

# History restored

## Rebuilt Burdine Lodge among lodging places of Francis Asbury

By Allison Trussell

PICKENS COUNTY—On a bright, cool day, descendants of Samuel Burdine joined with members of the Pickens County Historical Society, Hagood Mill Foundation and the South Carolina Methodist Conference Historical Society to

dedicate and bless the Burdine Lodge Nov. 13.

The one-room log cabin, built in the Dacusville Community by Burdine in 1796, is documented three times—1800, 1802 and 1803—in the journals of Francis Asbury as his lodging place when he traveled through the Saluda Grade

into South Carolina.

Known as the Burdine Lodge, it became a meeting place for a Methodist Society that became Antioch United Meth-

See “Burdine Lodge,” Page 12



Photo by Matt Brodie

### Standing with Jesus

Singers in the South Carolina State University Gospel Choir lift their voices to heaven as they perform special music at the 175th Homecoming Celebration for Main Street UMC, Columbia, Oct. 24. Several other churches across the state marked historical milestones recently. See Pages 7-8.

## Apportionments expected to hit 90 percent

By Jessica Brodie

Apportionment payments continue to exceed last year’s performance, and church financial leaders are hoping to reach 90 percent for the year.

As of Nov. 17, the total apportionment percentage is 70.78 percent collected this year compared to last year’s 62.90 percent.

That translates to approximately \$12.21 million collected so far of the budgeted \$17.3 million for 2021.

In comparison, last year at this time we had received \$11.08 million of the \$17.6 million budgeted for last year.

“We are very pleased by the improvement seen in the current year,” said Beth Westbury, treasurer and director of administrative services for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. “Our churches showed an amazing commitment to supporting mission and ministry during the peak of the pandemic, and they continue to give to and support the connection. We are on target to reach 90 percent, perhaps more, in 2021.

“I am very thankful for the churches and their participation in mission and ministry beyond their home community.”

To date, 319 churches have already paid 100 percent of their apportionments compared to 248 at this time last year—an increase of 71 churches.

The Walterboro District is leading the conference’s districts in percentage paid as of Nov. 17 with 83.92 percent. The Florence District is in second

See “Apportionments,” Page 11

## Exercising Faith Over Fear

### United Methodist Women hold annual meeting

By Linda Eichenbaum

“Good morning! Good, good morning to all!”

With that, Cathy Ford, president of the South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women, called the 49th Annual Meeting of the group to order. After pounding the traditional gavel, she expressed a special welcome and warm greeting to Bishop Jonathan and Felecia Holston and to all women gathered from across the state for the event.

The meeting, held virtually Oct. 23, was hosted by Lyttleton Street United Methodist Church in Camden.

After a pre-conference virtual tour of Hartsville, Ford began the

meeting with a word of prayer from the UMW 2021 Prayer Calendar and written by Kate Peterson, Order of Deaconesses and Home Missioners, Eastbrook Mission Barn, New Castle, Pennsylvania: “God of peace, let us so shine with your love that all the world sees you through us. Amen.”

“This was our second virtual annual meeting,” Ford said, “but even more importantly, this was our 49th annual meeting. Every annual meeting is a time of celebration of the total program of mission in which

See “United Methodist Women,” Page 10

## Black Methodist caucus gathers to navigate church renewal

By the Rev. Amiri Hooker

COLUMBIA—United Methodist clergy and laity across the Southern states gathered in South Carolina Oct. 27-30 for the 52nd annual meeting of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Black

Methodists for Church Renewal.

It was an honor to welcome the meeting to Columbia, where our state motto is “Dum Spiro Spero: While I breathe, I hope.” One of the main things this year’s conference projected

was hope for The United Methodist Church, and especially the Black Methodist Church.

At the meeting, held in person at the

See “Black Methodists,” 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.

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#### 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.

# S.C.'s Bishop Holston among leadership for UMC Council of Bishops

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Bishop Thomas Bickerton, the residential bishop of the New York Conference of The United Methodist Church, was elected Nov. 3 as the next president of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church during the bishops' online meeting via Zoom.

Also elected were President-Designate Bishop Tracy Smith Malone of the East Ohio Conference and Secretary Bishop L. Jonathan Holston of the South Carolina Conference.

"It is very humbling to be asked to offer my leadership at this point in the church's life and work," Bickerton said after the election. "While the road ahead will no doubt present us with great challenges, I celebrate a faith which offers the firm assurance that God will provide us with the light we need to find the next step on the path.

"My prayer is that with grace and deep respect, we will continue to find ways to love one another as a response to God's great love for us. I pledge to lead out of that same conviction and covet the prayers of



Bickerton



Holston



Smith Malone

the church as we embark on this journey together."

Current officers are Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, president; Bickerton, president-designate; and Malone as secretary.

The new officers will take office at the end of the 2022 spring meeting of the COB.

Harvey will serve as the immediate past president of the COB.

As the COB began its virtual meeting Tuesday, Nov. 2, Harvey called her colleagues to a time of leading by the example of love.

"It's time to face the reality that our big tent is having trouble holding up to the winds of change," Harvey said.

The bishop said the denomination is in a waiting period that began last year and is now extended to at least 2022, when the postponed 2020 General Conference is scheduled to meet.

During this time of waiting, Bishop Harvey said, there is the "potential to shift our focus from the very people we are called to serve."

## Bishops agree on narrative for the continuing UMC

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Council of Bishops ended its fall meeting on Friday, Nov. 5, having spent time in worship, plenary and covenant groups as they seek God's guidance to lead The United Methodist Church.

The worship services were coordinated by Bishops Sharma Lewis and Lawson Bryan and led by Bishops Harald Rückert, David Bard and LaTrelle Easterling.

The bishops, from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, overwhelmingly approved a narrative that provides a framework and begins to paint a picture for the continuing UMC.

The document reminds United Methodists of Christ's prayer for unity and the commandment to gather all to the table, to make space for one another, appreciate one another and look for Christ in each other.

The bishops noted that they are "committed to strengthening every local church, where the word is preached and Christ is offered and where the table is set before all who hunger and thirst for righteousness."

To read the narrative's full text: <https://tinyurl.com/umcsc-cob-narrative>.

The meeting began on Tuesday with a special and sacred service, celebrating the lives of those bishops and spouses who have joined the church triumphant since the last time the bishops met in April.

In her president's address which followed, COB President Cynthia Fierro Harvey articulated her vision for the continuing UMC that embodies the radical love of God in Christ

Jesus, noting that that the church is one, "where traditionalists, progressives, centrists and LGBTQ persons will find a home."

The bishops received the report of the Task Force to End Racism led by Easterling along with COB consultant Erin Hawkins Smith. The session focused on one of the pillars of COB anti-racism work, proximity to pain. Three people, including Bishop Leonard Fairley, shared their pain of being profiled and discriminated because of the color of their skin. The bishops also heard from Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi who is working with a team that is providing a theological lens by which to shape the COB's anti-racism work.

The collegial work of the general secretaries was highlighted by their convener Dawn Hare as they continue to steward the churches resources.

Members of the COB then received the ecumenical report from COB Ecumenical Officer Bishop Sally Dyck and Dr. Jean Hawxhurst and the newest addition to the ecumenical team, Dr. David Field.

On Wednesday, the bishops went into executive session where they heard from Bill Waddell, who serves as counsel for the COB and continues to help the bishops do their best work. The bishops discussed the upcoming Judicial Council docket and its impact on their current and future work. The bishops also have begun a repository of decisions of law from annual conferences that will serve as a guide for future annual conference sessions. There was a robust conversation regarding

scenarios planning should the 2020 General Conference be postponed or cancelled. A small working group appointed by Harvey earlier this year and affirmed by the COB continues the exploration.

Wednesday's session ended on a high note with the election of officers who will take office at the Spring 2022 meeting (see article this page).

On Thursday, the bishops heard from the Commission on General Conference and their plans as the commission continues to monitor issues regarding visas, vaccines and other things challenging 2020 General Conference gathering set for August 2022 in Minnesota.

Bishop Mike McKee reported on behalf of a task group that continues to discern the role of the episcopacy particularly in the denomination's ever-changing environment.

Bishop John Schol reported on the continuing mediation regarding the Boy Scouts of America.

The bishops acted on five items as a response to climate change and climate justice and made a commitment to this important work and have asked the executive committee to create a plan working alongside the boards and agencies.

At the end of the meeting, Harvey told United Methodists: "We will continue to listen and to learn from you, the church. Conversation is the currency of change. We commit to listen to the voices of the people as we lead with grace and with love as our witness and invite you to do the same."

## Deadline is Nov. 30 for young adult Global Mission Fellow program

Young adults passionate about advocating for justice in their community are invited to learn more about serving as a Global Mission Fellow in the US-2 track.

US-2 Track fall deadline is Nov. 30.

Fellows are young adults between the ages of 20 to 30; willing to live and serve in solidarity with others; dedicated to addressing systemic oppression; called to put their Christian faith into action; and paid a living stipend. Fellows enter into new communities, understanding their challenges and assets through relationships and with the long-term goal to overcome systemic oppression. They partner with community organizations to address a variety of issues, including migration, education, community development and poverty.

US-2 fellows work at partner organizations who serve as the local hosts for the fellows, providing contextual accompaniment and a support system beyond the day-to-day job description. Fellows have specialized job descriptions based on the needs of their host community and placement site.

Some of the placements available for the 2022 cohort include the Immigration Rights Project, Washington State; campus ministry and food insecurity, Michigan; case management for individuals experiencing homelessness, Michigan; anti-racism and justice outreach in the local church, Michigan; youth program coordination, Florida; ministry coordination with families experiencing homelessness, Florida; and Immigrant Legal Clinic, Florida.

Learn more at <https://umcmmission.org/become-a-fellow>.

## UMCOR to reimburse churches helping to resettle Afghan refugees

Recognizing that local United Methodist churches want to play a role in resettling Afghan refugees, the United Methodist Committee on Relief has started a brand-new program where local churches can be reimbursed for expenses involved with helping to resettle Afghan refugees.

The Afghan Refugee Resettlement Reimbursement program will reimburse as much as \$1,000 per local United Methodist church in the United States that is in a sponsorship relationship with Church World Service. Expenses eligible for reimbursement must fit the following criteria:

- Pre-arrival support, such as: setting up/furnishing an apartment; providing a culturally appropriate welcome meal; welcoming a family at the airport.
- Post-arrival support: assisting in English Language Learners (ELL) tutoring; providing transportation to medical appointments; assisting with grocery shopping or community navigation; mentorship.
- Providing other financial support to a newly arrived Afghan family to help them adjust to life in the U.S.

Full details, including application forms, can be found at <https://umcmmission.org/umcor/afghan-refugee-resettlement-reimbursement-program>.

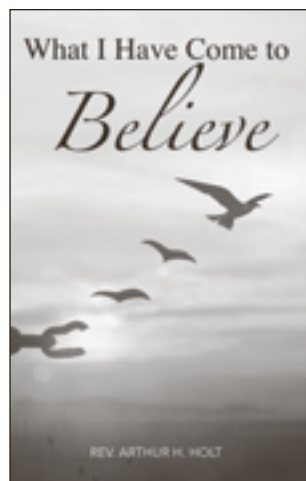
# Two more Advocate Press books to release this month

The Advocate Press will release two more books this month of interest to United Methodists in South Carolina.

One is a poetry collection by Stephon C. Void, "From My Heart to Your Eyes: Poems of Faith and Social Justice." Void, a native of Bowman and a certified lay servant in the South Carolina United Methodist Church at New Covenant UMC, Bowman, is also the nuclear magnetic resonance technician in the Department of Chemistry at Claflin University. He developed a passion for writing when he was selected to participate as a contributing author for the latest African series for Discipleship ministries of the United Methodist Church.

The other, "Who Am I? A Devotional for a Jesus-Centered School Year," is from Cindy Barrineau Curtis, youth director at St. Andrews Parish UMC, Charleston.

Curtis is a teacher, author and motivational speaker with a career spanning more than 30 years in education, ministry,



These three books are currently out, and two more—a poetry collection by Stephon C. Void and a youth devotional by Cindy Barrineau Curtis—will release this month. All are available at [www.advocatesc.org/books](http://www.advocatesc.org/books).

writing and speaking.

The books are in production now and are available for presale at [www.advocatesc.org/books](http://www.advocatesc.org/books).

These two round out a total of five books the Advocate Press has produced this fall. The others, which are currently on sale now, are as follows:

- "Faith in Action: Stories of Salkehatchie Summer Service," compiled by the Rev. John Wesley Culp Jr.

- "Walk with Me: Your Spiritual Esteem Journey," by the Rev. Cathy Joens and Toni Taylor

- "What I Have Come to Believe," a spiritual reflection by the Rev. Arthur Holt

All are available as a paperback and ebook and available at [www.advocatesc.org/books](http://www.advocatesc.org/books).

The Advocate Press is the *South Carolina United Methodist Advocate's* book publishing venture. The mission of the Advocate Press is to produce books of interest to South Carolina United Methodists on matters of faith and to amplify regional voices and those that advocate for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

## Grace UMC reaches out to Sweetwater community with The Way

NORTH AUGUSTA—Grace United Methodist Church is working with the Greenwood District and the South Carolina Conference in creating The Way as a satellite location for Grace UMC.

The Way sits on 17 acres located at 417 Randall Road in Edgefield County near the Aiken County line.

On Sept. 18, an outdoor worship service was held under tents at The Way Sweetwater property for the North Augusta Sweetwater community.

The Greenwood District purchased this property on Aug. 20, 1990, with the vision of a United Methodist presence in an area of new housing developments being constructed in the area within the next few decades.

Plans for the new building include monthly and weekly worship services, Bible studies, small group meetings, scout meetings, children's activities and other church and ministry events.

The Way currently offers a meditation trail through the woods with Scripture posts and benches along the way.

The vision is one in which the people moving into the Sweetwater community will have a United Methodist place of worship and ministry.

At the Sept. 18 event, Doug and The Henrys bluegrass group provided old-time gospel music for entertainment, as well as



At the Sept. 18 event, Doug and The Henrys bluegrass group (above) provided old-time gospel music for entertainment, as well as sing-along music for the worshippers (below).



sing-along music for the worshippers.

The guest preacher was the Rev. James Friday, South Carolina Conference director of congregational development, and special guests included Greenwood District Superintendent Dr. Stephen Love and Greenwood District Lay Leader Tony Watson.

Friday also officiated a service for the dedication of the new building as Grace UMC Senior Pastor the Rev. Tommy Wilkes and Associate Pastor the Rev. Randall Haase anointed the building with oil.

The Way also hosted a Fall Luau Festival Sept. 23, joining forces with the Grace Children's Council. It featured a pumpkin patch and a hayride through the meditation trail, plus beach games, a Hawaiian costume contest, a hula competition and a performance from the Grace ukulele class.

Does your church have a new ministry or mission project? Share your story with the Advocate. Email [advocate@umcsc.org](mailto:advocate@umcsc.org).

## Bethel starts new rock missionary ministry

Capitalizing on worshipping adjacent to the 400-acre Peachtree Rock Nature Reserve, a witness group at Bethel United Methodist Church at Peachtree Rock has initiated a "Rock Missionary Ministry."

Using God-made rocks as the messenger, the community is being invited to share God's love at the church situated just a short hike away from Peachtree Rock, a well-known attraction for families and nature enthusiasts.

Each rock (the flatter is better) is spray-painted white, then decorated in a variety of ways. The rocks always including an invitation to experience the Bethel worship service.

The rocks are then scattered throughout the community in expected and unexpected places. They are placed on a bench, a wall, a window sill, etc.

People reach for them because of their beauty and uniqueness, then are reminded that someone loves them and wants to make them a closer friend of Jesus.



Above, Katherine Vaeyens places a missionary rock among some flowers at a business. Below are examples of missionary rocks.



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# Viewpoints



## Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

### Advent's lesson on waiting

Sixteen years ago, my firstborn child, a son named Cameron, was born. His birth changed my life, not only in practical ways but in matters of the spirit.

Cameron was my answered prayer, my miracle baby born after a season of infertility, when I'd lost all hope and clung to God for whatever God chose to do. I remember during that season reading the story of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, and how desperately she'd prayed for a child. My heart cried out just as desperately, and I've never forgotten the faith lessons I learned in that time of waiting. I remember that fiery spark as the Holy Spirit settled on me the night I surrendered my dreams to whatever God had planned. The liberation and beauty of that moment will remain seared on my heart and mind forever. God chose to allow me to experience that pregnancy and birth, and I'm grateful.

Cameron was born Dec. 1 in the midst of Advent, itself a season of waiting. And for many years, I've looked back on that time with contentment and a smidge of self-congratulation—I'd finally learned how to surrender to God. I'd finally learned all things happen on God's timeline and for God's purpose.

But have I, really? Have any of us truly learned to wait, to be content to let God be God and surrender our will?

I spent so many years rushing around, busy for the sake of being busy, for how good it felt to rush around and feel productive and accomplish good things in the world.

Later, after I learned better how to "be still and know" that God is God (Psalm 46:10), I thought I understood the concept of surrender. Still, there I was, silently orchestrating behind the scenes, wishing and plotting and hoping for my will, my wants, my so-called needs.

Now, after a pandemic and so many life lessons I've lost track, I've come to the realization I know nothing in the grand scheme. I am blessed God has chosen to give me life, give me people to love, give me these bones to walk around in and these senses to bask in the glory of God's creation.

I still don't love to wait. An over-achieving "do-er" by nature, I get a vision and want to throw my all into helping it come to fruition. But I know in my soul that waiting is the ultimate lesson in faith, obedience, surrender and love. I treasure Advent because it reminds me to cozy up with the discomfort of waiting the way I might cozy up with a blanket on my sofa—wrap myself in it, feel it upon my skin, let its weight sink into my pores. To let myself feel the waiting, feel that tension of not knowing how things will be.

The Bible is filled with stories of waiting—Sarah and Abraham waited for Isaac. Hannah waited for Samuel. Elizabeth and Zechariah waited for John the Baptist. The Israelites waited for the Promised Land, and later for the Babylonian exile to end.

God's people waited for their Messiah.

Waiting usually isn't comfortable. But looking back, I realize my deepest lessons have come during the waiting.

If you are in a season of waiting, consider whether God is calling you to pause and fall to your knees in gratitude and surrender for whatever will be. God's hand is upon it all, and God will make it all perfectly, beautifully good.

Happy Advent and Christmas, dear readers and friends. Remember: You are never alone.



## Bishop's Corner

by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

### The days are surely coming

*"The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"—Jeremiah 33:14-17 (NRSV)*

The word "Advent" means "coming" or the arrival of something important.

As a people of faith, we join the voices of Ancient Israel in the clarion cry for God to save us, to restore justice and to build right relationships. We join their voices in a call for the fulfillment of God's promises.

It is in times like these that we cry out to God to come in power and to do the spectacular. And, at the same time, we learn a new patience with God and ourselves. If there is one word that captures fully the meaning of the season of Advent, it is the word "wait."

We've learned anew what it means to wait lately. With supply chain issues, we have to wait on products to be in stock, or we have to wait longer on packages to arrive. We have had to wait on test results and wait in anticipation to see if our plans will come to fruition or have to be postponed.

What is most important is not that we wait, but how we wait. Do we wait with a sense of excitement? Anticipation? Hope? Or, do we wait in the doldrums of frustration, fear and anxiety? As we move through this season of Advent, we must learn a new

patience with God and ourselves. To be fully present in our waiting is to have hope in God's promise. For me, hope sustains and restores life.

In my first appointment, Grant Sherfield was a member. Mr. Sherfield had a unique talent for restoring neglected and damaged furniture. His shop was filled with an array of tools. It was amazing what he could do with broken tables, chairs, discarded desks and the like. To see him was to think he was too feeble for all the hours he spent caning chairs and restoring furniture. After finishing a task, he would receive compliments graciously by saying, "Saving these things is a joy for me. I just try to restore the beauty that should be there."

Friends, restoring the beauty of our lives is the work of hope. With the hope born in Christ, our lives can be restored to their intended beauty. Mr. Sherfield's face would glisten after a task of restoration.

I believe that God's face shines even brighter with hope when we practice our faith and fully trust that God's promises will be fulfilled in our lives. Think of the beauty that has been restored during the last 20 months—the innovative ways our churches have created meaningful new worship experiences online, on the phone and in parking lots; the creative methods that have been developed to meet the needs of the community from drive-through soup kitchens to blessing boxes to so many new community partnerships.

As we have pivoted and reset, we are constantly seeking ways to put our faith into action for the sake of restoring the beauty of God's kingdom here on earth ... just as it was on that sacred night in the little town of Bethlehem.

## Appointment Changes

Bishop Jonathan Holston has announced the following changes of appointment:

Effective Nov. 1, 2021

Marion District: Christ UMC, Bennettsville – Tom Pietila (RE)

Effective Nov. 7, 2021

Anderson District: Starr Charge – Mike Vandiver (RE) (1/4)

Anderson District: Homeland Park – Mike Vandiver (RE) (1/4)

### How can the Advocate improve and reach more people?

What do you like—and dislike—about the *Advocate*? How can we improve? And how can we reach more people?

These are questions the *Advocate* Board of Trustees is asking as we head into the next year.

We welcome your thoughts. Please share by emailing [advocate@umcsc.org](mailto:advocate@umcsc.org).

Also, if you are interested in being considered for the *Advocate's* board, email [advocate@umcsc.org](mailto:advocate@umcsc.org). Clergy and laity needed.



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## An Advent Short Story

### The garden revisited

By the Rev. Steve Brown

The breeze brought a chill to the couple by the fire. He rose to stir the embers with a stick and put more wood on it.

"It's time to go to bed," she said, stretching her legs.

He just walked over to the pile of logs and paused. He stood near the end, first picking up one log, looking it over and then dropping it to the side.

She watched him a few moments and then she stood, crossing her arms. She watched as he slowly and deliberately made his selection and walked back to the fire, stopping to pick up his stick to poke the fire.

"You don't want to go to bed, do you?" she asked softly as she walked toward him. She could tell there was something on his mind.

He placed one of the two logs he brought upon the fire and stirred the embers together, sparking a small flame.

"You had another dream last night, didn't you?" she asked as she came up beside him.

He stared at the fire and continued to work, adding the second log to the growing flame.

"I can see it on your face," she added, "Did you dream we were there?"

He stopped his prodding of the fire, the stick frozen by her question. He stood and sighed.

"Yes and no," he said, turning his back to the fire to face her.

"You know I have those dreams, too, Adam," Eve said, searching his eyes. "And I wake up remembering all over again."

He just nodded and looked at her and then the ground. All these years later, he thought to himself, and they still struggle to let go of the past.

"I did have the dream, the dream of being back in the garden, but this time it was different," he said.

"Did we walk away this time?" she asked, "Did I stop when I touched the fruit? Did you knock it out of my hand before I could take a bite? ... Did you? ... Did we? ..." and her voice trailed off.

"Eve," he said softly as he reached out to take her hand, "don't torture yourself again. Not tonight. We've had a lifetime of regret and sorrow and pain. It wasn't your fault. I know I blamed you, but I was standing right there, too. I heard the serpent. I listened to the conversation—and I didn't say anything. I saw what you saw and wanted what you wanted and I did what I did ... what you did. We talked about God, but we weren't thinking about God. We made our choice for ourselves and not for God."

She looked up at his face, and he could see the tear in the corner of her eye about to fall.

"I wonder so many times how different it would have been for us, for our family," Eve said as she brushed back the tear. "I've always wondered if things would have been different for Cain and Abel, for our children, if we had listened to God's words instead of our own thinking. If we had trusted him instead of ourselves. Would the curse of sin have been stopped? Would it have never happened?"

Adam shifted from one leg to the other and he mulled over her words.

"I don't know," he said as he looked back to the fire. "I've wanted to think so, but I don't know. Each of our descendants have to make their own choices—obey God or not, follow his ways or go their own. The choosing doesn't just happen at a tree but in the home, in the field, with others or all alone. All of us hear a lot of voices besides God's, whether inside us or around us. We were the first to eat the fruit, but others may have taken it for themselves even if we hadn't."

"I don't want to talk about it anymore," Eve said and began walking away. "Let's go to bed. I am tired of this same, sad story; tired of these dreams that haunt us."

Adam reached out and touched her arm. "But, Eve, listen. I did dream about the garden," he began. "And I saw the tree again—"

"I know, Adam," she interrupted, "the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

"Yes, but no," he said, "Yes, I saw that tree, but I saw the Tree of Life, too. I've never seen that tree since we left the Garden. I've never even dreamed of it before. But there it was—there were the both of them once more!"

They walked on in silence for a moment and he spoke again.

"I saw someone; someone I've never seen before," he continued. "And he took the Tree of Life, and cut it down. How could he do that? Why would he do that? And he shaped the wood and joined it together into some kind of box, like the ones Enosh and Kadel made to feed the animals. Remember we used it to feed the animals in the caves when the weather turned so bad."

She stopped and turned toward him. "I don't understand," Eve said. "Who was it? And why would the Tree of Life become an animal's feed box?"

"I don't know," he said shaking his head, "but there's more. The same figure went up to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and stripped it down to bare wood and branches. And it just stood there like a pole, its branches cut and twisted until I could only see one limb stretched out like an arm on either side. And he grabbed hold of it and just hung there. He seemed to hang there a long time. When he finally let go, he fell to the ground. And it had turned red, Eve. Dark red. Blood red. I have never seen a tree that looked like that. It was awful."

"Why would someone do that to that tree?" she asked, "Was it destroyed?"

"No. No, not destroyed, Eve," Adam continued. "At least it didn't seem destroyed but, like the Tree of Life, changed. Changed by this someone into something more, the same as it was but different; re-made for a different purpose."

"Oh, Adam, was it God?" Eve's mind raced, so full of questions at his strange tale.

"Was it God who did this? I mean, he could do this! Would he do this?"

"I don't know," he replied. "I think it is something only God could do, yet this someone was not like God. He looked like us, like one of our children. He seemed to be some kind of builder, a woodworker who knew exactly what he was doing. And then the dream was over—but something else. But ... Eve. There's one thing more. And I've not ever felt this before in all my dreams and nightmares."

"What?" she asked with eyes locked on his. She could tell it was important as he took both her hands in his strong grip.

"All the other dreams were always looking back," he said, "looking at what was lost and left me heavy with regret and the what-might-have-beens. But this time, Eve, this time I felt something different. That man, he got back up. And as he got up, I felt it. I felt hope, rising from my heart and filling my mind. Hope, Eve, hope of what is to come. I think it is God's doing, but he's using another man."

"God's going to do something to change what we did. Someone else to change this world."

All was quiet when Adam finished. They looked at one another and slowly turned to make their way to bed, their minds full of questions and wonder ... and hope.

Could this dream see a new beginning for a world that was old too soon?

*Brown pastors St. Mark United Methodist Church, Greenwood. During Advent, Brown likes to amuse himself by writing stories and reflections for the season.*



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Tony Rowell

### Do you kiss your momma with that mouth?

I will forever have a picture in my mind of my older brother, Mike, sitting outside of Granny Tharpe's laundry room on a hot summer's afternoon, looking dejected, angry and slightly indignant with a bar of soap sticking out of his mouth.

I don't recall the brand of soap, but it was a nice shell white, or maybe it was antique white; I could never tell the two apart, but color aside, from the expression on Mike's face, it wasn't particularly tasty.

Now Mike hadn't talked back or been rude to Granny in any way. He knew better than that. The issue at hand lay in the fact that Granny had heard him use the word, dare I say it, "darn," in casual conversation through the kitchen window. Quickly thereafter she proceeded to grab him by the hair of the head, give him a good tongue-lashing and after that she gave him a good tongue-washing right there in front of God and everybody.

Lord, have mercy. Can you imagine what folks today would say about such a thing?

I can tell you this, though, Granny wouldn't care one lick what they thought or said.

Granny didn't even call Momma to ask permission to discipline her darling little boy. She didn't fear the Department of Social Services or any other governmental agency. Heck (I hope she didn't hear that!), but heck, she didn't fear God himself when it came to raising children, because she knew his book and was following that book as closely as she knew how.

You see, Granny wanted her grandchildren to grow up to be good citizens and decent, godly people, and teaching them to watch their mouths was just part of the training.

As Mike's younger brother, I watched closely. I listened and I learned, and from then on I did my darning well out of ear-

shot. But there was one thing I never did in earshot or out. I never talked back, and I was never rude or disrespectful to Granny.

First of all, that was because I loved her and would never want to hurt her. Secondly, it was because I had been taught to respect my elders by my momma and my daddy. Besides all of that, if I had talked back or been rude or disrespectful to my loving Granny, she would have knocked me clean back to the antebellum days and I would have deserved every last bit of it and more.

Lord, have mercy, where have all the grannies gone?

If the television and the politicians and the folks down at Walmart and Best Buy are any indication, there hasn't been enough soap in enough mouths for a long time now.

Now before you get all high and mighty and proud of yourself, your mouth just might be one in need of a little soap itself.

Consider Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (NIV).

So how are you doing on that account? Personally, I plan on pleading the fifth and probably eating a little heavenly Lifebuoy in the long run.

As Luke 6:45 reminds us, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."

*Rowell pastors Beulah United Methodist Church, Gilbert. He's also the author of "What Would Granny Say? And Other Somewhat Embellished Memories," a faith-based essay collection published by the Advocate Press. The book is available as a paperback and ebook at [www.advocatepress.org/books](http://www.advocatepress.org/books).*



### Equipping disaster response trailers

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission-South Carolina's Early Response Team is still working to outfit their new trailers that will help them respond in the aftermath of disasters, such as the recent Hurricane Ida that hit Louisiana and Mississippi. Needed are \$20,000 to 30,000 in funds to outfit the trailers, purchasing items such as tarps, flashing, roofing tar, air compressors and air hoses, circular and reciprocating blades, crow bars, extension ladders and more. Funds will also offset the cost of fuel, supplies, training, etc. If you are interested in helping with this project, go to <https://www.umcsc.org/donate> or contact ERT Coordinator Billy Robinson at 803-539-8429 or [brpraisejesus@aol.com](mailto:brpraisejesus@aol.com).

## New community center brings much-needed child care, opportunity to Spartanburg

SPARTANBURG—State and local officials joined community leaders to open the Highland Early Learning Center Nov. 16. The new child care center, located in Spartanburg's Highland community at The Bethlehem Center, will provide free, quality care and education to eligible children.

The Bethlehem Center is one of the Advance Special Ministries of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

In 2020, South Carolina First Steps awarded \$300,000 in state funds to The Bethlehem Center based on the community's plans to renovate an underutilized, city-owned building and establish a First Steps 4K program serving children from the Highland community and surrounding areas.

"This is life changing for families. We are addressing the critical need for affordable, high-quality early care and education and creating a foundation for lifelong learning for young children and their families," said Patrena Mims, executive director of The Bethlehem Center.

The Highland Early Learning Center has a large classroom for 18 First Steps 4K



South Carolina First Steps awarded \$300,000 in state funds to The Bethlehem Center based on the community's plans to renovate an underutilized, city-owned building and establish a First Steps 4K program serving children from the Highland community and surrounding areas.

students and provides transportation to and from the center for each student. The center plans to expand its services to serve children birth through age 3 in an Early Head Start classroom supported by Spartanburg County

First Steps and the Mary Black Foundation.

The building at 400 Highland Ave. was originally constructed as part of the now-demolished Cammie Clagett public housing complex. Donated to the City of Spartanburg

by the Spartanburg Housing Authority in 2019, the facility is now managed by the neighboring Bethlehem Center.

The nonprofit organization has served the Highland area for 90 years with Youth Programs including the new Early Learning Center, afterschool and summer youth programs, as well as Community Supportive Service Programs for senior adult services, financial literacy activities, a food pantry, and wellness activities.

"Many people came together in support of this vision, and it is amazing what can happen when communities come together, said Martha Strickland, state director of 4K. "We know that early learning and increased family supports are very powerful and produce positive outcomes."

This program will advance ongoing local efforts to revitalize the Highland community. Assistant City Manager Mitch Kennedy said, "We are forming a solid plan for the future by first investing in our young people."

Interested families can learn more about The Highland Early Learning Center and First Steps 4K by visiting [www.Free4KSC.org](http://www.Free4KSC.org).

## Hometown pastor uses her gifts to follow her dreams, producing faith-based film

ANDERSON—On Saturday evening, Nov. 6, "Dinner For Seven: Serving Scott Free," had its film premiere as a red-carpet event at Pendleton High School's Auditorium to an audience of family and friends of Katie E. Webb.

Webb, known as "Pastor Katie!", is a product of Bethel United Methodist Church on the Pendleton Charge, Anderson District, where her mother Katie R. Webb and sister, Mildred Webb, attend. She served as an UMC Licensed Local Pastor in the North Texas Conference, Dallas Metro District, from 2008-2018, before returning to South Carolina.

The film was written by her and is a modern day look at Isaiah 4:1, which says, "In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, 'We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!'" (NIV).

The audience watched in anticipation of what would be the thoughts, acts and responses of seven ladies who presumed they had met the ideal man. "Scott Free" is a series of plots and episodes that explore these possibilities. The film's inspiration is to show how seven spiritually mature, faith-filled, self-actualized women respond to their realized conflict and unrealized desire.

In addition to writing the script for the film, her brother, Benjamin F. Webb II, wrote, sang, mixed and produced the music for both the film and the CD. She provided the vocals and lyrics. As well, her dad's great-grandson, Isaiah Smith, raps in the theme song.

And at the end of the film premiere, Webb announced the film has been picked up by Amazon TV and Apple TV, along with Firestick and Roku, to be streamed early next year. The original soundtrack is



The film has been picked up by Amazon TV and Apple TV, along with Firestick and Roku, to be streamed early next year.

available for purchase, too.

The Pendleton Charge partnered with Webb to secure Pendleton High School as her debut venue. Many local businesses sponsored her film's premiere.

Webb earned her Master of Divinity from Duke University. She is a certified spiritual director (SMU, Perkins School of Theology) and has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a Master of Science in human resources and development from Clemson University. She and her son, Brandon, now live in South Carolina. Her motto is from John Wesley, "The world is my parish," and her vision statement is "sharing god's love with humanity, partnering in forming deeper more intimate relationships with god, self and others".

For more information, visit [www.manyhatsproduction.com](http://www.manyhatsproduction.com).

## Aldersgate's new respite program will support caregivers

Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry is starting a drop-in style respite program for adults with developmental disabilities.

Called Aldersgate in the Morning, it will be hosted by Grace United Methodist Church, Columbia. The program will provide caregivers a short-term break.

Respite helps caregivers relax, relieve stress and maintain their own physical and emotional well-being.

AIM will operate on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Staff and trained volunteers will provide supervision and meaningful activities for the participants. If AIM is successful, ASNM will consider expanding the service to other locations.

Program Director Ebony Dawson-Mack will oversee the program opening in early 2022. Dawson-Mack holds several degrees including a Bachelor of Arts in English and a master's in counseling. She has worked in the special needs industry since 1999.

"I look forward to starting the respite program at Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry," Dawson-Mack said. "As a longtime advocate for people with disabilities and special needs, I truly believe in the person-centered approach and focusing on each person's abilities."

To learn more about AIM, email [respitateasnm@att.net](mailto:respitateasnm@att.net).



Dawson-Mack

## Bell to lead stewardship seminar on Jan. 28 at LTSS

COLUMBIA—Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary will hold its Stewardship Symposium Jan. 28 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dr. Dan Bell will be the keynote speaker on, "The Gift of Stewardship as the Mission of the Church."

It will be a virtual and in-person meeting held at Stavros Auditorium, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University.

As Bell says, "We will consider stewardship as a gift that God gives the church because God desires for us more than we could ever ask or imagine. To make this point I will argue that stewardship is not about what we do with a little bit of our stuff, but about what God gives us and what God wants us to do with what God gives us."

"Moreover, stewardship is not simply something Christians do but is expressive of the very nature of what they are as Christian, as human. By extension, stewardship is not about giving to the church but the church giving itself away. Along the way, we will consider why Christians do not give more, the pathos of much contemporary stewardship, why we have what we have, our mission problem and edifice complex and some of the challenges associated with leading the church in giving itself away."

Bell is an independent scholar and

professor at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, and Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. For 17 years he served as professor of theology and ethics at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia. An ordained elder in The United Methodist Church, he is a graduate of Stetson University in Florida, and he earned a Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School and a Ph.D. from Duke University.

Among his various publications are several books, including "Liberation Theology After the End of History," "Just War as Christian Discipleship," "The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World" and "Divinations: Theopolitics in an Age of Terror."

This stewardship opportunity is presented by the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University and the LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education. This event is funded by the LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education, a matching grant from the Lilly Foundation, Thrivent Financial and registration fees.

Questions? 803-609-2338 or [jimhjohnson51@gmail.com](mailto:jimhjohnson51@gmail.com)

Register online at <https://2022-stewardship-symposium.eventbrite.com>

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## Asbury UMC celebrates 150 years

CLIO—"This Far by Faith" was the theme for Asbury United Methodist Church's 150th anniversary.

It says a lot about the people of an African-American church that began after slavery. For 150 years, the church has been built on a solid foundation of God's word by the people of the Clio/Dunbar community of Marlboro County, and it continues to stand and be of service and blessing to the community and its members.

Asbury UMC was formed in 1871 as a "Brush Harbor" congregation around Hagan Prong Creek in the Dunbar community of Clio. The founders were Andrew Thomas, James McRae, Alphonso McRae, Mo McRae and Killis Wright. Their descendants still serve the church and community today.

On the weekend of Oct. 17, Asbury UMC family and friends celebrated the 150-year anniversary with a series of events on the history of the beginning of the church, a documentary of the church buildings, the families who worshiped

together throughout the years and the future of Asbury.

On Saturday, Oct. 16, a full house of members, friends and family gathered at the church on Church Street in Clio to view a documentary of the church history on widescreen view. They were welcomed by church pastor the Rev. Sandra Stubbs and other church members. The documentary depicts the real-life history and legacy of Asbury told by family, friends and ancestors of Asbury. Award-winning producer and journalist Art Fennell directed the film so members would have a legacy of historical events that would never be lost or forgotten.

There was also a dedication presented to the family of Joseph C. Kinney, who passed away this year, and was instrumental in giving oral and written history of the church. The documentary can be found on YouTube at Asbury Church843.

On Sunday, Oct. 17, the celebration continued as members and friends enjoyed the anniversary service with prayer, wor-

ship and praises to God for strength and perseverance. The leaders were passionate about having Fennell be the speaker for Sunday service, and the audience welcomed him with praise.

In honor of the anniversary, some members paid \$150 to commemorate the 150 years. Commemorative pens, masks and fans were the souvenirs and keepsakes given to the friends and family who came out to celebrate.

While the pandemic has derailed some of Asbury's activities, some are still planned, including the annual Christmas program presented by the Asbury Choir and musicians, along the delivery of care packages to the sick and shut-in members. Other events include Calendar T/Father's Day programs and Black history celebrations. Asbury leaders said they are blessed and honored to have dedicated members and former members who support the church financially and spiritually. Moving forward, the small church family of Asbury along with Stubbs are planning for a vibrant future.



### Conference Historical Society

by Joyce Plyler

#### Man of one book—and many

John Wesley referred to himself as *homo unius libri*, or man of one book—the Bible. But what could Wesley have meant by this proclamation when we know he was a voracious reader and studied many books, well more than a thousand by conservative counts?

Wesley intended us to know that, while he sought and obtained a broad education by reading other subjects, the Bible remained his "one book"—it was his primary source, the prism of his worldview and the very foundation for all other knowledge.

Many scholars have diligently researched which books, other than the Bible, Wesley read or studied. One of those scholars is Dr. Randy L. Maddox, general editor of "The Wesley Works Editorial Project." I recently discovered his publications related to the breadth of Wesley's literacy, which I highly recommend. Two of his articles printed in the journal "Methodist History" are available online at <http://archives.gcah.org/handle/10516/6572> or <http://archives.gcah.org/handle/10516/6564>. Both articles include lists of books that Wesley is known to have read or that were found in his libraries.

As one might expect, most of Wesley's secondary reading was religious and included a spectrum of theologies. He read the Old and New Testaments in their original languages and, to supplement the King James Version, he read the various other translations available at the time. He read many books concerning biblical exegesis, which assisted Wesley in writing his own biblical commentary. Wesley enjoyed reading the diaries and treatises of other ministers and missionaries, as well as religious philosophers such as Blaise Pascal.

Wesley's reading list also included quite a few secular tomes, heavily weighted toward history and the natural sciences, particularly biology and medicine. A short sample of these include: "A Treatise of the System of the World," by Sir Isaac Newton; "Observations on a Series of Electrical Experiments," by Dr. Hoadly and Benjamin Wilson; "The History of the Turks," published in 1603, by Richard Knolles; "The Elements of Algebra"; "The Elementary Parts of Dr. Smith's Complete System of Opticks"; "An Anatomical Exposition of the Structure of the Human Body"; William Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England"; "The History of France from Pharamond to Charles IX," by Jacque Bénigne Bousset; "A General History of Scotland from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time" (10 volumes), by William Guthrie; "Essays on Several Parts of the Animal Economy," by James Keill; "The History of the Rebellion and Civil War in Ireland," by Ferdinando Warner (whom Wesley notes in the book was "an impartial writer"); "The

Select Works of William Penn: To Which Is Prefixed a Journal of His Life," by William Penn; and "A Disquisition of the Stone and Gravel, and other Diseases of the Bladder, Kidneys, Etc."

If Wesley ever read a novel, I have not found a discussion of it. He might well have been curious enough to read Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" or Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," two of the earliest iterations of the English novel form and both published during Wesley's youth (1719 and 1726, respectively). Wesley, who never swayed from his laser-focus on the work of God, likely would have considered such fiction a fruitless diversion.

Wesley did, however, enjoy poetry. For example, notes in his handwriting were found in the text of "The Faerie Queene," an epic and allegorical poem with moral and religious themes, by Edmund Spenser. According to Dr. Maddox, Wesley is also known to have possessed an annotated version of Shakespeare's plays, which a later custodian of the library in Wesley's City Road Chapel home in London thought fit to destroy. What we might have learned from any notes Wesley penned in the margins of Shakespeare!

Of all the books Wesley read, however, the Bible remained his *summa libri*, the one above all others. His work never ceased to understand the Bible in all of its fullness, nuance and complexity.

In "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," Wesley explained that as a "man of one book" he regarded "none, comparatively, but the Bible."

To further understand this concept and how we can follow Wesley's example in reading the Bible and other books, I recommend the chapter by Randy L. Maddox titled "John Wesley—A Man of One Book," in "Wesley, Wesleyans, and Reading the Bible as Scripture," Joel B. Green and David F. Watson, eds. (Baylor University Press, 2012). You may find this and other essays by Maddox on his webpage at <https://divinity.duke.edu/faculty>.

For a wealth of information and resources on John Wesley and his theology, go to <https://wesley-works.org>.

Because reading is fundamental to our knowledge of the spiritual and natural world, what we read is critical. As Methodists, we would do well to follow the example of our founder in reading a variety of quality, well-researched books, while retaining the Bible as our "one book."

*Plyler is president of the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference. She welcomes comments or inquiries at [joyce@charlotte.twcbc.com](mailto:joyce@charlotte.twcbc.com) or 704-847-6096.*



Retired Bishop Dr. William "Will" Willimon, bestselling author who served a number of churches across the South Carolina Conference of the UMC before his election as bishop, preached the 175-year celebration.

Photo by Matt Brodie

## Main Street UMC marks 175-year anniversary

COLUMBIA—In person and online, members and friends of Main Street United Methodist Church gathered Sunday afternoon, Oct. 24, for a homecoming that celebrated the congregation's 175th anniversary, as well as brought an opportunity for wisdom and inspiration from a well-known denominational leader.

Retired Bishop Dr. William "Will" Willimon, bestselling author who served a number of churches across the South Carolina Conference of the UMC before his election as bishop, was the speaker for the celebration, preaching on "Standing with Jesus Between Yesterday and Tomorrow."

Often, Willimon said, "It's easier to talk about the past. It's easier to figure out yesterday than tomorrow."

After all, only God has the future. We sometimes doubt what's ahead of us.

And certainly, he noted, Main Street UMC has a long and influential past.

"But it could be this church's tomorrow could be more interesting than its yesterday," Willimon said.

The future is in the hands of God, and God only knows how glorious that will be.

Willimon was among a number of speakers that day, including representatives from its "mother" church, Washington Street UMC, Columbia; its "daughter" church, Virginia Wingard Memorial UMC, West Columbia; and its "sister" church, Wesley UMC, Columbia, with whom it shared space for a number of years after a flood damaged Wesley's building.

Teresa Arnold of Main Street brought a welcome and greeting, noting the City of Columbia declared the day "Main Street UMC Day." Main Street UMC pastor the Rev. Lex McDonald brought the opening prayer, followed by the Rev. Rebecca Shirley of Washington Street UMC, who led the litany of remembrance and rededication. The Rev. Beth Faulk of Virginia Wingard Memorial UMC read the first lesson, and the Rev. Tiffany Knowlin Boykin of Wesley UMC read the second lessons, both from Matthew 28.

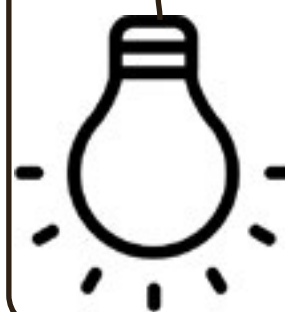
The Rev. Walter Strawther, Columbia District congregational specialist, brought the prayer, and Columbia District Superintendent Cathy Jamieson introduced Willimon.

The South Carolina State University Gospel Choir provided special music.

The Rev. James Friday, director of congregational development for the South Carolina Conference, led the offertory prayer, and Dr. Cheryl Rhodes, pastor emeritus of Main Street gave a word of thanksgiving.

The service concluded with fellowship time featuring a display of the church's long history and a food truck.

### 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.



Richard James, the Rev. William Bowser Jr. and Dr. Anthony Hodge gather during the two-church celebration.



Patricia Cummings and the Rev. William Bowser Jr. smile during the celebration.



The Rev. William Bowser Jr. and Patricia Cummings with Dr. Anthony Hodge, who served as the event's speaker.

## Two churches celebrate church anniversaries together Nov. 14

Fisher Chapel and St. Stephen's United Methodist churches were encouraged recently to personally actualize the words contained in Deuteronomy 6:10-12 of The Message Bible translation, as they gathered to celebrate their anniversaries.

St. Stephens UMC celebrated 200 years, and Fisher Chapel UMC turned 141.

Dr. Anthony Hodge, Rock Hill District superintendent whose home church is Fisher Chapel, was the speaker for the dual-church anniversary celebration.

The theme for Hodge's message was "Don't Forget Where You Came From." During his exegesis of the biblical passage from Deuteronomy 6:10-12, Hodge commented, "We come from good people! We come from hard-working people! We come from people who knew the value of worshipping God. We are all here because of God first and second because of our fore-parents or ancestors. Remember where you came from."

Deuteronomy 6:10-12 says, "When God, your God, ushers you into the land he promised through your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you, you're going to walk into large, bustling cities you didn't build, well-furnished

houses you didn't buy, come upon wells you didn't dig, vineyards and olive orchards you didn't plant. When you take it all in and settle down, pleased and content, make sure you don't forget how you got there—God brought you out of slavery in Egypt" (MSG).

Hodge closed the message by reminding those physically in worship, as well as those participating via Facebook, that just as God was with people before, God is still with each of us. If God did it for them, God will do it for us today, as well, he said.

"We are happy to praise God with our sisters and brothers of St. Stephen UMC because it is another opportunity to be restored, experience renewal and recommitment to God," Esther Blackshear, chairperson of Fisher Chapel's Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, said about the dual celebration. "Our hearts are filled with joy as we embrace our first combined church anniversary celebration of God's goodness to us and our love for our sisters and brothers in Christ."

Helen Shuler, a member of St. Stephen, describes her church as being a small-frame white church with a red door "where much love continues to stand the test of time" under the leadership of the Rev. William Bowser Jr.

Marva Tigner, a member of Fisher Chapel's United Methodist Women, worked alongside other UMW members to facilitate the preparation of a meal enjoyed by those at the church, as well as those unable to attend the celebrations.

Joyce L. Leavell, chairperson of Fisher Chapel's Church Council, said, "When we did the memorial for all past members of both churches, it led me back to several old spiritual songs we have sung over the years, such as 'Look Where He Brought Me From,' 'Come By Here My Lord,' 'Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross,' 'His Eye is on the Sparrow,' 'Through It All,' 'Just a Little Talk with Jesus,' 'He Touched Me,' 'Lead Me,' 'Guide Me Along The Way' and 'There's Something About That Name Jesus.'"

Leavell further shared the two churches have been through a lot and have the power to keep moving in the spirit of those who came before and paved the way for where the churches are today.

Bowser said he has been blessed to be a part of these two loving congregations for five years and marvels at the wonderful ways God has blessed them.

## Senior members reflect as Cedar Grove UMC celebrates 221 years

ORANGEBURG—On Saturday, Oct. 3, Cedar Grove United Methodist Church celebrated its 221st anniversary.

Members said it was truly a blessed time. As Matthews 18:20 states, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am also."

The theme was "Reaping the Harvest, Pressing On, Going through the Storm, Striving for Higher Heights." Focusing on the theme, pastor the Rev. Harry Lee Brown reminded the body, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heaven."

As Brown said, "When I think of all the good things God has done for us, and the way he has blessed Cedar Grove United Methodist Church, it filled my heart with praises and thanksgiving. Knowing, when we have done our best, we cannot be but blessed."

Deuteronomy 7:6 states, "For you Israel are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the people on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (NIV).

Two hundred twenty-one years ago, God had some special people in mind, and a special place to meet these people. God decided to make 1401 Birch Drive, Orangeburg,



Degraftenreed



Palmer



Preston



Wade



Whitmire

South Carolina, that people. Now 221 years later, God is still making 1401 Birch Drive his dwelling place. Through the years there were many setbacks, many storms and many trials, but somehow Cedar Grove made it. Cedar Grove never let go of God's unchanging hands.

As Brown said, they concentrated and believed in what Galatians 7:6 says: "Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Because of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, as Cedar Grove celebrates 221 years, Cedar Grove is striving for higher heights serving each other as God's chosen people.

The guest speaker for the occasion was Dr. Robin Dease, the former district superintendent in the Hartsville District, now pastor at St Andrew By-the-Sea United Methodist Church, Hilton Head Island.

Her message came from Deuteronomy

8:2-4, titled, "Remember the Hours God has Blessed You; Remember Who You Are."

Dease reminded all that Cedar Grove is blessed to have elderly members that are still here to witness such great celebration. As we celebrate 221 years, these senior members share their reflections:

Ruth Starkes Preston remembered her grandfather bringing her siblings and her along with her cousins and others to church in the horse and wagon. She said they did not miss a Sunday service or revival. Back then it was called "Camp Meeting," and her grandfather would make ice cream and sell it for five cents a cone to help with the offering.

Mattie Stroman Degraftenreed and Mary Parler Palmer talked about attending Cedar Grove School. They said the schoolhouse was one big room with a big woodstove sitting in the middle of the floor. The boys were sent outside to collect wood

to keep the fire burning. The classes were divided into sections from first grade to six grades. Their most memorable time was "May Day," when all the children would come together wrapping the May Pole.

Argie Stroman Wade remembered the big pot belly black stove that sat in the middle of the church and sitting on those hard wood seats. She said one of the trustees would go to the church early and make fire so when the members arrived, they would be warm. One of her enjoyable times was "Children's Day" when her Uncle Roy Felder (trustee) would make the "good ole lemonade" in the big barrel with a wooden paddle.

Hattie Stroman Whitmire and Wade remembered the outside toilets (now called portajohns) and the windows that you pushed up and had no screen. They had paper fans that were used to fan off the flies, gnats and mosquitoes. The good times were when their parents would begin cooking days before Camp Meeting, which they also called "Big Meeting."

People would walk for miles to attend the service. On that day, dinner was served from the trunk of the cars and the children would be fanning the flies and gnats.

## Bethel gets ELCC grant to fund homework program

SMOAKS—Bethel United Methodist Church has received a grant to fund their afterschool homework program initiative.

The grant comes from the Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The ultimate goal of Bethel's program is to strengthen

and encourage children and families' beliefs toward completing a successful 2021-2022 school term.

Citing 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and Matthew 6:9-13, Bethel UMC's homework program leaders said they will continue to pray without ceasing as they engage in their ministry.

Around 40,000 children in the state of South Carolina

did not complete the 2019-2020 school term and were unaccounted for because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bethel hopes to bridge this gap through the afterschool homework program.

Anyone interested in participating in this program should contact Susan Fryar, project director, at 843-909-0749.





Photo courtesy of Jodie Plyler

**Socktober helps homeless people**

Tabernacle United Methodist Women at Tabernacle UMC, Lancaster, sponsored Socktober during the month of October. Tabernacle's congregation collected socks to be given to the Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless through the Lancaster County United Way. Socks are the top item requested by homeless shelters. Tabernacle collected 287 pairs of socks.



*View from the Pews*

by Bill Barnier

**More rules?**

Our political environment worldwide is now being so cluttered with rules and laws that even the humblest of saints would be in violation of something.

Our nations' history demonstrates the pitfalls of enacting rules and control in order to keep free thought and self-determination from the minds of those ruled. In our nation of laws, founded upon religious freedom and responsible government, the pendulum has swung away from trust and personal freedom toward irresponsibility, selfishness and greed. Power collectors destroy or ignore what rings of actual truth or responsibility and encourage others to do the same.

As humans, we struggle to live up to the standards God has set before us. We once failed so badly that God destroyed everything, giving humans a chance to start over. When the "new" humans repeatedly could not follow his rules, he sent Jesus to earth to show us how to live our lives correctly. Not only did we again fail to learn the lessons, but we killed the messenger! Yet with his last breath he asked that we be forgiven.

Humans pile on unreasonable rules and standards, even if they are also impossible to follow. The biblical rules of the Sabbath are a perfect example. Even today, lawmakers constantly dream of new ways to control, rule and govern when the rules already in place don't work or are ignored. When we do this in conflict with God's will, the devil and his minions take the opportunity to challenge us. They find every chink in our goodness to plant seeds of doubt and guilt. From a purely natural point of view, we are simply pack animals who mostly want to be accepted and happy. With free will, we are bound to make mistakes along the way, so we are sinners on a journey to be better, not perfect.

Somewhere along our path, we seem to have given up on the core values God encourages us to live by. Spiritual health and well-being can only be achieved when we clear our lives of the sheep mentality that comes from taking the easy path. We abdicate our personal struggle so the devil can tempt us away from responsibilities for our actions and our obligations. Instead of drawing closer to each other and trusting the Holy Spirit to show us what we need as people of the universe, we give control of our lives to those who have long since turned away from God's love and grace.

We are becoming weaker, ignoring the lessons of history and shutting out anything that requires love and responsibility for ourselves and each other.

The easy path we seem to be traveling cannot lead to the peace, love and harmony we seek. As former President Kennedy once said, "We must do these things because they are hard." We can only succeed in achieving the love and peace God offers by doing the hard things.

Leadership only dooms everyone to failure when it makes rules to deny history lessons, to force those they lead to do things they themselves won't do and to use the power of punishment to force compliance with rules not of God's plan.

I'm reminded of a movie in which the main character repeats each day. Known human history seems to follow a similar story: civilizations thriving until they disappear, the next following the same fate.

Perhaps it's God's way of telling us that until we follow the rules he has given us, we are destined to keep returning to earth life until we get it right. More rules won't achieve anything until we use our free will to follow his rules.

*Barnier attends St. Paul United Methodist Church, Ridgeland.*



*Guest Commentary*

by David Bryant

**Aquafina and the kingdom of heaven**

When I was still teaching school, we had the good fortune to have our classroom adjacent to the entrance atrium. It was a spacious, attractive and comfortable area. The classroom soon became a morning depository for all the sundry items a high school kid needs with the atrium as our morning gathering.

In our school, like many, we had a school-wide minute of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The only problem was there was no flag. As a short-term resolution, we recited the pledge to the Aquafina machine as that was the only thing that was red, white and blue!

I'm currently exploring several scriptural and spiritual areas, and no, I'm not good at multitasking. The areas are the kingdom(s) of heaven/God, the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus as Messiah and Christ. The lines of distinction blur, and I often travel far and wide on, quite literally, a "wing and a prayer." But I wonder, in my frequent confusion tempered with rare but blinding realizations of the obvious, how many of us declare a committed faith in Christianity, a fervent belief in Jesus and an obedience to him while entirely missing the point of his point and purpose. How many of us look to him as a convenient vending machine to which we can pledge our allegiance and from which we can put in our dollar, select our salvation and choose our grace, and presume to be the arbiters of his grace to others?

Surely, there has to be more to Jesus, salvation and the kingdom of Heaven than pledging allegiance to an Aquafina machine.

Our adult Sunday school class recently finished a unit on the Book of Job. We know what Job didn't. No, not that the Satan was mistreating Job, not God. What we know that Job didn't is that Jesus is coming. When he arrives he will make several astounding revelations (lower case "r"). One: Through him the kingdom of God has arrived. Two: He's not THAT Messiah.

There will be no (immediate) defeat of Rome; no abundance or prosperity; no unification of the tribes of Israel; no smiting of the pagan, idol worshipping, immoral, and unrepentant Gentile Canaanites. There will be suffering; in the end, the path of all our suffering will take us to the foot of the cross.

But here's the deal. Once there, we find it's actually the beginning and we don't have to physically die for our sins. Jesus covered that—the dying and the atonement. We get to choose to accept that which was previously carved on tablets of stone to now be carved on our hearts. We get to have the kingdom of Heaven within our very selves.

Wesley tells us that as soon as we accept Jesus and allow him in (justification), our transformation from earthly beings bound

by man to heavenly beings bound to God begins (sanctification).

Sanctification is not an event but a process of transformation that leads to perfection. Heaven here, heaven now, heaven future, heaven for eternity—go figure.

But there's a catch, and isn't there always?

We have to choose. We have to seek him. We have to die to self and allow him in, all the way in, all the way to "in control." No longer mine but thine.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains what it means to live as his follower and be a member of God's kingdom. Beyond the sermon, Jesus spends a lot of time teaching on the concept that we must "abide" in him. Commensurately, if we are to personally experience the kingdom of Heaven, he must abide in us. We must provide him shelter and sustenance; safety and security; love and belonging; esteem and respect. Then, and only then, will what Maslow calls "self-actualization" occur, in the form of our realization of Wesley's "perfection in love" and Jesus' kingdom of Heaven!

I thought for years that the scariest verse in the Bible was Matthew 7:23: "Many will cry Lord, Lord ... and I will reply, I never knew you." But I fear the greatest tragedy is we will cry "Lord, Lord" and he will say, "You knew the Scripture and the prophecies, you knew the law and the commands, you knew the creeds and the prayers. You knew the sacraments and the symbols, but you never knew me."

When we become the attitudes, we become servants, not controllers of others; we become subjects of his kingdom, not rulers.

We become guides for others to the foot of their cross and, by default, his kingdom.

Then we will know him—and know him in a far more intimate and personal relationship than merely knowing of him.

Do we have the faith to trust him and obey, to put faith into action? I think we do. John Wesley thought we did. Francis Asbury thought we did. The Evangelical United Brethren Church thought we did during the formation of The United Methodist Church. Jesus said we could and commanded us to do so.

We can stop proving points, feeding contention and using God (Scripture) for our own ambitions and prejudices. We must stop splitting the "one true and universal church" into smaller and smaller segments that are less and less about Jesus and begin to not only follow him but be as him through Christian love in action.

To extend Paul's conviction of the Galatians 2:21, "I don't ignore the grace of God, because if we become righteous through the Law, then Christ died for no purpose" (CEB).

Or what, really, is the point?  
*Bryant attends Bethesda UMC, Easley.*

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# UNITED METHODIST WOMEN: Exercising Faith Over Fear

From Page 1

we are involved. Truly, the South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women are involved in many missions. I thank you sisters and brothers in Christ for your energy, your passion, your commitment to bringing the love of Christ to everyone everywhere, always and forever. The members of this powerful yet humble organization are 'Exercising Faith Over Fear' every month, week, day, hour and minute of every year as they serve with boldness and confidence, which comes solely ... from our constant companion, Father God.

"Our faith makes us strong! Our faith defines who we are. Let us rejoice in the strength of that knowledge and celebrate all that we do and believe!"

Ford said that as UMW members journey into the future, remembering and honoring traditions of the past and creating new traditions for the future, they should always put faith, hope and love into action.

Vice President Janice Eaddy presented the Program Book next, then greetings were offered by Holston, as well as Hartsville District superintendent and cabinet representative the Rev. Telley Gadson, Lytleton Street UMC pastor the Rev. Gary Rivas, Hartsville District UMW President Jacquelyn Session and Lytleton Street UMW President Carol Lee.

UMW General Secretary Harriett Olson greeted the group via a video title "Emerging New Thing in Methodism."

Charm Eaddy, SCCUMW Charter for Racial Justice Representative, and Janice Eaddy led the women in a prayer of commitment: "We believe that God is the creator of all people and all are God's children in one family. We believe that racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ and denies the redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ. We believe that racism robs all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic, and political exploitation. We believe that we must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sisters and brothers of other races in thought, word and deed. We further believe that in our common humanity in creation, all women and men are made in God's image, and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God. We believe that our strength lies in our racial and cultural diversity and that we must work toward a world in which each person's value is respected and nurtured, and that our struggle for justice must be based upon new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures and practices of both church and state. FINALLY, As United Methodist Women members, we commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and in deed and to struggle for the rights and the self-determination of every person and group of persons."

Holston then delivered his "Message from the Heart," encouraging all to, as he stated, "Never back away from our challenges."

Holston said all we have are gifts from God, including challenges. In exercising our faith over fears, we have opportunity for mission. What we've got to do is an obligation, but what we get to do is an opportunity. As he exclaimed, may God be the glory for all United Methodist Women can do together.

Meaningful musical organ selections of "Be Thou My Vision" and "Holy, Holy, Holy"



Women (and some men, including Bishop Jonathan Holston, lower left) from across the state gathered via Zoom for the 49th annual meeting of the United Methodist Women.

performed by Ike Pitts of Lytleton Street UMC added emotional emphasis.

Next, Greenwood District UMW President Joyce Crouch introduced the Bible study leader, the Rev. Brenda Thomas, pastor of Good Hope UMC. Thomas focused upon exercising faith over fear with passages from Joshua 1:1-9, encouraging all to be strong and courageous.

As Thomas noted, great leaders are rare, and everyone is a leader, for someone is always watching and learning from you. She exhorted the women to study God's word, meditate on his word, and be faithful followers of Christ.

Next, Ruby Hannah, treasurer, introduced the two 2021 Presidential Scholarship recipients, Joyden Glover and Jillian Spencer, both of whom expressed great appreciation to the UMW for the opportunity to continue their educations. Glover is a sophomore elementary education major at Winthrop University and Spencer is a freshman bio-chemistry and genetics major at Clemson University.

Having urged attendees to prepare a snack beforehand, a love feast/memorial service was conducted by Vickie Harvey, spiritual growth coordinator, following the bell ringing memorial for UMW members who

have passed away. This was the second year the Christian fellowship meal was shared virtually.

The morning session concluded with a viewing of "I Believe You," a powerful video about intimate partner violence.

After a break, the afternoon business session began with Olson's video, "Personal Response to COVID-19 Health Crisis."

Ford then presented her president's report highlighting the purpose of UMW and the scope of the UMW mission project. She shared that SCCUMW has the distinction of having the largest United States membership number, 9,458, and the largest unit membership of 319.

Thanks were offered to the program committee, Hartsville District and technology team for the success of the annual meeting.

"I am honored to serve beside you," Ford said. "I am truly thankful for this experience and opportunity to grow spiritually through our shared experiences. Exercising our faith, nurturing and exercising it, will keep us strong. Like Daniel in the lion's den and David before Goliath, we go boldly into the future with confidence knowing we are loved children of God."

Ford also honored two UMW with Special Mission Recognition Pins: Barbara Brooks, deaconess and past Marion District president and active missionary, and Debra Schooler, longtime Limitless mentor and leader and current Columbia District president. Ford asked them to consider themselves "admired and hugged."

Dr. Renee Ritter presented the 2020 minutes, which were adopted after minor corrections.

Various executive committee members then presented their reports and awards: Diamond Award Units, Mission Today Units and

Reading Program Units were all recognized and praised for continued success during a challenging season.

Hannah presented the 2022 budget, which was approved.

"Fairness Lord Jesus," performed by Pitts, preceded Eaddy's introduction of the keynote speaker, the Rev. Angela Marshall, of St. John's UMC in Lugoff.

Marshall spoke on "Exercising Faith over Fear," encouraging all to listen to God's word to overcome distress and to live "on the edge of faith with one foot poised to step forward into fear." She reminded all never to doubt God's promise and presence.

"Great is thy faithfulness—always," Marshall said.

Registrar and Hartsville District Treasurer Bernice Wright then presented annual meeting credentials: 348 members registered, including 15 younger than age 40, and 134 first-timers. Wright also emphasized the five things God wants us to remember: 1) We are never alone; 2) Nothing takes God by surprise; 3) When we're weak, he is strong; 4) He is the God of new beginnings; and 5) Love never gives up on us.

UMW Southeastern Jurisdiction President Sue Owens recognized retiring SCCUMW Officers: Eunice White, Education and Interpretation (four years); Lavonne James, Membership, Nurture and Outreach (three years); Evelyn Pauling, Committee on Nominations (four years); Betty Swinton, Mission u dean and assistant dean (four years); Charm Eaddy, Charter for Racial Justice Committee (three years); Kate Hyder, Charter for Racial Justice Committee (three years); and Barbara Holley, Spartanburg Bethlehem Center Representative (five years).

Owens closed in her inimitable style with, "Ya done good, and we thank ya!"

Kathy Roys, chair of the Nominations Committee, added Patricia Walker as a new nominee for Education and Interpretation. The new full slate was approved by ballot vote, and Samoria Session conducted the installation of new officers: Patricia Walker: Education and Interpretation Coordinator; Ruby Hannah: Treasurer; Linda Kennedy: Committee on Nominations; Angela Allen: Membership, Nurture and Outreach Coordinator; and Sonya Benjamin, Barb Brooks, Eunice White: Charter for Racial Justice Committee.

Marion District President Sarah Woods offered a spirited invitation to the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting to be held in person in Myrtle Beach with First United Methodist Church as the host church. Plans are being made for a memorable celebration of United Methodist Women.

Ann Alexander invited all to the 2022 United Methodist Assembly in Orlando, Florida, and encouraged members younger than age 40 to apply to one of the three \$500 scholarships available (contact Hannah or Ford for applications).

Maureen Thomas, Legacy Fund Liaison, noted that the UMW Legacy Fund has now topped \$38 million toward its ultimate goal of \$60 million. She noted there will be a special Inaugural Legacy Banquet at Assembly with a \$65 extra ticket price.

Eaddy offered a final prayer for the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Ford closed the meeting, saying, "Thank you for being here today, being part of our 'community of women whose purpose is to know God.' We are one united group, serving together all across the conference. Stay safe. Stay well. Love one another from a distance. Continue doing what you do best which is putting faith, hope and love into action each and every day. Remember to 'Exercise Faith Over Fear' today and in the days to come."

Pitts closed with the hymn "Here I Am, Lord," a most appropriate ending to a beautiful day.

*Eichenbaum is SCCUMW Social Action coordinator.*



## SHARE your STORIES

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# APPORTIONMENTS: All payments due by January 14

From Page 1

place, with 78.8 percent, and the Columbia District is in third with 75.85 percent.

In addition, special giving and other askings are up more than \$200,000 over last year, with \$909,617 collected to date this year versus last year at \$703,355. These are for anything from extra mile giving for college and homes to ministries such as Epworth Children's Home or Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry.

Friday, Jan. 14, is the last day to pay apportionments. Payments must be in the treasurer's office by 4 p.m. that day.

**Is your church doing something special this year to raise extra money to pay your apportionments?**

Share it with the Advocate, and we'll give you a mention in our next edition. Email [advocate@umcsc.org](mailto:advocate@umcsc.org), or call 803-786-9486, ext. 338.

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.

Westbury urges churches to pay electronically or mail their final check by the end of December because of changes made to United States Postal Service first-class delivery time frames.

"We have noticed that some mail is arriving two weeks after the postmark," Westbury said.

"It is not the postmark that determines when the church pays," she added. "It is when the payment appears in the treasurer's office."

Wires can be initiated and received on the same day, so the deadline to send a wire is Jan. 14 by 2 p.m.

# BLACK METHODISTS: Speakers explore 'What's Going On?'

From Page 1

Double Tree by Hilton Columbia, SEJ BMCR celebrated a commitment to "chartering the course through treacherous waters." More than 50 years ago, Black Methodists for Church Renewal was birthed out of the necessity of Black Methodists to set a course and offer cooperation to the newly forming UMC, a body of believers who desired to become more like Christ.

In today's reality, BMCR continues to stand up and champion the cares, concerns and celebrations of its people while staying focused on the challenges and opportunities within the UMC, as well as the changing landscape of our communities. BMCR is still here advocating for unity and standing against systemic injustice. It is still acting as the agitating conscience on all boards and agencies. And it is still working to initiate, develop and implement strategies for the development and growth of strong Black local churches.

Highlights from the meeting began with an impressive opening session memorial service with music by Jarvis Wilson and an introduction by Barbara Jackson (Northern Alabama), coordinator for SEJ-BMCR. Greetings were offered by South Carolina Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston and Dr. Cathy Jamieson, Columbia District superintendent, as well as the Hon. Steve Benjamin, mayor of the City of Columbia.

A powerful keynote on the theme "What's Going On?" was next offered by Bishop Sharma Lewis, resident bishop for the Virginia Conference of the UMC.

The day also featured two learning labs on the future of the Black church with a pointed conversation between Dr. Reginald Lee (South Carolina), Hartsville District Cooperative Parish, and Dr. Michael Bowie, executive director of SBC-21. The conversation left participants with hope and a stated passion for the necessity of local Black churches in the community. A second learning lab on "Power at the Polls: Mid-term Elections" focused on the needs for



Submitted photo

Attendees gather for a smile at the Southeastern Jurisdictional BMCR 2021 Banquet.

local churches to get members to exercise their rights to vote.

A communion service was held Thursday evening at Journey UMC with a message from Holston, who preached from Mark 1:6-7 on "From the Inside Out, Because Many of Us Are Overdue for Maintenance."

On Friday we had a wonderful town-hall style "What's Going On?" discussing plans for possible church separation. Presenting were Holston; Lewis; Bowie; DuWanna Thomas Esq. (North Georgia Conference), chair, North Georgia BMCR; the Rev. Jasmine Smothers (North Georgia Conference), pastor, Atlanta First UMC; and Dr. Byron Thomas (North Georgia Conference), past coordinator, SEJ-BMCR, and superintendent, Central South District.

It covered many of the concerns but also some of the hopes for the growth of the Black church.

Next was a truthful worship celebration with the Rev. Telley Lynette Gadson, superintendent of South Carolina's Hartsville District, who delivering an eye-opening message, "Do You Know The Assignment?"

The meeting closed Saturday with an installation of officers by Dr. Candace Lewis, president and dean of Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta.

The Rev. Amiri Hooker was installed as the new BMCR coordinator of the jurisdiction.

In all, the theme for this year—"What's Going On: Charting the Course Through Treacherous Waters"—spoke to the issues at hand in this time in our lives, in the life of our country and in the life of the church.

We maneuvered through the COVID-19 pandemic and found ourselves making decisions about how to return to a "normal church life" amid recent protests for racial justice and equality, voting rights and the wait for General Conference.

We who attended were thankful for this opportunity from SEJ BMCR to educate ourselves on the issues and be willing to step up and address them.

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# BURDINE LODGE: Ceremony dedicated, blessed restoration

From Page 1



Photo by Allison Trussell

Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury, pictured here in the lodge where he stayed during his journeys, traveled more than 250,000 miles during his lifetime, growing the church to 700 itinerant preachers, 2,000 local or lay preachers and 214,000 members.

odist Church. The church's current pastor, the Rev. Steven King, offered the invocation at the ceremony.

The cabin, donated to the PCHS by Nell Davis Patton and her family, was dismantled, and the logs and stones tagged and placed in storage 12 years ago, said Ron Masters, master of ceremonies. Once funds were raised, the cabin was rebuilt as part of the Hagood Mill Historical Site.

The Rev. Valerie Mireb, pastor of Grace UMC, Pickens, gave a brief history of Charles Wesley and his and his brother John's travels in the colonies. The church's Chancel Choir sang "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," all written by Wesley, throughout the ceremony.

Dr. Roger Gramling, secretary-treasurer of the Conference Historical Society, offered a brief history of Bishop Asbury's journey from Bristol, England, to the American colonies. Though elected "general superintendent" in the 1784 organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Asbury remained itinerant, traveling from Maine to Georgia "with rare respites from Methodist society to Methodist society, from Methodist family to Methodist family," Gramling said.

"To those of us who are Methodists, the Burdine Lodge serves as a vivid reminder of how Methodism took hold in America, how it began in homes, led initially by lay men and women," Gramling said. "It also reminds us of a man (Asbury) who, at great personal sacrifice and with great courage, became the undisputed leader of his church until his death on March 31, 1816, having traveled over 250,000 miles during his lifetime, growing the church to 700 itinerant preachers, 2,000 local or lay preachers and 214,000 members."

The lodge, Gramling said, reminds all

of us, regardless of denomination, of the importance of religion in shaping America from its beginnings.

"God's word brought hope and promise to families like the Burdines, and because of their faith in the promises of God, men and women worked and planted and built and looked forward to a better day," Gramling said.

South Carolina UMC Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston echoed that thought in his dedication and blessing of the site.

"This isn't just a piece of Methodist heritage," Holston said, "but a place where we remember ... not just its importance in the past, but its importance to us now and in the future."

After words of dedication, Holston offered a prayer of blessing.

"We give thee thanks for those whose time, talents, gifts, labor and service have brought us to this day thus completing this act of restoration and preservation," Holston said. "May this place be a place for remembering those who pioneered and persevered in the Christian faith. And, in remembering them, may we be led to persevere in the work that is set before us that we may be counted among thy good and faithful servants as we, too, seek to witness the Gospel and build thy kingdom."

Ken Nabors, president of the PCHS, acknowledged two individuals with plaques: Julian Howell, an Eagle Scout candidate, was instrumental in the re-creation of the brush arbor used for worship near the lodge, and Nick Gambrell received one as a representative of Old Oakway Builders, "the guys that made this happen," Nabors said.

Gambrell noted that while they do the work for future generations, "it has been a delight."

Continued next page



During the holidays, all roads lead home.  
WE HOPE YOUR ROAD LEADS YOU TO WOFFORD COLLEGE.





Photos by Allison Trussell

Conference Historical Society leaders Dr. Roger Gramling and Joyce Plyler pause for a smile outside the restored Burdine Lodge. The tin roof was used in place of wood shingles because of the cost of the shingles and the need for them to be replaced every eight to 10 years. All the furnishings with the exception of the bed are period antiques donated by Dr. Tim Drake. The bed is of the period.

**Continued from previous page**

Nabors also presented four pens to Joyce Plyler, president of the Conference Historical Society. Nabors made the pens from the chestnut logs from the original cabin. Some of the logs were discovered to be unusable when the cabin was dismantled.

Plyler took the opportunity to recognize Gramling's efforts in raising nearly \$30,000 for the project and said the society would decide how the pens would be used. She suggested they could be auctioned to raise money and awareness for the project.

Following the ceremony, the crowd was invited to process across the road and up a hill to the Burdine Lodge, nestled in a small clearing. There, people were encouraged to walk through and around the cabin,

which is furnished with period-appropriate antiques donated by Dr. Tim Drake, and to follow the path to the arbor, where the family and Methodist Society would have held service.

Special thanks were given to the following for their help in the project: the Nell Patton Davis Family, South Carolina Methodist Conference Historical Society, Hagood Mill Foundation, Pickens County, Pickens County Historical Society, Dr. Tim Drake, Roger Lindsay, Doug and Charlie Winchester, Gerry Tennihill, Davis Brothers Grading, Les McCall and Nick Gambrell of the Old Oakway Builders, and the Master Chinkers and other hands-on volunteers who labored to preserve this important history.



Above, everything about the cabin is period appropriate except the roof. Below is the brush arbor.



"This isn't just a piece of Methodist heritage but a place where we remember ... not just its importance in the past, but its importance to us now and in the future," said UMCS Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston.

# Orangeburg Circuit starts parish nursing and medical ministry

By Elaine Leonard and Rev. Annie H. Sistrunk

The Orangeburg Circuit, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Lawrence Cantey, has started a Parish Nursing and Medical Ministry.

This ministry, known as PNAMM, was a detailed collaboration between various entities: Zeta Eta Eta Chapter, Chi Eta Phi Sorority Inc., Medical Ministries (Judy Castro) and nurses and non-medical volunteers of the charge's churches, which are Bethlehem, Mount Nebo and St. John United Methodist.

They held a health fair Oct. 31 using the medical knowledge of various doctors and community resources, calling the event a "Trunk or Treat-Ment COVID-19 Health Clinic."

At the event, not just candy was given out to children, but also a health fair with other vital information for members and the community. Several doctors from the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties— Dr. Catherine Millender, Dr. P. Mbu and Dr. John Samies—gave lectures via Zoom on COVID treatment and breast cancer awareness. Millender not only gave her lecture, but also took time to speak with



The Orangeburg Circuit held a health fair with doctors and community resources, calling the event a "Trunk or Treat-Ment COVID-19 Health Clinic."

individuals about some of their medical concerns.

Along with the lectures, the Department

of Health and Environmental Control delivered 40 COVID-19 vaccinations or boosters to attendees. Nurses checked individuals

blood pressure, and some people had their blood sugar levels tested.

With the words of Jesus spoken from Matthew 25:31-46 as the Scripture used for the mission of this ministry, other provisions were made for attendees. PNAMM attended to medical needs as well as hunger and thirst needs.

Metro T-Mobile partnered with Harvest Hope to have a food distribution for everyone in attendance.

Sponsors for the event included Medical Ministries (Judy Castro), Metro by T-Mobile, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Snap Nurse, Healthy Blue, Regional Medical Center, Pasos, Marcos Pizza of Orangeburg, South Carolina Vocational Rehab and DHEC.

With the support of area resources, the Orangeburg Circuit strives to make events such as this a regular part of their ministry life to the community.

Their next endeavor is "Stepping for a Healthier Heart" on Jan. 30, 2022, at Mount Nebo UMC.

Committee members include S. Elaine Leonard, RN, chair; Evelyn Pauling, RN; Sarah Murch, RN; and Josephine Edmonds, retired CAN.



Church volunteers picked through bins, discarding bad potatoes and bagging the good ones in batches like you'd find at the grocery store.

## Local church groups feed the hungry via 'Potato Drop'

Members of Seneca-based churches St. Mark United Methodist Church and Foot-hills Church banded together in October to participate in a unique community outreach project: a Potato Drop.

Approximately 26 local farmers donated potatoes (russets, reds and sweet potatoes), gleaning produce that might otherwise be left to rot in the fields. The excess crops were delivered to St. Mark's parking lot in large bins on a crisp Saturday morning.

The church volunteers then went to work, picking through bins, discarding bad potatoes and bagging the good ones in batches like you'd find at the grocery store. The bags were then passed down conveyor-style by the volunteers and loaded onto trucks and SUVs that delivered the bags to 17 agencies throughout Oconee County and the region, including shelters and food pantries such as Golden Corner Food Pantry.

This worthy project was done in conjunction with the Society of Saint Andrew,



Flynn Vassey helps pastor the Rev. Shawna Darnall of St. Mark UMC assemble boxes for the Potato Drop.

an organization that helps feed hungry people and reduce food waste by matching up volunteers with farmers who have produce to spare.



## United Methodist Women

by Cathy Ford

### A year like no other

The South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women have experienced a year like no other. Many good deeds and amazing events have taken place. God has been with us in all that we have accomplished. Daily we express our love and praise for all that our Father has provided.

Here is a quick glance at the activities and attendance for some 2021 virtual events:

- In February, four Legislative Advocacy Days virtual workshops brought more than 200 registered attendees;
- On March 23, our Day of Giving took place, with donations of funds to our permanent endowment;
- April 24 brought 271 registered guests together virtually for our Spiritual Growth Retreat;
- 202 ladies dressed in red May 15 for our virtual Come Together Be Together;
- Our virtual Limitless Party brought together young women ages 14-30 for celebration and fellowship;
- 228 students attended virtual Mission u July 24, 31 and Aug. 7 in both adult and youth classes;
- 348 registered for our virtual 49th annual meeting Oct. 23, with the theme "Exercising Faith Over Fear"; and
- 127 elected and appointed officers came together virtually Nov. 6 at District Officer Training.

The results of the Membership Survey for 2020, completed in March, reported our South Carolina Conference United Methodist Women to be the largest in membership numbers, with 9,458 members and 319 units reported.

Our increase in numbers and participation in the survey resulted in our being in first place. That is awesome news to share with you. Thank you to all who participated in the survey!

The year 2022 offers the promise of continuing growth and strength for United Methodist Women.

We will concentrate on the fourth portion of our pledge: "The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to 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. Let us work together to grow the mission work we do. Let us invite and encourage others to participate with us, beside us. Together we take action to increase those who receive the gifts from our caring hearts and hands."

We have many activities both virtual and in-person planned for 2022. Mark your calendars now and join us.

They include:

- Virtual Legislative Advocacy Days Feb. 2, 8, 17 and 26;
- Our Legacy Fund Day of Giving continues on March 23;
- Our virtual Spiritual Growth Retreat will be April 23;
- Our national Assembly will take place May 20-22 at Orlando Conference Center, Orlando, Florida (a virtual option is available for select portions of the event);
- Next is a virtual Come Together Be Together June 25;
- On July 2 we host a virtual Limitless Celebration;
- Our in-person Mission u is scheduled for July 21-23 at Spartanburg Methodist College
- Our 50th Annual Meeting Oct. 21-22 will be at First United Methodist Church, Myrtle Beach, Marion District;
- Our in-person District Officers Training Nov. 12, in Columbia District; and
- A second virtual Limitless Party will be Dec. 3.

In 2022 we will celebrate our 50th year as United Methodist Women. For 50 years, we have grown stronger as a community of women working, sharing and praying together.

We give thanks to God for all he has provided. We rest in the confidence knowing our future will be bright as we boldly go "Exercising Faith Over Fear" every mile and every minute of the year to come.

All praise and glory go to God our Father. Thanks be to God.

Blessings to all as the season of Christmas is upon us.

Ford is SCCUMW President 2019-2022.

## SHARE your STORIES

Send stories, photos, calendar items and ideas to:  
advocate@umcsc.org (email preferred)  
or 4908 Colonial Dr., Columbia SC 29203





Bethany's senior pastor, the Rev. Mitch Houston, cuts the Epworth birthday cake.



The Rev. Narcie Jeter, a Bethany UMC pastor, is hard at work with the other dedicated Bethany women.



A child enjoys some birthday cake at the Epworth celebration.

Photos by Katrina Patton

## Bethany women are a force for Epworth

SUMMERVILLE—Many hands made light work at Bethany United Methodist Church's recent Mission Work Day for Women sponsored by the United Methodist Women.

"We were thrilled to be able to do these projects for Epworth and the local schools, so we made our goals as big as we could," said Pam Kahl, United Methodist Women president. "As a large church, our unit is broken into many circles. Every circle is active on its own monthly mission support, but we wanted something that would bring us all together for something other than a business meeting. We wanted to share time with each other as we accomplished

something tangible for our mission emphasis."

Kahl said they also invited all the women of the church to participate, and many expressed interest in joining a circle.

"You could feel the joy and love as we worked together with such purpose, growing closer as a group and spiritually," Kahl said. "We plan to make our Mission Work Day projects, with lofty goals, a twice-a-year event to complement our current monthly circle efforts."

Katrina Patton, Bethany's local church representative for Epworth, reports that more than 75 Bethany women,

including two Bethany pastors and Amanda Winen from Epworth's Charleston Hub, came together to celebrate Epworth's 125th birthday and to finish 100 blankets and 100 duffel bags for Epworth's Foster Care Program.

"These wonderful women also prepared packets for the 'Period Project,' which offers sanitary products for youth in need," Patton said. "We enjoyed Christian fellowship and supported the ministry of Epworth Children's Home in a warm and tangible way. Thank you, ladies (and Mitch)!"

This is what happens when you get a group of women together for a wonderful cause like Epworth.



A prayer box will be added soon so the church can pray for its community and the hardships of those who are not comfortable sharing their needs openly.



## Mount Zion UMC outreach offers many blessings

SANDY RUN—Members of Mount Zion United Methodist Church are uniting in love to serve their community as ambassadors of Christ in a variety of ways.

In October, church members collected enough goodies to fill 100 treat bags. Volunteers came together to assemble the bags and then placed them on the altar to be prayed over by pastor Larry Wannamaker on Sunday morning. These treat bags were then passed out at Mount Zion's "Drive-Thru for Treats" Oct. 31. Children enjoyed the treats while the parents delighted in the fellowship.

Children's Coordinator Lynda Moore stated, "We were blessed to receive so many smiling faces in our drive-thru—or maybe we should name it 'Stop and Visit A Bit.' Building relationships with the community is a great way to share God's love and one's faith."

Faith is proven by actions, and Christians live out trust in the Lord by not allowing fear to keep them from helping strangers. To that end, Mount Zion UMC is doing just that through a Blessing Box project, headed by Missions Coordinator Jeanette Mack.

The Blessing Box was built by Junis Craps, an 82-year-old friend from Pelion, and it stands in the front yard of the church for all to enjoy. Mack said it has united the church from the young to the mature.

In August, the children at vacation Bible school collected \$117 plus canned goods to be used for the items placed in the Blessing Box. Many anonymous souls have also added items and restocked the box about three times a week.

A sign that reads "Take what you need! Above all, be blessed!" is on the front of the Blessing Box to encourage anyone to accept the love with which each item was given.

"We all have times of struggle, and a kind offering can lift our spirits," Mack said. "Mount Zion UMC wants to be a light in the darkness that our world creates."

A prayer box will be added soon so the church can pray for its community and the hardships of those who are not comfortable sharing their needs openly.

Coming together in service and love, Mount Zion UMC members have stepped out in faith and given of their time, talents and resources to bless others in the name of Jesus.

To be a part of the ministry or for more information, contact Mack at 803-331-5222.



## Native Americans

by LaShella Kirkland

### The spirit of giving

**W**e, as Native North American Indians, are monotheistic. We believe in one God who is known by many names: Grandfather, Great Spirit, Creator, Great Mystery, as well as various separate tribal names.

All tribes have an oral tradition about the Great Flood and the man who walked on water and would become the savior for all peoples. Do we celebrate Christmas? Yes; however, Christmas occurs daily through the spirit of giving.

The Creator gives us everything: the sun, the rain, the air, the water, plants, animals, herbs for healing, our bodies, our hearts and our souls to return to him. When we rise each morning to greet the new day, we pray. And when the day ends, we pray and give thanks.

Our daily living is centered around the Spirit and walking the Red Road, which means that everything we do is a spiritual act. If a neighbor needs something, we offer to help: to help the sick, the needy, the naked, the poor and those who are broken in spirit. We are therefore grounded in being an angel here to everyone. We do not take, whether it's an herb or the life of an animal, without first asking for permission and then giving thanks for those gifts with an offering of tobacco to show gratitude.

The story of Christmas and the birth of Christ is consistent with some of the prophecies that were handed down to us by our ancestors. However, after several hundreds of years of European contact and

being Christianized, willingly or forcefully, by missionaries, we have blended Christmas traditions with our cultural customs. They are now an integral part of our celebrations today as they are in many American homes. Also, Winter Solstice is celebrated around the same time as the blessed birth of Christ.

Friar Jean de Brebeuf, a Jesuit priest in 1640, wrote down the first Native American Christmas carol for the Hurons. They built a small chapel out of fir trees. The bark was used as a manger, with the fox, the buffalo and the bear surrounding Jesus. Animal skins were used for the tent, and Jesus, Mary and Joseph were dressed in Native American regalia.

In the 1800s, there was an important man who was a leader and a warrior for the Creek Nation. He was called Chief Hobbythacco, which means "Handsome Fellow." He was known to share food, clothes and other gifts with those who were less fortunate.

It doesn't matter if it's Christmas or any other day. The Spirit of Christmas is present every day. We do this because of the respect we have for the Creator. It is in giving that we also receive.

May the Great Spirit bless you, your home and those you love with peace and lasting happiness. Aho!

*Kirkland is a South Carolina United Methodist Church Native American Committee board member, a Native American representative training coordinator and a member of Lyttleton Street UMC, Camden, in the Hartsville District.*

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Photo courtesy of the Rev. Allen Vaught

### Faith and fun

The New Zion and Trinity UMC's CIA (Children in Action) group, Florence District, took a skating trip recently. They have been studying who God is, and the skating trip was an opportunity to get to know each other better and have fun. Horseback riding on the beach is planned for their December outing.



Children enjoy cool clean water at Old Mutare. South Carolina UMVIM helped initiate the water restoration project in 2001.

## Epworth Children's Home

### A vivid memory: Joining children's hands near and far

By Francie B. Markham

What is the chance that a children's home 8,500 miles from Columbia could be a sister organization to Epworth Children's Home?

This place is called Fairfield Children's Home in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, and is a 130-year-old Methodist mission center.

John Holler, former president of Epworth, had a vision of how it could happen.

The story begins in June 2001, when a mission team from Columbia's Trenholm Road United Methodist Church headed to Zimbabwe, with Holler as one of the leaders; I was privileged to be on that team.

As we toured the area, we visited the Old Mutare Mission Center, which included an orphanage, a small hospital, Hartzell High School, Central Primary School and Ehnes United Methodist Church.

We visited the orphanage, which was very overcrowded with children all 5 years old or younger. This place, called the Babyfold, was sparsely staffed by a few dedicated women who were totally outnumbered. Our team spent time at Babyfold and working at the children's home. Many tears were shed by team members at the huge need that existed.

Luckily, on a nearby piece of property and with God's help, a Nebraska team began building homes for these children, with mothers and aunties caring for approximately 10 children per house. Each home was a family unit, with all houses under the name of Fairfield Children's Home. The team's efforts were very fruitful.

Thus, Fairfield Children's Home had a new campus, and it grew to 80 children with eight filled homes, along with an administrator and staff. The Nebraskans and others who agreed to support Fairfield Children's Home called themselves FOSA, now Fairfield Outreach and Sponsors Association (fosakids.org). FOSA is now 20-plus years old and is supported by churches and individuals, many of whom sponsor a child for \$30 a month.

Meanwhile, at Epworth in 2019 with Holler's Babyfold memory still lingering, Epworth began a major financial campaign called Every Child Is a Miracle. With the encouragement and blessing of South Carolina Resident Bishop Jonathan Holston, the Epworth Board of Trustees and later the South Carolina Annual Conference decided that the campaign would tithe to God's work through the Old Mutare Mission Center and Fairfield Children's Home.

Fairfield Children's Home has many needs. For example, thorough repair of several of the homes is needed. A used truck could be a dream come true as a replacement for the broken, beyond repair combi. Hopefully 30 computer tablets can be delivered to help with online learning and textbook availability, especially as COVID-19 is still a threat. Assistance with expensive electric



A graduate of Hartzell School at Old Mutare and student at Africa University.

bills may arrive. More chicken and pork may be added to the children's diets. A rented or purchased tractor may be bought to plow and plant the fields.

Additionally, students who meet admission standards may be awarded university or two-to-four-year technical college tuition, room and board. Fairfield Children's Home has eight students in technical college now and two students who attend universities; currently every university and college graduate is proudly employed in a country where there is 80 percent unemployment.

Holler notes that the Old Mutare Mission—which contains Fairfield Children's Home and Hartzell School—is located on the same tract of land as Africa University. The tithe from Epworth's "Every Child is a Miracle" campaign will be as transformative to the mission in Zimbabwe as the campaign has been and will be for Epworth. The campaign has allowed Epworth to purchase a second campus, establish The Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing, pilot new life-changing programs across the annual conference, establish initiatives that prevent family disintegration and grow Epworth's permanent endowment in order to enhance long-term sustainability.

The list of projects is long, and each possible project offers great hope to the Fairfield Children's Home community and her young people. After all, as Epworth supporters proclaim, "every child is a miracle," whether at Fairfield in Old Mutare or at Epworth, her sister children's home in Columbia. Intercontinental love is mutually powerful. To God be the glory.

Markham was an English teacher at Dreher High School for 28 years and head of the English Department before she became a member of an UMVIM Mission team from Trenholm Road UMC. While at Old Mutare in 2001, she heard an even higher calling. The next year she retired from teaching and has since dedicated enormous time, energy and resources to the mission, and especially to Hartzell High School. She has been at the mission site 11 times, been instrumental in acquiring resources for the mission and serves on the FOSA Board.



### Packing party

Manning UMC, Manning, held an Operation Christmas Child packing party Nov. 7, packing more than 110 boxes. Here, Manning UMC pastor the Rev. David McManus poses for a photo with a child from the church.



### Connecting with local schools

Bethel UMC (Jackson Charge) pastor the Rev. Matt Turner delivers a devotion to the faculty at Silver Bluff High School during their faculty meeting Nov. 10. Snacks were provided as well as cups, pens and pamphlets containing church information. This came about in response to a request from Orangeburg District Superintendent the Rev. Ken Nelson, who encouraged the church to develop a relationship with the local schools. Each year prior to the start of the school year, Bethel collects school supplies for distribution to the local elementary and middle schools. Money is collected throughout the year for the purchase of gift cards for needy kids for Christmas. The church also recently fed the Silver Bluff football team prior to a football game.

## Registration now open for Revolution youth spiritual event

Registration for the youth spiritual event Revolution 2022 is now open. Held this year as a one-day event, Revolution is set for Saturday, Jan. 29, at the Township Auditorium in Columbia.

It will start at 9:30 a.m. and end by 9 p.m.

Stars Go Dim is the worship leader, and the speaker will be announced soon.

The design team is currently accepting applications for youth talent for Revolution, also. Register at <http://scmyp.org/revolution-registration-2>.



# Outreach Missions of McCormick UMC celebrate with student athlete

For several years, McCormick United Methodist Church has sponsored an annual scholarship dinner to raise Fellowship of Christian Athletes summer camp scholarship funds for student athletes in the McCormick middle and high schools.

Although COVID-19 put a damper on this mission and also on the summer camp activity over the past year, McCormick's Outreach Missions Committee is now doing this annual fundraiser for next year's camps.

On Oct. 12, 17 members and spouses of the MUMC Outreach Missions Committee had the opportunity to celebrate with Jalen Salliewhite, senior athlete at McCormick High School, who actively attends worship services and Sunday School at MUMC.

Jalen was named Lakelands FCA Player of the Year.

The son of Rico and Kristen Salliewhite and Candace and Kelley Shuler, Jalen participates in three sports at McCormick High: basketball, baseball and cross country.

"Lakelands FCA, which consists of Greenwood, Abbeville, McCormick and Laurens counties, is honored to have Jalen Salliewhite as our FCA Player of the Year," said Ben Hjalmer, Lakelands FCA area director. "Jalen is one great young man who loves the Lord and other people. He lives



From left are Outreach Missions Chair Connie Tremsky, Bob Garner, Marsha Garner, Robbie Rennie, Shannon Stewart, Lola Rek, Don Rek, Gail Gore, Brian Gore, Byron Thompson, Rev. Nels Ledwell, Mary Thompson, Rico Salliewhite, Jalen Salliewhite (Lakelands FCA Player of the Year), Kristen Salliewhite, Josiah Salliewhite, John Yerdon, Jessica Kidd, Sue Mickel Yerdon, Paula Grady and Linda Kidd.

out the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and obeys the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) by the way he lives his life for the Lord Jesus in his school and community. He is constantly pursuing Christ (1 Timothy 6:11), and we cannot wait to see how the Lord uses his life after high school."

Through the Gary Russ Chevrolet Athlete Camp Scholarship Award, Jalen will be treated to a summer camp of his choice, Hjalmer said.

"He will have a wonderful time with other athletes across the nation and worship the Lord with them. It will definitely

be an invaluable experience as he uses it to further the kingdom of God wherever the Lord leads him," Hjalmer said. "Jalen, please know that we are proud of you and here for you as you make disciples of all nations. Congratulations, brother!"

Jalen shared his testimony at the event, held at Piedmont Technical College's Medford Center in Greenwood. While expressing his appreciation for support from his church and faith community, his family and friends, Jalen specifically cited the Christian impact Coach Jimmy Hughes at McCormick Middle School had on his life.

Hughes, who is a recent cancer survivor, taught Jalen many lessons, the main one being to always keep fighting.

Jalen said attending FCA camps and athletic events brought many friends into Jalen's life, friends with whom he maintains contact.

About his FCA camp experience, Jalen said, "Attending these camps was all well and fun, but I took something deeper from FCA, realizing how powerful meeting new people through God can be, and how during one week the number of things you could accomplish with a group of people you know nothing about."

Jalen added that FCA has taught him several things.

"In middle school, just like any other kid, I thought it was all about going out and scoring the most points, but as I grew to high school, I started to see beyond that," Jalen said. "FCA taught me that treating people well, and doing it from the heart of God, will always be bigger than any game you will ever play. Now that I am a senior, I get to see that. I highly recommend FCA for all the athletes out there. It will truly give you a different outlook on sports. Winning is important, but winning for God will always be No. 1!"

# LTSS dedicates new garden at seminary

COLUMBIA—Imagine sitting down to lunch on campus and knowing the food on your plate was grown at the same place where you study or work.

For students, faculty and staff at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne, that will become a reality with the seminary's new garden.

In late October, a dedication service was held on the Columbia campus to celebrate the creation of the garden.

The venture represents a partnership between the seminary and Axiom Farms, a local Black-owned business led by farmer and businessman Keith Alexander.

They became the foodservice vendor for the campus this fall.

At the dedication, Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, rector and dean at LTSS, introduced Alexander to the campus community and guests who attended the service.

"He brings a vision of healthy food for a healthy community," she said.

After hearing comments from Alexander and other speakers, participants were given the opportunity to get hands-on in the dirt by adding small cups of organic fertilizer to nourish the plants.

"We want people to be excited about and engaged in agriculture," Alexander said about the garden, which will also help address local food insecurities with fresh fruits and vegetables.



The Rev. Melanie L. Dobson, Th.D., provides cups of fertilizer to guests at the dedication.

# Good Samaritan Trunk or Treat draws strong turnout

By Sarah Jaramillo

When the calendar flips to the month of October you probably start to see signs advertising a "Trunk or Treat," and usually these signs are at churches. Good Samaritan United Methodist Church in Lake Wylie was one of those churches.

Trunk or treats are a popular family event during Halloween. It is a safe and easy way for children and families to trick or treat in a large, confined area like a church parking lot. Some families are now choosing to just attend a trunk or treat instead of going out on Halloween night, while others simply add it to their list of fall family activities.

It's a very simple and fun activity for people of all ages. First you need a big open space where those handing out candy can park their cars. People then decorate their trunks or backs of their cars in whatever theme they desire. Some are decorated with



Good Samaritan UMC had 15 cars decorated and passed out candy to almost 100 children from the Lake Wylie/Clover area.

ghosts, witches or scarecrows, while others choose to be more elaborate, like a "Fruit of the Spirit" design or "Jesus is my Superhero" theme. The ideas are endless.



Children come dressed in their Halloween costumes and go from car to car saying "trick or treat" and gathering tons of candy. At Good Samaritan, members were

pleased with their trunk or treat this year. They had 15 cars decorated and passed out candy to almost 100 children from the Lake Wylie/Clover area.

After going car to car collecting candy, families could go for a lengthy hayride around the church grounds and play a few games set up among the cars, such as tossing a ping pong ball into various pumpkin buckets, or tossing a ring around a witch's hat to collect even more candy.

If a child was thirsty and ready for a refreshing drink, they just had to play "toss the ring around a juice box."

Overall, it was a fun day enjoyed by the members of Good Samaritan and many families in the community, one we plan to continue in the years to come.

Because of the wonderful turnout of families, we are organizing an outdoor family Christmas event for the community in December.



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Judy Hames

## Trunk or treat!

Dickson Memorial UMC, Townville, held their annual Trunk or Treat event Halloween weekend, drawing a good crowd for candy and fellowship.



## A bountiful harvest

Dickson Memorial UMC, Townville, held a Harvest Fest Nov. 6. Among the items were this crocheted nativity crafted by Donna Strike (left) and this quilt made by the crafters. There was a drawing for the quilt at the Harvest Fest.



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Judy Hames

## Global Briefs

### German pastor sentenced for providing asylum

PEGNITZ, Germany—In January, the Rev. Stefan Schörk granted asylum in his church to a young man from Iran. Now, the United Methodist pastor faces a penalty of 1,500 Euros (more than \$1,700 U.S.) and two years of probation for “aiding and abetting unauthorized residence.”

### Large majority of churches offering hybrid worship

HARTFORD, Conn.—A new study exploring the pandemic’s effects on U.S. churches has found that eight in 10 of them now offer hybrid worship services, meaning in-person and online. The Hartford Institute for Religion Research study is part of a broader, five-year research project done with Faith Communities Today. United Methodist Communications is a member of Faith Communities Today and is working with United Methodist leaders and members to assist the ongoing research.

### Bishops take on climate, finances, vaccines

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—In an eventful final day of their fall meeting, United Methodist bishops made decisions related to COVID-19 vaccines, online communion and climate change. They also reviewed their improving but still shaky finances.

### ‘Ever Faithful’ veteran pens Army hymn

ROUND ROCK, Texas—“Ever Faithful to the Call” is a bid by a United Methodist songwriter to give the Army its own hymn, which the Navy and Air Force already have. When Tom Lough debuted it for a church group around the anniversary of Sept. 11 this year, veterans who attended were in tears.

### Asbury sues over vaccine mandate

WILMORE, Ky.—Asbury Theological Seminary, one of the seminaries approved for students pursuing ordination in The United Methodist Church, is challenging the Biden administration’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate for employers with more than 100 workers. Attorneys for Asbury and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary filed suit in federal court, arguing the requirement violates the schools’ religious freedom.

### Investing faith in God’s earth

GLASGOW, Scotland—The familiar words of Psalm 23—“walking in the valley of the shadow of death”—take on a new meaning in light of the world’s climate crisis. But this is not the way it has to be, the Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe told worshippers gathered Nov. 7 at Glasgow Cathedral. Henry-Crowe, who is top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, gave the sermon at an ecumenical service in recognition of COP26.

### Asbury celebration wraps up in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA—The celebration of a 250-year-old journey reached its summit with weekend events commemorating Francis Asbury’s 1771 voyage from his native England to America, where he spearheaded the organization and early growth of Methodism in the New World. Festivities were held at St. George’s United Methodist Church—the oldest Methodist church in continuous use in the U.S.—where Asbury first preached on his arrival.

### Zimbabwe churches reopen to vaccinated, unvaccinated

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Mixed reactions greeted a recent government announcement that both vaccinated and unvaccinated congregants could worship together in person. While church leaders welcomed members back, they also continued to encourage vaccinations and COVID-19 preventive measures.

### ‘Give Love’ campaign launched

ATLANTA—United Methodist Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s year-end giving campaign—Give Love, Joy, Hope, Peace—launched Nov. 1. Donations to the campaign help connect the church in mission through the work of evangelism and church revitalization, missionaries, global health and humanitarian relief and recovery.

### Boise church pushes for global COVID shots

BOISE, Idaho—A missions team at First United Methodist Church of Boise, better known as Cathedral of the Rockies, has sparked an interfaith campaign to raise big money for COVID-19 vaccinations in underserved countries.

### Eight keys for improving online worship

MARION, Ind.—Bob Whitesel, author of “Growing the Post-pandemic Church,” offers eight practical suggestions for engaging online worshippers more effectively. One suggestion for church leaders is to ignore, rather than criticize, technical glitches during worship.

### Clergy promote peace during trial

BRUNSWICK, Ga.—The Rev. Abra Lattany-Reed is among the clergy trying to bring peace, prayer and comfort to those who mourn outside the county courthouse during the trial of three men charged in the death of Ahmaud Arbery. Kara Witherow reports on the United Methodists seeking to model justice and peace as the trial moves forward.

### Group seeks bishops’ grace in church exits

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—A group of United Methodists is urging bishops and conference leaders to allow churches to leave the denomination with property now rather than wait for General Conference. The group released its open letter, titled “A Call to Grace,” as the Council of Bishops begins its fall meeting.

### Orthodox patriarch visits United Methodist Building

WASHINGTON—The UMC Church and Society welcomed His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Simpson Chapel and the United Methodist Building on Oct. 26. Bartholomew is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. During his Washington visit, he called on U.S. leaders to combat climate change.

### Hartzell school embraces new technology

MUTARE, Zimbabwe—The 173 young students at United Methodist Hartzell Central Primary School now have access to 10 desktop computers, thanks to a United Methodist Global Ministries grant. The technology is helping teachers and children adapt to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

—Courtesy of United Methodist News Service



Photo courtesy of Sandy Sorrow

### Buckets full of blessings

The Rev. Dan Fortney offers blessings over 20 flood buckets assembled by members of Latimer Memorial UMC, Belton, and donated to United Methodist Committee on Relief.



by Betty Stalnaker

## Resource Center

### Christmas movies available

Do you need a Christmas movie for family night this December? The following titles have been favorites each year from the Resource Center. Call and reserve the one that best suits your need.

#### Cotton Patch Gospel

(DVD1079M) 111 min. (Requires CVLI licensing).

This award-winning musical drama is a leg-slappin’, toe-tappin’, hand-clappin’ hoe-down of a story that retells the Gospels of Matthew and John translated into a present-day Southern vernacular. It brings the faraway places of Nazareth, Jerusalem and Bethlehem closer to home—Atlanta and Valdosta, Georgia. From his birth in a Gainesville, Georgia, trailer to his Good Friday lynching and Easter Sunday victory, the story of Mary Davidson’s son, Jesus, is presented musically with zest and uninhibited joy. Age: MHYAS.

#### The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

(DVD1080M) 60 min.

Beware the Herdmans! They’re the nastiest, dirtiest kids you could ever meet—and they’ve just decided they belong in this year’s pageant. But the town thinks they belong in the care of the local police. When the curtain finally goes up, a miracle begins—and it all turns into the best Christmas pageant ever! Age: All.

#### The Christmas Experience: The Movie

(DVD1344CA)

“The Christmas Experience” is designed to tell the Christmas story in a way that reminds people of God’s plan to restore mankind to himself. The miraculous events of Christmas come alive through Kyle Idleman’s dramatic storytelling and challenging teaching. From the moment the angel tells Mary, “You are highly favored” to the visit of the magi, this state-of-the-art production and in-depth study will keep members engaged as they discover anew God’s plan to restore humanity to himself. Join Idleman as he examines the Christmas story in detail, emphasizing how God chose each individual in the Christmas story for a specific purpose. Age: MHYAS.

#### The Fourth Wise Man

(DVD1081M) 72 min.

A Magi named Artaban (Martin Sheen) studies the prophecies and witnesses a sign in the heavens that he hopes will lead him and his faithful servant, Orantes (Alan Arkin), to the Messiah. Artaban takes with him three precious gifts to present to the Messiah. For 33 years, Artaban and Orantes pursue Jesus, only to miss him at every turn. Along the way, Artaban uses his gifts to help people in dire need. He now has nothing to present to the Messiah when he finds him. The story culminates on Easter Sunday as Artaban, old and dying, finally encounters the new king, bringing peace to his final moments of life. Age: MHYAS.

#### The Story of Silent Night

(DVD1082M) 80 min.

This program opens with “Silent Night, Holy Night” being sung by the Vienna Boys Choir in the spectacular Austrian Palace where they are housed. The saga of this simple carol has become the anthem of Christmas. The story behind “Silent Night” recalls the miracle birth of the Christ child 2,000 years ago. This moving story tells how this beautiful carol, now sung in more than 120 languages, has become a part of us all, world over. Age: EMHYAS.

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.umcsc.org/resourcecenter](http://www.umcsc.org/resourcecenter).



Members assemble Operation Christmas Child packages.

## New Market UMC: Going beyond the walls of the church

The members of New Market United Methodist Church in the Hartsville District are busy throughout the year preparing for the Christmas holy-day season.

While they are not Santa's elves, they are disciples of the Lord Jesus and are working to bring the gospel and gifts to children in need.

The church family has participated in Operation Christmas Child for four years. Through the program, children all over the world are blessed. Church members donate clothing, books, puzzles, personal care items and many other gifts. The project is led by Diane Euten.

Euten shared that although she leads the project, the church members who donate items, money, and their time packing boxes and praying are the backbone of it all. She

said she feels such joy working through this ministry to reach children who do not know Jesus.

"This is a way to let them know there are people who love and care about them," Euten said.

Church pastor the Rev. Corinthia Mack said she is blessed to be a part of the New Market church family, as her passion is outreach also. Mack said she is ready to further the church's outreach by putting God's word in action through the "Master's Plan."

It is an outreach effort that will be intentional and focused on those Jesus helped: the hungry, the sick, the children, widows and the poor.

"New Market is small, but mighty," Mack said. "We are strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Annie Jackson

### Raising awareness

The Anderson Circuit held Breast Cancer Awareness Sundays recently. Above, most everyone wore pink in celebration of awareness Sunday at Emmanuel UMC. Directly below are members of Mount Pleasant UMC, and at bottom are some of the members of Mount Sinai UMC.



### Beulah is back!

Beulah UMC, of the Rembert-St. John Charge in the Hartsville District, has now resumed full services since the pandemic. In addition to Sunday morning worship at 9 a.m., Beulah is also holding Sunday school at 9:45 a.m., Bible study and family night the first Wednesday of the month. "It's truly a blessing from God," said the Rev. Debra Anderson-Joe, pastor.



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Al Shifflett

### 17 inches

In 1996, more than 4,000 coaches descended upon the Opryland Hotel for the 52nd annual American Baseball Coaches Association Convention. The featured speaker that year was John Scolinos.

At that time, John Scolinos was 78 years old and had retired from a college coaching career that began in 1948. I am told that Coach Scolinos shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants with a light blue shirt and a string around his neck holding home plate—a full-sized stark-white baseball home plate! Was this old man crazy?

He spoke for 25 minutes, with the home plate dangling from his neck, then stopped and said: "You're all wondering why I'm wearing home plate around my neck. Well, I may be old but I'm not crazy. The reason behind this is because I want to share with you baseball people what I've learned in my 78 years about home plate."

He asked the audience, "Let me ask you some questions. Are there some Little League coaches here today?"

Some hands went up.

"How wide is home plate?"

After a pause, someone said, "17 inches."

"Right," said Coach Scolinos. "What about in Babe Ruth's day—how wide was home plate?"

"Seventeen inches," someone suggested.

"Correct," responded the coach. "How many high school coaches are here?"

Hundreds of hands went up.

"How wide is home plate in high school baseball?" asked the coach.

"Seventeen inches," came the reply.

"You're right," the coach said. "What about college ball. How wide is home plate?"

Again, the coaches in attendance agreed it was 17 inches.

"What about Minor League Baseball and Major League Baseball? How wide is home plate?"

"Seventeen inches," they all said in unison.

"Seventeen inches," barked the old coach. "And what happens if the pitcher can't throw the ball over a 17-inch plate? 'We send him to Pocatello,'" he hollered, to a chorus of raucous laughter.

"Do we say, 'Aw, that's okay, Jimmy, we'll widen the plate to 18 inches, or 19 inches, or even 20 inches?'"

There was a pause.

Then he continued, "What do we do when your best player shows up late for practice? Or when our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? Or when he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit his style? Do we widen home plate?"

The 4,000 coaches in attendance grew silent. The coach turned the plate toward himself, point up, and with a Sharpie, began to draw a house-windows and door.

He continued, "This is the problem with our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids and with our discipline. We don't teach accountability, and there is little or no consequence for failing to meet standards. We just widen home plate!"

"Where is that getting us? And this is the problem with the church today, where powerful people took advantage of children and swept the atrocity under the rug, or we've succumbed to the cultural standards for home plate. Our church leaders are widening home plate for themselves, and we allow it! And the same is true with our government. Our so-called representatives make rules for us that don't apply to themselves. They take bribes from lobbyists and foreign countries. They no longer serve us. They fail to keep their oath of office and we've allowed them to widen home plate!"

The old coach continued: "If we fail to hold ourselves to a higher standard of what we know to be right, and if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when we fail to meet standards, and if our schools and government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve, it's because we've widened home plate. And by doing so we can only expect dark days ahead."

Shifflett pastors the St. Paul-Tillman Charge, Ridgeland.

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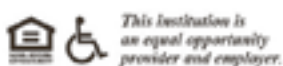
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# Shepherd's Center volunteer honored with National Volunteer Leadership Award

COLUMBIA—Shepherd's Centers of America has announced that Dr. Carol McGinnis Kay, a member of the Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews with headquarters at Ashland United Methodist Church, is the recipient of the 2021 Donald Owen Smith National Volunteer Leadership Award.

The award, which recognizes top volunteers in the SCA network for service in helping older adults lead meaningful lives through connection with each other and the community, is the highest award given in recognition of volunteers from around the Shepherd's Center national network.

Kay, distinguished professor of English emerita at University of South Carolina-Columbia, has served continuously with the Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews for 18 years, first as a volunteer instructor and subsequently in leadership roles as chair of the Adventures in Learning Committee and as a member of the Board of Directors, including terms as secretary, president (2010, 2011, 2017, 2018) and past president.

When the COVID pandemic ousted members from their headquarters and caused other Shepherd's Centers to shut down, Kay was a driving force in the St.



Carol McGinnis Kay flanked by Ken Howell and Lynne Mahaffey who completed and submitted the nomination.

Andrews Center's successful transition to Zoom offerings—13 in the recently completed fall session, with an enrollment of some 200 seniors. She is also the one responsible for developing, designing and

editing the St. Andrews Shepherd's Center brochures that announce upcoming courses.

"Volunteers are the backbone of Shepherd's Centers," said Sarah Cheney, executive director of SCA, in presenting the

award. "Without volunteers, we would not be able to deliver our mission of connecting older adults to life-enriching experiences, which has been even more important during the global pandemic. Carol McGinnis Kay embodies the passion, commitment and joyful caring" at the heart of this prestigious national award.

Amy Crook, executive director of Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews, said, "No task is too big or too small, and leading by example is important to Carol. She inspires others with her enthusiasm, her positive and caring attitude and her determination to see that the programs offered meet the interests and needs of participants."

Center member Ken Howell, who led the team that nominated Kay, summed it up, noting, "When I read the invitation from Shepherd's Centers of America to submit nominations, I immediately thought of Carol. From the moment she joined Shepherd's Center of St. Andrews, she was more than a member—she was a force for excellence, high standards and change for the better, which has never slackened."

"I can't think of anyone who more deserves this national recognition."



## Reflections

by Deborah Len

## We are made by God

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."—Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

**H**ammer, saw, piccolo, guitar, pliers, tuba, miter box, screwdriver and a shovel are all things that perform a special function. They can be used in multiple ways.

If you are left-handed then you would use them differently than a right-handed person. If you are without hands, then you would use them even more differently.

A hammer can be used to place nails into other objects,

or it can be a weapon of destruction. There are claw, ball-peen, sledge, mallets and tack hammers, to just name a few. Each one has been given a specific shape and size for a specific purpose.

God made us to be the instruments or tools to further his kingdom. It is vitally important to not compare ourselves to another person. We are not mass produced. Each one of us is 100 percent individual. Yes, there are twins and triplets and so on, however there are nuances within the physical body and the general psyche of the person that make them unique.

God's goal is for each human to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are not a mistake. Everyone is here for a reason and for a purpose. So your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to let God help you to be the best you that you are created to become.

A prayer: Help us to be still and know that you are God. Use us and create something good through us to your glory. Amen.

*Len is a member of Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, Lancaster*

## Obituaries

### Edward Duke Bowling

LEXINGTON—Retired Maj. Edward Duke Bowling, brother of the late Dr. Ralph T. Bowling, died Nov. 4, 2021.

Memorials may be made to American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22478, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.

Mr. Bowling is survived by his wife, Betty Drake Bowling, son and daughter.

### Lauretta Sara Cannariato

BROOKLYN, N.Y.—Lauretta Sara Cannariato, grandmother of Sabrina Levi, died Nov. 12, 2021. Mrs. Levi is the wife of the Rev. Cameron Levi, pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church, Saluda.

Funeral services were held Nov. 17 at St. Ephrem Roman Catholic Church with burial in St. Johns Cemetery, Queens, New York.

### Robert Cowan deRosset Jr.

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Robert "Bob" Cowan deRosset Jr., father of the Rev. Ann Kovan, died Nov. 12, 2021. Rev. Kovan is the pastor of Brown Swamp United Methodist Church, Conway.

A memorial service was held Nov. 18 at Cecil M. Burton Funeral Home, Shelby, North Carolina. A graveside service was held Nov. 20 at Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington, North Carolina.

Memorials may be made to Heifer International, 1 World Ave., Little Rock, AR 72202; or to Charlotte Rescue Mission, P.O.

Box 33000, Charlotte, NC 28233.

Mr. deRosset is survived by his wife, Shirley Craft deRosset, two sons and three daughters.

### Martha 'Lois' Eargle

CONWAY—Martha "Lois" Eargle, mother of Lynn Eargle Kersey, died Nov. 14, 2021. Mrs. Kersey is the wife of the Rev. Jeff Kersey, pastor of Mount Horeb United Methodist Church, Lexington.

Funeral services were held Nov. 18 at Langston Baptist Church with a private burial.

Mrs. Eargle is survived by her son and three daughters.

### Maggie Mae Gibbs

SUMMERVILLE—Maggie Mae Gibbs, sister of Sarah Bozier, died Nov. 7, 2021. Ms. Bozier is the administrative assistant to the Charleston District Office.

Graveside services were held Nov. 11 at Brownsville Cemetery.

### Stanley Vinard Greenlee

ANDERSON—Stanley Vinard "Half-Pint" Greenlee, father of Yolanda B. Hunter, died Nov. 7, 2021. Mrs. Hunter is the wife of the Rev. Keith Hunter, pastor of Camden First United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Nov. 13 at Piney Grove Baptist Church, Sandy Springs.

Mr. Greenlee is survived by his wife, Cheryl "Peanut" Greenlee, four daughters

### 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.

and son.

### Marvin Laverne James Sr.

WARNER ROBINS, Ga.—Retired Chief Master Sgt. Marvin Laverne James Sr., brother of the Rev. Palma Thomas, died Nov. 2, 2021. Rev. Thomas is the pastor of Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Florence.

Funeral services were held Nov. 11 at First Baptist Church of Garmon Street with burial in Magnolia Park Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Northside High School, ATTN: NHS ROTC, 926 Green St., Warner Robins, GA 31093.

Chief Master Sgt. James is survived by his wife, Mattie Genet, two daughters and son.

### Ada Belle Akers LeMaster

SPARTANBURG—Ada Belle Akers LeMaster, widow of the Rev. James E. LeMaster Jr., died Nov. 10, 2021.

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.

Mrs. LeMaster is survived by her two daughters and son.

### Rev. James Jeffrey Merck

COLUMBIA—The Rev. James Jeffrey Merck, an honorably located elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Nov. 1, 2021.

Prior to being honorably located in 2004, Rev. Merck served the Livingston-Pine Hill Charge and was appointed associate pastor to Shandon UMC.

A memorial service was being planned at the time of printing.

Rev. Merck is survived by his two daughters and parents.



Merck

### Michael Arthur Stephens

LEXINGTON—Michael Arthur Stephens, husband to the Rev. Faye Stephens, died Nov. 9, 2021. Rev. Stephens is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

A memorial service was held Nov. 18 at Mount Horeb UMC.

Memorials may be made to Mount Horeb UMC, 1205 Old Cherokee Road, Lexington, SC 29072-9045.

Mr. Stephens is survived by his wife and daughter.

**November**

*Native American Heritage Month*

- 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/>
- Nov. 30—US-2 Track Fall Deadline. <https://umcmmission.org/become-a-fellow/>.

**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. 6—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "Climate Justice as a Global Movement," 2 p.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1206climatejustice>
- Dec. 7—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 7—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "Theological Reflection on Climate Justice,"



Photo courtesy of the Rev. Cheryl Remchuk

**Blessings abound**

Lowell Street UMC, Greenwood, has a new ministry. Church Council chair Terry Creswell handcrafted this Blessing Box to honor God and his wife, Jean, for her birthday. The food items will have a label with a scripture, and there is a shelf to share Upper Room devotionals and other information.

- 2 p.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1207climatejustice>
- 10 a.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1208climatejustice10am>
- Dec. 8—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "Climate Change and Front-Line Communities,"
- Dec. 8—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "Indigenous Climate and Water Justice," 2

- p.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1208climatejustice2pm>
- Dec. 9—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "En-Roads Climate Workshop—Simulating Global Solutions," 10 a.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1209climatejustice10am>
- Dec. 9—Church and Society 2021 Winter Webinar Series "Envisioning a Just Green Transition—Panel Discussion," 2 p.m. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/1209climatejustice2pm>
- Dec. 24—Christmas Eve
- Dec. 23-27—United Methodist Conference Center closed
- Dec. 25—Christmas Day
- Dec. 31—New Year's Eve
- Dec. 31—United Methodist Conference Center closed

**January**

- Jan. 4—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- Jan. 8—ERT Basic/Renewal class, New Beginnings UMC, Boiling Springs, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Register: <https://umcsc.org/ertregistration/>.
- Jan. 17—Rev. Martin Luther King's Birthday, UM Center closed.
- Jan. 28—Stewardship Symposium, Stavros Auditorium, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Register: <https://2022-stewardship-symposium.eventbrite.com>
- Jan. 29—Revolution 2022, Township Auditorium, Columbia. <http://scmyp.org/revolution/>

**ERT training set for Jan. 8 in Upstate**

Anyone interested in being trained to help in the aftermath of a disaster can take a training next month for the South Carolina United Methodist Volunteers in Mission's Early Response Team. Set for Saturday, Jan. 8, ERT basic and renewal classes will be offered at New Beginnings United Methodist Church, Boiling Springs. The basic class goes from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fees are \$40 per person, which includes a manual, shirt, cap and badge. The renewal class is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fees are \$20. To register for either class, go to

<https://www.umcsc.org/ertregistration>. Everyone also needs to do a background check (free) through UMCOR at <https://app.verifiedvolunteers.com/en/Candidates/Account/Register>. If asked for a code, then put in 9x2r4eh. You may or may not be asked for it. If you have not had COVID vaccines, please bring your personal mask and wear it as you see fit. Temperatures will be taken. If you feel ill after registering, cancel and you will receive a refund. For questions: [brpraisejesus@aol.com](mailto:brpraisejesus@aol.com) or 803-539-8429.

**Owens graduates from LTSS spiritual direction certification program**

**Next cohort starts in January**

COLUMBIA—The Rev. Ken Owens has graduated this year from the spiritual direction certification program Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University. Interested in the practice of holy listening? Want to learn how to support others as they discern their life's pilgrimage with God?



Owens

Saturday residential intensives in January and June on the seminary's Columbia campus throughout an 18-month period of study. In between intensives, participants engage in self-paced reading, written reflections, conversations with mentors and spiritual direction.

The next cohort starts in January. The program includes four Wednesday- contact Dr. Melanie Dobson at [melanie.dobson@lr.edu](mailto:melanie.dobson@lr.edu) or 919-724-3557.



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Deadlines are the 10th of the month for the following month's paper.

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by the Rev. Cathy Joens

# The one who waits

## Dec. 5

### A Long Wait

**Lesson Scripture:** Luke 1:5-25,27-58

**Background Scripture:** Luke 1

**Key Verse:** “The Angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to your son and you must name him, John’ (Luke 1:13).

I was age 8 and couldn’t wait for Christmas to come. The wait was so hard that I begged my dad to let me open my presents early. He finally gave in and let me open the presents.

It was a wonderful three days, but there was a consequence. Ten days later, I had no presents to open on Christmas day.

We often find it hard to wait. We don’t like the uncomfortable place of the “in between and not yet.” I suspect that Zechariah and Elizabeth had tried many times to have a baby and had begun to let the hope go when the Angel Gabriel came to Zechariah. He couldn’t believe it. It was beyond their human understanding how Elizabeth’s pregnancy could be true, but it happened. They waited, Zechariah mute, Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit and John (in the womb) filled with the Holy Spirit.

God was doing his work during the waiting period. He prepared Zechariah and Elizabeth long before she was pregnant to love God and trust God for all things, the good gifts and the bad news. Zechariah and Elizabeth’s Advent story offers us the reminder that there is a holy presence and holy learning in waiting. We are in a time where we have many means to interrupt our waiting: Busyness, arguments, electronics. You name it, we great rationalizers can rationalize why we shouldn’t or can’t wait. If we don’t wait; however, we may just miss the blessing and awe of what God wants to offer.

## Dec. 12

### Mary’s Pondering

**Lesson Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38,46-55

**Background Scripture:** Luke 1

**Key Verse:** “Then Mary said, ‘I am the Lord’s Servant. Let it be with me just as you have said,’ and then the angel left her” (Luke 1:38).

While we are waiting this Advent, we have experienced the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. They are a priestly family. They have some standing in their world.

Now we experience Mary. Mary is a young girl with little means. Mary possesses one thing of importance: a simple faith. When the Angel Gabriel comes to her, she only asked, “How will I become pregnant?” It seems she simply knows deep inside that God can and will do such an unheard-of thing. He can bring Jesus into the world and promise him to be great, to be the son of the Most High, to have the throne of David and to rule a kingdom that will have no end.

She is so moved that she sings (the Mag-

nificat). She sings a song that praises God for what he is about to do in her life, and she praises God for what he is about to do on behalf of her people and those who may seem less than.

Mary gets ready for a long wait. What does she do while she waits? She ponders the wonders of God, the beauty of God and the power of God. She visits Elizabeth in Elizabeth’s sixth month, and they ponder together. It seems pondering is a way to get one’s head wrapped around what is to come. It is a way to ready the heart, mind, spirit and body.

What are we doing while we wait? Can we stop and ponder the wonders of his works, anticipate their beauty and give thanks and praise?

## Dec. 19

### Waiting for Prophecy to be Fulfilled

**Lesson Scripture:** Luke 2:25-38

**Background Scripture:** Luke 2

**Key Verse:** “A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him” (Luke 2:25).

Waiting is hard for many. We often want to see or bear fruit the day after we plant it. We have lost patience with the process of waiting.

The story of Mary and Joseph presenting Jesus in the temple is a great snapshot of the beauty and reward of waiting. The truth is that Mary did not give birth to Jesus and then immediately go have him ritually cleansed. She had to wait 40 days for herself to be declared clean before she entered the temple.

Simeon was told by the Holy Spirit that he had to see Jesus before he died. He was old and had lived life, but God wanted him to wait for the blessing of seeing the new way ushered in through Jesus.

Anna, an 87-year-old widow who never left the temple, also had to wait for Jesus to be brought to the temple in order to see him.

We know Simeon and Anna were devout and attuned to the Holy Spirit. We know that Mary and Joseph were, too.

Yet God had a process that was carried out through the laws that God had passed down. What was so important about following the process and waiting faithfully? It seems that waiting is for us. It allows us space, whether we want it or not, to prepare emotionally and spiritually for a new thing. It allows us preparation time to be ready for a new thing.

Waiting can help us choose to believe when we don’t have the proof of that new thing. Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s promise long ago. They were blessed in the waiting and anticipating.

We can be, too.

## Dec. 26

### Jesus is Waiting

**Lesson Scripture:** Revelation 3:20-4:11

**Background Scripture:** Revelation 3:20-4:11

**Key Verse:** “Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If any hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to be with them, and will have dinner with them, and they will have dinner with me” (Revelation 3:20).

The waiting is over. It is Dec. 26, and it’s Sunday, a day to worship and thank God for the gift of Jesus. What do we do now?

This Scripture passage offers a great reminder. God, since the time of creation, has been walking with us and waiting on us. It is all about the relationship that God wants with his people. He makes a way through the Scripture for us to be in close, abiding relationships. He stands at the door and knocks, wanting for us to open the door that leads to abundant and eternal life.

What do we do now? Are we too tired from the Advent season to open the door?

Are we too busy cleaning up from Christmas day to recognize that God is waiting to connect in a deep and meaningful way?

When we open the door, we acknowledge that God is waiting and has been waiting for his gifts of grace and love to be received. We actively pursue a life filled with God’s presence and direction. We acknowledge the vastness of God’s plan and his gift of the Holy Spirit. We tend to the needs of others and seek to be in right relationships with those around us.

Now we are in the Christmas season that says there is so much more that God has yet to show us. May we take a minute, open the door, welcome him in and bask in his love.

*Joens is congregational specialist for the Anderson and Greenville districts of The United Methodist Church. She’s also co-author (with Toni Taylor) of “Walk With Me: Your Spiritual Esteem Journey,” a brand-new book published by the Advocate Press. The book is available as a paperback (\$15) and ebook (\$5) online at [www.advocatessc.org/books](http://www.advocatessc.org/books).*

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Courtesy of Paige Helms

### Happy fall

Fall has touched Asbury Hills, and the vibrant colors are at their peak. Most memories at Asbury Hills include some sort of nature or gorgeous view. These views probably include the Lake Chapel or Mountain Chapel, the view just above the pool and amenity building or the view from the top of the Alpine Tower. Each and every view looks almost magical when the leaves start to change and the air gets a little crisper. Familiar sounds like the creek and wildlife fill your ears as you notice nature changing with the season. Every season at Asbury Hills is unique and full of its own specialties. There is just something about being able to take in a deep breath of cool, mountain air while you relax to the sounds of fall at camp. "The rushing sound of the creek and the crisp mountain air almost immediately allows me to relax," says Laura-Allen Kerlin, campus pastor for Advent Scuffletown. Fall truly changes camp, and if you haven't seen it, Asbury Hills hopes you are able to.

## Stories wanted on faith and mental illness

Do you have a story about the intersection of faith and mental illness? Given much-needed awareness about depression, anxiety, addiction, suicide, trauma and other aspects of mental illness, *Advocate* Editor Jessica Brodie is hoping to release a new book this year through the Advocate Press titled "Darkness to Light: Jesus, Mental Illness and our Faith Journey." Stories can be anonymous if needed but must be true tales.

To share your story, or to talk with Brodie about her helping you write one, email [jbrodie@umcsc.org](mailto:jbrodie@umcsc.org), or call or text 803-807-0018.



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