

South Carolina United Methodist Advocate

CONNECTING METHODISTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA SINCE 1837



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November 2021

Apportionment payments 'returning to normal'

By Jessica Brodie

Apportionment payments are returning to normal, conference financial leaders say, bringing them some relief after a year filled with uncertainties regarding the pandemic and its continued impact on churches and giving.

As of Oct. 20, the South Carolina Conference Treasurer's Office has received approximately \$11.1 million of the \$17.3 million total budgeted for 2021, or about 64.34 percent. In comparison, last year at this time we had received \$9.9 million of the \$17.6 million budgeted for last year, or just 56.49 percent.

"We are doing much better than in 2020," said Beth Westbury, treasurer and director of administrative services for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. "We all know last year was not a normal year. We are about where we were in 2018 and 2019 in terms of percent collected. So, it looks like we are returning to normal."

Their office has received \$1.2 million more this time than last year. Westbury also said special giving, including amounts given to Extra Mile, are up compared to last year. Special giving represents funds churches have elected to give to missions and ministries the conference supports. As of Oct. 20, churches have given about \$206,000 toward the \$625,000 budgeted for these "other askings," compared to \$165,000 given last year—almost a 7 percent increase.

"It is a wonderful feeling to show increases in our support to these organizations," Westbury said.

While the overall goal of the conference's Council on Finance and Administration is to increase the percentage of giving and ultimately achieve 100 percent giving, meaning all churches in the conference pay what they are asked to pay, Westbury is personally hoping the conference will achieve 90 percent.

"The total apportionments have been decreasing over the last few years to make it easier for churches that could not pay 100 percent in the past to have a

See "Apportionments," Page 11

Health and *Hope*



Rosylin Weston, in front of the BMW Zentrum in Greer, participates in a Facebook live event to help raise awareness and money for metastatic breast cancer research. Her church's video series aims to increase awareness about health issues in communities of color.

Photo courtesy of Rosylin Weston

Church, hospital partner in new video series on heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke

By Jessica Brodie

TAYLORS—What happens when a church and a hospital decide they need to create awareness about critical ongoing health issues claiming countless in their community?

They create a powerful new video series together designed to advance conversations around health equity.

The communications team of St. Mark United Methodist Church, in conjunction with the South Carolina Hospital Association Foundation, have partnered in a three-part video series, A Series of Hope, to increase awareness about

health issues in communities of color. The series focuses on heart disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke, identified as the leading causes of death for Black Americans.

"While we know there are disparities in health care, we must take some responsibility for contributing to those disparities. In general, we simply do not openly and honestly share our family health history," said Rosylin Weston, St. Mark's church council chair and president of RAWeston Communications who is herself an active health advocate

See "Health and Hope," Page 11

A reset for men's ministry

Men N Ministry leaders urging local, district men to reboot, connect, grow

By Jessica Brodie

After more than a year and a half of a COVID-19-induced disruption, leaders in South Carolina men's ministry are urging their local groups to embrace a season of reset so they can begin anew.

"Our vision is that men, via their district presidents, will attempt to reset their local and

district connections and get to know each other again, all so they can reboot and grow in Jesus," said Marvin Horton, president of the South Carolina Conference United Methodist Men.

To that end, they are rolling out events, resources and more as tools to help them achieve this purpose.

Horton said the physical separation and

other pandemic-related issues of the last 18 months have caused a great deal of pain for many of their men across the state, between personal losses and spiritual struggles.

"We're not about meeting and eating but about growing relationships with Jesus Christ.

See "Reset for Men's Ministry," Page 12

Three new Advocate Press books slated for release in November

Three books of interest to United Methodists in South Carolina are planned for release this November, and two more are on their heels in early December.

Set to be released by the Advocate Press, which is the Advocate newspaper's book-publishing arm, the books are "varied and strong," said Advocate Editor Jessica Brodie.

They include "Faith in Action: Stories of Salkehatchie Summer Service,"

compiled by the Rev. John Wesley Culp Jr.; "What I Have Come to Believe," a faith reflection by the Rev. Arthur H. Holt, and "Walk with Me: Your Spiritual Esteem Journey," by the Rev. Cathy Joens and Toni Taylor.

"All three books are different but excellent," Brodie said. "We're excited to see them reach publication."

See "Three Books," Page 11

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Submissions

The *Advocate* encourages readers to submit for publication items of interest to South Carolina United Methodists. There is no charge for running items involving activities or announcements. Items should be submitted as far as possible in advance of the event's date or the date of requested publication. Since there is no charge for these items, they appear in the newspaper on a space-available basis. Deadlines are the 10th of each month for the following month's paper.

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Photographs

Photographs can be submitted to the newspaper for publication. High-resolution digital images are preferred. Photographs should be in focus and should have proper exposure. Color or black and white photographs are accepted. People in photographs should be identified with names and ages, and a contact person with a phone number should be included in the information.

Accuracy Policy

The *Advocate* strives to produce error-free news reports. When mistakes occur, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention. To request a correction, call Jessica Brodie at 888-678-6272 or 803-786-9486, ext. 338, or email jbrodie@umcsc.org. In the event of errors in advertisements, the *Advocate* will be responsible only for the space occupied by the actual error. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for omissions.

Back Issues

The *Advocate* maintains copies of back issues for sale for up to one year, as long as the supply lasts. When requesting by mail, back copies are \$2 each, to cover postage and handling. To research or review articles published more than one year ago, bound copies of the newspaper are available for review at the Advocate office, Wofford College in Spartanburg and the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia.

Third S.C. ERT team helps Oct. 2-7 after Hurricane Ida

By Chuck Marshall

After Hurricane Ida, Louisiana Conference Disaster Coordinators requested help. Almost immediately, two South Carolina disaster early response teams responded from Orangeburg and Greenwood, along with ERTs from other areas, such as Anderson and Clemson.

ERT Core leaders decided, with the short notice, to hold back a third team from Spartanburg for a follow-up call-out in two weeks.

On Oct. 2, that third team sprang into action. I, as Spartanburg District disaster coordinator, and Phil Griswold, as the assistant disaster coordinator, led a team of eight ERTs with two trucks and one ERT trailer from New Beginnings United Methodist Church, Boiling Springs, to Metairie, Louisiana.

We were hosted by the St. Mathews UMC in Metairie.

The first day, we arrived at approximately 10 p.m. and were met by two members of the congregation who had been assigned to us by their pastor, the Rev. Tim Barnes. They helped us get unloaded and set up for our stay.

The next morning, Sunday, Oct. 3, we were invited to services at 9 a.m. at St. Mathews UMC. We were greeted and welcomed by all the congregation.

Our plan following services was to get rested, oriented to the area and possibly do some "windshield assessments" of the needs. This was not to be, for Barnes handed me a stack of addresses his ERTs had already assessed. All were in the general area of the church and most were congregation members.

By Sunday evening we had completed five help requests, including removing large tree limbs from roofs and clearing debris from yards.

During the remaining days in Louisiana, we cleared 12 help requests around Metairie, south across the Mississippi River to Luling and north across the Lake Pontchartrain Bridge (24 miles) to Mandeville. We met many people from the area who appreciated our help and knowing that South Carolina had cared enough to send us from so far away.

There were many great stories of recovery and some sad stories. All eight of our team members worked hard, as a team should. Everyone worked from early morning until the evening in hot, humid weather. The pastor and congregation from St. Mathews UMC worked hard, too,



The team, pictured above, worked around Metairie, Louisiana, south across the Mississippi River to Luling and north across the Lake Pontchartrain Bridge to Mandeville Oct. 2-7.

and sacrificed much to support us.

We arrived back in South Carolina on Thursday, Oct. 7, at 11:30 p.m., exhausted but feeling the presence of our Lord.

As always, we had the distinct feeling we returned from a call-out with more than we had left with.

New Beginnings UMC and its members provided much support for the team, as did Anytime Fitness in Boiling Springs, which held a fundraiser for our mission. The congregation at New Beginnings also sent cakes and pastries with the team (note: no pastries sent made it back home).

More than anything else, we offer thanks to the Lord for guiding us and watching over us along the way.

Team members included myself, Chuck Marshall, along with Phil Griswold, John Gemmell, Dan Gemmell, Lee McDow, Melissa McDow, Cherynn Hewitt and the Rev. Jimmy Dillard.



The Methodist Student Network spent their October fall break mucking and cleaning out a fire station in Louisiana damaged by Hurricane Ida.

USC's campus ministry spends fall break helping Louisiana hurricane survivors

The community of Jean Lafitte, in rural Louisiana south of New Orleans, was ground zero for the recent Hurricane Ida, receiving devastating wind and flood damage. To help the people there, the Methodist Student Network (Wesley Foundation) at University of South Carolina spent their October fall break mucking and cleaning out a fire station that had four feet of water and disabled the building.

With the help of the two firefighters at the fire station, in three days the building was brought to the point where it should be able to restore service to the areas in just a couple of weeks.

Three of the four fire stations serving the area were knocked out of commission by Ida. One of them is not salvageable. Therefore, fire and rescue service has been limited since the

storm.

Four firefighters reportedly quit their jobs and relocated after Ida, so the remaining firefighters have not even had time to tend to their own damaged homes.

While there, MSN also helped to rehabilitate one fireman's home, which had been unlivable. Serving those who serve others was indeed a gratifying experience, MSN members said.

'Come Follow Me' releases Vol. 4: Disciples Love and Care for Others

The Discipleship Ministry Area of the Conference Connectional Ministries has published four sermon series under its brand "Come Follow Me." The newest volume, four, is titled "Disciples Love and Care for Others."

Each series has explored a dimension of what it means to be a follower of Jesus—a disciple. It is our response when Jesus invites us to "Come Follow Me."

The series is an eight-part series exploring what the Scriptures say about what it means to love and care for others.

Writers include the Rev. Tim Drum, chaplain, Spartanburg Methodist College; Dr. Sheila Elliott, pastor, Silver Hill Memorial UMC in Spartanburg; the Rev. Jon Hoin, pastor, Platt Springs UMC in West Columbia; L. Jonathan Holston, resident bishop, South Carolina Annual Conference; the Rev. Kitty Holtzclaw, pastor, St. John's UMC in Anderson; the Rev. Cameron Levi, pastor, St. Paul UMC in Saluda; the Rev. Edward Stallworth, pastor, Pelion-Sharon Charge

in Pelion; and the Rev. Mary Teasley, pastor, Surfside UMC in Surfside Beach.

The editor of the series is Rev. George Donigian, retired pastor in the South Carolina Conference.

The sermon series includes notes to the pastor, an exegesis, a sermon outline, a sermon manuscript, other illustrations, supplemental resources and suggestions for further reading.

As with the other three in the series, a discussion guide is included so the pastor and/or lay person can lead a discussion of the sermon the week after it is preached. The discussion guide includes a weekly spiritual practice the participants are encouraged to try.

Volume four of the series, as well as the other three volumes, are available at umcsc.org/come-followme.

You may also order a printed copy through Tammy Fulmer by emailing tfulmer@umcsc.org or calling (803) 786-9486.



UMCSC's Salley named president/CEO of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—South Carolina's James H. Salley has been named president and chief executive officer of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc., effective immediately.



Salley

The Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. Board of Directors, meeting in a virtual plenary Oct. 18, voted to create the position of president/CEO and name Salley to it as part of the ongoing evolution of governance within the United Methodist-related institution. The new role is in addition to Salley's current responsibilities as associate vice chancellor for institutional advancement.

"We are thrilled to name Mr. Salley the first president/CEO of Africa University Inc., the U.S. organization that raises, holds and distributes funds for the benefit of Africa University," said Board Chair Lisa Tichenor.

Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. is the oldest of three legal entities that comprise Africa University. It is a registered U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit created in 1988 to enable the birth of Africa University as part of the global mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. Two Zimbabwe-registered entities were subsequently added—Africa University (Zimbabwe), which delivers the teaching/learning, research and community outreach operations of the institution, and the Mutare United Methodist Educational Company, which holds title to Africa University's physical assets in Zimbabwe such as land, buildings and other infrastructure.

Members of the board serve on all three corporations.

"Mr. Salley's record of leading the efforts to raise friends, funds and institutional stability and growth for AU is well

documented," said Indiana Bishop Julius C. Trimble. "The growth in enrollment of students and the expansion of buildings and partnerships is a reminder that with God all things are possible. This new role allows Mr. Salley to continue to cast the vision and open partnership windows for resources as he works with his Africa University Development Office (AUDO) team, the Vice Chancellor and leadership team of Africa University (Zimbabwe), and friends of Africa University across the globe."

Known to many as "Mr. Africa University," Salley was a member of the site selection committee that chose Old Mutare, Zimbabwe in 1988 as the future home of Africa University. He served on AU's founding Board of Directors, representing the General Board of Global Ministries. In 1992, Salley left the AU Board and a senior institutional advancement role at South Carolina State University to become AU's chief advancement officer. He established the AU Development Office, located within the headquarters of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville.

"The AUDO, managed by Mr. James H. Salley since 1992, has developed into a major organization requiring leadership of a CEO," said Tichenor. "With over \$100 million in endowed funds, it requires the structure and leadership to continue to build Africa University. As The United Methodist Church determines its course, Africa University will have a strong presence to ensure support for future African students."

Bishop Mande Muyombo, a two-time graduate of AU,

leads the North Katanga Episcopal Area and chairs the AU (Zimbabwe) Board of Directors. He highlighted Salley's hard work and dedication.

"He has been the face of Africa University and has been preaching Africa University in the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the USA and the world," said Muyombo.

A taskforce chaired by the general secretary of GBHEM, Rev. Greg Bergquist, is currently examining how AU and GBHEM will relate to each other and work together in the future. The taskforce is focused on governance and issues of sustainability and will report its findings and recommendations for board action in 2022.

Bishop Minerva Carcaño is vice chair of the AU (Zimbabwe) Board of Directors and chair of the Personnel Committee. She noted that the position of president/CEO of AU (Tennessee) Inc. was envisioned from the beginning of the planting of Africa University.

"(It) creates an administrative structure that allows this critical work to be done more effectively and efficiently both in the US and in Zimbabwe. It is a sign of the maturing of AU and signifies a historic moment in which a significant step toward shared leadership and true partnership between AU Zimbabwe and AU Tennessee has been taken," said Carcaño.

"Africa University is approaching its 30th anniversary in March 2022 and is ranked No. 1 in Zimbabwe and 39th among the top 200 universities in Africa," said Salley.

"My message is 'don't leave us now, let's finish the work that we have started for the benefit of the emerging leaders for the continent of Africa that are coming out of Africa University.'"

'Champions of Civil and Human Rights in South Carolina' collection released

A retired South Carolina United Methodist pastor and longtime champion of equity and justice issues, Marvin Ira Lare, has just released a five-volume anthology of more than 100 civil rights leaders telling their stories.



Lare

Told in their own words, the collection features oral histories from famous leaders such as U.S. Congressman James E. Clyburn, Septima Poinsette Clark and the Rev. I. DeQuincey Newman, as well as small-town citizens, pastors and students, all sharing their experiences, motivations, hopes and fears and how they see the struggle today.

The anthology is called "Champions of Civil and Human Rights in South Carolina," and the five-volume collection spans the decades from 1930 to 1980 with oral history interviews of key activists and leaders of the civil rights movement in South Carolina.

The Department of Oral History, University Libraries, University of South Carolina has now made available an online oral history exhibit, giving access to both the transcripts and sound recordings of the interviews. Volume 1 is titled "Before the Movement Began," and

covers 1930-1954. Volume 2, "Dawn of the Movement Era," covers 1955-1967. Volume 3, "The Movement Era," covers 1955-1967. Volume 4, "Birthing a New Day," covers 1968-1980. And Volume 5, "Lessons Learned and Promises to Keep," covers 1968-1980.

The project is part of the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research and was funded in part by the South Carolina Bar Foundation, the Southern Bell Corporation and South Carolina Humanities.

Lare is a veteran administrator of public service projects for the South Carolina Department of Social Services and Community

Care Inc., an interfaith community service organization. His early ministry in the inner city of Los Angeles led him to champion equity and justice issues. He specialized in community, human and economic development, and participated in many civil rights demonstrations, including the Selma to Montgomery march, and attendance at the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Atlanta.

To view the collection: <https://digital.library.sc.edu/exhibits/champions>. "Dawn of the Movement Era: 1955-1967" is available in hard copy. You can order it at civil.rights.sc@gmail.com or send \$43.19 to Champions, P.O. Box 5101, Columbia, SC 29250-5101.

New facilities dedicated at Camp Providence



On Sunday, Oct. 10, those who love Camp Providence Day Camp in Anderson gathered to reconnect and dedicate the facilities on the property.

The afternoon started with a picnic lunch, time for fellowship and the opportunity to enjoy the property.

The dedication service started with a welcoming from Arthur Spriggs, executive director of South Carolina Camps and Retreat Ministries, and Bob Kahle, operations director.

The Rev. Steve Patterson shared a litany of thanks and officially blessed the property and its facilities.

"It was a beautiful day, and it's wonderful to be a part of a vision for this property,"

Supporters headed to Camp Providence Oct. 10 to dedicate the facilities and reconnect with each other.

Spriggs said. "We are blessed by God to witness its full fruition."

Camp Providence Day Camp has been the keeper of many memories over the years. Spriggs said Camps and Retreat Ministries is pleased to continue the tradition of welcoming day campers to pour into and share the love of Jesus.

Day campers now have access to a two-slip boat dock complete with a ladder and bench, newly renovated bath houses, landscaped property and a lakeside shelter.

Friends of Camp Providence and members of Providence Church are providing support for this new effort.

Five virtual Clergy Care retreats scheduled in November

The Clergy Care ministry of the South Carolina Conference has scheduled five new virtual retreats in November, all free and open to all clergy:

Nov. 8 from 2-3:30 p.m., "Listening to God through Lectio Divina," led by Marla Fuller;

Nov. 11 from 6-7:30 p.m., "Navigating Clergy Bereavement Overload," led by Rev.

Miriam Mick;

Nov. 17 from 12-1:15 p.m., "Resilient Clergy Leadership," led by Toni R. Taylor;

Nov. 29 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., "Navigating Holiday Stress," led by Alethia King; and

Nov. 30 from 12-1:15 p.m., "Lead More Effective Meetings," led by Toni R. Taylor.

For more information and to register for any of these: <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november>.

Sign me up for the Advocate!

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Viewpoints



Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

When you're just not feeling thankful

Have you ever felt simply ... off? Unsure, perhaps, why you are feeling this way, you strive to reconnect with God in your usual ways. Maybe you go off alone, spending time in prayer and meditation with the Lord. Maybe you read more Scripture, try a new Bible study or do what you can to slow down and take a step back from your hectic pace.

Of course, God hasn't gone anywhere—your soul is simply tired, or overwhelmed with life, or out of alignment with the Creator, all symptoms of spiritual weariness or some other malady on our part. It's never God who pulls away.

Still, that "off" feeling persists. And no wonder: mental illness is taking an increasing toll on society as the impacts of COVID-19, social isolation, financial hardship and more continue to wear us down. Anxiety and depression are on the upswing. Many can't bring themselves to get off the couch on Sunday mornings and go back to church. There's talk of a food shortage along with the slowdown in shipping. An ever-present sense of doom seeps in like a cloud of toxic gray.

We were never promised an end date with the pandemic, yet many of us expected it would be over by now, that by this holiday season we'd be back to normal, with our life lessons nicely learned and all the angst, sickness, sadness and difficulty of the past 20 months sealed like a present in a gift box and tied up tight with a neat red bow.

Yet this month, Thanksgiving, urges us to have a grateful heart, to give thanks in all things, to count our blessings and show appreciation to God for all God's kindness, mercy, compassion and provision. This can feel almost impossible for those who are depressed, "off," grieving or otherwise spiritually low. How do you muster up the strength for a grateful heart when it's an effort to get out of bed, let alone "feel thankful"?

I believe it has to do with perspective. To experience gratitude in difficulty, we must understand gratitude is not a feeling but a state of being. Just like we can experience joy but not "feel happy," we can also experience gratitude without feeling happy or even especially thankful. Joy is a deep soul-level understanding of the hope we have in God even in the midst of great trial and difficulty. Similarly, gratitude is understanding that God, in God's great mercy and love, provides. We might not feel particularly thankful or happy when someone we love has died, but we can still experience gratitude that God has a purpose and a plan, that God will use this for good, that God is still almighty and all-powerful, supreme and glorious and true. We might not feel particularly thankful or happy when our finances are tight or a relationship ends, when our church family is squabbling or our kids are unwell. But we can experience gratitude. We can know deep in our souls that all is right with God, and we are carefully held within God's arms in spite of it all.

This November, I urge you to explore gratitude as a state of being rather than a feeling. Don't merely go through the proverbial motions of Thanksgiving, but reflect anew on what it means to be held in the Lord and be comforted by God's vast, wide compassion and love. As we read in Job 19:25-27, "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (NIV).



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Bishop's Corner

by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

Lest we forget

"Make sure you don't forget God, your God, by not keeping his commandments, his rules and regulations that I command you today. Make sure that when you eat and are satisfied, build pleasant houses and settle in, see your herds and flocks flourish and more and more money come in, watch your standard of living going up and up—make sure you don't become so full of yourself and your things that you forget God, your God..." Deuteronomy 8:11-14 (MSG)

The late Maya Angelou said, "Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently."

It goes further to say that we should never back away from any intimidating challenge. To confront our challenges is to understand them and to be empowered to interact. In fact, we will be liberated from the fear. Too often, our fears drive many of us to make choices that are at odds with healthy relationships, vitality and balance.

Moses was afraid the Israelites would forget all that God had done for them during their Exodus experience, and begin to think that everything they had come by their own power, their own might and their own strength. Moses was afraid that these sojourners of the faith would forget all God had done for them.

Often, the phrase is used, "out of sight, out of mind." Truthfully, it makes sense, because we have a tendency to forget. It is so easy to forget that all we have is a gift from God. It is so easy to forget that everything we eat, or the homes where we live, or the successes of our lives are extensions of God's grace.

But we receive so much more than food or possessions—everything we have is a gift from God.

Jennie Evelyn Hussey penned a hymn with this refrain—"Lest I forget Geth-

semane; Lest I forget Thine agony; Lest I forget Thy love for me, Lead me to Calvary." This is a tremendous call to remember.

During the month of November, we have opportunities to remember—lest we forget.

During this month of November, the church celebrates All Saints Day, a time when we rejoice in the hope we have as Christians that those who die in the faith still live in Christ.

Lest we forget.

We can also look to those saints all around us, in our communities. Many may be homebound, in a hospital or in a care facility, but that doesn't mean they are any less with us in the faith of Christ. These "living saints" among us have seen life, lived through those very things many of us are now going through, and have come out on the other end sustained by faith.

Lest we forget.

Thanksgiving is coming, and we celebrate! It is a time when we are supposed to give thanks for our blessings. A lot of times, we think of the concrete things, our material possessions. We give thanks for food, our clothes, our homes. Yet, we must give thanks for our sufferings as well. We have lived in the midst of a global pandemic, civil unrest and political divisiveness that has wreaked havoc on our lives.

In giving thanks, we remember to rely upon Christ for everything.

Lest we forget.

We also will enter the season of Advent this month. The season of Advent is unique. It is a season of preparation; a season of waiting. Advent reminds us that we are called to be fully present and alert—and not fearful.

This is hard and painful work because of the distractions and temptations that surround us. Yet, we are called to recognize the signs of Jesus breaking into our lives.

Let's make sure we don't forget God, our God.

Correction

In the article "Main Street to Celebrate 175th Homecoming" (October *Advocate*), it does not give the correct name of the church sponsored by Main Street. The church sponsored was Virginia Wingard Memorial UMC. We apologize for this error and, as always, strive to set the record straight.

Appointment Changes

Bishop Jonathan Holston has announced the following changes of appointment: Effective Sept. 26, 2021

Hartsville District: West Camden Charge: Franklin Garrett (RE) (1/2)

Effective Oct. 10, 2021

Walterboro District: Hendersonville Charge: Gary Finch (SY) (1/2)

Effective Oct. 11, 2021

Rock Hill District: Adnah: Daniel O'Connor (SY)

Letters Policy

We welcome letters to the editor. We urge brevity, as succinct writing often produces clarity. Letters should be no more than 450 words. All letters are subject to editing as needed to meet standards of grammar, space and interest. We will not publish anonymous letters, letters praising or criticizing businesses by name, endorsements of or letters from political candidates, fundraising appeals, or letters containing inappropriate language or personal attacks. All letters will be verified, so you must include a name, daytime phone number, church membership and hometown. Letters should be sent to The Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203 or e-mailed to advocate@umcsc.org. Deadlines are the 10th of each month.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Darlene Kelley

The night I learned Black lives matter

This is that story where you have to change the names to protect the guilty, but I won't change the location.

Baltimore is my hometown, and there's no other. Plus, it's a city with plenty of grit and history. The first bloodshed of the Civil War fell on the streets of Baltimore a week after the troubles at Fort Sumter. Soldiers from the Massachusetts 6th Regiment met an angry mob in Maryland, and insults and rocks turned into gunfire and death.

Yet, with the help of the local police, the soldiers made their escape and continued their journey to the edge of Washington, preparing for one of the initial skirmishes that brought people with picnic baskets to the edge of the fighting, like spectators at the Coliseum, unfolding the waxed paper from their egg and butter sandwiches, awaiting the gladiators. Musket balls tore through the air and then through flesh, and the spectators soon lost their appetites and scurried away, but the violence continued.

I watched smoke rise from those same streets in 1968 after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King fell dead on a balcony in Memphis, Tennessee.

But my story takes place a decade later, years after the start of the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation, college years for me, and a few spent drinking pitchers of beer with other aspiring actors in the storefront theatres of Fells Point.

On one of those nights, driving up the wide thoroughfare away from the harbor, I hit two pedestrians crossing the street in front of Johns Hopkins Hospital. Being hit by a car is certainly a bad bit of luck, but being hit in front of one of the world's best hospitals increases your chances for excellent and immediate health care. Still, it didn't look good.

I hit the man first. He was closest to me, inadvertently shielding his partner who walked next to him on the other side. Though I wasn't traveling fast, the impact of the hit hurled him up in the air and back down against the hood of the old, tan station wagon I'd bought from my sister for 350 bucks. But to be honest, I'd borrowed the money from an old boyfriend, and there was a tug of war brewing over ownership.

The male accident victim landed with a thud, grabbing his leg and screaming. He carried on so loudly that whatever was happening to the friend at his side was hard to decipher. She was alive, fully conscious and sitting up on the curb, wiping rivulets of sweat from her forehead. I was relieved to see both victims aware, but my relief was short-lived because the wails of the man, so agonizing and powerful, drew a larger and larger crowd of spectators. Soon I was aware of being a White girl surrounded by a crowd of Black folk, and some of them seemed pretty angry at the sight of two of their own screaming at me from the curb. I panicked, got back in my car, and drove away.

The screams of my victims faded the farther I drove, but it didn't take long before my conscience began to bellow. That still, small voice of God in my soul began to shout out my sins. I'd been drinking. I'd been drinking and hit pedestrians. I'd been drinking, hit pedestrians and left the scene of the accident.

I was guilty of a hit and run.

Now it was a crime scene, not just an accident scene. I had a choice to make. I had to decide who I really was, what I was capable of, and what kind of person my 19-year-old self wanted to be.

And just at that moment, like an answer to prayer, a Baltimore City police cruiser merged from a side street right in front of me. I hit the horn and the lights, and both of us pulled over. I got out of my car, crying and confessing, walking along the edge of the road toward a young, White police officer, who was smiling and nonplussed by my cries of guilt.

"Can you drive?" he asked, and I nodded, surprised enough by his response that my tears stopped instantly.

"Good," he said. "Follow me."

Moments later, we were standing on the empty parking lot of the Food Mart surrounded by a small fleet of police cars and seven other police officers, all of them White. My tears may have ended, but my confession continued.

"I've been drinking and driving, and I hit a couple with my car in front of the hospital," I said.

"Don't you worry that pretty little head," one officer beamed down at me. He was the oldest and taller than the others. I sensed instantly he was the man in charge. "Those nigs jumped out in front of your car to collect the insurance."

All the others nodded and grunted in agreement.

"Hey, Ricky, get her a Coke out of the machine over there. You want a Coca-Cola, sweetie?" The big man smiled down at me, and I didn't know what to do except smile back.

Officer Ricky ran across the parking lot to the red light radiating against the night sky.

Soon I held a cold can of Coke. Taking a few sips of the soda gave me a moment to think. What should I do now? I'd confessed my sins. I'd owned my mistake. I'd told them everything, but instead of handcuffs and a list of my Miranda rights, I was hearing laughter, camaraderie.

One of the officers patted me on the back, his hand lingering a moment on my shoulder. "How you doing, hon?"

They were talking among themselves now while the big man in charge called out on his radio. I knew instinctively he was talking to the officers at the scene of the crime, the hit and run—my hit and run—but it wasn't a hit and run anymore. It had turned into a small party on a parking lot.

"We better make sure she gets home safe," the policeman in charge informed the others. "Where do you live?"

He smiled down at me, and I gave him my address, realizing at that moment none of them had ever asked for my license.

"Oh, you're at college up in Towson," his smile grew. "Good school. My niece went there. Don't you worry—we'll get you home."

He took me by the arm and guided me across the asphalt parking lot to my car. He opened the door, and I got behind the wheel.

He smiled again. "Now you just get home safe and forget all this mess. Ricky, you got the address? You lead and Bobby can follow her in his car. Get our girl home."

He patted the roof of my car with an air of certainty.

I followed the police cruiser out of the parking lot and watched through my rearview mirror as Bobby pulled in behind me.

Both officers turned on their lights, and the parade began.

Twenty minutes later, Officer Ricky was walking me to my front door. It felt for a moment like the end of a date as I paused to thank him and say "goodnight," but there was no awkward kiss, just an awkward moment before the young policeman smiled again, and I put my key in the door.

Then he was gone, and I was left alone with my conscience and my confusion.

I called the hospital to check on the couple who must have come in from right out front, but no one seemed to know what or who I was talking about. Why hadn't I asked for their names?

I dropped to my knees and prayed for them, my nameless victims, and asked God about the nagging feeling stirring deep within me, the knowledge that privilege and not redemption had saved me from my sin. The realization that I'd been taught to be White, layered and lessoned in bias and bigotry.

And that even without conviction, my convictions would never be the same.

Kelley pastors O'Neal Street United Methodist Church, Newberry, and Mount Pleasant UMC, Pomaria.

Letters to the Editor

A poem: It Be What It Be

It's just a fact
That we be who we be
And often, we're much different than we see.
Convincing tales all our lives that we're "all that"
And hanging around, upside-down, like a sleeping bat
Can cause one's blood to go to one's head
And if not careful, one can become a walking dead.
For certain, a tiger cannot change its stripes
And fruit is most delectable when it ripens.
Folks don't get what they want, simply because they desire
And it doesn't mean that one will be rescued if he/she yells "Fire!"

It's plain to see that things be what they be,
But don't be duped: There's more to things than we see.
Maybe that's the reason we're told, "Walk by faith, not sight"
And that "situations and problems seem better in the morning light."
Nothing motivates and cheers our spirits like thoughts of heaven.
It raises and increases our hope like dough laced with leaven.

I truly believe that faith be what faith be
And there's more to faith than what these feeble eyes see.
We're told the sun rises each morn and sets each night,
When in fact, the earth rotations expose it to the sun's light.
In this light, men staggered as in total darkness, in broad daylight,
Until the Son of God arrived with His marvelous light
That outshines the darkest night.
For He be all that He be
And much, much, much more than we see.
Amen.

*Rev. Joseph Abram Jr., retired
St. Matthews*

Faithful: An Acrostic Poem

For the Lord is good, praise his name.
And his steadfast love remains the same.
In times of trouble or misfortune, He is there,
The Lord always answers prayers.
He is wonderful to us and we are so thankful, too
Forever, forever we praise Him for everything miracles do
Under the blood we stay because we know we are never alone.
Love the Lord for all the blessings and love He's shown.

*Retha W. Jenkins, member
Wesley UMC, Johns Island*



Bishop Julius Trimble (board chair), Dr. J. Elbert Williams and Bishop Tracey S. Malone of the East Ohio Conference are among those gathered for the Africa University Advisory Development Committee meeting held Sept. 17-19 in Cleveland, Ohio.

New scholarship started for AU students

By Dr. J. Elbert Williams

In January 2013, I joined Bishop Jonathan Holston and Dr. James Salley on my first journey to southern Africa to visit Africa University in Zimbabwe.

I was captivated on that trip by the children's thirst for knowledge. Their eagerness to work together to better themselves and neighboring countries is phenomenal.

I was so inspired by what I witnessed that, after my mother passed in August 2013, I decided to honor her by establishing the Magnolia R. Williams Endowment Scholarship Fund. The fund was established in the amount of \$10,000 for students enrolled in business. Over the last nine years, I have been on every trip with Holston and Salley, totaling four times.

This year, Sept. 17-19 in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Africa University Development Committee meeting, I endorsed an additional scholarship in the name of my deceased father, the Rev. Frank E. Williams Sr., also in the amount of \$10,000.

AU's Planned Giving Program is now in its 21st year of existence. Donors continue to show their wholehearted generosity and support of the ministry of education and leader-

ship formation. They are thoughtful people doing what we can to ensure the university's success for many years to come. To date, there are 431 Legacy members.

Africa University is in the Valley of Dreams in Zimbabwe. It offers degrees in business, peace, leadership and governance. It has colleges of health, agriculture, natural science, social science, theology, humanities and education, just to name a few. The college also offers a doctoral program.

The present enrollment is approximately 2,893 students. It presently has 212 international students from different countries. Last graduation was 527 students from 21 countries. Of that class, 59.6 percent were male and 40.4 percent were female.

As a member of the AU Advisory Development Committee, I am proud of its use of blended learning technologies. I am also excited about a solar energy project soon to come that will resolve some of the electrical problems the university faces.

Africa University is in zero debt. All buildings are paid for before they are constructed.

In October 2022 AU will celebrate its 30-year anniversary.

Hinton Center celebrates 60 years, searches how to stretch vision

By Lorraine Bennett

Reprinted courtesy of the Clay County Progress

Editor's note: Hinton is an agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

HAYESVILLE, North Carolina—In a weekend of celebration and soul-searching, Hinton Rural Life Center marked 60 years of ministry: celebration for decades of service and soul-searching for ways to have an even greater impact on rural communities it reaches and serves.

The celebration came Saturday when Bishop Kenneth Carter, resident bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, told a special service at Hayesville First United Methodist, "I want to thank you for doing the work of God."

The soul-searching began Friday evening when a panel of eight serious-minded clergy and community activists grappled with ways Hinton might increase its impact on rural communities, areas hit especially hard during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the more meaningful exchanges occurred between Ann Miller Woodford, Black activist, artist and author of "When All God's Children Get Together" and Nora Stanger, author of "Diamonds in the Dew." Stanger is White. She grew up in poverty in the Appalachian foothills.

"We are mountain people, Appalachian people," said Woodford. "African American people are here, too. This is a moment people are fearful of, but they may also be more open to new directions."

"There's been so much stress that can break us down," Stanger observed. "We need to reach out. We have so much more in common."

"We need to start by knowing each other's story."

The Friday evening panel, held at Hinton Rural Life Center with dinner and conversation for about 70, was moderated by Rev. Audrey Rogers. She is director of the Tuskegee Wesley Foundation and a Hinton Ambassador for the Alabama-West Florida Conference. She is also an ordained itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Panel participants included Rev. Allen Stanton, executive director of the Turner Center for Rural Vitality at the University of Tennessee Southern; Woodford, founder and executive director of One Dozen Who Care; Dr. Jacqueline Gottlieb, Hinton's president celebrating her tenth year as the center's CEO; and Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith, adjunct professor for Garrett-Evangelical and Wesley Theological seminaries.

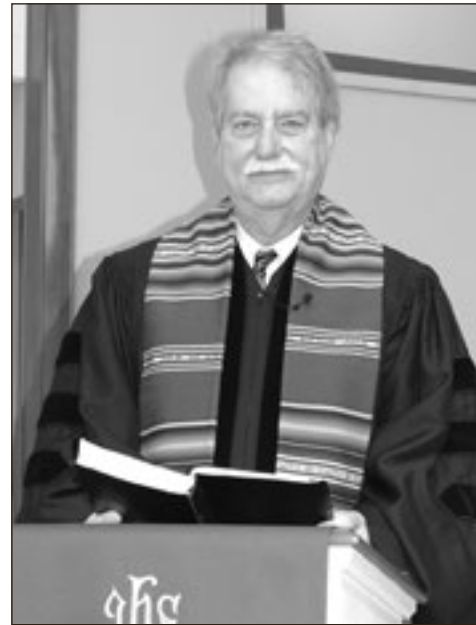
Also on the panel were Dr. Josh Yates, executive director of the Ormond Center at Duke Divinity School; Stanger, coordinator of Appalachian Outreach & College of Life-long Learning at Sinclair Community Col-



Above, The Pressley Girls provided background music for the celebration.



Ann Woodford, artist, historian and author, stands before samples of her art.



Bishop Kenneth H. Carter Jr. was keynote speaker at the service of celebration.

lege in Dayton, Ohio; Rachel Ahrens, Western Carolina University graduate student and youth director at Brevard-First United Methodist Church; and Sarah Thompson, vice president of impact-economic opportunity at Dogwood Health Trust.

At sunset Friday guests gathered at Hinton Center in a large outer room to view displays of its long and varied history.

Several participants enjoyed tables displaying their own creations, among them Woodford, whose African-American-oriented art was available for viewing; Stanger, whose self-published book "Diamonds in the Dew: An Appalachian Experience" was offered for sale; and fine art potter Michael A. Lalone and Linda Thompson of Mountain View Crafts.

The Pressley Girls, Katie and Corie, provided background music and opened the evening's program with their rendition of "You Are My Sunshine."

After a sit-down meal for guests, the panel began a discourse on what it means to live in a rural community and meet its residents in an impactful way so those residents can thrive.

Here is a sampling of the comments and observations:

"Profound change can bring a lot of great good."

"Why did it take a crisis for attention to come to rural areas? How can we utilize this crisis?"

"Part of the boon of the crisis is that we have to band together."

"Churches are permanent trusted institutions that represent a large part of the community. We can do a lot of high impact low-cost programs by working through the churches."

"We're at a critical point. Little rural churches are dying. Young people don't see the value in them and the old people are burned out."

"We need to see each other. Rural communities are increasingly not white."

"A lot of pain and trauma needs to be addressed."

"What can we do to get all people involved? Some people don't feel invited to the table. You have to start by opening the door."

"We need to cultivate hope. Maximize your assets. Tell other people about the assets in your church."

"Once a year survey everyone in your congregation and see where they are volunteering and serving in the community."

"Find your bridge-builders."

"Rural churches overall are aging. The rural elderly feel they don't matter anymore, but they are the core and the heart of the church now."

Throughout the evening, Hinton Center staff was religious about observing safety protocols in the midst of a pandemic. All participants and panelists wore masks constantly except when dining. Summer staff

To learn more about Hinton:

Watch two videos:
"Embracing Our Roots"
on Hinton's beginnings
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJY8Fmjwq0&t=79s>

and

"Sharing the Fruits"
on Hinton's ministries and impact
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BX-S8iSEDc&t=13s>

members served meals on tables spaced well apart and in two separate rooms.

Saturday's midday service of celebration took place at Hayesville United Methodist Church with the keynote address from Bishop Carter.

"The work of the rural church is love," he told the congregation, many of whom watched from home as the service was live-streamed, "and the work of the Hinton Center is to love these rural churches."

Taking his texts from the gospels of John and Mark, the bishop said, "The kingdom of God is like scattering seeds on the ground. Even as we sleep the work continues, the seed sprouts and grows.

"Human needs just seem to multiply," he continued. "Yet we continue in these fields and labor. We grasp handfuls of seeds and we scatter them.

"If we work and watch and wait, first the stalk, then the grain, then the full head appears," he said. "When seeds are planted, there is growth. You and I pause today to reflect on that growth."

Apart from working and scattering seeds, people come to Hinton Center to set work aside for personal growth and change and even transformation, he said.

When disasters come, he said they do harm but they also bring to the surface the goodness that was already there.

"Years ago some root systems were established," the bishop said, "and they have endured. Sixty years ago there was a pioneering spirit of what might become the rural life center, and today we honor that spirit."

During the program two videos were offered focusing on the formation of Hinton Center and its continuing work.

The Rev. Claude Young, who was involved in the founding of Hinton Center and pastored First Methodist Church Hayesville in the late 1950s, appeared in a video on the center's history.

The video traced the center as it began from a small dream among a handful of people and grew into a thriving entity serving the community in a variety of ways: delivering firewood, repairing homes, offering summer mission programs, holding poverty awareness seminars and bringing clergy, the community and ordinary people together.

Last year the center gave away 455 pickup truckloads of split firewood to needy residents.

Carolyn and Rivers Smith related how Hinton Center inspired them to begin a similar endeavor in Transylvania County called STEP Western North Carolina, which offers home repair and firewood ministries.

Music for the Saturday service was provided by Blaine and Christina Russell, directors of music and youth ministries respectively for Fletcher United Methodist Church, Fletcher. Both are former summer staffers at Hinton Center.

For 60 years Hinton Center has offered mission outreach initiatives from home repairs to firewood to garden ministries. At the same time it has held an open retreat ministry for individuals and groups needing a place to reflect and renew.

The center is visited by a variety of groups and individuals each year and is

Thank you for 30 Years!

We can't believe it's been 30 years since Robin Thompson began playing the organ and piano – and directing the choir – at Main Street United Methodist Church in Dillon! He walked in – and auditioned by playing a song from his senior organ recital at Coker College. We had never heard of him, but we were truly blown away by his unbelievable talent.



Little did we know that we had received a bonus when we hired Robin. His brother Shaw Thompson, who is truly a professional tenor, has quite often shared his talent with us. In addition, Shaw has served as Choir Director during COVID. During this same time, Robin has pre-recorded all his organ accompaniment; therefore, he was also able to sing baritone with the choir. And – because Robin knows so many other musicians whom he has assisted through the years, he has provided some outstanding instrumentalists and soloists from all over the state of South Carolina. Our cantatas and special programs are a joy for the entire community.

Yes, our congregation has been treated to some magnificent music through the years! We sincerely thank you, Robin, for continuing to play and direct faithfully each week – for 30 years – and for introducing so much wonderful talent to Main Street United Methodist Church in Dillon!



The 8- by 16-foot new porch has steps, railings and a pole for a TV antenna.



Elmore and Diane Jackson share a smile with some who helped on the porch.

Orange Circuit replaces damaged porch for family in need

By Billy Robinson

NORTH—The Orange Circuit recently replaced a porch for the family of Diane and Elmore Jackson of North.

The Rev. Richard Toy of the Orange Circuit was a firefighter for 20 years before becoming a United Methodist pastor. He moved to North in 2019 and soon found himself volunteering with North Volunteer Fire Department after much persuasion by members of North UMC, who were also members of North Volunteer Fire Department.

Recently after helping put out a structure fire on Main Street in North, Toy was summoned to the Jacksons' home. There he saw the dire need for a new porch for the home as the old porch was rotten and missing several boards, making it a real hazard.

Mr. Jackson had recently undergone several stints and multiple medical issues, making it hard and dangerous to use the old steps, which was the main access to the home.

Toy approached the Orange Circuit for help, and its members stepped up to the challenge, first raising the funds then tearing down and hauling off the old porch. They finished with an 8- by 16-foot new porch complete with steps, railings and a pole for a TV antenna. The family was also presented with prayer and Scripture items of encouragement.

The Orange Circuit is constantly taking on mission projects to spread the life-giving message of Jesus Christ. They are currently working on replacing the flooring of a structure for a family in need.

Robinson is a member of North UMC.



Photos by Trudy Robinson

The Rev. Richard Toy works on the porch with North Fire Department's Michael Hughes and Billy Robinson.

Shandon UMWomen's plant and frozen soup sale helps local charities

COLUMBIA—Shandon United Methodist Church and their United Methodist Women held a plant and frozen soups sale recently to benefit local charities.

Held Saturday, Oct. 23, the fundraiser sale, hosted by the

United Methodist Women, donated every penny to Harvest Hope Food Bank, Cooperative Ministries, SisterCare, Family Shelter, the Free Medical Clinic and Killingsworth Home.

The soup and plant sale was free and open to the public,

offering a variety of bulbs and plants, as well as a variety of frozen quarts of soups.

It was hosted outside and socially distanced with masks required.

Pondering footprints in an old sidewalk

Whose tracks these are I do not know,
Pressed in this sidewalk long ago.
The shoes were girl's shoes I can tell
By shape of sole and size as well.
Perhaps a child, judged from their size,
Seized on the moment when no eyes
Were watching, to step boldly here
And leave her footprints wet and clear.

I wonder, as I kneel and feel
These small indentures, toe to heel,
Just who she was who left her tracks
In this sidewalk, between the cracks.
I wonder as I ponder where
These little footprints led from here.
Since time set them in manmade stone,
Will time tell where she might have
gone?

What did the future bring to her?
Did in her heart some great love stir,
To mold within her womanhood
A soul both beautiful and good?
Did she know heaven's earthly bliss
Enfolded in a husband's kiss
And darling children's sweet embrace,
Which made her world a happy place?

Was she industrious, like the one
Whom Scripture crowned as having
done
Most excellent beyond all measure,
Her worthiness a priceless treasure?
Was kindness always in her speech,
And did her hands forever reach
To help and heal with selfless deeds
For neighbors, strangers, all with needs?

I wonder as I ponder where
These little footprints led from here.
Contentment fills my soul today
To think of her in just that way:
A noble lady, filled with grace,
Whose steps led upward from this place
To love and live till set of sun ...
At last to hear Christ say, "Well done."

But, then, into my pleasant dreaming,
An awful thought and scene comes
streaming—
There is another woman's face!
Surrendered to time's long embrace,
She lies in loneliness, and fears
The reaping hand—and no one cares.
No husband, child or friend is there
To witness what her soul must bear.

She chose to follow some vain pride,
Which led her to the vicious side
Of life, and turned from grace to sin,
Forsaking all she might have been.
Yet—in her scarlet brokenness,
Did she at last to God confess
The guilty life she chose to live—
And hear him say, "Child, I forgive"?

A wind-swept sidewalk marks the place
Where some dear child of nameless face
Went forth one day to destiny:
"May she have found, God, rest in
Thee!"

For this I pray ... and turn to go
As once she did longtime ago.
What is, for me, I do not know:
Only to choose which way to go.

—Rev. Zach Farmer, retired



Online gala, fashion show to help women of Killingsworth

Those who support Killingsworth Home, a United Methodist home that helps women in crisis to transform their lives, have an opportunity to help from the comfort of their own homes. This year's gala will be an online event again featuring the theme, "Home for the Holidays ... Again." It is intended to be a night of joy and inspiration that celebrates the women who live at Killingsworth and the home's many years of love and service. The gala will be Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. Registration is free, and sponsorships are available. To register: www.killingsworth.org. Here, Schrendria Robinson, executive director of Killingsworth Home, speaks at last year's gala.

Golf tournament helps relieve hunger through Helping Hands

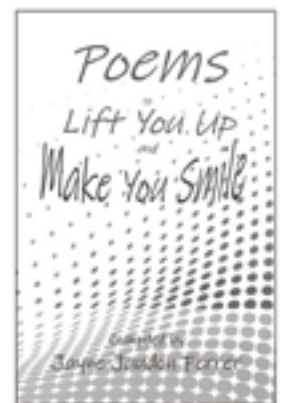
Main Street United Methodist Church, Dillon, held a Methodist Men's Golf Tournament Sept. 17.

More than 40 golfers participated in this year's tournament, raising a record total of \$35,000.

This \$35,000 amounts to 400,000 lbs. of food (about six tractor-trailer loads) that will be given to the Helping Hands Food Pantry (The Johnson Foundation).

The food pantry provides meals to approximately 400 families in Dillon County each year.

Give a gift to uplift!



Available from bookstores everywhere & online at Amazon.

A percentage of every sale helps fund a food ministry.





Guest Commentary

by David Bryant

Sixty percent

It was a normal day in a different life. I was grumbling and discontent, waiting on whatever to be resolved that was holding up progress on a project of such great importance I can no longer remember. The old man, my mentor, friend and spiritual accountability partner, said, “Remember, we spend 60 percent of our time in the meantime.”

“What does that even mean?” I asked impatiently.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the ups and downs of life—the joys and sorrows; achievements and losses; the progression of markers, events and milestones. The need to recognize the meantime between all of those events as where we usually exist and to enjoy and take advantage of the respite; to reflect, plan, rest and prepare; to practice patience; to dream dreams and see visions.

Finally, he sat back, crossed his arms and said, “See? We spend 60 percent of our time in the meantime!”

“Why 60?” I asked. “Where does that number come from?”

He laughed and told another long story about how one of his divinity professors at Duke always said it, and the students mimicked him.

But isn't it true? We wait for an election to end, for a church conference to begin, for an important meeting, a marriage, a birth and, yes, death. We wait for healing and restoration. We wait for joy and hope and happiness. We wait for social justice—and we struggle with what we can do in the meantime.

Our frustration, pain and impatience show, but so, too, can our experience, strength and hope.

While both Old Testament and New Testament Scripture is filled with the lessons of waiting and patience, Jesus didn't directly address either. He simply lived a life as the embodiment of both—the perfect example of each. But about rest he had much to say, from quieting the storm to calling those weary from labor and heavy burden to telling his disciples, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

That old man I was talking about? He passed away recently. He knew how to laugh and relax in the middle of life's storms. He defined serenity. He led me to a life of sobriety. He led me to a deeper understanding of Scripture. He led me to a personal relationship with Jesus, then he let me go to experience life and occasionally get together to reminisce.

And I can still recite every word of “The Touch of the Master's Hand.” I miss him ... but I know there will be a time farther along. In the meantime ...

The pandemic almost got me. I grew weary, impatient and intolerant, character defects that ruled my life while I was still a practicing alcoholic. Only when chatting with my pastor and those words popped out did I know how true they were. I could not stay in that place. I would not go back.

I renewed my efforts to maintain conscious contact with God. I made amends where they were due. I realized the logisti-

cal overload of doing ministry had become more my focus than the relationships, individuals and ministries themselves. I slowly began to work my way out of the selfish self-centeredness of me.

Two major projects now lie ahead: food and hunger ministry through my church and community, and pursuit of certification as a United Methodist Church lay speaker. Interestingly, both of these have been preparing my way for my path forward: a passion for social justice.

I have not the faintest clue what God has in store for the UMC or for me. But I know—as we wrestle with, argue over and defend our interpretation of Scripture and Wesleyan Doctrine—Wesley was clear that there is no “holiness without social holiness” and Jesus was clear that we are to love one another.

So, like Rachael, I'm just going to go; all will be revealed.

That old man often said he wasn't called to pastor but to preach. He was a high school dropout sweeping in a cotton mill when he received the call. He earned a high school diploma in night school, went on to a bachelor's from a local college, graduated Duke Divinity with an M.Div., only to discover he was called to pastoral care. He worked within prison ministry, inner-city ministry, hospital chaplaincy and alcohol and drug addiction. He accomplished more in retirement than most do in a lifetime of work. I miss him, but I know there will be a time farther along. But, in the meantime ...

We have 17 months until August 2022. I don't really feel the call to preach. I see myself much more of a “Wednesday night teacher” than a “Sunday morning preacher.” I don't know if I even need to be a lay speaker to do what I want to do, but I do believe I need to be prepared to what he would have me do.

So, in the meantime of the next 17 months, my desire is to talk to folks and walk them through the current (2016) Social Principles of the UMC, the advocacy efforts of the UMC General Board of Church and Society and the proposed revisions of the (now) 2022 Revised Social Principles. We'll see—more will be revealed.

Oh, that 60 percent the old man talked about? If you go to the Discipleship Ministries link on the UMC website, you can find the UMC Liturgical Calendar. On the calendar, there are no church “holidays” or “holy days” between Epiphany and Fat Tuesday, nor are there any between Pentecost and Advent. Those periods are called Ordinary Time. They are marked by ordinal numbering such “the first Sunday after ...”

They are times of reflection and discernment. The first, a time to call disciples. The second, a time to train disciples.

They are the “meantime” of the church year—and they make up approximately 60 percent of the calendar.

So, in the meantime, love as Jesus loved you. Love extravagantly, openly, inclusively, radically—love!

Bryant attends Bethesda UMC, Easley.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Tony Rowell

Tattoos and muumuus

Several years ago I was having lunch at a new Waffle House. It was new then, at least; but new or not, it still held that special ambiance particular to Waffle House. Perhaps the floor was a little cleaner, the windows a bit less opaque and the “How you doing, honey?” had a bit more zest to it than normal, but it felt the same. Same black and yellow sign, same wonderful scent of industrial coffee and frying bacon on the air, same welcoming clatter of fine china being washed and the same clientele I have always loved so much.

I have said this before, but I do believe it to be true. I contend that Christ would sit in a corner booth at Waffle House most weekday mornings enjoying some eggs and grits and getting to know the regular folks.

Well, all of that aside, as I sat down in my normal pew, I noticed a woman of about 30 years or so, standing beside the juke box pondering over her selections. She was a striking woman; well, actually, her tattoos were striking in a scary, cadaverous, ghastly sort of way.

She was wearing a tie-dyed muumuu, dyed bright in reds, yellows and greens with just a hint of lavender in the mix; and on her arm, the one facing me, was a tattoo of what appeared to be a severed head, newly removed. So I looked away. I didn't want to stare too long for fear her voodoo might win the day.

As I turned back to my grilled cheese, however, I noticed the rest of her family had magically appeared in the booth next to mine with nary a sound while I was engrossed in my observations. There before me was an interesting mix of people—a tattooed smorgasbord of sorts.

It would appear my newfound friend had a younger sister with similar adornments, perhaps not as bloodcurdling as her sibling's, but macabre nonetheless.

If the matching rings were any indication, my new acquaintance also had a husband in attendance. He was similarly inked with some very artistic, if not ghastly, artwork as was the other gentleman present whom I assumed was the younger girl's boyfriend, or perhaps husband from the familiarity displayed.

Much to my surprise, mixed in and amongst the crowd was a woman of about my age, and she appeared to be tattoo-free. (Generational preference, I reasoned.) I didn't ask or investigate too rigorously for fear of possible findings, but as far as I could see her canvas remained pristine. Her hair, on the other hand, was tie-dyed in the matching, if not inversed, color pattern of the hitherto mentioned muumuu, so Momma fit right in.

It was only after I completed my appraisal of the adults that I noticed the little baby boy sleeping in the arms of the sister and the little girl, of about 4 years of age or so, nestled in between her daddy and her uncle.

The unadulterated love shining from the sister as she looked down at her little baby, and the paternal pride beaming from the daddy as he sought to teach his little girl the value of the words “thank you,” is what awakened me from my revelry and brought my subjects' humanity into sharp focus.

Feeling I was intruding, I adjusted my gaze and looked out the window for a time and just listened. It didn't take me long to realize that behind that façade of wildness lay a devoted family filled with love for one another, pride in their children and, as it turns out, a love for Christ, as well.

I was in my work clothes: khaki pants, maroon polo shirt, and reading glasses of course. I had a notebook and a Bible. I

like to study in Waffle House sometimes. So there I was, with my glasses perched halfway down my nose and this shock of grey hair overhanging my wrinkled-up face. I was the personification of an out-of-touch, anything-but-cool old man. Lord have mercy, did I look like a square.

As I looked out the window thinking about all of this, I was absentmindedly listening to the tattooed lady at the juke box when she asked her family a question.

“Other than Stephen and Damian, did Bob Marley have any other sons that played reggae?”

When I noticed they were stuck for an answer, I looked up and said, “Ziggy is pretty good.”

The sister was the first to grin, and then she laughed out loud, followed by the rest. She looked me up and down and said, “Well, that's a surprise. You sure don't look like you would know that!”

I said, “Well, looks can be deceiving sometimes.”

In truth, I was saying it more to myself than I was to them.

In a little while our cholesterol-laden meals arrived, and in the interim, I admired and played with the children a little and had a good conversation with the family. We actually struck up a short-term casual friendship. It was delightful.

As we turned to our plates to eat, the little girl's daddy asked me to say grace over the meal. So we all bowed our heads together and thanked the Lord for his bounty, our sudden and surprising friendship and a good laugh.

I left that place with a hint of shame at my jumping to conclusions, but with an inward grin at the lessons taught and a new appreciation for the upcoming generation.

The Lord kept throwing this old memory in my path this week as I considered what to write. I think I know why he did it. He has been trying to teach me a lesson, and perhaps we could all benefit from it.

We live in a polarized, hypersensitive, overwrought world. It seems everyone has taken sides about almost everything these days, and we Christians are no less guilty than anyone else in this matter. In the heat of battle, however, we as the children of God are called upon to rise above the fray by remembering a couple of things.

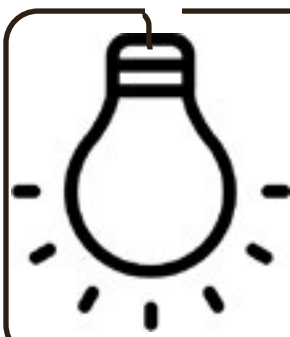
First and foremost, every human being that has walked on this planet or ever will walk on it was, is and will be created in the image of God, by God. In turn they are to be treated accordingly, with respect. In today's climate it is often difficult to remember that. We must keep that in mind or our witness for Christ will suffer.

Secondly, over the years I have been blessed to travel the world, and I have discovered that no matter the race, no matter the language, no matter the locale and no matter the religion, deep down we human beings are pretty much the same. We are all afraid of the dark, and in our fear we shatter the peace, joy and contentment that our Creator longs for his children to enjoy.

You, as God's child, are called upon to be the light that Christ created you to be, and in so doing, bring peace, joy and contentment to those around you.

And finally, judge not and be not judged. Wear your muumuu whenever you want to, and I'll wear my muumuu, too.

Rowell is the pastor of Beulah United Methodist Church, Gilbert. He's also the author of *What Would Granny Say? a 79-essay collection published by the Advocate Press and available on Amazon and at www.advocatesc.org/books.*



Did You Know?

The *Advocate* offers a free one-year subscription to anyone who joins a United Methodist Church in South Carolina. Send us your new members' names and addresses and the name of your church and we'll get them started on becoming more informed about our conference and our church.



View from the Pews

by Bill Barnier

Rate me a 10

Anyone who has purchased products or services in the last couple of years is familiar with being advised they will be getting a satisfaction survey. The purchaser is then advised to rate the salesperson or product as a “10,” meaning nothing could be improved, or don’t bother to return the survey.

What they really want is not the truth, but rather an affirmation that the product or service was perfect, even if it was not.

I ponder just what purpose a survey serves if the truth may be unwelcome and discarded.

In this day and age, the recognition of less than perfect is similar to everyone on the team getting the same trophy when only a few actually earned the honor. Allowing negative survey results to be cancelled creates a false sense of accomplishment. It removes any incentive to create better products or learn skills to earn praise or recognition. It also removes any motivation by the purchaser to offer corrective feedback because doing so has no effect. For the provider, such inaccurate surveys stop any chance of innovation, growth or change, which might lead to actual revenue enhancements or customer loyalty.

How often have we been asked to return a survey rating our Creator? If we were to actually rate God for his skills or services provided, would we have anything negative to say? Perhaps we would rate his creation of everything as perfect but add a very slight ding for giving free will to humans and allowing Satan access to us. Scripture tells of Job who would certainly be given the prize for the human most deserving of a perfect survey, right along with Jesus and Moses.

What if the tables were reversed? What if we, who claim our birthright as children of a perfect God, had to stand before a panel of heavenly bosses for a quarterly lifetime

review? Just as in a traditional workplace, about every 20 years of our life we would be given the opportunity to hear how we’re doing. We might be given the chance to explain why we didn’t measure up in a particular situation. We may also receive positive recognition for that which we do correctly. We may then receive a God “smile rating.” A frown means we better change, or we could get up to five “God smiles” for living a life that pleases God. No sliding scale or scores on a curve, either.

Carrying the fantasy one step further, at the time of our death a lifetime of such reviews would be presented to a Heavenly Clearing Committee, who would make their recommendation to God as to who measured up and who didn’t. Those who score at the bottom are discarded to eternal warmth, while the higher-scoring souls are allowed to stay or perhaps given the chance to try again.

It may matter which instruction manual you lived by. We all have the capacity to understand love, caring, compassion, peace, generosity, sacrifice, etc. But if we select the instruction manual for which these God-given abilities are used for evil, it’s probably a good bet we won’t like the final judgement.

Of course, we all know this scenario is musing of an old guy. But we are indeed given the opportunity to evaluate ourselves each and every day we live. Each new dawn is a fresh page in our life evaluation book, and we must take great care about what is on each page.

Our Creator gave us forgiveness insurance to cover the unintentional mishaps that occur on our life travels. But the more we use it, the higher the premiums become.

Cancellation is permanent!

Barnier attends St. Paul United Methodist Church, Ridgeland.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Leonard Huggins Jr.

A daily schedule for going back to school

“My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don’t neglect your mother’s instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck.”—Proverbs 1:8-9 (NLT)

Here are some practical tips for children/youth going back to school.

Morning

Wake up with morning prayer. Think about how you want to start your day. Keep in mind that you are in control of your day with the help of God, family, teachers and friends.

Get up.

Make your bed.

Greet your family; saying “good morning” never goes out of style.

Wash up.

Get dressed for school.

Eat a nutritious breakfast at home or school, but make sure you eat. Breakfast is the fuel your body needs to get the day started.

Leave for school on time so you don’t have to rush.

Arrive at school and pay attention and respect the leaders in authority.

When the school day begins, remember the teacher is in charge.

Watch your manners; good manners never go out of style.

Afternoon

Return home from school or afterschool program.

Snack, relax and do your homework.

Share your day with your parents/guardians.

Eat dinner: This is a very important part of your schedule. If you need assistance, please seek the help of your parents/guardians.

Homework is very important. Please ask for help if needed. Parents, be sure to help children with their homework or solicit the help of a tutor through an afterschool program.

Pack your bookbag and get ready for the next day.

Evening:

Shower or bathe and get ready for the next day.

Say your evening prayers.

Goodnight and sweet dreams!

In 1 Corinthians 15:33, we’re told, “Don’t fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you” (CEV). If nothing else, bad friends will get you into trouble.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “He that lieth down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas.” If you don’t want fleas, don’t play with dogs that have them.

If you don’t want to curse, steal, kill or rob someone, don’t associate yourself with people who do these things. If you don’t want to get into trouble, be careful not to associate yourself with troublemakers.

The most important education you can get in life is in church and Sunday school. In these environments, you learn about God and Jesus. Jesus is the one person who can make you into a better person.

You learn how to love God and treat others. You learn principles like, “I won’t hurt you” and “You won’t hurt me.”

When you are following Jesus, you pay attention and are respectful to your parents and those in authority.

I am praying for a blessed, prosperous and safe school year for all students.

Huggins pastors Shady Grove United Methodist Church, St. George.

McFadden leads worship for Hickory Hill UMC’s Laity Sunday

SMOAKS—Hickory Hill United Methodist Church observed Laity Sunday Oct. 10 with a message from someone they call a “dynamic WOG (Woman of God)”—Clara Hodges McFadden.

McFadden’s sermon was on “Spiritual Gifts.” As she preached, we discover these gifts in our everyday journeys of discovery. These journeys help us grow in our relationship with God. All of our gifts are different, and they help us grow in our call to discipleship and ministry.

As she noted, love, faith, serving, giving and wisdom are only a few of these spiritual gifts.

“How are you using your gift to magnify God in both spirit and truth? You never know how much of an impact your gift will make both in the church and community if you don’t use the gift to its full potential,” she told the body. “We were given these gifts and God expects us to use them.”

As McFadden noted, God is a giver. He provides and to gives us.

“Let’s combine these gifts and use them so that the church can be productive and thrive,” she added. “In 1 Corinthians 12:7, it reads, ‘To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.’ We must nurture the church to help it grow.”



The Rev. Adrienne E. Stokes and Hickory Hill UMC members offered thanks to McFadden, above, for what they called a blessing of a message.

McFadden is a native of Colleton County and attended the public schools of both Colleton and Charleston counties. She retired after 27 years from the College of Charleston where she served as the executive assistant to the provost and senior vice president of academic affairs. The mother of one son and stepmother of two other sons, she attends Hickory Hill UMC in SMOAKS with her husband, Harold.

The music ministry at First United Methodist Church of Myrtle Beach ROCKS! Whether it is traditional music for our 8:30 and 11:00 Sunday services, our 11:00 Sunday and 5:45 Monday contemporary services, or our special concerts, etc. all of our music is exceptional! Our Director of Music, Norman McQueen, ensures that our music ministry supports and enhances worship and ministry at First Church! Norman’s awesome team is composed of Grant Nesmith (Contemporary Music Director), Jayne Smith (Adult and Children’s Handbell Director), Eve Harris (Children’s Choir Director), and D. Scott Ferguson (organist/pianist). Adult choirs regularly lead the traditional congregations while The First Church Band leads our contemporary services. Our children sing and ring at various times throughout the year, and our adult handbells ring for numerous occasions within the life of the church. Special Sundays as well as special events are times that Norman and his team amp up joy and worship by combining the groups for an extraordinary musical offering. The Fourth of July concert is a particularly exciting concert as musicians and singers from the community are invited to join First Church in a patriotic concert. Depending upon the time you are at First Church, you may hear Handel, old time gospel, or the top contemporary Christian songs. God has richly blessed us with much talent, and we try to enjoy the joyful noise of music and song as often as we can. If you are ever in Myrtle Beach, please come enjoy a Sunday at First Church!

Thank you to all our singers and musicians at First Church! We are blessed because you share your gifts with us!

We love and appreciate **Dru West**,
our handbell choir director at Cannon’s Camp Ground UMC!



Guest Commentary

by Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe

The traumatic legacy of indigenous boarding schools: Recognizing grief over historic wrongs and using truth to heal

Editor's note: Reprinted with permission of General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church.

I serve on a team for the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace of the World Council of Churches. For more than six years, this international multifaith team has traveled to different parts of the world, listening and learning from people and communities whose voices are often marginalized and ignored.

Their stories are traumatic and sometimes tragic. This year, via Zoom, we sat and listened to stories of indigenous communities in North America, including those in Standing Rock and Minneapolis in the U.S. and Winnipeg, the Toronto area and the Artic Circle in Canada. The vision, strength and courage of these communities as they address the issues of land and dispossession, gender violence and racial violence is remarkable.

On a June morning during this year's pilgrimage, our hearts were broken. As we sat together for devotions by Archbishop Marc MacDonald of the Anglican Church of Canada, we heard of the recent discovery of the 215 bodies of children in unmarked graves in land close to a residential school on Turtle Island, a traditional Native territory.

The news of the unmarked graves was a "gut punch to the community," said MacDonald, the first national indigenous Anglican bishop. He then told us, "We are now grieving as we listen patiently and provide space to hear the deep sorrow of the survivors of the residential schools."

Our pilgrimage team heard horrifying stories of how these children often were taken far from their families as part of a deliberate policy to "get rid of the Indian in the child." The children often lived in poor conditions. Their braids were cut and they were sometimes abused. We saw one photograph of a particular school which operated from 1890 until 1969 and was the largest of its kind. A heart-wrenching painting of the church leaders taking children from their families is emblazoned in my mind.

At the same time of the exposure of these (and other) atrocities in territories in Canada, similar stories of racism and colonialism were breaking in the United States. The U.S. Department of Interior has cast light on the forcing of thousands of Native American children into "Indian boarding schools," separating them from their families and cultures.

These residential schools grew out of the church attempting to "evangelize" and colonize Native peoples. Such actions were rationalized by the Doctrine of Discovery, which established spiritual, political and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians. Under a Papal decree in 1493, for example, Christian European explorers claimed the land and waterways they allegedly discovered to promote Christian domination and superiority in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Americas.

A recent statement by United Methodist leaders, Remembering Native American Victims of U.S. Schools (see box, this page), supports the Department of the Interior investigation and pledges to study and investigate Methodist-related boarding schools

As people of faith and for those of us who are U.S. citizens, we must seek truth in order to address the trauma. Only truth can begin to heal trauma. Healing is needed not only for the survivors of white supremacy, colonialism and racism, but also for the church, which has been complicit in the systems of oppression and violence.

In the Christian faith, we believe we can repent of the hurt and the harm we have done—our sin. We cannot undo it. But in the listening, the hearing, the recognition and the mourning, healing may come.

Tell Congress to support the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School policy. To learn more about Church and Society's efforts in this area: <https://tinyurl.com/gbcs-indigenous>.

Henry-Crowe, a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference, is the general secretary of the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church.



Photograph of Capt. Pratt and students at the Carlisle Industrial School, black and white photographic print, 13 cm by 21.5 cm. Capt. Richard Henry Pratt served as the head of the Carlisle Industrial School, where Native Americans were sent. Photograph circa 1900 (undated). Pratt died in 1924. Courtesy of the Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons.

Remembering Native American Victims of U.S. schools

Excerpted—full statement at umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/remembering-native-american-victims-of-u-s-schools-1417

Recent media reports, a public education campaign, and the announcement of an investigation by the U.S. Department of the Interior have cast renewed light on one of the most shameful practices in the deplorable treatment of the indigenous people of North America by European colonists across 500 years. This was the forcing of thousands of Native American boys and girls into "Indian boarding schools" in a deliberate attempt to separate them from their families and cultures.

Disturbing new reports from both Canada and the U.S. indicate that, in some cases, large numbers of the young people died in school custody without notice to families and were buried in mass schoolyard graves. Some of these burials have been documented internally in boarding school records, but others have not.

While authorized and primarily funded by government, some of these schools were also sponsored or operated by religious organizations, including several with Methodist affiliations. Some Methodists and their institutions shared and promoted the sentiment that indigenous people must be "Christianized" and then "civilized" to be regarded as human beings, or as stated by prominent proponents, "Kill the Indian and save the man."

We know the names and locations of a number of Methodist-related Native American boarding schools and efforts are underway to identify as many such institutions as may have existed. We need to better understand our complicity in this form of cultural genocide and to bring the boarding schools more clearly into focus in our expression of repentance for the inhumane treatment to which the church and its members subjected indigenous people in the past. Such repentance was expressed by the 2012 United Methodist General Conference.

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition represents an effort to educate the public in the U.S. about these schools and their lingering harmful legacy. In light of the recent reports of abuse and neglect, the coalition has called for September 30, 2021, to be observed a National Day of Remembrance for U.S. Indian Boarding Schools. This date aligns with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation that is dedicated in Canada to residential school survivors.

The National Day of Remembrance is being observed by Native American United Methodist leaders, including the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, Native American Comprehensive Plan, Native American International Caucus and numerous annual conference committees on Native American Ministries. Our agencies join

our Native American sisters and brothers in this special occasion, an opportunity for individual grief and collective reaffirmation of the 2012 "Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People." Suggestions from the healing coalition for ways to remember the victims and survivors of the schools can be found online.

We welcome a recent announcement by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland that the Bureau of Indian Affairs will investigate the programs and operations of these boarding schools. We will share information we may discover in our investigation of Methodist involvement in such institutions. ...

In the face of renewed focus on the damages done by the boarding schools, we:

- Endorse and join the Day of Remembrance on September 30, 2021;
- Welcome the investigation underway by the U.S. Department of the Interior;
- Pledge to conduct our own study and investigation of Methodist-related boarding schools;
- Seek to embody in our work the spirit of our church's 2012 "Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People";
- Review and implement as possible recommendations for healing and reconciliation found in the resolution of 2016, including measures to increase the role and visibility of Indigenous persons and communities; and
- Promote equity and justice for Native Americans in both church and society.

Signed September 27, 2021, by:

General Board of Global Ministries, Roland Fernandes, General Secretary; United Methodist Women, Harriett Olson, General Secretary; General Board of Church and Society, Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary; General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Greg Bergquist, General Secretary; Discipleship Ministries, Jeff Campbell, Acting General Secretary; General Commission on Archives and History, Ashley Boggan Dreff, General Secretary; General Commission on Religion and Race, Giovanni Arroyo, General Secretary; General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, Dawn Wiggins Hare, General Secretary; United Methodist Communications, Dan Krause, General Secretary; General Commission on United Methodist Men, Gil Hanke, General Secretary; and General Council on Finance and Administration, Moses Kumar, General Secretary

What do you think?
Write a letter to the editor:
advocate@umcsc.org

HEALTH AND HOPE: Videos, study guide for use by churches

From Page 1

currently living with cancer. “These unspoken conversations are a contributing factor in our overall declining health.”

Weston said she and the rest of the production team hope the series can be used in discussions with local churches, schools, health clinics and other community organizations, helping people understand resources and other tools available to them and creating an accepting environment where open conversations can be held about these health issues.

They have also developed a study guide for use with the videos.

The first video, on cancer, is available now. Production on the second video, about diabetes, is going on now, and the third video will focus on stroke and heart disease.

“The intent of the series is to provide information and encourage families to have real conversations about real health care-related issues,” Weston said.

As the question is posed in the video:

Does the Black community talk about health enough?

St. Mark’s pastor, the Rev. Charles L. White Jr., said the project was entirely led by the church laity and provides an opportunity to make an impact not only on the church but also the community as a whole.

“These diseases are sometimes silent killers in our community because we’re afraid to have these open discussions,” White said.

The videos enable St. Mark to be advocates for health care, educating people about diseases and creating awareness about treatment plans and affordable health care.

As the cancer video shares, when it comes to most cancers, Black people have the highest death rate and shortest survival period of any racial group in the United States. Prostate cancer is the most diagnosed cancer among Black men, while breast cancer is the most diagnosed cancer among Black women.

Cancers of the lung and colon are also common.

The video shares the cancer experiences of a number of people within their congrega-

tion. For instance, Sheila Bradley, now 22 years cancer-free, underwent both surgery and chemotherapy after she was diagnosed with rare small bowel cancer. Her faith testimony is woven into her cancer story.

Solomon Bradley, also now cancer-free, shares his battle with prostate cancer, which required him to take an active role in his care and treatment.

Eugene Smith was diagnosed with colon cancer from a routine colonoscopy. Luckily, his was detected early, and he is able to keep it at bay with healthy eating and regular exercise.

Weston also shares in the video her own battle with breast cancer, enduring two surgeries, eight rounds of chemotherapy and 33 rounds of radiation. While she was declared cancer-free, the cancer returned, now metastatic—and terminal.

St. Mark is sharing the video on their website, <http://stmarktaylorssc.com/a-series-of-hope-part-one-cancer>, as well as on Facebook. The diabetes and the stroke/heart disease videos will also be displayed there when they are complete.

“

These diseases are sometimes silent killers in our community because we’re afraid to have these open discussions.

—Rev. Charles White Jr.

”

APPORTIONMENTS: Walterboro District leading payments so far

From Page 1

better chance of paying 100 percent now,” she said. “Of course, we would like to see it higher, but we know some churches are still struggling with the return from COVID.”

As of Oct. 20, churches in the Walterboro District are

leading the payments with a collection rate of 78.71 percent. Florence District churches are in second place with 71.57 percent, which Westbury said is a significant increase over the prior year, which was 53.40 percent.

Columbia District is in third place with 69.29 percent. Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, is the last day to pay apportion-

ments. Payments must be in the treasurer’s office by 4 p.m. that day.

If the church is paying electronically through Vanco, the payment must be initiated by 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 12, to allow time for payments in process to clear and for staff to prepare for the 2022 year.

THREE BOOKS: Salkehatchie, Holt’s reflections, spiritual esteem

From Page 1

The Salkehatchie book contains stories written by Salkehatchie volunteers from the ministry’s early days. Founded by Culp, Salkehatchie started in 1978 and continues every summer, with the exception of the last two years because of COVID-19. Registration starts soon for the 2022 season, and ministry leaders hope the stories will inspire and encourage a new generation of students to come alongside seasoned adults to repair homes in some of South Carolina’s most poverty-stricken communities. Many of the people who wrote the stories were teens when they volunteered and now are doctors, lawyers, advocates and other key leaders in their field; Culp said one is even a diplomat

stationed at the United States Embassy in Italy.

Holt’s book is a reflection from the retired longtime pastor about his spiritual journey, exploring how his theology has changed over the years from conservative evangelical to theological liberal. As the book asks, “Are you wavering in some of your theological convictions? Have you given faith the boot from your life, believing it has no place in our modern scientific world? Or are you confused about how to reconcile what you read in Scripture with the “love all” model Jesus Christ offers in his own life?” Holt hopes his reflections—on everything from abortion, science, sexuality and the End Times to sin, the spirit and the Bible—will help others in their own faith journey.

And Joens and Taylor’s “Walk with Me” is a fascinating exploration of the messy journey of living out our faith, helping readers dive into the concept of spiritual esteem, gain confidence in their relationship with God and discover how the Lord perfectly equips people with all they need to serve and lead—no perfectionism required. It asks important questions such as: What are we waiting for? What do we need to give us the confidence to lead in the church? Are we holding out for a self-help book called, “Get Over It and Lead in the Church?” Or are we waiting for a 10-step program or course that provides us a certificate that proclaims we are now equipped to lead in our church? These don’t exist. As the introduction explains, “This book is about having the vulnerability to be

in an authentic relationship with God, with yourself and with others. This authentic relationship fuels the courage to show up, lean in and reach out to people even when you have no idea of the outcome. It calls for courage to be there for someone who needs you and risk what is beyond your control.”

The books will be released in November. Check advocatesc.org/books for updates and preorders.

The *Advocate* has two more books slated for publication before the end of the year: a poetry collection by Stephon C. Void, “From My Heart to Your Eyes: Poems of Faith and Social Justice,” and a devotional for youth, “Who Am I?” by Cindy Barrineau Curtis. More information will come on these books in the next edition of the *Advocate*.

Fall clergy orders to address ‘Healing the Healers’

Alethia King, a licensed professional counselor, will serve as the presenter for the 2021 Fall Clergy Orders. It will be Nov. 18 at 9 a.m. via Zoom.

King will speak on “Healing the Healers: Navigating the Danger Zone.”

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston will be the opening speaker.

Registration fee is \$5, and active clergy who cannot participate should notify their district superintendent.

Register by Nov. 16 at <https://www.umcsc.org/clergyordersregistration>.



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RESET FOR MEN'S MINISTRY: 'Our connection will help'

From Page 1

"It's spiritual, not just a civic duty," Horton said.

First, he said, conference and district men's ministry leaders will do what they can to re-establish local connections, communicating with district superintendents and other leaders in their area to get to know people again. This is the phase they have been working on lately, trying their best to reconnect with their charter and sponsor churches and embrace the wider vision of men's ministry.

After all, Horton said, "United Methodist Men is who we are, but Men N Ministry is what we do. That's what we've been focusing on."

Soon, they'll be meeting with individuals and groups in their areas to discern how men's ministry can be helpful, compiling resources and other tools to help cultivate a climate of mutual mission/ministry goals.

They'll also be encouraging connections with other men's ministry leaders across the state with an understanding no one is working alone but as part of a team.

"Basically, it's an attempt to get all the districts working on one page," Horton said. "Ministering to men is a tough business, and finding and working with a leadership team, or with another close by who knows what it is to try and lead a bunch of men, will be a tremendous support."

In February, men will again gather at Mount Horeb United Methodist Church, Lexington, for a men's spiritual retreat and golf tournament that they hope will spur on the work they have been doing. The golf tournament is Feb. 25, and the retreat is all day Feb. 26. Speakers and a theme are being developed now.

Men across the state echo Horton's sentiment that the last year and a half have been



Photo by William Baker

Adrian Despres prays with more than 300 men who gathered at Mount Horeb UMC, Lexington, for their fall men's event in October. Across the state, men are making an effort to reconnect with people who might feel disconnected with men's ministry because of the pandemic.

extraordinarily difficult. COVID-19 closed doors and kept many from meeting in person, not to mention other life struggles. For instance, Anderson District United Methodist Men President Chuck Blowers said he has little to report on districtwide activity, having suffered a stroke late in 2019, then adding COVID-19 into the equation. Yet he is looking forward to holding a district meeting this year and doing other things to reconnect with other men with the same goal.

Harry White, Florence District president, said he's eager to implement more cross-racial activity. As a Black man, he's made strides connecting with people in predominantly Black churches though an active ramp-building effort, but he personally wants to see more unity with people of all races do-

ing ministry together.

United Methodist Men have roughly 10 active or getting-active district presidents across the 12 districts, and they are working to mobilize all districts.

As Horton said, "This ministry to men and their families is more than church attendance, but about where we spend eternity. This is only the beginning.

"It's through our connection that we'll thrive and grow."

Here, the Advocate chats with men's ministry district leaders about their hopes for this year and current issues facing the church:

Chuck Blowers, Anderson District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward to elections and holding a district meeting.

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? I believe just survival during these pressing times.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? A reigniting of Men N Ministry all across the district and conference.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I am a retired master carpenter/builder and an avid big game hunter. I've been married to my darling bride for 38 years with two grown children and two wonderful grandchildren.



Blowers

Charles Shipman, Columbia District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward to connecting and reconnecting with men in the Columbia District. I look forward to serving with them in efforts to improve our ministry to men.

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? Asking are we relevant in our communities? Are our churches recognized in our community as a positive member?

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful?

The one thing I would like to know that was successful one year from now would be that our men's ministry in the Columbia



Shipman

District is healthy and is active.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I am employed by a small health care consulting firm that works with home health and hospice agencies. I am an armchair sports spectator. I like to read and to occasionally play golf. Mitzi and I have two adult children and three grandchildren. Our daughter and her family live in Charleston, and our son and his family live in Hastings, New York.

Harry White, Florence District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? We have our ramp building ministry we're trying to stay involved with, mainly in the Black churches, and we are working with our district superintendent to try to get our ramp ministry more across the board. I'm looking forward to getting it out to the White community, too. We can't seem to come together, but we need to get the word out.

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? For some reason, we have a wall and everyone wants to build their wall. Blacks don't trust the Whites and Whites don't trust the Blacks. It's like we don't want to work together for whatever reason. We don't want to visit each other's churches. This needs to change. I wish I knew the answer, and I wish pastors would start encouraging this.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? I would love to see some unity across the board. I'd like to think we've accomplished something, done something together, whether a ramp ministry or some other ministry or whatever. I'd love for our ramp ministry to have grown into something.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I'm a welding instructor at Florence Darlington Technical College, I've been married 52 years to Lorraine, and we have two sons and a daughter.

The Rev. Gerald Clinkscales, Greenwood District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward to seeing the Greenwood District Methodist Men becoming focused on ministering within our communities. We have many smaller groups within the district, and our aim is to help the groups become connectional pulling their resources, their time and talents together accomplishing goals together through connectional units.

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? The most pressing issue today is navigating the current health crisis as congregations. There are small churches that are still not having live services or events. Without their regular crowds on Sunday, local small churches are adjusting. Some congregations are providing virtual services or pivoting to outdoor services, while others are maintaining their social programs despite the challenges of doing so while social distancing. Unfortunately, not everyone is comfortable. Local churches must continue to be creative when it comes to church amid the pandemic and always consider the health and welfare of the most vulnerable members of our congregations.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? I would like to look back and see that every decision we made about the church and her future was the right choice for every individual situation, despite all the obstacles we have faced over the past two years.



Clinkscales

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4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I am a local pastor of a three-point charge (Crossroads-Martha's Chapel-Mays) in the Greenwood District. I have one son, Aric, who is a senior at Appalachian State University and a faithful housemate named Violet, a Staffordshire terrier.

Gregg Riley, Hartsville District United Methodist Men co-president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward to visiting many churches in the Hartsville District to get to know the men, worship and share ministry opportunities with them. We are planning to train men in No Man Left Behind, a model for disciplining men. The goal is to help and support each man in moving into a closer, more personal relationship with Christ.



Riley

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues in our local churches? One issue is welcoming all persons, regardless of socioeconomic status and other differences, to worship and church activities. Just as Christ would welcome all, we must do the same. Another issue is to encourage parents to come to church and bring their children to church. A small child should know Jesus and understand how Jesus wants us to live and treat others. A third issue is helping each and every person know there is a place for each person to serve. As we are different, we have differing spiritual gifts to offer and contribute to the body of Christ.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? That many men from different churches got to know each other and share their love for Christ with each other. That many men were encouraged to grow spiritually and experience Christ in a close and personal way.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I am a retired educator with 42 years of service as a teacher, coach, guidance counselor and administrator in South Carolina's public schools. I love to read, share special times with my family, participate in church activities, travel and do yard work. I have been married for almost 50 years and have two daughters and six grandchildren.

Bill Keese, Marion District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? Being able to meet and discuss the needs of our district, to have an open meeting with the district members able to attend with a special speaker, to add to our charter churches and to have a special project the whole district can work on.



Keese

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues in our local churches? Getting our churches back to normal in attendance. COVID-19 has a lot of our older members afraid to return. We have to keep our faith in God strong. We have to reach out to those attending and have them call those not attending yet.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? The growing of our UMM charters. New men's groups to churches that don't have a UMM. Knowing that the Marion District is reaching out to all in need and helping as much as we can.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I have just recently gone back to work after several years of retirement and am working in the building

supply business. I love to golf. But my main job is raising our 12-year-old grandson, Christophe. He keeps me young. Most of all, I have missed mission trips. We have had to cancel the last two years. I hope to go next summer.

Steve Lathrop, Orangeburg District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward mostly to resuming our normal activities once the pandemic has subsided. My original plans were to resume this summer, but the variant has impacted those plans. I am looking forward to face-to-face encounters with the men of the district, and hopefully this fall we will resume.



Lathrop

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues in our local churches? There are numerous issues that exist currently within the church. Hopefully a path forward will eventually be initiated at the General Conference level, but it does not look like it will occur this year. However, at the district level, and within the local churches, there are several issues. We seem to concentrate on reaching out to the younger men, but we must not disregard the existing senior men. The major issue is how to develop the structure of the United Methodist Men to meet the needs and requirements of each generation. We also need to continue striving to put our emphasis on discipling men. The tendency is to concentrate on social gatherings and meetings. But we must continue to strive to be a bastion of making disciples of the men in our churches.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? Hopefully entering 2022 we can all look back on how well the men of the church persevered within the pandemic and grew to encompass all the men of the church. We need to be able to look back and feel that we have, in fact, created new disciples of Christ.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. Personally I am trying to be active within the church. At the local level we are continuing with our ramp ministry, we have several different Bible studies for men within the church and we are there for the men. I also keep relatively busy as a Stephen Leader within Stephen Ministries.

Bob James, Rock Hill District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? I am looking forward to seeing the district UMM units getting back to active meetings, planning missions, activities and fundraisers. Our UMM District Leadership Team has set goals of reaching out to as many men as possible in the coming year and providing support, resources and the means of communicating with each other across the district.



James

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues in our local churches? There are many pressing issues our local churches are facing: How to get members off their couches and back to the Sunday worship services. How to encourage members to be patient with the global issues that will not be addressed until August 2022 at the earliest, and not "give up" on Methodism and go elsewhere as a number of local church members have during the past year. How to get the "under 40s" interested in being active in the missions of the local church. How to overcome apathy that can be prevalent with our members, especially men.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? A success story for men in the Rock Hill District would be an intentional, positive response to a community need by Methodist men, especially between multiple UMM units and men from churches across the district—men making a difference.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I have been happily married to Linda for 47 years and have three adult children, all active in their churches. I am an active member of Woodland UMC in Rock Hill and have held numerous leadership positions in the church. I participate on the South Carolina Conference Commission on Archives & History. I have also just accepted the position of Rock Hill District Lay Leader, which I will attempt to balance with my role of district UMM president. I am employed, by choice, as a pharmacy analyst for a national major health care group purchasing organization in Charlotte. What little spare time I have is taken up with vegetable gardening and enjoying family.

Jeff Tillerson, Spartanburg District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? This year I'm looking forward to the fellowship with the UMM in person again, but I know it's going to be an uphill climb.



Tillerson

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? The challenges we see that are impacting the UMM is recruiting the younger generation of men.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? We have grown as ministry, and we are stronger than before in 2022.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. During this time in this trying year, it has allowed me to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities like golfing, vacationing and just being thankful and blessed for the time we have here on this beautiful place God created.

Alvin Glen, Walterboro District United Methodist Men president

1. What are you most looking forward to as the UMM district president this year? To visit the men and have a face-to-face talk about where they are currently and what things they plan to do moving forward. Being able to fellowship with men in person safely.



Glen

2. What do you think are our most pressing issues within the local churches? How to get fully engaged in the sanctuaries and the community after worshipping online for a year.

3. What is one thing a year from now you would like to look back and know was successful? A full return to worship, fellowship and outreach.

4. Share a few things about your profession, hobbies, family, etc. I serve as conference men's vice president as well as men's ministry president of the Walterboro district and St. John (Dorchester) lay leader. I am a husband of 41 years, a father of five and a grandfather. I'm currently in my 42nd year as a public school art instructor. I have received awards for my artwork and was awarded teacher of the year several years ago. I also enjoying fishing and boating with my children and soon with my grandchildren. I enjoy helping form ideas and helping people find ways best for them to be successful. Leadership is rewarding, but I'd much rather be in the background.

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Claflin University remains a top-10 institution in U.S. News & World Report's 2022 list of best historically black colleges and universities

ORANGEBURG—"Claflin University not only survived—we thrived," said Claflin President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack looking at how quickly the university's faculty, staff, students and alumni adapted to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By transitioning to innovative teaching and learning modules and working cohesively as a team, the university continued to operate effectively. Despite challenges, Claflin achieved national accreditation for its School of Education, approval to launch a new Master of Science in Nursing program during the Fall 2021 semester, record-breaking fundraising success—and a spot on U.S. News & World Report's "Top 10" of the nation's Best Historically Black Colleges/Universities for the 11th consecutive year. Claflin is the only HBCU in South Carolina ranked in the Top 10.

The publication ranked Claflin seventh in the Best

Regional Colleges in the South category. Institutions in this group focus on undergraduate education but grant fewer than half their degrees in liberal arts disciplines.

Claflin was third in the U.S. News ranking of the Top Performers on Social Mobility for Regional Colleges in the South.

"These rankings reflect our ongoing commitment to academic excellence and student success. They also serve as a tribute to our outstanding faculty and staff, which during the past year redefined teaching and learning at Claflin during a global pandemic," Warmack said. "We applaud our students who also persevered and continued to pursue their dreams of earning a Claflin degree."

The U.S. News & World Report's Best HBCU ranking measures the quality of undergraduate education at historically Black colleges and universities. These HBCUs were

compared only with one another for this ranking. A school must currently be listed as part of the White House and U.S. Department of Education's Initiative on HBCUs to be included in U.S. News' HBCU ranking. To qualify for this U.S. News ranking, an HBCU also must be an undergraduate baccalaureate-granting institution that enrolls primarily first-year, first-time students and must be a school that is part of the 2022 Best Colleges rankings.

In total, 79 HBCUs were eligible to be included on the list; 78 of those were ranked, and one was unranked.

Regional Colleges rankings are split into four regions: North, South, Midwest and West.

Claflin also made U.S. News and World Report's lists of colleges recognized for efforts to achieve economic diversity and as a Best Undergraduate Computer Science Program among the Regional Colleges in the South.



Seminary snapshot

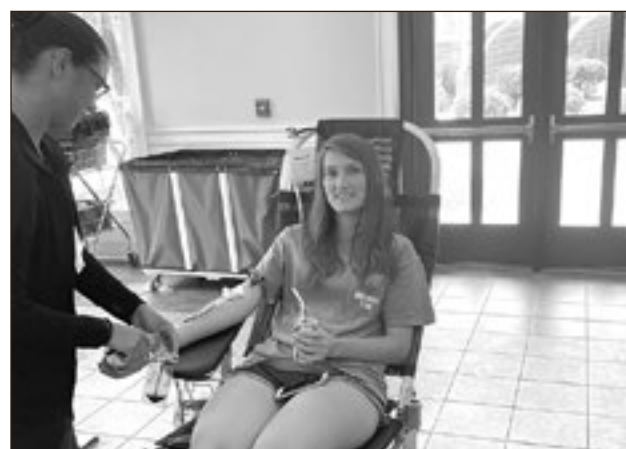
Is the Spirit nudging you? Do you have questions about seminary and ministry that just won't go away? Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia is opening its campus Nov. 14-15 for the community to enjoy intentional time in discernment with seminary professors, staff and students. People can worship in Christ Chapel, attend classes, eat farm-to-table meals and listen for God's voice in the midst of it. Housing and meals are provided at no cost. Find out more and register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/186299084577>.



Photo courtesy of Jane Peterson

Open doors

Youth at Washington Street UMC, Columbia, did a project together for Pride Month, collecting, painting and installing these colorful doors in front of the church's chapel. The doors remained on display for the whole month of October to signify open hearts and open doors at the church.



Manning youth stay active

Youth at Manning UMC, Manning, have been doing a variety of activities to stay active and engaged with each other and the community in the name of Jesus. Above left, Alyssa Gottheiner gives blood at a blood drive Aug. 2. That day, the Blood Connection donated \$20 for every person who donated blood back to the youth program at Manning UMC. Also this fall, a brand-new nine square game was donated to the church, and youth have been enjoying it as they spend time together in the Lord. And on Oct. 2, Manning held a yard sale that raised more than \$3,000 for youth at the church. All unsold items were donated to Habitat for Humanity or a local clothing mission to help people in need.



Columbia College new student enrollment up 73 percent

COLUMBIA—The final enrollment report for Columbia College's undergraduate program showed 282 new first-year students and transfer students compared to 163 in Fall 2020, a 73 percent increase.

Graduate enrollment is 327, up 37 percent from 238 in 2020 and up 130 percent from 142 in 2019.

President Dr. Tom Bogart attributes the

73 percent increase in undergraduates to three factors: engaging students, faculty, staff and alumni in the recruitment process; revising its marketing strategy and admissions process over the past 18 months; and admitting male students.

Males accounted for 63 of the additional 119 new students or 53 percent of the increase.

"We have a five-year plan to increase our enrollment by 50 percent in undergraduate and graduate students, and this year's enrollment is already ahead of projections," Bogart said.

"The future is very promising for Columbia College."

Vincent Maloney, dean of enrollment management, credits the entire college for the success.

"Everyone from the facilities personnel beautifying campus to faculty taking time to engage with prospective students made the

difference," Maloney said.

"The team in admissions has worked so hard to streamline the admissions process from application to the first day of class, and their commitment has paid off."

The result was a 57 percent increase in applications for admission.

"The extra work of faculty, staff, students and alumni improved our yield from applicant to student, which explains how we increased 57 percent in applications but increased 73 percent in new enrolled students," Maloney said.

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Hopewell UMW host free yard sale

When the United Methodist Women of Hopewell UMC, Lancaster, opened the doors to the Family Life Center for a free yard sale, they welcomed excited shoppers who were looking for just the right priceless treasures. One cardiac patient was excited to find a stationary bike that would enable him to continue exercising after his rehab was finished. A young couple found dishes for their new kitchen. Readers found a large selection of fiction and non-fiction to challenge and inspire. Toys and children's books thrilled the youngest visitors. By the end of the morning, only a few tables of items remained and they had received more than \$500 in donations for Red Bird Mission.

Washington Street to hold 'Sunday Dinner' for those in need

COLUMBIA—The Sunday Dinner team of Washington Street United Methodist Church will hold a socially distanced event, "Sunday Dinner—A Dinner for Those In Need," Sunday, Nov. 14, from 4-6 p.m. in the church parking lot.

The church, located on the corner of Washington and Bull streets in downtown Columbia, has been holding its Sunday dinner for more than five years. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the church has moved this event outdoors to help prevent any spread of COVID-19. In prior years, the Sunday dinner has been held inside in the church's social hall. Team members and volunteers would serve and dine with guests providing not only food but fellowship.

This year, volunteers from the church and the community will be helping serve guests a to-go style meal of baked potatoes, chili, cornbread, salad, dessert and drink. The Sunday Dinner Team is also collecting donations of cold-weather gear such as gloves, scarves, coats, jackets, sweaters and other winter clothing. The community is encouraged to donate these items.

The church will be accepting donations between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays through Nov. 13. You may drop off your donation just inside the Bull Street entrance.

Masks and social distancing will be required by all in attendance.

This mission, normally known in the community as the Sunday Dinner, is an outreach of the Sunday Dinner Mission Team of WSUMC. The Sunday Dinner was modeled after "Welcome Table," a ministry of the Haywood Street United Methodist Mission in Asheville, North Carolina. Through this program, WSUMC has continued to break down barriers and extend the family of God to its neighbors as a meal is shared.

Feeding those in need continues to be an important mission of WSUMC. During the week, WSUMC's Soup Cellar still provides a daily lunch for those in need in the community. On average, the Soup Cellar feeds between 95 to 125 people each weekday.

The Soup Cellar is open 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday to Friday on the Marion Street side of the church. Meals are free to anyone in need and are available for take-out only at this time.

Washington Street was established in 1803 and was the first Christian house of worship in Columbia.

Burroughs brings message of knitting together for God's work for Wesley Chapel Women's Day Celebration

By Dorothy McClam

LAKE CITY—Wesley Chapel United Methodist Women observed their annual Women's Day on Sunday, Aug. 8.

In keeping with their current program study, the theme and message title for the observance was "Knitted Together for God's Good Work." The morning's Scripture was Ephesians 4:25-5:3.

The speaker was Shirley Burroughs, who challenged the women to use their quiet time to pray for someone else.

"When we pray for others, we are knitting ourselves together for God's good work," Burroughs told the crowd.

She said when we are knitted together for God's good work, the result is one for all and all for one. Families become knitted together by praying together.

Burroughs said followers of Jesus are to "share love with everyone and be knitted

together for God's good work."

The United Methodist Women Pinning Ceremony followed the message and was presented by Wesley Chapel United Methodist Women President Betsy Graham and South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women Vice President Janice Eaddy. Recognized for their service were Cora Wilson, Delores Darby and Ella Julious.

"It moved me to take a deep look into myself, our UMW unit and our church," Graham said in response to the message. "It led me to ponder the question, 'Am I knitted together with other believers to do the work God has for me to do?' I do believe this is a question we all should constantly ask ourselves."

Graham thanked Burroughs for bringing such an inspiring, soul-stirring message to their unit.

McClam is communications coordinator.

Epworth Children's Home

The clock is ticking, and the future is bright

Six years ago, the Rev. Tim Rogers and I met with Bishop Jonathan Holston to discuss the possibility of a comprehensive campaign to strengthen Epworth's existing services and an expansion plan to reach more children with both remedial and preventive services. It was to help unify our conference around a common missional goal and to help sustain God's work through Epworth long into the future.

Out of that meeting came a pledge of support for a proposal to the South Carolina Annual Conference to consider, and hopefully adapt, a conference-wide financial campaign for Epworth Children's Home. The plan was presented, considered and unanimously adopted by our Annual Conference.

The Every Child Is a Miracle campaign as adopted contains four priorities:

1. Purchase a second campus (\$3 million)

There are many additional children who need the services that Epworth can provide. Epworth continues to expand its present capacity and programs with the purchase, renovation and staffing of the former Carolina Children's Home campus. This 19-acre, 14-building campus is now being used for residential, counseling, foster home and other support services. Epworth has borrowed funds on a low interest short-term note. The amount currently owed on this second campus is \$2,311,000. (Naming opportunity available.)

2. Establish and grow groundbreaking programs through the Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing (\$3 million)

The experience and knowledge gained through 125 years of ministry enables Epworth to comprehend emerging needs and changes in the landscape of child and family welfare and to effectively plan to meet the needs of children and families in the future. Through this institute, the number of strong foster families has increased dramatically, the bridge program for older youth transitioning from group care to the world of work and independence has been enlarged and strengthened, and the Family Care program for mothers and their young children has been strengthened and equipped. New hubs and satellites are being established in churches across South Carolina. The immediate need in this area is for \$250,000 to establish a missional hub in the next district.

3. Global child wellbeing (\$1 million)

Epworth believes in serving not only the children and families in South Carolina, but also in serving others across our connection as part of its mission and outreach. This campaign will provide for some of the most urgent needs of the children and youth at United Methodist facilities in Zimbabwe, Africa. Just as Epworth serves the needs of children and families in South Carolina, Fairfield Children's Home and Hartzell School provide for the needs of children who have no reliable support. This is in the area surrounding the Old Mutare Mission and Africa University. If our conference is successful in raising \$1 million, a title of our campaign, for Hartzell and Fairfield, it will be worth \$10 million to those agencies. It is rare that we have an opportunity to multiply our gifts by 10. If you would like to earmark a gift to the Global Child Wellbeing portion of the campaign in honor of Bishop and Mrs. Holston, please indicate this on your campaign gift.

There is also the Bishop's Committee for Children. For a gift of \$10,000 or greater, a person or group will be entered on the permanent roll of the Bishop's Committee for Children. Bishop Holston will be notified of your generosity. Contact Lisa Fusco for more information.

4. Long-term sustainability (\$3 million)

In the past 10 years, I have seen several long-serving childcare institutions close their doors, and there are more to come. It is vitally important to have a solid endowment that can bridge the gap during times of transition and economic change. Therefore, Epworth's Board of Trustees has set a target of growing Epworth's permanent endowment by \$3 million through this campaign. The income generated through Epworth's endowment each year enables Epworth to serve its children and families in superior ways. This income also enables us to not be overly dependent on a single source of income. This gives Epworth the freedom to do what is best for clients instead of what the changing service flavor of the month may dictate.

Epworth's endowment has grown because caring people for many years have designated gifts to be set aside in a permanent fund that not only grows, but also provides an annual income for the care of the children Epworth serves. Many have done this through their wills or through designated gifts.

The Every Child is a Miracle campaign is entering its final phase. Because of COVID-19, we at Epworth have not been able to hold church visitation events and dinners, and all the normal campaign activities associated with major campaigns. Yet within a few weeks we are confident we will be able to announce that we have reached the \$8 million mark.

This means we have only a few months left to raise the final \$2 million. This is vital for Epworth to accomplish what we have set out to accomplish. What a great celebration it will be to announce, at the end of Epworth's 125th year, at the South Carolina Annual Conference that the goal has been met, that lives are being changed in new ways, and in new places the love of God and the generosity of his people is colossally evident.

If you would like to discuss or would like more information about the campaign, please contact Lisa Fusco at lfusco@epworthsc.org or (803) 256-7394 or me at jholler@epworthsc.org or (803) 256-7394.

—John Holler, president emeritus

Trinity UMC Spartanburg

Ben Chumley is the greatest!!

He goes above and beyond the call in helping and preparing our church each Sunday. He has four choirs ready for special music and for Christmas. There is the wonderful three Sunday nights of Ring, Play and Sing. Everyone is welcome.

We love you, Ben – Hat & Deb

St. Stephen's Men's Ministry provided a back-to-school bash for members and the community. School supplies were distributed, and it was a fun-filled day with food and games, as well.



Outreach Ministry did an "Ice-Scream for Prayer" community activity that provided snow cones to children in various apartment complexes in Orangeburg.

Love in Action

St. Stephen reaches out to community through many activities

ORANGEBURG—Rev. Kenneth Carter and the St. Stephen United Methodist Church family continue to show the pandemic is not hindering them from providing love in action.

During the summer when most were hesitant about outreach services, St. Stephen was actively planning to find ways to reach out to and provide love to the community.

St. Stephen's Life Groups (formerly Age-Level Ministries) and other ministries of the church sponsored a number of activities. All ministries worked in collaboration to make all the events a success.

The church's CIA (Christians in Action) Young Adult Ministry sponsored a community event for children in the church and community. The event allowed the parents to learn more about the ministry and hope to become a church home for those without one. Area churches expressed gratitude for CIA thinking of the children in the community.

SAGE (Spiritual Anointed Gifted Eagles) Older Adults were able to work with various organizations that had a need for their transitional residents. The group donated baby items to Toby's Place, which is a women's only facility of Oliver Gospel Mission in Columbia, and held a pillow drive. Members of SAGE, as well as the congregation, donated more than 200 pillows to The Samaritan House in Orangeburg. SAGE has also agreed to be in continued partnership with these community-based facilities.

St. Stephen's Men's Ministry provided a back-to-school bash for members and the community. School supplies were distributed, and it was a fun-filled day with food and games, as well. CIA assisted them with this event.

Outreach Ministry did an "Ice-Scream for Prayer" community activity that provided snow cones to children in various apartment complexes in Orangeburg. There was an opportunity for fellowship, but the ultimate goal was to have students do a



SAGE (Spiritual Anointed Gifted Eagles) Older Adults donated baby items to Toby's Place, a women's only facility of Oliver Gospel Mission in Columbia.

virtual back-to-school prayer call, which was very successful. Outreach also donated \$500 to The Samaritan House as well as \$500 to CASA (Citizens Against Spousal Abuse) both in Orangeburg. In addition to St. Stephen members, members of various motorcycle clubs also participated, which gave the children a special treat.

ACES (Aspired College Embraced Scholars) Higher Education Ministry and Witness Ministries sponsored a virtual back-to-school prayer call where pre-kindergarteners through college-aged students joined to listen to speakers encouraging students as they returned to a "new normal" school experience for the upcoming school year.

St. Stephen UMC strives to operate as a church in the "NOW," focusing on Nurture, Outreach and Witness. Carter and his congregation are already preparing for the fall and the winter seasons to continue to make a positive spiritual impact on the community.



Von Robinson (on left) is a very proficient keyboard musician who has more than 40 years of experience. His son Racardo Robinson has been playing the drums for over 18 years.

The St. Paul-New Hope Charge in the Walterboro District is happy to have them a part of the music ministry team.

In the center is choir member Andrew King. Rev. Sharon Spann Gamble is the pastor of the charge.

Nov. 7 offering to support UMCSC Advance Special Ministries

Churches in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church will celebrate Advance Special Ministries Sunday Nov. 7.

On that day, local churches are encouraged to feature an offering in support of conference Advance Special Ministries, as well as supporting these ministries in their communities through volunteer work and in other ways.

The 15 Advance Special Ministries are missional organizations within the conference that have been recommended by the Conference Board of Global Ministries and approved by the Annual Conference.

These independently controlled and operated organizations share a connection to the South Carolina Conference, either through history or mission. They must apply for certification every quadrennium for approval and apply for funding every year. The 2021-2022 Advance Special Ministries are as follows:

Alston Wilkes Society: Provides offenders, former offenders, the homeless, at-risk youth, veterans and their families the tools they need to become productive citizens.

Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry: Responds to the call in communities to continue to light the flame of hope by striving to build and sustain communities of character with youth, young adults, adults and older adults who have high morality, integrity and commitment to be leaders for the sake of present and future generation.

Columbia Bethlehem Community Center: Educates and enriches the lives of individuals and families in the Midlands to help them achieve success.

Bethlehem Community Center (Spartanburg): Supports, strengthens and inspires individuals and families and support the redevelopment of the Highland community.

Christian Assistance Bridge: Provides hope and support to those in need in the community through a collaborative effort of local churches, individuals and support organizations.

Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center: As-

sists people on their journey toward healing and wholeness, ministering to individuals, couples and families in crisis through affordable holistic counseling, education and consultation.

The Cooperative Ministry: Increases the economic self-sufficiency of people experiencing poverty in the Midlands through crisis assistance and sustainability programs.

Interfaith Community Services: Works with faith and community partners to improve the lives of low-income children and families in South Carolina.

Jubilee Academy: Turns the hearts and lives of inner-city children, youth and families toward Christ and academic excellence.

Killingsworth Home: Provides transitional housing to adult women who are going through significant life changes.

PATH, Positive Affirmation Through Helping: Helps or ministers to those in need, including finding temporary aid in times of crisis and guiding them to appropriate social agencies.

Tracy Jackson Program (G.I.F.T): Feeds the bodies, minds and spirits of children by providing a free summer day camp-type experience, including free breakfast and free lunch and activities.

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)-South Carolina: Helps others at home and throughout the world through construction, medical and other activities.

United Ministries of Greenville: Serves and empowers those on the transformative journey to self-sufficiency.

Wallace Family Life Center: Provides educational, cultural, recreational and religious programs to enrich the lives of the people who live in the Wallace/Bennettsville communities.

For more on the ASMs including how to become an ASM, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/outreach/advance-special-ministries/>. You can also download a bulletin insert for the special Sunday at <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Advance-Special-Ministries-Sunday-2021-insert.pdf>.



United Methodist Women

by Janice Cockfield Eaddy

Training to lead

Greetings, God's people! The organized unit of United Methodist Women is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

As officers of this wonderful organization known as the South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women, we are called to be in mission work all around the world. We are all committed to doing God's work in fulfilling the purpose of our organization. In order to do his work and do it well, we must be trained to lead others to be mission-minded United Methodist Women.

The SCCUMW Officers are in the process of gathering written and verbal information to share with the district officers, district historians and district cluster leaders. This information will be beneficial for your district as you plan training workshops for local unit officers. District presidents are asked to communicate with your elected officers, historians and cluster leaders to gain their commitment to attend our 2021 Virtual District Officers' Training. We will meet via Zoom with Salem United Methodist Church serving as our host.

The theme for this program is "Continu-

ing Our Commitment to Our Purpose." The meeting will be Saturday, Nov. 6, starting at 10 a.m.. Please plan to join Zoom or call in no later than 9:45 a.m.

It is my prayer that each of our 12 districts will have representatives in every workshop being planned. The conference officers are committed to planning a training session that will be informative and beneficial. They will be ready to answer questions and provide packages for each of their district counterparts.

Blessings to each of you during this time of change. Prenerva Thomas, Florence District president, and Doretha Bailey, Salem UMW local unit president, are planning to host this event in a special way.

District presidents should encourage their officers to be in attendance. Registration is required this year to attend. The paper registration version was included with the September Mission Echo, and the online version can be accessed at <https://www.umcsc.org/discipleship/united-methodist-women/>. This was a request from the technology team to allow your sessions to be set prior to the start of our event.

Zoom meeting and password information will be sent to all registered participants.

Blessings to each of you, and stay safe and prayed up!

Eaddy is SCCUMW vice president.



Bluff Road United Methodist Church honored James Porter for his more than 25 years of lay leadership.

Photos courtesy of Bluff Road UMC

Bluff Road UMC honors longtime lay leader James Porter

On Saturday, Sept. 25, Bluff Road United Methodist Church honored James Porter for his more than 25 years of lay leadership to the church and community.

Porter has served under four different pastors during his tenure at Bluff Road, where the Rev. Kenneth B. Middleton is pastor.

Because of COVID-19, the church members organized a drive-thru parade where Porter and his wife, Daisy, were presented with gifts of love from their church family. A plaque was presented to Porter, and a fruit basket and a dozen roses were presented to his wife.

One of Porter's favorite quotes is "When one shines, we all shine."

"Congratulations, Mr. Porter, and thank you for your years of dedicated service," the church said.



Porter and his family.

Around the Districts

Columbia District

Evelyn Anne Johnson-Neal, a member of Chapin UMC, Chapin, has just published her second book. "Edisto, My Edisto" is a book of poetry about her love of Edisto Island and the South Carolina Lowcountry. The poems contain history, natural history and her love of the island. It is available on Amazon.

Congratulations to the Rev. Becky and Richard Shirley on the birth of their grandson. Joseph Andrew Graham Jr. was born Oct. 1. Rev. Shirley is the pastor of Washington Street UMC, Columbia.

Greenwood District

The Trinity UMC, Newberry, Women's Mission Group has been packing Starting Over Boxes for the Newberry County Probation, Parole and Pardon Office to give to individuals who have recently returned to Newberry County after incarceration. Three boxes per month are filled with toiletry items. They also receive a box of food items from the O'Neal Street UMC Food Pantry. The Trinity Men's Club will take over this task for the remainder of the year. The group said the people entering back into society after incarceration have very little, so these boxes can be a big help and a blessing during a difficult time.

Orangeburg District

Clafin University, Orangeburg, hosted the 2021 UNCF Ecumenical Day of Prayer Oct. 23. The virtual event is a fundraiser to support scholarships. Student Jenai Brown and Minister Rosemary Griffin and Friends provided musical performances.

Spartanburg District

Wofford College, Spartanburg, has partnered with Blue Duck to provide electric scooters for trips across campus and to downtown Spartanburg. They will be available to rent from 7 a.m.-10 p.m. and will cost \$1.25 to unlock and \$0.30 per minute after.

We love and appreciate Christi Sellars, our director of music at Cannon's Camp Ground UMC!



Hot doggity dog!

On Oct. 16, Bethel UMC, Chester, held a hot dog sale for Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry. The Rev. Mike Burgess served as grill master. Church members set up tents and gave away balloons. Members of a local bluegrass gospel band, Cottonwood, donated their music for the event.



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From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

South Carolina Methodists in 1971

Fifty years ago this fall, South Carolina Methodists were discussing a number of pressing issues, from new church starts to mission work to the impending merger of the Annual Conference.

The *Advocate* noted the ribbon-cutting for the renovated Oliver Gospel Mission in Columbia on Oct. 24. Future Congressman James Clyburn, then an assistant to Gov. John West and now the House majority whip, cut the ribbon, celebrating 80 years of the mission's service to the community.

Bishop Paul Hardin wrote about his visit to the USS John F. Kennedy with some 20 other clergy at the invitation of the Navy's chief of chaplains, Rear Admiral Francis L. Garrett. Garrett was a Wofford graduate whose father was a member of the South Carolina Conference. Bishop Hardin described the size of the aircraft carrier and some of the activities he observed. He ate with officers in the wardroom and with enlisted men in their dining rooms, met with men on the ship and watched planes take off and land. The bishop himself got to experience taking off from the flight deck when it came time to leave the ship. He wrote that his new experience helped him become more knowledgeable about the work of the Navy's chaplains and reinforced his belief that the church had to minister to everyone no matter where they were.

Hardin also noted work being done in new church starts. In one column, he described his visit to Dawsey United Methodist Church in Florence, which was being named in honor of Bishop Cyrus B. Dawsey. Dawsey was a native South Carolina missionary in Brazil for some 40 years who, in 1947, was elected bishop of the autonomous Brazilian Methodist Church. Hardin was pleased to see the ties between South Carolina and Brazil recognized in the naming of the church.

Hardin also recounted his visit to St. Andrew By-The-Sea, which was opened that fall. He recalled a conversation between one of the district superintendents and the Rev. Milton McGuirt, when the DS asked McGuirt what he thought about taking a new church start. McGuirt took the opportunity without even knowing where the church was. Hardin noted the help Shandon in Columbia gave to St. Andrews in getting started and predicted the new church would help another church one day.

Of course, the biggest issue facing South Carolina Methodists in 1971 was the impending merger of the White and Black conferences. Both conferences had been preparing for merger, but the steps weren't always smooth. The 1785 Conference had rejected a merger plan that the 1866 Conference had approved earlier in 1971, instead in a special session in September passing an alternate plan. When the 1866 Conference met in a special session on Saturday, Oct. 16, they immediately rejected, without debate, the 1785 Conference's alternate proposal. The 1866 Conference immediately appointed a committee to meet with representatives of the 1785 Conference to iron out some of the remaining details.

As we move toward the 50th anniversary of our current South Carolina Annual Conference in June 2022, we should remember the work of clergy and lay members of our conference who worked to bring our conference into being.

Stone is archivist for the South Carolina Conference and Wofford College. Read his blog at blogs.wofford.edu/from_the_archives.



Conference Historical Society

by Joyce Plyler

Revival of a forgotten legacy

There was a time when Francis Asbury was possibly the most widely known person in America, after George Washington. Yet today, among Methodists generally and especially in broader society, Francis Asbury is woefully unknown and understudied, notwithstanding the excellent 2012 biography "American Saint," by John Wigger.

In this column last month, Roger Gramling reminded us of Asbury's answer to John Wesley's call for preachers to go to the American colonies, and of Asbury's role as superintendent, or bishop, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America for more than 30 years, from its inception until his death in 1816. Asbury left everything and sought nothing other than to bring people to Christ.

American society should not forget the sacrifices and accomplishments of men like Asbury. He had not been forgotten in 1924. That year, a large bronze equestrian statue of Asbury was erected in Washington, D.C., and dedicated by President Calvin Coolidge. The statue's granite base is inscribed: "His continuous journeys through cities villages and settlements from 1771 to 1816 greatly promoted patriotism education morality and religion in the American Republic"; "If you seek the results of his labor you will find them in our Christian civilization."

In his dedication speech, President Coolidge gave Asbury credit not only for the religious impact of his ministry, but also for "making stronger the foundation on which our government rests and seeking to implant in the hearts of all men, however poor and unworthy they may have seemed, an increased ability to discharge the high duties of their citizenship. His outposts marched with the pioneers, his missionaries visited the hovels of the poor so that all men might be brought to a knowledge of the truth."

Said Coolidge further, "Who shall say where his influence, written upon the immortal souls of men, shall end? How many homes he must have hallowed! What a multitude of frontier mothers must have brought their children to him to receive his blessing! ... How many temples of worship dot our landscape; how many institutions of learning, some of them rejoicing in the name of Wesleyan, all trace the inspiration of their existence to the sacrifice and service of this lone circuit rider! He is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation."

Asbury also had not been forgotten in 1951, when he was selected by the U.S. National Historical Publications Commission as one of 66 eminent leaders, along with Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Lincoln, whose works were deemed historically significant for proper editing and publication. When Asbury's journal and letters were published, his editor remarked, "Asbury was one of the greatest explorers of the American

frontier. He was more widely traveled than any other man of his generation, and was known by more people. ... As the bearer of a moral culture and its civilizing consequences to the frontier settlements of America, Francis Asbury has no peer in history."

A builder of the nation who has no peer in history should be remembered in both secular and religious histories. The state of South Carolina was a base for Asbury during 31 extended trips, and his influence was deep within all sections. Walter Edgar, professor emeritus of history at the University of South Carolina and the undisputed dean of South Carolina historians, would have done well to discuss the particular work of Asbury in "South Carolina: A History," or as an individual entry in "The South Carolina Encyclopedia," which he edited, but neither tome gives Asbury his due.

The tendency of academic and secular histories to diminish the significance of religious influences in society makes the work of our Methodist historical societies and commissions on archives and history all the more important.

This is a fitting time to study Asbury and his work because it was exactly 250 years ago, during the period of Sept. 10 to Oct. 30, 1771, that Francis Asbury was making his way by ship from England to America.

The Methodist Church of Britain and The United Methodist Church are jointly commemorating Asbury's response to his call and his arrival in America with a series of events, podcasts and resources. Learn more here: gcah.org/resources/celebrating-asburys-voyage-to-the-americas-250-years-ago.

Francis Asbury was a man of prodigious travels, a saint among men by any measure, and by far the single most influential figure in the growth of Methodism in early America, especially South Carolina. Because of his organizational leadership, his disciplined example, his incomparable work ethic and his spiritual guidance, Asbury's significance can be measured not only in its geographic breadth but also in its doctrinal depth. For sheer determination in the pursuit of a mission, his equals are few.

Please join us Saturday, Nov. 13, at 1 p.m., at the Hagood Mill Historic Site, 138 Hagood Mill Road, Pickens, to help Bishop Jonathan Holston and other church and county officials dedicate a restored log home in which Francis Asbury was a guest during his travels in South Carolina.

Here, current and future generations will be educated about Asbury's impact and the influence of Methodism.

Plyler is president of the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference. She welcomes comments or inquiries at joyce@charlotte.twcbc.com or 704-847-6096.



St. Michael UMW enjoy outside meeting

The St. Michael United Methodist Women, Kingstree, unit held its first meeting for 2021-2022 Sept. 26 at 4 p.m. outside to follow CDC guidelines and practice safe distancing. Their president, Michelle Poinsette, welcomed all and shared accomplishments and awards received. Rosa Thames gave a prayer, and Katherine Sabb-Graham, vice president, shared the different positions available for the unit. Martha Scott, treasurer, gave the financial report, and women submitted their pledge cards for the fiscal year. After, a homemade meal was served of pringleau, coleslaw, sweet potato pie and pound cake. Pictured in front are Natasha Black, Winferd Pendergrass, Katherine Sabb-Graham, Martha Scott, Carolyn Epps, Rosetta Morris, Michelle Poinsette and Iva Poinsette. In second row are Barbara Washington, Barbara Briggs, Leslie Nesmith, Annie Mae Green, Millie Greene, Patty King and Rosa Thames. Sitting are Nancy Brown and Anna Peterson.

We are so thankful to be blessed here at FUMC Cheraw with our music director, Michael Williams. We want to thank him for his hard work and dedication to the music ministry. His music is truly wonderful and a blessing to all. He has a deep love and appreciation for the music he plays, and it shows his love for our Lord and Savior. We appreciate his willingness and flexibility as we navigate the pandemic. We are very fortunate to have such a talented musician. Thank you for your commitment to our church and our awesome God.

— Love, Your FUMC Cheraw family



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Last year our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provided assistance to over 300 Veterans families who were in need.

If you're a Veteran in need or know a Veteran in need, call 803-995-8464 to see if you qualify for assistance.

UMC leaders share important information for churches sponsoring Scout troops

United Methodist churches that have sponsored Boy Scout troops can expect to receive a “disclosure statement package” from the Boy Scouts of America regarding its pending bankruptcy proceeding in the near future. The mailing seeks to summarize for chartered organizations how the BSA’s proposed plan of reorganization will affect those organizations’ legal rights with respect to Scouting-related sexual abuse claims to which they may potentially be connected.

The BSA is mailing the packets to all known chartered organizations. The packet is expected to include an “opt out” form related to chartered organizations’ options. In addition, churches that filed a “proof of claim” with the bankruptcy court during the designated time frame will also receive a ballot.

The United Methodist Ad Hoc Committee, which advocates for United Methodist interests within the bankruptcy process, has advised that churches that receive the packet should not take any action at this time and should not fill out the opt-out form under any circumstances. More information will be forthcoming to United Methodist churches within the next couple of weeks, well in advance of the December 14 voting deadline. The Ad Hoc Committee is developing recommendations for local churches on how to complete the included ballot, and will also be providing a summary of the most important aspects of the plan.

“Webinar sessions will be conducted for district superintendents and church leaders to share additional information about the vote, the ballot and how the outcome might affect our congregations,” said Bishop John Schol, chair of the UMC leadership team created to support the denomination in the bankruptcy matter.

While the United Methodist Ad Hoc Committee continues to engage in mediation related to the bankruptcy case, the Commit-

tee and the BSA have issued a joint statement that addresses how United Methodist congregations that sponsor Scouting programs should proceed in the meantime regarding expiring charters or facility use agreements.

The committee previously recommended that churches either extend existing charters or utilize a facility use agreement until Dec. 31, 2021. This recommendation was made to protect the interests of United Methodist churches in light of the bankruptcy proceedings because they were not included in an initial settlement.

To simplify the issue for chartered organizations, and because the bankruptcy process will extend beyond Dec. 31, 2021, the BSA and the committee have agreed to the following statement:

“The Boy Scouts of America and United Methodist leadership continue to work together to resolve matters related to BSA’s financial restructuring and have agreed, in the best interest of the young people who participate in scouting, to strongly recommend to United Methodist chartering organizations and Boy Scout Councils to extend existing charter agreements and facility use agreements in force at this time through March 31, 2022. There will be no additional fee required from those chartering organizations through March 31, 2022. This will pause new chartering, re-chartering and the use of facility use agreements with United Methodist churches. This automatic extension will allow Boy Scouts of America, United Methodist leadership and other parties in the bankruptcy case time to resolve important issues affecting chartered organizations, including a favorable release for chartered organizations for any Scout abuse claims.”

“As we continue with the negotiation process, we ask that you pray for the healing of the survivors,” said Schol. “We also ask you to pray for those leading the effort to reach just settlements.”



by Betty Stalnaker

Resource Center

Cultivating thankfulness

Being greedy makes you grumpy, but a thankful heart is a happy heart. With this in mind, the following DVDs are helpful in teaching children to be thankful in all things.

Cherub Wings: #2 Gratitude Attitude—Thankfulness

(DVD1550C) Children will learn that God wants us to be thankful in all things. Episodes include The Grateful Leper, Thank You For This Bright and Sunny Day, The Garden, From the Time the Sun Comes Up and Royal Trouble. English and Spanish language tracks. 25 min.

Squanto and the First Thanksgiving

(DVD1114C) Discover the moving true story of the Native American named Squanto, who is captured from his beloved Pawtuxet tribe, taken to Spain and sold into slavery. Years later, Squanto regains his freedom and embarks on a miraculous journey back to his homeland where he teaches the pilgrims how to survive the difficult early years in the Plymouth colony, culminating in the first Thanksgiving celebration. A touching drama about trust, faith and renewal. 30 min.

VeggieTales: Thankfulness

(DVD1493C=) In the “VeggieTales: Thankfulness” Sunday school lessons, kids learn from Madame Blueberry, the very blue berry who wants more stuff. They’ll learn alongside Madame Blueberry that “being greedy makes you grumpy, but a thankful heart is a happy heart.” 23 min.

William Bradford

(DVD2429C) William Bradford fled with the Pilgrims to the new world, where he discovered the price for religious freedom was hunger, sickness and death. As a peacemaker, he befriended the Native Americans who taught the struggling pilgrims how to survive. By the end of the first year, Bradford became governor of the new land. After their first critical harvest, he set aside time for the pilgrims and their new Native American friends to feast together and express their thanks to God. Thus, Bradford became the “Father of Thanksgiving Day.” 26 min.

The South Carolina Conference Resource Center is your connection to DVDs and seasonal musicals. We are here to serve your church family. To reserve resources, call 888-678-6272 or 803-786-9486, or visit www.umsc.org/resourcecenter.

Global Briefs

Webinar examines pandemic and Black churches

ATLANTA—Gammon Theological Seminary plans to have a webinar at 1 p.m. U.S. Eastern time Nov. 4 on its recent study of how COVID-19 affected Black United Methodist congregations. The study, on matters such as digital discipleship, online giving and pastors’ well-being, was conducted in partnership with multiple United Methodist organizations.

\$1.5 million grant to support clergy of color

DURHAM, N.C.—United Methodist Duke Divinity School has received a \$1.5 million grant from the Duke Endowment to strengthen Wesleyan pastors in the Carolinas who are Black, indigenous or people of color. The grant will go toward developing retreats and building networks among clergy.

Commission selects Greg Arnold as top executive

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The Commission on United Methodist Men has named Greg Arnold, a deployed staff member of the commission, to serve as general secretary. He succeeds Gil Hanke, who retired from the post in October. Arnold, a 12-year Mississippi-based staff member, will begin work Nov. 1.

Guidance for sexual harassment survivors

CHICAGO—A new website offered by the Commission on the Status and Role of Women offers step-by-step guidance on the complaint process for people who are considering pursuing sexual misconduct charges against a church official. The Do No More Harm site strives to make the system put forth in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* more clear.

‘Nerd’ church builds community without a building

DENVER, N.C.—As churches in the pandemic era have gotten creative with online worship, Checkpoint Church was designed to be exclusively virtual. It doesn’t even have a building.

Design Fellowship program announced

WASHINGTON—Wesley Theological Seminary has launched Wesley Design Fellowship, a one-year, cohort-based experience that includes community formation, spiritual direction, graduate-level courses and hands-on experience leading innovation. Open to young people ages 23-29 interested in leading new ways to connect young adults with the whole church, each fellow will earn an \$8,000 stipend and four graduate academic course credits. The application deadline is Feb. 1, 2022.

United Methodists support investigation of abuses in the Philippines

WASHINGTON—The United Methodist Board of Church and Society joined other denominational groups in a renewed call for an independent investigation by the United Nations and the international community of human rights violations in the Philippines. The National Association of Filipino American United Methodists has expressed concern for church leaders being targeted for advocating for poor and Indigenous communities.

New church paradigm in North Carolina

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—The Woodlawn Community Fellowship, a merger of two United Methodist congregations, is trying a new model of a faith community that will use development of its property to fund its ministry. Plans call for building 36 townhomes to help generate income.

Church cultivates field of dreams

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Food pantries are full of canned and boxed items, but fresh produce can be harder to find. Concord United Methodist Church turned two adjacent empty lots into a field of dreams, full of hundreds of tomato, pepper, squash and okra plants. Everything grown in the garden goes to food pantries and feeding programs.

William Abraham, traditionalist scholar, dies at 73

DALLAS—The Rev. William J. “Billy” Abraham, a longtime professor at Perkins School of Theology, helped shaped the traditionalist renewal movement within United Methodism and was regarded with respect and affection by many who disagreed with him. The Northern Ireland native died Oct. 7 at age 73.

Mount Bethel countersues conference leaders

MARIETTA, Ga.—Mount Bethel United Methodist Church has countersued the North Georgia Conference leadership, which filed a lawsuit in September seeking control of the megachurch. Mount Bethel argues that the conference is blocking the congregation’s efforts to disaffiliate under church law.

—Courtesy of United Methodist News Service

Thank you to the Ashland United Methodist Staff

The congregation of Ashland United Methodist Church wishes to honor, recognize, and say thank you to the church’s staff for their dedication. So thank you to Maria Anderson, Karen Zobel, Jack Holladay, Ryan Keith, Robert Neese, and Laura Siddons.

Your commitment during this past two years of pandemic turbulent daily living is most astonishing and has not gone unnoticed. Each of you were asked to step up, provide aid and assistance to Pastors Efird and Rowell in serving the church and congregation needs.

Not in any circumstance did you the staff flinch in the completion of any task asked. For this commitment, Ashland United Methodist recognizes your dedication to our Lord and the church’s congregation – Thank You.



Sending some love

Members of Manning UMC, Manning, got together to write cards and send care packages to residence of local nursing homes recently. The activity was part of a churchwide effort to love each other in the name of Christ.



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Susan Maddox

Two triple-digit birthdays

Highland Park UMC, Florence, celebrated the triple-digit birthdays of two of its members in September. Kathleen Baskin (left) turned 103 years old Sept. 11, and Agnes Spradley turned 100 years old Sept. 16. "These ladies inspire us with their zest for life," said the Rev. Susan Maddox, Highland Park UMC senior pastor.

Obituaries

George Henry 'Skip' Brooks

GLEN ALLEN, Va.—George Henry "Skip" Brooks, father of the Rev. Hank Brooks, died Sept. 25, 2021. Rev. Brooks is the pastor of Cambridge United Methodist Church, Ninety Six.

Funeral services were held Oct. 1 at Mount Vernon Baptist Church with burial in Mount Vernon Memorial Park.

Memorials may be made to Mount Vernon Baptist Church, 11220 Nuckols Road, Glen Allen, VA 23059.

Mr. Brooks is survived by his wife, Carol M. Brooks, and two sons.

Joseph Lee Hagler

NORTH CHARLESTON—Joseph Lee Hagler, a former local pastor in the Charleston District, died Oct. 3, 2021.

A graveside service was held Oct. 9 at Sunset Memorial Gardens.

Ida Williams Herlong

JOHNSTON—Ida Williams Herlong, mother of the Rev. Edward Herlong and grandmother of the Rev. W. Douglas Herlong, died Sept. 29, 2021. Rev. Edward Herlong is the pastor of Elim United Methodist Church, Lamar; Rev. W. Douglas Herlong is the associate pastor of St. John's UMC, Aiken.

A graveside service was held Oct. 1 at Harmony UMC Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Harmony UMC, c/o Andy Livingston, P.O. Box 186, Johnston, SC 29832.

Mrs. Herlong is survived by her three sons and two daughters.

Francis Asbury Hipp

NEWBERRY—Francis Asbury Hipp, a former Lay Servant Ministries director of the Columbia District, died Sept. 21, 2021.

Funeral services were held Sept. 27 at Trinity United Methodist Church, West Columbia, with burial in Bethany UMC Cemetery, Saluda.

Memorials may be made to Trinity UMC, 1201 Mohawk Drive, West Columbia, SC 29169; or to Christopher Towers Retirement Community, 1805 Devine St., Columbia, SC 29201.

Mr. Hipp is survived by his wife, Maggie Gillett Maffett Hipp, and two sons.

Joyce White Ivey

JONESVILLE—Joyce White Ivey, wife of Dr. James W. Ivey, died Sept. 30, 2021. Rev. Ivey is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Graveside services were held Oct. 2 at New Hope UMC Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to New Hope UMC or Jonesville UMC, P.O. Box 787, Jonesville, SC 29353.

Mrs. Ivey is survived by her husband and son.

Eleanor Hope Adams Jenkins

LAKE WYLIE—Eleanor Hope Adams Jenkins, wife of the Rev. Larry Jenkins, died Oct. 4, 2021. Rev. Larry Jenkins is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Graveside services were held Oct. 6 at Woodside Cemetery, Clover.

Mrs. Jenkins was survived by her husband.

Rev. Larry Alfred Jenkins

LAKE WYLIE—The Rev. Larry Alfred Jenkins, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Oct. 14, 2021.

Prior to his retirement in 2002, Rev. Jenkins served the Great Falls-Asbury, Lando, St. James-Eureka, Chester-Wesley Memorial, Providence, Rock Hill-Main Street, Indian Field, El Bethel, Duncan Acres, Bethlehem, Marion-First and Main Street charges. Following his retirement, he served the Harris-Ebenezer and Liberty charges.

Graveside services were held Oct. 19 at Woodside Cemetery, Clover.

Rev. James Ernest LeMaster Jr.

SPARTANBURG—The Rev. James Ernest LeMaster Jr., a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Oct. 8, 2021.

Prior to his retirement in 2001, Rev. LeMaster served in Kentucky at Lambert's Chapel, Millersburg, Burlington and Williamston charges. He was the chaplain at Methodist Hospital of Kentucky before serving as academic dean at Sue Bennett College, London, Kentucky. In South Carolina, he served



Jenkins



LeMaster Jr.

Obituary Policy

The *Advocate* prints death notices of clergy and their immediate families and laypersons who have served on conference boards and agencies or who work for the S.C. Conference of The United Methodist Church.

the Ridgeville, Ridgeland-St. Paul, Easley Fairview-St. Paul and Lamar charges.

No services were planned at the time of printing.

Memorials may be made to Epworth Children's Home, P.O. Box 50466, Columbia, SC 29250.

Rev. LeMaster is survived by his wife, Ada Belle Akens LeMaster, two daughters and son.

Verdell Virginia Mitchell Mosley

SUMMERVILLE—Verdell Virginia Mitchell Mosley, mother of the Rev. Mark Mitchell, died Oct. 3, 2021. Rev. Mitchell is the pastor of the Lake City Circuit, Lake City.

Funeral services were held Oct. 9 at Canaan Family Life Center, Ridgeville.

Mrs. Mosley is survived by her son and four daughters.

Rev. David Eugene Reed

DOTHAN, Ala.—The Rev. David Eugene Reed, a retired local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Sept. 21, 2021.

Prior to his retirement in 2015, Rev. Reed served the Smyrna-Shiloh Charge, Bennettsville. A memorial service was held Oct. 3 at Shiloh UMC with burial at Smyrna UMC Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Ouachita Baptist University, 410 Ouachita St., Box 3754, Arkadelphia, AR 71998.

Rev. Reed is survived by his wife, Susan Goodwin Reed, daughter and son.



Reed

Sara Earle Sherer

TROUTMAN, N.C.—Sara Earle Sherer, sister of Barbara E. Ropp, died Oct. 15, 2021. Mrs. Ropp is the wife of the Rev. John Ropp, a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Oct. 22 at Statesville First ARP Church.

Memorials may be made to New Perth ARP Church, 204 West Ave. W., Troutman, NC 28166; or to First ARP Church, 123 E. Broad St., Statesville, NC 28677.

Mrs. Sherer is survived by her husband, the Rev. Robert E. Sherer, daughter and son.

Norwood Smalls

HUGER—Norwood Smalls, brother of the Rev. Nathan Smalls, died Oct. 1, 2021. Rev. Smalls is the pastor of Mount Carmel United Methodist Church, Charleston.

Funeral services were held Oct. 10 at New Hope Life Center with burial in Berkeley Church of Christ Cemetery.

Jeffrey Sean Thomason

GREENVILLE—Jeffrey Sean Thomason, husband of Kimberly Truluck Thomason, died Oct. 12, 2021. Mrs. Thomason is the daughter of the Rev. Gerald and Lou Truluck. Rev. Truluck is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and the pastor of the Quinby-Bethsaida Charge, Florence.

Funeral services were held Oct. 16 at First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, with burial in Hillcrest Memory Gardens.

Memorials may be made to Shriner's Hospital for Children, 950 W. Faris Road, Greenville, SC 29605.

Mr. Thomason is survived by his wife, two sons and daughter.

Ramona 'Mona' Potter Waddell

GREENWOOD—Ramona "Mona" Potter Waddell, wife of the late Rev. Bobby Waddell, died Oct. 5, 2021.

A graveside service was held Oct. 16 at Wood Memorial Park, Duncan.

Memorials may be sent to Hospice Home, 408 Alexander Ave., Greenwood, SC 29646; or to Epworth Children's Home, 2900 Millwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29205.

Mrs. Waddell is survived by his three daughters and son.

Alice Faye Cohoon Wicker

WALLACE—Alice Faye Cohoon Wicker, wife of the Rev. William Wicker, died Sept. 10, 2021. Rev. Wicker is a retired local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Sept. 13 at Pleasant Hill UMC with burial in the church cemetery.

Mrs. Wicker is survived by her husband and three daughters.

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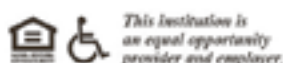
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October

- Oct. 29-30—Church Music Workshop, sponsored by the S.C. Chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, Shandon UMC, Columbia. www.southcarolinafellowship.org
- Oct. 31—Reformation Day
- Oct. 31—Virtual Fall LSM School (Greenwood District). <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenwood-District-Fall-2021-Lay-Servant-School.pdf>
- Oct. 31—Fall Festival, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 3-5 p.m.

November

Native American Heritage Month

- Nov. 1—All Saints Day
- Nov. 2—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 5—World Community Day
- Nov. 5-6—10th Annual Martha's Market, Union UMC, Irmo. Saturday: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Friday Preview Party tickets at Eventbrite, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/marthas-market-tickets-167024539895?aff=ebdssbeac>
- Nov. 6—UMW Virtual District Office Training, 10 a.m., Florence District UMW, host.
- Nov. 7—All Saints Sunday
- Nov. 7—Conference Advance Special Ministries Sunday
- Nov. 7—Daylight Savings Ends
- Nov. 8—Clergy Care Retreat: "Listening to God through Lectio Divina," led by Maria Fuller, 2-3:30 p.m., virtual. <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november/>
- Nov. 11—Veterans Day
- Nov. 11—Killingsworth Stay at Home Gala, 7 p.m.. Register: <https://killingsworth-home.com>
- Nov. 11—BBQ & Bake Sale Fundraiser for Missions, St. Luke UMC, Hartsville, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; 4-6 p.m.



New Light celebrates World Communion

New Light UMC, Orangeburg, celebrated World Communion Oct. 2, as a bilingual service. The service was done in Spanish and English as the church celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. The guest speaker was the Rev. Ernesto Barriguete, director of racial equity and justice ministries for the North Carolina Annual Conference. His sermon, titled "Two Possibilities," came from Matthew 25:31-45. Also, Alfredo "Freddy" Elias, a member of the Hispanic community in Orangeburg, performed a special selection during worship. The service concluded with a bilingual celebration of communion. Barriguete did the Spanish part and the Rev. Enrique Gordon, pastor of New Light UMC, translated the service in English. Members said the overall worship experience was uplifting and joyful.

- Nov. 11—Clergy Care Retreat: "Navigating Clergy Bereavement Overload," led by Rev. Miriam Mick, 6-7:30 p.m., virtual. <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november/>
- Nov. 12-14—Mountain Immerse, Asbury Hills, \$170. <http://scmyp.org/mountain-immerser-information/>
- Nov. 13—Burdine Lodge project opening celebration and dedication, Hagood Mill Historic Site, Pickens, 1 p.m.
- Nov. 13-14—Virtual LSM School (Marion District). <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Marion-District-Lay-Servant-Schools-for-2021.pdf>
- Nov. 14—Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday
- Nov. 14—Sunday Dinner for Those in Need, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 4-6 p.m.
- Nov. 16—Deadline to register for 2021 Fall Clergy Orders, <https://www.umcsc.org/clergyordersregistration/>
- Nov. 17—Clergy Care Retreat: "Resilient Clergy Leadership," led by Toni R. Taylor, Noon-1:15 p.m., virtual. <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november/>
- Nov. 18—2021 Fall Clergy Orders, "Healing the Healers: Navigating the Danger Zone," 9 a.m. via Zoom, \$5. <https://www.umcsc.org/clergyordersregistration/>
- Nov. 19—Clafin University Inauguration of Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack as president, 10 a.m.
- Nov. 19—27th Presidential Scholarship Gala, Camp Landy, Orangeburg, 7 p.m. 803-535-5665 or <https://alumni.clafin.edu/2021-presidential-gala>

- Nov. 19-20—Clafin Homecoming Weekend. <https://www.clafin.edu/>
- Nov. 20-21—Virtual LSM School (Marion District). <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Marion-District-Lay-Servant-Schools-for-2021.pdf>
- Nov. 21—Christ the King/Reign of the King Sunday
- Nov. 21-28—National Bible Week
- Nov. 25—Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 25-26—United Methodist Conference Center closed
- Nov. 28—United Methodist Student Day
- Nov. 29—Clergy Care Retreat: "Navigating Holiday Stress," led by Alethia King, 10 a.m.-Noon, virtual. <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november/>
- Nov. 30—Clergy Care Retreat: "Lead More Effective Meetings," led by Toni R. Taylor, Noon-1:15 p.m., virtual. <https://www.umcsc.org/5-virtual-clergy-care-retreats-scheduled-in-november/>

December

- Dec. 1—World AIDS Day
- Dec. 3—Community Bar-B-Que, Pendleton UMC, Pendleton, Noon-7 p.m.
- Dec. 3-5—Hinton YouthLead Academy, <https://www.hintoncenter.org/ministries/training-and-workshops/>
- Dec. 7—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 24—Christmas Eve
- Dec. 24-27—United Methodist Conference Center closed
- Dec. 25—Christmas Day
- Dec. 31—United Methodist Conference Center closed

January

- Jan. 4—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.



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by the Rev. Walter Strawther

It's Time to Feast

Nov. 7

Feast on Giving

Lesson Scripture: John 6:1-15

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Key Verse: John 6:11, "Then Jesus took the bread. When he had given thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, each getting as much as they wanted."

One of the most well-known stories in the Bible is the feeding of 5,000 men, plus women and children. John's telling of this story has Jesus say to the disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." Everyone received as much as they wanted, they ate until they were full and there was still plenty left over. So much so that Jesus did not want to see the leftovers go to waste.

When read in reference to 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, the leftovers are intended to be given to those who are still hungry. Jesus gave thanks, and then gave to the crowd. The crowd was then empowered to give to others.

The disciples in particular were charged with collecting and distributing the leftovers just as Jesus distributed food to them. Being a cheerful giver takes on a deeper meaning when we realize we are only giving in response to what God has given us. We may think we have very little to give by way of gifts and talents, or maybe even money and material resources. But God takes our little and adds the increase. We lose our sense of lack and scarcity when we truly feast of God's generosity. We soon learn we can get our fill and still have plenty to share with others.

As we give out of the blessings God has given us, we find ourselves feasting spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally on God's abundance.

How can we apply God's generous giving to our daily lives? What would it look like to give our little bit so God's greatness is revealed?

Nov. 14

Feast Instead of Fight

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 25:2-39

Background Scripture: 1 Samuel 25

Key Verse: 1 Samuel 25:32, "David said to Abigail, 'Bless the Lord God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today!'"

Our reading begins with Verse 2 of 1 Samuel 25, but Verse 1 gives us some important information. Samuel the prophet has died and with him vital leadership for the nation of Israel. Israel's first king, King Saul, has failed as a leader. This information makes Nabal's response to David much clearer.

The lack of leadership has in Nabal's words caused "many servants to break away from their masters." However, Nabal doesn't know what his wife Abigail seems to know, and that is that David is not just a servant but God's servant. In some sense, Abigail seems to know this better than David.

Nabal does live up to his name, "fool," by refusing to respond in kind to the protection David and his men provided Nabal's workers. However, David in his haste to seek revenge by killing Nabal and all of his men is just as foolish as Nabal.

It is Abigail who takes matters into her

own hands by preparing a feast in order to avoid a fight. Abigail is the voice of reason as she prevents needless bloodshed.

David recognizes God uses Abigail to restrain him from the violence he was about to pursue (v. 32-35). According to the times, David would have been justified in taking retribution against this foolish landowner, but God, through Abigail, showed David a different way. Through conversation over a meal, Abigail turned David away from the destruction he sought. Abigail reminded David of the anointing he had received from Samuel and the faithfulness of God.

How can we follow Abigail's example and turn fighting into feasting? Are we capable of hearing an Abigail that God has sent to us to deescalate conflict?

Nov. 21

A Unifying Feast

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Background Scripture: Luke 22:14-20

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 11:28, "Each individual should test himself or herself, and eat from the bread and drink from the cup in that way."

Paul writes to the community of believers in the city of Corinth to address various sources of conflict threatening to cause disunity as they strive to live together as followers of Jesus Christ. There is division, as evidenced by the way they commemorate the Last Supper, or what we now call Holy Communion.

Instead of this being a time of coming together to draw closer to God and each other, the remembrance of Jesus' last night on earth has become a source of division for the Corinthians. There is no coming together, no sharing in the meal, because each one (perhaps each family) goes ahead as individuals. Those who have are not sharing with those who don't have. Some have so much they get drunk while others have nothing.

We, too, face a time when there is division in and among our congregations. In light of the existence of these divisions, we do well to follow Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, but only after careful reading of his instructions. I hear Paul calling us to examine or test ourselves individually so we participate in the Lord's Supper in a way that honors Jesus and produces unity. Examining ourselves individually keeps us from examining others and determining their worthiness or unworthiness. Examining ourselves as individuals, in light of Jesus' victory of sin and death, reminds us of the salvation we have in Jesus Christ.

We are drawn together as we recognize we are all siblings in and through Jesus Christ. Eating the bread and drinking the cup in remembrance of Jesus is to feast on unity.

How can we make sure we are participating in Holy Communion so that Jesus is remembered and unity is created?

Nov. 28

Feast on the Fullness of God

Lesson Scripture: Isaiah 25:6-10; 55:1-3

Background Scripture: Isaiah 55

Key Verse: Isaiah 25:6, "On this mountain, the Lord of heavenly forces will pre-

pare for all peoples a rich feast, a feast of choice wines, of select foods rich in flavor, of choice wines well refined."

The prophet Isaiah uses language that is contradictory or at least confusing to the casual reader. How does one buy food without money? It is impossible to buy something that has no price (55:1).

However, when we consider our claim that Jesus is the bread of life and the implications of our understanding of Holy Communion as a celebration of the eternal life we have in him, we can begin to make sense of the opening verses of Isaiah 55. Moreover, a close reading of Isaiah 25:6-10 informs our understanding of the salvation we have in Jesus Christ and leads us to conclude that Isaiah's words are fulfilled in the body (bread) and blood (wine) of Jesus Christ.

To speak of our salvation as something we buy without money is to speak of our understanding of God's grace. We participate (figuratively buy) in our salvation as we put our belief in Jesus Christ. The currency is grace, not money, and Jesus freely gives us

this currency so we can "buy" that which has no price. In swallowing the veil that covers the nations (v. 7), God's prevenient grace removes the divisions we have set up. In swallowing up death forever and wiping our tears away, God's justifying grace frees us from sin and death and takes away our reproach imparting to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

As we look to the day when the Lord will rest on God's holy mountain, we live in God's sanctifying grace being perfected to sing God's praise forever more.

Isaiah's metaphoric use of a feast of exquisite foods and choice wines gives us a glimpse into the fullness of God's salvation. To feast on the fullness of God is to enjoy a meal that is beyond description or comparison.

What other metaphor might we use to express the fullness of God's salvation through Jesus Christ?

Strawther serves as congregational specialist for the Columbia and Hartsville districts and for African-American ministries.

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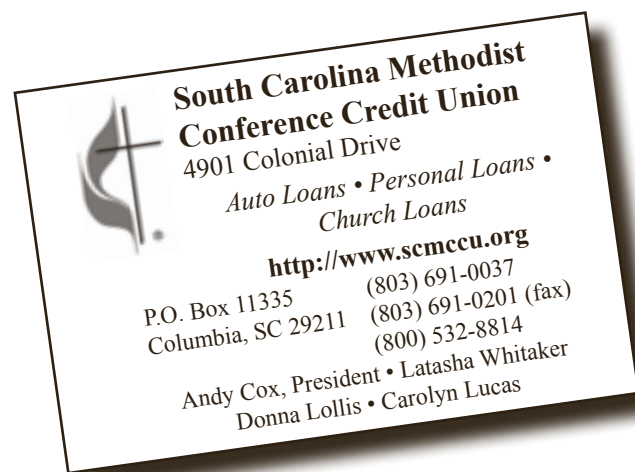
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From left are committee members and trustees Carrie Gass, Betty Procher, Clyde Wilson, Mae Ruth Cooke (chair), Charlie Richardson, Edward McMillian and Ruth P. McCants.



Committee members share a moment with Hartsville District Superintendent the Rev. Telley L. Gadson and the Rev. E.W. Frierson, pastor of Mechanicsville UMC.

Photos by MIDAS TOUCH/Linton McCants

Mechanicsville UMC unveils historical marker

Community officials and church members witnessed a historical sight on the campus of Mechanicsville UMC Sept. 18, with the unveiling of a new historical marker.

The dedication ceremony commemorated the heritage of the church's nearly 150 years with a two-sided marker standing more than seven feet on the front lawn of the campus of Mechanicsville.

The Rev. E.W. Frierson, church pastor, said the ceremony brought a "beacon of light" to the Ashwood community and Lee County.

The marker is inscribed on both sides and depicts the church history.

The church was organized in 1871 and established by John Jenkins and Daniel Gass.



The Rev. E.W. Frierson speaks during the ceremony.



The two-sided marker stands more than seven feet on the front lawn of the campus

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