

## **SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – DECEMBER 4 EDITION**

### **Conference's Spanish Walk to Emmaus retreat celebrates 10 years, impacts lives in South Georgia and beyond**

**By Kara Witherow, *Editor***

South Georgia's La Caminata a Emaús – the Walk to Emmaus – recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Spanish spiritual retreat.

What began as a project of the Conference's Hispanic Ministries' office a decade ago has grown and developed into a model that others attend and emulate, said Rev. Daniel Medina, Associate Director of Connectional Ministries for Hispanic Ministries and pastor of Nueva Vida UMC in Macon and Warner Robins First UMC.

In the past 10 years, South Georgia's Spanish Walk to Emmaus has hosted 550 pilgrims from not just South Georgia, but North Carolina, Tennessee, New Jersey, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, and Uruguay. This year, a delegation of pastors and their spouses from the Dominican Republic Methodist Church came to experience the 72-hour retreat.

They came to be renewed and encouraged in their faith and also to learn more about The United Methodist Church's doctrine and structure, which they hope to adopt, said Rev. David Diaz, Emmaus Walk spiritual director and associate pastor of Cordele First United Methodist Church.

The eight church leaders came to South Georgia at Rev. Diaz's invitation and as guests of Connectional Ministries, Hispanic Ministries, and Cordele First UMC.

“Connectional and Hispanic Ministries were excited to host the pastors and laity from the Dominican Republic as they participated in the Spanish Walk to Emmaus,” said Dr. Nita Crump, director of Connectional Ministries. “The Spanish Walk has been an integral part of the Walk to Emmaus movement in South Georgia for 10 years. Those from the Dominican Republic went home with plans to send additional people next year and then start a Walk to Emmaus on the island. This is an exciting way our Conference is ‘Alive Together in the World’ as we offer our Hispanic brothers and sisters, in South Georgia and in other countries, a way to grow in discipleship. I give thanks for Rev. Daniel Medina and Rev. David Diaz who worked to make this possible.”

The Walk to Emmaus retreats are important to the Hispanic community because they help foster spiritual growth and encourage laity in their spiritual development, retreat leaders say.

“They have been very important – crucial, even – in the development of our Hispanic ministries in South Georgia,” Rev. Medina said. “They are where our lay people are inspired and trained on issues very basic to our Wesleyan doctrine.”

Held at Camp Dooley near Vienna, the retreats immerse pilgrims – those who attend the retreat – in a time of prayer, teaching, fellowship, and worship. This year, 28 men attended the men's retreat, held Sept. 27 through Sept. 30. One week later, 42 women attended the Women's Walk.

Based on Luke 24:13-34 which tells of Jesus' post-resurrection walk to Emmaus alongside two grieving disciples who aren't able to recognize him until they shared a meal, the retreats are designed to help attendees recognize and experience God more fully.

"The main idea of the Emmaus Walk is to let them know that we are not alone, that Jesus has always been with us and will always continue to be with us," Rev. Medina said. "After our encounter with Him we can go back to our Jerusalem, our places, to be witnesses and to spread hope and love and share the good news."

All South Georgia Hispanic pastors are involved in this annual retreat, Rev. Medina said, and many lay members serve during the weekend, too. Haroldo Poroj-Vicente, lay leader of El Faro Hispanic Ministry in Albany, served as lay leader of the most recent Emmaus Walk.

The weekends are powerful, and being involved with them has been a blessing, Vicente said.

"Seeing people serve God who don't know me and sometimes don't know each other who are serving with all their hearts encourages me to continue serving God."

Vicente, who was himself a pilgrim about seven years ago, said that the Emmaus Walks are important to the Hispanic community because many experiences pilgrims have during the Walks only occur during that weekend.

"I think it's very powerful for us and I thank everyone who has helped us put this on," he said. "It's been a blessing for us to have them and it's very important that we continue them."

In South Georgia, in the Dominican Republic, and beyond, the Conference's Spanish Walk to Emmaus retreats are impactful and important.

"I have seen it impact the Hispanic community greatly because people get inspired," Rev. Medina said. "They are ready to serve. I think that's the result of those 72 hours. They are inspired and motivated to serve their local church."

### **The Walk to Emmaus Movement**

The Upper Room, part of United Methodist Discipleship Ministries, began the three-day ecumenical spiritual-renewal retreats in 1978. The self-supporting ministry grew out of the Catholic Cursillo movement, and took the name Walk to Emmaus in 1981. The goal of Walk to Emmaus is to equip church members for Christian action. Following the three-day experience, participants are joined in small groups to support each other in their ongoing walk with Christ. The movement also includes the [Chrysalis](#) program for youth, the [Face to Face](#) program for adults 60 and older, and the [Journey to the Table](#) program for adults 18 to 35. [Learn more](#)

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### **MATT HEARN: Living Proof of Faith**

Reprinted with permission from [Pooler Magazine](#)

Story by Kelly Harley

## **Photos by Stephanie Gibson at SweetArt Photography**

What if you were told you had two or three years to live? Would you be scared, angry or would you be at peace? At 45 years old, Gateway Church senior pastor, Matt Hearn, knows what it feels like to hear those words. This summer he learned that he has a 10 percent chance of surviving the next two to three years. If you have the pleasure of meeting him personally, you'll immediately notice that Matt, despite his fate, is at peace. He is a motivator, an inspiration and living proof that faith can carry you as far as you will allow it.

### **Something Wasn't Right**

Matt, who has always had good health, started suffering painful migraines in July and knew something wasn't right. At first, doctors thought he had shingles and after additional testing, they discovered a 15-pound tumor in his abdomen. Within a week of doctors finding it, Matt was sent to Piedmont Atlanta Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, to have it removed. It was a dangerous surgery that doctors in Savannah did not wish to perform.

What was first thought to be kidney cancer, turned out to be something much more serious. Matt was diagnosed with spindle cell sarcoma. With more than 50 types of sarcoma, Matt's type is called synovial, a soft-tissue sarcoma. As one of the rarest forms, only one in three million people are diagnosed with it. No oncologist in Savannah has ever seen it and Matt was referred to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, to see Dr. Steven Attia, the leading authority on sarcomas. "You hear about people dealing with cancer, but when it's you, it just feels so unreal," says Matt. "I thought, 'How can this be happening to me?' I wept, grieved for myself and then I prayed. I asked God to help me understand what He was doing and what this means for me."

### **A Faithful Foundation**

As a pastor, Matt understands what it means to have faith. In 2006, with the help of a devoted staff and remarkable volunteers, he started Gateway. It was a humble beginning for the church and Matt poured all he could into building it up. Services began at the West Chatham YMCA and when attendance outgrew that space, services were moved to Godley Station School. In October 2017, Gateway's new building opened with enough space to seat 650 people in one service. In large part, it was Matt's faith that served as an inspiration for the tremendous growth the church has witnessed. It is also his relatable stories and his funny (serious when he needs to be) personality that draws an engaged crowd.

Coming back to faith, it's what Matt is relying on during his time of sickness. If he says it once, he says it 50 times, faith will get him through. Others recognize his tremendous trust in God, too. "People are encouraged by his faith," says Sam Martin, executive pastor, Gateway Church. "We see he is going through this really hard time, but his faith hasn't changed. His consistency has a big impact on those around him and serves as a powerful example for others going through their own battles."

It's easy to expect people with cancer to feel like it's the worst possible thing to happen to them, and undoubtedly it is for so many; however, Matt looks at his diagnosis from a different

perspective. “People say that I’m going through the worst time of my life, but I’m not,” says Matt. He then jokes and says that was middle school. “Don’t get me wrong, this is really hard, but it’s actually the best time of my life. To see so many people supporting me and saying things to me that they may only say at my funeral and being closer to my friends and family makes this really a blessing.”

The support from Matt’s friends and family and the church has truly been remarkable. In late August, the church set up a GoFundMe page to help Matt with the financial burden of treatment and travel. The goal was to raise \$8,000. By October, the donations topped more than \$17,800. “I’m truly humbled. When it comes to faith, how can I day after day, month after month, receive so many good things from God and abandon my faith when something bad comes,” asks Matt. “God has never been so near me. In this season, I sense his presence and I’ve seen him working. God is near the broken-hearted.”

Matt says years of practicing faith has prepared him for this moment. He offers advice for others who may be fighting a battle. “Whatever mountain you may be facing, it’s hard to have faith if you didn’t have it when you come up to the mountain. When the wind is at your back and everything is going good you really need to build up your faith that way your heart is prepared,” says Matt. He also recommends borrowing the faith of others when yours isn’t strong enough. “Surround yourself with people who believe and know that God hasn’t forgotten about you.”

### **Time Not Wasted**

Aside from a strong faith, Matt says God has blessed him with time. When you know when your life may end, Matt says you don’t take the time you do have for granted. “When you’re told you only have two to three years to live, you have a greater awareness of every moment and its meaning. You don’t think you can do something another time, you go ahead and do it.”

He is doing as much as he can with those he loves, especially his wife Lori and his two children, Emma, 15, and Jack, 12. His diagnosis has given him the chance to do something for his family; writing each of them letters related to moments in their lives. “The first one was to my daughter on her 18th birthday. I’ll also write one for her wedding day,” smiles Matt. “Whether I’m living or not, she will have those words. I’m thankful that I’m able to put into words what my family may want to hear from me.” Matt gets choked up when he talks about this. He recalls a recent conversation he had with his daughter who told him she wanted him to walk her down the aisle. He told her he wanted to, but if that’s not what God has in mind, be thankful for the time we did have together.

It’s that attitude that makes you admire Matt. “People ask me why I’m not angry. My response is that I’m so blessed. My life has been extraordinary. God has given me everything I could have wanted or hoped for. I have a beautiful wife and a wonderful family and I get to be the pastor of Gateway,” says Matt. He has also come to understand cancer in his own way. “The only way cancer makes sense is that it’s an opportunity to point people closer to God.”

### **What the Future Holds**

After learning of his diagnosis, Matt decided to move forward with chemotherapy in hopes of prolonging his life. His first round was in October and he will undergo a total of four rounds. Matt says the treatments are excruciating, both physically and mentally. “When you’re sick, you’re lonely because with chemotherapy, you can’t be around people,” Matt admits. “It’s easy to isolate yourself, but you really have to reach out to people and ask for help.” At Matt’s house, they have plenty of hand sanitizer and face masks for when people do come to visit.

The chemotherapy forced Matt to make a very tough decision. He has taken a leave of absence from Gateway at least through January. “This is what I’ve given my whole life for and to not be able to do what you love most is hard,” says Matt. He knows, though, the church will continue to thrive. “Leadership is how the organization functions in your absence and on that score, I feel really good about the people I’ve poured in to. God has led me to put the right people in place.” Matt laughs when he says church attendance has gone up in his absence. His sense of humor hasn’t changed.

After Matt completes chemotherapy, the next step will be to participate in a clinical trial. If there’s one thing you learn about Matt it’s that he isn’t ready to give up and he won’t give up. He’s applying for a grant that would afford him the opportunity to travel and attend leadership training next year. When asked about the work he’s done so far, Matt believes he has accomplished all that God has set out for him; however, he feels he has a lot more left to do. “I do believe He can heal in spite of my diagnosis. In Isaiah 38, God adds 15 years to Hezekiah’s life.” Matt smiles when he says, “I’m trusting God will give me another 15 years.”

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### **Denman Evangelism Awards presented**

Three South Georgia United Methodists have been awarded United Methodism’s highest honor, the Harry Denman Evangelism Award.

Given through the Conference Witness Team, the Denman Awards recognize outstanding work in the field of evangelism.

Tammy and Matthew Reynolds, members of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Columbus, are this year’s laity Denman Award recipients.

The couple teaches St. Paul UMC’s sixth-grade confirmation Sunday school class and attends many retreats with the children. Tammy helped create and implement the church’s “St. Paul for All” day of evangelism and mission, and both Tammy and Matthew participate in the day of service, which benefits 15 Columbus-area para-church ministries. They are also deeply passionate about the church’s Ukraine Ministry, having traveled to Krivoy Rog, Ukraine more than 20 times since 2000. They share the good news of Jesus Christ with orphans and their caretakers, and even when home, Tammy holds a weekly conference call with each orphanage to discuss the wellbeing of the children.

“They don’t hesitate to share their love of God with anyone,” their nominator said. “Their warm and friendly personalities put people at ease and their Christ-like characters makes them unforgettable.”

Andrew Bos, 16 years old and a member of Harvest Church in Kathleen, is this year’s youth Denman Award recipient.

“Andrew has taken a leadership role in evangelism since joining Harvest Student Ministries some five years ago,” said nominator Teri Nave. “During that time, and even more so today, Andrew’s compassionate heart for the lost and ‘the least of these’ has been keenly obvious.”

As a member of his school track team, Andrew saw an opportunity to introduce his teammates to Jesus by starting a team prayer ministry, and at practices and meets he gathers his team together for prayer. A faithful participant of a weekly, small-group Bible study, Andrew regularly invites his friends to join him to learn about Jesus and the Bible. And each Christmas he helps lead and organize a Christmas luncheon for residents of the local Salvation Army Safe house.

But perhaps the ministry he’s most passionate about is the church’s prison ministry. In April 2017, Harvest Church began conducting worship services at Burruss Correctional Training Center in Forsyth. Bos is the behind-the-scenes backbone of the ministry, ensuring that prayer requests are received and distributed, holiday notes are written and mailed, and much more.

“Andrew Bos is an inspiring young ‘man-after-God’s-own-heart,’” Nave said in her nomination. “Without even realizing it, he sets a humble example for students and adults alike. Andrew is someone we can point other students to and say, ‘follow him because he is following Jesus.’”

Since 1982, the South Georgia Conference has celebrated the outstanding personal evangelism ministries of United Methodist clergy, laity and youth.

Click here to view a photo of laity award winners Tammy and Matthew Reynolds.

To nominate clergy, laity or youth for the 2016 Harry Denman Evangelism award, contact Karen Forrester, Conference Witness Team chairwoman, at [karenforrester65@gmail.com](mailto:karenforrester65@gmail.com).



## **Plowden serves on denomination’s top court**

**By Kara Witherow, *Editor***

It’s been an unprecedented year for the Judicial Council and South Georgia Chancellor Warren Plowden.

Plowden, who is serving as first lay alternate to the Judicial Council, recently returned from Zurich, Switzerland, where the denomination’s top court, meeting Oct. 22-26, reviewed possible plans for the future direction of The United Methodist Church and on Oct. 26 released [Decision 1366](#), which was unanimous.

In its decision, the Judicial Council found several issues with petitions in both the One Church Plan and the Traditional Plan. Because the Connectional Conference Plan contains proposed constitutional changes required for implementation, the court ruled it has no authority to scrutinize the plan at this time.

Plowden, filling in for Ruben Reyes of Manila, Philippines, has, in the past, been known to file dissenting opinions, but was in favor of all opinions issued by the Judicial Council during this session.

It will be up to the proponents of each plan to amend or revise them before the special called General Conference session, to be held in St. Louis February 23-26, 2019, he said.

“We did our best with what we had. There’s some complicated constitutional issues involved in some of the legislation and we issued a lengthy opinion stating what we felt about each particular legislative issue,” Plowden said. “Some were approved as constitutional; some were approved as constitutional with certain things stricken, a sentence or two here or there; and several were found unconstitutional in whole.”

The business of the Commission on a Way Forward has to do with the substance of changing The United Methodist Church in very significant ways, he said, and that’s something the General Conference is going to have to tackle.

For Plowden and the Judicial Council, though, what’s next to tackle are four cases that they didn’t get to during their October meeting. They’ll discuss and decide on them when they next meet in St. Louis in February, just prior to the called General Conference session. They’ll also be on hand during the session to rule on any constitutional issues.

Plowden says this quadrennium, which is his second to serve as a lay alternate to the Judicial Council, is markedly different than the last for several reasons, but mostly because of the focus on the Way Forward.

“Our denomination benefits greatly from the spiritual commitment and legal expertise of our conference chancellor, Warren Plowden,” said South Georgia bishop R. Lawson Bryan. “He is respected across Methodism, as well as here in South Georgia. Knowing Warren as we do enables us all to have confidence in the wisdom of the Judicial Council. We thank God for him and pray for his discernment as a member of the Judicial Council.”

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## **Bishop's Appeal: Special Christmas Offering**

When disaster strikes, the United Methodist connection comes alive. The South Georgia Conference has seen this over and over again in the past month as people have responded to our needs here in South Georgia following the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael. Our connection is at work thanks to your overwhelming generosity.

Even as we continue down our own path of recovery in the southwest pocket of our conference, we also want to extend a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in the Alabama-West Florida Conference who will feel Michael's impact for years to come. Bishop Lawson Bryan is encouraging South Georgia Conference churches to collect a special Christmas offering for our neighbors in South Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.

"I want to thank all those who already have contributed to the South Georgia Conference Storm Recovery Fund," said Bishop Bryan. "Hurricane Michael did significant damage to a large sector of our conference. Thanks to your generosity we have been able to make an immediate initial response to those churches and communities. This special Christmas Offering for Storm Relief will give us the funds needed to sustain the long-term recovery effort. Also, through this Christmas Offering our conference will be able to continue doing what you have done so well in the past: reach out to help our brothers and sisters in need in the neighboring conferences of Alabama-West Florida and Florida. Those in Mexico Beach and the greater Panama City area are looking at a recovery period that will extend at least 10 years. While taking care of our own churches and communities we will also be able to give tangible support to our neighbors. Thank you for joining in this special Christmas Offering for Storm Relief."

Hurricane Michael was one of the most powerful storms ever recorded in the United States and struck last month with 155 mph winds. It raged ashore leaving miles and miles of devastation along the Gulf Coast.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference has established formal partnerships with 28 pastors and churches that were damaged by Hurricane Michael. Financial offerings are already being distributed to support staff salaries at those churches that currently are not operational on a day-to-day basis. Our Christmas Special Offering will allow us to come alongside these neighboring churches with additional financial support as they pick up the pieces and begin to rebuild. And in southwest Georgia, impacted congregations and communities are being and will continue to be supported by the generous donations of supplies, food, and home repair case management from within and beyond our conference.

**A Christmas Offering Storm Relief Fund #6849** has been established specifically for our support of the recovery efforts. This will be a Lane 6 offering.

There are two ways to give:

1. Donations may be made to any South Georgia Conference United Methodist Church by marking your gift for the "Christmas Offering Storm Relief Fund" or "Fund #6849".
2. Donate online [here](#).



## **Give the gift of time together this Christmas**

### **FROM THE BISHOP**

**R. LAWSON BRYAN**

What a privilege to represent the South Georgia Conference at the Georgia Farm Bureau annual convention this weekend. It didn't hurt that it was held at the Jekyll Island Convention Center, where we've held our annual conference session the past two years. What a spectacular setting.

I have enjoyed getting to know Gerald Long, the president of Georgia Farm Bureau. Their main office is in Macon, on Bass Road near the episcopal residence. President Long is a farmer from Bainbridge, where I was raised. He invited me to preach for the memorial service with which the convention begins each year. We recognized 11 former county presidents who have died over the past year. It was a blessing to read the Word and preach the Gospel message as it applies to those who have experienced grief and loss.

The Georgia Farm Bureau represents nearly 300,000 farm families throughout the state. I enjoyed meeting several United Methodists who are active members of South Georgia churches. The farmers of South Georgia have experienced tremendous crop loss and property damage as a result of Hurricane Michael. The annual meeting brings them together for mutual support and encouragement. It was an inspiration to spend time with people of such stamina and resiliency.

Like Georgia's hardworking farmers, we United Methodists have found that coming together is essential for our spiritual health. That insight goes all the way back to John Wesley. You know that a major part of the genius of early Methodism was the way it brought people together in classes, bands, and societies. I know we sometimes think of gatherings like charge conference, district conference, and annual conference as "business meetings." But I found those very meetings to be opportunities for mutual support and encouragement. I loved meeting with the farmers and I truly love opportunities for fellowship with United Methodists.

The Gospel lesson for the fourth Sunday of Advent gives an interesting example of the importance of coming together. After receiving the surprising and perplexing news that she would have a son, Mary immediately goes to be with her relative, Elizabeth (who will give birth to John the Baptist). The whole story is found in Luke 1:39-56. What a time of mutual support and encouragement that must have been for these two women who were still adjusting to a life-changing experience. And what a reminder that when we are facing times of uncertainty and anxiety we need to be together with others who will walk with us on the journey. Connecting is so important. Mary knew that and therefore went to be with Elizabeth. And she stayed three months! And sang The Magnificat!

Do we know what Mary knew? Do we intentionally spend time with those whom we know are good for us? The Advent/Christmas season offers us many opportunities to join Mary and Elizabeth in spending time with each other. In unusual situations, like the approach of General

Conference in February, we need more, not less, time together. May God give us the peace and joy that Mary and Elizabeth found in the simple act of coming together.

Have a truly merry Christmas by being Alive Together in Christ,

R. Lawson Bryan

*The Council of Bishops (COB) of The United Methodist Church is mourning the death of the 41st U.S. President, George H. W. Bush. I join COB President Bishop Ken Carter and my fellow UMC bishops in praying that God's sustaining grace and strength will surround the entire Bush family in the days to come. [Click here to read a letter sent to President George W. Bush and the Bush family, from Bishop Carter and the Council of Bishops.](#)*

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## **2019 Join the Journey Confirmation Retreat set for March 1-3**

During the weekend of March 1-3, 2019, more than 500 confirmands will gather at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island for the annual "Join the Journey" Confirmation Retreat of the South Georgia Conference.

Tailored to fifth-grade students and above, confirmands will enjoy learning about their United Methodist heritage in a high-energy, exciting atmosphere. Participants will also be exposed to the diverse leadership that makes up the South Georgia Conference as Bishop Lawson Bryan, pastors, youth directors, children's directors, and lay members share and teach during the general sessions and workshops. Throughout the weekend, confirmands will journey through the church seasons, gaining a better understanding of their role as United Methodists and members of the body of Christ.

Online registration is now available for South Georgia Conference churches. Beginning Jan. 14, registration will be open to all churches both in and out of conference. The deadline to register is Feb. 11 or until the event reaches maximum capacity. [Click here for more information about registration.](#)

For more information, contact Event Coordinator Suzanne Akins at the Office of Connectional Ministries at (888) 266-7642 or by email at [suzanne@sgaumc.com](mailto:suzanne@sgaumc.com).

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## **Multicultural Luncheon set for Feb. 9**

The third annual Multicultural Luncheon will be held February 9, 2019, from noon until 2 p.m. at Cordele First United Methodist Church. The 2019 theme is "Alive Together in Christ, the World."

The luncheon will celebrate the gifts God has provided in the South Georgia Conference through its local churches as well as the service the gifts and talents provide for the churches and communities. Speakers from around the conference and the connection will present.

There is a small cost of \$6 for lunch. [Register here](#). For more information, contact Earnestine Campbell at [earnestine@sgaumc.com](mailto:earnestine@sgaumc.com). The 2019 Multicultural (MC) Luncheon is sponsored by The Office of Connectional Ministries and hosted by the 2019 MC Luncheon Design Team.

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## **Love and Serve God**

### **Winter Quarter: Our Love For God**

#### **Unit 1: God Is Worthy of Our Love**

#### **Sunday school lesson for the week of December 9, 2018**

**By Helen and Rev. Sam Rogers**

#### **Lesson Scripture: Joshua 24**

As last week's lesson focused on Moses' final words to his people before his death and their entrance into Canaan, so this week we listen to what Joshua said to the Israelites before his death, after they had conquered and were living in the Promised Land. In law, there is nothing more sacred than a will. A will is a binding legal document. In this instance, the people will have the opportunity to ratify the will of the aged Joshua as he passes from the scene.

Joshua had been through it all, from the Exodus to the entrance into the land of Canaan – the land of God's promise to Abraham. The second dimension of that promise was also fulfilled: progeny. There were now 12 tribes, and each had settled into their allotted territory. The representatives of all these had been called by Joshua to assemble at Shechem.

Joshua had been designated by Moses as leader and had proven over many years of violent conquest his superior abilities to guide this people into the future. Remember, the first time we meet Joshua he is a leader in battle! (Exodus 17: 8-13) He was one of the 12 spies sent into Canaan before the conquest. With Caleb, he had reported, "we can do it!" Tragically their voices were not heard, and the Israelites were destined to spend another generation in the Wilderness until all who had seen the miraculous hand of God in the Exodus, at Sinai, and the feeding of quail, manna, and water from the rock had perished.

To this new generation, Joshua now speaks at Shechem. The location is significant. It is the first place named in Canaan when Abraham arrived. Many centuries later, tragically, Shechem will be the place where the nation divided North (10 tribes) and South (2 tribes) after the death of Solomon.

On this day all the leaders – tribal, political, religious, judicial, and military – had gathered. The purpose of the assembly was primarily spiritual, because the One truly in charge is the Lord God.

As Moses had spoken east of the Jordan, now Joshua speaks in the west. Both relate the “word of the Lord.” Significantly, the scripture specifies “all the people.” The message is for the entire nation, not just its leaders!

He reminds them of their history, beginning with Abraham and his journey, a spiritual journey as well as a geographical one. He and his family traveled from Ur to Canaan – in distance many miles and a magnificent leap of faith. Their forbears had worshipped many gods in the land beyond the Euphrates, and, even in the Promised Land, this temptation would return again and again to resume this polytheistic practice.

The covenant faith of Abraham is stated clearly in verse 3, with the fulfillment of the promise. The following verses 4-12 tell the story of God’s actions on behalf of these descendants of Abraham down to this momentous moment at Shechem. Please note how the nature of God is emphasized in the use of action verbs: *took, sent, led, gave, and delivered*. How important is it for a people to know their history, and to see God’s hand at work? We too must tell the story – all of it – the good and the bad!

*At this point God gives the people a poignant reminder: they cannot rest on accomplishments they had not achieved, but received. “So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.”*

Our God is gracious and giving, who always provides what is needed – not wanted! Our response? Joshua states it clearly – *“Now fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.” (vs. 14)*

Sadly, we can always find other priorities that become for us god-like. The culture and form they take may be different, but the results are always the same – we fear and serve other gods.

As a good debater, Joshua has stated his argument, and documented his reasons with the facts of history. He leaves the decision with his hearers. “CHOOSE!!”

Every person must choose for himself. The choice makes all the difference! For you Harry Potter fans, remember how often in the tale Harry is told his choices made him different from Voldemort. The choices we make determine our character – not parentage, nationality, race, education, economics, gender, nor any other factor beyond our control. Sam had an old teacher who always said: “God votes for us; the Evil One votes against us; and we cast the deciding vote!”

Again, Joshua makes it clear where he stands. Regardless of how the people vote, Joshua and his family stand with the Lord. Martin Luther later would declare in the Reformation: *“Here I stand; I can do no other; God help me.”*

When the clamor around us is overwhelming and one-sided, we must choose between what is right and what is easy. Joshua and Jesus, whose names come from the same Hebrew word meaning “to save,” are both pioneers of faith, leading the people toward the “Promised Land.”

We often remember Sammy Clark’s holy geography: Egypt – the land of bondage; the Red Sea – deliverance through the water; the Wilderness wanderings; and crossing the Jordan – entering the Promised Land. We are slaves to sin, we are saved by baptism into the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; we live in the wilderness of this world, and “on Jordan’s stormy banks (we) stand and cast a wistful eye to Canaan’s fair and happy land where (our) possessions lie.” In death we cross the Jordan into the Promised Land.

Joshua gives the people two options: serve the Lord or other gods. Both Moses and Jesus spoke in similar ways about our choices, and the consequences of them.

With a resounding voice vote the people declare: *“We will serve the Lord.”* As with any will, witnesses are needed, and Joshua tells the people they are their own witnesses. His final word to them was: *“yield your heart to the Lord, the God of Israel.”*

Again, the people said: *“We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.”*

This was the third affirmation of faith in this chapter, but we know the rest of the story. Although the Book of Joshua ends hopefully, the next book, Judges, ends with a very different tone: “In those days, Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” (Judges 21:25) Translating our profession of faith into actions that are consistent with what we believe is where belief becomes a trusting faith. It was difficult then and still is today.

*Helen and Rev. Sam Rogers are a retired clergy couple. They can be reached at [sg3@cox.net](mailto:sg3@cox.net).*

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## **Love and Worship God**

**Winter Quarter: Our Love For God**

**Unit 1: God Is Worthy of Our Love**

**Sunday school lesson for the week of December 16, 2018**

**By Helen and Rev. Sam Rogers**

**Lesson Scripture: Psalm 103**

The pattern of our study this quarter should be clear to all. The response we are to make to God is obedience, service, and, this week, worship. Our studies have focused on the giants of Hebrew history – Moses, Joshua, and today, David.

With David, we are not studying his history, which is ambiguous at best, but his talent as a poet, singer, and songwriter. He is credited with composing half of the Psalms, including the scripture for this week. The Book of Psalms is the hymnbook of the Hebrew faith. The content of the Psalms is like poetry, running the gamut of human emotions in expressions to God. Like ours today, some Psalms soar with the powerful language of praise, while others are filled with questions. Like Psalm 22, which Jesus cried from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me,” the music resounds with anguish, pain, and anger. Many have heartfelt questions about the ways of God and the apparent Divine absence in times of trouble. There is no “out of bounds” in the Psalms, with the subject matter covered.

For us, the poetry is difficult to discern. The most common form is parallelism. We have a great example in the first verse of the Psalm for today.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me bless His holy name.

The thought of the first line is repeated in the second. In Hebrew, “soul” refers to a person’s inmost being. The line begins and ends with blessing/praise of God, and the second and third phrase emphasizes the involvement of the total person in this act of worship – heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Here is how we are to worship God: the totality of our life is used to declare the greatness of God. What power would there be if our people entered the sanctuary in this frame of body – mind – spirit? Remember what Paul said in Romans 12:1: We are to be “living sacrifices to God.”

Sam loves to sing, and is, in retirement, active in our church’s Chancel Choir. We have a gifted, spirit-filled director who is not only a marvelous musician, but also senses the way an anthem can help the congregation do precisely this – the result is powerful to us who sing and to those who hear.

Think of the divisions of this Psalm as verses of a hymn. Each stanza carries a thought. In Psalm 103 the divisions are verses 1-5 – a call to worship; verses 6-10 – the triumph of God’s mercy/grace; 11-14 – the greatness of God; 15-18 – the eternity of God’s mercy/grace; and 19-22 – a doxology of praise to the eternal King.

The hymn begins with the worshipper bringing his total being to focus on God and the Divine Nature. A listing of the reasons for praise and thanksgiving includes remembering the blessings of the past with forgiveness and healing, gifts that are for our good, crowned with love and compassion. The verse concludes with the powerful metaphor similar to Isaiah 40:29-31: *Life is renewed like the eagles.*

Before proceeding, a word about the necessity of remembering: We must not forget. Life is filled with current demands, distractions, and detours causing us to forget. The temporary must not make us forget the eternal. Moses had warned his people of the same danger in Deuteronomy.

The second verse shows us the triumph/supremacy of God’s mercy/grace in the ways God has and will act in justice and righteousness, especially toward the poor and oppressed. The hymn reveals the very heart of God as being merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Hebrew word is “hesed” and is the Old Testament equivalent of grace in the New Testament. The word “harbor” refers to containing God’s just anger, not letting the anger take control of the Divine punishment which all humans deserve. With Paul we know “we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” God does not deal with us as an accountant balancing the books! The verse closes with this assurance: “God does not deal with us according to our sins or punish us according to our iniquities.”

Just the opposite – as the next verse states beautifully: spatially and geographically God demonstrates the greatness of his mercy/grace. (vss. 11-12) The beauty of God’s character is depicted by the analogy of a loving father disciplining a child. No wonder Jesus told us to pray: “Our Father!” God remembers how we were formed – from dust. We might see this origin as unworthy and inadequate, but from the Divine heart we receive concern and patience.

In stanza four we move from the triumph and greatness of God’s mercy to the eternity of God’s mercy. In unadorned honesty, the Psalmist describes our mortality. When Sam was a pastor, he loved to mow the lawn. For him, it was one of the few things he could do and SEE the results! There is an aroma to newly mown grass, but in a matter of hours, the blades have shriveled and died, blown by the wind. So the Psalmist describes our life: temporary and fleeting!

On the other hand, the Creator is forever – from everlasting to everlasting – and God’s love is extended always to His children who know WHO GOD IS – who fear Him, keep His covenant, and remember to do His commandments. Please note the verbs in relationship to the commandments – action – fear, keep, do!

The final verse of the hymn is a doxology of praise to the King of creation. What a choir is assembled to render this anthem! Think of that angelic choir that sang on the night of Jesus’ birth! The choir call is to all the angels, all the host of heaven, all who do the will of the Eternal King, even creation itself. Over and over, again and again, they sing “Bless/praise the Lord,” and finally the Psalmist joins in as at the beginning: “*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*”

Will you join the chorus?

*Helen and Rev. Sam Rogers are a retired clergy couple. They can be reached at [sgr3@cox.net](mailto:sgr3@cox.net).*

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What’s your favorite question?

## LEADERSHIP REALLY MATTERS

ANNE BOSARGE

REV. JAY HANSON

We are collectors. When I (Anne) was younger I collected stuffed animals, shells, rocks, stamps, plastic Smurf figurines, books, Dr. Scholl's shoes, Holly Hobbie socks, hair scrunchies, and cassette tapes. When I (Jay) was young we collected stamps with my grandmother.

As you can tell, we're dating ourselves as kids of the 70s and 80s. But as we've gotten older, our collections have changed. Instead of physical objects, we now collect wisdom, quotes, thoughts, ideas, and questions – things that take up a lot less physical space and significantly more brain space.

In our last two articles, "[What is Jesus asking you?](#)" and "[If you could ask anything, what would it be?](#)" we talked about using questions as powerful tools for leading and learning. The truth is, once you have experienced the freedom of not-knowing and the power of inquiry, you'll naturally begin your own collection of favorite questions! So this month we would each like to share five of our favorite questions with you – inquiries that have shaped our leadership and lives in ways we never would have expected; powerful questions that still cause us to ponder, reflect, and refine.

### Anne's Top Five

1. **“What’s it like to be on the other side of me?”** This is a powerful tool for gaining self-awareness. I first heard this question posed by Carey Nieuwhof at a ReThink conference. I immediately tried it out on my preteen daughter and the insight she provided was as painful as it was life-giving.
2. **“Who are you and what breaks your heart?”** Andy Stanley posed this question at a Catalyst conference I attended several years ago. It continually challenges me to remember who I am and that I was uniquely created with a passion and a purpose.
3. **“What I can learn from you?”** As a leader, I'm often in the position to impart advice, direction, and wisdom to others. When I switch the question and ask myself what I can learn from everyone I meet, it allows relationships to become mutually beneficial and helps me see the beauty and value in every individual.
4. **“What would I do if I were unafraid?”** Fear is a powerful demotivator that keeps us stuck. By eliminating fear with this question, I often find amazing clarity and direction in my decisions.
5. **“What is the opportunity in this?”** It's often much easier to see the roadblocks, hurdles, and difficulties in a given situation. It's typically more difficult to identify the opportunity in the pain. This question puts me in the posture of assuming there is something to be learned and gained from every situation.

### Jay's Top Five

1. **“Am I growing spiritually?”** If so, what is it that is helping me grow? If not, what is hindering me? This question helps me pay attention to my own soul and reminds me that everything I “do” must be from an overflow of my own spiritual growth.
2. **“Am I personally investing in others’ spiritual growth? Who?”** I need to be personally involved in discipling other people. Not hypothetically, but practically and tangibly! I need to be able to name them and know my plan for helping them grow.
3. **“Am I developing systems that help people grow?”** If people’s growth is tied to contact with the preacher, not many people are going to grow very much. Therefore, it is essential to develop scalable systems that enable them to grow without having to be personally connected to me.
4. **“What would a great leader do?”** I got this question from Andy Stanley. Often when I am struggling to discern the most appropriate course it is because my personal feelings are clouding my judgment and causing me difficulty in determining what “I” should do. So I change the question to “what would a great leader do?” I can generally figure that out and then I just decide to do that.
5. **“Why?”** Generally I like to go at least three “whys” deep. Why is it the way it is? Why is that? And why is that? This helps get closer to the root issue. So much time is wasted dealing with symptoms rather than root causes. I have found taking the time to ask “why” multiple times helps me invest my energy in the real issue which ultimately saves tons of time.

What’s your favorite question? Email us and let us know!

*Jay Hanson, Lead Pastor, and Anne Bosarge, Multi-Campus Director, serve at The Chapel Ministries. They love sharing about the ways God is moving in their church. Contact them at [jay@thechapelbrunswick.com](mailto:jay@thechapelbrunswick.com) and [anne@thechapelbrunswick.com](mailto:anne@thechapelbrunswick.com).*

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## **John Wesley’s wife, Molly Vazelle**

### **JOHN WESLEY MOMENTS**

#### **DAVE HANSON**

When John Wesley was 47 years old he married Mary (Molly) Vazelle, a wealthy widow with four grown children whose merchant husband had died four years earlier. She was 41 years old. They agreed that all her assets would go to her children.

Their relationship was stormy. She was jealous of the time Wesley spent traveling and became furious at his correspondence with women. He made the mistake of telling her that she could open and read any letters that came to him. She went with him on several of his preaching missions and was miserable at the conditions they had to endure. She actually destroyed some of Wesley’s journal.

One day a visiting pastor knocked on Wesley's door. It came open, revealing John on the floor with Mary dragging him by his long hair.

She left him several times, but returned. Finally she left again and John said, "I did not ask her to leave, but I will not ask her to return." They were married for 20 tumultuous years and separated for 10. He returned from one of his preaching mission to learn that Molly had died and was buried.

John Wesley was poor husband material. His life was consumed by his mission to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.

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### **Retired Clergy Birthdays – December 2018**

- 12/01 – Virginia Connelly: 11130 Springfield Pike; Cincinnati, OH 45246
- 12/06 – Charles Adams: 301 Island St.; Lake Park, GA 31636
- 12/06 – Eugene Cariker: 102 Ingham St.; Simons Island, GA 31522
- 12/09 – Mollie Danner: 1415 Sunrise Ave.; Moultrie, GA 31768
- 12/09 – Clifford Wallace: 136 Pineworth Pointe Dr.; Macon, GA 31216
- 12/09 – Don Warren: 450 Cove Dr.; Marietta, GA 30067
- 12/10 – Charles Cox: 9800 County Line Rd.; Midland, GA 31820
- 12/10 – Britt Priddy: 109 Churchview Dr.; Leesburg, GA 31763
- 12/10 – Joe Stevens: 892 Dublin Hwy.; Eastman, GA 31023
- 12/10 – Cephas Williamson: 4815 Tirol Pass; Ft. Wayne, IN 46835
- 12/12 – Alan Miller: 2099 Corsica Way SW; Marietta, GA 30008
- 12/15 – Paula Lytle: PO Box 2905; Statesboro, GA 30459
- 12/16 – Pat Holbert: PO Box 1004; Louisville, GA 30434
- 12/19 – Morgan Johnson: 5000 Fairbanks Ave. #148; Alexandria, VA 22311-1227
- 12/22 – Larry Giles: 214 Jasmine St.; Sandersville, GA 31082
- 12/22 – Lenton Powell: PO Box 42986; Atlanta, GA 30311
- 12/22 – Joy Wilson: 59 Amanda Lane; Ellaville, GA 31806
- 12/26 – Wayne Mitchell: 431 Oak Ridge Dr.; Nashville, GA 31639
- 12/26 – Diane Shedd: 515 Meadow Green Dr.; Davenport, FL 33837
- 12/28 – William Blalock: PO Box 187; Vidalia, GA 30475
- 12/31 – John Carroll, Jr.: 4663 Wesleyan Woods Dr.; Macon, GA 31210
- 12/31 – William A. Smith: 102 Pierce Rd.; Reynolds, GA 31076

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### **Scripture Readings – Dec. 4**

**Dec. 9**

*Second Sunday of Advent*

Malachi 3:1-4  
Luke 1:68-79 (UMH 208)  
Philippians 1:3-11  
Luke 3:1-6

**Dec. 16**

***Third Sunday of Advent***

Zephaniah 3:14-20  
Isaiah 12:2-6  
Philippians 4:4-7  
Luke 3:7-18

**Dec. 23**

***Fourth Sunday of Advent***

Micah 5:2-5a  
Psalm 80:1-7  
Hebrews 10:5-10  
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

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**Consider end-of-the-year giving to the new Conference Center**

Over the years I have found that the month of December is a time of incredible generosity. As we celebrate God’s gift of Jesus, our church members find fulfillment in giving of themselves and their resources. One special opportunity is “end-of-the-year giving.” This occurs when our members determine that they want to make a special gift before Dec. 31. These gifts may be stocks, bonds, property, and/or cash. A gift to the [new Conference Center](#) of the South Georgia Conference would be a great blessing. We are only \$250,000 away from funding this project and breaking ground on our first-ever conference office center.

I welcome the opportunity to provide more information about the new Conference Center to anyone with whom I might meet. Please contact me through the Episcopal Office at 478-475-9286.

Thank you for considering [a gift to the new Conference Center](#) ... and for making others aware of this special opportunity.

Alive Together in the World,

R. Lawson Bryan

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## 2018 Advent Resources

We hope the resources will help jumpstart your planning and give you new ideas for this season.

### Nurture

[Take the Online Advent Quiz: \(Download\)](#), print and share the Advent Quiz with your church, family & friends!

[Chuck Knows Church](#): The Advent Wreath (Video 3 minutes)

[New Ways to Celebrate Advent With Kids](#)

[Christmas Gifts That Won't Break](#): A Children's Advent Study by James W. Moore.

[Coloring Through Advent](#): A creative way to prepare your heart for Christmas.

[Blue Christmas/Longest Night Service](#): A unique service designed to minister to those who mourn during the holiday season. This service can be used as an *outreach* tool in your community as well.

[Cokesbury Advent Studies](#): Looking for a study for a small group, congregation or yourself? Find a good selection at Cokesbury.

[Unwrap the Meaning of Christmas](#): Children share the story of Christmas. (Video 1:26)

For more resources, visit [Discipleship Ministries](#).

### Outreach

Ideas to reach into your community and embody the very thing we celebrate: God's love coming in human form as Jesus Christ is born!

[4 Great Advent Outreach Ideas](#)

[Community Seeker-Friendly Outreach Event Ideas](#)

[Giving Tuesday](#): November 27, 2018 - People know about Black Friday and Cyber Monday, we want them to know about Giving Tuesday, too! This global day of giving is fueled by the power of social media. Find ways to kick off this charitable season by giving to your favorite mission organization.

[Christmas Is Not Your Birthday](#): Mike Slaughter's Bible Study on experiencing the joy of living and giving like Jesus.

[Advent Revolution](#): Learn how Thomasville FUMC turned the Advent season into Outreach, reaching their community and into the world. (The Advocate, 2016)

[Random Acts of Christmas Kindness \(RACK\)](#): Churches Spread Christmas cheer through local communities. (The Advocate, 2013)

## **Witness**

While there's debate about whether services on Christmas Eve or Easter Sunday draw the larger attendance, it is clear that Christmas Eve attracts more unchurched guests.

[Creative Ways to Invite Others this Advent Season](#)

[Invite Your Community This Christmas](#): Get all the resources you need this Christmas, including direct mail, banners, and invites.

[Christmas Eve Hospitality: 12 Ways to Welcome](#)

[Roll Out The Welcome Mats This Christmas](#)

[Invite Christmas Eve Guests to Return](#)

For additional Outreach & Witness resources, visit [United Methodist Communications](#).

## **Advocacy**

[Advent Offers Homecoming](#)

[Advent in Action](#)

[Engaging Advent](#)

[All Earth Is Waiting](#): An advent devotional written through the lens of Creation and Creation Care. (Climate Justice)

For more Advocacy resources, visit [Church & Society](#) and [Discipleship Ministries](#).

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## **Events in the South Georgia Conference – 12/4/2018 edition**

### **Connectional Ministries Leadership Tour, Americus FUMC – Jan. 6, 2019**

Leaders all across the South Georgia Conference have answered the call to serve in their local church setting. As a faithful member of your congregation, we know you want to serve and serve well! To help equip and empower you in your ministry role, the 2019 Leadership Tour will offer practical teaching and resources to both inspire you and help you lead with confidence. This free event is sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries. [Download a flyer to promote this event in your local church.](#)

### **Connectional Ministries Leadership Tour, Pine Forest UMC, Dublin – Jan. 13, 2019**

Leaders all across the South Georgia Conference have answered the call to serve in their local

church setting. As a faithful member of your congregation, we know you want to serve and serve well! To help equip and empower you in your ministry role, the 2019 Leadership Tour will offer practical teaching and resources to both inspire you and help you lead with confidence. This free event is sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries. [Download a flyer to promote this event in your local church.](#)

### **Connectional Ministries Leadership Tour, Tifton FUMC – Jan. 20, 2019**

Leaders all across the South Georgia Conference have answered the call to serve in their local church setting. As a faithful member of your congregation, we know you want to serve and serve well! To help equip and empower you in your ministry role, the 2019 Leadership Tour will offer practical teaching and resources to both inspire you and help you lead with confidence. This free event is sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries. [Download a flyer to promote this event in your local church.](#)

### **Connectional Ministries Leadership Tour, Springfield UMC – Jan. 27, 2019**

Leaders all across the South Georgia Conference have answered the call to serve in their local church setting. As a faithful member of your congregation, we know you want to serve and serve well! To help equip and empower you in your ministry role, the 2019 Leadership Tour will offer practical teaching and resources to both inspire you and help you lead with confidence. This free event is sponsored by the Office of Connectional Ministries. [Download a flyer to promote this event in your local church.](#)

### **Winter Conference at Epworth By The Sea – Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2019**

Join Bishops Sue Hauptert-Johnson (North Georgia), Ken Carter (Florida), James Swanson (Mississippi) and Lawson Bryan (South Georgia) for Winter Conference 2019 at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. Dr. Tod Bolsinger, Vice President for Vocation and Formation and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary and author of "Canoeing the Mountains, Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory," will be the keynote speaker. Register early as we believe demand will be high. Further information about faculty, preachers and curriculum will be announced shortly. [More information and registration](#)

### **Annual Multicultural Luncheon Celebration – Feb. 9, 2019**

The third annual Multicultural Luncheon will be held February 9, 2019. For more information, contact Earnestine Campbell at [earnestine@sgaumc.com](mailto:earnestine@sgaumc.com).

### **Sexual Ethics Workshop, Statesboro – Feb. 21, 2019**

According to the Conference Sexual Ethics policy, this workshop is required every three years for any person serving under appointment by the bishop (clergy, local pastors, extension ministers, appointed lay speakers). The Sexual Ethics Workshop will be held Thursday, Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Pittman Park UMC in Statesboro. [Register here](#). Cost is \$35, which includes lunch (collected at the door). Checks can be made payable to South Georgia

Conference. For questions, email [cpcassistant@sgaumc.com](mailto:cpcassistant@sgaumc.com). Please note that spouses and lay employees who are not appointed by the bishop are not eligible to attend the workshop.

### **Campus Crawl – Feb. 28-March 3, 2019**

The 2019 Campus Crawl is set for Feb. 28 - March 3, 2019. During the Campus Crawl weekend, high school students from both the North and South Georgia Conferences will meet representatives from United Methodist Colleges and Universities in Georgia as well as meet several Wesley Foundations on public university campuses. Stops on this year's tour include: Oxford College, Young Harris College, Reinhardt University, Kennesaw State Wesley, Clark Atlanta, Georgia Tech Wesley, Emory University, LaGrange College, Andrew College, Wesleyan College, Mercer University Wesley, Augusta Wesley, Paine College, UGA Wesley, and more. The cost of \$100 per student includes a tour bus, meals, lodging, and a t-shirt. After Jan. 15, 2019, the price increases to \$125. [Click here to reserve your seat on the bus](#). For more information, contact Suzanne Akins at the Office of Connectional Ministries at [suzanne@sgaumc.com](mailto:suzanne@sgaumc.com) or (912) 638-8626 ext.107.

### **Join the Journey Confirmation Retreat – March 1-March 3, 2019**

Designed for students in the fifth grade and above, the "Join the Journey" Confirmation Retreat will provide churches of all sizes an opportunity to connect with others through worship, study, and fellowship. The event will also include large group gatherings around the church seasons and breakout sessions with topics of grace, United Methodist History and United Methodist lingo as well as Holy Clubs throughout the weekend. Not meant to be the only confirmation youth go through, the Confirmation Retreat should be complementary to what a church is or will be doing. For more information, please contact Event Coordinator Suzanne Akins at [suzanne@sgaumc.com](mailto:suzanne@sgaumc.com) or (912) 638-8626 ext. 107. Registration will open Dec. 3, 2018.