

Schedule of Events

Tuesday, February 27

9:00 AM | Raper Hall

Registration

9:30 AM | Rodgers Chapel

Worship Service

Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Director, Thriving Rural Communities Initiative at Duke Divinity School

10:30 AM

Break

10:45 AM | Raper Hall

Workshops

12:00 PM | Murphy Center

Lunch

1:15 PM | Murphy Center

* **“From the Tractor: Thoughts on Agriculture in North Carolina”**

Steve Troxler

2:00 PM | Raper Hall

Workshops

3:15 PM

Break

3:30 PM | Southern Bank Auditorium

* **“The Church as God’s Extension Agent?”**

Fred Bahnson

4:30 PM

Break

4:45 PM | Murphy Center

Small Group Discussions

6:00 PM | Murphy Center

Dinner

7:00 PM | Murphy Center

* **“The Rural Challenge Needs Your Church”**

Billy Ray Hall

* *Denotes Keynote Addresses*

Worship Leaders

Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Rev. Jeremy Troxler is an ordained Elder in the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. He serves as Director of the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative at Duke Divinity School, a program whose mission is to share and strengthen the gifts of North Carolina’s rural communities and churches. Jeremy grew up on a farm in Brown Summit, NC and was baptized at Gethsemane UMC before receiving the blessing of becoming a Morehead Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill and a Duke Scholar at Duke Divinity School. He has served churches in the Channel Islands of Great Britain and in Maggie Valley, NC. Jeremy is Ada and Della’s daddy and Margaret’s husband.

Elizabeth Bahnson

Elizabeth Bahnson is a mother, a musician who is a member of the group FolkPsalm, and a person who loves to cook and eat great food. She is also the director of an after-school program called Transylvania JAM, where children learn to play traditional Appalachian music. She lives in Brevard, NC with her husband Fred and their three boys.

Registration

Registration, including the cost of lunch and dinner, is \$15.

(A few scholarships are available for those who find the cost prohibitive).

The lectures are open to the public. Participants are asked (but not required) to register in advance on the conference website at www.moc.edu/faithandruralife or by contacting Laura Getz at 919-635-2787 or lgetz@moc.edu.

Sponsors

The Mount Olive Area
Ministerial Association

The Thriving Rural Communities
Initiative at Duke Divinity School

The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

The Barrow Endowed Fund for Christian
Ministries at Mount Olive College

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
of North Carolina

Mount Olive Pickle Company

634 Henderson Street • Mount Olive, NC 28365

Faith and Rural Life

Down to Earth Ministry



February 27, 2012

A gathering of clergy and laity
in Eastern North Carolina
to explore the shape of
Christian community and
the nature of Christian
mission in our small-town,
rural context.

An Ecumenical Gathering of
Christians at Mount Olive College

*Keynote Speakers



“FROM THE TRACTOR: THOUGHTS ON AGRICULTURE IN NORTH CAROLINA”

Steve Troxler

N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler was raised in the Guilford County community of Browns Summit, and has spent his entire career in agriculture as founder, owner and operator of Troxler Farms. Over the years, the family-owned farming

operation has produced tobacco, wheat, vegetables and soybeans. Since taking office in 2005, Troxler has focused on developing new markets for N.C. farm products, preserving working farms and protecting the state's food supply. Troxler is active in the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, serving as first vice-president and also as chair of the Tobacco Task Force and the Food Regulation and Nutrition Committee. Troxler graduated from N.C. State University in 1974 with a Bachelor of Science degree in conservation, with a concentration in environmental studies. He and his wife, Sharon, have two grown sons, two daughters-in-law and three grandchildren.



“THE CHURCH AS GOD’S EXTENSION AGENT?”

Fred Bahnson

Fred Bahnson is a writer who was Montana-raised and is now living in Transylvania County, NC. He holds a Masters in Theology from Duke Divinity School ('00), and in 2005 helped start Anathoth Community Garden, a church-supported agriculture project in

Cedar Grove, NC. Visit him at www.fredbahnson.com



“THE RURAL CHALLENGE NEEDS YOUR CHURCH”

Billy Ray Hall

Billy Ray Hall is a longtime champion of rural North Carolina. President of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center since its inception in 1987, Hall has guided the center's work on behalf of the state's 85 rural counties with the mission of improving quality of life for all North

Carolinians. He currently serves on the boards of the Golden LEAF Foundation, the North Carolina Biofuels Center, the Kerr-Tar Regional Economic Development Corporation, the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council, the e-NC Authority and the North Carolina Agricultural Advancement Consortium. Hall holds bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from N.C. State University and in 2007 received an honorary doctorate from the university.

Workshops

“THE RURAL CHURCH AS CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT”

Rev. Dr. Alan Rice, Rev. Duncan Overrein, and Rev. Dwight Smith

The call of the rural church leader to be community social developer, community organizational developer and catalyst for change is based in social holiness. Crossfire UMC is a congregation of the poor seeking to be fruitful in tangible expressions of mercy and piety through new pathways of risk taking service and ministry. Join us to learn more about Crossfire's community food ministries of The Giving Table and Wesley Storehouse, and to discuss ways that congregations can be involved in food production, food distribution, and community development.

Rev. Dr. Alan Rice is the Executive Director and Rural Faith Development CDC/Pastor at Crossfire United Methodist Church in Moravian Falls, NC. Rev. Duncan Overrein and Rev. Dwight Smith are Associate Pastors Crossfire UMC.

“PLACE OF POSSIBILITIES: BECOMING A MISSIONAL CHURCH THAT BLESSES YOUR COMMUNITY”

Rev. Laura Early

The Place of Possibilities seeks to focus on 3 primary needs within the community: Job Training, Health Awareness, and Literacy. The emphasis of the ministry is on five 'P's: People, Passion, Perseverance, Partnerships, and Possibilities. This workshop will focus on the lessons other churches can learn from the witness of the Place of Possibilities in order to more effectively reach out and bless their communities.

Rev. Laura Early is the pastor at All God's Children United Methodist Church and is CEO of The Place of Possibilities, Inc. in Anlander, NC.

“BECOMING THE CHURCH TOGETHER: IMMIGRATION, THE BIBLE, AND OUR NEW NEIGHBORS”

Chris Liu Beers

This workshop looks at immigration through the lens of the Bible and theology, and will discuss ways that churches can reach out to the Hispanic and Latino folks in their communities. North Carolina's changing demographics offer opportunities for ministry even as we wrestle with the politics and policies of immigration. With a focus on the people at the heart of these stories, Becoming the Church Together offers many resources to help congregations learn to treat immigrants not as strangers but as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Chris Liu Beers serves as Program Associate for the North Carolina Council of Churches.

“THE PASTOR AS SPIRITUAL GUIDE”

Larry Williams

The focus of the workshop will be on the pastor's spiritual life and the pastor serving as a spiritual guide with the congregation. *Larry Williams is a retired Baptist minister, Spiritual Director, and retreat leader.*

“GROWING FOOD AND GROWING COMMUNITY: FEEDING RURAL NEIGHBORS WITH LOCAL FOOD”

Lindsay Perry and Sarah Gibson

Rural communities feed our state, but healthy local food can be hard to find in rural areas. Throughout our state, ministries are filling this gap. Learn how churches can grow food, join with farmers, and glean from local fields to fill the table of hungry families. *Lindsay Perry is an Americorps VISTA volunteer with Inter-Faith Food Shuttle. Sarah Gibson is an Americorps VISTA volunteer with Come to the Table.*

“THE PRACTICE OF A FIT FAITH”

Rick Jordan

This workshop will reflect on the purposes of Christian Education for adults and examine a teaching method that encourages reflection, introspection and discussion, regardless of the curriculum being used. *Rick Jordan is a Church Resources Coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of NC.*

“SERVING AT RISK CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITIES”

Danny King

This workshop will look at the issues facing at risk children and teens in our communities and what churches can do to help them. The mission and ministry of ADLA Inc.—A lot of Direction, Love, and Affection-- will serve as an example of and an opportunity for getting involved with at risk children. *Danny King is the Director of ADLA, Inc.*

“THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN NORTH CAROLINA”

Steve Troxler

Join N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler for a workshop and discussion on the current realities of agriculture in North Carolina and what may lie ahead. *Steve Troxler is the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture.*

Faith and Rural Life: Down to Earth Ministry began last year as a way to bring clergy and church members together to network with one another and explore ways in which our churches can better share the gospel in our rural context. Through meaningful worship, lectures, workshops, and discussions, the planning committee hopes this conference will help build an ecumenical network of churches that are passionate about proclaiming the gospel in word and deed in this place and time.