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September 2023

'A move from God'

Ecumenical churches partner for huge community outreach in downtown Charleston

By Jessica Brodie

CHARLESTON—Over and over, the Rev. Nathan Smalls prayed the same prayer: Lord, please send us some food and some helpers for the people in our community.

The small church he pastors, Mount Carmel United Methodist, is in a downtown area that is both highly developed and highly underserved, and many neighbors rely on the small food pantry, clothing closet, soup kitchen and other outreach activities the church offers.

But with limited numbers in his congregation, and many of them older adults who have moved from the area, Mount Carmel simply didn't have enough people to provide all the help the community needed. In his heart, Smalls worried he'd have no choice but to scale back and eventually discontinue their efforts.

"I didn't tell anyone I was praying, but I spent quite bit of time prayer and fasting," Smalls said. "I was heartbroken."

Then one day, he showed up to the church and discovered their refrigerator and blessing boxes were filled with food.

Smalls was astounded—and he had no idea who was responsible.

"I'd been only one doing this, and three times I went down there to find fresh food in there!" he said. "I never could catch them."

Finally one day he discovered his mystery angels in the act. He found out they were a group of women from the large non-denominational Coastal Community Church

See "Ecumenical Partners," Page 10

A summer of service

Salkehatchie draws 920 campers who repair 80+ homes across S.C.



Photo by Matt Brodie

Volunteers assess termite damage beneath a rotted-out floor during the Salkehatchie Santee Camp, held July 8-15. The Santee camp was one of 32 held this summer across the state to repair homes for people in need.

By Jessica Brodie

Despite relentless heat blanketing the southern United States all summer long, nearly 1,000 youth and adults dispersed among 32 different sites across South Carolina as Salkehatchie Summer Service returned in full force.

Founded in 1978 by the Rev. John Culp, Salkehatchie brings youth, young adult and adult volunteers together for a weeklong mission event to repair and rebuild homes for people in need, many of them living in poverty situations without the ability to

fund the work on their own.

This year marked Salkehatchie's first big return since the pandemic and the first time many youth had the opportunity to participate.

According to Kathy Hart, Salkehatchie staff member, 920 Salkehatchie campers participated in camps that ran from June 10 through July 29, ultimately repairing more than 80 homes for families in need.

See "Salkehatchie Summer," Page 11

Eccles: Caring for creation through historic preservation

By Jessica Brodie

HUGER—An effort to restore the historic Eccles United Methodist Church in the Francis Marion National Forest is now gaining community attention as organizers zero in on a goal.

According to Nancy Platt, Eccles member and elementary school teacher who is spearheading the restoration, the work by Artis Preservation Contractors is expected to cost roughly \$75,000, covering a new roof, timber framing and the repointing of the bricks on one of the foundational corners.

"We're focusing on the three main structural needs to make the building habitable,"

Platt said.

Eccles' original building, constructed in 1882 and tucked deep within the rural area northwest of Mount Pleasant, has long been admired for its rustic, old timey beauty. While churchgoers worship in an adjacent, modern structure, the original house of God stood in all its natural glory, slowly declining over the years because of extensive rot, heavy wood deterioration, weathering damage and some biogrowth.

In spring 2022, a historic preservation class at the American College of Building Arts in Charleston spent the semester analyzing the historic building and then producing

a master plan with historical research, condition assessments and remediation suggestions for the church.

The class, led by Professor Christina Butler, recommended not over-restoring the building or modernizing it heavily with new electricity and climate control. Instead, they suggested the church, which is essentially one great piece of longleaf pine, be repaired as needed and preserved overall—a far less expensive option than complete restoration and modernization.

Eccles organizers have established Eccles

See "Eccles Restoration," Page 10

Francis Burns' Freedom School celebrates 10th year

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—A decade ago, the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School was a fledgling experiment at Francis Burns United Methodist Church.

Organizers hoped to strengthen literacy in a new and different way in their local community by enabling rising fourth through ninth graders to hone their reading comprehension skills, engage in dialogue about key social justice issues and ultimately become the kind of critical thinkers needed in the world.

Today, they just completed their 10th anniversary, celebrating

what Executive Director Carol Singletary called "a village effort" that has transformed the youth, the church and the neighborhood for the better.

On July 27 at 6 p.m., 32 Freedom School scholars, as well as their servant leader interns and administrative staff, gathered before a packed crowd at Francis Burns UMC to showcase the hard work they accomplished this summer, as well as celebrate the difference 10 years of Freedom School has made in their community.

See "Freedom School," Page 24



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The *Advocate* is delivered to mailboxes via U.S. mail every month prior to the first Sunday of the month. Subscriptions are \$20/year for the print and online version, and \$10/year for the online-only edition. Church plans are available for as low as \$1/member (online version) or \$10/member (print version with 6+ subscribers per church). To start your subscription, visit www.advocatesc.org, call with credit card 803-726-6743 or 803-786-9486, ext. 335, or send a check to Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

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Epworth opens new Upstate counseling center to meet need

Epworth has opened an Upstate counseling center to help address a critical South Carolina-wide shortage of affordable community-based mental health care services for children, teens, adults and families.

The new Epworth Upstate Center for Counseling is located at 108 Anderson Ave., Anderson, on the grounds of Trinity United Methodist Church. Staffed by licensed therapists specializing in a range of mental, behavioral and substance use concerns, it offers both individual and family counseling, group therapy, crisis services, behavioral health screenings, parenting classes and telehealth appointments.

"Epworth has provided assistance to children and families for more than 100 years, and we continue to expand in ways that allow us to serve children and families where they are — at their point of need in their communities," said Epworth President and CEO Beth Williams.

Like Epworth's existing Center for Counseling in Columbia that serves more than 500 clients a year, the new Upstate counseling center helps address two of the barriers that keep South Carolinians from getting the mental health care they need: local availability of services and cost.

"We know from government health data that more than 2 million South Carolinians

live in communities that do not have enough licensed mental health professionals to meet demand," Williams said. "We also know that approximately 220,000 adults in South Carolina who need mental health care do not receive it—47.2 percent because of cost. Epworth is working to change this because we see that when people who need mental health care can't get it, the consequences for children, adults, families and society are serious, often tragic."

Research data shows the fateful impact of inadequate mental health care in South Carolina. As many as 7 in 10 youth in our juvenile justice system have a mental health condition. About 53,000 South Carolina youth ages 12-17 have depression, and of those, more than 56 percent did not receive any care last year, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Studies show that high school students with depression are more than twice as likely to drop out than their peers.

As for adults in South Carolina, 706,000—more than five times the population of Charleston—have a mental health condition, according to SAMSHA. Last year, 811 South Carolinians lost their lives to suicide, and mental health survey data estimates that 189,000 adults in South Carolina had thoughts of suicide in the past 12 months. About two in five adults in jail

or prison have a history of mental illness.

Epworth's new Upstate Center for Counseling, like its existing Center for Counseling in Columbia, make mental health care more cost-accessible to low- and middle-income South Carolinians because it accepts Medicaid in addition to other types of insurance. Both counseling centers also offer a sliding scale fee for the more than 10 percent of state residents who lack health insurance.

Williams said that a grant from the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation made expansion of Epworth's community counseling services possible. A previous grant from the BCBS Foundation in 2019 provided the funding to open Epworth's Center for Counseling in the Midlands.

"We are very grateful for the continued provision and generosity of the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation," Williams said. "We're equally grateful to the hundreds of churches and thousands of individuals who continue to enable Epworth's lifechanging work with children and families."

Those in the Upstate who would like to make an appointment or refer a client to the center for counseling, call 864-642-6555. If in the Midlands, call 803-667-4697.

Gadson among leaders for Hinton's Rural Clergy Renewal Retreat

HAYESVILLE, N.C.—The last few years have been ones of stress, strain and struggle for pastors and others serving in vocational ministry. To support and encourage rural clergy, Hinton Rural Life Center is offering a second Rural Clergy Renewal Retreat in its setting on Lake Chatuge in the Appalachian Mountains.

The retreat is set for Monday to Wednesday, Sept. 11-13.

Hinton is a retreat and mission outreach agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.

The South Carolina Conference's Hartsville District Superintendent the Rev. Telley Gadson—a lifelong rural ministry enthusiast—is one of the resource leaders for the retreat. Others include singer/songwriter/guitarist and worship leader Tom Conlon from Virginia; rural ministry/Methodist studies scholar and Western North Carolina Conference local pastor Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith; and the Rev. Laura Hamrick, clergy engagement coordinator for the Duke Clergy Health Initiative and WNC Conference elder.

Clergy serving rural churches and communities are invited to retreat, reflect and renew at this lightly scheduled gathering that offers opportunities for self-care, rich conversation with rural ministry resource leaders, soul-lifting scenic views, grace-filled worship and enjoyable time with colleagues who till similar soil.

The retreat begins Monday at 5 p.m. with a welcome gathering at Hinton's Lakeside Pavilion. There will be tips for making the most of renewal time, followed by dinner and boat rides, with evening worship in the chapel.

Tuesday features free time and conversational times with the rural ministry and healthy living resource leaders, as well as options for Creative Dabbling (art fun) and therapeutic massage. There will be morning and evening worship times for centering and drawing closer to God, and



Gadson



A rocking-chair view of Lake Chatuge and the mountains from the back porch of Hinton's Lodge.

meals prepared by Hinton's head chef that retreat attendees will enjoy together. Although programming options are provided, this is a "do what you need to do for you" retreat, and participants are encouraged to do as much or as little as they want.

The retreat ends at noon on Wednesday.

Last year's attendees met rural ministry colleagues from across the UMC connection. "I found myself longing for another full day," said the Rev. Drew Nix. "I greatly appreciated the low-key schedule, as I was able to hike and read as I wished."

The cost is \$395 for individual clergy and \$600 for clergy and spouse; this includes two nights lodging. Those who desire a longer renewal stay may add a night before and/or after at Hinton's 10 percent clergy discount rate. (Contact Director of Operations Kelli Miller for rates and to reserve additional nights at 828-389-8336 or kelli@hintoncenter.org.)

Deadline to register is Sept. 1. For more details and for online and pdf registration forms, visit www.hintoncenter.org/retreat.

Study shows shift in UMC disaffiliations

By Sam Hodges

Excerpted from United Methodist News

The numbers are way up, and the geography is shifting. Most other measures are about the same.

That's the gist of a second report from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership comparing U.S. congregations disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church with those staying.

In late February, the Lewis Center published a study showing that departing churches were overwhelmingly from the denomination's Southeastern and South Central jurisdictions and were more likely to be majority White and led by a male pastor than churches staying United Methodist.

The second study analyzes updated and much larger disaffiliation numbers. It shows that the disaffiliation pool is still dominated by the Southeastern and South Central jurisdictions, but less so.

Mostly, the Lewis Center's latest findings about the two groups of churches are in line with the first study.

"As we reported before, there are more simi-

larities than differences comparing the cohort of disaffiliating churches with the total pool of all United Methodist churches," writes the Rev. Lovett Weems Jr., senior consultant for the Lewis Center, in the new study.

Decades-long, intensifying conflict over homosexuality led the 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church to create a new policy whereby local churches in the U.S. can leave with their property.

Under Para. 2553 of the denomination's *Book of Discipline*, churches can disaffiliate if they have a two-thirds vote of members to do so, followed by a majority vote of approval from their annual conference. They also must meet certain financial conditions. Para. 2553 went into effect in 2019 and expires Dec. 31.

In doing its studies on disaffiliation, the Lewis Center draws on data collected by the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration and uses as a base year 2019, when the departures were just beginning.

In other words, both remaining and departing churches are studied based on their characteristics in 2019, before COVID-19 hit.

In 2019, the denomination had just more than 30,500 congregations in the U.S. By the end of 2022, about 2,000 of those had left under Para. 2553.

For its February study, the Lewis Center compared the 2,000 to the remaining group.

The new study takes the same approach but reflects the quickening pace—and geographical spread—of disaffiliations, as many more annual conferences have met in special session or regular session this year to approve departures.

The Lewis Center identified 6,155 churches that disaffiliated between 2019 and the end of June 2023—a tripling since the end of last year. UM News is doing its own count and shows 6,225 disaffiliations, including some since June.

In its first study, the Lewis Center found that 84 percent of departed churches were from two of the five U.S. jurisdictions—Southeastern and South Central. But the new study, drawing on the larger pool of disaffiliations, shows those two jurisdictions now account for 70 percent.

Read the full article at <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/study-shows-shift-in-disaffiliations>.

Service and serving: Women without capes

By Clara Hodges McFadden

Every year, we in the Ruffin Parish of the Walterboro District participate in different projects in our communities. In 2022 and 2023, we have continued to participate in giving donations to the In His Name Colleton organization; the students, faculty, and staff at Bells Elementary School; the Veteran's Victory House; Toys-for-Tots; and the back-to-school supply drive in Bamberg County. Two individuals within the Ruffin Parish have dedicated their lives to giving and providing their services whenever needed. One is the late Pernice Boatwright Hudson Jones. "Mrs. Pern", as she was affectionately called, passed away Jan. 9 in the Pruitt Healthcare facility in Walterboro. A dedicated and devoted member of Buckhead United Methodist Church in Ruffin, Mrs. Pern served in many capacities, but whenever she was called on to do a job she was always willing and ready to serve. At Buckhead UMC, she was one of the original members of the Young Adult Choir, was Sunday school superintendent for many years and served as an usher, communion steward and member of the United Women in Faith. She was also part of the Family and Community Leaders (Colleton, Ruffin, Washington Club), as well as the BZS Community Center Council.

If you were ever privileged to experience her leading the usher's procession at Buckhead, visions of her "bop and strut" were definitely a sight to behold. She was the true



Jones



McFadden

epitome of what serving and service was all about.

Another dedicated servant is Ruffin native Vivian Whiting McFadden, or "Momma Vivian" as she's called in the community, is a retired food service worker. She worked for more than 33 years at Ruffin High School and Ruffin Middle School. A member of Buckhead UMC and president of the Usher Board for more than 30 years, she once ran as a delegate for the Colleton County Democratic Party. She serves as a board member of the BZS Community Center. While serving her church, she is also actively involved with the upkeep of the BZS Community Center, helping with fundraisers for repairs to the building and making sure that the building is kept clean and orderly.

In the Hand-in-Hand Outreach project associated with the Community Center, she helps with trash pickup in the area, provides meals for the sick and shut-ins and donates supplies where needed. For more than 15 years she has served as a member of the Colleton County Community Emergency Response Team by providing information to residents in the area before and after disasters and will serve in the shelters by making sure the phone lines are covered. She still manages to visit those in the local nursing home facilities. On May 6, the Walterboro Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., recognized her for her many years of service to the community.

'Restoration' revival marks Lee Road's 65th anniversary

Lee Road United Methodist Church, Taylors, celebrated its 65th anniversary from May 17-21 with four nights of revival and a combination Methodist Heritage Sunday and Homecoming Sunday. The theme of this year's revival was "Restoration" in recognition of the mighty works God has done to heal the church and move it forward with a new spirit of missions and unity.

For the revival services, former ministers delivered inspirational messages on restoration: Pastor Emeritus the Rev. Jim Gilliam Jr. (1979-1985, 2008), the Rev. Mickey Fisher (1973-1979) and the Rev. Tony Medlin (2001-2005).

At the conclusion of Medlin's message, a heart-warming surprise occurred when the Rev. David Surrett (1996-2001) joined the service via Apple Facetime on the large screen. Surrett is facing ALS disease with grace and dignity, and members said his speech and closing benediction will be remembered by all.

On Saturday evening, the church's contemporary band "The Bridge Collective," under the direction of Jacob Kiser, praised the Holy Spirit in song. Finally, "Reverend John Wesley" (current pastor the Rev. Rusty Godfrey) led the morning service followed



Pictured above is the Rev. Tony Medlin. Below Godfrey, center, stands with former ministers Gilliam and Fisher.



by a homecoming luncheon with the presentation of a new 10-minute film on the history of Lee Road UMC by church member Denise Wilson.

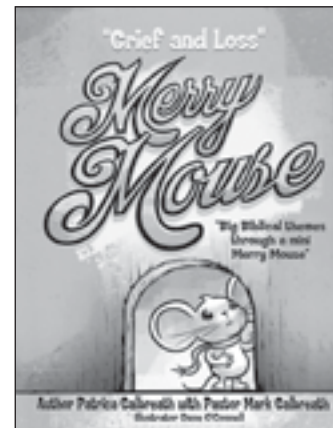
Victor member releases new 'Merry Mouse' children's book on grief

By Jessica Brodie GREER—One United Methodist in Greer has released her latest children's book in her "Merry Mouse" series: "Merry Mouse, Grief and Loss."

Patricia Galbreath, 81, who attends Victor United Methodist Church, wrote the book with her grandson, Pastor Mark Galbreath.

"This book is dedicated to my second child, Little Eddie, who went to heaven when in was 3 years and 4 months old," Galbreath said.

Merry Mouse has lived in the church for some time now. He has learned so much about Jesus and has come to trust in him. But now Papa is very sick. Is Jesus going to heal Papa if Merry Mouse asks? Join Merry Mouse on his journey of learning what it means to have comfort and hope in Jesus during times of grief and loss.



Another grandson, Brian, and his wife, Wendy, gifted her with a revision of her first two books through her new illustrator, Dave O'Connell.

"The words are the same, just the illustrations have been revised, so that there is a continuation of the same style of illustrations," she said. "That was a gift for my 81st birthday—a big surprise and lots of happy tears."

Churches invite her to come and share her faith journey at luncheons for their grandparents and great-grandparents and all senior members of their church.

Galbreath started writing when she was 60 years old. She often speaks to churches about her books and her faith journey.

To learn more, visit <http://www.merrymousechurchmouse.com> or call 864-920-8237.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Clayton Childers

Finding space for new growth

Recently, I went with my 6-year-old granddaughter on a field trip to a regional park. We were guided through the park learning all about the natural habitat of the plants and animals that live there. One guide said plants need five things to thrive: light, air, water, nutrients and space.

The space piece was new to me, and I have been pondering the importance of space ever since.

I think one good thing about the ongoing departures of "traditionalist" congregations from The United Methodist Church is that it provides those of us who remain United Methodist an opportunity to grow anew in a positive way. Rather than being defined by conflict, we can be defined by our God-given mission of making "disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." As one pastor friend, the Rev. Susan Leonard, pointed out, "slimming down does not have to be a negative thing" (see article in August *Advocate* or check out her message at the Reconciling Ministries breakfast at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFD20w1MIV0>).

I was greatly encouraged reading reflections of members of the North Texas Annual Conference. Many said they had felt a new spirit in the conference, a positive spirit grounded in hope and harmony rather than negativity and tension. I witnessed this somewhat in my home conference as well. The South Carolina Conference experienced 113 congregations choosing to depart the conference, but as they did, we bid them farewell with a prayer and grief but also a renewal of commitment to the ministries that define us.

We were also able to discuss two resolutions—one opposing the death penalty and one standing against gun violence and AR-15-style weapons. We debated respectfully and passed each of them handily. It was refreshing to see the conference move

forward in a positive way, to own our identity as United Methodist Christians committed to non-violence and peace.

One thing I remember from my family systems theory class is that a family can become caught in a system in which a particular member is categorized as the "identified patient"—they are the problem. Healing comes not by doubling down but by drawing back, creating space for each member to be fully themselves apart from the others. Everyone benefits, and the system becomes less stuck.

It feels to me like our United Methodist Church has been stuck for a long time, caught in a web of negativity that is dragging us down. Perhaps now we will be able to find room to breathe again. To become the church of open hearts, open minds and open doors we were once promised.

At our house we have a small section of the backyard that is covered in hosta plants. There are just way too many in a too little space. In recent days I have been clearing them out by transplanting hostas to other parts of the yard. Two things have struck me: 1) How hard is to kill a hosta and 2) how happy they seem to be in a new home where they can get the full sun and spread their branches wide.

Sometimes, all it takes to flourish is having space to be the creatures God created us to be and to return, with joy and hope, to the work God created us to do.

Childers is a retired United Methodist clergyman from the South Carolina Conference living in Manassas, Virginia. For 19 years he served with the Board of Church and Society and for a while Director of Advocacy for the Imagine No Malaria campaign. Article originally published at <https://um-insight.net/in-the-church/umc-future/finding-space-for-new-growth>.

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Viewpoints



Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

Navigating the waiting space

I'm sure we've all been there, and it's not our favorite place: the waiting space. Middle ground. Limbo.

After the turmoil and hurt feelings surrounding separation and disaffiliation, as well as the angst over what is General Conference going to do (or not do), many of us are stuck in an uncomfortable and unsettled place of uncertainty.

Now what? How do we get back to normal, if there is such a thing? Do we focus on getting stronger after the pandemic? Do we look outside our walls and into the community? For those of us whose churches have left the denomination, where are we going? Have we found a new church home? What do we do with all of these emotions that are still oh-so-difficult?

The truth is that there is no easy answer to any of this. Like any waiting season in life, sometimes the answer doesn't come for a long time.

I'm frustrated sometimes at the lack of answers. I wish there were some creative new program or mission effort I could sink my teeth into as I go about my daily Christian walk. Business as usual doesn't feel like it's enough at this stage.

But here's the thing: It doesn't really matter how I feel about it—or how you feel. And it doesn't really matter if there is or is not some big, great project to focus on right now. These are self-imposed wants, things I think I need—not things I actually need.

What I need is to listen to God's still small voice in the center of everything (1 Kings 19:12-13). This is the answer it has always been.

My oldest child is 17 now, and I remember 19 years ago living in the center of a painful waiting season. I struggled with infertility, and I had absolutely no idea if I would be able to conceive and eventually give birth, something I desperately wanted. Sometime during that long, long process, I made peace with where I was, and I made peace with surrendering to God's will. And eventually, what I desired did come to fruition. I did get pregnant and give birth to my son, and now he's in his senior year of high school.

Of course, sometimes we don't get what we want at all. Sometimes that season of waiting has a decidedly different ending. But I do know this: When I am truly surrendered to the will of God, somehow, whatever happens ends up being OK. Actually, it's even better than OK. It ends up being the perfect thing, the thing I wish I'd asked for from the start. That's because God works all things for the best, "for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The season of separation in The United Methodist Church is not over. I've been hearing about a number of local churches who are still struggling to discern what they wish to do. Many are waiting to see what happens at General Conference. Things are not over, and it's going to be a long time before the waiting is done and things seem reasonably clear.

In this season, instead of letting strife and worry take over, let's all lean little closer to the Lord and tune our ears to God's special, sometimes imperceptible voice. Let's pray for one another that we can all do this, that we can all keep our eyes on God in the center of everything. For if we can do this, if we can surrender to God's will, anything that happens will always be just right.

After all, God plan is best—not mine.



Bishop's Corner

by Bishop Jonathan Holston

Catching our breath

"On one occasion, while [Jesus] was eating with the [disciples], he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Then they gathered around him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"—Acts 1:4-8 (NIV)

Living in a fast-paced, instant gratification culture that is often hectic and rushed, it is so difficult to catch our breath. We face constant underlying pressure to prove our worth.

Even our youth feel the pressures of today's world. Earlier this summer, the SEJ Youth Harambee convened at our own Claflin University campus. The young people gathered there expressed with me their concerns of needing encouragement and hope—requesting prayers for strength, guidance, the struggles of their families, single parents working multiple jobs and for building their personal relationships with Christ.

We are often in need of encouragement, inspiration, reassurance and support.

Charles Tindley penned lyrics in 1905 that were later adapted into a popular gospel anthem: "Encourage, my soul, and let us journey on. Though the night is dark, and I am far from home. Thanks be to God, the morning light appears. The storm is passing over, the storm is passing over, the storm is passing over, hallelu!"

The hymn speaks of the journey toward a destination that is far away, accompanied by the fear and uncertainty of being lost in the darkness of night.

Despite the perceived danger, the singer finds solace in the knowledge that they are guided by a God who is bigger than any storm.

The repetition of "the storm is passing over" reflects the idea that whatever challenges are faced are temporary and will come to an end.

Though we know not the times or the

dates, we believe with confidence that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes.

Hope is that one encouraging thing that carries us through the darkness, through the waiting in our own lives. When we feel anxious thinking of things we need to do, the tasks we need to complete and the people we need to see, hope will strengthen our souls for the journey that awaits us, wherever it may lead and whatever it may bring.

Brian Wiener, writer and entrepreneur, has described hope this way, namely, "If you carry one thing throughout your entire life, let it be hope. Let it be hope that better things are always ahead. Hope that you can get through even the toughest of times. Hope that you can get through any challenge that comes your way. Hope that you are exactly where you are meant to be right now, and you are on the path to where you're meant to be. Because during these times, hope will be the very thing that carries you through."

Early in the spring of 1905, while Civilla Martin and her husband, Walter, were sojourning to Elmira, New York, they developed a deep friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, who Civilla called "true saints of God."

Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for more than 20 years. Mr. Doolittle experienced serious handicapping conditions and propelled himself daily to and from his business in his wheelchair.

Despite their challenges, they lived happy lives.

During one visit, Civilla and Walter commented to them on their faithfulness and hope, asking them, "What is your secret?" Mrs. Doolittle shared a simple response, "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me."

Civilla Martin was inspired to pen a poem and mailed it to a composer who wrote the tune that we know so well today.

If we trust that God cares for all of creation, then why would we question God's care for us?

Of course, God's eye is on the sparrow, and God is surely watching over you and me.

All it takes is slowing down and catching your breath. Then, be filled with hope as you fix your gaze ahead, soul strengthened and following where Christ leads.



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Our Mission

To inform and connect South Carolina United Methodists by independently reporting relevant news, engaging readers, providing a forum for dialogue and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Subscriptions

The individual subscription rate is \$20/year for the print and online version and \$10/year for the online-only edition. To subscribe or for information about discounted church plan rates, call 803-726-6743, e-mail advocate@umcsc.org or visit www.advocatesc.org.

The S.C. United Methodist Advocate (ISSN 1078-8166) continues the Southern Christian Advocate, authorized by the General Conference of 1836. Publication began Annual Conference-July 24, 1837. The paper is published monthly by the S.C. United Methodist Advocate Trustees. We cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. Please direct all inquiries regarding commentary submissions to the editor, 4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 207, Columbia, SC 29203-6070. 803-786-9486. Periodicals postage paid at Columbia, S.C.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: S.C. United Methodist Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 207, Columbia, SC 29203.

Appointment Changes

Bishop Jonathan Holston has announced the following change of appointment:

Effective Sept. 1, 2023

Charleston District: Smyrna – Debra Dowdle (RA) (1/2)

Letters Policy

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

Letters to the Editor

The essence of missions

“Because I Wasn’t Working on the Stoves” (August *Advocate*) is the very essence of a mission trip, internationally or stateside.

As Methodists, we most often focus on “fixing” things and people, but it is showing the true heart of Christ that shares and gives the greatest satisfaction of a successful mission experience. The building will crumble, the paint will fade and the roof will someday leak, but the seed planted in the soul will rise and bloom in the fullness of a new Christian, and that is what we are sent out into the world to do.

David Busby
Platt Springs UMC, West Columbia

Look at the soul

A good friend asked me if I would preach at one of the churches that left the United Methodist Church. My answer was yes. These people are still God’s children, and we are not their judge. God is.

These people were baptized in the United Methodist faith and were faithful for years. My grandmother said, “Everyone has a soul.” We need to be careful how we judge anyone.

In 1 Samuel 16:7, it says, “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Beware of these individuals who do not realize “the soul” of individuals. God sees the soul, not the outward appearance. Let us pray for the souls of all.

Rev. John Culp
West Columbia

Ministry through the church

The Interpreter’s Bible says that no passage in Paul’s letters is more important than 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, which reads, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

When we consider the context in which these verses appear, it is clear that Paul’s primary subject here is ministry. In the most personal terms, he explains to the congregation at Corinth what Christian ministry is all about. Since that ministry now belongs to the church, what we have in these verses is a statement on the ministry of the church. These verses tell us what God has done for us and what we are to do for God.

We who are being drawn into the friendly embrace of God are called to extend that embrace to others. But how do we do that? What does such a ministry look like?

The current squabble in Methodism boils down to who stands in the pulpit as the leader of the flock. It strikes me that “squabble” is an appropriate term to describe our present situation. Some would say that our situation is far more serious than a squabble, more than a mere difference of opinion.

Opinions are subject to change; convictions are resistant to change. It appears that folk on both sides of our dilemma have dug in their heels to resist any change that might avoid a permanent division of the church. What we have is a clash of convictions that is likely to end in separation.

If that happens, we need to remember that Methodism has survived earlier divisions and separations. In my view, Methodism will live on and recoup from whatever losses may occur from the present situation. Generations of Methodists have lived together without 100 percent agreement on every point of theology. That has been our strength.

The key ingredient for a new and thriving future is Paul’s vision of “the ministry of reconciliation.” That is Methodism at its best, both past and future!

Rev. Mickey Fisher
Spartanburg

A poem: Christ, the golden rock of heaven

Christ, the golden rock of heaven.
Through whom the skies were laid,
And in whose very name the sun and moon,
so took their place. He does not fail to hold all things.
He shatters, not like glass.
Nor does sea or swell or storm depose his stable mast.
Overflowing yet not losing, not golden scepter, is he?
He does not leak like earth and pots unfilled. He cannot be.
And beneath the weight of all his might and glory held therein.
Death will crumble down to dust and swallow with it sin.

(Excerpted from the author’s second published book, “Notes from the Hem,” a collection of Christian poetry and prose.)

Autumn Leigh Waite
Bluffton UMC, Bluffton



by Glenn Williams

Let’s all have lunch with Jesus

We all have a sin problem. This is a truth to which we Christians must all agree. If that were not so, then who would need a savior?

At the age of 27, I began surrendering to Jesus. I was saved as a little boy, but I believe one can be saved, but not surrendered. That part comes under God’s work of sanctification. I started discussing my faith with my mom. She told me to beware, as, “The closer you get to Jesus, the more you will be convicted of your sin.”

That is so true. I taught a Sunday school lesson in an older adult class one Sunday morning on the topic of sin. I commented facetiously that I’d once timed myself as to how long I could go without sinning, and my best time was 30 minutes. Their mouths fell open!

I clarified, adding that I do not plan to sin, and I am convicted and repentant when I do, but sin includes my thoughts and actions and even my inaction. I am not making excuses; I am just stating what the Bible says about any thoughts of my own righteousness. They are only filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Can I go on sinning in knowing I am forgiven? Paul states emphatically, “By no means!” I am not advocating “cheap grace,” but only stating a fact: I need a savior, and I am eternally grateful that I have a savior. Jesus not only forgives me, but the Holy Spirit helps me grow toward perfection with every prayer. I am getting better. Maybe I can do 45 minutes on my next “sin-timing.”

The division in our United Methodist family seems to hinge on the question of what is sin. The Holy Bible is very clear on what constitutes sin. We cannot interpret our way out of this. There are enough “do nots” in the Bible to make one want to just stay in the bed to keep from stepping on an ant (do not kill!). Let’s get real—if we get out of bed in the morning, we are going to sin. There is disagreement as to whether some sins are

worse than others, but the Bible is clear that the penalty for sin (not any particular sin) is death. Without Jesus, we are doomed.

Now, to the point of our contention: homosexuality. I personally have never been sexually attracted to fellow males. However, I know and have known and love many Christian friends and relatives who have been so attracted. Some have acted on this attraction and some have not. Do I call this sinful? My belief in the inerrant Holy Bible compels me to believe that such a lifestyle is sinful. I also have Christian divorced friends and family, Christian alcoholic friends and family, Christian gossiping friends and family, Christian obese friends and family—the “sin list” goes on and on. (By the way, I can eat a quart of ice cream in one sitting, and gossip with the best of them, and have thoughts that I would never reveal to anyone but Jesus.) The UMC *Book of Discipline* seems to “pick on” a particular sin. We all tend to “pick on” the sin of which we don’t personally have a problem.

Our *Book of Discipline* uses the pastoral letters in the Bible to give our denomination guidance on who can be ministers. When the paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline* regarding homosexuality were inserted, I question why other sins were not mentioned. The answer to that question is simple: If that had been done, there could be no ministers!

So what now? There is still time to save The United Methodist Church. We are not perfect, but we have a good (not perfect) organization already in place. We must stay together. We must put an end to our most grievous corporate sin—segregation—and embrace diversity (Galatians 3:26-29). We must learn to live and worship together, work out our differences and even live together with our differences. I am so glad Jesus still prefers to have lunch with sinners, of which I am the worst (1 Timothy 1:15-17).

Williams is a lifelong member of Main Street UMC, Greenwood.



by Carol J. Bratcher

Guest Commentary

A Holy Spirit movement

As a supply pastor, I am pretty new to managing a church but was blessed beyond my belief on the first Sunday I was sent out into the world to preach.

On Sunday, Aug. 14, 2022, I had my first assignment at a small, historical church (established in 1785) located in the southernmost part of Greenville County. The minute my husband, Jay, and I got out of the car we both said, “Do you feel that?” It was a slight tingle and yet calming invitation to walk into the sanctuary. No one was there to greet us except the church at that moment, and there were only six present when I preached that day, which included Jay and me. But they asked us back the following Sunday, and we are still there, assigned until June 30, 2024.

I never pictured myself as a pastor and have argued and wrestled with God over those feelings so much that I finally gave up and nicknamed myself “Jacobene.”

We now average about 18-20 each Sunday. COVID-19 hurt this little congregation like so many others with death, illness and then replacement because of not being able to gather. Those that remained are loyal and love their little church.

I am most often writing from the Lectionary and prepare my sermons on Saturday night because that’s when I feel like God is

settling on me to guide me with my words. On May 21 my sermon was about the establishment of the church and Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:1-8) with the following closing paragraph: “If you are not sure of your salvation or just not yet an official member of this wonderful Lebanon church family, I invite you to come—join us as we seek God’s will in spreading his word and his love throughout this community.”

As we began to sing the closing hymn, suddenly I had four people at the altar railing. To say I was terrified would be an understatement, but I said a huge prayer asking God to give me the right words. Then I walked to the railing to pray with two people I’d never seen before and one of our new residents in the community. The Holy Spirit was active. Almost every member present that day was crying or praying. As the Spirit calmed, a sweet peace fell over the room, and those at the railing went back to their seats.

And then the young lady, new to the community, shouted out, “I want to join this church! I love this church!” The following week we had a reception for her. The Holy Spirit is there every week, sprinkling “amens” and “praise the Lords,” guiding, teaching and blessing me. (And yes, we are Methodists!)

Bratcher is supply pastor for Lebanon UMC, Honea Path.

Dulce out of the hospital

Dulce, the Guatemalan 10-year-old girl many have prayed for and supported in her recent bone marrow transplant, continues to improve. Dr. Luke Rhyee, a South Carolina UMC elder who runs the medical mission Healing Guatemala, which helped Dulce, said the girl had excellent test results at her checkup a few days ago. She has gained weight, her hemoglobin and platelet numbers are within normal range, and she does not show signs of inflammation. Dulce said her biggest joy is getting her hair back, Rhyee said. Dulce, who has Fanconi Anemia, had a bone marrow transplant in South Korea thanks to the donations and support of Methodists and others. Her return to Guatemala is planned for October.

Photo courtesy Luke Rhyee





Guest Commentary

by Clara Hodges McFadden

The children are missing!

When you read that subject line, it probably makes you think about all of the pictures that you'd once see on the side of milk cartons, on flyers posted around neighborhoods or on the postcards in your mailbox of children gone missing or kidnapped.

But that's not the missing I'm referring to in this instance.

We all remember growing up and having to go to church with our parents on Sunday as a child. No excuse, except being gravely ill or suffering from a serious illness or condition, kept you from being able to attend. I grew up in a family of nine children, and we would be in parade-style following my parents into the building like little ducklings in a row. Needless to say, we took up one whole pew sitting alongside my mother. My father would always sit in the pew in front of us.

When services got to be a little longer than usual, my siblings and I would start to get fidgety, and just the mere thought of brother or sister touching each other or talking would cause my mom to politely touch us with the church fan to alert us to be still. If she had to do that more than once, all it took was for my father to look back and give us the side-eye and we'd know it meant you'd better behave or there would be a surprise for you when you got home. Of course, not the fun surprise—a surprise of the frightening kind. So that one look would make us forget about being aggravated by each other, and we'd return to being the sweet, cute little darlings that we were.

Children were the joy of the church, every Sunday dressed in their best dresses and suits, or at Eastertime dressed in a bright array of colors.

But what about now? It appears that Easter Sunday is the only time they come, little girls in their bonnets with their hair freshly curled or styled, lacy socks and patent leather shoes and little boys in their new suits, ties and new shoes. The same parents now that were made to attend church when they were growing up have now seemed to fail in bringing their own children to church on Sunday mornings.

My son, Travis, and I would go to church every Sunday. It would be a fight to get him up and dressed because he was not interested in going to another place other than school where he claimed, "We stayed too long!" But now as an adult, he is in church every Sunday.

I'm proud that he now takes the initiative to go on his own without any coaxing as he did when he was younger.

Churches now have designated Sundays where the youth of the church will officiate, but even so, sometimes the attendance on those days is slim to none. The children are our future, not only in the church, but in life in general. What better place is there to raise them and teach them about the teachings of Jesus Christ so that they grow up caring and being productive adults?

The Bible states, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). It's known that when children become old enough to make their own decisions, one of these seems to be not to attend church. Why not continue to attend so that they become closer to our Lord and Savior?

In these last few years we've suffered through a COVID-19 pandemic where the virus has taken the lives of many, not counting the individuals who contracted the virus and had to spend days, if not months, in hospitals and rehabilitation facilities. We all need to pray for our children that they get back into attending church and taking part in services and not just being a body on the church bench.

Children should observe the elder adults in the church as they usher, sing in the choir, be a pastor's helper or devotional leader or do whatever it takes to make the church run like a well-oiled machine. They learn from watching us! They pay attention to what we do in and out of church.

In the church I grew up in, we have a Senior Citizen Club project where a younger adult sponsors a senior member in the church. The group rewards their seniors with small tokens of love on any given Sunday. It doesn't ever have to be a special holiday or anything, but whenever you feel like being a blessing to your senior sponsor, then you give them something. It can be monetary, gift cards, blessing-in-a bag, etc. Just to see the expressions on their faces when they're presented with these items says it all!

Maybe we need to appoint an older adult with a child in the church so that they can mentor and instruct them on life and the teachings of the church.

Sometimes a person who is willing to take some time with a child is all that is needed.

The children are missing. We have to figure out a way to invite them back into the church, get them interested and involved a little more.

The children are definitely missing!

McFadden is a member of the Ruffin Parish, Waltherboro District.

'Making the Invisible Visible'

Red Bank's Native American Sunday dispels myths

By Jessica Brodie

RED BANK—Native Americans may often be invisible, but they are still here. That was the message underscored Aug. 21 at Red Bank United Methodist Church, where the body got the chance to hear important truths about America's first people from the chair of the annual conference's Native American Committee.

Zan Tracy Pender, South Carolina UMC's NAC chair, delivered the sermon to all three services at the church that Sunday as he helped dispel myths about Native Americans and offer a number of important truths.

Pender taught how Native peoples have experienced blatant discrimination in the United States despite being on this soil long before European settlers and despite mandates throughout the Bible to care for others.

Pender drew from two key Scriptures in his message: Leviticus 25:23-34, which emphasizes that the land belongs to God and we must care for it, and Matthew 25:35-40, which notes that we are caring for Jesus when we show care for others, particularly the "least of these."

Pender, whose paternal grandmother was an American Indian of both South Carolina's Wassamassaw and Santee heritages, shared how the typical Native greeting—a raised hand and the word, "How"—is a gesture of peace. The raised hand indicates a person has no weapon and, therefore, no intention to harm them, and the word "How" is what people would ask: how are things going with you and your community? How can I help?

He shared that a teepee wasn't the typical house for a Native American. Teepees were much like today's recreational vehicles—tem-



Zan Tracy Pender

porary places people could stay while out on the road. For South Carolina Natives, who weren't off hunting buffalo, there were generally no teepees.

He also noted that the clothing we see worn by Native Americans is not a "costume" but rather traditional dress.

As well, what to call Native people varies by area, and the

terms are all technically correct, whether that is First Peoples, First Nations, American Indians, Native Americans or Los Indigenas.

"We were the first but the last," Pender said—the first to live in what is today the United States but the last to receive their rights. It wasn't until 1924 when Native Americans got their rights—after White women—and today, they are still required to carry their tribal identification.

Today, many Native Americans face much discrimination. One member of the conference's NAC, a Catawba woman named Beckee Garris, was told she can't be Indian and Christian, Pender said.

But, Pender noted, in The United Methodist Church, you can.

"Open doors, open hearts, open minds really means something," Pender said, lifting up the inclusiveness of the UMC.

He closed his sermon with a traditional Navajo blessing: God is before us. God is behind us. God is above us. God is below us.

Chris Galvin, a member of Red Bank UMC, organized the Native American Sunday and introduced Pender to the congregation.

To join the UMCSC Native American Committee email group or receive a newsletter, email leelamar56@gmail.com.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr.

Still a spark among the wet wood

Another holiday has come and gone, the latest being the Fourth of July. This date has a special meaning for a nation that treasures freedom. It would be greater still if those freedoms were shared by its total citizenry.

Sadly, those freedoms have not been extended to everyone, and even more troubling, the few possessed are being stripped away almost daily. We are less free today than 50 years ago. The term "democracy" is rapidly becoming extinct, while authoritarianism is becoming the new hashtag. Cracks are appearing in our togetherness, and divisions will make it more difficult to find willing souls to defend a land in which one does not feel at home. The saying rightly applies, "If this is your baby, then you rock it to sleep, but if ours, we will rock it to sleep!"

I thanked every current and previous veteran that I encountered for their service to this nation. In fact, consistently, I have been supporting three military support groups (VFW, Wounded Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans) of late. The nation's soldiers have done their duty of protecting us from our foreign enemies, but our government has not done as well to protect us from our domestic enemies.

I remembered the flag, late in the day, that I was given by one of the organizations that I support, and consequently it is still neatly packaged. Hopefully, I will remember and have reasons to fly it soon.

I commented to a friend that I am surely grateful that Christ still sets free, and whoever he sets free is free indeed. That freedom doesn't change with the changing

of the courts, political parties or the plight or flight of the physical church and or whims of mankind. Our bishop didn't cry alone during the separation of the Conference's churches; I cried, too.

However, as I waited in the crowded exit lines and traveled I-95 at the conclusion of our annual celebration of God's people, I could not help but take note of the bumpers and windows stickers adorning the vehicles of the faithful. I was reminded again of what I heard and looked for in counseling, that the real issue is not always the one on the table, or purported, but an underlying one.

Maybe the issue in separation was not so much the decision that the General Conference might make, but about the decisions that it had already made over the years and provided a covering for the physical church to conform to the world rather than transform the world. In any case, I dried my tears, because crying might be a bit premature and rejoicing might be the better order of the day. "God does work in strange ways, his wonders to perform," I am told.

My emotions have been a roller coaster ride of late, but I heard a news report that gives me much needed hope. One of the five young men falsely accused of assault in a New York park, and later exonerated, has now earned his doctorate and was recently elected to serve his beloved community of Harlem, New York, while his greatest accuser is indicted and now awaits his day in court.

Sometimes, it does seem, "God can and will turn things around!" Maybe the battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

So I will say to my soul, again: "Do not worry; the Lord will make a way somehow!"

Rural Clergy Renewal Retreat

Monday - Wednesday, Sept. 11-13, 2023
Hosted by Hinton Rural Life Center, Hayesville, NC

Come and "sit a spell" with us!

Featuring four rural ministry resource leaders, including South Carolina's the Rev. Telley Gadson






Tom Conlon Rev. Telley Gadson Dr. Jonathan LeMaster-Smith Rev. Laura Hamrick

For details and to register, visit



www.hintoncenter.org/retreats



Mount Seal moms enjoy fun, fellowship

Mount Seal UMC, Hemingway, celebrated Mother's Day with an eventful weekend filled with fun, laughter and fellowship. Pictured are members of the church enjoying candle making activities on Saturday, May 13.



Twists and Turns

Zion UMC, Lancaster, held a "Twists and Turns" themed vacation Bible school this year. Participants gathered Aug. 6-10 for the fun.



Pickleball party

Murray UMC, Summerville, held a pickleball tournament Aug. 7. Here are some of the participants.



New Light celebrates Women's Day

For more than 30 years, the women of New Light UMC in the Orangeburg District have been celebrating Women's Day. Their program was held this year on Sunday, May 21. The theme of the program was, "Women of Strength, Pain and Healing," and the speaker was Karen S. Waymyers, who reminded all that they can find strength through pain. Following the message, a portrait of the late Mrs. Berlena Jackson, a strong trailblazer and leader at New Light for many years, was presented to the church from the Jordan family. The portrait will be hung in the Sunday School room where Mrs. Jackson taught for almost 50 years. The president of the United Women in Faith is Patricia G. Walker.

Puppets, ice cream and comedy draw crowd to Ruffin Parish's Fifth Sunday

SMOAKS—Ruffin Parish's Fifth Sunday service in July was held at Hickory Hill United Methodist Church.

The Rev. Adrienne Stokes and her congregation were blessed with a message from Buckhead Kids Puppet Show.

The show featured the Bible story of David and Goliath and how that mustard-seed faith placed entirely in God gives us courage not to cower against giants.

Attendees were enlightened by the comedic performance of Brother William McFadden (Buckhead UMC) and Sister Marie Thompson (Hickory Hill UMC).

After the service, Hickory Hill UMC's Youth Chairperson Bridgett Brown, along with MacKenzie Washington (Hickory Hill youth), hosted an ice cream social.



Vanilla, butter pecan and strawberry were a few of the favorite flavors, and an abundance of toppings—from M&M's and caramel to hot fudge, Snickers, banana and nuts—made everything much more fun.

Around the Districts

Greenwood District

Congratulations to the Rev. Scott and Frances Nurse on the birth of their fourth grandchild. Russell William Nurse was born to Jennifer and Trevor Nurse and welcomed home by big sister Vivian. Rev. Nurse is the pastor of St. John's UMC, Batesburg.

Spartanburg District

Central UMC, Spartanburg, will host "Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith" on Wednesday nights Sept. 6-Oct. 11 beginning at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact the church at (864) 582-7263.



View from the Pews

by Bill Barnier

Transformation

The signs are all around us. The shift in energy, the change in the "feeling" of our world, the perception that nothing is as it should be any more. Perhaps we just feel unsettled, as if there is no longer a safe connection with who or what we are.

When we turn to our leadership for answers, we find they're busy mismanaging what they are elected to care for with wisdom and responsibility. It just seems as though everyone in the world has decided to look out for themselves and have become lost in a sea of selfish indulgence or control without conscience. Integrity and morality are now just empty words. What we used to be shocked by is now common culture, and modern news media has turned into a voice for anyone who shouts loudly or pays their bills.

Our faith culture of religious and worship organizations, most with a less-than-stellar history, have mostly lost their voice and their following because they lost their sight. Our own Methodist brand, who coined the vision of transforming the world, forgot to guard the door to the big house and completely missed the self-serving saboteurs sneaking into the leadership ranks. Their greedy mission is nearly complete, but their victory by any means is shameful.

In Romans 12:2, Paul writes: "Do not conform to the pattern of the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve God's will." Paul was concerned that culture was leading us away from that which is good by controlling how we think, what we hear and what we covet.

As each generation loses its compass, its conscience, the link to love and peace becomes weaker. Their capacity to think clearly and measure life against that which

our creator intended has become skewed because the ruler with which to measure these things has been vandalized and is no longer accurate.

It is within our own hearts that we must seek real truth. We still have the capacity to transform our thoughts and actions. We are incredible creatures in a universe of immeasurable splendor. We have the capability to transform how we think, feel and act by simply willing it so. We can renew our vision of our purpose in this life by renewing our link with God. We can relearn how to think and put aside the new cultural distractions so we can question everything through the purpose of our creation.

Our souls, our cosmic divine energy, don't belong to us. Our creator has given each of us what we need to learn and grow through the lessons which a life on this busy planet can provide. In the grand scheme of the great everything, we are but a single atomic spark of energy with a mandate to learn, to love, to grow. God asks us to just love one another as he loves us.

The signs of transformation are all around us. Discoveries of historical events bring knowledge of times of other transformations. New discoveries might be signs of old knowledge becoming new again by revealing just how wide and wonderful our universe really is. Yet God still requires us to stop being stubborn and hateful and simply open our minds and our hearts to share his love and goodness with one another. If we can finally humble ourselves before him, the reward is the key to the library of all that is.

It all begins with helping the person beside you. It grows healthy and happy as long as it's nurtured with God's love. Pass it on and watch it grow!

Barnier is a member of St. Paul, Ridgeland.

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Photos courtesy of Eugenia Vicars

Pack the Backpack

St. Paul UMC, Greenville, located in the West End, held a back-to-school event on Sunday, Aug. 6. Called "Pack the Backpack," the event was held in the afternoon in the fellowship hall. Families were invited from around the Greenville area to come choose free school supplies to be ready for the start of the 2023-2024 school year. Members and the children attending the church's vacation Bible school collected the school supplies that were given away at the event. The VBS children collected more than \$300 in their offering for the week to help purchase headphones and earbuds for the event. The Rev. Matt Greer, St. Paul pastor, estimated they served 300 students.



Photos by Daryl Rishforth

Happy hearts

Memorial United Methodist Men at Memorial UMC, Greer, partnered with Emmanuel's Hammer to assist a woman in Greer whose porch railing was deteriorating. A great time of fellowship was had by all as they repaired the home in the name of Jesus.



Photo by Matt Brodie

The hands and feet of Jesus

Billy Robinson, coordinator of the Early Response Team for South Carolina United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, shows off a toy chainsaw outside the ERT trailer, which was parked at the entrance of the Florence Center during Annual Conference. ERT volunteers are specially trained men and women who, in the event of a disaster, are among the very first people to go into an area and assist with everything from muck-out work to tarping roofs. For more information or to learn about trainings, contact Robinson at brpraisejesus@aol.com or 803-539-8429.



United Women in Faith

by Kathy Roys

United Women in Faith to hold 51st annual meeting

The South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith is making exciting plans to celebrate our upcoming annual meeting as women united in our faith to be God's loving hands and Jesus' supportive voice for all women, children and youth.

Our theme is "Unity in Christ" focusing on Ephesians 4:2-3.

This year's event is being hosted by the Orangeburg District and will be held at St. John's United Methodist Church in Aiken on Oct. 20-21. The Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon will be our keynote speaker. She is in ministry with the Wesley Foundation in the Orangeburg area, so she will be bringing university students along with her to participate in the program.

The Orangeburg District Superintendent the Rev. Ken Nelson will be preaching at the Friday evening Communion service.

We will hold one group workshop addressing our national focus on climate justice. Charlotte Ward of Citizens' Climate Lobby will be the workshop leader. Ward will also have a display area set up during our registration check-in time to provide resources and ideas on how to better care for God's world.

Other activities will include meeting with

our conference coordinators to discuss our areas of mission and view their displays. We will have a greeting card station to provide supportive messages to the clients and staff of our state mission projects, Columbia Bethlehem Community Center; Killingsworth; The Bethlehem Center, Spartanburg; and Wallace Family Life Center. Cards can also be created for the residents and staff of Brooks-Howell Home. Attendees are also welcome to bring greeting cards from their units.

Our young women's Limitless team will be collecting useful items for Stand at the Crossroads Ministries, a local mission organization in Aiken. Their director, Debbie Lamb, will be sharing information about this ministry.

Of course, we will be acknowledging all the great work being done by our districts and local units this year.

Be sure to register by Sept. 30 to take advantage of the lower registration fee. The fee will increase in October. Contact your district officers for registration forms.

You can also get the registration form and more information in the September issue of our Mission Echo newsletter at <https://www.umcsc.org/women>.

Roys is SCCUWF vice president/program coordinator.

Native American Ministries

Origins of Scalping

By Zan Tracy Pender

Many Americans believe scalping started with American Indians. Scalping and Indians are often synonymous. But what are the facts about the origins of scalping? Is what we think we know fact or myth?

Scalping is the act of cutting or tearing part of the human scalp, with hair attached, from the head and generally occurred in warfare, with the scalp being a trophy.

Scalping independently developed in various cultures both in the Old and New Worlds. The earliest example dates back to Mesolithic period, 5,000 years ago in Sweden, where a man was found in a grave who had been scalped. The Scythians, who lived in present-day Iran, collected scalps from their defeated foes 2,500 years ago. In England in 1036, Early Godwin was responsible for scalping his enemies. In Asia, evidence showed scalping was practiced by the Longshan culture from 3000 to 1900 BC. In the Americas, scalping occurred in Central and South America in 600 AD.

Every society had some type of human war trophy. In the Old Testament, David and his men killed 200 Philistines and collected their foreskins for the king (1 Samuel 18:27).

Archaeologists examining Native American skeletons near the Illinois river found one skull with circular incisions around the crown validating scalping. The skeleton dated from 700 AD. The Crow Creek town massacre site in South Dakota, with the remains of around 486 skeletons, revealed male skulls with the telltale cuts of scalping, but the women and children killed were not scalped. These remains were pre-Columbus, dating back to 1325. Frenchman Jacques Cartier was one of the first Europeans to witness and document a collection of scalps by a tribal chief named Donnacona near Quebec City.

The bottom line is that humans from all areas of the globe practiced scalping as a means of taking trophies or evidence of killing another human being. Europeans had the means, roads and tools where heads could easily be collected as trophies or proof of death. Instead of carrying something so heavy, some American Indians collected

scalps. Scalping varied by region. There is little evidence of scalping in the Pacific-Northwest. When reviewing all of the available data, the most logical conclusion is that Europeans knew how to scalp and used it prior to arrival in the New World, and Native Americans knew how to scalp and used it prior to European arrival. Both sides continued the practice after European arrival in the New World.

European contact accelerated scalping in the New World. English settlers around 1697 began to use the term "scalping" as a verb. Bounty was a European innovation. American colonies paid bounties for Indian scalps. Europeans commercialized scalping, offering 100 pounds for a male Indian scalp. Both the French and the British encouraged Native tribes to scalp their Native and European rivals and collect money based on the number of scalps turned in. The French were also known for collecting scalps.

In contrast, some Native tribes had different names for scalping depending on the process, types of scalps or tribe from which the scalp was collected. Men often shaved their heads but maintained a scalp-lock of hair that had cultural and religious significance. In some tribes, loss of the scalp-lock would mean being a pariah, or cast out while the taker celebrated obtaining the scalp-lock as a great honor. For some Native peoples, it ranged from a war souvenir (a trophy), proof of warrior skills, payback, a way to tally credits or the number of dead in warfare.

Contrary to popular belief, scalping itself was not a fatal operation. American history is full of survivors, both Native and European. Taking a person's scalp did not guarantee death. Most commonly, the scalp was removed after death. In conclusion, scalping has origins in societies across the globe that developed independently of each other. It was not something unique to Native American culture. European arrival increased scalping and commercialized it for profit. Yet Native culture believed in a tooth for a tooth or an eye for an eye, so it was appealing. Both sides have their own unique origins and faults when it comes to scalping.



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Campus Ministry mythbusting

By the Rev. John Sterling Poole

Campus ministry is a rhythmic ministry. We move with the semesters.

Fall is our kickoff, with recruitment, fun-filled retreats, cookouts, pumpkin carving, midterm mania, Friendsgiving and the Christmas send-off. Spring holds the statewide Wesley Retreat, leadership recruitment, spring break trips, beach days, graduations and May trips.

Then comes summer. Plenty of people have told me how nice it must be to be in campus ministry because we have summers off. They said the same thing when I was a public-school teacher. The myth is that campus ministry has summers off.

The truth: Summer is crazy busy. Looking over this past summer, it has been jam-packed with so much for the Charleston Wesley Foundation. Early to mid-May holds graduations, graduation parties and move-outs. Obviously, the staff of Charleston Wesley Foundation wanted to see each of our seniors graduate, and some of them wanted us to come to their parties (i.e., they wanted a graduation gift!). After all of that, they needed help moving out of their dorms.

We then had a trip to Nicaragua where the students engaged in food ministry, vacation Bible school, construction, music, and prayer work. That was May.

June held Annual Conference in the beginning of the month, and then we kicked off our summer studies. I reminded my students (to an annoying degree) that they need to rest from schoolwork, not Jesus. We offered a Zoom study on Monday nights for students from all over the country to join in to learn about the Fruit of the Spirit. We offered an in-person Wednesday night meeting for students in the area where we studied Revelation. Beyond that, we went to a Riverdogs Baseball Game, recruited at College of Charleston orientations, visited churches, planned the fall semester schedule and prayed over next steps. That was June.

July started with a Fourth of July Cookout for the students who didn't have family or friends to celebrate with. Instead, they celebrated with their Wesley family. We continued with our summer studies, continued recruiting and continued visiting, planning and praying. We also got a crew together to



Many think campus ministers have the summer off. (Nope!)

do some painting on one of the hottest days of the summer. Needless to say, we didn't paint as much as we wanted, but the students had fun. We also began planning our fall retreat and our welcome week events. That was July.

August found us resting briefly before everything went into overdrive with the start of the school year.

One thing to note, too, is that fundraising is a major focus over the summer in order to raise enough support to actually minister to the students during the school year.

All-in-all, it doesn't look like we had the summer off. And that's OK—the Holy Spirit revealed itself in tremendous ways this summer.

We had the opportunity to worship on Sunday mornings in 10 different sanctuaries. Some services were traditional, and some were contemporary. Some were historical churches, and some were newer. Some churches were predominantly White, and some were predominantly Black. My students got to see God glorified in different ways with different lenses. We broke down the services afterwards in order to understand the liturgy and tradition behind everything. The questions

around the table were seminary-level, and they began to detect patterns between churches.

On one of the Zoom studies, a student who was studying abroad in Greece stayed up until 2 a.m. in order to join our Zoom because he wanted to learn about love in a biblical context with his Wesley friends.

Another new student bravely showed up to one of our Wednesday night Bible studies and confessed immediately that he had never read a word from the Bible. (Revelation was quite the doozy to get started with!)

Five students sacrificed the first part of their summer to go down to Nicaragua in 110+ degree temperatures in order to worship God and boldly pray over complete strangers.

One student was sent to Fort Knox for boot camp for the Army. Missing Wesley so much, he started leading his own Bible study with his comrades.

Another student showed up to three different recruiting sessions in order to testify to what God has done in her life through the Wesley Foundation while she juggled summer school, a full-time job and a personal life.

But perhaps my favorite moment from this summer was the Fourth of July Cookout. My wife and I hosted it, and we were thrilled to bring the grill out, set up an inflatable pool and have a Spikeball tournament. However, five minutes in, we were rained into the house with six students. Instead of segmenting off into the living room, den and dining room with plates, the students dragged every chair they could find to the dining room, and we all sat together enjoying the food we made for each other.

The summer was a busy season for Charleston Wesley Foundation. However, it was so very worth it. Should you run into your area's Wesley director or your campus chaplains, be sure to ask them what God did this past summer. I'm sure each of us has a story to tell about God working even though most of the students are gone. And please pray for us as we continue what God started this summer.

Learn more about Campus Ministries here: <https://www.umcsc.org/campus-ministries/>

Poole is director of Charleston Wesley Foundation.



Young leaders

On Aug. 6, Manning UMC, Manning, held a Youth Sunday during which the high school youth presided over the entire service. Gabriel Collier gave the message, and John William assisted with the service by reading Scripture, being an acolyte and giving the benediction. Ansley sang "Oceans" during the offertory. Hunter and Ryleigh assisted as greeters and ushers as well as during the offering. Pictured Gabriel (left) and John William.



A stellar VBS

Calvary UMC, Swansea, held a "Stellar" vacation Bible school in July. The children's mission project at VBS was Operation Christmas Child. Children brought items for the OCC shoeboxes that will be packed by the Calvary United Women in Faith. Here, Maddie and Jameson Yon display items collected at the VBS.



At Asbury Hills, campers learned how to live out 1 Timothy 4:12.

Camps & Retreat celebrates a summer of ministry

South Carolina Camps and Retreat Ministries hosted a summer filled with fellowship, adventure and spiritual growth across the state.

At Asbury Hills Camp & Retreat Center, in Cleveland in the Upstate of South Carolina, the camp celebrated serving more than 1,000 campers. The summer theme was "Strive," and campers learned how to live out 1 Timothy 4:12.

Sea Islands Camp & Retreat Center, on Johns Island, opened to groups this spring and served close to 300 people on the coast. Many groups came to Johns Island from various states around the country for spiritual retreats, service weekends and fellowship.

At Camp Providence, on Lake Hartwell in Anderson, Providence Church held summer worship services through the summer, and these will end Labor Day weekend. Campers and various scouting troops were on the lake throughout the summer for waterfront programs and camping experiences. Camp Providence also unveiled a Donor Recognition Tree this summer honoring the financial gifts given toward the property's development.

And in July, SC Camps & Retreat Ministries partnered with the Florence District to provide a neighborhood day camp program to local churches in Florence. Connectional relationships were fostered and wonderful memories were made.

It has been a fruitful summer of growth, outreach and discipleship at camp properties. South Carolina Camps & Retreat Ministries strives to serve churches throughout the conference with access to quality facilities and programs that serve all people for Christian birth, growth and renewal.

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Bluff Road United Methodist Church
Sunday, September 10, 2023



Rev. Angela Ford Nelson
New Life United Methodist Church
Monday, September 11, 2023



Rev. Dr. Anthony A. McCallum
Bethlehem Baptist Church
Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Devotion | 6:30 p.m.
Revival Service | 7:00 p.m.

ECCLES RESTORATION: Being 'stewards of the garden'

From Page 1

UMC as a charitable entity and created a GoFundMe campaign, as well as begun seeking grants for the project. To date, Eccles said, they have raised nearly \$15,000 toward the goal, and they also discovered a historic preservation grant from the state that can possibly help, though that grant cycle doesn't start until the end of the calendar year.

The church is also hosting a Gospel Sing at the site of the old church to help raise awareness and funds for the restoration. The event is set for Sunday, Sept. 24, from 6:30-8 p.m. at Eccles UMC, 1696 Eccles Church Road, Huger, SC 29450. Eight groups/singers are on the lineup, to include the Cordesville Quartet, Kristina Wren Gaskins, J.R. Morris, Tonya Berry, Brenda and Earl Morris Ashleigh Rolader, Jodi and Dale Nobles and Perry Gaskin. A love offering will be accepted.

Eccles UMC set up a Facebook group to encourage support for the project at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/266805578870292>, and several have commented on what the old church means to them.

One woman reminisced about all the fam-



"You can feel the presence of the Lord, and you feel peace when you step inside," Platt said.

ily reunions held there when she was a child, running in and out of the structure with her cousins. Others pledged support for the project and urged others to do the same.

Platt said the beauty of Eccles UMC is in its simplicity.

"You can feel the presence of the Lord, and you feel peace when you step inside,"

Platt said, and the whole setting ties in with the natural beauty of the forest all around it. "A huge Christian concept is loving our world, being stewards of the garden God gave us, and there's something about that church that brings it all together for me."

While they are first focusing on the three major structural needs, the historic preser-

vation class identified several priorities for the structure, all of which Platt and fellow organizers hope to tackle in time.

First-priority items include repairing a compromised corner post; removing siding on the front wall; bracing stud walls as needed to address a slight bow in the wall; and adding collar tie or ceiling joists to the end of the building to help strengthen the end wall. Second steps include removing siding from entire façade to allow structural repairs; adding flashing and repairing cornices as needed; salvaging as much original siding as possible; installing new replace-in-kind siding as needed to supplement the salvaged original material; repairing historic windows where possible/as funding allows; replacing other windows as necessary; repointing brick piers as needed; repairing metal roof cladding or replace existing; limewashing or using an opaque stain to coat the exterior siding; and repairing the exterior doors where possible.

Last steps include sanding and refinishing the pine flooring; limewashing or painting the interior paneling; and removing the concrete steps.

To access the Eccles UMC GoFundMe campaign, visit <https://gofund.me/40380764>.

ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP: 'It's a prayer answered'

From Page 1

located in West Ashley, about 10 miles away. The women were White, Smalls said, and Mount Carmel's membership is totally African American.

And when he spoke with them, he instantly knew: His prayers had been answered.

It turns out the women had felt the Lord lead them to Mount Carmel with a surplus of food they had been distributing to another nearby food ministry. Further, they said, their pastor had been praying about starting an outreach ministry with another church downtown. Would Smalls consider partnering with them?

"I said twist my arm," Smalls recalled, laughing. "Yes!"

Now, every Thursday Coastal Community brings a sizeable supply of food to Mount Carmel—fresh produce, fresh meats, as well as a host of nonperishable items—and restocks the blessing box and refrigerator at the church.

Then, on the first Saturday of every month, they come to Mount Carmel with a group of about 50 people, towing grills, food, clothing, blankets, ice cream, snow cone machines, jump castles and more to the church for a big community outreach day. Drove of people come by for giveaways and fellowship, all entirely free.

Smalls said they come in, cook all the food, serve, clean up and take the trash with them as they depart.

"When they're gone, you wouldn't even know they were there—it's all cleaned up. They even bought all the items for our back-to-school giveaway."



About six people have started attending the church who hadn't come before, the pastor said.

Coastal Community's outreach pastor, Chris Jones, calls the Saturday crew their "tailgating team," and he said it is a blessing and an honor for them to serve with Mount Carmel in this way.

"It's all about coming together to be the church together and show the love of Christ in that community," Jones said.

As is the case in so many large cities, Jones said, the people who live near Mount Carmel experience great need on so

many levels.

Meeting those needs is what Coastal's partnership with Mount Carmel strives to do, Jones said.

"It's meeting the physical needs of the people, yes, but these people also need to know the love of Christ."

Smalls agrees. He said Coastal Community also provides biblical tracts, and they witness about Jesus to the community, encouraging neighbors to come to the church on Sunday. About six people have started attending the church who hadn't come before.

Smalls said he's also struck by the fact that God clearly put both churches together—one Black, one predominantly White.

"This is poignant," Smalls said. "We have crossed racial lines within two churches in serving a community which consists of underserved people of all races. For me this speaks volumes to the true definition of being ecumenical."

Coastal also has a bed ministry with several carpenters in the church, and if Mount Carmel learns about anyone in need of a bed, they build it, deliver it, set it up and bring a mattress, all at no charge.

"It almost sounds corny, but I thank these people so much because it's a prayer answered," Smalls said. "There's no way they could have known our need other than God revealed it to them. Here I was, heartbroken because we could not continue to do what we were doing. ... Now here's the Coastal Church coming each week, bringing all the food, and we don't have to buy anything. You just cannot rationalize this."

"It's definitely a move from God."

Author Stephon Void featured on UMCom 'Get Your Spirit in Shape' podcast

One of the Advocate Press's authors, Stephon Void, was featured recently on United Methodist Communications' popular "Get Your Spirit in Shape" podcast.

In his July 21 interview with Crystal Caviness, Void shared about his new collection of grief and healing poetry published this spring by the Advocate newspaper's publishing arm.

Void wrote poems to help cope with his father's terminal cancer diagnosis, as well as his own chronic health concerns. The poetry collection is titled "A Healing Journey."

A native of Bowman, Void holds a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Master of Science in biotechnology from Claflin University of Orangeburg. He is currently the nuclear magnetic resonance technician in the Department of Chemistry at Claflin University. He is a certified lay servant in the South Carolina United Methodist Church at New Covenant UMC. His first book, "From My Heart to Your



XXXXX

Eyes: Poems of Faith and Social Justice," was published by the Advocate Press in 2021.

Check out the podcast, including a full transcript, at <https://www.umc.org/en/content/a-poetic-journey-to-healing-with-stephon-void-gysis-145>

To learn more or purchase Void's book, it's available on Amazon or at <https://www.advocatesc.org/books>.

October is Pastor Appreciation Month

This fall, you have the opportunity to recognize the pastor of your church with an appreciation ad.

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Deadline is Sept. 6.

SALKEHATCHIE SUMMER: Planning now for 2024 camps

From Page 1

While Salkehatchie returned in 2022, it was a much smaller version. The 318 campers worked on 33 homes in 11 camps, largely doing outdoor work such as roof jobs and ramp construction.

Although 2023's Salkehatchie was smaller than it was pre-pandemic, which typically saw about 45 camps and 2,500 campers, Salkehatchie tripled the number of camps and volunteers this summer from last year. Organizers hope that growth will continue.

Those involved said it felt good to be back to relative normal after COVID.

"A big concern was recruiting youth, ages 14-17, who never had the opportunity to participate before. It was exciting to see the youth showing up and most pledging to return next year," Hart said.

One of those new youth was Cameron Connor, 17, who volunteered at the Santee Camp and said the experience "changed his life." Salkehatchie is already on his calendar

for next July, and he plans to invite friends to join him.

Another Salkehatchie first-timer, Landon Gurley, worked at the Lancaster Camp and told the *Advocate* he can't wait to return next year.

Gurley said the experience was a win-win for everyone, and it felt good, as "I was with my friends and having fun and doing something good for someone."

While Salkehatchie is part of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, volunteers do not need to be Methodist to participate.

Hart said they will continue, as always, to be open to anyone outside of the UMC who wishes to join in efforts to improve the living conditions of neighbors in need. It's also open to volunteers beyond South Carolina, she said, noting a youth ministry director from Massachusetts brought his youth to Harvest Camp in Dillon.

For many churches, she said, Salkehatchie has been the impetus behind the establish-

ment of their youth program.

"I hear many churches complaining that they have no youth in their congregations," Hart said. "But I also have heard youth directors mention how Salkehatchie was the kick-off to building a youth program in their church."

It's not uncommon for those who volunteered as a youth to continue coming back year after year, eventually becoming a camp director and even bringing their own children to Salkehatchie when those kids turn 14 and become old enough to participate. For example, Hart said Eryn Price Wilson was a youth at Harvest Camp 15 years ago when she was 15. She became the assistant camp director in Williamsburg County for two years and now is camp director for the new Rock Hill Camp. Ward Smith started at 14 at the Santee Camp and today serves as that camp's director. Others "have all received the torch and are carrying it into the future," Hart said, such as Jonathan Calore, Kemper Moody, Robert Harrelson and Gary

Graham.

Hart offered huge thanks to all the churches who helped feed Salkehatchie campers, offer lodging space or give donations. Without that support, she said, Salkehatchie could not continue.

June 2023 camps were 2 Rivers, Baker Creek, JET, Penn Center, Piedmont, Sumter, Sand River, Winyah Bay, Lancaster, Catawba, Jenkinsville, Union, Bishopville, Marlboro Flowers and Rock Hill.

July 2023 camps were Lake City, Foot-hills, Bamberg, Black Swamp, Calhoun County, Circuit Rider, Edisto Island, Fairfield, Harvest, Santee, Moncks Corner, Columbia, Emerald City, North Augusta, Newberry, Clover and North Strand.

Hart said Salkehatchie leaders are planning now for next year's camps and hope to release the camp dates and begin registration this fall.

For more on Salkehatchie or to get involved, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/salkehatchie>.



A happy homeowner tries out his new steps thanks to the hard work of the Rock Hill camp.



Volunteers load debris into a wheelbarrow at the Lancaster camp.



Volunteers team-carry a chop saw at the Columbia camp.



Safety first! A volunteer holds a ladder for another working on a roof at the Rock Hill camp.



One team, including this volunteer, built a new ramp for a homeowner through the Columbia camp.



Volunteers at this homesite, part of the Santee Camp, repaired one roof and re-shingled another.



Camp directors Ward Smith and Kemper Moody assess a home under repair.



Youth volunteers at one of the Santee homesites didn't let the heat stop them from putting a new roof on a man's home during one of the hottest weeks of the year.

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“I spent hours each week talking with Dr. Swicegood. Sometimes it was about class, sometimes about the James Fund, sometimes about something completely abstract.”

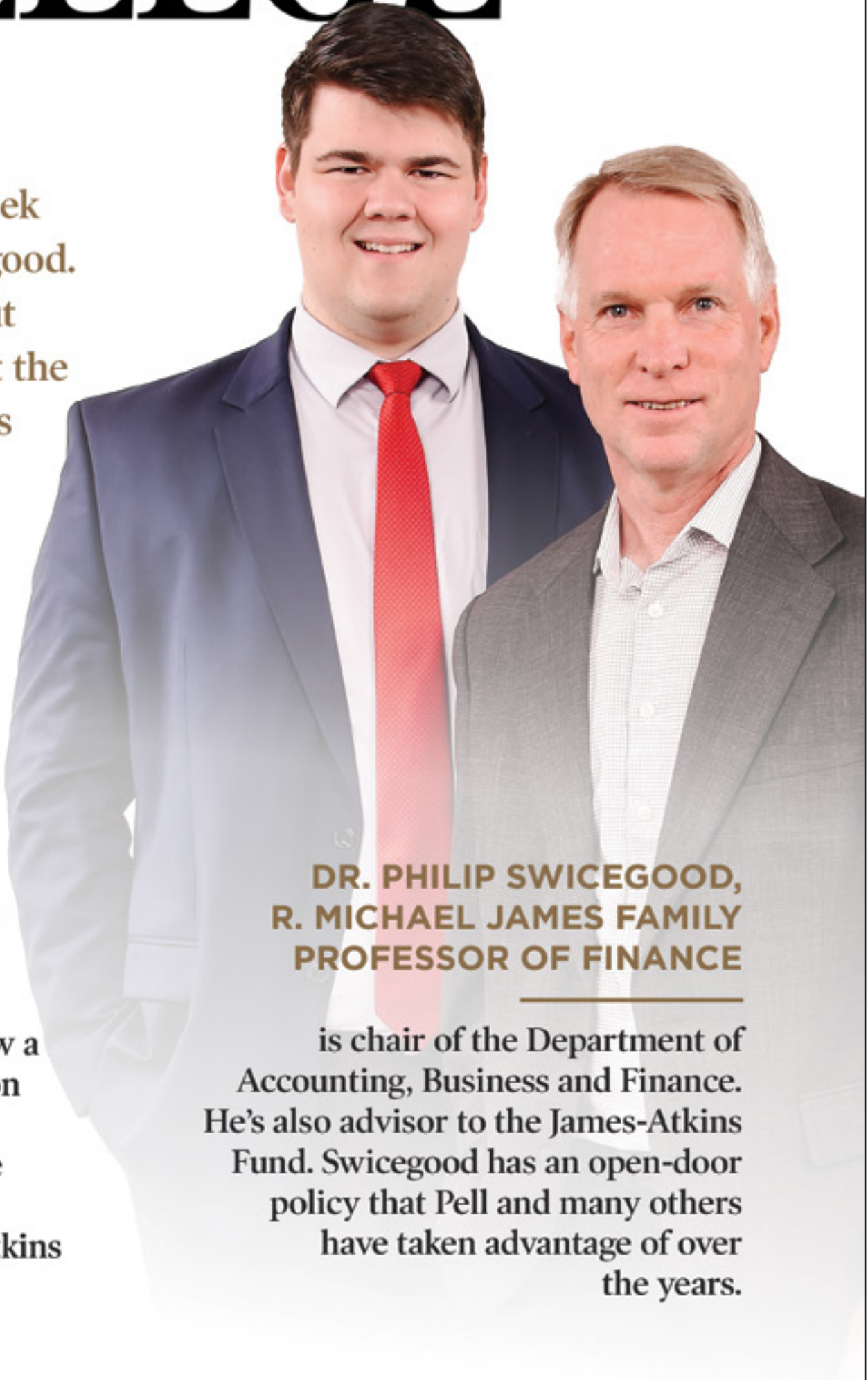
“Jackson always has ideas ... good ideas!”

**JACKSON PELL,
FINANCE MAJOR AND
ACCOUNTING MINOR**

A 2023 graduate, Pell is now a financial analyst for Johnson Development Associates in Spartanburg. He was the managing partner of the student-managed James-Atkins Investment Fund.

**DR. PHILIP SWICEGOOD,
R. MICHAEL JAMES FAMILY
PROFESSOR OF FINANCE**

is chair of the Department of Accounting, Business and Finance. He’s also advisor to the James-Atkins Fund. Swicegood has an open-door policy that Pell and many others have taken advantage of over the years.



Where thought leads. to business ethics.

Northeast UMC to dedicate prayer labyrinth this month

COLUMBIA—Northeast United Methodist Church will dedicate its prayer labyrinth Sunday, Sept. 10.

The dedication will take place at 4 p.m. at the church, located at 4000 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia. Along with the labyrinth, a walking path with prayer benches was added to the campus, as well as a directional map and permanent sign to explain the labyrinth.

The hope is the space will be a place of respite for individuals to have time with God.

Labyrinths have long been associated with the journey of life, and in medieval times they were symbolic of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Christian imagination. Praying with a labyrinth is a form of walking meditation, a physical expression of the interior journey toward Christ that characterizes all

Christian contemplation.

In addition to dedicating the labyrinth, Dr. Melanie Dobson will teach three classes; Dobson is a United Methodist elder, professor at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and director of the Spiritual Direction Certification Program. Titled "Practices of Presence: Prayer for Life's Journey," they focus on prayer for our life's moments (days and weeks).

The classes are scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 14, 6:30 p.m., "Practicing the Presence: Welcoming God in Life's Moments"; Thursday, Sept. 21, 6:30 p.m., "Practicing Awareness: Discerning God's Presence in a Day (Examen)"; and Thursday, Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m., "Practicing Sabbath: Resting with God in a Week." Childcare will be provided.

This was made possible by Relevance to Resonance: Exploring the Practices of Transcendence in Ministry and Congregational Life by Lilly Endowment Inc. in association with Luther Seminary.

For more information, contact Northeast UMC's pastor, the Rev. Antoinette Gaboton-Moss, at 803-736-6386 or magaboton-moss@umcsc.org.

Labyrinths have long been associated with the journey of life, and in medieval times they were symbolic of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.



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more info online at www.asburyhills.org

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 Andrews, Richard C. (RL)
 Blackwelder, Joe Lee
 Bobo, Kenneth G.
 Boshell, Donald C. (RL)
 Bowers, Michael E.
 Brewer, Jones L. (RL)
 Brown, David A.
 Brown, Will Rogers
 Caldwell, Jack A. (RL)
 Cannon, Carol R.
 Cannon, Robert T.
 Carter, James B. "Jim" (RL)
 Clyburn Jr., David A.
 Culp, Wayne A.
 Dillard, Jimmy W.
 Duncan, Jason C. (RL)
 Ervin, David F. (RA)
 Fields, George D. (RL)
 Fisher, A. Mickey
 Fizer, George H. (RL)
 Gavalas, Anthony N.
 Gilliland, Douglas W.
 Griffeth, James Ellis
 Hill Jr., Thomas H. (RL)
 Holt, Arthur H.
 Hope, Donald J.
 Hopper, Richard D.
 Hunter, Kathryn O.
 Hyder, Larry R.
 Ivey, James W.
 Jamison, Louis D.
 Jenkins, Jane D.
 Johnston, James W.
 Kyllonen, Mitchell W.
 Leonard Sr., Ronald Lee
 Long, Allen E.
 Major Sr., Wayne R.
 Monson, Robert C.
 Nichols, David E.
 Norrell, Thomas H.
 Price, Angelia P. (RA)
 Rawlinson, Carol M.
 Reynolds, Edgar B.
 Rickenbaker, Luther H.
 Roper, Frances "Lee" (RL)
 Ropp Jr., John Wesley
 Sistare, James Bart
 Smith, Calvin L.
 Strother, Robert G.

Teagan, Deborah Luther
 Thompson, Elizabeth A.
 Thompson, William L. (RL)
 Tillerson, Elbert S. (RL)
 White, Rufus Horace (RL)
 Wilkes, Molly F. (RA)
 Wilkes Jr., Thomas B.
 Wilkins, Rebecca A.
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers:
 Miller, Mary Lou (DR)

DEACONESSES

Active: None
Retired:
 Miller, Mary Lou (DC)

WALTERBORO DISTRICT (51 charges; 88 churches) JOSEPH A. MCDONALD, DS 4

ALLENDALE:
 Allendale Charge – Jeremy N. Phipps (PL) (1/2) 2
 (Gillette, Swallow Savannah)
 Central Circuit – Lisa M. Way 2
 (New Hope, Simpson, Union)

BEAUFORT:
 Carteret Street – Charles Bryson Williams Jr. 5
 Holy Trinity – SanRoman King (PL) (1/4) 3
 Port Royal – Anne Gregory Bridgers (RL) (1/2) 13
 Waters Edge – Hans Jerome Hamm (PL) (1/2) 2
 Wesley – Tracy Paulette Colleton-Glover (PL) (1/2) 3

COTTAGEVILLE:
 Jericho – Marvin Jones III (PL) (1/2) 6
 Macedonia – Wilhelmina Thompson (PL) (1/4) 3
Rehoboth – Becky G. Hogan (SY) (1/4) 1
 Wesley Grove – L. Johnny Epps (PL) (1/4) 6

DORCHESTER:
Dorchester Circuit – Larry W. Stocker (SY) (1/2) 1
 (Salem, Zion)
 Dorchester Parish – Laurie Michael Jamar Tomlin (OF)
 (¶346.2) (1/2) 4
 (Oak Grove, St. John)

EHRHARDT:
 Ebenezer-Rizer's Chapel – Stanley Bernard Ritter (PL)
 (1/2) 9
 Ehrhardt Charge – Lewis Christopher King III (PL) (1/2) 20
 (Wesley Chapel, St. James, Zion, Lodge)
 Friendship-St. Luke – Vivian Remona Lingard (PL)
 (1/2) 14

HAMPTON:
 Estill-Black Swamp Charge – Dewey L. Shaffer (OF)
 (¶346.2) (3/4) 10
 (Estill, Furman, Mount Carmel)
 Fairfax Charge – Mary Benton Holladay (OF)(¶346.2)
 (1/2) 6
 (Bellinger Chapel, Brunson)
Hampton-Varnville – TBS
 Toby's Bluff-Mount Nebo Charge – Lamonte Darnell
 Hodges (PL) (1/4) 9

HARLEYVILLE:
 Bethel-Duncan Chapel – Paul Lawton (PL) (1/2) 6
 First Church – Yvette Mickaylla McDonald (FL) 3
 Harleyville Parish – James A. Ross (RL) (1/2) 3
 (Morris Chapel, St. Daniel)

HILTON HEAD:
 Bluffton – Scarlet Tanner Hester 4
Church of the Palms – Shannon Renee Bullion 1
St. Andrew By-The-Sea – Jonathan E. Tompkins 1
RIDGELAND:
 Fisher Chapel-St. Stephen – William H.D. Bowser Jr.
 (RE) 7
 Hardeeville – Richard Moses Smith (RE) (1/4) 3
 St. Luke – Christopher Lee Thompson 3

RIDGEVILLE:
 Canaan-Sand Hill – Jeffrey Salley 8
 New Hope-St. Paul – Sharon Spann Gamble 5

RUFFIN:
 Adnah-Williams – Richard W. Kelly (SY) (1/4) 2
 Bells Parish – James Bernard Grant (PL) (1/2) 17
 (Red Root, Sykes Savannah)
 Mount Pleasant – Schoneke Summerhill (SY) (1/4) 2
Ruffin Circuit – N. Keith Yates (PL) (1/2) 1
 (Bethel, St. John, Tabor)
 Ruffin Parish – Adrienne Elaine Stokes (PL) (1/2) 4
 (Buckhead, Hickory Hill)
 Smoaks Circuit – Jeffrey P. Cila (PL) (1/2) 2
 (Green Pond, Little Swamp, Trinity)
 Springtown – Norman Aaron Brown 10

ST. GEORGE:
 Grover Charge – Sidney Wells Mims (RL) (1/2) 3
 (Grover, Providence)
Indian Field – Michael Leonard Written (RL) 1
 New Grace – Constance Nelson McLeod 3
 Shady Grove – Leonard Huggins Jr. 6
 St. George – Kathy Priest Hudson 3
St. George Parish – Fred Moore (PL) (1/2) 1
 (St. Mark, Trinity)

WALTERBORO:
 Bethel – Scott Wachter 6
 Bethel-Red Bank Charge – Walter Harley (PL) (1/2) 2
 Colleton Circuit – Curtis J. Young (PL) (1/2) 19
 (Bethel, Heaven Gate, Trinity)

Hendersonville Charge – Gary Wade Finch (PL) (1/2) 3
 (Ebenezer, Ritter; Ebenezer, Yemassee; Salem)
 New Life – Angela Ford Nelson 3
Walterboro Charge – TBS
 (Mount Carmel, Peniel, Sandy Dam)
 Walterboro Parish – Destine M. Spells (SY) (1/2) 2
 (Cumberland, Isaiah)

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Within the Connection:
 McDonald, Joseph A. – District Superintendent,
 Walterboro District 4
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: None
Other Valid Ministries: None
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
 McNeal, Steven Moore – Pastor, Advent Ferry UMC,
 North Carolina Conference 3
STUDENT LOCAL PASTOR – None
LEAVE OF ABSENCE – None
FAMILY LEAVE – None
SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE – None

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
 Bell, Melvin (RL)
 Bowser Jr., William D.
 Brewer, Ronald L. (RL)
 Bridgers, Anne (RL)
 Cox, David W.
 Davis, Frederick R.
 Geddis Jr., Roosevelt Harrison
 Jerry Hoover, Robert E. (RL)
 Lybrand, Frank E.
 Maddox, Susan D.
 Marchant, James D. (RL)
 Mims III, Sidney W. (RL)
 Ross, James Albert (RL)
 Smith, Richard M.
 Smith, Theron Walker
 Thomas, J. Herbert
 Written, Michael Leonard (RL)
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESSES

Active: None
Retired: None

Early Response Team to hold three trainings this fall for disaster crews

South Carolina United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Early Response Team will hold three trainings this fall, which will cover both basic classes and renewals.

The trainings are scheduled for Sept. 9 at Faith United Methodist Church in Lexington; Sept. 30 at Cornerstone UMC in Rock Hill; and Oct. 21 at Edgefield UMC in Edgefield.

All ERT basic classes are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fees are \$40 per person, which includes a manual, shirt, cap and badge. Renewals are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and there is a \$20 fee per

person.

To register for a class, go to <https://www.umcsc.org/ertregistration/>. All registrants also must do a background check (which is free) through UMCOR at <https://app.verifiedvolunteers.com/en/Candidates/Account/Register>. If asked for a code, enter 9x2r4eh. You may or may not be asked for it.

For more information, email ERT Coordinator Billy Robinson at brpraisejesus@aol.com.

Reconciling Next Team at Washington Street honors Summers, Hancock for longtime work supporting LGBTQIA+ persons

COLUMBIA—The Reconciling Next Team at Washington Street United Methodist Church recently hosted a celebration of community and love.

Titled "Finding the Courage to Speak and Act: LGBTQIA+ Activists and Allies Journey in the UMC" was held May 24 to honor, thank and encourage allies. The event kicked off with a meal and was followed by awards presentations and two keynote speakers.

Dr. Nancy Malcom, a sociologist at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, and Dr. A.J. Ramirez, a sociologist at Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia spoke at the event. After the UMC General Conference, the pair started working together on research to answer the question: "Why do LGBTQIA+ and allies stay in the UMC?"

Malcom shared quotes and stories from some of the interviewees. One was an ally who said allies need to not only offer support but to speak up, especially when LGBTQIA+ persons can't be in the room. She also shared that by staying in the UMC, people can work within the church's structure to eliminate the restrictions on inclusion in all aspects of church life.

Ramirez shared her personal story of her wife and children finding an affirming church in South Georgia. Through the Reconciling Ministries Network, she was connected with a UMC minister who was serving in Macon and was a strong ally. She became a lay leader with Centenary UMC, and with support from Centenary, is building a community of disaffiliated Methodists and others seeking an affirming place to worship God in their hometown.

Following the presentations, two long-

time Columbia allies were honored for their continued support of the LBGTQIA+ community.

The Rev. Tom Summers presented the inaugural Harriet Hancock Award to Harriet Hancock for 40 years of work to assure justice for and rights of LGBTQIA+ persons and their families.

Hancock is known as "The Mother of Pride" in South Carolina. Her accomplishments include being the founder of the first PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) in Columbia (1980); co-founder of PALSS (Palmetto Life Support Services) in Columbia (1985), which provides support services to those with HIV/AIDS; and co-founder of the first Pride event and parade in 1990.

Next, Dr. Jim Lane presented the first Harriet Hancock Ally Award to Summers, who has worked with Hancock for years supporting the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons. Summers served as a hospital chaplain during the AIDS epidemic.

Recalling the many ways he showed Christlike compassion and love in his ministry, Lane shared that Summers conducted a funeral for a man who died of AIDS and whose family had abandoned him because he was gay. Summers said this "cruelty shocked and saddened him." After that, he was determined to be intentional about ministry to LGBTQIA+ persons, and families.

Evidence of his intentionality includes his efforts to form the ministerial group, SC Clergy and Friends. For years Summers, wearing his clerical collar, carried the banner for this group while they walked together in Columbia's annual Pride parade.

The Reconciling Next Ministry team

consists of members of WSUMC, Reformation Lutheran and St. Mark UMC.

Their mission is to inspire and engage our and community to challenge and transform unjust systems that discriminate against or lessen the opportunities of LGBTQIA+ persons.

The Rev. Tom Summers (left) received the first Harriet Hancock Ally Award for years supporting the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons. Harriet Hancock was honored with the inaugural Harriet Hancock Award.



Celebrate the Gift of Music and Song in your Church

Your church choir, church music director and praise bands do so much good in your church. Now, you have a chance to honor and thank them for sharing their talents with the Lord and your church family.

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Three sizes (all 5" wide):
 1" tall: \$38 • 2" tall: \$76 • 4" tall: \$152

Email text to atrussell@umcsc.org or send to 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

Deadline: Oct. 10, 2023

Churches will be billed for the ads unless otherwise noted



Conference Historical Society

by Dr. Roger M. Gramling

'Lest we forget!'

Remembering the Rev. Horace E. Gravely

At Latimer Memorial United Methodist Church in Belton, where I served as pastor from 1977 to 1982, there was a Sunday school class named the "Horace E. Gravely Class," so named for a former pastor of the church. His framed photograph hangs in the classroom.

Horace Edward Gravely was born Oct. 10, 1901, in Pickens County. He graduated from Wofford College in 1927 and that year married Katherine Carter of Lockhart. They would have three children: Horace Jr., John and Martha.

In November 1928, Gravely joined the Upper South Carolina Conference "on trial" and was appointed to Drayton-Beaumont in Spartanburg. Four more appointments followed during the years 1932 to 1940. He was ordained in 1932. In November 1940, he was assigned to Belton. He had been a member of the Officers' Reserve Corps and had served as a chaplain for the Civilian Conservation Corps during the years of the New Deal.

Two months after Pearl Harbor, he was ordered to report for active duty in the United States Army on March 7, 1942, and was assigned to duty at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was 40 years old. From Camp Robinson he wrote the following to the editor of the Southern Christian Advocate: "I especially like my personal contacts with the boys, many of them need a friend to whom they can talk freely. I am trying to be that kind of a friend. We hope the war will soon be over so that we can all get back to our homes, and help build a world in which war will not be possible."

In December 1942, 1st Lt. Horace E. Gravely was ordered to report to the Chaplains School at Harvard University where he received 240 hours of specialized instruction. From Harvard he was sent to Camp Myles Standish to prepare for deployment and from there to the port of embarkation from which he sailed for Europe at the end of January aboard the Henry R. Mallory. He joined six other chaplains on board the troop ship.

A week later, on Feb. 7, 1943, a German submarine torpedoed and sank the Henry R. Mallory. In its sinking, 272 men lost their lives, including five of the seven chaplains who were aboard. Among the five chaplains lost at sea was Chaplain 1st Lt. Horace Edward Gravely. It was the deadliest day in the history of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy Corps. Lt. Gravely was the first chaplain entering the service from either the South Carolina Conference (1785) or the Upper South Carolina Conference or any other denomination in South Carolina to lose his life in action during World War II.

The Rev. L. E. Wiggins wrote the words that follow in the Memoir for the Conference Journal: "He was successful in every pastorate he served, but his last at Belton was remarkably so. His name and influence will abide there for many years to come. When his country called for his service, laying aside his own personal desires, he responded, feeling that God could and would use him in the camp among the boys more effectively than in the pastorate. From his letters written to me while he was at Camp Robinson, and from the words of appreciation and praise expressed by his fellow chaplains, and the boys whom he served, he was not mistaken. As one of the soldiers expressed it, he fulfilled his ideal of what a chaplain should be more perfectly than any other of the chaplains he had met."

Lest we forget.

Gramling currently serves as secretary-treasurer of the Conference Historical Society and is president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society.

New Hope celebrates longtime pianist, choir director

The congregation of New Hope United Methodist Church, Jonesville, recently honored longtime pianist and music director Kay Yeary for 54 years of dedicated service.

As a teenager, Yeary answered the call to play the piano at New Hope church services and has continued for many years, providing beautiful and inspiring music. When the need for a choir director arose, Yeary again answered the call, providing direction and inspiration to the choir of equally dedicated members, while continuing to serve as pianist.

New Hope members said they are truly blessed to enjoy this talented musician and her dedicated choir who glorify God each Sunday with their music. All are invited to come enjoy the music of Yeary and the choir, along with an inspiring message from Pastor Lee Moseley.

The service begins at 9:50 a.m. at 154 New Hope Church Road, Jonesville.



New Hope celebrated Kay Yeary.

Photo courtesy of Prudi Youngblood



From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

Methodism in Anderson

The local churches of our conference each contribute to the history of Methodism in our state. Occasionally I like to look at the story of Methodism in a particular community, and usually I learn that Methodism was very much present at the earliest days of that town. That's certainly true of Anderson.

According to a 1940 *Advocate* article, Methodists were the first church of any type to organize in Anderson. In 1828, the first Methodist society was organized in what was then referred to as Anderson Court House Village. By 1830, they had built their first house of worship, the first in the village. At first, the church was part of the Keowee Circuit of the Augusta District. Later, it became part of the Pendleton Circuit of the Cokesbury District. The Pendleton Circuit became the Anderson Circuit just before the Civil War. The Anderson church moved to its current location in 1858, and in 1864 became a station appointment with 179 members (104 White and 75 Black). It was only in 1898 that the church chose the name St. John's.

Five times between 1872 and 1940 the church hosted Annual Conference. A new church building was dedicated in 1888, and then a fourth sanctuary was completed in 1912. That building is still in use, with education and activities buildings added later.

Many of St. John's African-American members likely moved their membership to a new Methodist Episcopal congregation after emancipation. Thompson Centennial, founded in 1867, formed in the home of the Rev. Henry Mikell. The first minister after their building was constructed was the Rev.

James Rosemond, who is known for founding numerous congregations in the upstate during Reconstruction.

Growth in Anderson as it became a textile center saw the need for more churches in the city. In the 1890s, the West End Methodist Church formed and was placed on a charge with several other rural Anderson congregations. It operated for a time in a building constructed by one of the mills, but by 1897, had built its own building on Bleckley Street. In 1911, the church got the name "Bethel."

Another of the older churches close to Anderson is Orrville, which was organized on South Main Street in 1900. In 1940, the church had 265 members.

Numerous congregations in Anderson County are also quite old. Asbury on the Toxaway Charge was organized around 1835. Toxaway was organized in 1909. Sandy Springs dates to the early 19th century, for an article in 1940 says it's 135-140 years old. Bethel in Iva was organized in 1886 with some 50 members.

Methodism has been present throughout the Anderson community for more than 200 years, and that tradition continues today with old and new congregations.

If you are interested in learning more about the work of the conference's Commission on Archives and History, please reach out to me. The commission will have several vacancies next year, and we would be happy to talk with anyone with an interest.

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

Leave A Legacy To Change Lives

The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation
 P. O. Box 5087, Columbia, SC 29250-5087
scumf@bellsouth.net



Resource Center

by Betty Stalnaker

New Christmas music available

Church musicians, it's time to plan your Christmas music. Listed below are new titles available for adults in the Conference Resource Center. Check our website for many other titles for children, youth and adults.

Christmas Presence

(SBK484=) *Composer/Arranger: Parks, Marty.*

Christmas has become synonymous with gifts. It might even be something you look forward to as the Christmas season approaches. But the greatest gift that could ever be given happened on that first Christmas night inside a lowly stable. An ode to that first Christmas day, when God's greatest gift came to earth, is this brand-new musical titled "Christmas Presence: Unwrapping God's Perfect Gift." This 14-song musical gives a glimpse into what it was like that first Christmas night: angels singing in a magnificent chorus, everyone gathered around to see this new miracle and a look into what the three kings must have felt. Veteran arranger Marty Parks expertly constructs multistyle songs to showcase the awe and wonder of the miraculous gift of baby Jesus given to us. "Christmas Presence" is the latest installment in the Excel Plus Series, the bestselling series designed to provide accessible arrangements while maintaining high-quality four-part harmonies. Adult/33 min./Easy/SATB. (Lillenas) Listening CD available.

Christmas The Story Of His Love

(SBK488=) *Composer/Arranger: Daniels, William/Mathews, Dale.*

In the Simple Series style, you'll discover the perfect mix of songs for your Christmas presentation, including favorite carols, a Gaither Christmas classic and songs of worship and praise. These unison/two-part arrangements, adapted by Michael Frazier from the original, will have your choir sounding better than ever. Adult/27 min./Easy/Unison/2-part. (Brentwood-Benson) Listening CD available.

Come Worship the King!

(SBK483=) *Composer/Arranger: Mauldin, Russell.*

The Worship Ready series delivers another outstanding Christmas musical with world-renowned arranger Russell Mauldin. This ready-to-learn and easy-to-sing 35-minute Christmas musical is perfect for the small- to medium-sized church or community choir. Adult/35 min./Easy/SATB. (Daywind) Listening CD available.

The Living Gift

(SBK482=) *Composer/Arranger: Frazier, Michael/Crumpton, Johnathan.*

This easy-to-sing and easy-to-learn 25-minute Christmas celebration, from the Go Sing series, has been created especially for the two- to three-part choir by veteran arrangers Michael Frazier, Phil Nitz, Russell Mauldin, Phillip Keeveran and Lee Black. What a celebration awaits us each year during this season as we sing carols of hope and love and peace. It's time to rejoice again as we remember the most amazing gift that has ever been given: the gift of God's son, Jesus. Adult/25 min./Easy/2-3 parts. (Daywind) Listening CD available.

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 <https://www.umcsc.org/resourcecenter>.

Leesville UMC holds Youth Sunday 2023

The second annual Leesville United Methodist Church "Youth Sunday" service was held Sunday, July 30, with 136 in attendance, and what a Sunday it was.

The theme this year was "Stand Up, Even If You Stand Out" from Romans 12:2.

The youth had the opportunity to sign up for the areas in which they wished to serve. Many were involved behind the scenes in this service from communications with the marquee and the bulletin to technology and sound with livestream and PowerPoint. There are many aspects of service in a worship, such as greeters, acolyte, ushers, children's moments, Scripture and prayer. They stepped up to serve.

It's been a little while since Coach Garrett Jones was a member of the youth at LUMC, and he brought a message on "Choices and Love." He talked about the why, the how, and the what of our choices.



Photo courtesy of Wendy Zwart

Leesville youth stepped up to serve for Youth Sunday.

But, he said, when we partner with God in making wise choices, we say "no" to conforming to the world and are transformed by God's great love for us.

Wesley awards two Hope for the Future Memorial Scholarships in memory of Mrs. Ella Belle Watson

LADSON—Wesley United Methodist Church, with the support of Pastor Curnell Graham in partnership with the Watson Family, awarded two \$500 scholarships on Sunday, July 23, honoring the legacy of the late Mrs. Ella Belle Watson.

Watson had her own quiet way of reaching out to individuals who needed help.

She always had valuable, encouraging advice for young people to continue to get an education and to always trust in the

Lord. Watson's great passion to instill learning and prepare young people for the future was with love and devotion as she taught children in Dorchester School District II, Wesley UMC Sunday school and throughout the community.

This year's scholarship went to students in Dorchester County District II, where Mrs. Watson retired.

Recipient Armani Canty is the daughter of Acicy and Segina Canty. Armani

will attend the Honors College of Lander University.

She will major in English with a concentration in creative writing.

Recipient Jalil Kareem Harris is the son of Reico and Rabiah Harris. Jalil will attend the Honors College of Clemson University.

He is committed to majoring in computer science and using his knowledge of computers to advance research in how genes mutate in cancer.



Armani Canty



Jalil Kareem Harris

Global Briefs

Hospitality tips for the 21st century

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Many church members sit in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings with an eye turned toward the door, hoping that new visitors will enter. This might not happen as frequently as churches would like. The Rev. Michael Beck, director of Fresh Expressions at Discipleship Ministries, shares time-tested tips that United Methodists should consider when learning how to be more welcoming.

Church WhatsApp group fosters collaboration

HARARE, Zimbabwe—The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has created a dedicated WhatsApp business platform to promote collaboration among church members. The group serves as a virtual meeting space where United Methodists can connect, explore business opportunities, promote each other's companies and services and offer other support.

Anti-racism challenge begins Sept. 1

WASHINGTON—The United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race is holding a "30 Days of Anti-racism" challenge for the month of September. Each day, participants are encouraged to engage in an activity that helps them to become more anti-racist in the ways they think and act. The agency has created a free, downloadable calendar with suggested anti-racism activities for each day of the challenge.

Ecumenical group responds to Maui fires

GENEVA—As the death toll continues to rise in the wake of wildfires in Maui, Hawaii, the World Council of Churches expresses grief and solidarity with the island's churches and communities. The group's pastoral letter also offers assurances "that the God of Life is ever present and grieves with us."

Zimbabweans help neighbors after cyclone

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Still reeling from the impact of Cyclone Freddy earlier this year, survivors in Malawi received \$35,000 in cash and supplies from United Methodists in Zimbabwe. Stanley Dawa, Board of Church and Society chairperson, said church members felt called to act after the disaster. "The support was overwhelming," he said.

Jan Love to step down as Candler dean in 2024

ATLANTA—Jan Love, the Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean of Emory University's Candler School of Theology, will step down as dean in summer 2024, when her current term ends. She will remain on the Emory faculty as a professor of Christianity and world politics and plans to take a sabbatical during the 2024-2025 academic year before retiring in summer 2025. Candler is one of 13 United Methodist seminaries in the U.S.

Praying, assessing damage amid Hawaii fires

LAHAINA, Hawaii—California-Pacific Conference Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank is calling for prayer as United Methodists continue to assess the damage caused by wildfires on Maui whipped up by Hurricane Dora's winds. The fires have killed at least 36 people. The bishop said Lahaina United Methodist Church's pastor and his family safely evacuated to a shelter and are checking in on church members, but the church building itself is destroyed.

Rethinking mission work

ATLANTA—The second of three gatherings to reconsider how The United Methodist Church conducts missionary work was Aug. 1-3 at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. Panels and small groups conversed on topics such as the historical and contemporary role of mission-sending agencies and the intercultural and incarnational nature of missionary work.

—Courtesy of the United Methodist News Service



Saluting accomplishments at Sandy Grove

On Sunday, July 23, Sandy Grove UMC, Lamar, celebrated 19 youth from the church for their accomplishments in education. These students from kindergarten through college received awards, scholarships and more. The purpose was to salute their accomplishments, thereby giving them courage to speak their minds and act with confidence. "Our hope is to give them confidence to challenge unemployment," said the Rev. J. Elbert Williams, pastor, "and to challenge drug abuse and poverty, which are part of our everyday lives. The hope of the church is to inspire our students to take control of their lives, that they may live with pride, purpose and self-determination.

Jane Winfield Boyce Carroll

LANCASTER—Jane Winfield Boyce Carroll, former wife of the late Rev. G. Bryan Carroll, died Nov. 5, 2022.

A private burial service was held Nov. 7. A memorial service was held Nov. 19 at First United Methodist Church.

Memorials may be made to the Jane Boyce Carroll Nursing Scholarship, Educational Foundation, USC Lancaster, P.O. Box 889, Lancaster, SC 29721; or to First UMC Music Ministry, P.O. Box 608, Lancaster, SC 29721.

Mrs. Carroll is survived by her daughter.

Linda Louise Garrison Fulmer

BLYTHEWOOD—Linda Louise Garrison Fulmer, mother of Eddie Fulmer, died Aug. 6, 2023. Mr. Fulmer is the husband of Tammy Fulmer, assistant to the director of Connectional Ministries.

Funeral services were held Aug. 9 at Fair Lawn United Methodist Church with burial in the church cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Special Olympics of South Carolina, 109 Oak Park Drive, Irmo, SC 29063; or to Fair Lawn UMC, 9203 Wilson Blvd., Columbia, SC 29203.

Mrs. Fulmer is survived by her two sons.

Rev. Donald Eldree Love

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—The Rev. Donald Eldree Love, a local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and brother of the Rev. Stephen Love, died July 26, 2023. Rev. Stephen



Love

Love is the superintendent of the Greenwood District.

Prior to his death, Rev. Love served Western York Charge, York.

Funeral services were held Aug. 1 at Liberty Church, York.

Memorials may be made to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, <https://www.pcf.org/donate>; or to Zero Prostate Cancer, <https://www.zerocancer.org/donate>.

Rev. Love is survived by his wife, Toni Lowry Love, and two children.

Sarah Grace Beckwith McDonald

CAYCE—Sarah Grace Beckwith “Becky” McDonald, mother of the Rev. Lex McDonald, died July 28, 2023. Rev. McDonald is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

A memorial service was held Aug. 12 at Cayce UMC.

Memorials may be made to Cayce UMC, 1600 12th St., Cayce, SC 29033-3104; or to Epworth Children’s Home, P.O. Box 50466, Columbia, SC 29250-0466.

Mrs. McDonald is survived by her two sons and two daughters.

Rev. Robert Clyde Monson

SPARTANBURG—The Rev. Robert Clyde Monson, a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died July 22, 2023.

Prior to his retirement in 2003, Rev. Monson served the Campobello, Fairmont, Spartanburg-Central Associate, Limestone Street, Mill



Monson

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.

Sardis UMC, Blacksburg, with burial in the church cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Sardis Methodist Cemetery Fund, c/o Butch Kimbrell, 334 Deepwater Road, Union, SC 29379.

Mrs. Moss is survived by her daughter and two sons.

Dennis Peterson

DARLINGTON—Dennis “Clyde” Peterson, brother of the Rev. Patricia P. Bowman, died Aug. 12, 2023. Rev. Bowman is the pastor of Pageland United Methodist Church, Pageland.

Funeral services were held Aug. 19 at Faith Memorial Gardens.

Rebecca Lynn Bayne Smith

WARE SHOALS—Rebecca “Becky” Lynn Bayne Smith, mother of the Rev. J. Michael Smith, died Aug. 10, 2023. Rev. Smith is the pastor of Simpsonville United Methodist Church, Simpsonville.

A memorial service was held Aug. 12 at Calvary Baptist Church.

Memorials may be made to Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 420, Ware Shoals, SC 29692; or to Redeemers of Faith, 443 Elledge Road, Ware Shoals, SC 29692.

Mrs. Smith is survived by her husband, Bill, two sons and daughter.

Creek, Wesley Foundation Associate Director, Wesley Memorial-Psych Institute, Division of Chaplains, Wesley Memorial-Bethlehem, West Columbia-Trinity, Old Bethel, Kingstree, Church of the Covenant and St. John’s Fort Mill charges.

Funeral services were held Aug. 5 at Central UMC with inurnment in the church columbarium.

Memorials may be made to Spartanburg Regional Hospice, P.O. Box 2624, Spartanburg, SC 29304; or to Alzheimer’s Association, 901 S. Pine St., Spartanburg, SC 29302.

Rev. Monson is survived by his wife, Nancy Lunsford Monson, and son.

Mary Jeanette Ivey Moss

UNION—Mary Jeanette Ivey Moss, sister of the Rev. James W. Ivey, died July 24, 2023.

Rev. Ivey is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held July 26 at

Interstate Transportation Equipment, Inc.

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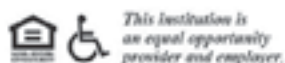
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August

Aug. 30—"Preparing for Charge Conference" class offered by Basic Church Administration, Zoom, 7:30 p.m. Free, but registration required: <https://www.church-admin.org/registrator/>.

September

*September 15-October 15:
Hispanic Heritage Month
UWF Special Emphasis Month:
Killingworth*

Sept. 4—Labor Day; United Methodist Center closed.

Sept. 5—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 6—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Overview, led by John Simmons. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 9—Connectional Ministries meeting

Sept. 9—ERT Training, Faith UMC, Lexington, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Register: <https://www.umcsc.org/ertregistration/>.

Sept. 10—LSM School (Spartanburg District) I, Beaumont UMC, Spartanburg, 2 p.m.-5:30 p.m. \$40. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/SPARTANBURG-DISTRICT-LAY-SERVANT-SCHOOL-REGISTRATION-FORM-Fall-2023-Final.pdf>

Sept. 11-13—Rural Clergy Renewal Retreat, Hinton Rural Life Center, Hayesville, N.C. <https://www.hintoncenter.org/retreat>.

Sept. 13—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Stage One: Simplicity, led by Paige Wolfe. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 16—David LaMotte Concert, New Beginnings UMC, Boiling Springs, 7 p.m. \$30. For more information, 864-559-1303.

Sept. 17—LSM School (Spartanburg Dis-



Photo courtesy of Rev. Don Brown

Help for foster families

Hopewell UMC, Simpsonville, is beginning a new ministry to reach out to foster families in its community. As part of this new ministry, they are purchasing a new outbuilding to house their foster closet to help foster parents with the needs they may have, especially when receiving new placements. Pictured, Troy Blalock (left), of Mount Hebron UMC, West Columbia, delivers a donation of \$2,000 from their United Methodist Men to help purchase the building. Standing with Blalock are Stacy Black, representing Hopewell's Foster Care Committee, and the Rev. Don Brown, Hopewell pastor.

trict) II, Beaumont UMC, Spartanburg, 2 p.m.-5:30 p.m. \$40. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/SPARTANBURG-DISTRICT-LAY-SERVANT-SCHOOL-REGISTRATION-FORM-Fall-2023-Final.pdf>

Sept. 17—LSM School (Greenwood District) I, Main Street UMC, Greenwood, 2 p.m.-7:30 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenwood-District-Registration-Form-for-Fall-2023-classes.pdf>

Sept. 20—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Stage Two: Complexity, led by Cam Treece. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 24—LSM School (Spartanburg District) III, Beaumont UMC, Spartanburg, 2 p.m.-5:30 p.m. \$40. [\[TION-FORM-Fall-2023-Final.pdf\]\(https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/TION-FORM-Fall-2023-Final.pdf\)](https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/SPARTANBURG-DISTRICT-LAY-SERVANT-SCHOOL-REGISTRA-</p>
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Sept. 24—LSM School (Greenwood District) II, Main Street UMC, Greenwood, 2 p.m.-7:30 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenwood-District-Registration-Form-for-Fall-2023-classes.pdf>

Sept. 25—AU Golf Tournament, Orangeburg. <https://tinyurl.com/2krt76hj>

Sept. 25-Oct. 31—Pumpkin Patch, Carteret Street UMC, Beaufort, 12-6 p.m. M-F; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday; 12-6 p.m. Sunday.

Sept. 27—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Stage Three: Perplexity, led by Arthur Holt. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 30—"A Day of Growing in the Spirit," Marion District Men N Ministry Event, Surfside UMC, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Register:

843-246-8398.

Sept. 30—ERT Training, Cornerstone UMC, Rock Hill, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Register: <https://www.umcsc.org/ertregistration/>

Sept. 30—LSM School (Charleston District), Eccles UMC, Huger, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Charleston-District-One-Day-Lay-Servant-School-September.pdf>

Sept. 30-Oct. 1—LSM School (Orangeburg District), New Covenant UMC, Bowman, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; 3-7 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/ordistlsmregistration/>

October

*September 15-October 15:
Hispanic Heritage Month
UWF Special Emphasis Month:
Bethlehem Center, Spartanburg*

Oct. 4—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Stage Four: Harmony, led by Joan McPherson. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 7—Indoor Yard Sale, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Oct. 9—Indigenous Peoples' Day

Oct. 11—Brian McLaren's Four Stages of Faith: Conclusion: So What?, led by Andy Crosland. Central UMC, Spartanburg, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 12-14—SEJ Black Methodists for Church Renewal Annual Meeting, Charlotte. The Rev. Amiri Hooker, convener. For information: westrawther@umcsc.org or abhooker@umcsc.org

Oct. 14—Asbury Hills Fall Festival, Asbury Hills, Cleveland, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. <https://asburyhills.org/fall-festival/>

Oct. 20-21—SCCUWF 51st Annual Meeting, St. John's UMC, Aiken. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/June-2023-Mission-Echo.pdf>



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Presence and provision in the wilderness

by the Rev. Genova McFadden

Sept. 3

Enough!

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 16:2-19, 31-32

Background Scripture: Exodus 16

Key Verse: Exodus 16:18, “But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.”

Enough. Hungry and weary from their desert travel the “whole congregation” of the Israelites had had enough of this wilderness journey. They even waxed nostalgic for their time in bondage (v. 3). They complained against Moses and Aaron, and even against Yahweh, losing sight of the fact that it was the Lord who brought them out of the land of their captivity (v. 6).

The description of the travelers as “the whole congregation” identifies them as a cohesive group, but Fretheim (Interpretation, p.181) states “Stress is laid upon the people as the ‘congregation’ of Israel. ... But their perceptions do not correspond to this new reality: they have not yet become who they are.” They will learn that the Lord hears and can countenance their complaining, and lovingly provides sustenance for them on their wilderness journey (v. 18). Have there been times when you have questioned “Is God with me or not?” Did this challenge or strengthen your faith?

Enough. The whole congregation had enough to eat—everyday. The Lord provided.

Until the recent worldwide pandemic, many people never had to face not having enough. A scarcity of options. Fear and uncertainty. Yet, gradually, churches and people of faith and “God will” came forth with food “giveaways,” providing clothing, school and health supplies; making space for offering vaccinations; and doing many other tangible acts of faith and service. All through the Lord’s presence and provision.

The Lord is ever present and always provides just what we need. The Rev. Paul Jones expresses this in the gospel song, “I Won’t Complain”: “But when I look around and I think things over, all of my good days outweigh my bad days—I won’t complain.”

The Lord provides, and that is enough.

Reflect: Can “enough” as provided by the Lord equate to a multitude of blessings?

Sept. 10

Elijah’s Message for Those Who Would Lead

Lesson Scripture: 1 Kings 19:1-12

Background Scripture: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Key Verses: 1 Kings 17:6; 19:8, “The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi ... “Elijah got up, ate and drank, and went refreshed by that food for forty days and nights until he arrived at Horeb, the mountain of God.”

In these passages of Scripture, we are

introduced to Elijah. Elijah’s name means “Yahweh is my God.” The study materials tells us “Elijah’s mission was to call the people of Israel back to the Lord and away from the worship of foreign, powerless gods” (Teacher’s Guide, p. 22).

Again we find the motif of presence and provision in the wilderness. Sent on a mission by Yahweh (17:3-5), obedient Elijah receives provision of food from the ravens as promised by the Lord. The situation is a bit different from 19:4ff when Elijah found himself spent after his flight to the wilderness. This time, he ran in terror from Jezebel’s threats on his life, seemingly abandoning his mission and ministry. Again we encounter someone who’s had enough (19:4). Yet, the Lord was present with Elijah and the Lord provided for him. Refreshed in body and spirit, Elijah was able to carry on for 40 days and 40 nights (signifying a long time) to arrive at the mountain of God.

What is a lesson for those who would lead? For those who accept a ministry and mission from God?

Church leaders and those in ministry with God’s people are often the worst at self care, “wearing themselves to a frazzle” in (the often) misguided notion of what ministry and service means. Rather than running until they are weary and worn out, those whose would lead might learn from Elijah, and trust in the Lord’s presence and provision during their own wilderness journey.

Yahweh not only provides nourishment for the body, Yahweh also provides nourishment for the spirit in the sabbath rest. How do you make space in your life and ministry for a time of sabbath rest?

Sept. 17

They Came for More Than Food

Lesson Scripture: Mark 6:30-44

Background Scripture: Mark 2:1-28; 8:1-10

Key Verse: Mark 6:42, “And all ate and were filled.”

The people were hungry in that moment. Not for food—they were hungry for the life-giving word of Jesus. After all, they pursued Jesus and the disciples to that quiet place just to partake of his teachings, his presence (6:33). Even though their hunger for Jesus’ teachings was greater even than their hunger for food, Jesus recognized their need for a meal.

This passage of Scripture is a miracle story. It is also reminiscent of the miraculous feeding of the whole congregation of the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). Again, then, there is presence and provision in the wilderness. Divine presence in the person of Jesus, and provision for food. Both occasions are presented as miraculous occurrences—how can so little feed so many?

I met “Rodney” when I was campus minister at the Wesley Foundation. Rodney was a student who came to a “fun and fellowship” activity. Fun and fellowship activities appeals to students who tire of campus meals and

junk food snacks. Campus ministries are often intentional in offering these activities as a way of engaging students; some students are longing for more than just “pizza and soda.”

Rodney grew up in an urban area, in less than affluent circumstances. Despite this, a way was made for him to go to college—being the first in his family to achieve this milestone. Still, Rodney had difficulty fitting in, and he bore the weight of struggling to find his way. By God’s grace and provision, Rodney found food and fellowship at the Wesley Foundation. I was grateful to meet Rodney where he was, being present and engaged in ministry with him as he grew into the student and the young man God intended.

Sometimes people may come for physical food when in fact they are searching for spiritual nourishment. How can we respond?

Sept. 24

At the Table Together

Lesson Scripture: Luke 14:7-15

Background Scripture: Luke 14:1-34

Key Verse: Luke 14:13, “Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, lame and blind.”

What if you plan a feast for your family, friends and people in the community of the high status, and no one comes? In this parable, Jesus poses an answer: Invite those who have nothing and can never repay you!

In truth, we tend to hold “feasts” for those in our sphere of influence, rarely inviting those of “lesser” status. In the church, we come closest to an open invitation at anniversaries, family day, homecoming, and other such offerings. Mostly often annually.

When we invite “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40) to the table it puts us face to face

with those we seek to serve; it allows us each to share bread and love and peace. At the table together, we share in the holy presence and provision and incomprehensible love of God.

One of the greatest examples of such a ministry was the “Midday Manna” meal once offered by St. Paul UMC in Orangeburg. The congregation met people in the community at the level of their need. Being a downtown church, set in the middle of local governmental offices, and with a growing population of persons on the street, the congregation set aside the lunch hour to offer a brief service and a meal within one hour. The workers and those on the street had an unhurried and nourishing lunch. It was a moving sight to see office workers, poor and unsheltered people and church members all sitting down at the table together. Genuine authentic sharing happened there. A true glimpse of the coming reign of God in our midst!

What if you change the guest list for your next feast? What would happen if at more feeding programs the hosts sat down with the guests to share in the meal?

Sources: Fretheim, Terence E., Exodus Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching- Exodus. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991.

Nolland, John. Luke 9:21-18:34: Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas Texas: word Books Publishers, 1993.

McFadden is a retired elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. She celebrates being a part of God’s creation, and continues serving God’s people wherever they are, striving to be a voice for those at the margins; the outcasts; the least of these.



A good mother

On Mother’s Day at Wesley United Methodist Church, Aiken, lay servant Mamie Thomas delivered a powerful message. The title was “The Characteristics of a Good Mother.” While Mother’s Day is not a church holiday it is the most celebrated holiday in popular culture. The congregation thanks all the mothers who came to worship, noting all had a dynamic time in the Lord. All mothers received a special gift. “As we celebrate the mothers at Wesley and around the world, we would like to say thank you for your love, wisdom and dedication,” church representatives said. “Happy Mother’s Day.”

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FREEDOM SCHOOL: 10 year party draws packed church

From Page 1

Fostering a desire to read

Freedom School was held for six weeks every weekday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., throughout June and July. Most of the day was spent reading and discussing books and their themes in-depth. The books they read are designed to provoke deep thought about relevant social issues, such as "Bessie the Motorcycle Queen" by Charles R. Smith Jr., about trailblazer Bessie Stringfield. In 1929, 18-year-old Bessie, a Black woman, hopped on her motorcycle and headed out on an adventure, crisscrossing the country through small towns, big cities and open spaces.

In addition, Freedom School brings in guest speakers, who read texts aloud during the morning Harambee gathering.

Freedom School was started by the Children's Defense Fund in 1995. It is based on Mississippi Freedom Summer, which itself grew out of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom



Photos by Jessica Brodie

Level 2 scholars perform an African drumming presentation led by Michael Cantey (not pictured). For more photos from the celebration, visit <https://tinyurl.com/mry8cz92>

Movement, which encouraged Black voter registration. The primary goal is to help scholars acquire a desire to read, which ulti-

mately reduces the achievement gap during the summer.

Freedom School is conducted by servant leader interns, or SLIs, who are students aged 19 or older who have completed their first year in college and have a 3.0 GPA and a voter registration card. Parents are also required to participate through volunteering and a weekly meeting. The school operates through grants and contributions from church members.

High-energy celebration

The high-energy 10th anniversary celebration kicked off with "Ella's Song," sung by the 2023 scholars, and then an enthusiastic welcome from Carmen White, this year's site coordinator. White started at Freedom School, then became a junior SLI and an SLI before becoming site leader. She is also an

Ella Baker trainer and serves as an extension of the national CDF Freedom Schools staff.

Next came inspirational quotes and a prayer from Laresha McDaniel, project director, followed by presentations from each of the classes. Mr. Khalil's class did a rap inspired by "Bessie the Motorcycle Queen," Ms. Isis's class did a skit about the book "Stacey's Extraordinary Words" and Mr. Myles' class produced a video about "The Anxiety Toolkit for Teens."

McDaniel recognized those students aging out of the program by entering the ninth grade. White shared about the National Day of Social Action, which had a gun violence focus. Next, Michael Cantey led Level 2 scholars in an African drumming demonstration. Then Singletary recognized three people who helped the school tremendously: Dr. Ernest Etheredge, Rebecca Eleazar and Dr. John Dixon.

"If we ever needed a God, we need him now. If we ever needed Freedom School, we need it now," Dixon said, underscoring the importance of Freedom School in the world today.

Freedom School's advisory board presented Singletary with a surprise gift as a way to thank her for her excellent leadership over the past decade.

"We thank you, we love you and we appreciate you," said Rachel Bourke as they made the presentation.

To learn more about Freedom School and the Children's Defense Fund, visit www.childrensdefense.org/programs-campaigns/freedom-schools/.

For more on Freedom School at Francis Burns, email info@francisburns.org.



Freedom School scholars perform a high-energy chant-song during the celebration.

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