

## WEST ROBESON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1989

### Pastor's Report

West Robeson United Methodist Church, located in the NC Conference of the Rockingham District, is a newly chartered church. This is a church that "wants to be a church." This reminds me of the following story which supposedly happened or is true.

A friend of Socrates came to him one evening after struggling with his commitment as a Christian. He asked, "Socrates I want to be a truly committed Christian. How can I do just that?" Socrates asked him to walk with him to a nearby river. Upon arriving they walked into the water about waist deep. All of a sudden Socrates ducked his friend under the water and held him there until he could not breathe anymore. At that moment Socrates released him. His friend came up out of the water very angry to say the least and asked "Socrates are you crazy? What were you trying to do, drown me?"

"No," Socrates replied. "What did you want most when you were under the water?" asked Socrates. His friend replied that he was asking a foolish question. He continued on to say that he wanted to breathe more than anything else. To which Socrates said, "My friend when you want to be a truly committed Christian as much as you wanted that breath of air, you will be just that."

As the Director of Native American Larger Parish, several persons approached me about the possibility of becoming United Methodist and establishing a church in the NC Conference particularly in the Rockingham District. These persons had been Baptist all of their lives. They wanted to find a church that would accept them as persons of worth and a church that could provide trained leadership to lead into effective wholistic ministry in the West Robeson community or often referred to as "Brooklyn Community." The group decided to become a UMC and they named the church West Robeson.

Twenty-one persons gathered in a store front building in Pembroke for our first worship on September 6, 1987. Several months later we were forced to move to a larger facility, formerly known as Wonderland Child-care. In the store front we had to compete with the train and at Wonderland it proved to be a "WONDER." We encountered no gas, no heat, no lights, and no electricity from time to time. Even the owner started remodeling without any warning. Temporarily, we moved to Pembroke: First UMC and worshipped for about one month. We wanted to move out but could we?

Finally we knew we must move out on faith. The "want to" was put to the test. By faith, we purchased a seven acre site in the West Robeson community from a member of Prospect UMC, Mr. James H. Dial, in the amount of \$35,000. Mr. Dial graciously gave \$7,000 back to the church as a donation.

