



The Future of African-American UMC Churches in Lafayette County

by Barbara Wortham



The members of West St. Peters UMC, Salem UMC, Beverly UMC, Hammitt Hill UMC and Burns UMC met on February 28, 2015 to discuss the future of the United Methodist African American church in Lafayette County. The assembly was led by

Rev. William T. Chaney, Jr., SEJ Regional New Church Strategist, New Church Division/ Path1, Rev. John Moore, New Albany District Superintendent and Rev. Timothy Thompson, Assistant to the Bishop was also in attendance. Rev. Chaney led the

group in a Spirit filled and open discussion about the future of our churches.

He pointed out that in order to be a vital congregation, a church:

1. should have at least 10% of each weeks church attendance be visitors;
2. new professions of faith should make up 10% of your church membership each year; and
3. the church must have a community impact.

He also presented an outline for the planning process and talked about the 3 different types of church merger:

1. Restart- When churches decide to try to reinvent themselves where they are
2. Elisha/Elijah Model- Where the churches have a central location for

worship and keep other buildings to house ministries

3. Vital Merger- All of the churches sell their properties and come together as one church with a new name and a shared mission.

Superintendent Moore reminded us of a fourth option available to us in the Mississippi Conference- Preaching stations. A preaching station is when a church is no longer financially tied to the United Methodist Conference. Apportionments are not paid; pastor's salary is not paid. The congregation is sent a lay minister or a lay preacher (servant) that will conduct service.

Rev. Chaney exhorted the group to pray and ask God for leadership in this matter. There will be other discussions and meetings as we move along in this process.



PICTURED ABOVE (l. to r.): Back Row: Pastor Marvin Quarles, West St. Peters UMC, Rev. William Chaney, and Pastor Christopher Diggs, Burns UMC and Hammitt Hill UMC; **Front Row:** Rev. John Moore, Pastor Mary Veasley, Salem UMC and Beverly UMC and Rev. Timothy Thompson.

Save the Date.....

BURNS & HAMMITT HILL SPRING BREAK YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT REVIVAL

Monday, March 9th - Wednesday, March 11th, 2015 * 7:00 p.m.

Burns United Methodist Church
600 Molly Barr Road, Oxford, MS 38655

Rev. Tariq Z. Cummings, Evangelist
Allgood Road Church
(A United Methodist Congregation)
Stone Mountain, Georgia



Your church family is invited to join us,
especially your Youth & Young Adults.
We look forward to your fellowship.
Yours in Christ.....

Burns & Hammitt Hill UMC Youth Ministry

Rev. Christopher C. Diggs, Pastor

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

Dominican Republic Mission Trip by Christopher Cross



My mission trip to the Dominican Republic was indeed a great trip. I, along with twenty-three other students at the Ole Miss Wesley Foundation spent January 6-13, 2015 having a wonderful time doing mission work for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Dominican Republic. We stayed in Puerto Plata Dominican Republic with Crossroads Ministries. The very first day we got there, we had a tour of different Dominican and Haitian refugee villages. The amount of

poverty I witnessed was like nothing I had ever seen before. Families of five living in shacks and huts smaller than my dorm room here at Ole Miss, children walking in pathways filled with human waste, and senior citizens lying on cots rapidly wasting away. All of these things I witnessed, and caused my heart to weep.

The majority of the trip was spent building houses, playing with kids, and participating in a Vacation Bible School there. I mainly helped with building houses and playing with kids. The greatest part of the whole trip to me was the fact that as we improved their physical conditions, they helped us out spiritually. They taught us what it is like to really lean and depend on Jesus. The people there we met exhibited being content with whatever the Lord blesses them with. That is the main thing I took away from that mission trip. Since being back in the U.S., I feel changed. I also feel convicted by God to share the story of my mission trip, and encourage fellow Christians to engage in mission work. Once again, I was so very thankful for the opportunity for God to allow me to do mission work in the Dominican Republic.

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