

*Editor's Note: At every ordination, the bishop gives a charge to the newly ordained person, but the following charge is distinctive in that there is a charge for the whole church. As such, it seemed good to publish it for the church. It also reminds all ordained persons of some important points.*

## **Charges Given at the Ordination of Margaret Leinbach**

The Rt. Rev. Graham Rights

**Charge to the Province:** First of all, I want to issue a charge to the Province today. You in this congregation are the Province's representatives in this service, and so I charge you: help our Province to match our deeds with our words. Twenty-six years ago we began welcoming women into ordained ministry in our Province. Now we have to confess that we have not lived up to our resolutions.

There is still hesitation and reluctance among us to accept women in ordained ministry. As a result, gifts for service have gone unused and underused and we are the poorer for this. So I charge you to spread acceptance and affirmation of women in ministry so that we may release these God-given gifts to be employed among us for our good, for the up-building of our congregations and Province in our service for our Chief Elder.

**Charge to Margaret:** Margaret, once you discerned your call to ordained ministry, you really put yourself into it. You have been a devoted, conscientious, and accomplished student these past years. You have piled up miles upon miles commuting from Charlotte to Winston-Salem during your time at Wake Forest Divinity School and in your various provincial involvements. You have undergone separation from family for study at Moravian Theological Seminary. The work that you have done during these years has produced some helpful insights in regard to the service of ordained ministry in this province. We need your insightful and fruitful thinking in our province. So today I charge you to continue to devote yourself to issues of ministry to which you have given attention and to continue to share your helpful insights with our province.

In your journey of preparation, you have enjoyed strong support from family, friends, colleagues in study, and colleagues in ministry. As you now enter the ordained ministry of the province and render service with congregations in interim situations, I charge you to continue to maintain a strong support system.

I mention in particular the types of support Barbara Gilbert identifies in her book, *Who Ministers to Ministers?* We clergy, she says, need first, people whom we can trust with our pain and uncertainty, and who comfort us, often just by being good listeners. Second, we need people who help us clarify by asking the right questions and pointing us to significant resources. Third, we need people who care about us enough lovingly to confront us with that which we don't see or have been avoiding. Fourth, we need collaborators or colleagues, who have some of the same goals, visions and problems we do and who can help us avoid isolation and stagnation in ministry. Fifth, we need clowns, who can add perspective and support through humor or a light touch at an appropriate moment. Finally, we need celebrators, who will celebrate our triumphs, large and small, and affirm us as persons. I charge you to see that you are surrounded with such support as you carry out your ministry and experience the opportunities and challenges of that ministry.

Finally, I charge you in the words of Paul to the Corinthians to "keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." [1 Cor 16:13-14]