

## **SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – JANUARY 22 EDITION**

### **FaithWorks' Open Doors program provides jobs, homes, hope**

*By Kara Witherow, Editor*

Shawn Smith has had a home of his own for a little more than a year, and his pride comes through in his voice.

As he steps down off a ladder, removes his work gloves, and wipes the plaster dust off his face, he looks around at the job he's done.

There's still a lot of work left to do – sanding floors, scraping the popcorn ceiling, replacing windows, repairing plaster, and more – but it'll get done.

Smith and two other men, Thomas and Buddy, are helping renovate a home on Brunswick's Q Street, near the city's downtown. Part of FaithWorks' Open Doors community housing and job training program, they are formerly homeless men who are learning basic renovation and home rehab skills. The goal is to help get them, and others like them, back on their feet, living in one of the renovated homes, and, eventually – hopefully – employed in higher-paying jobs.

“I was living with friends in a not ideal situation,” Smith says during a break from sanding trim. “This gave me a home and a job and skills.”

Smith lives in one of Open Doors' two renovated homes and has gained construction and home maintenance skills, which is one of the goals of the program, said Dr. Wright Culpepper, Executive Director of FaithWorks.

“The program aims to provide opportunities for persons who are homeless,” Dr. Culpepper said. “We want to give them training, gainful employment, and hope.”

Another goal of the Open Doors program is to improve the housing in Brunswick and to not only rehabilitate the homes themselves, but in doing so, the community.

To date, two homes have been fully renovated and several more are in the works. When the third home is complete, it will be rented by Gateway Behavioral Health Services and used by its clients.

Open Doors was formed when Ron Slade, a Brunswick native, returned home from Montana and met Dr. Culpepper. Slade, a landscape architect and land planner, shared his love for and dream to help renovate his hometown with Dr. Culpepper. A \$75,000 grant from the St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation helped fund the ministry, and the Foundation pledged another \$50,000 if FaithWorks raised the same amount, which it was able to do in about six weeks.

The Open Doors program isn't a handout, Slade says. The men involved are invited to take part in it and must commit to work and regularly attend church, counseling, or a substance abuse program.

The rent they pay to live in an Open Doors home is below market value, but it, along with their Open Doors job, is often a first step toward self-sufficiency.

“We’ve just started our fourth and fifth homes and have been able to get 10 people off the street so far, so that’s pretty good,” Slade said. “These guys have to work and they earn their money and they learn a skill and a trade.”

The homes they’re renovating are just the vehicles, Slade said, the classrooms in which to teach and learn new skills and trades.

“It’s all about the guys,” he said. “The world’s a tough place, and it seems tougher than ever, and if everybody would show some love and support for other people the world would be a lot better place.”

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## **Madi’s Story: Prayer shawl ministry**

**By Madison Lee, member of Woodbine UMC**

*Madison Lee is a member of Woodbine United Methodist Church. This is her story about her love of the Lord and a special project she accomplished. With help, she has taken more than 100 prayer shawls to Wolfson Children’s Hospital in Jacksonville, Fla. Wolfson Children’s Hospital has recognized her for this project.*

Have you ever stopped to think about a gift you got as a little kid or something someone gave you that was dear to your heart? I am not talking about a gift you saw and your eyes got all big, but something that, when you looked at it, you felt a sense of peace or some comfort, as if you had someone right there with you. Something sentimental, something significant in your life.

Well, I did. When I was 16 my youth group gave me a prayer shawl and it changed my world. In 2013 my granny passed away, and that year turned into the worst year of my life. It felt as if I had lost my best friend. It was the little things that I was going to miss, like painting our fingernails or playing I-Spy games on her iPad for hours or the Coke floats she would have in her freezer just because she knew I loved them. My granny was the person I wanted to have at my wedding one day, sitting right there in the front row looking at me and saying, “You did good with this one.” There was something about losing her that almost felt as though I was losing a piece of me.

I remember the exact moment when I received that “wow gift,” and it brought me so much peace and comfort, the kind of peace and comfort I wanted to give to others. I had just left my grandma’s house and had gone to my youth group because I needed to take my mind off things for a while and get back to my normal routine. But I felt like nothing would ever be normal again. While I was there, a man came up to me. He was holding a Ziploc bag full of some type of fleece material. I wondered, “What piece of fleece would ever make this pain go away?” But when he handed it to me it had a prayer on the front, and as I read the prayer I got a sense of

comfort. Right then the whole youth group prayed with me and tears ran down my face. I felt as though the prayer shawl had some type of superpower within it. I knew right then I was going to get through this time of hurt and pain.

That superpower was prayer. I remember sleeping with the prayer shawl that night and feeling as though that sleep was the best sleep I had gotten all week. I felt as though God was physically with me because of the amount of prayer that was poured on that shawl. I will be forever grateful for my church providing me with that “wow gift” and giving me the comfort and peace I needed at that moment in my life.

This has led me to where I am today with my Wolfson Prayer Shawl Mission Project. I thought that if this prayer shawl brought me so much peace and joy, how could I give that peace and joy to others. While I was not sick during my time of grief, the amount of pain I endured felt almost unbearable, so I could only imagine what joy I could bring other little kids and babies who were physically, emotionally, and even some who were spiritually sick.

My purpose in this mission is to have kids feel the true presence of God and to help families realize that they will not get through this without having faith in God. God is our physician and our healer. Exodus 23:25 says, “Worship the Lord your God and His blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.” I wanted people to know that if you turn to God he will heal you, whether it is taking you to live in His kingdom or having you still on this earth to be a witness for His amazing healing.

These prayer shawls are a wondrous thing and are only possible with the help of the Hana Circle. They’ve helped me start this mission and make it possible by providing the materials and helping make them, and for that I will be forever grateful. These prayer shawls are already spreading like wildfire in the hospital and I pray that they continue to spread and that people really see the love of Christ in them like I did mine. This journey has been amazing, but it’s all for the glory of God.

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## **Task force prepares for possible outcomes of General Conference**

The [special session of General Conference](#) will be held in less than six weeks, and while things are still undecided and uncertain, South Georgia is making plans for the future of the Conference.

For nearly two months, 16 lay and clergy members of the South Georgia Conference have been meeting to discern ways the conference might respond to the decisions that may be made at General Conference.

“While we will take seriously the work of the General Conference, we also know that we have a say in our own future,” said South Georgia Bishop R. Lawson Bryan. “The purpose of this task force is to bring together key areas of our conference for the purpose of considering possible outcomes of General Conference and various ways we might respond to each of those

outcomes.”

The 16 members of the Foundations for the Future Task Force represent the Conference delegation, the Trustees, the Board of Laity, the Council on Finance and Administration, the Personnel Committee, the Cabinet, the Compass Group, Connectional Ministries, laity and clergy under 40, and the Conference Chancellor.

Task force members include: Bill Hatcher, Don Adams, Lee Bush, Julia Magda, Jeff Barker, Derek McAleer, Kelly Roberson, Allison Lindsey, Nita Crump, Jay Hanson, Henry Bass, Doreen Smalls, Bobbi Googe, Anne Bosarge (facilitator), Ben Gosden, and Warren Plowden.

“Each of these groups has a very important role to play in assessing the plans that will be considered at General Conference, and whatever the specific outcome of General Conference, this task force will be able to do a comprehensive evaluation of the implications for our conference,” Bishop Bryan said. “This will enable us to chart our course for the future - a future in which we are going to continue to be the South Georgia Conference, alive together in Christ.”

South Georgia United Methodist congregations can take comfort in knowing that the task force is already planning for General Conference and planning for the post-General Conference phase, he said. Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to attend an information session on Saturday, March 9 in Tifton where attendees will receive clarity about the outcome of General Conference and next steps for the Conference. This information session is open to everyone. [Read more about the session here.](#)

“I invite us to focus on the constants we can count on. Our mission will not change. Our vision will not change. Our Methodist focus on Biblical Christianity will not change. We will move full-speed ahead in the work to which God has called us,” Bishop Bryan said. “Let me encourage us to stay calm and stay connected as we chart this course together. And we will be Alive Together in Christ.”

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## **Put faith into action on #ServeSouthGA Day**

What would South Georgia look like if every local United Methodist church spent an entire day serving its community?

Hungry people would be fed.

Lonely people would find friends.

Schools could be beautified.

Rivers could be cleaned.

Homes could be repaired.

And so much more.

The Conference's Discipleship Teams are hoping that the Annual Conference's inaugural [#ServeSouthGA](#) volunteer day inspires congregations throughout South Georgia to move outside the church building and into their communities on March 23. If that day isn't convenient, they hope church leaders can choose another day to serve.

"We want to intentionally bridge our churches and communities in real and tangible ways," said Stacy Avera, chair of the Conference's Nurture Team. "We want our communities to realize the United Methodist Church is present and a real, involved part of their community! There is an old saying that asks, 'If your church ceased to exist, who would notice, besides the members?' We want our churches to be vital parts of their communities so that they would be missed and so that the communities know our UMCs can be counted on!"

Designed for people of all ages, [#ServeSouthGA](#) allows people of faith to put their faith into action as they serve those in need in their own towns, neighborhoods, and communities.

The [#ServeSouthGA webpage](#) gives examples of volunteer opportunities and project ideas, has a downloadable media kit, and invites those who have participated in the service day to fill out a short form to share how they have served in their community.

Avera said that while the Discipleship Teams know [#ServeSouthGA](#) is only two months away, they hope that the [planning tools and resources](#) they've provided will help congregations feel confident to go out into their communities to serve.

"Sometimes we have to meet needs before we can share Jesus and His love with people," she said. "It's showing them the love of Christ."

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## **Wesleyan College to host scholarship competition**

Macon, Georgia's College Street is the site of the original 1836 campus of Wesleyan College, founded by Georgia Methodists as the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women. Wesleyan College is now located on a beautiful, historic 200-acre campus a few miles north of town, but the marker on the site of Old Wesleyan attests to the origins of its commitment to the education of women. The marker refers to "the motto on Wesleyan's seal – *Scientia et Pietas* – which represents ideals which have inspired her graduates to go forth to the far corners of the earth to teach, to lead, to serve."

Now, 182 years after its founding, Wesleyan still sends women into the world in answer to their calls to ministry, to service, to education, to medical fields, and to professional careers. In fall

2018, Wesleyan welcomed the largest number of first-year and transfer students since 1975. New academic and athletic programs, newly renovated residence halls, the signature *From Here to Career* program, and many other initiatives draw undergraduate women to Wesleyan. 2019 marks the beginning of fully online programs for women over the age of 23, and a new Master's Degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology will soon join the very popular Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Education programs for men and women.

Recognizing the high cost of attending college, Wesleyan College benefactors have created scholarship programs that provide full-tuition scholarships for selected students. Each year, faculty and staff select students for the Margaret A. Pitts and Mary Knox McNeil scholarships which are designed especially for United Methodist students and those committed to service; Lane scholarships for students who major in theatre, music, and art; Findlay scholarships for humanities or social sciences; Munroe scholarships for sciences or mathematics; and Corn Scholarships for students who live in Columbus, Ga. Additional merit scholarships will be awarded to incoming students, both first-year and transfer students.

Competition for these prestigious scholarships will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2019, at Wesleyan College. In order to qualify, students must first apply to, and be accepted by, the college. Students who qualify for various scholarships will be contacted by a member of the admissions staff. For more information, visit [www.wesleyancollege.edu/admission/](http://www.wesleyancollege.edu/admission/).

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## **Have faith: God is in control**

### **OUR CONNECTION MATTERS**

#### **NITA CRUMP**

*I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out – plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. (Jeremiah 29:11, The Message)*

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, and looks to God alone; laughs at impossibilities, and cries, "It shall be done." - Charles Wesley

The time we are in as a church can seem very stressful. There is a called General Conference quickly approaching at which we, as a church, will try to discern a path through what, to some, feels like a wilderness. Our goal is a future where all can focus on the work of making disciples. We are uncertain what that future will look like. It is easy to become discouraged as we worry over what might or might not happen to our great denomination.

In Matthew 19, we find the story of the rich young ruler who wanted to know what he had to do to get to heaven. As Jesus watched him walk away in disappointment over Jesus' answer to that question, the following conversation took place:

*As he watched him go, Jesus told his disciples, “Do you have any idea how difficult it is for the rich to enter God’s kingdom? Let me tell you, it’s easier to gallop a camel through a needle’s eye than for the rich to enter God’s kingdom.” The disciples were staggered. “Then who has any chance at all?” Jesus looked hard at them and said, “No chance at all if you think you can pull it off yourself. Every chance in the world if you trust God to do it.” (Matthew 19:23-25, The Message)*

The message of that last verse is very similar to a verse we often quote, Jeremiah 29:11. In both, God states very clearly that he’s in control, he has a plan, and we can trust him to take care of things.

Over the last few days, I have witnessed many signs of God’s presence. Connectional Ministries is hosting a [Leadership Tour](#), teaching classes for church leaders. We’ve completed two of the four stops on the tour. On each of the last two Sunday afternoons, leaders who are concerned about the future of the church have gathered to learn more about what it means to be a leader in our church. Their enthusiasm and love for the church is clearly expressed. I find hope for the future in their willingness to serve.

We have many folks already registered for the upcoming Lay Servant training sessions. These are church leaders who want to know more about the church and how to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. We have people asking when the next Certified Lay Ministry class will begin. They are excited about being with others as, together, they learn more about leading congregations in The United Methodist Church.

We have 85 churches that have experienced an increase in worship attendance at a time when most churches are living with decline. More people have turned in paperwork to the Board of Ordained Ministry this year than in the past several years, as they ask to continue the process toward ordination.

Any one of these signs individually might not be very convincing, but all these together tell me that God is not done with us yet. We have laity who want to grow in leadership to be better equipped to lead into the future that God has planned for us. We have people answering God’s call to ministry. We have churches reaching out to their communities and finding folks to respond to their invitations to come and know Jesus. These are amazing signs of hope and of the future that God has in store for us.

I love these words from Charles Wesley: faith sees the promise and laughs at impossibilities, not because of anything you or I might be able to do, but because of all that God is able to do.

Let’s remember those words as we live through the coming weeks and months. God himself has said: “I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out – plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.”

*Dr. Nita Crump serves as Director of Connectional Ministries. Contact her at [nitac@sgaumc.com](mailto:nitac@sgaumc.com).*

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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.

Registration is now OPEN. 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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## **Leadership Team applications now available**

Applications are now being accepted for the 2019 Camp Connect Summer Leadership Team at Epworth By The Sea. Applications are open to college students who have completed at least one year of college. The Leadership Team will commit to nine weeks of camping ministry which will include serving at high school, middle school, and elementary camps. These Camp Counselors will minister to hundreds of youth and children throughout the summer while making Christian friendships with other staff members that last a lifetime.

For more information, [click here](#) or contact Suzanne Akins, Camp Director, at (912) 638-8626 ext. 107, or by email at [suzanne@sgaumc.com](mailto:suzanne@sgaumc.com).

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## **Connectional Ministries guest speakers available to preach**

Guest speakers from Connectional Ministries are available to preach and share with local congregations the important work of connecting, resourcing, and training ministry the office provides.

Partnering with local United Methodist congregations and individuals is vital to Connectional Ministries' ministry. Call today to let them share the good work that God is doing!

Available speakers include Dr. Nita Crump, Rev. Earnestine Campbell, and Allison Lindsey. Contact Connectional Ministries at 888-266-7642 for more information and to schedule a guest speaker.

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## **Imitate Christ**

**Winter Quarter: Our Love For God**

**Unit 2: Loving God by Trusting Christ**

**Sunday school lesson for the week of January 27, 2019**

**By Helen and Rev. Sam Rogers**

**Lesson Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11**

We have two more lessons from Paul's beautiful, loving letter to the Philippians. Why not take the time to read the entire letter and not chop it up into sections for Sunday school? Get a *feel* for his heart as he communicates in prison from Rome, cut off from all but a few personal contacts. We believe the time would be well worth spending.

Also, take the time to review what we wrote last week about the history of the city and the Philippian people to whom he wrote. We noted the personal conflicts between Euodia and Syntyche, but also the actions of others in the fellowship who were using their rhetoric and influence from base motives. This background is crucial for this most famous and significant statement about Jesus Paul ever wrote! Yes, it's that important!

He begins with four BIG "*IFs*":

*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ;*

*if any comfort from His love;*

*if any common sharing in the Spirit;*

*if any tenderness and compassion.*

For understanding Paul, think of these "ifs" as "because." Paul is not casting doubt on whether the Philippians have received these gifts. It is Paul's way of highlighting what he and the people acknowledge to be true. One commentator states, "At the end of every clause is the implication *AND YOU DO!*"

These conditions are the result of their being bonded together by the love of God in Jesus. Unity, comfort, sharing, and compassion are the hallmarks of the new community created by the work of Jesus' obedient and selfless life. The Lord gives this legacy to his followers, including the Philippians – and us!

Christ gives to believers a transformed perspective on life. Having received rich gifts undeserved, and receiving them *together, not just individually*, they have been formed into a community. The Christian faith song is never a solo – we sing in chorus! There are no Lone Ranger Christians. No individual Boy/Girl Scouts – we are always in a troop.

What is our response to these gifts that enrich the fellowship? Again, there are four: like-minded, same love, one spirit, and one mind. (Vs. 2). Does Paul mean we are to give up individuality and all become duplicates of each other? NO!

Christian unity is a blending of differences to achieve one aim – selfless service. We take these actions because we belong to Christ, but every action is preceded by thought – the mind. As he begins and ends this quadrilateral, we are “like-minded” and “of the same mind.” Attitude is at the heart of who we are and what we willingly do. He states it clearly: No selfish ambition or conceit; humility that counts others better; looking to the interests of others and not our own. Could there be any attitudes more contrary to our human nature than these? Each of these highlight the Christian life and witness of selfless service.

Paul then breaks into song. Most scholars feel verses 5-11 are an early Christian hymn, and it is printed in our Bibles as poetry and not prose. Those of us who love music know singing the faith is easier than memorizing ideas. We are better at remembering a hymn than quoting Bible verses. So Paul sings one of the earliest and best of all hymns – the famous *kenosis – emptying* – passage.

Once again, our actions begin with a mindset – the very mind of Christ. We consciously choose to act this way and pursue it vigorously.

And what is the mind of Christ? As in John 1:1, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The One who emptied Himself was God Himself, who chose to become a servant – “emptied” himself, became a human being, and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. These words echo Isaiah 53, the Suffering Servant who willingly gives his life for others.

Beginning with the Incarnation (humbling himself), the climax is reached on a cross – a torturous and shameful way to be killed as a common criminal. The cross was the symbol of Roman power over the world. The Word, who had power to bring all things into existence, submitted to this earthly power. In doing so, Christ brought to human existence something totally new.

Consider this: The first human beings, Adam and Eve, owed God their submission but rebelled, seeking to be like God (Genesis 3). Christ was equal to God, but in the Incarnation He became totally submissive to the point of death. In doing so, in Christ God has brought to humanity something never before attained – and the Creator/Savior God offers us the same wonderful New Creation.

And so begins the “Hallelujah Chorus” of Philippians 2. For the first time Paul names Jesus as the One who has opened the door to the new relationship to God, and, in doing so, His name will be honored by every creature in the universe (in heaven, and earth, and under the earth).

When Paul wrote this letter, every Roman subject and citizen in the Empire declared their allegiance by saying, “Caesar is Lord!” Christians then and now have a new Pledge of allegiance! The very One Roman soldiers, in the name of Caesar, crucified is now Lord of all.

To close this lesson, allow us to share what one writer has said:

God has achieved His original purpose in creation and expressed His true nature not by destroying rebellious humanity but by sending His beloved, divine Son to become a human, experience the pangs of death for others sake and receive His life again by God’s gift. In that story we find the real meaning and truest direction for our lives.

Truly, He is King of Kings, He is Lord of Lords. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

*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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## **Miracles**

### **Dr. Hal Brady**

In one of his columns, the late Lewis Grizzard described standing outside the church in his hometown of Moreland, Georgia on a cold day. It had been at least 10 years since he had been inside, but his roots were there.

As he reminisced about the youth group that met on Sunday nights, he recalled how two rowdy boys in town broke into a store and were required to attend the youth group for six months as punishment. The first night they attended, Grizzard recalled, they beat up two boys and threw a hymn book at the nice woman who led the group and always brought the cookies. Fortunately, she ducked just in time. Grizzard remembered her words to the boys: “I don’t approve of what you boys did here tonight, and neither does Jesus. But if He can forgive you, I guess I can, too.” Then she handed them the cookies.

The last Grizzard heard both boys had grown up to become “good daddies” and seldom missed a Sunday in church. Grizzard concluded that was the first miracle he ever saw.

Mildly stated, this issue of miracles has been a troubling one. Do miracles still happen? This has been one of the biggest and longest-running controversies of the church.

To be sure, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Era have all added blocks of separation between miracles and our daily lives. For many, miracles have been looked upon as anti-science, anti-rational, and anti-intellectual.

On the other hand, people have and do believe in miracles. Writing in his book, “Conversations of the Heart,” Bishop Woodie White, past resident Bishop of the Candler School of Theology, says, “I do believe in miracles – the occurrence of acts not explained by rational and logical reasoning, cures and healings that have taken place in the face of contrary medical predictions and evidences ... But this is more testimony to the power of God than the claims of men and women.”

I asked a friend the other day about the welfare of her relative. She replied, “It’s a miracle he’s alive.” Then she talked further about the miracle.

While preparing for this article, I tried to read as much as I could about miracles. One of the best things I read was a short sermon by Barbara Brown Taylor, noted preacher, professor and author, titled, “The Problem with Miracles.” I’d like to mention that a few of the thoughts Dr. Brown shared that I found helpful. She said:

1. The problem with miracles is that it is hard to mention them without wanting one of your own.
2. Not everyone who prays for one gets one, not by a long shot, and meanwhile there are people who get them without asking for them at all.
3. There is no formula for miracles because God rarely does anything the same way twice.
4. One of the meanest things religious people do is to blame the lack of miracle on a lack of faith.
5. Faith does not work miracles. God does. To concentrate on the strength of our own belief is to practice magic. To concentrate on the strength of God is to practice faith. God, not faith, works miracles.

Personally, my favorite definition of a miracle and one I whole-heartedly believe is the following. “A miracle is when God makes a way.” As Isaiah the prophet observed, “Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea ... I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it! I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” 43:16,19.

If you were asked to name a miracle that God has performed in your life, you might not be able to answer. But what if you were asked to name a way God has made for you when there didn’t seem to be a way?

A young wife and mother had just had her third child. She didn’t know how in the world she could take care of three babies and do the other things that she was expected to do. Unexpectedly, an older Christian friend paid a person to come in and help that young mother for nine months. God made a way.

Like many of you, I've found a number of situations I wasn't sure how it would go. But God made a way.

What about the time when someone held your hand, figuratively or otherwise? Has there been a moment in your life when the miracle of companionship made the difference? God made a way.

In conclusion, Albert Einstein noted, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing in a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." I choose the latter!

*Dr. Hal Brady is a retired pastor who continues to present the Good News of Jesus Christ and offer encouragement in a fresh and vital way through Hal Brady Ministries ([halbradyministries.com](http://halbradyministries.com)).*

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### **Retired Clergy Birthdays - January 2019**

- 1/01 – Cindy H. Autry: 2958 Roswell Lane; Columbus, GA 31906
- 1/01 – James Hancock: 4360 Manor Millwood Rd. S; Manor, GA 31550
- 1/01 – Larry Roberts: 12 Foxfire Estates Circle; Waynesville, NC 28785
- 1/01 – Dan Robinson: 222 N. Bobby St.; Lenox, GA 31637
- 1/02 – Sharon Loyley: 1544 Harris Ridge Rd.; Young Harris, GA 30582
- 1/03 – Marcus Tripp: 3791 Overlook Dr.; Macon, GA 31204
- 1/07 – Tommy Martin, III: 606 Chastain Place; Macon, GA 31210
- 1/08 – Kenneth Banker: 220 W. Pecan St.; Surrency, GA 31563
- 1/08 – Ernie Rogers: 1803 Pineknoll Lane; Albany, GA 31707
- 1/08 – Gary Starrett: PO Box 113; Bolingbroke, GA 31004
- 1/11 – V.L. Daughtery, Jr.: 3713 Bermuda Run; Valdosta, GA 31605
- 1/12 – Eddie Braswell: 1110 Moore Dr.; Americus, GA 31709
- 1/12 – Grady Vance: 127-B Nina Dr.; Eatonton, GA 31024
- 1/13 – Randy Nease: 195 Zipperer Rd.; Guyton, GA 31312
- 1/15 – Gary Morris: 2445 Jacqueline Circle; Moultrie, GA 31768
- 1/16 – J. Brooks Partain: 206 Eckles Rd.; Americus, GA 31719-2118
- 1/17 – Ed Ellington: 675 Arthur Wolfe Rd.; Dublin, GA 31021
- 1/18 – Steve Rumford: 130 Arlington Row; Macon, GA 31210
- 1/21 – Billy Wicker, Jr.: 400 Ridgecrest Rd.; E. Dublin, GA 31021
- 1/22 – Tom Davis, Jr.: 155 Twin Creek Ct.; Athens, GA 30605
- 1/24 – Joe Dunagan: PO Box 1903; Bristol, VA 24203
- 1/25 – Frank Harris: 312 Brim Dr.; Macon, GA 31220
- 1/27 – James Ford: 1751 G 8th St. NW; Hickory, NC 28601
- 1/27 – Bill Jones: 106 Hilldale Circle; Vidalia, GA 30474
- 1/30 – Harold Feightner: 107 Harvest Point; Warner Robins, GA 31088
- 1/30 – Holland Morgan: 2 E. 62nd Street; Savannah, GA 31405

## **OBITUARIES**

### **Mr. Carlton Rainge**

Deacon Carlton Rainge, age 67, of Blackshear, Ga., passed away Sunday night, January 6, 2019, at the Orange Park Medical Center in Orange Park, Fla., following a brief illness. His loved ones were by his bedside.

He was born August 3, 1951, to the late Daniel Lee Sr. and Martha Fisher Rainge. He attended the Nahunta Elementary School System and then Center High School in Waycross before returning to Brantley County High School where he graduated in 1969. After high school, he matriculated at South Georgia College in Douglas where he graduated in 1971 with an associate's degree.

He attended Gupton-Jones Mortuary College and graduated, securing his dream with his funeral director and embalmer licenses.

He was the owner and operator of Rainge Memorial Chapel Funeral Home, Inc. in Blackshear. He was a member and deacon at Little Rock Baptist Church in Nahunta.

Deacon Rainge was an individual of extraordinary vision, talent, presence and accomplishment. A born leader, he exercised tremendous influence on the lives of many, especially young people. Without fanfare, he worked in the church and civic organizations, in social clubs and in educational endeavors with a view toward making situations better than he found them.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Daniel Lee Sr. and Martha Fisher Rainge; his maternal grandparents, John and Louise Fisher; his paternal grandparents, Ike and Leatha Rainge; a sister, Beverly Jenese Rainge and two brothers, Nathaniel Rainge and John Henry Rainge.

Left to cherish his memories are his wife, Rev. Marie Rainge; three children, Roosevelt Hardaway Jr., Grantville; C. Mario Rainge Sr., Waycross and Kamari Rainge, Atlanta; god-children, Steven Anderson, Tammy Frierson, Annette Mainor and Charlie Mainor; grandchildren, LaTravis Stone, Shaniqua Stone, Corriyon Bray, Keyshawn Hardaway, Shamaria Rainge, Carlton Mario Rainge Jr. and Arayah Rainge; great-grandchildren; five brothers, Daniel L. (Annie Mae) Rainge Jr., Nahunta, Eddie (Ruby) Nails, Ellenwood, Lester (Sarah) Rainge, Macon, Marshall R. Rainge, Brunswick and Curtis M. Rainge, Papillion, NE; five sisters, Shirley (Harold) Goldsmith, Albany, Mary Ruth Rainge Thomas, Puyallup, WA, Barbara Ann Rainge Maefield, Nahunta, Carletha Rainge Bryant, Waycross and Louvenia Annette Rainge, Evans; sisters-in-law, Lois Shephard, Annie Parks (Leon), Roberta Daniel, Carrie Nell Stinson, Teresa Stinson, Oletha Stinson and Dianne (Vernon) Robinson; two uncles, Jimmy Rainge and Sam Fisher, both of Florida and loving nieces, nephews, cousins and the loyal and the dedicated staff of Rainge Memorial Chapel, Inc.

A celebration of life service was held at 1 p.m. Monday from the First Baptist Church of Blackshear where the Rev. Dr. Bill Young is the pastor. Pastor Donald Mathis Sr. of the M.L.

Harris United Methodist Church of Columbus was the presider and the Rev. Marie S. Rainge, officiated.

Minister Thomas Lott offered prayer, Pastor T. Terrell Reynolds read a selection from the New Testament and Elder Terence Lattimore offered acknowledgements.

A special tribute was offered by Carlton Mario Rainge Sr. and remarks given by Marshall Rainge Sr., Steven Anderson and Curtis Rainge.

Music was rendered by the Jacksons and soloist, Kamari Rainge. A praise dance was offered by Michelle Massey of the Woodbine Cooperative Parish.

Interment followed in the Masonic Cemetery in Waynesville in Brantley County.

Active pallbearers were Daniel Lee Rainge III, Kelii Stinson, Marshall Rainge Jr., Leslie Stinson Jr., Henry White and Phillip Rainge.

Honorary pallbearers were the Second District of Georgia Funeral Services Practitioners Association and all GFSPA members, 100 Black Men of Southeast Georgia and the staff of Rainge Memorial Chapel Funeral Home.

Flowerbearers were nieces, cousins and loved ones.

Condolences may be expressed online at [www.raingememorialchapelinc.com](http://www.raingememorialchapelinc.com).

Final and most sacred arrangements are entrusted to the professional care of Rainge Memorial Chapel, Inc. 505 Ware, St. Blackshear.

And a special "Thank You" to Mr. Randall King of King Brothers Funeral home for his assistance.

### **Rev. William Edward Ratcliffe**

William Edward Ratcliffe, 70, of Brunswick, departed this life Thursday, January 10, 2019, at Southeast Georgia Health Systems.

Born September 22, 1948, in Brunswick, Georgia, he was a 1966 graduate of Glynn Academy and attended Brunswick Junior College, Georgia Southern, South Georgia College, The Jewelers Institute of America, and Emory Candler School of Theology Course of Study.

He was a living donor recipient and was the recipient of two kidney transplants. He had a tremendous love of music and model trains. He was a member of The South Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. He was a youth and choir director as well as a member of Chancel Choir at First United Methodist Church in Brunswick. He also served as the pastor of several churches and served a mission ministering in Methodist Church Spanish Wells, Bahamas. He served as the Chaplain of Southeast Georgia Health System. He was also a past

member of the Brunswick Kiwanis Club, Downtown Business Association, and a member of the Order of DeMolay.

Survivors include his daughter, Jennifer (Keith) Emery; grandchildren Cody, Alyssa, Will and Haley Emery; mother, Sara Ratcliffe; brother, Charlie (Nancy) Ratcliffe; and nephews, Eric and Scotty Ratcliffe. He was preceded in death by his wife, Arlene E. Ratcliffe; father, Charlie G. Ratcliffe; maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. S. Hadley Brown; and paternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Ratcliffe.

Funeral services were held Monday, Jan. 14 at Brunswick First United Methodist Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Abiding Memorial fund at First United Methodist Church or to the American Kidney Foundation. [www.edomillerandsons.com](http://www.edomillerandsons.com)

### **Col. Thomas Jere “Jere” Cater**

Colonel Thomas Jere “Jere” Cater, Sr., USAF (Ret.), died Thursday, January 10, 2019, at Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL. He was 72.

Col. Cater was born in Macon, GA, the only child of Thomas Johnson Cater, Jr., and Hedvig Linnea Elisabeth Swanson Cater, both of Warner Robins. He was Salutatorian of the Class of 1964 at Warner Robins High School. While attending Georgia Institute of Technology on an Air Force scholarship, he worshiped regularly at St. Mark United Methodist Church in downtown Atlanta where he met his bride-to-be, Nancy Lee Rast, in the College and Career Sunday School class. He graduated from Georgia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1968, and from the University of Georgia with a Master of Business Administration in 1977.

Following his graduation from Tech and hers from Agnes Scott, Jere and Nancy Lee were married August 31, 1968, at Shandon United Methodist Church, Columbia, SC. Jere served more than three years active duty at Robins Air Force Base as a Maintenance Officer for the 19th Bomb Wing “Black Knights,” servicing B-52s and KC-135s. He completed his 30-year career in the active Air Force Reserve working with RAFB Civil Engineering. His military education included Aircraft Maintenance Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, Air War College, AFIT School of Civil Engineering, and numerous other training programs.

As a registered Professional Mechanical and Electrical Engineer, Cater excelled in establishing connections between disciplines and forming working relationships to facilitate construction of a wide variety of projects all over the southeast. His career included work in RAFB civil service, as an agent with civilian contractors, and as a professional in large firms and in private practice over more than 40 years. He was a Life Member, Reserve Officers Association; Life Member, Air Force Association. He also belonged to Society of American Military Engineers; National Society of Professional Engineers; Georgia Society of Professional Engineers; American Society of Mechanical Engineers; American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers; and American Society of Energy Engineers.

Faith and family formed the energy core of Col. Cater's life. His strong faith in Christ emerged in his teen years and undergirded his devotion to his family and his church. He and NancyLee celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary August 31, 2018. They enjoyed sharing time with many friends at the reception in their honor that was given by their children. A man of gentleness and honor, Cater lived out his faith by serving his church in multiple roles. He also strongly supported Boy Scouts of America. Himself an Eagle Scout at the age of 14, he proudly supported his two sons on their successful journeys to rank of Eagle Scout. On January 19, 2012, he was awarded Scouting's Silver Beaver Award for his unflagging participation.

Always optimistic and forward-looking, Col. Cater greatly enjoyed choral singing in multiple settings. He sang many years with the Heart of Georgia Barbershop Chorus, Choral Society of Middle Georgia, Great Falls (MT) Community Chorus, and his beloved First United Methodist Church Chancel Choir. While with the Great Falls Community Chorus he had the joy of singing at Carnegie Hall in New York.

Col. Cater was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas J. Cater, Jr., and Hedvig Swanson Cater, and his aunt, Katharine Cooper Cater. He is survived by his wife, NancyLee Rast Cater; sons, Thomas Jere Cater, Jr. (Tamra) of Purvis, MS, and John Owen Cater (Brittany) of Macon, GA; three grandchildren, Asher Owen Cater, Katharine Lanier Cater, and Skylar Jo Cater.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First United Methodist Church, Warner Robins, GA - Organ Fund, or to Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, FL.

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## **Scripture Readings – Jan. 22**

### **Jan. 27**

#### ***Third Sunday After the Epiphany***

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalm 19 (UMH 750)

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21

### **Feb. 3**

#### ***Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany***

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6 (UMH 794)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

### **Feb. 10**

#### ***Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany***

Isaiah 6: 1-8 (9-13)

Psalm 138 (UMH 853)  
1 Corinthians 15: 1-11  
Luke 5: 1-11

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## **Events in the South Georgia Conference – 1/22/2019 edition**

### **Ugandan Kids Choir Concert, Richmond Hill UMC – Jan. 23**

The children in the Ugandan Kids Choir bring a message of hope – sharing the power of God’s love through traditional music and dance. As they tour the United States, they delight audiences with their high-energy performances and infectious joy. They’ll be in South Georgia Wednesday, Jan. 23 at Richmond Hill United Methodist Church. Their performance begins at 6:45 p.m. in the church’s sanctuary. This concert is free of charge; however, their mission is to help bring attention and gain sponsorship for impoverished children. There will be an opportunity for people to choose a child to sponsor. The children in the performing choir already have sponsors, so you will have an opportunity to bless another child! Visit their [Facebook event page for more information](#).

### **Early Response Team and Chainsaw Training, Fitzgerald – Jan. 26**

An Early Response Team and Chainsaw Training will be held Saturday, January 26 at Central UMC in Fitzgerald. [Register here](#). Early Response Team Trainings help equip individuals and teams to respond in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The cost for the training is \$25 per participant. At the training, participants will receive an ERT Training Manual and upon completing the course will receive an UMCOR ID Badge and a T-shirt. Background checks are required before receiving badges. (UMCOR background checks **are** required before receiving badges—participants must register [here](#) at no cost to participants.) Lunch is also included in the cost. ***Pre-registration is required.*** \*Chainsaw training requirements: complete and pass ERT training offered in the morning or hold current ERT badge. Cost for chainsaw training only is \$12. If taken following the ERT class in the morning, \$6. The cost includes your textbook and badge. This chainsaw training will be demonstration and lecture style. There must be 6 participants for a chainsaw course to make. Host church must facilitate 1-2 trees (within reasonable distance from training venue) to be fell during hands-on training portion. ERT training time: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Chainsaw training time: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. To schedule an ERT training/chainsaw training, contact Luis Morales at [morhill@gmail.com](mailto:morhill@gmail.com).

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

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**

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](#)

### **Vashti Day – Feb. 3**

Every local church in South Georgia is encouraged to receive a special offering to support the ministry of The Vashti Center, Inc. To learn more about Vashti and its great ministry, visit [www.vashti.org](http://www.vashti.org).

### **Lay Speaker Training, Hahira UMC – Feb. 8-9**

The Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking Courses will be taught Friday, Feb. 8 and Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019, at Hahira UMC. A lay speaker is a professing member of a local church who is ready and desirous to serve the Church, and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church. A lay speaker has completed the required training courses in lay speaking and has been approved by a district or annual conference committee on lay speaking. Lay speakers serve the local church by witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and caregiving ministries. When certified, the lay speaker may conduct services of worship, preach, and lead study sessions as requested by the pastor or the district superintendent. Registration fee for the class is \$25 which covers all materials and lunch on Saturday. (Note: The Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class). [Register here.](#)

### **Annual Multicultural Luncheon Celebration – 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. [Click here for an event invitation.](#)

### **Andrew College Sunday – Feb. 10**

Founded in January 1854, Andrew College has continuously provided an academically challenging liberal arts education within a nurturing community for more than 160 years. A member of the South Georgia Conference, Andrew strives to inspire academic and spiritual growth across its historic 40-acre campus. The qualified faculty and caring staff engage with students in an intimate setting to encourage a lifelong love of learning and a strong sense of civic leadership. Students are regularly invited to strengthen their Christian discipleship through weekly chapel services and participation in a myriad of religious offerings. Andrew Sunday seeks to gain support for the College and identify prospective students. To learn more about Andrew College - a United-Methodist affiliated institution in Cuthbert, Georgia - visit [www.andrewcollege.edu](http://www.andrewcollege.edu).

### **Volunteers in Mission Awareness Sunday – Feb. 17**

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) exists to promote, encourage, and enable Christians to exemplify “Christian Love In Action” through short-term mission service in the United States and abroad. UMVIM provides opportunities for service by developing and nurturing relationships with domestic and international leaders. They continually nurture their contacts with these leaders to respond to the needs of local communities and to provide comprehensive project information. You can help support the work of UMVIM in the South Georgia Conference by giving an offering to support this vital ministry on this special Sunday.

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

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.

### **Kingdom Builders Promotion Sunday – Feb. 24**

*You are blessed to be a blessing.* We have been blessed to travel roads that were paved by those that went before us. Our lives have been changed by the investments they made. Now the torch has been passed to us to make the investments that will pave the road for the generation that will follow us. In 1962 the Kingdom Builders Club was started to change lives by funding new ministries and new congregations. Several of the largest congregations in South Georgia were started with funds from Kingdom Builders. In fact, the #1 and the #2 fastest growing United Methodist Congregations in the U.S. over the past 10 years are both in our conference and you started them. Way to go South Georgia! **PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL!** The Kingdom Builders Club is about far more than starting churches. It is about CHANGING LIVES! We have published a new daily devotional book entitled “Pray for 5.” This 40-day devotional is a tangible tool to help you and your friends change the lives of your family and friends. To obtain copies

for all the people in your congregation simply ask your District Superintendent. Our hope is that this daily devotional book will ignite a movement of prayer that unlocks a wave of relational evangelism that helps new people come to know Jesus like we have. **Funding is important.** God sends people to congregations who are ready to minister to them. We need to be starting new ministries to connect with these new people. To reach people no one is reaching, we must start doing things no one is doing, which requires funding. Pray for your friends AND become a Kingdom Builder by making a financial investment today to the Kingdom Builders Advanced Special. [Click here to download a Kingdom Builder support form.](#)

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

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 \$125 per student includes a tour bus, meals, lodging, and a t-shirt. [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**

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 is **OPEN**. [Click here for more information and registration information.](#)

### **Post-General Conference Informational Session – March 9**

An informational session will be held at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center in Tifton, GA to talk about the outcome of the 2019 called General Conference Session.

### **Marriage Enrichment Retreats at Lake Junaluska – March 10-12**

Lake Junaluska invites you to their Marriage Enrichment Retreats. The retreats are perfect for pastors who regularly do marriage counseling, or anyone who wants to strengthen the bond in their marriage. Three retreats will be held at Lake Junaluska, March 10-12, Aug. 18-20, and Sept. 29 – Oct. 1. Learn more at [www.lakejunaluska.com/marriage](http://www.lakejunaluska.com/marriage) or call 800-222-4930.

### **Lay Speaker Training, Pittman Park UMC – March 15-16**

The Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking Courses will be taught Friday, March 15 and Saturday, March 16 at Pittman Park UMC in Statesboro. A lay speaker is a professing member of a local church who is ready and desirous to serve the Church, and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church. A lay speaker has completed the required training courses in lay speaking and has been approved by a district or annual conference committee on lay speaking. Lay speakers serve the local church by witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and caregiving ministries. When certified, the lay speaker may conduct services of worship, preach, and lead study sessions as requested by the pastor or the district superintendent. Registration fee for the class is \$25 which covers all materials and lunch on Saturday. (Note: The Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class). [Register here](#).

### **Minister Spouses Retreat – March 15-17**

South Georgia's minister spouses are invited to "Come to the Waters" to refresh, rekindle, and remember at their annual retreat, March 15-17, at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. Please direct any questions to Lisa Crosby at (706) 392-6673 or [lisamcrosby@msn.com](mailto:lisamcrosby@msn.com). [Download the flyer](#)

### **Annual SBC21 Leadership & Development Conference – March 26**

The 2019 SBC21 Annual Celebration of Leadership and Development Conference will be held Saturday, March 16. Contact Rev. Earnestine Campbell, associate director of Connectional Ministries, at [earnestine@sgaumc.com](mailto:earnestine@sgaumc.com), for more information.

### **Lay Speaker Training, Richmond Hill UMC – March 29-30**

The Basic and Advanced Lay Speaking Courses will be taught Friday, March 29 and Saturday, March 30 at Richmond Hill UMC. A lay speaker is a professing member of a local church who is ready and desirous to serve the Church, and who is well informed on and committed to the Scriptures and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of The United Methodist Church. A lay speaker has completed the required training courses in lay speaking and has been approved by a district or annual conference committee on lay speaking. Lay speakers serve the local church by witnessing to the Christian faith through spoken communication, church and community leadership, and caregiving ministries. When certified, the lay speaker may conduct services of worship, preach, and lead study sessions as requested by the pastor or the district superintendent. Registration fee for the class is \$25 which covers all materials and lunch on Saturday. (Note: The Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class). [Register here](#).

### **UMCOR Sunday – March 31**

**UMCOR Sunday** (fourth Sunday in Lent) enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. A special offering is

taken on this day to support humanitarian aid through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). You can be assured that when catastrophes cause suffering, your church, impelled by Jesus' love and compassion, will be in the lead to ease the pain. Gifts to the UMCOR Sunday offering underwrite UMCOR's "costs of doing business." That helps them keep their promise that 100 percent of every other gift you make to a specific UMCOR project can be spent on that project - not on home office costs. To learn more about UMCOR or to order resources to promote the offering, visit [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) or call 888-346-3862. [Click here for resources to help promote this offering in your local church.](#)