But for me, I wouldn't trade it for all the snow/ice and bone-chilling cold that winter sends to us. Yuck! To me, winter is depressing. I guess that is why I love Spring so much. . .it is the season of newness, new life – a dramatic change from the dormancy of winter. I'm also reminded that as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, that he too, offers us new life. What a gift! God promises us that we are made new when we accept Christ as our Savior.

As Mulberry enters into the Pilot-Cluster project that Session recently approved, I am hopeful that this opportunity will be a new beginning for the life of this church. I see it like a season of Spring for us. In Isaiah 43:18-19 God promises, "Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."

Each of us must persevere in our faith and pray for God's leading in this new season for Mulberry. Let's bloom where He has planted us. Spring is the season of getting down to work. . .the soil must be prepared to receive the seed, we have to nurture and care for the garden, so that what we do will bring forth fruit. We would hope that our work will yield a plentiful harvest.

For those of us who know and love God and understand the amazing gift of grace given to us in Christ, we should show how thankful we are by getting down to work. You see, the harvest God wants us to reap is the hearts of people who do not know Him. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells us our mission, "So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always, even until the end of this age." I am excited about what God will do in this new beginning. It is an honor to serve Him and to be a part of His kingdom. Thanks be to God.