

## **SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – MAY 17 EDITION**

### **Guyton UMC gives \$7,500 to support Ukrainian orphans**

**By Kara Witherow, *Editor***

Guyton United Methodist Church is a small church with a big heart.

The congregation, which averages between 40-50 people a week in worship, recently raised 150 times that to support Ukrainian orphans.

In just one week, church members gave \$7,500 to support [St. Paul United Methodist Church's](#) Ukraine Orphan Ministry.

Familiar with the ministry through former pastor Rev. Daryl Brown's connection and his past mission trips to the country, the congregation gave generously to help Ukrainian children impacted by the Russian invasion of their country.

The effort was spearheaded by Richard Saxon, a veteran who served two tours in Vietnam.

"I have seen what war can do to people, especially to children," he said.

Watching and reading the news, he couldn't ignore what was happening in Ukraine.

"The Lord laid it on my heart that I needed to do something."

After a conversation with Rev. Brown and Guyton UMC pastor Rev. Matt Waldron, Saxon pitched the idea to the congregation.

"I told them I had this heavy on my heart and that there were probably more orphans now than before the fighting started. I just laid it on them and said I'd be giving a donation and if anyone felt the way I do they could make one, too."

Saxon said he really didn't have a goal in mind, and was happily surprised when Rev. Waldron called him a few days later to tell him there had been an overwhelming response. Some members sent checks, others emptied their coin jars, and several donations came in from non-church members.

"I was thinking if we could give \$5,000 I'd turn a flip in front of the church, but when it came up that we had \$7,500 I was just ecstatic."

This kind of generosity isn't unusual for the Guyton UMC congregation, said Rev. Waldron.

"When we've had needs within the church, people have always stepped up," he said.

Along with funds provided by the district missions board, the congregation covered the cost of a new roof through a special offering and has worked to pay off the mortgage to a historic property, Beulah House, that the church purchased in 2006. The church is also active in the local Backpack Buddies program and has accounts set up to help local citizens pay their utility bills.

“I think when a real need has been communicated people are very willing to step in and help out,” Rev. Waldron said.

Saxon hopes that, through the sacrifice of generous Guyton UMC members, children in Ukraine are helped and know they’re loved and cared for.

“One of the things I always live by is, ‘with every opportunity there’s sacrifice.’ There was an opportunity to help, and our church members sacrificed and came through. I hope there’s some kid who has something to put on, maybe a diaper or some baby food to eat, that got there from Guyton United Methodist Church.”

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## **Centerville UMC serves community with bi-weekly food bank**

**By Kara Witherow, *Editor***

Last month, a handful of men biked 15 miles to Centerville United Methodist Church’s food bank. The food bank closest to their homes had closed, and they couldn’t afford groceries or gas.

Inflation and high gas prices are driving more people to Centerville UMC’s bi-weekly food bank, said Cheri Cox, a member of the church and a food bank volunteer. Wednesday, May 11 was a record day, with volunteers serving more than 300 people.

“I think the economy is getting bad. It’s so expensive. People can’t afford food,” she said. “It’s rough right now.”

Each month, Centerville UMC’s food bank feeds 700 to 1000 families, giving out 8,000-10,000 pounds of food, said Rev. Tommy Odum.

Needs have grown and the food bank is a vital ministry, he said.

“It meets a need that is there in the community. People need food and this helps meet that need.”

The food bank is a mission of love for Cox and her 40 volunteers. They work hard, they pray with and for those they serve, and they leave each shift sweaty but with smiles on their faces.

“It’s hard work, but we have a good time and we all walk out of there with smiles. We hear stories about what our customers are going through and it just makes us work harder,” Cox said. “This is where we’re supposed to be.”

In 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, the food bank transitioned from a walk-up to a drive-up food bank. The growth of the ministry necessitated additional space, and this past February, the congregation dedicated a revamped building on the church's campus as the Tom Shell Community Outreach Building.

Cox has also implemented cost saving and efficiency measures, helping the ministry serve more food at the same cost. The church joined forces with the Middle Georgia Community Food Bank and is now able to purchase meat and other food at a substantial savings.

The ministry defines who the congregation is as disciples of Jesus, said Rev. Odum, as people who love and serve others as Jesus did.

“The Bible tells us they will know who we are by the way we love one another. It also tells us that we were his long before we knew him,” he said. “If people can see the way we love one another in the food pantry and if they can see the way we love people who don't have a relationship with Jesus, that is going to help the church grow and the mission of the church overall, which is to make disciples of Christ.”

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## **Conference Trustees to extend disaffiliation deadline**

**By Kara Witherow, *Editor***

While [seven resolutions](#) have been presented to the Conference Committee on Resolutions for consideration and vote by the 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference, there's an eighth - and perhaps less obvious - resolution contained in the [2022 Book of Recommendations and Reports](#).

Written into Recommendation 1 of the Conference Board of Trustees' report is a resolution stating the intent of the Conference Trustees to extend South Georgia's current disaffiliation policy through December 31, 2024.

Already voted on and approved by the Trustees, the resolution states, “the Trustees wish to provide a means for local churches desiring to exit the denomination on the terms outlined in ¶2553 after the expiration of ¶2553.”

With the further postponement of General Conference to 2024, the Trustees believe it is important to give South Georgia congregations additional time to pray, discern, and make decisions, said Dr. Jimmy Asbell, president of the Conference Board of Trustees.

“It was the intent of the Trustees to prevent an unpredictable or unanticipated closing of a window and force a church to make a decision it was otherwise not prepared or not desiring to make,” he said. “We didn't want time to be the deciding factor but wanted to give congregations

time to make informed, prayerful decisions. If us honoring the terms a year longer does that, we think that's in the best interest of the Conference.”

The Conference's [disaffiliation policy](#), approved during the 2019 Annual Conference session, grants local churches limited rights to exit the denomination prior to December 31, 2023.

“I am grateful to Jimmy Asbell and the Trustees for putting together this recommendation,” said Dr. Jay Harris, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services. “Being able to set deadlines after General Conference meets makes a world of difference. I hear of too many instances where churches feel under pressure to rush toward disaffiliation in order to beat deadlines. This is not a time to be propelled by fear and anxious emotion.”

The Conference Board of Trustees' report can be read beginning on page 31 of the “[Book of Recommendations and Reports](#).”

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## **Annual Conference Updates – May 12, 2022**

Dear Lay and Clergy Members of the Annual Conference, Conference and Agency Leaders,

Thank you again for the attention you are paying to all of the many details of the 2022 Annual Conference session set for June 5-8 [in Columbus](#). Below is highlighted or new information you will find helpful as you prepare for Annual Conference, including:

- Timeline and Agenda
- Report from the Board of Trustees
- Updates to the Board of Pension and Health Benefits Report
- Updated Covid Safety Protocols
- Childcare Deadline
- Voting
- Training Session for Online Clergy Session & Electronic Voting (May 17)

The safety of our South Georgia Conference family continues to be our top priority. The program committee and conference staff are monitoring the uptick in covid-19 cases and have made available an alternative space within the Convention Center where members may be in a mask-required setting and social distance all while still fully participating in Conference. Additional information about this option is below. As always, we want to provide the safest conference experience possible for our members.

As a reminder, we will be utilizing electronic voting during our conference. Members are requested to bring a device (smartphone, tablet, etc.) in order to vote during the conference session. If you do not have your own device or cannot borrow one, you may share a device with a fellow conference member. Please make your plans now to secure a voting device.

We will continue to communicate with you regularly over the next few weeks.

Grace and peace,

Meredyth Earnest  
SGA Conference Secretary

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### **Conference Timeline and Agenda - June 5-8**

- May 16 - Clergy Session Part 1 Meeting Link & Voting Credentials Issued Via Email
- May 17 - Conference Member Online Meeting/Electronic Voting Training Session, 6pm
- May 22 - Clergy Session Part 1, 4pm (Online)
- June 5 - Registration Opens, 3pm
- June 5 - Opening Worship Service, 7pm
- June 6 - Clergy Session Part 2 & Laity Session, 8:30am
- June 6 - Methodist Home Barbecue (St. Luke UMC), 5pm
- June 6 - Service of Ordination with Commissioning (St. Luke UMC), 7pm
- June 7 - Memorial Service (St. Luke UMC), 2pm

[Click here for a working agenda of the 2022 conference session.](#)

### **Report from the Board of Trustees**

Written into Recommendation 1 of the report by the Conference Board of Trustees is a resolution stating the intent of the Conference Trustees to honor the current disaffiliation policy through December 31, 2024. You can read the full report of the Trustees beginning on page 31 of the [Book of Recommendations and Reports](#).

### **Update to Board of Pension & Health Benefits Report**

The following reports have been revised or added since the Book of Recommendations and Reports was published. Conference members will need to have these additional reports available to them during our session.

- Report #5: The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits has updated Report #5, to include new recommendations on HealthFlex insurance premiums for 2023. [Click here to download the revised Report #5.](#)
- Report #7: The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits wishes to include their recommendation on how to fund the proposed Trust. They have published an additional funding supplement to the Retiree Healthcare Trust report #7. [Click here to download Report #7 supplement.](#)
- Report #9: The Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits received an approved Comprehensive Benefits Funding Plan for 2023 from Wespath and are presenting an updated Report #9. [Click here to download Report #9.](#)

### **Updated Covid Safety Protocols - Extension of the Bar Available**

In an effort to provide an alternative option for our members seeking a conference experience

with additional covid safety protocols in place, an on-site “extension” room is now being offered. In a spirit of hospitality, we have established a room that will serve as an extension of the bar. This room will be equipped with socially-distanced seating (no tables), and the wearing of masks will be enforced for all within. Whereas masks will be encouraged for all members who wish to wear them in any conference meeting room, it will be enforced within this particular room.

This room, which is right around the corner from the main plenary session, is available to voting conference members only. It will be monitored by tellers and supplied with a live feed of the conference business. Members will still be able to vote and watch the proceedings in real time. However, if a member of the conference utilizing the extension room wishes to address the conference (make a motion, speech, etc.) he or she will have to walk to the microphones in the main plenary session to do so. A teller will assist with this process, alerting the Bishop that a member is approaching the microphone to ask to be recognized. There is no way to be recognized by the Bishop or any presenter from within the extension room.

Conference members who anticipate wishing to utilize this designated space during our time together are asked to [please complete this interest form](#). This allows conference leadership to prepare adequate seating and teller coverage. Please note that this interest form is non-binding and any conference member may elect to sit in the room or leave the room at any time. The form is used for planning purposes only.

As a reminder, in order to reduce the total number of persons in the room and practice social distancing, this room will only be for voting conference members. No guests, spouses, etc. will be allowed within - as the entire room will be considered an extension of the bar.

[Please click here to let us know that you plan to utilize the extension room.](#)

### **Childcare - Deadline is May 22**

Please note that the deadline to register for childcare is Sunday, May 22. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

### **Voting**

This year we will utilize an electronic voting system provided by GNTV during our Annual Conference sessions. This system is the same one we used during our 2020 and 2021 virtual sessions. Please note the following details:

#### Member Voting Credentials & Email Verification

Each conference member will receive a personal voter identification number in order to vote during the clergy session and/or the main session. Pastors: please take the time now to check the [church dashboard](#) and ensure that the correct person is listed as your member(s) and that your member has an email address listed. For the information on training opportunities and

other vital information to reach the right person, the information in the dashboard must be correct. If you need help verifying or making a correction to lay member information, please contact your district office or [meredyth@sgaumc.com](mailto:meredyth@sgaumc.com).

#### Electronic voting during the online Part 1 Clergy Session

- Those who are eligible to vote during the May 22 online Part 1 Clergy Session will receive their unique voting credentials via email on Monday, May 16.
- You will need an internet-connected device such as a desktop or laptop computer with speakers, a tablet, or a smartphone. You will access the session using a web browser (i.e. the platform you use to get on the Internet, such as Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.). A webcam is not necessary.

#### Electronic voting at the in-person Annual Conference Session in Columbus

- Members are requested to bring a device (smartphone, tablet, etc.) in order to vote during the conference session. If you do not have your own device or cannot borrow one, you may share a device with a fellow conference member.
- We are told the wi-fi signal will be strong enough for our needs. However, we may have to ask that during the vote you utilize your cellular data should that become necessary.
- Member-specific voting credentials will be issued at registration. Only those who are present at the session in Columbus are eligible to vote; there is no hybrid option.

#### **Training Session for Electronic Voting - Members Encouraged to Attend**

An online training opportunity is available on May 17 at 6 pm allowing you to familiarize yourself with the online process and voting for the Clergy Session and the electronic voting for the main business session. Conference members are encouraged to attend this session. The link to participate was included in an email sent May 12.

The same voting platform will be used for both the May 22 Clergy Session (Part 1) and the June 5-8 Business Session.

To participate in the training session, you will need an internet-connected device such as a desktop or laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone. You will access the session using a web browser (i.e. the platform you use to get on the Internet, such as Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.). A webcam is not necessary.

#### **Has there been a change in your lay member?**

Each charge conference should have elected an alternate lay member(s). If your alternate member is attending the conference in place of the primary member please share that information with your district office as soon as possible so that proper credentials may be prepared.

## Business Related Items

- [Detailed working agenda](#)
- [Clergy Session: Part 1 & Part 2](#): Part 1 on Sunday, May 22 (via Zoom) and Part 2 on Monday, June 6 (at the Columbus Trade Center)
- [Resolutions](#)
- [Retiree Health Trust proposal information](#)
- [Registration & Expenses/Per Diem](#)

## Missional Giving Opportunities

- [Mission Emphasis to support our conference agencies](#)
- [Special Offering for our North Katanga Partnership](#)

## Local Arrangement Details

- [Hotels](#)
- [Venue](#)
- [Childcare registration](#)
- [List of Banquets/Special Events](#)

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## Church court: Conferences can't exit unilaterally

By Heather Hahn, *UM News*

U.S. annual conferences have no authority under current church law to withdraw from The United Methodist Church, the denomination's top court ruled.

“There is no basis in Church law for any annual conference to adopt stopgap policies, pass resolutions, take a vote, or act unilaterally for the purpose of removing itself from The United Methodist Church,” the Judicial Council ruled in [Decision 1444](#).

The church court said only General Conference — the denomination's top lawmaking assembly — can set the process and conditions for these regional church bodies to leave the United Methodist connection.

But as of now, General Conference has not established such a process for annual conferences within the U.S.

“Absent General Conference legislation, any vote and actions taken by an annual conference to separate are unconstitutional, null and void, and of no legal force or effect,” the Judicial Council said.

The church court released the ruling May 10 as U.S. annual conferences are about to begin their season of yearly meetings.

Judicial Council member Beth Capen issued a separate opinion that concurs in part and dissents in part. Capen concurred with the ultimate holding but approached the issue differently.

The United Methodist constitution describes an annual conference as “the basic body” of the denomination. Each consists of multiple congregations and other ministries such as camps and college groups in a geographical area. The United Methodist Church has 53 annual conferences in the U.S., and 80 spread across Africa, Europe and the Philippines. A bishop presides at each annual conference.

Decision 1444 responds to [questions brought by the United Methodist Council of Bishops](#) about U.S. annual conferences. The Book of Discipline, the denomination’s law book, has a lengthy process for conferences outside the United States to become autonomous.

The bishops are dealing [with a splintering in the denomination](#). After years of intensifying internal disputes around the status of LGBTQ people, the coming General Conference faces proposals for some kind of denominational separation including the disaffiliation of annual conferences. However, not one of these separation proposals has received a General Conference vote.

Complications from the pandemic have caused [three postponements of the international legislative assembly, from May 2020 to now 2024](#). With the third postponement, some theological conservatives decided to stop waiting for General Conference action and instead launched a breakaway denomination — the Global Methodist Church — on May 1.

But with no General Conference-approved separation plan in effect, the bishops asked whether U.S. annual conferences can leave under current church law.

As the Judicial Council notes, resolutions already have been filed in at least two U.S. annual conferences — Northwest Texas and South Georgia — seeking their disaffiliation. The Northwest Texas Annual Conference, which encompasses the Texas Panhandle, [held a nonbinding vote last year signaling its aspirations to leave The United Methodist Church and join the Global Methodist Church](#).

The Judicial Council rejected arguments made in some briefs that an annual conference should be able to set its own rules for departure. Without enabling legislation passed by General Conference, the church court said, an annual conference disaffiliation “is contrary to Church law.”

Annual conferences elect General Conference delegates, deal with matters related to clergy ordination, manage church discipline and, in the U.S., serve as pension plan sponsors for their

clergy members. Annual conferences also are responsible for [handling the disaffiliations of individual United Methodist congregations](#).

They are part of The United Methodist Church's connectional form of church governance and any separation has "serious ramifications" for both the departing annual conference and beyond its boundaries, the Judicial Council said.

"The question of annual conference withdrawal from The United Methodist Church is a connectional matter and requires a churchwide legislative solution primarily because General Conference has 'full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional,'" the church court said, quoting the United Methodist constitution.

Church law already spells out how an annual conference "outside the United States" can become "an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist or affiliated united church."

The bishops asked if this process, [in the Book of Discipline's Paragraph 572](#), can be viewed "as minimum standards" for any annual conference disaffiliation. The Judicial Council said "no" since the paragraph only applies to conferences outside the United States. "There is no parallel provision or process for U.S. annual conferences," the church court said.

In Decision 1444, the Judicial Council also expanded on part of one of the court's earlier rulings. [Decision 1366](#), from 2018, repeatedly came up in briefs arguing that conferences should be able to set their own rules for exits.

The Bulgaria-Romania Provisional Annual Conference also referenced Decision 1366 [in a resolution to leave The United Methodist Church for the Global Methodist Church](#) — a move that now has led to another item on the Judicial Council docket.

In that earlier ruling, the church court was [reviewing the constitutionality of proposed legislation going to the special 2019 General Conference](#). The decision said a proposal that set up a procedure for annual conferences to become self-governing was in line with the denomination's constitution.

"An annual conference has the right to vote to withdraw from The United Methodist Church," Decision 1366 said. "This reserved right, however, is not absolute but must be counterbalanced by the General Conference's power to 'define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences.'"

However, the particular proposal under review in Decision 1366 never became church law. It was part of [a longer petition that died in committee at the 2019 General Conference](#).

In short, General Conference has not approved any legislation that provides a process for U.S. annual conferences to exit The United Methodist Church.

“While an annual conference has the reserved right to vote on disaffiliation, the General Conference must first enact enabling legislation to establish the right to withdraw but has not done so for U.S. conferences,” the Judicial Council said in Decision 1444.

“Decision 1366 cannot be construed as creating a self-executing right for an annual conference to separate because the Judicial Council has no legislative authority.”

*Hahn is assistant news editor for UM News. Contact her at (615) 742-5470 or [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org). To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free Daily or Friday Digests](#).*

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## **Freedom, Love, and Faith**

### **Spring Quarter: God Frees and God Redeems**

#### **Unit 3: Liberating Letters**

**Sunday school lesson for the week of May 22, 2022**

**By Dr. Hal Brady**

**Lesson Scripture: Galatians 5:1-15**

**Key Verse: Galatians 5:14**

#### **Lesson Aims**

1. Identify the key traits of a life free in Christ.
2. Explain the connection between the law, faith and love.
3. Plan one way to serve his or her neighbors as a practice of living a life of freedom in Christ.

Christian parenting involves more than telling scriptural truths; it also involves modeling ethical behavior. Yet sometimes even mature adults have trouble overcoming selfish practices – especially regarding love for others.

The churches in Galatia were wrestling with the tension of personal freedom and what was required of them as God’s children. Though divisions had formed, Paul, like an attentive father, offered a new perspective on the nature of law, liberty, and love.

#### **Lesson Context**

We are informed that today’s scripture text marks a transition in Paul’s teaching to the Galatian Christians. To this point, Paul defended the nature of his ministry (Galatians 1:9-11) and offered a new understanding in the nature of the law (3:21-22), especially for God’s children (3:26-29).

Among the Galatians were individuals who required Gentile believers' adherence to Jewish religious customs and practices. Paul called out these Judaizers for compelling "Gentiles to follow Jewish customs" (2:14). Judaizers emphasized faithfulness to the old covenant – the Law of Moses – for salvation. They taught that Gentiles should show faithfulness to the words of the law to find salvation (1:6; see Acts 15:1-5). And the most visible way such faithfulness could be shown was by the act of circumcision (see Genesis 17:7-14). So what resulted among the Galatians was a tension between the words of the law and expression of faith (3:1-14).

Prior to today's scripture text, Paul refers to the story of Abraham's wives, Hagar and Sarah (Galatians 4:21-23; see Genesis 16:15; 17:16-21; 21:2). Paul retells the birth narratives of Isaac (by Sarah) and Ishmael (by Hagar). And we might assume that Paul would connect the physical descendants of Isaac and Ishmael to that of Jews and non-Jews respectively. However, Paul relates the spiritual descendants of Isaac to individuals in freedom from the old covenant children of God's promises (4:28). By contrast, Paul describes the spiritual descendants of Ishmael as those in bondage to the old covenant, never to experience the inheritance of God's children (4:30). The retelling made Paul's point clear. It is through faith, not law adherence, that is God's blessed inheritance.

### **I. Fight for Freedom (Galatians 5:1)**

Verse 1 is a stirring challenge to embrace freedom, not slavery. As Eugene Peterson put it in "The Message," "Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you."

Freedom in this regard is the result of a believer's life made new in "Christ." But freedom is not without cost. That Christ has set believers "free" indicates the cost: He "gave himself" for humanity's sins (1:4; 2:20), "becoming a curse for us" as he hung on the cross (3:13; see also 5:30-31).

Throughout the letter, Paul emphasized the imitations of the Law of Moses as it related to the children of God (Galatians 2:16-20; 3:10-14, 19-26). Paul's directive to avoid becoming "burdened again" in this regard is due to the teachings of the Judaizers.

That Paul describes the law as a "yoke" highlights the law's demands, especially those placed on Galatian Gentiles (Acts 15:10). A yoke indicates the submission of a weaker power to a stronger power (example Genesis 27:40; Isaiah 9:4).

God desired that his people live freely (Colossians 2:16-23) following Jesus' reminder that "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). Believers are to be burdened by the needs of others (see Galatians 6:2).

### **II. Searching for Freedom (Galatians 5:2-6)**

Verses 2 and 3 state two terrible consequences of a lapse into legalism for the Galatians. First, it would cancel the benefits of Christ for them – freeing them from the curse of the law, sin, and death. Christ’s work would provide them no value.

Second, it would put these Galatians under the necessity of keeping all of the Law. Perhaps the Galatians had not thought of it, but they could not submit to circumcision and stop there. Once they had admitted it was necessary, they would be admitting that all the rest of the law was also necessary. As James stated, to break one point of the Law was to be guilty of all the law (James 2:10). Obedience to the law was an all-or-nothing requirement! If people disobeyed the law at one point, they were guilty of disobeying the whole law.

In verse 4, Paul reiterates a previous point: a person cannot be justified by both “Christ” and “the law” (5:2-4). Only faith can bring justification (Romans 3:28).

The phrase “fallen away from grace” serves as a warning: the Galatians’ acceptance as children of God is entirely dependent on God’s grace. Thus, any attempt to find justification in the law will be equivalent to falling out of grace’s realm.

Now, the promise of righteousness through the Law is appealing because it is definite and tangible. However, the righteousness that comes through faith, Paul argues, is no less real. Although this righteousness may not be fully experienced until God’s final judgment, it is already present in the form of hope as the Spirit works in the believer now.

Because Paul has already expressed the failure of circumcision, some Galatians might highlight their own un-circumcision. Paul reminds them that “neither ... has any value” regarding God’s righteousness. By highlighting the limitations of both, Paul reinforces that there is neither Jew nor Gentile ... you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28; compare Galatian 6:15).

Instead, what really counts is a person’s faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 2:16; 3:23-25). And this “faith” is not passive; it is not mere believing or hoping. Instead, faith has an active component. It expresses itself in the lives of believers and the outward expression of faith is demonstrated “through love” – a love rooted in God’s love (1 John 4:19).

The late Henri Nouwen was one of the great spiritual leaders of modern times. He was the author of more than 40 books and taught at the University of Notre Dame, Harvard and Yale. He spent the last seven years of his life with people with mental handicaps, serving as pastor of the L’Arche Daybreak Community in Canada. Nouwen was a good example of a person who demonstrated his faith through love.

### **III. Obstacles to Freedom (Galatians 5:7-12)**

The metaphor of “running” a race is common in Paul’s writings (see 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25; Philippians 2:16). It described the Galatians’ pursuit of Paul’s teaching (Galatians 1:11, 2:2). They had started the “race” well by following what he taught! But Judaizers, teaching a different

message, obstructed the Galatians' obedience. That Paul asked "who cut in on you" was likely a rhetorical question; Paul knew their situation. He just wanted them to recognize the problem in their midst (compare 3:1).

Paul called the "persuasion" of the Galatian Judaizers "a different gospel" (Galatian 1:6) which would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (1:7). Their message distracted other Galatians from following the gospel that calls to faith, obedience, and love.

As Paul moves on in his letter, he speaks of the methods of the false teachers and considers the end result of their problematic interference. He does this by quoting a proverbial saying from the world of bread-making, "a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough" (v.9).

The New Testament uses the word "yeast" figuratively elsewhere (example: Matthew 16:6-12). To Paul, the teachings of another "gospel" served as leaven among the Galatian believers. As they allowed a little of opposing, persuasive teaching to take hold, specifically the alleged need for circumcision, the rest of the false teachings would take hold. The result would be division among the Galatians.

So in verse 9, the churches in Galatia were in turmoil. They were wavering and perhaps even tilting toward Paul's opponents, but they had not yet completely succumbed to the false teachers' pervasive appeals. It is stated that Paul's primary purpose in writing his letter probably was to provide a counterweight to the false teachers.

Against the influence of the other teachings, Paul was "confident" in the Galatians' mindset toward faith. The resulting positive reinforcement served to motivate the Galatians, like a parent encouraging a child. Paul hoped they would not "like" another view of the gospel of Christ Jesus. And the individual teacher (the one ... throwing you into confusion) who taught a different gospel than Paul's would face God's judgment and "pay the penalty" (Galatians 1:8-9).

In verse 11, we are left to assume that the Judaizers claimed Paul had continued "preaching circumcision." Perhaps their claims were based on Paul's former zeal in Judaism (Galatians 1:13-17), or his seemingly casual approach toward the issue (see 5:6).

Prior to his conversion, Paul had persecuted followers of Christ (example, Acts 9:4-5; 22:4). Paul was now the one to suffer the hardships he caused others to experience (compare 2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

Now, this is not the only time when Paul wrote on the "offense of the cross." For messianic expectations, a crucified Messiah was "a stumbling block" (1 Corinthians 1:23). So, to the Judaizers, salvation without the Spirit of the law was equally as offensive.

The highpoint of Paul's defense hits an unexpected and graphic climax. He ends with an almost crudely blunt saying. Galatia, we are informed, was near Phrygia, and the great worship of that part of the world was the worship of "Cybele;" now it was the practice that priests and really

devoted worshippers of Cybele mutilated themselves by castration. The Cybele priests were even eunuchs. So Paul says, “If you go on in this way, of which circumcision is the beginning, you might as well end up by castrating yourselves like these heathen priests.” For sure, this is a grim illustration of which a polite society might shudder, but it would be intensely real to the Galatians who knew all about the priests of Cybele, who, in fact, lived among them.

#### **IV. Paradox of Freedom (Galatians 5:13-15)**

Paul’s Galatian “brothers and sisters” – believers who expressed faith – were called from the yoke of the law’s demands. They were now to live into the freedom that Christ had given. The Lord had worked in the Galatians, and the time had come for them to move forward in his Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17)!

However, Paul extends a caution. The word “flesh” describes human nature that acts in sinful ways contrary to God’s Spirit (Romans 8:1-12; Galatians 6:8; Ephesians 2:3). Thus, freedom is not an occasion for believers to “indulge” their personal desires, especially sinful ones. In essence, liberty does not mean license. As Paul expressed it, “It could become an occasion to the flesh.” Again, Paul meant human nature without the motivation of the Holy Spirit.

If the Christian is not under the Law, then what is to prevent him/her from going in to the desires of the flesh? Paul’s answer to this critical question is, the commitment to be servants of one another through love! Once more, the remedy for living under the flesh is to “serve” others in love. As the Spirit brings freedom, a believer is required to use that freedom responsibly, concerned for the good of others (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7). If Paul had desired an example of this teaching, he could have easily referred to the life and ministry of Jesus (see Mark 10:45; John 13:4-16, 34-35; Philippians 2:3-8). In addition, Paul’s own life and ministry was an application of this verse (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

In verse 14, Paul was likely referring to the Law of Moses and all that it required. The law’s teachings did not culminate in customs and rituals like circumcision. Instead, the law was fulfilled and found completely through a person’s overt concern for others (Romans 13:10).

Therefore, in the commitment to serve one another – this is what the Law is all about. If you love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27), then you have fulfilled the intent of the law (Romans 3:8-10). Thus, as we are reminded, Paul showed that he did not deny what the Law aimed at, which was righteousness. He simply pointed out that the Law cannot bring it about, but Jesus Christ can.

Related to verse 15, a tense conflict might lead a person to say or act in a manner that serves “to bite and devour” other people, like actions of a predator toward a weaker animal. If believers are not filled with love (see Galatians 5:14), their actions may tear others down.

If the Galatians attacked one another, the result would be mutually assured destruction. They would be destroyed by fleshly desires.

### **Conclusion**

As Peter Scholtes (1938-2009) directed his South Side Chicago youth choir in the 1960s, he wanted a song that would unite the varied experience of his church's youth group. After a day of work, Scholtes composed "They'll know we are Christians." The song, now made popular in numerous hymn books, reflected the sentiment of Jesus' teaching that "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

While believers might be free from the demands of the law, Paul taught the Galatians that such freedom requires active love for others. And showing this love is the litmus test for a believer's love for God.

The late Brennan Manning, priest and author, has written a book called "Ruthless Trust." He says the book started writing itself with a remark from his spiritual director. "Brennan," his spiritual director said, "you don't need any more insights into the faith. You've got enough insight to last you 300 years. The most urgent need in your life is to trust what you have received."

In reality, that's we all need – to trust what we have received – that freedom in Christ is to love God and others.

### **Action Plan**

1. What steps can believers take so they don't become burdened by sin?
2. How can believers wait for the freedom of God's righteousness in the midst of daily life?
3. How can an accurate understanding of freedom hinder a Christian witness?

### **Resources for this lesson**

1. "2021-2022 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Series, International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching," pages 321-328.
2. "The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians" by William Barclay, pages 46-50.
3. "Shepherd's Notes" by David Shepherd, pages 63-69.

*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).*



### **The Fruit of Freedom**

**Spring Quarter: God Frees and God Redeems**  
**Unit 3: Liberating Letters**

**Sunday school lesson for the week of May 29, 2022**  
**By Dr. Hal Brady**

**Lesson Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26**  
**Key Verse: Galatians 5:25**

**Lesson Aims**

4. List characteristics of life in the flesh and life in the Spirit.
5. Explain how elements of “fruit” of the Spirit and “acts of the flesh” can be rank-ordered as to importance of why such an attempt should not be made.
6. Identify a sinful tendency most besetting and commit to developing one specific fruit of the Spirit to counteract it.

A gripping story – word or film – has engaging, almost lifelike characters. And when conflict exists between such characters, the story narrative builds toward its breathtaking climax.

Additionally, a story’s narrative conflict and climax usually reflect an inner turmoil we can identify with. Now, Paul understood that his readers experienced spiritual turmoil. So in what serves as the dramatic climax (but not the end) of Paul’s letters to the Galatians, the conflict between Spirit and flesh comes to a head.

**Lesson Context**

Central to Paul’s argument in this lesson, we are informed, is the nature of “the flesh.” However, the nature and implications of the flesh are not static in the New Testament. Even the dozens of uses of the word in Paul’s writings indicate slight differences and nuances. To claim a singular understanding of Paul’s view of the flesh would be mistaken.

Paul uses the word to speak of physical matter of living creatures generally (1 Corinthians 15:39) and the human body specifically (1 Corinthians 6:16). In other instances, flesh is regarded negatively. Paul referred to it in the context of circumcision (Galatians 6:12), rebellious human nature and desires (Romans 8:3-12), and temporal lineage in contrast to an eternal one (Romans 4:1; Galatians 4:23, 29).

As used in today’s Scripture context, flesh refers to the carnal, unredeemed self and its rebellious nature and desires (see Romans 13:13-14). In order for believers to live fully as children of God, the ways of the flesh must die (see Galatians 2:19-21).

As we understand, the entire epistle to the Galatians has been building to this lesson’s scripture text. With a proper understanding of God’s law and promises (Galatians 3:1-22) and true freedom in God’s Spirit (4:21-5:14), Paul puts all the pieces together.

## **I. Stating the Sides (Galatians 5:16-18)**

Paul envisions one option for the Galatian believers: to “walk by the Spirit of God.” By using a metaphor, Paul describes the kind of life required of disciples as a walk (see Romans 13:13; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:6-7). The metaphor refers to the ways first-century students might follow in the steps of their rabbis (teachers of the Jewish Law). As students did so, they would listen to the teaching and allow it to change their hearts and minds. If the Galatians followed Paul’s exhortation, their whole way of life would change.

As the Galatians walked in God’s Spirit, they would avoid defilement that comes from a heart out of tune with the Spirit. This would consist of “the desires of the flesh” (see Mark 7:18-23; 1 John 2:16). Now, Paul did not suggest that the Galatian believers should invite the Spirit of God into their already established way of life. Rather, he wanted them to allow the Spirit to determine their motivations and behaviors (see Galatians 5:25).

The way of “the flesh desires” that the working of “the Spirit” in a believer’s life would be thwarted. That Paul describes this as a desire alludes to the sinful acts of coveting (see Romans 7:7; 13:9) and lust (Matthew 5:28). Acts of the flesh certainly involve more than these two, but all acts of the flesh imply the flesh’s sinful desires.

The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is very evident to Paul. The desires of the flesh lead to death while the desires of the Spirit lead to life (Romans 8:5-8). In other letters, Paul describes this conflict as being between the old, sinful self and the new, righteous self. Without the presence of God’s spirit working against the flesh, a person will act in sinful and selfish ways (see Galatians 5:19-21).

So it is obvious that a person cannot at the same time embrace fully the ways of the flesh and the ways of the Spirit. Their ways are in conflict with each other. And as a result, a believer – while filled with God’s Spirit – may experience a spiritual frustration (Romans 7:17-25). God’s Spirit has already provided a way out: freedom from the ways of the flesh (Romans 8:1; 11,16).

In this sense, the battle has been won and believers are to follow the Spirit. Consequently, Paul’s conclusion is believers are not to “do whatever” the flesh desires. Instead, believers follow the Spirit’s way of life.

Not long ago, a friend shared with me an admirable testimony to his personal honor, integrity and faith. In another state he had refused to sell his vote for great personal gain in a large business transaction. He commented, “Eventually, because of it, I lost my job. But I can still look myself in the mirror and like what I see.” Perhaps that is one example of walking in the Spirit.

In verse 18, Paul expressed a new point of conflict between “the Spirit and the Law.” He was likely speaking of the demands of the Law of Moses. Paul previously connected the demands of the law and the ways of the flesh (Galatians 3:2-5). He had reminded the Galatians of their

freedom from the law. Consequently, they were no longer “under a curse” (Galatians 3:10) nor “in custody” under the law (Galatians 3:23). So as they followed the Spirit, they would not experience the bondage of the flesh and the law (Galatians 5:1).

As we are informed, Paul’s exhortation was the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Jeremiah. God’s people would be marked by their following of God’s law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:3). This promise took hold through a life committed to be in tune with the Spirit of the living God (2 Corinthians 3:3).

## **II. Chasing the Flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)**

For Paul, it was essential that freedom and liberty should mean not freedom to indulge this lower side of human nature, but freedom to walk in the life of the Spirit. Therefore, what follows are lists of vices (Galatians 5:17-21) and virtues (Galatians 5:22, 23). And such lists were not intended to be exhaustive catalogs for the readers but were representative (compare Romans 1:29-31; Colossians 3:5-9).

Indulgent and self-gratifying sexual acts outside of a marriage relationship make up sexual immorality. The Greek word for “sexual immorality” originally meant “prostitution.” By Paul’s time, it was used to denote a whole range of immoral sexual relationships, including incest (1 Corinthians 5:1). For believers to be caught up in sexual misconduct deeply grieves the Holy Spirit, whose presence within their lives has made their bodies temples unto the Lord.

Acts of sexual immorality, although often done in the name of love, are really the antithesis of love, which is the foremost fruit of the Spirit.

“Impurity” means uncleanness and has both a medical and ceremonial connotation. Even today doctors speak of cleaning a wound before they apply medication to it.

Under the Mosaic Law, ceremonial impurity barred one from participation in the worship rituals of the temple until the impediment was removed. Uncleanness, then, speaks of the defilement of sexual sin and the separation from God that it brings. God desires that his people acknowledge the holiness of their bodies and act accordingly (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Extravagant sexual vice, uncontrolled and shameless, is “debauchery.” The term implies lack of self-control, even to the point of shocking others without regard for decency (see Ephesians 4:19). So debauchery speaks of the total loss of limits, the lack of restraint, decency, and self-respect.

Now, it’s no secret that today our society is wildly swinging on its sexual hinges. With regard to current sexual attitudes and practices, we are living in a pagan, post-Christian society. More or less, anything goes between consenting adults. As long as it makes me feel “good,” that’s the fashion.

Paul's cultural context was also obsessed with sexuality. Sites of pagan worship, such as temples to the goddess Aphrodite, utilized practice of sexual exploitation. Religious festivals frequently encouraged public and graphic expressions of sex.

Paul called Christians to a life of self-discipline, contrary to the ways of their culture. Indiscipline and excessiveness were and are simply not suitable for a life in God's Spirit.

Paul's second grouping concerned idolatrous acts of worship. "Idolatry" involved replacing worship for the one true God. In essence, this act exchanged God for a lie (see Exodus 20:3-6; Leviticus 19:4; Isaiah 44:9-20; Jeremiah 10:14; Romans 1:25).

So, what is idolatry? We are guilty of idolatry when anyone or anything usurps the place that God should have in our lives. The Second Commandment (Deuteronomy 5:8-10) forbids – absolutely forbids – the making or worshipping anything other than God Himself. But as the late James Kennedy expressed it, "There is a tendency in the human heart to worship things other than God."

"Witchcraft" is the attempt to use physical objects and rituals to manipulate the spiritual world. Examples would include ancient pagan practices of magic, incantations, and drug use. In the New Testament, however, it is invariably associated with the occult, both here in Galatians and in Revelation, where it occurs twice (Revelation 9:21; 18:23).

And Paul's final grouping of sins concerns a person's treatment of others. "Hatred" refers to a spirit of hostility toward another person, God, or both. The specific forms this hatred can take in tearing down community life are: discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy.

"Discord" is a general description for the feeling of hostility among people – quarreling and disharmony (see 1 Corinthians 1:11; 3:3). We are told that in the New Testament this word is unique to Paul. He used it nine times to characterize the strife and discord that beset so many of his congregations.

Feelings of "jealousy" speak to the strong feelings that may arise from seeing the success of another person. "Fits of rage" are strong bursts of anger stemming from an impetuous mindset. "Self-ambition" results when hostile groups advance their own interests. These kinds of acts are the opposite of the self-giving love initiated by God's Spirit. "Dissensions" continues interpersonal strife to the point of causing division (Romans 16:17-18). And "factions" point to false beliefs that lead to destructive differences within the community.

Now "envy" is another word similar in meaning to the trait of jealousy listed earlier, except that this word is plural, suggesting the multitudinous expressions of envious desire. Here in Galatians 5:21 it refers to the unacceptable rivalry that had sprung up from the malice and ill will of the

Galatians toward one another. And, of course, it refers to the desire to deprive others of what they have.

Paul ends his list of vices by describing two public displays of overindulgence and self-destruction. “Drunkness” – intoxication from alcohol – harms the body and clouds a person’s mind. A drunk person might lose control of his or her better judgment and participate in “orgies.” These are public displays of indulgence, gluttony, and immorality (Romans 13:13, I Peter 4:3).

Orgies is variously translated “revelings” (KJV), “carousing” (NRSV), “wild parties” (TLB). It occurs three times in the New Testament (here and in Romans 13:18 and I Peter 4:3). In each case it is linked to the sin of drunkenness. In New Testament times, as in our day, the abuse of alcohol contributed to marital infidelity, child and spouse abuse, the erosion of family life, and the moral chaos in society.

That the vice list ends with “and the like” confirms that Paul had not compiled a comprehensive list. Rather, he wanted to highlight specific works of the flesh applicable to the Galatians.

The phrase, “as I did before” says that this was not the first time Paul had addressed these Galatians on this topic. “To these people who live like this,” the listed vices of the flesh, a strong warning is evident. People give their eternal inheritance of life through faith, not ethical behavior (Galatians 3:11-12,13). But righteous behavior serves as an indication of the presence of God’s Spirit. People who fail to act in accordance with the Spirit will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Important point! Occasional failure to live in this regard was not Paul’s concern. Instead, he was concerned with individuals who mock God’s Spirit as they continually lived in the flesh (Galatians 6:7-9). A life led by the Spirit will not continue the status quo of living apart from God’s path.

### **III. Showing the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26)**

Having given his list of vices, characteristics of the flesh, Paul now provides an in-depth listing of virtues appropriate to the life of a spirit-filled believer. We are told that Greco-Roman philosophers created virtue lists based on the cardinal values of their culture. However, Paul’s virtues list had a different basis: love for others indicative of the presence of God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:13-16).

Paul described the Spirit-filled life in agricultural terms, calling the attributes of such a life “fruit” (compare his other “fruit” thoughts in Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11, 22; see also John 15:1-17). The metaphor alludes to the Spirit’s role in producing this harvest – a shift from human striving to the Spirit’s supplying. Only through submission to God’s Spirit will these fruits be evident in a believer’s life (see Matthew 7:16-20).

The word “love” is used frequently by Paul. It is significant that love heads the list of these nine graces of Christian life. Paul might well have placed a period after love and moved on to the conclusion of his letter.

Love is not merely “first among equals” in this listing, but rather the source and fountain from which all of the other graces flow. Love as a characteristic of the Christian life issued from God’s unfathomable love and infinite mercy toward us.

A Spirit-filled sense of “joy” does not come from or depend on circumstances. It’s a joy whose basis is God.

Now missionaries for the most part are a happy lot. Have you ever seen an unhappy missionary? I don’t think I have. But why? Mostly because they have learned the Christian secret of redemptive joy. They have attached themselves to the world’s sorrow and the struggles. They’ve learned to forget themselves and devote themselves to the service of Christ and others.

Spirit-filled “peace” does not imply the absence of distress. Rather peace finds its basis in the conviction of God’s all-sufficiency. Believers demonstrate peace as they work toward taking part in God’s restoration of the world. And this begins with the restoration of the relationships within the Church (see 1 Corinthians 14:33).

The next grouping of spiritual fruit describes a person’s attitude toward others. “Forbearance” expresses patient treatment of others, even in response to hurtful treatment. “Kindness” points toward a person’s loving disposition in relating to others. God’s action toward humanity provides the ultimate example (see Romans 2:4). “Goodness” is a rare word found only four times in the New Testament (and only in Paul). It conveys the idea of benevolence and generosity toward someone else – going the second mile when it is not required. The underlying Greek word translated “faithfulness” can also be translated as loyalty. It probably is that meaning in this verse. Specifically, it refers to the faithfulness required between believers (see Galatians 4:12-16).

Now, while the earlier groupings of fruit focused on a person’s treatment of others, this final grouping concerns a person’s demeanor. “Gentleness” implies self-restraining even in the midst of disagreement (see 2Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 3:15-16). And that “self-control” appears last in Paul’s list may indicate its importance as a summation of the preceding virtues.

Christians are not to be passive while bearing the Spirit’s fruit. While the Spirit has a role in the growth of the fruit, the Christian must end anything that might hinder the growth condition of the fruit. Thus, Paul’s imagery unites Jesus’ followers with his experience on the cross. Following Jesus and expressing faith in Him requires believers to “have crucified the desires and ways of the flesh.” Believers are reminded here to put to death sinful practices so that new life might be found (Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 2:20). Paul wanted the Galatians to live not only for themselves, but for the One who died for them (2Corinthians 5:15).

In conclusion, it has been stated that if the Galatian epistle were a narrative, flesh and Spirit would serve as the main characters. And in this scenario, the conflict between the two played out in the lives of the Galatians. However, the Spirit has already won – the resolution of the story has been decided! Therefore, Paul wants and encourages his hearers and readers to live accordingly.

### **Action Plan**

4. How can Christians measure whether they're living in the direction of God's Spirit?
5. In what ways is the kingdom of God already established, but not yet fully realized?
6. How might we go about cultivating fruit of the Spirit in our lives?

### **Resources for this lesson**

4. "2021-2022 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Series, International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching," pages 329-336.
5. "The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians" by William Barclay, pages 54-57.
6. "Shepherd's Notes" by David Shepherd, pages 68-79.

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## **Great is thy faithfulness**

### **WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN**

#### **ANNE PACKARD**

*The Methodist Church has laid upon my shoulders many responsibilities, but it has also given to me a great many honors. Perhaps no man ever stood seeking admission at the bar of an Annual Conference with so little to offer as credentials of his worthiness for the work of the Ministry. But in great kindness, the South Georgia Conference received me "on trial" in 1909. From that humble circuit to which I was sent in that year, I have traveled a worldwide circuit and had the privilege of being the "Ambassador" of Methodism upon almost every continent of the earth.*

*"My Personal Testimony" by Bishop Arthur J. Moore*

Arthur Moore would have liked to have had an impressive education including college degrees, but there wasn't even a high school in his hometown. How great was his faithfulness?

Arthur Moore would have liked to have been a missionary to Korea, but instead was appointed to a seven-church charge in McIntosh County with a horse for transportation and an abandoned home as a parsonage. How great was his faithfulness?

Arthur Moore was appointed to Travers Park in San Antonio, and his first act as senior pastor was to construct a new sanctuary with the church meeting in an open-air tabernacle while it was being built. How great was his faithfulness?

The Methodist Church elected three new, young bishops in 1930 during the height of the Great Depression, despite there being no funds for their salaries. How great was its faithfulness?

Bishop Moore attended the 1934 General Conference prepared to leave the episcopacy but instead accepted all of the foreign work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South with the exception of Latin America. How great was his faithfulness?

Bishop Moore voted for mandatory retirement of bishops due to age knowing his mentor, Bishop Candler, would be forced to retire. How great was his faithfulness?

Bishop Moore flew from Belgium to the Belgian Congo to minister while World War II was being declared in Europe. How great was his faithfulness?

To return home from the Belgian Congo, Bishop Moore rode a train three weeks to Johannesburg, South Africa and then sailed with a Japanese fishing boat in the south Atlantic while German U-boats patrolled the sea and sank ships. How great was his faithfulness?

He returned to China three days after getting home and traveled to the remote regions outside of Shanghai to see how the common people were faring with the Japanese invasion. How great was his faithfulness?

During World War II, when isolationism dominated the country, he led the Bishops' First Great Crusade to raise funds for the Methodist missionary program and raised the equivalent of more than three million dollars. How great was his faithfulness?

The first two countries that donated to the Bishops' Great Crusade to save the missionary program were China and Korea. How great was their faithfulness?

Bishop Moore agreed to lead the Methodist Church Board of Missions in 1940 despite a recent unification within the church and an ongoing world war. How great was his faithfulness?

Bishop Moore was instrumental in creating the Upper Room devotional magazine, printing 100,000 copies of its first edition. The copies sold out quickly. How great was his faithfulness?

Bishop Moore took Mrs. C.C. Sapp, the first female delegate from the South Georgia Conference, to the General Conference meeting in 1940. How great was their faithfulness?

Bishop Moore was not elected chairman of the Board of Trustees of Lake Junaluska Assembly so he created Epworth By The Sea Conference Center. How great was his faithfulness?

We are being asked to meet for the 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference meeting in Columbus in June. How great is your faithfulness?

*God hath sent the eternal in our hearts. He makes the seen and the unseen one. He bridges the gulf between a world that now is and the eternal world of abiding beauty. We are neither guests of a night nor captives of a cruel world, but children in the family of God. That broken sepulcher in Joseph's garden assures us that God hath set the light of immortality in our hearts and not even death can put it out. Our Christian faith is never so confident, never so triumphant as when it proclaims the everlasting life. We march, not toward a setting sun, but toward the light of morning; the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. This life and the next are one and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

*The light that falls upon my pathway is the Light of Eternal Morning.* Arthur J. Moore

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

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## **Choosing the color**

**By Dr. Hal Brady**

There's a story of a student at Iowa State University who took to selling magazine subscriptions for additional income. He decided that a likely customer might be the president of the university. The student was greeted at the door by the president's wife who was able to resist his sales pitch by saying that her husband already received more magazines than he could read. Before turning to leave, the student assured her that he understood. It was then that the president's wife saw something she had not noticed before. The student was disabled. She felt bad that she had turned him down, and probably out guilt called out to him and said, "I did not know you were disabled." The student responded that being disabled was the result of having polio as a child. The woman then said, "My, how that must color your life." The young man brightly responded, "It certainly does, but thank God I can choose the color."

As we can see in this story, attitude plays a key role in our lives – especially in dealing with adversity. Attitude determines who we are and how we live day to day. Attitude can give us perspective and hope in all kinds of situations, whether difficult or not. Another significant point of the story is that the young man was not born with his good attitude. He pointed out that he chose the color. He chose how he would respond to his adversity. And that is also true of us. We can choose our response to adversity.

First, we can choose to resist it! The late noted minister Ralph Sockman once expressed this resistance or rebellion this way: "A grief is a sorrow we carry around in our hearts. A grievance

is a chip we carry on our shoulders.” So many in their anger concerning their adversity blame God, others, or even themselves. Why did God allow this to happen? I can never forgive them. I should or shouldn’t have done that! In my earlier days, a lady in one of my churches lost three of her family members by death, one in an accident. As you might imagine, she had a very difficult time with her grief. But she turned bitter toward God and everyone else. She pulled the shades down in her home, sat in the dark all day and would see no one other than me, her pastor. In her resistance or rebellion, she greatly increased her bitterness and turmoil and delayed any sense of recovery.

Second, we can choose to give in to adversity! The late Hubert Humphrey waged a courageous battle against cancer. During the height of his illness he wrote: “The biggest mistake people make is giving up. Adversity is an experience, not a final act. Some people look upon setback as the end. They are always looking for the benediction rather than the invocation.”

Well, evidently, Jesus was not one of those “benediction” people. For in the midst of his adversity (his tough times in his hometown), Jesus refused to quit. He refused to give up. Jesus did not see in his adversity a hopeless situation. Consequently, he did not lose his perspective or zeal for the greater purposes of God. We can choose to give in!

Third, we can choose to cope with or overcome our adversity! Here we can take our cue from the apostle Paul. Paul could have been writing about his unfortunate experience of being in prison or how his missionary activity had ended abruptly. He could have been writing about his troubling adversity. But he wasn’t. Why? Because Paul understood that his impossibility could become God’s possibility. So he says this: “I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (Philippians 1:12).

If we can’t run, we can walk; if we can’t walk, we can crawl. And if we can’t crawl, we can do something. By God’s grace, our impossibility can become God’s possibility.

Oh yes, like the disabled young man in the story, we can choose the color!

*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).*

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## **Retired Clergy Birthdays – May 2022**

5/01 – Jacque Asbel: 4116 Amberley Trail; Valdosta, GA 31602

5/01 – John Beck: 1210 Tribble Rd.; Ft. Valley, GA 31030

5/03 – Rick Turner: 798 Mallery St., Apt. 11; St. Simons Island, GA 31522

5/06 – Eddie Morrison: 1610 Kings Way; Savannah, GA 31406

5/11 – Stan Posey: 3936 Island Creek Rd.; Valdosta, GA 31601

5/12 – Reese Nelson: 2804 Willow Wood Circle; Valdosta, GA 31602  
5/12 – Ron Womack: 404 Bobby Ray Rd.; Reidsville, GA 30453  
5/14 – Kenneth Watkins: 170 Sanford St.; Wadley, GA 30477  
5/15 – Tommy Roe: PO Box 56; Montrose, GA 31065  
5/15 – Dan Smith: 7176 Standing Boy Rd.; Columbus, GA 31904  
5/19 – Ronnie Howell: 32 Vanceville Co. Line Rd.; Tifton, GA 31794  
5/20 – Franklin Pierce: 602 Ft. King George Dr.; Darien, GA 31305  
5/22 – Jimmy Gilbert: 464 Penia Rd. N; Cordele, GA 31015  
5/23 – Jeri Pruette: 2188 Peacock Rd.; Quitman, GA 31643  
5/24 – Columbus Burns: 201 East 63<sup>rd</sup> St.; Savannah, GA 31405  
5/24 – Robert Beckum: 5031 Spyglass Court; Columbus, GA 31909  
5/26 – Faye Burgamy: 165 S. Burgamy Rd.; Warthen, GA 31094  
5/27 – Cile Mitchell: 130 Hitchiti Ridge Rd.; Juliette, GA 31046  
5/28 – Richard Newton: 1823 Kaufman Circle; Lady Lake, FL 32159  
5/29 – Marsha Emery: 3855 Dennis Creek Road; Talbotton, GA 31827  
5/30 – Luanne Kemper: 1412 Sapling Dr.; Orange Park, FL 32073

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## **OBITUARIES**

### **Mrs. Rose King**

Margaret Rosetta (Rose) King was born on July 6, 1944, in Montgomery, Alabama. At two years of age, with her parents, Samuel and Pauline Hayden, she moved to Nashville, Tennessee where her faith was nurtured by Clark Memorial United Methodist Church. She received a BS degree in psychology from Bennett College in 1966 and completed course work towards the MS degree in psychology at Howard University. After teaching in New York, she returned to Nashville where she worked in her mother's beauty salon as a cosmetologist Her earthly journey ended on April 27, 2022. She is preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Sandra Hayden.

Rose faithfully supported the ministry of her loving husband, Bishop James R. King, Jr. in Tennessee, Kentucky and South Georgia. Her passion for teaching was deeply inspired by Susanna Wesley which aligned with her being a teacher at heart. She taught children and adults in Sunday school, co-led workshops with her husband and hosted church gatherings. As the wife of a pastor, district superintendent and bishop, she believed clergy spouses should be supported, and have healthy outlets in order to be most effectively engaged as partners in ministry. She wanted them to have rich, encouraging experiences. Rose also desired her clergy spouse colleagues to pursue lifelong educational opportunities as well. Recently, she worked to establish Bible Study Fellowship International Evening Women's Group in Columbus, Georgia.

She was devoted to family, peace and creating loving relationships with a big smile. When it came to discord in the world, her commitment to prayer and peace often left her saying "only in heaven." Precious memories will continue in the hearts of her husband and their three children:

Jothany, James III, and Robert; grandsons Jaylon and Joshua; sister-in-law Linda, nephew Langston; the Hunter family which includes a host of cousins and many friends.

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## **Scripture Readings – May 17 edition**

**May 22**

***Sixth Sunday of Easter***

Psalm 67 (UMH 791)

Acts 16:9-15

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

John 14:23-29

**May 29**

***Seventh Sunday of Easter***

Psalm 97 (UMH 816)

Acts 16:16-34

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

John 17:20-26

**June 5**

***Pentecost***

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b (UMH 826)

Romans 8:14-17

John 14:8-17, (25-27)

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## **Events in the South Georgia Conference – 5/17/2022 edition**

**Online Advanced Lay Servant Training – May 17, May 19, May 24, May 26**

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 us about how we are called to use our spiritual gifts. Advanced LSM Training includes learning how to put your spiritual gifts into service. This training will be offered via Zoom. You must complete all of the scheduled dates above to complete your training. To participate you will need either a cell phone that will allow you to download the Zoom app (please do so ahead of time) or a laptop, a steady wi-fi connection, and a willingness to learn in a modern way.

Registration fee for the class is \$25. (Note: Basic Lay Servant class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) For more information, contact Anne Bosarge at [abosarge@sgaumc.com](mailto:abosarge@sgaumc.com).

### **2022 Annual Conference session – June 5-8**

The [2022 Annual Conference session](#) is set for June 5-8 in Columbus, Ga.

### **Peace with Justice Sunday – June 12**

Peace with Justice Sunday enables The United Methodist Church to have a voice in advocating for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs. [Peace with Justice Sunday Pastor and Leader Kit](#)

### **Wesley Glen Day – June 19**

Fathers' Day is Wesley Glen Day across the South Georgia Conference. Show your support for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by making a gift to [Wesley Glen Ministries](#) on June 19 in honor of a strong male role model in your life. Celebrate by wearing your favorite Wesley Glen T-shirt from past years. Post your pictures on social media with the tags: #WesleyGlenMinistries #growingtogether

### **Certified Lay Ministry, Summer Immersion, Brunswick – June 20-24**

If you've always wanted to pursue your Certified Lay Ministry certification but didn't have the weekends to give toward classes, our CLM Immersion in Brunswick might be a great option for you! Take off one complete week of work and join us for an immersion that will allow you to complete all your classes in one week. Then finish up the assignments on your own time and finish up after the week is over! Sound like something you'd be interested in? Register today: [sgaumc.org/certifiedlayministrytraining](http://sgaumc.org/certifiedlayministrytraining)