

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – SEPT. 17 EDITION

Lessons from Dorian: Communication and connection are critical

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Even though Hurricane Dorian didn't impact Georgia's coast as originally forecast, South Georgia United Methodist congregations and ministries responded before and after the storm to help those whose lives were affected.

In the days leading up to Hurricane Dorian's eventual East Coast landfall, no one was sure exactly where the storm would hit, but those in the Coastal District prepared for the worst.

Coastal District Superintendent Rev. David Thompson lives in Richmond Hill in Bryan County, one of six Coastal Georgia counties that were under mandatory evacuation orders by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp.

Rev. Thompson, who evacuated to Cordele with his family, spoke with each pastor in the evacuation zone. He was impressed with the level of communication taking place between and among the pastors and their congregations.

"They had already done some form of communication, either by email or by phone tree," Rev. Thompson said. "They had passed the word through the congregation to evacuate and to check on those who needed help."

He also had daily briefings with Bishop R. Lawson Bryan, conference Communications Director Kelly Roberson, Conference Disaster Response Coordinator Luis Morales, and Robert "Bob" Grieco, a member of the conference's disaster response team. Regular conversations were also had with Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA) officials, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) members, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) representatives, and surrounding annual conferences.

"There was a tremendous amount of communication going on beforehand and afterwards," he said. "That kind of communication up front builds confidence for people when we don't know what's going to happen."

What did happen, at least along Georgia's coast, was mostly just rain and wind, but what Hurricane Dorian highlighted here is that the conference is prepared for those storms that do cause more damage.

The South Georgia Conference is the best prepared it's been in more than a decade, Morales said. Since October 2016, more than 350 South Georgia United Methodists have received [Early Response Team \(ERT\) Training](#). Three years ago, the conference had just one formal ERT team and one UMCOR-trained instructor; today there are five teams with two in the works and five instructors.

“I am proud of the capacity our conference has built since 2016 when Hurricane Matthew visited us,” Morales said. “I am thankful for the ERTs, our recently assigned district disaster coordinators, our ERT instructors, and for our conference staff’s support. I pray that we don’t get hit by any natural disasters like hurricanes or tornadoes, but we are ready should it happen in South Georgia.”

Being connected to one another at the local, district, and conference level and having access to quick, rapid communication were critical, too, Rev. Thompson said. Having those systems already in place before a storm hits is key to deployment of resources and making sure needs are met.

“It was a blessing to watch how established and ready we were because the connection was there,” he said. “We had the connection already ... had we had to create that or start that in the midst of the event I’m not sure things would have ever played out like they did. But because we were connected and because we were very used to communicating with each other, it really flowed. It just did what it was supposed to do at its best, which was really a blessing to watch and be involved with.”

He was also struck by the number of calls, emails, and texts he got from people who wanted to help. Morgans Chapel United Methodist Church, a Coastal District congregation in Townsend, was one of them. The small congregation of about 100 people collected more than \$5,000 in a love offering to help the recovery efforts in the Bahamas.

“That’s the power of the connection,” Rev. Thompson said. “We had more people willing and able to help than we needed to deploy. They were saying, ‘Let us know what you need when you need it.’”

Eastman United Methodist Church was one of several South Georgia United Methodist churches who stepped up to serve before, during, and after Hurricane Dorian. When the hurricane was forecast to hit the coast, the congregation quickly decided to turn its social hall into a Good Samaritan shelter.

Having attempted twice before to open as a shelter – during Hurricanes Michael and Irma – the church was prepared with air mattresses, sheets, and supplies. It took just a few hours to set up and get ready, said Rev. Ted Goshorn.

“The congregation has wanted to do this for three years,” he said. “It’s just a characteristic of this church. They’re a very outward-focused congregation.”

Adapting a model created and shared by Rev. Jamie Bone at Valdosta’s Park Avenue United Methodist Church, Rev. Goshorn set up a registration system, recruited volunteers, and advertised the shelter.

Since Hurricane Dorian skirted the coast, no one showed up at the shelter, but they’re prepared for the next time they’re needed.

A verse from Matthew 25 captures why Eastman UMC has worked so hard to host a shelter, Rev. Goshorn said.

“It says, ‘As you’ve done to the least of these, you’ve done to me.’ And that encapsulates why we are so willing and eager to do this. Because evacuees are, at that moment, the least of these. We feel the conviction that comes from knowing that how we treat the least of these is a reflection of who we think Christ really is.”

Rev. Thompson is grateful for the connection’s communication, capacity, compassion, and charity.

“We’ve been hit by hurricanes from the south and on the coast, we’ve been tornadoed in the middle ... we’ve all experienced it,” he said. “The blessing is that we’re there for each other. It didn’t hit us this time, but it did hit people we’re connected to and we need to help, so there’s an immediate response, not even a second thought, and that’s the blessing to me.”

Trip explores partnership between South Georgia, North Katanga Annual Conferences

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Joy. Passion. Radical hospitality. Relevance.

That’s what six South Georgia United Methodists found earlier this month when they traveled to the North Katanga Annual Conference, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

There to explore a new mission partnership with the conference, the team met with Bishop Mande Muyombo and learned about his three main initiatives: church planting, the Kamisamba Farm and Training Centre, and an orphanage. The group toured the farm and orphanage to gain a better understanding and perspective of the work and ministry being done.

During the eight-day trip, the South Georgia team also participated in the dedication and ribbon cutting of a new [Global Ministries](#) (GBGM) hospital in Kamina. They visited several other medical facilities, villages, and churches throughout the DRC and worshiped with fellow believers.

Regardless of how the South Georgia Conference will partner with the North Katanga Annual Conference – whether to offer farming expertise, leadership development resources, or something else – Dr. Nita Crump stressed that a partnership is being developed between the two conferences and that both will benefit from the relationship.

“We aren’t going over to tell them how to do something,” said Dr. Crump, director of Connectional Ministries. “We’re not going over to help support them. We are developing a partnership where we help them accomplish their goals and they help us accomplish ours. They have as much to offer us as we have to offer them.”

During South Georgia's 2019 Annual Conference session, the conference approved a proposal that allows for the use of funds originally collected for the East Africa Annual Conference partnership to now be used to explore a partnership with the North Katanga Annual Conference. Of the \$80,000 in the fund, about \$4,000 was used for this trip, Dr. Crump said.

Accompanying Dr. Crump on the trip were Allison Lindsey, associate director of Connectional Ministries; Rev. Paula Lewis, superintendent of the South Central District; Rev. Lee Pettis, pastor of Soperton and Landsburg United Methodist Churches and a representative of the Northeast District; Rev. Joseph Carter, pastor of Homerville United Methodist Church and representative of the South Central District; and Rev. Christy Bandy, pastor of Cairo First United Methodist Church and representative of the Southwest District.

While he observed a lack of material resources while in the DRC, Rev. Pettis said that joy was abundant.

"There are so many needs in North Katanga, but there's one thing they don't need and that's the joy of worshipping Jesus Christ and praising the Lord."

The churches are the center of the community, and even though most are small with dirt floors, they pack hundreds of people in for worship. Rev. Pettis was amazed at the effort made by villagers who pound rocks to make bricks for church walls.

"How many people here would pound rocks to make bricks to build a church? I think we could learn something there about their perseverance," he said. "It really touched us all to see their passion for Jesus."

Rev. Carter was overwhelmed by the joy and authenticity he saw. It was almost indescribable, he said, and made him take a hard look at his own faith journey.

"Do we have that raw, authentic joy for being with God?"

He also saw the daily significance of the church, how it is relevant in a way that many in the U.S. aren't.

"The church is very relevant in their lives," he said, explaining that churches often have water wells and sometimes even clinics and schools. "That's why they go. They make a practice of turning to the church, turning to God, to meet their needs. That's the first place they turn."

While there is still much to be decided about South Georgia's partnership with the North Katanga Annual Conference, one thing seems clear: there is as much to learn from our brothers and sisters as there is to teach.

"A lot of us entered into this with thoughts of what we could offer and how we could help," Rev. Carter said. "We came away with the clear idea that they have a lot more to offer to us than we could ever offer them."

This group will continue to meet and communicate next steps for the conference and will present a report at the 2020 Annual Conference session.

Unity has a purpose

OUR CONNECTION MATTERS

NITA CRUMP

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13, NIV)

Unity.

Unity is a word that's been tossed around quite a lot over the last couple of years in The United Methodist Church. Many questions have been asked about unity, including the question of whether or not we could/should/would seek unity at any cost. Some have offered the opinion that we should seek unity in our common zeal to reach the lost even as we go our separate ways to live out our mission of reaching the lost in different ways and in different veins of theological thought.

I'd like to suggest that we consider unity from a different perspective. Perhaps the words of Paul in the fourth chapter of Ephesians would be helpful as we consider unity and seek a deeper understanding of the word.

Paul writes that unity has a purpose. The purpose is to come together in faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ so that we may become mature and reach the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. What is the "whole measure of the fullness of Christ?" Let's consider the words of Paul found in Philippians 2:1-11. In this passage we're told that Jesus was equal to God but did not hesitate to give up that equality in obedience to God. Jesus gave up his status in heaven to take on the lowly status of humanity, to go even lower by becoming a servant, and even lower still by becoming obedient to death itself, even the most despised death – death on a cross. Jesus gave up the glory and presence of God to walk on earth as a human and then die on the cross so that you and I do not have to experience eternal death. What is the fullness of Christ? It is humbling oneself to take a servant's role in order that others may want to know the God who inspires you to do so.

As a follower of Christ who longs for the kind of unity that seeks to build up the body as it moves all of us toward maturity as a disciple, I should be willing to do what Christ did – humble myself, take on a servant's role, wash the feet of others, even those with whom I disagree, and ask what I might do to serve them.

As we seek to serve, we build the body of Christ and we achieve unity in service. And we become a witness to the world of how the body of Christ can love and serve others even while disagreeing on theological issues. This is not meant to diminish the theological issues that are the basis for our disagreements, but instead should demonstrate that even in our disagreements we can be one in our love for and service of Christ and the world that Christ came to save. We can be alive together in witness so that our love for Christ can overcome disagreements, allowing us to move forward toward maturity together.

Dr. Nita Crump serves as Director of Connectional Ministries. Contact her at nitac@sgaumc.com.

Faithful Despite Unfaithfulness

Fall Quarter: Responding to God's Grace

Sunday school lesson for the week of September 22, 2019

By Dr. D. Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Numbers 13:1-14:10a

Key Verse: Numbers 14:8

"If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us."

Lesson Aim: This lesson helps us to understand the importance of vision. How we look theologically at life determines whether we shirk in fear and complain, or whether we move forward by faith.

Geographical context

The Israelites have now camped in Sinai, "before the mountain of the Lord" from where Moses will later deliver the Ten Commandments. The people will remain encamped here for a little less than a year. According to the narrative, approximately two to three weeks have passed since our last lesson of the manna and quail.

Historical and theological reflection introducing the narrative

How quickly Israel forgets the wonder of God's grace at work among them. The Lord has provided water, bread, and meat, and has allowed them to witness the divine glory. Few moments altered their lives more than the reception of the Ten Commandments, a remarkable gift of divine grace. This narrative records another incident of the people grumbling and complaining. Even as Moses ascended Sinai to receive the Law, the Israelites were shaping the golden calf. On this particular occasion they fear God is leading them, through the leadership of Moses and Aaron, into the violent hands of a mighty enemy in Canaan. The life of the Israelites

should be sated with hope and joy in relation to God's providential care in giving water, manna and quail, in relation to the gift of the divine presence in the cloud, and in relation to the guidance and life given in the Ten Commandments. However, chaos brews in the tribe and rebellion against the leadership and ultimately against God.

Theological, historical and experiential reflection upon Numbers 13:1-14:10a

Numbers 13:1-2

A great opportunity for physical rest and spiritual growth stands before Israel. After a tiring journey through the desert they can now rest for almost a year, and even more importantly, they can contemplate and reflect upon what God has done. It is not coincidental that these months of pause precede the opportunity to, at last, enter Canaan. Occupying Canaan will require faith, trust, and perseverance. Great opportunities require great preparation. Few textbooks can prepare the human soul for spiritual perseverance than personal and collective struggle. Adversity in life tests faith and character. Those who endure the difficulty leave the adversity stronger. One of my favorite quotes on perseverance is by an unknown author. It reads: "Pain makes you stronger. Tears makes you braver. Heartbreak makes you wiser. So thank the past for a better future."

A better future awaits Israel. However, they must understand the lessons of their past struggles and pain. Here in the presence of Mt. Sinai they have such an opportunity. In order to fully prepare Israel, the Lord commands Moses to send spies into Canaan. One man from each of the 12 tribes was selected for the preparatory mission. These were well respected, trustworthy men of character.

In retrospect, have there been moments in our life we handled well because of prior struggle and the lessons we learned from that struggle? Do we believe past pain and struggle have been used by God to make us stronger in faith and character? How difficult is it to understand adversity as a time of preparation in contrast to complaining that it is an intrusion? If so, why?

Numbers 13:17-18

The people of Israel could erupt in disagreement quite easily; thus, Moses was indeed wise to give the 12 spies specific direction for spying out the land. They would not enter the land in a haphazard, unorganized manner. Moses' instructions ensure that the entire land will be reviewed. From the southern area of desert, upward to the Jordan plain, and northward into the hill country, the spies would have an opportunity to offer an accurate report. It is helpful in adversity to understand the struggle itself. What happened to place us in the midst of the difficulty? What is the best manner to handle it? What are all the dynamics (physical, emotional, spiritual, and social) involved? It is helpful to understand my weaknesses, and even more so my strengths. The spies were to look over the entire land. Thus, it is helpful for us to study adversity in order to overcome and learn from it.

When in times of difficulty, have we developed a means of understanding the struggle or do we simply attempt to survive as best we can? Is there a helpful manner in understanding and learning from adversity that we can share with others?

Numbers 13:25-27

The mission of the 12 took 40 days. The number 40 is often used biblically to denote "a completed purpose." The mission of the 12 was finished and complete. They were engaged in a spiritual mission more than engaging in helpful military preparation. The faithful response of God's people depended upon the report of the spies. They had been asked to return with fruit from the land that Israel might know Canaan is as fruitful as God promised. The fruit was to be a tangible expression of the hope God birthed in their heart through covenant promise. The people would be able to exclaim, "It is a land flowing with milk and honey!" Jesus said, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing." (Jn.20:29) However, God's grace at times allows us to see manifestations of God's promise. We witness loving, caring acts daily. Are these not tangible expressions of the Kingdom of Heaven? When we see a changed life is this not a tangible expression of God's forgiving grace? It is more superior to believe without seeing. Yet, in our humanity, it is helpful on occasion to see "the fruit of the land."

What are some of the expressions of God's promises that we have witnessed on our life? What are some of the obstacles that make believing without seeing difficult? What are some of the spiritual disciplines we can employ to teach us to develop a more superior vision of faith?

Numbers 13: 28

Moses displayed the fruit before the people to increase their trust and bolster their courage. However, he adds what I call the "dreaded conjunction." He says, "But the people living there

are powerful, and the cities fortified and very large.” If that wasn’t enough to strike fear in their hearts he adds the terrifying statement, “We even saw the descendants of Anak there.” The Anakites were renowned for being tall, strong, fierce warriors. We can assume the visions of luscious fruit and thriving crops immediately gave way to unbeatable warriors, big and strong. The fruit had not disappeared. Spiritually they had become blind to it. Faith was giving way to fear. Courage quickly gave way to complaining. Of the 12, only two believed God’s promise in spite of what they saw. Caleb and Joshua were lone voices of hope, faith, and courage. The remaining 10 were filled with doubt and were now instruments of discouragement. The fear-provoking report of the 10 would lead the Israelites to wander for years before finally entering the land of promise. There is always a consequence when doubting what God has proclaimed true. Even after witnessing the resurrection of Jesus the disciples hid themselves behind a locked door that very night “for fear of the Jews.” How could they forget the power of the resurrection in a few hours? Thankfully Jesus entered their room of hiding and sent them forth. Without that appearance the church would never have made its way into the upper room for Pentecost. God’s grace can overpower doubt and fear. In our narrative, the consequence of opting for fear over faith is that of wandering in the wilderness for 39+ years.

Can we recall moments in our journey of faith when we listened to the voice of fear? Can we recall when our enthusiasm and courage dissipated simply because we listened to a message that stood in contrast to God’s message of promise? Can we name the consequences we experience as a result of our doubt, fear and at times our hesitation?

Numbers 14:1-2

Grumbling and complaining had returned. Once again, we learn that fear and discouragement can lead to a reframing of yesterday. Egypt now looks better through the lens of doubt and fear than Canaan as promised by God. In last week’s lesson the people exclaimed, “At least we had food in Egypt!” Now we discover their expression of despair is darker and resounds with hopelessness. “Only if we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!” The doubt and fear of the Israelites not only led them to assume a certain defeat in Canaan, they were envisioning horrific deaths. The illogical cries reek of raw emotion. They are crying, “It is better to die as a slave, or from hunger and thirst than in battle against such a savage enemy!” A word of discouragement from the 10 spies had completely altered the vision of God’s people and doused courageous faith with terrified defeatism. We need to note that a single word of discouragement has tremendous destructive power. Read James 3:4-8. One week in August a single word was spoken regarding America’s economy. That word was “recession.” The Dow fell 800 points in a matter of hours. Never doubt the power of a negative word. The Israelites initially heard “fruit” and “promise;” then they heard “powerful enemies” and their spirits spiraled downward.

Can we share an experience in which a single negative word or message altered our entire perception and course of action? Can we recall a moment when it happened in the ministry of our church? What are the certain consequences of allowing grumbling and complaining to become the status quo for a church or person?

Numbers 14:4-6

Assured of certain death, or rather “imagined death,” the people rebelled against Moses and Aaron for leading them into the approaching danger. Blame is a total waste of time and energy. It never alters anything for the better. It can be very destructive however, creating innocent scapegoats and hurting the feelings of others. Overwhelmed with emotion, Joshua and Caleb fell facedown before the people. One cannot help but think of Jesus lying on the ground in prayer, overwhelmed by the approaching abandonment, betrayal, and death. Joshua and Caleb are deeply moved and troubled at this tragic, sad sight. They tore their clothes, a symbolic act of sorrowful repentance and shame. It is moving to note how deeply these men were touched over the unnecessary pain experienced by the community, and the negative course of action they knew was going to be taken by their faith family. The response of God’s people created an air of mistrust and shame. Everyone experienced the consequences associated with collective doubt and fear. Though Joshua and Caleb were not guilty of disbelief and dispersing fear, still they suffered. Churches are promised that God is with us, “even to the end of the age.” (Mat.28:18-20}. However, we have witnessed churches that shrink from their mission for reasons of doubt and fear. There are serious consequences when God’s people neglect the promise of God and adhere to messages of doubt and fear. Those consequences affect everyone.

When is the last time you witnessed another weeping or experiencing sorrow over the needless suffering experienced by their church and the people they loved? Have you witnessed the suffering of even the innocent when destructive courses of action were taken?

Numbers 14:7-9

Joshua and Caleb reminded the people they had witnessed the fruit of land and its beauty personally. More importantly, they reminded the people of God’s promise. They attempted to address the fear running rampant among the community with faith in God, who had fulfilled the promise of covenant time and again. They were asking the people to, “Trust God.” “Remember the Lord’s goodness and power in the past, and move forward into today and tomorrow for God is unchangeable.” However, the people cannot enter the land in fear or mistrust. God will give them the land as promised if only they will do as promised in covenant: “Trust in the Lord and be not afraid.” God was not asking for works, only for faith. Fearing the enemy is interpreted by Joshua and Caleb as “rebellious against the Lord.”

How is the fear of Israel an act of rebellion against God? How does our fear in the imagined and projected vision we create hinder the work of God’s spirit in our midst? Can we list our “yesterday moments,” or our church list them in order to move into the future in trust?

Numbers 14:10

Our lesson ends with the sad words, “But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.” This closing word reveals the depth of fear and mistrust among the people. They are not only afraid and doubtful, they are angry! Projecting our fear into the future and imagining a tomorrow created by our fear can lead to pain. The conclusion of their projection of fear is that the people

are “going to suffer and die.” The anger emerging from such projection leads to blame. We can strike our head on the corner of a table and illogically curse the table. We are hurt, we want to hurt someone or something in response, and our action is usually senseless. Joshua and Caleb have done nothing other than encourage the people with truth. They are two shining lights of faith and hope, yet the imagination of the Israelites has made them the enemy. The future is now terrifying, and, if the people move forward in fear they will do so without leadership. Leadership can often be sacrificed in frightening and uncertain times for no constructive reason. Thus, fear will increase, suffering will intensify, and chaos will reign.

Sadly, can you remember when leaders were criticized in a time of uncertainty in church, at work, or anywhere in life? What were the consequences?

Lesson Summary

The Teacher’s Guide for our Sunday school lesson provided a great saying from Dale Carnegie. He wrote, “Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.” Our journey of faith has everything to do with perception. How we perceive yesterday matters. God has blessed us continually, yet how easily we forget or neglect these memories when faced with a time of testing. God uses life to not only test our faith in the Lord’s promise, but also to increase our faith as divine goodness is revealed once again. Like Joshua and Caleb, we are called to move forward trusting in God’s grace and promise. It doesn’t mean we are not fearful; it rather means that we allow our faith to overpower fear. As with Joshua and Caleb, our stand and decisions will not always be initially popular, but they will prove beneficial and blessed.

Prayer

Almighty God, shield me from the frailty of my spirit, protect me from own powerless will, free me from all anxieties and doubts, give me the vigor to push on and continue with the mission you have chosen me to task. Help me remember, Lord, that you are there beside me, and if I fall at times, be there to carry me. In Jesus name, Amen. (*Prayers for Courage and Strength*; www.lords-prayer-words.com)

Faithful During Consequence

Fall Quarter: Responding to God’s Grace

Sunday school lesson for the week of September 29, 2019

By Dr. D. Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Numbers 14:10b-20

Key Verse: Numbers 14:19

In abundance with your great love, forgive the sin of the people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.

Lesson Aim: Understanding the relationship between consequence and grace, and the importance of intercessory prayer.

Geographical context:

Israel remains encamped at Sinai after leaving the desert. They were poised to enter the Promised Land until doubt and mistrust made such a task too difficult. Israel would enter Canaan through faith in God's promise, trusting in God's care. They could not subdue or settle the new land in a spirit of fear with grumbling and complaining.

Historical and theological reflection introducing the narrative:

When interpreting a text, it is important to realize God reveals the divine nature and will to us *at a particular time in history, using the language and symbols of that time, speaking to us in a manner we can understand*. For example, we read nothing of physics or higher mathematics, for the people could not comprehend it. The stepping stones of science and math were not yet developed. The same is true for moral development. Israel would grow morally and righteously according to what they could understand at a particular time and pass to the next generation. In gaining an understanding of a biblical narrative we need to understand this moral development. It is helpful to think of rearing children into adulthood. If we place two items on a coffee table, both of equal value, a toddler will usually pick one up. We will sternly say "No!" The child will most likely pick it up again. This will continue until the consequence frightens them, whether it is a sterner "No!" or a light tap on the hand. Yet, the child will then most likely pick up the second item. Why? The toddler cannot yet develop internal principle. They do not realize that if we are not to pick up the first, it also means we are not to pick up the second. This is the stage of "Law." Israel, after the fall, is much like moral toddlers. They respond to consequence, thus they initially receive the Mosaic Law. The divine intent is to lead them into a life of internal principle, into a moral of the heart. Eventually our children enter school. Here they learn to live the values of the law in a social setting. Relationships begin to become very important. This "social phase" for Israel occurs when they enter and begin to settle Canaan. They must learn how the Mosaic Law relates to not only the life of their tribe, but also their life as lived among all the tribes in Canaan. Eventually, our children enter the difficult moral stage of adolescence. At this point they have begun to internalize the principles of law, and should know what is right and wrong. If we have to tell a teen every right and wrong they will face when they leave the house we are in trouble. However, a teen struggles with internal principles as they encounter a difficult world filled with decisions. We often chastise them with the words, "You should have known better!" For Israel, this is the "prophetic stage." The prophets are proclaiming to Israel that they should know better after receiving the law. Their life together and in the world should reflect the beautiful internal principle of love. All law was to teach one how to love God and live in God's love with one another. They were to learn to internalize Deut. 6:4 "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." Jeremiah 31:31-33 proclaimed the coming of this internalization. Jesus ushers us into that moral adulthood Jeremiah envisioned. He said, "I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it." He has come to fulfill Deut. 6:4 and to

empower us to do the same, adding the beautiful addition “and thy neighbor as thyself.” (Mat. 22:36-40) This is the ultimate moral state. This is moral adulthood. We no longer need 612 laws to teach us how to live, nor should we have to learn only by consequence. We live by an internal principle that the law had been pointing to all along. We need to always ask, “Where is our text located in the moral development of God’s people?” Numbers records a time when Israel is just begging to move out of the toddler stage and into the social stage of living in justice, love, faith and live with the world. Therefore, actions and consequences of those actions remain very important. As a matter of fact, they are still learning their moral life from consequence. They still need to hear the stern “No!” to receive a firm tap on the hand, and to experience the consequences of their actions. They still learn to trust through fear of those consequences. However, we find God’s loving nature at work in always tenderly affirming, gently guiding, and respectively reminding Israel they are loved. Our text occurs as Israel is going to have to experience the consequences of their recent doubt and mistrust of God. They are going to have to learn to fear God and to take God’s word and promises seriously. However, we also will hear the love of God reaching and teaching the people through Moses’s intercession and the Lord once again expressing love and mercy.

What is the intimate connection between Jer. 31:31-33 and Deut. 6:4? How is Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 22:36-40 related to Deut. 6:4 and Jer. 31:31-33? Where does Israel in Numbers 14 morally stand in relation to the ultimate internal morality of loving God and others with all one’s heart? Are there moral stances you take today that you would not have understood years ago? How did you come to the realization you now possess?

Theological, historical and experiential reflection upon Numbers 14:10a-20:

Numbers 14:10b-11

“How long will these people treat me with contempt?” Contempt is a strong word. The formal definition of contempt is: “A disregard for something that should be taken into account.” The stronger meaning is: “The feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration.” It is accurate to assume that Israel’s lack of faith reveals a disregard for God, and that which is sacred. God and his promises should be taken into consideration, but they are ignored and even questioned. “Yes, we know you promised to lead us into Canaan and to empower us to settle it, but we don’t believe you are going to do it!” is probably close to capturing the community sentiment. Their fear and mistrust are not presented as reasonable; their doubt reflects the very opposite. The text reads Israel doubted God “in spite of all the signs God performed among them.” Here we can hear the divine parent scolding the morally preadolescent people: “You should know better!” The people have far more reason to believe than to mistrust. Thus, indeed they are treating God with contempt. How do we arrive at this point of contempt after all we’ve witnessed? Remember, in prior lessons we learned that fear imagines its own scenarios. It can see defeat, suffering, and death before they actually occur, even when God promises they will not occur. Once a scenario is imagined or created we are prone to interpret events as supporting that scenario. As a young beginner in Little League baseball I was placed in right field. I didn’t want

the ball hit my way for I had not yet learned to field high fly balls. I began to imagine my dropping the ball and grew even more afraid. I then watched the batter stand in the box and practice a swing that I believed made it possible for him to hit the ball my way. The entire scenario was concocted through my fear. The batter dribbled a slow roller to the pitcher. My fear had imagined and created a scenario that never occurred. Fear begins to see what it needs to see to reinforce its existence. Israel is so immersed in their fear and their certainty of suffering they even envision God abandoning them.

Can you recall a time when fear distorted your perception of God's love and mercy? Can you recall a time when fear led us to assume God would act in a particular manner just for our benefit?

Numbers 14:12

It is difficult to understand these severe acts of judgement from where we stand in history. However, we must remember Israel is only a nation of moral toddlers. They understand and respond to fear more than kindness. At this point in Israel's moral development it is fear that gains their attention. The people quickly forget the kindness of God, but readily hear God's warning of judgement. It is not God's desire that they respond in this manner, but it is the Lord's desire to lead his people into a deeper understanding of true righteousness. Few, if any, of us enjoyed having to use any form of consequence when teaching our young children. However, that warning was necessary for their development into good, moral, upstanding people. We can hear a note of grace resounding from within the proclamation of judgement. God promises that though many will succumb to the plague, a remnant will be saved. God says, "But I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they." God remains faithful to his covenant though a large number of covenant people turn against the Lord. A flicker of hope always exists. Our hope now, as then, is in the goodness, mercy, and love of God.

Why is it difficult for us to believe God can work and does work through judgment and consequences? How do you personally understand the tension that exists between grace and judgement?

Numbers 14:13-16

Like Abraham, Moses cared deeply for God's people. His intercession on behalf of the nation reveals a great devotion unto the Lord and a great personal commitment to the people he leads. We must not forget that Moses is under no obligation to intercede or even care about wayward Israel. Why risk further angering God for a people who seem to care very little about pleasing the Lord? Moses must be aware that God's love is absolutely real. It is a love to which he can appeal when all seems hopeless. Not only is he confident in God's love, he is equally assured that God keeps his promises. Furthermore, Moses understands the "divine rationale" for the Exodus, the giving of the Law, and the expressions of care God has demonstrated over Moses' lifetime. Why would God deliver them in such a miraculous manner, care for them with such tenderness, and refuse to abandon them when they were unfaithful unless God has an incredible purpose for

doing so? As we examine Moses' personal reasons for interceding for Israel we understand that Moses *identifies* with the people. He is *one of them!* It is his family who faces impending suffering and loss. As any person who loves his family, he prays for them.

Many have prayed for me over the years during my physical suffering and struggle. Every prayer is precious and meaningful. Still, there are those who deeply identify with our pain and in some almost mystical manner we sense it. Moses prays as one who is intimately connected to the family of God. We hear Moses' reasoning in his attempt to change God's mind. Egypt was and remained a powerful nation. How stunned they must have been to have an unarmed nation of slaves escape their grasp, and then lose so many soldiers and chariots in the sea! They must certainly fear the God of the Israelites! But, what will they think if Israel now dies in Sinai? Where is their God when the plague comes? He must have abandoned them! As Israel moved into the "social stage" of their moral development it was important to possess great standing among the nations. It was a violent age of wars and empires. The greatest gods belonged to the mightiest nations. In the eyes of Egypt and surrounding enemies the God of Israel was mighty. However, if Israel succumbs to the plague their God will be perceived as weak. Moses prays, "If you put these people to death, leaving none alive, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, 'The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath, so he slaughtered them in the wilderness.'" It will not just be God's power that will be called into question, the world will question his mercy and love for his people as well.

Can you share a time when someone interceded for you in a most meaningful manner? What was the difference between someone offering a prayer for you and someone interceding for you? Is there a difference? How often do we intercede for others, especially those with whom we share no interaction or relationship? How often do we pray for the church and not just our church? What are the obstacles we face in becoming a person who intercedes regularly for others? Was Moses truly concerned about God's reputation of providentially caring for Israel in the world, or was he simply using this issue to bolster his argument for sparing Israel from judgement?

Numbers 14:17-19

Moses was aware that God judged, and God showed mercy. In his intercession he initially prayed for God to withhold judgement lest the nations doubt his care for Israel and his power. Now, Moses appeals to an attribute of God that was uncommon among the gods of the near eastern world. He appeals to God's love and mercy. Moses isn't simply reaching into the dark in hopes that God might be merciful. God has revealed the divine attributes of love and mercy consistently in Israel's life. These are the attributes which tower above all others. Paul, who was very acquainted with Old Testament history, understood the superiority of God's love when he recorded his masterpiece on love in I Cor. 13. God's love is the "more excellent way." In the age in which Moses lived, the revelation of such love was a theological ray of sunshine breaking through the dark clouds of angry judgment. The affirmation that God is slow to anger is important to remember. The warning of judgement is not a *loss of temper, or sporadic act* on God's part. Israel has consistently rebelled, ignored, and neglected God's mercy and goodness.

The ensuing judgement is the consequence of a pattern of behavior. Still, the text reveals that God's love does not always excuse us from the consequences of our behavior. As cited above in the discussion of moral development, Israel learns from consequences. Consequences gain Israel's attention and remind them to flee from such behaviors in the future. Removing the consequences on every occasion does not reveal the depth of God's love. Love sometimes has to be tough, and on occasion it hurts. As a parent I never enjoyed assigning punishment for rebellious behavior. Yet, because I loved I had to punish. My children needed to learn the moral lesson the consequences of their actions would teach. God will have mercy and the Lord's love is always at work, and at times it is at work in the consequences. Some struggle with the assertion that consequences of sin can be experienced for generations. The same is true, however, for mercy.

I am trained in family systems therapy, which understands generational patterns of behavior. Dysfunction in a family will usually affect at least one child. That child can marry someone that compliments the dysfunctional behavior and thus one of their children might bear the consequence. This pattern can continue until there is an intervention that breaks the cycle. Israel's children are being reared in a rebellious community. They hear the rebellious language and witness the rebellious acts. It is impossible for them to remain unaffected. Unless someone responds to God's love with righteous behavior the pattern will continue. A righteous pattern will continue for generations as well. When we read the book of Judges and the Kings we find the repetitive phrase that the leader of Israel "did evil in the sight of the Lord," or "lived righteously before the Lord." These books record the generational consequence that emerges from either a sinful or righteous community.

How do the actions of a church affect the coming generations? How can interventions of God's righteousness and divine purposes be experienced in churches seeking new direction? Can you identify the patterns of behavior in your life, your church, or family? How can constructive wholesome behavior be upheld and passed to the next generation? How can we affect change when the behavior and attitudes are destructive?

Numbers 14:20

"The Lord replied, 'I have forgiven as you asked.'" Moses shares six short words, but how powerful they are! God chooses to answer Moses prayer and once again forgive Israel for its mistrust and rebellion. God's goodness continues to reach forward, making way for a life of hope and promise. As stated above, the consequences remain. Only Joshua and Caleb will enter Canaan. The remainder of the people will perish before that great day when the Jordon is crossed. Their hope and joy must rest in the knowledge that their children and grandchildren will experience the promise of God.

How easy is it for our current culture to find joy in knowing our present actions will benefit the coming generations instead of us? Can we accept the role of creating a new day through God's grace that will allow the generations to come to experience the wonder of the Kingdom of God?

Lesson Summary

As a covenant people we are also an interceding people. As those in touch with God's presence in the world we can recognize that which takes life and that which gives it. We are the community that realizes the interconnectedness of all people. This intimate relationship we enjoy with each other is at the core of a prayer life that intercedes for others. On some occasions our prayer requests that we learn from the consequences. On other occasions we seek God's guidance in allowing the Holy Spirit to use us to create a new path of righteousness and love in the world. We leave the decision as to whether we should experience the consequences of rebellious behavior or escape them to God. God will act on behalf of all for the good of all.

Prayer

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. (St. Patrick's prayer)

A Positive Attitude

By Dr. Hal Brady

A few days ago, my wife and I visited a minister friend and his wife in an Atlanta hospital.

This minister friend and I have known each other for a number of years, as we served neighboring churches at the same time in the North Georgia mountains.

Though we haven't seen each other for some time, when I found out he was in the hospital in another city, I called him to see how he was doing. He told me that he had been in one hospital, transferred to another, was told he was to have heart bypass surgery, and was waiting for the date. His wife shared that the date had been set and changed several times.

A few days later, I called back and found out that he had been transferred to a hospital in Atlanta. So, of course, my wife and I went to check on him.

Upon arriving in his room, he was just back from having a couple of "heart stents" put in. When he saw me, a smile came across his face and he said, "Brother Brady, it's been a hundred years (an exaggeration). After the nurses left I said to him, "You've had something of a time with these different hospitals and varying opinions." I expected him to reply, "Yeah, I have." But he said no such thing. He said, "Well, they have all tried their best and have helped me, but I'm ready to go home – back to those mountains."

After the prayer, I thought to myself, what a marvelous positive attitude. He had been in three hospitals, was told he needed bypass surgery, and spent much time waiting. Yet he was and is positive about the whole experience.

Like my friend, positive people are always inspiring us.

Noted minister and author, the late Dr. James W. Moore, entitled one of his books, "Attitude is your paintbrush. It Colors Every Situation."

According to Dr. Moore, this is precisely what the Apostle Paul was underscoring in Romans 12 when he said, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice ... to God (12:1). In other words, let serving God and trusting God be the attitude of your life."

In the rest of this article, I want to mention three significant ideas about what makes for a positive attitude.

First, a positive attitude results from a sense of gratitude or thankfulness!

Melody Beattie, an American author, writes, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life ... It makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

The most positive people I know are the grateful people. Even in difficult circumstances, these grateful people know, because of their strong faith in God, that God is with them and they cannot be defeated. They know that God is with them and will ultimately give them the victory, and for that, they are grateful and positive.

Second, a positive attitude results from being open to the good, the true, the beautiful, and the joyous. I once knew a friend, now in the Church Triumphant, whose unwavering philosophy of life was this, "Everything's beautiful and getting better all the time."

Behind his life were multiple acts of kindness: dressing up like Santa Claus at Christmas while patrolling the streets of a major city and performing little deeds of kindness, visiting the ill, stopping at institutions and homes to bring joy to children and adults, even visiting the hospital at midnight to be sure his friend's needs were being met. And, of course, his kindnesses extended to numerous other homes and situations as well.

It's no wonder that his life's motto was, "Everything's beautiful and getting better all the time." A life of small kindnesses on behalf of others will assure us of a positive attitude.

Third, a positive attitude results when we recognize that others love us! To live with and get along with other people, we need to assume that they love us. This happens for many of us with our families and/or friends.

But it goes deeper than that. Truth is, we have a right to believe that others ought to love us because of our very creation. Granted, this sounds a bit conceited, but it's not. You see, we are God's children, and we have a God-likeness. And that's true of all of us!

There are certainly other things that contribute to a positive attitude, but these three merit our close attention. Life is much more inspiring and joyful with a positive attitude.

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](http://halbradyministries.com) (halbradyministries.com).

Retired Clergy Birthdays – September 2019

- 9/01 – David Boggs: 1557 George Williams Rd.; Louisville, GA 30434
9/03 – Fred Foster: 1964 Madison Hwy.; Quitman, GA 31643
9/03 – Guy Mathis, Jr.: 1108 Moore Dr.; Americus, GA 31709
9/04 – Earl James: 310 Avondale Circle; Warner Robins, GA 31088
9/05 – Mark Kase: 1100 Arthur J. Moore Dr., Unit 102; St Simons Island, GA 31522
9/05 – Gene Yelverton: 6345 Concord Church Rd.; Ellaville, GA 31806
9/06 – Cecil Hazen: John Wesley Villas, 5471 Thomaston Rd., Apt 419; Macon, GA 31220
9/09 – Richard Soper: 229 Victorian Lake Dr.; Brunswick, GA 31525
9/13 – Bernie Khaw: 150 Myrtle Ave., Apt. 2205; Brooklyn, NY 11201
9/14 – Tom Johnson, Sr.: PO Box 127; Oxford, GA 30054
9/15 – Ted Bass: 133 Brieghton Ct.; Macon, GA 31210
9/15 – Elick Bullington, Jr.: Lakeside Senior Care; 1025 N. Chester Ave.; Douglas, GA 31533
9/15 – Buddy Cooper: 7005 Deerwood Lane; Upatoi, GA 31829
9/16 – Henry Bass: 404 Clyde Ave.; Valdosta, GA 31602
9/16 – Bob Norwood: 946 Old Wadley Rd.; Swainsboro, GA 30401
9/16 – Ray Youngblood: 214 Lee St.; North Augusta, SC 29841
9/18 – Burns Willis: 1815 E. Washington St.; Thomasville, GA 31792
9/19 – Wayne Moseley: 29 William E. Moseley Rd.; Collins, GA 30421
9/19 – Dan Pegram: 112 Tahoe Dr.; Pooler, GA 31323
9/20 – James Trice, Jr.: 5300 Zebulon Rd.; Garden Home 31; Macon, GA 31210
9/21 – Robert Herrington, Sr.: 185 S. Sixth St.; Cochran, GA 31014
9/21 – Virgil Lee: 208 Yorkshire Crescent; Thomasville, GA 31792
9/22 – Edwin Chase: 70 Shipwatch Rd.; Savannah, GA 31410
9/23 – Steve Posey: 8337 S. 5th St.; Broken Arrow, OK 74011
9/26 – John Irwin: 109 Deer Run Dr.; Macon, GA 31220
9/26 – Larry Sauls: 1691 Church Loop Rd.; Rockledge, GA 30454
9/27 – James Boyd: 112 Asbury St.; St. Simons Island, GA 31522
9/27 – Andy Brownley: 34 South Broad St.; Alamo, GA 30411
9/28 – Donna Jordan: 404 Brentwood Dr.; Dublin, GA 31021
9/28 – William Ryan: 2138 Red Bank Circle; Sevierville, TN 37876
9/30 – Dennis Stalvey: PO Box 685; Americus, GA 31709

OBITUARIES

Rev. Sanford Brown

Reverend Sanford V. Brown, Sr., of Savannah, passed away Sept. 4, 2019, in Columbus.

Sanford was born October 31, 1927, in Hartwell, Ga. to William Howard Brown, Sr. and Lois Cook Brown. Number eight of 13 children, Sanford was raised on a dairy farm near Dawson, Ga. He graduated from Sasser High School. He attended Young Harris College and graduated from

Georgia Teachers College (now Georgia Southern University) and Emory University Candler School of Theology.

Rev. Brown served as a United Methodist minister in the South Georgia Conference for 41 years. His appointments included Twin City UMC, Shellman UMC, East Highland UMC (Columbus), Fort Valley UMC, First UMC Warner Robins, Camilla UMC, Trinity UMC (Savannah), and Adel UMC.

After retirement in 1991, Sanford remained active in pastoral and evangelistic ministry for another 20 years through Agape Faith Ministries and the Coastal Georgia Walk to Emmaus Community. He preached revivals throughout Georgia and frequently served as the Spiritual Director for Coastal Georgia Walk to Emmaus retreat. He was known by all as a man who loved Jesus and people and wanted them all to know Him.

In addition to his ministry activities, he enjoyed gardening, cooking, hunting, tennis and college football. He was an avid fan of the Georgia Bulldogs and the Georgia Southern Eagles.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Bobbie V. Brown of Savannah, and his siblings J. Harold Brown, Francis Holbrook, Claudean Stone, W. Howard Brown, Jr., Nelson Brown, W. Spencer Brown, Jule L. Brown, and Patsy Howard.

He is survived by his daughter, Debra Brown Johnson (James) of Columbus; daughter, Barbara Brown Greer (Rick) of Savannah; son Sanford V. Brown, Jr. (Theresa) of Brooks, GA; granddaughter Frankie Ann Mitchell (Adam) of Decatur; granddaughter Kendall Johnson Kim of Gastonia, NC; grandson Kyle Johnson of Fairfax, VA; and great grandchildren Kensleigh and Mikah Kim. He is also survived by his siblings Miriam Moore of Statesboro, GA; Lucy Corbitt of Rincon, GA; Paul Brown of Orange Park, FL, and Ellen Purvis of Watkinsville, GA.

Services were held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Savannah on September 11, 2019. The Rev. Dr. Dusty Reynolds of Savannah officiated. Baker McCullough Funeral Home assisted with the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be given in his memory to “[Unto the Least of His Ministry.](#)”

Rev. Edward Cadle

Rev. Edward Cadle, 96, passed away Sept. 12, 2019, at his residence after a long illness, joining his wife of 74 years in heaven with Jesus, which is where he longed to be.

The Hepzibah, Ga. native was a member of Garden City United Methodist Church where he taught the Barrett-Cadle Sunday School Class for many years. He was a Methodist minister for 40 years before founding Mission on the Move. He also served in the U.S. Navy during WWII.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward Eve Cadle and Molly Broxton; his wife of 74 years, Inez Cadle; grandchildren, Nicholas Cadle, Misty Bridgeforth, and Shane Cadle; and 17 siblings.

He is survived by sons and daughters-in-law, Edward “Eddie” and Joann Cadle, Danny and Lynette Cadle, and Pat and Julie Cadle; daughters and sons-in-law, Diane and David Wegmann and Mary and Matt Petrivitch; 19 grandchildren; and 24 great-grandchildren.

Services were held Sunday, Sept. 15 at Springfield United Methodist Church. Honorary pallbearers were the Barrett-Cadle Sunday School Class.

Remembrances: Mission on the Move, PO Box 206, Springfield, GA 31329 or Garden City United Methodist Church Building Fund, 62 Varnadoe Ave., Garden City, GA 31408.

Scripture Readings – Sept. 17

Sept. 22

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

Psalm 79:1-9, or Psalm 4 (UMH 741)

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 16:1-13

Sept. 29

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 (UMH 810)

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

Oct. 6

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lamentations 1:1-6

Psalm 137 (UMH 852)

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

Events in the South Georgia Conference – 9/17/2019 edition

KidzQuest Children’s Retreat – Sept. 20-22

KidzQuest, the annual children’s fall retreat sponsored by South Georgia’s Connectional Ministries is for students in 3rd-6th grades. This event typically sells out before the deadline and brings so much energy (and noise!) to the grounds of Epworth By The Sea retreat center on St. Simons Island, GA. 500 children and adult leaders come together with dozens of other church groups, learning how to worship, study God's Word, and understand what a relationship with

Jesus really means. Amidst beautiful coastal scenery, amazing adult leaders (that's you!) and time away from home - these children are given an opportunity to experience Christ in brand new ways! [Click here for details](#). **Registration is closed.**

Sexual Ethics Workshop – Sept. 26

A Sexual Ethics Workshop will be held Thursday, September 26 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Tifton First UMC. [Register here](#)

ERT & Chainsaw Operator Safety Training, Midland – Sept. 28

An Early Response Team (ERT) and Chainsaw Operator Safety Training will be held Saturday, Sept. 28 at Pierce Chapel in Midland. [More information](#) | [Register](#)

Annual SBC21 Leadership & Development Conference – Oct. 5

The 2019 SBC21 Annual Celebration of Leadership and Development Conference will be held Saturday, Oct. 5. Questions? Contact Rev. Earnestine Campbell, associate director of Connectional Ministries, at earnestine@sgaumc.com.

World Communion Sunday – Oct. 6

World Communion Sunday is one of the six churchwide Special Sundays of The United Methodist Church. Our church is at its best when we reach out to sisters and brothers in need. World Communion Sunday calls the church to reach out to all people and model diversity among God's children. United Methodists relate to [World Communion Sunday](#) by celebrating communion with other Christians around the world on this special Sunday. Churches are also encouraged to receive an offering to support scholarships for ethnic undergraduate and graduate students. Our gifts often enable first-generation students to attend college.

Lay Speaking Class (Basic), Statesboro – Oct. 11-12

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. This fee covers all materials and lunch on Saturday.

Registration: www.sgaumc.org/layspeakertraining

UMW Annual Meeting – Oct. 19

The 2019 South Georgia UMW Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, Oct. 19 in Columbus, Ga.

Eagles' Fall Retreat – Oct. 21-23

You are invited to join the Eagles, the retired clergy of the South Georgia Conference, for three

wonderful days at beautiful Epworth By The Sea as they meet to sing together, enjoy great programs, host an auction of members' creations, share meals in the dining hall, and close on Wednesday with a service for those whom we have lost the previous year. The names of those who have passed away will be read under the Live Oak trees with the ringing of the bell for each name. It is a most holy and moving moment for all Eagles. This year's keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Don Adams. The dates will be October 21-23. The retreat begins on Monday afternoon with registration beginning at 3 pm. There is a special rate at Epworth for all Eagles.

Lay Speaking Class (Basic), Waycross – Oct. 25-26

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. This fee covers all materials and lunch on Saturday.

Registration: www.sgaumc.org/layspeakertraining

UMW Sunday in Purple – Oct. 27

Sunday in Purple, sponsored by South Georgia's United Methodist Women, is a day to focus on increasing awareness of domestic violence in the United States and to be in solidarity with our sisters in South America where domestic violence often involves horrific murders. October is domestic violence awareness month in the U.S., and purple is its color. You are encouraged to wear something purple on Sunday, Oct. 27 (a ribbon or other item), take a photo, and send it to cybanks1946@gmail.com, or text it to 229-868-0381. Get your congregation to participate! Ask your pastor to include a special prayer for domestic violence victims and those trying to combat it. [Download a bulletin insert.](#)