

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – SEPTEMBER 15 EDITION

GSU Wesley Foundation spreads love – not germs – with COVID Care Packages

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

These days, a knock on the door usually means one of about two things: dinner has arrived via DoorDash or Uber Eats or an Amazon package has been delivered.

But in Statesboro, the knock may mean the Georgia Southern University Wesley Foundation has deposited a COVID Care Package on your doorstep.

According to a [report from the New York Times](#), Statesboro has become a COVID-19 hotspot. [Several hundred students have been diagnosed with the virus](#) or are quarantined because of exposure.

The COVID Care Packages are a way to show those students they are cared for even when they are isolated and alone, said Dr. Jonathan Smith, director of GSU's Wesley Foundation.

“We thought it would be a way to bless them and say, ‘We see you, we care about you.’”

Each cellophane-wrapped basket contains a journal, a water bottle, a package of Gatorade mix, snacks, candy, Seedbed's “Field Guide for Daily Prayer,” and an Upper Room devotional. Inside the journal is a brief note that tells the student they're being prayed for.

“This isn't the season to promote ourselves,” Dr. Smith said. “This is the season to tell students that we care, they matter, and that we're in this with them.”

Gillian McGuillard, a senior secondary education major who also serves as a Wesley Foundation intern, helps create the care packages. Attending college during a pandemic has been crazy and challenging, she said, but she hopes the baskets are helping bring a bit of joy in the midst of chaos.

“We're getting to bless students and are also giving their parents a little bit of peace of mind knowing that there are people in Statesboro looking out for them when they can't be there in person,” she said.

Dr. Smith said they've created and distributed about 20 care packages so far. Word has spread primarily via social media, and several parents have contacted him asking if care packages can be delivered to their ill or quarantined children.

The care packages are just one way the GSU Wesley Foundation has been creative and shifted its ministry since the coronavirus pandemic struck.

The ministry now meets virtually via livestream instead of in person and all of the small-group discipleship and community groups meet online via Zoom.

Despite the unknown, Dr. Smith says he keeps returning to Jeremiah 29 where God sends a message via Jeremiah to the people who were exiled in Babylon.

“All of us are trying to scramble for a new normal, but what if God is asking us to be comfortable in this land, in this place? How do we do ministry when face-to-face contact isn’t a reality? How do we let people know we still care for them even though we can’t reach out and give a hug and can’t sit down with them?”

The COVID Care Packages are one way to do that, he said.

“Our students are fired up about this (the care packages),” he said. “They think it’s the most fun thing we’ve done. They’re a great way for them to put into action the concern they have for their fellow students.”

South Georgia UM churches help families, students, schools

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Rev. Chrissy Ruehl has never felt more like a deacon.

Rev. Ruehl, Isle of Hope United Methodist Church’s Minister of Children and Families, is helping connect the church and the world in ways she never before imagined.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools across the country have scrambled to minimize the impact and spread of the disease while still providing instruction. Some began later than usual, others started virtually, and other districts offered hybrid models.

When Rev. Ruehl and her husband, John, a Presbyterian minister, learned that Savannah and Chatham County schools would be starting virtually this fall instead of in person, they knew they had to do something to help students and families.

Tapped by Savannah mayor Van Johnson, together the Ruehls formed the RISE Coalition (Religious Institutions Supporting Education), an interfaith group that has helped seven Savannah-area churches create virtual learning centers in their spaces.

One of those churches, Isle of Hope UMC, serves 40 children in its e-learning program. Rev. Ruehl estimates that 25 percent of the children in the program are Isle of Hope UMC members or staff members’ children while the other 75 percent are from the community. She estimates about 30 percent are from single-parent homes.

Rev. Ruehl understands the community’s need for the small, supervised virtual learning pods. Her children – a seven-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son — are among those who began the year learning virtually.

“(The virtual learning centers) are such a vital part of the church’s mission now,” she said. “This is the need now.”

Across town, Mosaic Church, a United Methodist congregation in Savannah, has turned its fellowship hall into a one-room schoolhouse. About a dozen elementary-school students meet there each day to learn virtually in a safe environment with the needed technology.

The church has also allowed the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System to park a mini WiFi station – a school bus outfitted with mobile WiFi hotspots – in its parking lot. This allows the wireless Internet signal to be blasted to families and students in nearby neighborhoods.

“We’re not here to duplicate school,” said Mosaic pastor Rev. Drew Young. “We couldn’t do that. We’re trying, as best we can, to be of aid and assistance.”

In Dougherty County, parents were worried about how they were going to juggle work and the demands of virtual learning.

Knowing of the need for a safe learning environment for children, Albany First United Methodist Church launched its Virtual Learning Support (VLS) program with 40 children and a waiting list.

Serving children in grades kindergarten through fifth grade, the VLS program’s main focus is to help working families.

Director Kim Hunter believes the program is the church putting its beliefs in action.

“This is what the body (of Christ) is supposed to do,” she said. “We’re supposed to be the light and salt. We’re providing for parents and families that need it and we’re providing a place for kids to come and get love and hugs and smiles and feel like they’re a part of a community.”

Even those churches who don’t open as virtual learning sites are able to serve the community and meet needs.

Trinity United Methodist Church in downtown Savannah is collecting essential supplies – masks, disinfecting wipes, paper towels, sanitizer, and more – that will be distributed to children who are attending a virtual learning center at a nearby YMCA.

As a “resource hub,” Trinity UMC will collect, house, and package the supplies until they’re ready for use. They’re also partnering with Loop It Up Savannah, a local community art program, to help resource the virtual learners.

And in a continuing partnership with nearby Gadsden Elementary School, the congregation is revamping its Backpack Buddies program and continuing its mentoring ministry via Zoom.

“It’s a way to be the Church. The point is to be the hands and feet of Christ and to let them know that they’re loved by this church,” said Rev. Ben Gosden. “We’ve always thought that reaching out beyond the walls of our church, especially to help children, mirrors what Jesus would be doing.”

And across the state in Bainbridge, Karen Forrester, a member of Bainbridge First United Methodist Church, didn’t hesitate to say yes when asked to help oversee three first grade students’ virtual learning for two weeks.

“I enjoyed doing this; I helped the parents and kids and it was good for me, too,” said Forrester, who taught for 30 years at Bainbridge’s John Johnson Elementary School.

While schools in Decatur County started face-to-face on Aug. 31, they began virtually two weeks prior. Working parents either had to find help or take time off from work to help facilitate learning.

“I love to teach,” said Forrester, who retired two years ago. “I had to help.”

Helping others is what believers are called to do, said Hunter.

“We’re being what the Body of Christ is supposed to be,” she said.

LaGrange College places in top 5 in ranking

For the second year in a row, LaGrange College has been named a top-five school in annual rankings released by U.S. News & World Report.

The institution was rated at number five among 122 Regional Colleges in the South, the only Georgia college in the category’s top 25.

LaGrange College also was named a “best value,” a label the magazine says factors a school’s academic quality and cost after accounting for total expenses and financial aid. “The higher the quality of the program and the lower the cost, the better the deal,” the publication said.

“We are pleased to again have the value of a LaGrange education recognized by an independent source,” said college President Susanna Baxter. “Our goal in all things is to provide a deep, student-centered education, one that prepares young men and women for both career and for life.”

Released on September 14, the 2021 rankings also placed the college at number 9 in its category for best undergraduate teaching.

“Our small class sizes enable professors to build relationships with students, allowing them to become effective mentors and encouragers,” Dr. Baxter said. “Their influence has helped LaGrange grads go on to become physicians, pastors, White House photographers and Grammy and Emmy award winners.”

The college also was featured on a Top Performers on Social Mobility list. New last year, the recognition measures how well schools perform in graduating students who receive Pell Grants, federal aid reserved for the nation’s neediest students.

Joseph Miller, LaGrange College Vice President for Enrollment, said that more than 99 percent of the school’s students receive some form of financial aid, and families are often surprised at the amount they receive.

“The average financial aid package from LaGrange meets about 92 percent of a student’s total need,” he said. “That means that the vast majority of our families are investing about the same amount in a college education as they would at a public institution.”

Georgia’s oldest private institution of higher learning, LaGrange College was founded in 1831. A four-year liberal arts and sciences college affiliated with the United Methodist Church, LaGrange offers more than 70 areas of study with an emphasis on global engagement and service.

Hispanic Heritage Month

OUR CONNECTION MATTERS

ALLISON LINDSEY

*“Today is the day
God embraces all hues of humanity
Delights in diversity and difference,
Favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.
And so shall we”*

[\(From a Companion Litany to our Social Creed\)](#)

I’m just three short months into this expanded role as Director of Connectional Ministries, and a new world has opened up before me. A world from which I am learning, asking questions, immersing myself in, building relationships, and embracing the rich diversity that I am discovering. What world is this, you ask? It is the ministry of our Hispanic-Latino brothers and sisters across South Georgia.

One of the first things I’ve learned is that while our Hispanic-Latino congregations may share a common language - Spanish (although there are differences in language and dialect between the various cultures) - they are actually incredibly diverse and represent many countries: Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, and I’m sure some others I have yet to discover. I took much of this for granted in my understanding of the label “Hispanic Ministries.” These congregations define multiculturalism.

As I continue to learn more, I invite you on this journey with me. Connectional Ministries has created a [South Georgia UMC Hispanic Ministries](#) Facebook page as a platform to connect with these ministries and create community. In addition to the Facebook page, there is a new section on our conference website dedicated to our [Hispanic-Latino Ministries](#). I encourage you to take a moment and begin to learn more about this vital ministry in South Georgia.

In our conference, we currently have five Hispanic pastors serving eight congregations and three Hispanic pastors serving English-speaking churches. Each faith community is unique and they, too, are beginning to return to in-person worship, navigate an online presence, and creatively continue their outreach to their communities. Your connectional giving through your Conference apportionments, in partnership with the districts and our Hispanic congregations, provides salary support for the pastors, leadership development for clergy and laity, and spiritual formation programming and opportunities. This collaboration is another example of the strength in our connection for fruitful ministry.

As of July 2019, Hispanic and Latino Americans were an estimated 18.5 percent of the total U.S. population (60.6 million people), making this population the largest ethnic minority. Georgia is one of 12 states with 1 million or more Hispanic residents. Hispanic influences are tightly woven in the fabric of American life through music, food, art, cinema, politics, literature, and so much more. [Click here](#) for more facts and features.

It's time to celebrate! Hispanic Heritage Month kicks off September 15, and the celebration lasts through October 15. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded to four weeks in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988. You might be asking yourself why this focus starts and ends in the middle of these months. September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days on September 16, September 18, and 21, respectively.

Resource UMC provides outreach ideas for [Hispanic Heritage Month](#), and Connectional Ministries is joining with our Hispanic congregations to celebrate their diversity and ministries. We are thankful for their witness and to be "Alive Together at the Table."

With the kick-off of Hispanic Heritage Month on September 15, Connectional Ministries will begin celebrating this diversity by sharing authentic recipes from our Hispanic pastors and members of their congregations. I am already planning my first attempt at Pupusas! I hope you, too, will have fun making some new dishes, take some time to learn more about the country of origin, learn a few conversational phrases in Spanish, and share with us what you have learned. You can use the social media hashtag #alivetogetheratthetable to share your fun or email me at allison@sgaumc.com.

Another component of ministry with Hispanic-Latino brothers and sisters is around advocacy. In The United Methodist Church, we have groups such as [The National Plan for Hispanic-Latino Ministry](#), [M.A.R.C.H.A. \(Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans\)](#), Hispanic Women, Hispanic Clergywomen, and others who advocate for the Hispanic-Latino people.

In South Georgia, the work of the [Task Force: Undocumented Neighbors](#) and the [Task Force: Multiculturalism](#) produced invaluable resources through videos and resource guides to educate and raise awareness for inclusiveness and intentionality in ministry to our neighbors. If you are just beginning your journey as I am, these resources are a good place to start.

"Today is the day... and so shall we." Lord, let it be so!

For more information about Hispanic-Latino Ministries, contact Rev. Daniel Medina, Connectional Ministries Associate Director for Hispanic Affairs, at danmedina007@bellsouth.net.

Allison Lindsey is the director of Connectional Ministries. She has a passion for the local church and its people. Contact her at allison@sgaumc.com.

Victorious Love

Fall Quarter: Love for One Another

Unit 1: Struggles with Love

Sunday school lesson for the week of September 20, 2020

By Dr. D. Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 42

Key Verse: “Rueben replied, ‘didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn’t listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood!’” (Genesis 42:22)

Textual and Experiential Background

Though Joseph could be described as an arrogant teen, his tenure as a slave had definitely humbled him. The gifts of leadership and wise business sense had always dwelled within him. Like many of us when we are young, our greatest gifts are buried beneath layers of self-centeredness and egocentrism. Aging, on the other hand, sharpens the spiritual and emotional gifts Joseph most likely never would have participated in at age 17, but now uses wisely at 37. Before we judge Joseph too harshly, try to imagine our perception of life and our worldview as a teen in contrast to our adult life.

Now, as an adult, is there a specific event that reveals how your worldview has changed since your teen years, and for the better?

The Liberating power of truth and bondage of falsehood

Joseph does set a trap for the brothers, but a trap of truth. The brothers claimed a younger brother lived at home with their father. Joseph knew little about his younger brother. Would the younger brother have been treated as harshly as Joseph? Were they even telling the truth to appeal to Joseph’s pity? Nevertheless, they lied to their father concerning Joseph’s fabricated death story, causing their father great pain. Now the brothers could have participated in another lie to escape and buy food to escape the famine. Joseph had to hope his brothers had grown in spiritual maturity in the years following their sale of Joseph and the painful effect on their parents. Their lie hurt the family at home terribly, and yet Joseph’s truth spoken in love would eventually heal the family. The truth would open doors the brothers most likely couldn’t fathom. Remember, Jesus taught, “The truth will set you free.” Truth may sting for a while, but fully liberates later. There are a few stings the brothers have yet to experience, but the love, truth and redemption with which God endowed Joseph would transform them into new men, honest men, as they stood before Joseph.

Notice Joseph’s request to leave a brother behind in Egypt, and Joseph’s new brother brought back with his brothers from Canaan to Egypt would eventually open doors of truth that led to redemption and reconciliation. It is important to note that Joseph is emphatic that “his God,” the God of the Hebrews, has Joseph make this request. Joseph never relinquishes his faith in his God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All glory that will arise from the ensuing events will be attributed to the Hebrew God. Joseph had learned in the most trying circumstances to trust his God, even if he suffered from the lying and injustice of others. Joseph was not lying in the literal sense in

pretending he did know his brothers, though he did. He was offering them a lesson in love that could transform them into godly men. Again, sometimes truth must sting a little before its liberating power is experienced.

Joseph's painful lesson

Whether Joseph believed he would ever see his brothers again is questionable. After all, almost 20 years had passed. But now, the opportunity for revenge stood before him and he could unleash years of personal struggle and pain. However, now he was governor, in charge of selling grain. Joseph's harsh tone and accusation against them must be placed in the context of love. Instead of revenge, Joseph truly loved his brothers, in spite of the pain they inflicted upon him. Love indeed can cover a multitude of sins. However, Joseph will later shed his tears in private, wanting his brothers to believe they could be in danger during their captivity.

It is fascinating that Joseph accused them of being spies. They had thrown him into a cistern; now he had the power to lock them away. The brothers were beginning to feel the pain Joseph must have felt when sold into bondage. The brothers now spoke the truth. They were not spies and had really journeyed to Egypt to buy food. Yet, Joseph lets them feel the injustice of suffering when it was undeserved; the same pain inflicted upon him at 17.

Joseph knew them as any kind of men but honest. Honest men do not sell their brother as a slave and allow him to disappear for almost 20 years. Every deed and word of the brothers were now beginning to weigh a little heavier in their hearts, especially when they would discover they were speaking to the brother they had painfully harmed.

It is in their attempt to defend themselves that they revealed the existence of a younger brother, Benjamin. Joseph also learned that his father was still alive. Again, it doesn't mention the mother, which reveals the patriarchal society in which they lived.

Joseph pretended to refuse their defense as another attempt to force a powerful lesson upon them. He accuses them once more to be spies. The lesson? How would they respond if they were innocent, and spoke innocently and still were not believed? Joseph's words as a teen had ensnared him, though arrogant, but still true. Now, would the words of his brothers ensnare them, whether true or false? Joseph is not wasting this moment to teach his brothers of both his deep unjust pain, and later his deeper, forgiving love.

Sin and Consequence

The brothers are beginning to understand that their sin and its consequences are directly connected. Their captivity, along with leaving behind a brother, are now perceived as the consequences of selling Joseph into slavery. Reuben's denial is a witness to the intimate connection of sin and consequence by his emphatically reminding the other brothers of his

innocence and their guilt. He argued he was the only brother who argued to keep Joseph alive. However, his argument must not have proven that persuasive because Joseph was sold anyway.

We are not certain of Joseph's behaviors following his release of the brothers. Was he having a difficult time letting them depart? Joseph has revealed strong emotion toward his brothers. They may have acted cruelly to young Joseph, but mature Joseph in turn loved them. Or, perhaps Joseph wanted them to feel the pain he experienced when imprisoned for an act of which he was innocent.

Joseph had recognized his brothers, most likely from their Canaanite dress and perhaps some of their spoken revelations. But they did not recognize Joseph, for he wore Egyptian dress and was fashioned as an Egyptian dignitary. Therefore, Joseph could be their stern teacher, and his brothers would be his frightened pupils.

Joseph's dream fulfilled

It would have proved almost impossible for Joseph not to remember his dream of his brothers bowing before him in homage. However, this moment in the story makes us wonder if Joseph found any satisfaction in the fulfillment of his dream. Joseph was now about 37 years old. He has had plenty of time to consider his own arrogance and attitude while a teen with his brothers. Some may believe Joseph enjoyed watching his dream coming true. But Joseph's tears, later shed and truly genuine, make it difficult for me to believe this was a proud moment for Joseph.

Some might understand Joseph's repeated accusation that his brothers were spies as an opportunity to make them squirm. In other words, Joseph could enjoy a little revenge. Others believe he is continuing to test the character of his brothers. Are they still hard-hearted men who just need food and would lie to get it? Or maybe they were spies. The latter I find difficult to believe, for few Canaanites would have taken great risk in spying on mighty Egypt, one of the most powerful empires in the world at the time. It is also difficult to believe he is enjoying making his brothers squirm a little more for their sin. Joseph's tender heart, revealed clearly later in the story through his hidden tears, would not appear to enjoy such torment. Furthermore, I find it difficult to believe Joseph was enjoying watching his dream come true. This adult Joseph seems a far more compassionate man than the young, arrogant 17-year-old.

Discuss which motive of Joseph is consistent with the entire narrative.

It appears to me he enjoyed seeing his brothers again, even when they had deeply hurt him. Also, he wanted to learn more of life back at home with his father and Benjamin. I personally don't believe he was ready to let them go. After all, when would he see them again, and would he ever experience seeing his family from Canaan if his brothers simply rode away? His mother Rachel and new brother Benjamin he had yet to meet. Again, discuss the reasons you believe Joseph kept his brothers in Egypt for an extended period. Our narrative leaves many questions unanswered except for the power of love over revenge.

The lesson of the exchange

In this segment of the narrative it appears Joseph wants his brothers to realize the pain they had inflicted on their father through convincing him he was dead. Was Joseph saying, “You threw the youngest in prison for your own gain. Now, one of you return to Canaan and bring the youngest to this foreign land, and for the second time return and tell your father what you’ve done with his youngest. “If you lie as you did about me, I will prove you wrong and can keep you in jail. This is the moment when the truth about what happened to Joseph will be revealed. Facing the sin of one’s own heart is one of the great pains of human nature. The brothers could now be forced to face their sin against Joseph and reveal that sin to their father when requesting to take Benjamin with them to Egypt, the second loss of a young son. How will the one chosen to go home explain to Jacob that his other brothers are in prison in Egypt and yet he must take Benjamin with him to Egypt? The brother who returned to Jacob could tell the truth, which would not please, or even make sense to Jacob. He may be forced to reveal to Jacob the wrong done to Joseph. Neither explanation would sound plausible or please Jacob. The time in Egypt with Joseph was far from peaceful. If Joseph believed the brothers lied about having a younger brother it could lead them to pay a penalty for lying and being a spy. The penalty could cost them their lives the price for espionage. Again, this is truth-telling time!

Joseph’s change of mind and the brothers’ belief Joseph is dead at their hands

Joseph delayed sending the one brother back to Jacob to retrieve Benjamin. Nine brothers would now return to Jacob rather than the one. Are the nine returning to drive home the fact that all brothers played a role in Joseph’s captivity? However, a stern warning was placed upon the conditions of failing to bring Benjamin to Egypt. They would be executed. The brothers have now become aware that Joseph planned to punish them for the death of Joseph. The constant changing of Joseph’s mind, and the harsh manner with which he addressed them led them to enact a Near Eastern belief: one will eventually pay for their sins against another. They were convinced it was their sin against Joseph (before whom they had been standing and who had placed the requirements upon them) that was leading to Joseph’s “cat and mouse” game with them. They believed this game would eventually result in their death or permanent imprisonment. In verse 22 we can hear this belief in Reuben’s defense: “I told you not to sin against the boy. Now we must give an accounting for his blood.” Undoubtedly, Reuben believed they should listen to him as the first born. The narrative reveals that Joseph did not know of Reuben’s attempt to save Joseph’s life. It also reveals that Reuben believed the others had killed Joseph as he alone fought for his life. Now, the brothers believe they will all pay for the blood of Joseph on their hands, even Reuben.

Joseph had been speaking Egyptian through an interpreter, but he clearly understood the conversations of his brothers. He had wondered if his brothers still hated him as much as when they sold him into slavery. The words of regret expressed by his brothers, and definitely Reuben, so deeply touched Joseph he turned away to weep and hide his tears. Even though their sorrow

might be related to regret, it still showed some sorrow. Joseph's love for them was still touching and revealed in his tears.

Joseph initially intended to bind Reuben until he listened to the account of Reuben's attempt to save him. Therefore, he bound Simeon, the second oldest son instead.

Grace responds to pain

Joseph had the power to set the price for the grain. His heart was so moved he allowed his brothers to leave with their purchased grain. However, as a special act of grace he had the price they paid hidden in the bags of grain; thus, the brothers paid nothing for the grain. Joseph gave them the grain at no cost. What an act of grace considering their history! Only a heart of true grace would weep and allow the brothers who hurt him for forcing him to live 20 years from home to leave without paying.

Prayer

Almighty God, in our humanity we often wound and hurt one another. It is easy for us to enact revenge. Teach us the beauty of grace, especially to those who hurt us deeply. Teach us to especially forgive and love our family members who may have wounded us deeply. Teach us that time has no limit on grace and love. It is never too late to love and forgive. This we pray in the name of Jesus who forgave all regardless of the pain inflicted and the selfish hearts that showed little care. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Dr. D. Craig Rikard is a South Georgia pastor. Email him at craigrikard169@yahoo.com.

Revealed Love

Fall Quarter: Love for One Another

Unit 1: Struggles with Love

Sunday school lesson for the week of September 27, 2020

By Dr. D. Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 43; 45:1-15

Key Verse: Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (Genesis 45:5)

Lesson Aims

1. Recount the moment when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt
2. Joseph seeks to understand and relay God's will in the events from his childhood from Canaan to Egypt.

3. Describe the beautiful reconciliation of Jacob's family through love and family.

The “cat and mouse” game of Joseph with his brothers, and the emotional offering of Judah as a surrogate for Benjamin

The opening paragraphs of the narrative of Joseph's story could be described as a concoction of human sin and a cacophony of human behaviors. There is deceit, lying, slavery, arrogance and I am certain there are others. There must also be the sin of self-deception suffered by the brothers since they had to live with their sin and witness the grief they caused their parents for almost 20 years.

The story even jumps from one emotional state to another. Joseph speaks harshly, but has his moments of extreme tenderness. He sends his brothers on their way and then finds or creates reasons to bring them back to Egypt. It is also a story of revelation and deception. Joseph recognized his brothers but they do not recognize him from his Egyptian clothing and grooming. Joseph also learns of his younger brother Benjamin and later that his father is alive. Yet, his brothers have little idea who Joseph is. And finally, there is shifting of power. In the opening of the story Joseph is a weaker young man of 17. The brothers over-power him, toss him in a cistern, and sell him to the Midianites. As the years pass, Joseph is the one who possesses power over his brothers and can imprison them if he chooses.

The selfish rationale of his brother's selling Joseph as a slave, when Joseph's own love refused to do the same to his vengeful brothers emotionally touched Joseph, and deeply. His crying was so passionate he had all to leave him alone except his brothers so he could weep alone. His brothers were allowed to remain so Joseph could at last reveal his true identity. In response to his revelation Joseph's brothers were terrified. Joseph would have been around 37, and many of them probably assumed him dead. Thus, his being alive, and holding such a high degree of power, would have been shocking. Joseph certainly had just cause to enact revenge. Yet, it is Joseph's love for his family that Joseph first expresses. He wanted to know if his father Jacob still lived.

This section involves shock, fear, imprisonment, deception regarding identity, revelation of identity after several days, and a shifting of power. Now the narrative shifts to a most difficult question: is suffering used by God to accomplish his will?

The question of all questions

Does God employ human suffering to accomplish his divine will when we usually think of suffering as destructive and disruptive? This question has been a major philosophical/theological question for us from the beginning of human questioning and contemplation. The early Hebrews simply accepted the answer to the question of God's using suffering to work in human history as “a given.” Suffering was simply a part of life. It wasn't until we reach the years of the prophets, like Habakkuk, that we hear the questioning of suffering as a part of God's sovereign will.

Habakkuk asks why God allows their enemies to be used to chastise Israel. Of course, the entire book of Job questions God's punishment of Job, who is known as a good, "perfect" man. Personally, I find it difficult to move forward in the story of Joseph without at least entertaining the question. For me, I have to return to the question as to why God created the second tree. If the second tree did not exist, human sin and the ensuing suffering could possibly be avoided.

However, the purpose of that tree reminds us that life is more than simply the opportunity to live with no difficulty, and to do so with longevity. The second tree has more to do with meaning than any other issue. Without the second tree, life may prove long and easy. Yet, what would it mean? For me, life has everything to do with *meaning*. Life with meaning allows us to experience the wonder and joy of life. Remove the second tree and what would life mean? What would life mean without the possibility of death? What would love mean without the possibility of hatred? What would knowledge mean apart from ignorance? It is the opportunity the second tree offers that gives life its rich meaning. Without that tree, life is simply a shallow existence with little meaning. Our life would be robotic, and righteous, godly choices would have no meaning.

In conclusion in discussing this complex question, I considered the question that most hurts us, and can be the most difficult to understand. Why do the innocent suffer? Though my understanding offers little comfort, it still brings meaning to my understanding of life. Every good and noble accomplishment on the part of humanity has been born from our concern about the suffering of the innocent. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving exists because an innocent child suffered. We attempt to cure diseases so the innocent will not have to suffer. Humankind's highest knowledge and richest compassion exists because innocent people suffer. Notice in John's revelation that his vision of God's Kingdom, presented in all of its glory, includes the removal of all suffering. Thus, we understand it was not God's will that any of us suffer. But suffering allows us to raise our eyes from the difficulties of life to that glorious day when the kingdom arrives in all of its glory, to experience life when all of its meaning has arrived in its new heaven and new earth.

Suffering remains and will always remain a complex issue of mystery for me. Still, I trust God's sovereign love and will as I seek to understand it. I pray each of you will never give up your quest to understand the powerful, loving will of God at work in all of human life, especially in the mysteries.

God sent me ahead of you

Joseph strongly believed God sent the suffering in the life of his family to save the people. He does not attempt to philosophically or theologically understand the "question of questions." He never asks "Why?" Suffering for Joseph was simply a part of life under the control and will of the sovereign Lord. Suffering can be a special expression of God's loving work among us. It would prove much easier to understand life if the Bible simply answered all the difficult

questions. But then we would stop seeking, knocking, and looking for divine truth. I would spend far less time on my knees and less time looking for that day when God's Kingdom fully arrives. And, I would not seek God in the sufferings of life. Not only can God use love and suffering to accomplish his will to grant us purpose in life, God can use the suffering itself to teach us wonder of life.

The next section includes a passage of scripture that includes Esther. Like Esther, how did Joseph not know that God had sent him into Egypt for the same redemptive purpose as Esther found herself in Persia: *to save God's people?* This is an important question to ask in times of suffering. How do I know that God has not sent me into this time for the wonder and beauty of God's divine redemption?

It is important to realize that Esther and Joseph were not looking at life through their own ego-centric eyes. They saw life through God's redemptive working. Therefore, there was no blaming of God, no matter how difficult life became. And, it is just as amazing that blame plays no role in this entire amazing saga. Within our human sinful lives there is always plenty of blame to share. But they do not blame God, and they do not blame each other. This refusal of blame was the liberating power that released them to live a new life of love together. Blame accomplishes nothing, but the refusal of blame can liberate everything.

Covenant continues

In the opening passage I shared that one of the reasons the story of Joseph might have been included in Genesis is that it reveals how God's covenant people ended up in Egypt. From there the most important historical covenant event occurred through the Exodus. In 45:7 *we read that Joseph understood God's sending him to Egypt to preserve a remnant on earth and to save their lives by a great deliverance (the Exodus).*

Conclusion

This lesson opened with the family learning their identity, and the redemption that followed. It then moves to the mighty sovereign working of God's working through all the events from Joseph's being sold to the Midianites to his rise to power in Egypt. The passage proclaims "God is in all, working through all, to accomplish his covenant will."

Prayer

Almighty God, teach us to bow before the mystery and the complexities of life. When we do not understand, teach us to seek, but always upon our knees. Remind us that you are the God of love, revealed in Christ, and thus all things will work toward your divine good. In Jesus name, Amen.

Dr. D. Craig Rikard is a South Georgia pastor. Email him at craigrikard169@yahoo.com.



Love That Intercedes

Fall Quarter: Love for One Another

Unit 2: Inclusive Love

Sunday school lesson for the week of October 4, 2020

By Dr. D. Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 1 Samuel 23: 1-8; 2 Samuel 9

Key Verse: Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what has he done has benefited you greatly.” (1 Samuel 19: 4)

Lesson Aims: Exploring the understanding and conflict between Jonathan, David, and Saul. Understanding the move for Israel as a theocracy to monarchy.

Geographical, textual, and interpersonal context

In our opening paragraph we are studying post-Exodus Israel. The nation of Israel is not a united nation at all after entering the promised land. After crossing the Jordan with Joshua, the tribes of Israel scattered throughout Canaan. When adversity arrived and enemies attacked, the individual tribes would join together to ensure their continued existence. Usually they rallied together under the leadership of a judge. They have received the law of Moses and have a well-defined moral code. That can slowly erode if not taken seriously. Furthermore, other nations had not been eradicated from the territory of Israel. There existed many skirmishes between the nation of Israel and various tribes. When Israel joined, they could usually defeat these enemies. Many skirmishes were over water and grazing rights for the herdsmen. The only tribe they never expelled were the Philistines who play a major role in Israelite history.

Prophets still possessed great power as the authoritative voice of God. It wasn't until the years of Jeremiah and the other major prophets that they were ignored. The voice of the king became the more powerful prophetic voice of God. Of course, not all kings spoke with godly authority. This explains why prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were often ignored. The Mosaic Law was still the authoritative source of morality, but the kings had now become the proclaimer, interpreter, keeper, and leader of the Law.

Initially many of Israel's behaviors were governed as an Israeli theocracy under the leadership of judges who were actually military leaders.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” This requirement by Jesus certainly was relevant to the relationships between David and Jonathan, and initially with Saul though Saul quickly lost his admiration and care for David. Jonathan and David enjoyed the deepest relationship and were very protective to one another.

Israel was never intended to be a monarchy. They were intended to be a theocracy ruled under the Mosaic Law, most likely by the tribal elders or perhaps a prophet. Whether the articulation was to be done by the elders of the tribes, a chosen select group of wise men, or some other means. We do know, however, that the prophets like Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and Nathan were actually more powerful than kings and the tribal elders in Israel's earliest years.

From theocracy to monarchy

One of the criteria the prophet Samuel used to select Saul as the first chosen king of Israel was an interesting criterion. It was Saul's physical attributes. Even today, many sports choose their players based on physical physique and strength. Saul stood "head and shoulders" above other Israelites, thus making him a formidable foe on the battle field. Saul had some of the physical attributes of Goliath who was greatly feared on the field of battle. When Saul was chosen king, the king became a military leader, the role the judges initially occupied. Initially, Saul did well in unifying the scattered tribes of Israel. Why did Israel desire a king when God had not requested they do so? Because most of the surrounding nations had kings; thus, they too wanted a king. God had requested that Israel be a special people under the rule of God, not a monarchy as the surrounding nations. The Israelites demanded that judge Samuel give them their first monarchy, Saul. Samuel warned Israel against choosing a king when God had not so requested. Still, the people demanded a king like the other nations around them in 1046 BC. From this point forward, the living of the law, the moral life, the military battles, and the sources of authority changed. Prophets like Nathan still had spiritual authoritative power and kings like David listened. But as the years passed, the prophets became more ignored, though they spoke truth.

Saul loses the authoritative role of the king

Most of us have heard that power corrupts, and in Saul's case this was sad and true. Though king, there were still spiritual regulations that belonged solely to the prophets and priests. These were enacted under the authority of God. Yet Saul began to assume these roles for himself. When Samuel was late, rather than wait for him, Saul performed the blessing himself. Read the narrative of Saul's reign to gain a sense of his spiritual arrogance and the ignoring of God's requirements regarding issues like keeping an enemy king in captivity and blessing a battle that was the responsibility of Samuel and not the king. Saul took this role upon himself. Two impure actions most of us might remember were this performance of a sacrificial duty set aside solely for a priest and the consulting of the witch of Endor to consult the spirit of Samuel for advice against the battle with Philistines rather than praying to God.

David, Jonathan, Saul, and Goliath

Goliath was a terrifying enemy of the Philistine army. He possessed an even greater physical stature than Saul. Goliath challenged the Israelites to a "one on one" battle on the field. No Israelite had the courage to challenge the mighty Goliath. Young David had become the deepest kind of friend possible for Jonathan. They cared for and protected each other. David was

embarrassed and ashamed that no Israelite challenged Goliath, who was mocking the army of God. Even though he was probably a young teen, David chose the possibility of death instead of allowing his God to be mocked. He chose to enter the field of battle. Jonathan, worried about his friend, loaned David his battle sword and armor, but they were too big for young David. David chose to employ the power and gift God had given him as a shepherd and walked forward with his sling. How primitive he must have appeared facing a giant of a man, fully clad in armor, with a weapon used to protect sheep. Yet David had the one great gift the Israelites had ignored. It was a gift that David truly trusted. It was his faith. With his sling he slew Goliath and the Israelite army was ecstatic and amazed.

However, in spite of the joy there was one who was ecstatic but already smitten with jealousy. It wasn't David's dear friend Jonathan. No one could have been more thankful and admiring than Jonathan. It was King Saul that was threatened as he heard his army sing and shout praises unto David for such a daring deed of courage and faith. Initially King Saul had use of David as a harpist. Saul's erratic behavior and dramatic mood swings leads many therapists to assume he suffered from bipolar illness. David's music often soothes Saul's inner torment.

Saul's act of jealousy posed more than a singular problem with David. David was his son's dearest friend, and David married Saul's daughter Michal. Now they were a family teeming with jealousy, anger, plots to kill, and strong determination by Saul to kill David.

There was a progression in the attempt to take David's life. Saul attempted to kill David with his own hand; then, David was put in certain danger that would risk his life, Then Saul did the unthinkable. He enlisted Jonathan and Jonathan's servants. There was no way Jonathan was going to kill his friend whom he loved like a brother. Saul and the Philistines both failed.

Though Saul had been removed as king, he had been removed as "God's king" and leader of Israel. To the people, he was still their king.

In Jewish law a son was never to disobey his father, but in the case of Jonathan and David, Jonathan refused his father's request for him to kill his dear friend as Jonathan sided with David. He not only sided with David, he protected David against the plots of his father.

As an interesting footnote, David would later use a process to kill Bathsheba's husband Uriah. No one is above sin or jealousy, not even a man with faith as great as David.

It is quite fascinating to note the humility of Jonathan. He was to be the proper heir to the throne. Yet, from the beginning it appears that he intuitively sensed it was God's will that David become king of Israel. We don't know if Jonathan recognized David's great faith, courage, ability to lead, or simply loving admiration. Jonathan seems to value being David's servant than king of Israel.

Jonathan took great risks himself as he warned David of immediate danger from his father. Thus, he saved David's life, and further cemented their alliance and covenant with each other. The plot to save David required great planning, risk, and friendship of the heart.

Jonathan reminded his father of another Mosaic law. Not only was a son to obey his father, a man of righteousness was not to kill a godly man. David was such a man and Jonathan reminded his father that David had done him no wrong; thus, Saul had no moral right to kill David. Jonathan was using every means possible to save his friend, and ensure his friend would become king.

It was this last appeal by Jonathan that did more than save David's life. It restored mutual respect and tolerance in the family. Saul made a vow not to kill David. Vows were serious, for again, in Judaism, words were creative and binding. Once something was said, it was done and irrevocable.

It is believed Saul took his own life after losing a battle against the Philistines, their major enemy.

Prayer

Almighty God, great and mysterious are the righteous ways you work among us. You ensure that when all is said and done, it is righteousness that will reign victorious over sin. The manner in which you use the gifts you bestow upon your people calls us each to be faithful with the gifts you've given each of us. Help us appreciate those more gifted in fulfilling your will and help us avoid the sin of jealousy, being content to occupy the special place you give each of us in life. In Jesus name, Amen.

Dr. D. Craig Rikard is a South Georgia pastor. Email him at craigrikard169@yahoo.com.

.....

If anybody's listening

By Dr. Hal Brady

Whenever I do pre-marital counseling, I usually include the following: role expectation and is it realistic, a good theology of marriage, the importance of communication, the necessity of commitment, and how to deal with conflict or disagreement. Unless one of the marriage partners is a non-thinking robot, every marriage has disagreements. The only question is how we handle it.

But whether it's in marriage, business, sports, politics, church, world issues or personal relationships, every life situation has disagreements. Again, the important thing is how we deal with it. So, how do we deal with disagreement?

To further the discussion, I want us to consider a biblical situation. When the curtain falls on Acts, chapter 15, Paul and Barnabas are parting company. They had previously been successful partners on their first missionary journey. But now they are parting company over the future of John Mark who had previously accompanied them.

The crux of the dividing issue was that as they were preparing for their second missionary journey Paul did not want to take John Mark. Paul felt John Mark had deserted them on the first journey.

Barnabas, on the other hand, wanted to give John Mark a second chance, and insisted that they take him with them. The result was that Paul and Barnabas separated, chose different partners, and went different ways.

Now, what can we learn here about handling our disagreements?

First, we can remember the importance of prayer! Nowhere – I repeat – nowhere in Luke’s account does it say that Paul and Barnabas prayed about their situation. And this is the noticeable failure of these two servants of God. They didn’t pray about their disagreement.

The late Bishop Emerson Colaw wrote in his book: “Modern science and industry have done a great deal to overcome barriers of time and distance, but many people still face each other across formidable obstacles of race and religion, of interest and education, of ideas and ideals. Unable to communicate and cooperate because of such obstacles, persons often find themselves unwillingly involved in incidents of hatred and bloodshed. How different is the situation when men and women are praying for one another!”

Second, we can seek to understand the other person’s point of view! There can be no reconciliation if we do not seek to understand the other person’s point of view. And this understanding will always begin with listening.

At least, part of the discord in our culture today is due to the fact that no one is listening to another’s point of view. Minds are already made up, battle stations are manned, and everyone else is considered the enemy or opposition.

In being open to another’s point of view, Charles Swindoll says that there are three necessary qualities that don’t come easily: honesty, objectivity, humility. Could it be that a lack of those three qualities are at the heart of our difficulty in hearing one another?

Third, we can disagree without being disagreeable! In all Paul’s letters to the churches that they had founded, Paul never took a pot shot at Barnabas. He never said anything bad about Barnabas. And such seemed to be true of Barnabas as well. He didn’t downgrade Paul. Even though they had a major disagreement that led to a parting of the ways, they were not in the end disagreeable.

It is at this point that Samuel Johnson gives us one of the most liberating sentences he ever wrote: “Kindness is in our power, fondness is not.” Kindness is not passion or affection or friendship, but an attitude of unshakable and unwavering goodwill to others, whether we like them or not.

Fourth, we can look for a way of compromise! Some people look at compromise as a weak and cowardly thing. They mistakenly think it has something to do with a lack of backbone.

Now, to be sure, there is a time to hold the line. We should never compromise biblical truth, principles, or convictions. But simply to be unbending is another thing altogether.

Finally, we can trust that God can use everything, even our disagreements, for His purposes! In the Narthex of the Cathedral of Belmont Abby near Charlotte, North Carolina, there is a baptismal font mounted on a big rock. The inscription reads: "From this stone, on which persons were sold into slavery, they now are baptized into freedom."

If God can do that, He can transform any dead-end situation into a powerful force for good. May it be so again today!

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).

Transformation but not defeat

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

ANNE PACKARD

"That we are in a critical and fateful hour no one can deny. The entire world is in serious trouble. There is confusion everywhere. Turn where you will, there you find the rampant forces of racial prejudice, assertive nationalism, blind economics, coupled with the age-old human passions and lusts. All these are contesting every inch of Christian progress. The Christian movement is hindered not only because some oppose its teaching, but because so many ignore it." (Bishop Arthur J. Moore "Apathy or Advance!" The 1935 Report to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church South)

Leave it to Bishop Moore to mention the elephant in the room in such a blunt manner, but is he speaking in 1935 or 2020? Racial tensions, nationalism, and economics have certainly been in the news lately. All that's missing is a global pandemic and it would be an exact match. This means what's old is new again!

So, what was going on in 1935 to make Bishop Moore begin his address to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in this manner? Well, the United States was still recovering from the Depression and the Dust Bowl continued to plague the grasslands with Black Sunday occurring that spring. Under President Roosevelt, the New Deal created the Works Progress Administration in an attempt to get people back to work and the Social Security Act was passed. The Harlem Race Riots erupted in New York because a rumor circulated that a Puerto Rican shoplifter had been brutally beaten and Mary Bethune McLeod created the National

Council of Negro Women. And, if this wasn't enough, Adolf Hitler reinstated the German Air Force and began rearmament in defiance of the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919.

After surviving the first six months of 2020, we can all imagine how the people of 1935 must have felt. The trouble and confusion that Bishop Moore references is all too familiar, but Bishop Moore never leaves us with the trouble and confusion, and this is where the power lies. He goes on to write:

“We may be in a time of transformation but not of defeat. The growing complexity and difficulty of work may call for reconsideration and restatement of plans and programs, but I was never so sure that in all the turmoil and confusion of individuals and nations Christ’s uncompromising conquest goes on. The missionary enterprise rests not upon our human frailty and shifting economic conditions, but upon God’s unchanging purpose and Christ’s unwearied compassion for all men. In my heart is the assured hope of final and glorious success.”

I cannot know today what the next six months of 2020 have in store for the South Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church, but I do know that it does not rest upon our shoulders. It lies squarely with God’s purpose and Christ’s love, and for this, we are truly grateful. So, to quote another of Bishop Moore’s titles, “Fight On! Fear Not!”

Anne Packard serves as Conference Historian and director of the [Arthur J. Moore Methodist Museum](http://www.mooremuseum.org) on St. Simons Island. Contact her at director@mooremuseum.org.

Retired Clergy Birthdays – September 2020

- 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 – Gene Yelverton: 6345 Concord Church Rd.; Ellaville, GA 31806
- 9/06 – Cecil Hazen: The Phoenix at Milton; 13943 Hwy. 9 North; Milton, GA 30004
- 9/09 – Richard Soper: 229 Victorian Lake Dr.; Brunswick, GA 31525
- 9/13 – Bernie Khaw: 344 S. Old Middletown Rd., Media, PA 19063
- 9/14 – Lynn Drake: 3124 E. Victory Dr.; Savannah, GA 31404
- 9/14 – Tom Johnson, Sr.: PO Box 127; Oxford, GA 30054
- 9/15 – Elick Bullington, Jr.: Lakeside Senior Care; 1025 N. Chester Ave., No. 11; 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: 206 Westview Dr.; Dublin, GA 31321
- 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. Randy Mosley

Rev. Randy Mosley, 65, of Sparks, Georgia, passed away September 12, 2020, at the Mayo Clinic Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

He was born November 14, 1954, in Ware county to the late Winston Henry Mosley and Juanita Carter Mosley. Rev. Mosley was a minister for 36 years with the South Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church and had lived in Cook County for many years. He had also served as a Chaplain with Bethany Hospice since his retirement. Rev. Mosley attended the Antioch United Methodist Church and was a Mason.

Rev. Mosley is survived by his wife, Sharon Williams Mosley, of Sparks; two daughters and sons-in-law; Heather and Blaine Warren of Adel, Georgia and Megan and Nick Andrus of Willingboro, New Jersey; seven grandsons: Jacob Warren, Seth Warren, Caleb Warren and Luke Warren all of Adel; Lincoln Andrus, Roman Andrus and Easton Andrus all of Willingboro, New Jersey.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m., Thursday, September 17, 2020, at the Antioch United Methodist Church. Interment will follow in the church cemetery. Visitation will be from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday; September 16, 2020, at Boone Funeral Home, 1804 S. Hutchinson Ave.; Adel, Georgia. Pallbearers will be Blaine Warren, Jacob Warren, Seth Warren, Nick Andrus, Todd Williams and Michael Williams. Fellow ministers of the South Georgia Conference will serve as honorary pallbearers.

Condolences may be expressed online at www.boonefunerals.com. Boone Funeral Home, Inc. is serving the Mosley family.

.....

Scripture Readings – Sept. 15

September 20***Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost***

Exodus 16:2-15

Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 or Psalm 78 (UMH 799)

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

September 27***Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost***

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 (UMH 799)

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

October 4***Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost******World Communion Sunday***

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Psalm 19 (UMH 750)

Philippians 3:4b-14

Matthew 21:33-46

Events in the South Georgia Conference – 9/15/2020 edition**Methodist Children's Home Work Day Offering – Sept. 20**

Every local church in South Georgia is encouraged to receive a special Work Day Offering to support the ministry of The Methodist Home for Children and Youth. The Work Day Offering for the Methodist Home is a tradition from the 1900s, a time when people, mostly farmers, donated the equivalent of one day's wages to the Methodist Home. Sometimes they would load a freight car with cotton or peanuts and send it to Macon. Today folks just use a calculator. The amount of the work day offering can be calculated quite simply: Divide your annual income by 365 (farmers didn't take vacation days.) For example, if a person made \$60,000 a year, it would be \$60,000 divided by 365 = \$164. Whether you give cotton or a check, be assured that your gift will bring hope and a new lease on life to the more than 400 children and families they serve every day. To learn more about this incredible ministry of our conference visit

www.themethodisthome.org.

World Communion Day – Oct. 4

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.

Advanced Lay Servant Training, via Zoom – Oct. 6, Oct. 8, Oct. 13, & Oct. 15

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. The advanced class, based on Cokesbury's book, "Each One a Minister," by William Carter, is a study of the book of Ephesians and what it teaches about how we are called to use our spiritual gifts. Registration fee for the class is \$25. (Note: Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) Attendance in all four classes is required for certification. Contact Anne Bosarge for more information. anne@thechapelministries.com.

Basic Lay Servant Ministry Training, Vidalia First UMC – Oct. 9-10

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. The basic class is based on Cokesbury's book, "Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course," which teaches a basic understanding of ministry in the United Methodist Tradition. Registration fee for the class is \$25. This fee covers all materials and lunch on Saturday. (Note: Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) For more information, contact Anne Bosarge, anne@thechapelministries.com.

Basic Lay Servant Ministry Training, College Place UMC, Brunswick – Oct. 16-17

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. The basic class is based on Cokesbury's book, "Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course," which teaches a basic understanding of ministry in the United Methodist Tradition. Registration fee for the class is \$25. This fee covers all materials and lunch on Saturday. (Note: Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) For more information, contact Anne Bosarge, anne@thechapelministries.com.

Advanced Lay Servant Ministry, Vidalia First UMC – Oct. 23-24

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. The advanced class, based on Cokesbury's book, "Each One a Minister," by William Carter, is a study of the book of Ephesians and what it teaches about how we are called to use our spiritual gifts. Registration fee for the class is \$25. (Note: Basic Lay Speaking class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) Attendance in all four classes is required for certification. Contact Anne Bosarge for more information. anne@thechapelministries.com.