

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – SEPTEMBER 20 EDITION

Disaster response team travels to Kentucky to help rebuild veteran's home

By Kelly Roberson, *Advocate editor*

When disaster strikes, United Methodists have a long legacy of being present to help their neighbors and communities from day one until the very last nail is put in place. At the core of this legacy is the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church.

In December 2021, after a massive high-end EF4 tornado tore directly through the center of Mayfield, Kentucky, members of Mayfield First United Methodist Church reached out to family and friends at Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church in Savannah, Georgia. Immediate financial assistance was sent.

The tornado, which was on the ground for nearly three hours tracking 165 miles, caused massive destruction not just to Mayfield but also to surrounding communities. As many as 80 people died as a result of the storm. Three churches were destroyed, including Mayfield First United Methodist Church, and over 600 homes were destroyed in Mayfield (Graves County) alone.

The devastation was immeasurable, and Scott Cleaveland, member of Wesley Monumental UMC, knew “through the hallmark connectionalism of The United Methodist Church” there was more the church could do. He began praying about and planning a trip to Mayfield.

On August 22, 2022, Cleaveland's planning came to life as he led a team of 16 volunteers from 7 United Methodist Churches in the Coastal District - Goshen, Rincon, Clio/Silver Hill, Richmond Hill, Waynesboro, Trinity, and Wesley Monumental - plus a neighboring Brunswick congregation, The Chapel. The team spent four days fully insulating and putting up sheetrock at the home of an elderly veteran and his daughter who sought refuge in their hallway as their home was obliterated during the tornado.

“Laying hands on the house, praying for the success and safety of the project, as well as healing and wholeness for the family and community were integral to the work week,” said Cleaveland.

Team members led morning devotions and two Coastal District pastors, Rev. Michael Finn and Rev. Nick Pumfrey, led worship each evening. Standing on the empty lot that was once Mayfield First UMC, the team prayed for the future of the congregation.

“At a time when so much of our denomination is focused on dividing, it was good to unite in service to others,” said Cleaveland. “When it came down to it, we were the same hands and heart of Christ in a tornado ravaged community.”

Cleaveland was thankful for the support of the connectional structure as he prepared for the trip. Kelly Crane, Coastal District Disaster Response Coordinator and member of Trinity UMC in Savannah, organized the construction aspects of the trip. Rev. Shannon Baxter, Conference UMVIM coordinator and associate pastor at Isle of Hope UMC in Savannah, coordinated UMVIM insurance for the group. Rev. David Thompson, Coastal District Superintendent, and the Coastal District Missions Committee sent \$10,000 towards the cost of reconstruction. Graves County UMC (Kentucky) provided the team with accommodations and generously fed them each night.

Crane has been on numerous disaster response trips but knew there was something special about this team, most of whom were meeting each other for the first time.

“From the moment we all arrived at our host church it felt like I was with family,” said Crane. “We all came from different backgrounds and different areas of the conference, but we all came together to insulate and sheetrock an entire home.

“I know God has his hands on our work as we all laughed together, cried together, and prayed for this homeowner and community. Being part of something that is so much bigger than any one person is truly inspiring and humbling.”

Being called to serve may not be convenient or easy, explained Crane, but it is what sets Christians apart.

“All you need to do is be a caring Christian presence,” said Crane. “The rest is easy.”

Cleaveland says they are already considering plans to return to eastern Kentucky in 2023 where the devastation of flooding has been just as substantial and will take as long to assess and reconstruct. If you are interested in being part of a disaster response team to Kentucky, contact Cleaveland for further details msctclv@gmail.com.



Dr. Derek McAleer to retire, new Administrative Services director sought

Overseeing the finances of an entire United Methodist Annual Conference is a high calling.

The Rev. Dr. Derek McAleer has faithfully lived out this calling as the Director of Administrative Services/Treasurer for the South Georgia Conference, where the amount of information and responsibility is constantly growing and the load of financial, legal, and administrative decision making is a large task.

This week, after 8 years of service as the Director, Dr. McAleer announces his retirement effective December 31, 2022.

“It has been an honor and joy to serve the South Georgia Conference,” said Dr. McAleer. “I look forward to finishing out our work together.”

Dr. McAleer made his intentions to retire at the end of the year known to Bishop David Graves, episcopal leader of the South Georgia Conference, back in January 2022. He and his wife, Charlene McAleer, have big plans ahead.

“Charlene and I came to this decision during 2021 after some medical setbacks,” said Dr. McAleer. “We have dreams for our retirement years and do not want to miss out on them. We look forward to traveling and spending time with our children and grandchild.”

Dr. McAleer began his ministry in 1977 as the Director of Youth at Grace UMC in Savannah, his home church and the place where he received his call into ministry. Ordained as an elder in 1984, Dr. McAleer served the congregations of Davisboro, Dudley Charge (Allentown, Danville, Dudley, & Montrose), Ebenezer (Macon), Rincon, St. Marys, and Forest Hills (Macon) prior to becoming the Vice President for Church Relations at The Methodist Home for Children and Youth in Macon. Dr. McAleer served at The Methodist Home for 8 years before being appointed to the Administrative Services Office in 2014.

Over his 42 years of ministry in South Georgia, Dr. McAleer has served the Annual Conference as editor of the Conference *Journal*, member of CFA where he chaired the apportionments sub-committee, and served on numerous district and conference committees including the Commission on Town & Country Ministries, the Commission on Equitable Salaries, the Conference Futuring Committee and chaired the Savannah District Council on Ministries. He has served on the Board of Trustees of Magnolia Manor, The Methodist Home, and the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries (UMA). He chaired the Public Relations, Development, and Marketing (PRDM) section of the UMA. In 2014, he was honored as PRDM Professional of the Year. Dr. McAleer also served on the Board of the National Association of Annual Conference Treasurers.

Under Dr. McAleer's leadership as the Director of Administrative Services – which also includes serving as the Conference Treasurer, Pension and Benefits Officer, and Statistician - the Conference established a retiree health trust, finished the 30+year journey to pay off its pre-82 pension liabilities, raised the Pre-82 Past Service Rate by 21% (from \$660 to \$799 per service year), oversaw a conference office move, helped implement a unified conference database, established and funded a financial reserves goal of 3 month's operating expenses, continued the path of intentionally lowering the conference budget to lower apportionments, expanded online guidance for local churches and clergy, assisted local church offering collections during the pandemic, guided local churches in qualifying for PPP loans, used a comprehensive compensation study from GCFA to guide salaries and benefits for conference staff, shifted to auto-enrollment for clergy in the pension program (increasing clergy contributions to their own pension), implemented the Voluntary Transition Program for clergy exiting the ministry, updated the Conference Personnel and Board of Pensions policy manuals and Standing Rules, established a Human Resources position, and developed the Disaffiliation Policy and an equitable plan for allocating Pension Liability to local churches.

Most importantly, though, Dr. McAleer has proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ in every setting he served, receiving 876 members in 26 years of ministry, 253 on Profession of Faith.

“Since coming to South Georgia 13 months ago, I have appreciated Derek and his good work and leadership to the South Georgia Conference,” said Bishop David Graves. “Derek is well respected by the Southeastern Jurisdiction treasurers and also across the denomination. He has been a great leader in The United Methodist Church. It is not just a loss for the conference but also the general church.”

The Rev. Dr. Shane Green, senior pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Columbus and chair of the South Georgia Conference Council of Finance & Administration (CFA), echoes Bishop Graves' sentiments and praises Dr. McAleer's commitment to CFA, his work, and service to the Conference.

“We are indebted to Derek and his work on the Council on Finance and Administration and his work throughout our Annual Conference,” said Dr. Green. “It is a loss for our Annual Conference, but CFA is committed to finding the right person to continue Derek's great work and steadfast leadership.”

CFA, under the guidance of Dr. Green, now begins the process of seeking the next person to fill the role of Director of Administrative Services/Treasurer. The *Book of Discipline* gives CFA the authority to hire this position. CFA will be utilizing the services of the General Conference on Finance and Administration in the hiring process. Dr. Green will also be in consultation with the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (BOP) as this position also supports their work.

The job will be open to lay and clergy persons. More information and a complete job description will be posted on the conference website, www.sgaumc.org, in the weeks to come.

A Personal Note from Dr. Derek McAleer

In 2021, my wife Charlene twisted her knee and had to spend a good bit of the year rehabbing it. Since our vacation involved hiking the Colorado mountains, we were concerned about her recovery (old knees don't rehab as quickly as young knees do!). Thankfully, she was able to enjoy the hiking, though we did choose less strenuous trails. But it got the two of us thinking. She is five years older than I and already retired after 35 years of teaching. Like most of you, we hope to enjoy active retirement years. Knowing of the age difference, we have long considered that I might retire before my full retirement age and have planned accordingly. The knee injury brought this idea to the forefront again.

In January, I told Bishop Graves of my plan to retire at the end of 2022. You may recall that in January of 2022, we still thought General Conference would meet in 2022, the church would make decisions, and the annual conference would move forward. Retiring at the end of 2022 would put us beyond all that. Retiring at the end of our fiscal year is good for a person in my position.

With all that was going on, however, we determined to delay announcing my retirement until after annual conference met so that the conference could focus on the work before us without distraction.

I share this lengthy narrative to say I have been thinking about and moving towards retirement for some time now. This is not a reaction to this season of United Methodism but rather a choice for this season of my family life. I have worked for the church since 1977, and am in my 43rd year under appointment. I have been blessed far beyond any reasonable expectation by this annual conference. I move towards retirement with a heart full of gratitude. Serving our Lord through this Annual Conference has been and is a great privilege. God truly is good!

Derek W. McAleer

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Safe Sanctuaries: putting fresh eyes on your local church policy

By Allison Lindsey, Nurture Team Chair

During the 2022 Annual Conference Session, conference members approved the following two items related to Safe Sanctuaries:

1. Every local church will revisit and update (as necessary) their Safe Sanctuaries policy by Dec. 31, 2023
2. Changes to the conference Safe Sanctuaries Policy were made to reflect updated practices

As you know, Safe Sanctuaries is the name commonly given by local United Methodist Annual Conferences and local churches to their individual efforts to make conference, district, and local church programs welcoming and safe for children and youth. The General Conference mandate of 1996 requires all United Methodist congregations, regardless of size, to implement policies and procedures that help protect children, youth and vulnerable adults; protect the adult workers who serve in these ministries; and protect the various assets of the church for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is always important to take a fresh look at our policy and make sure it reflects current practices as well as to find areas of improvement. As part of an agreement in the Boy Scouts of America lawsuit settlement that

took place this past year, we have made the commitment that all of our churches will do this by December 31, 2023.

To help you do this, I want to highlight a few of the key updates we made to the conference Safe Sanctuaries policy at Annual Conference. Some of these updates were made because of requirements from our insurance company and others were changes based on current practices since the policy was written in 2007. The conference policy can serve as a guide to help strengthen your local church policy. [The newly adopted conference policy can be found here.](#)

1. Local churches are strongly encouraged to include best practices for the use of technology/social media for their ministry context.
2. Revised language is included for the Two-Adult Rule to now include the Rule of Three. This outlines in writing what we put into practice in our local churches. Provided wording: *The two-adult rule is advisable at all times for the supervision of children, as described above. If there are periods of time when the Two Adult Rule cannot be implemented, the implementation of the Rule of Three for children and youth should be implemented. The Rule of Three requires at least three individuals (at least one being an adult employee or volunteer) be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. For special circumstances that increase the likelihood of abuse or false allegations of abuse, the Two Adult Rule should be preferred. When the Rule of Three is adopted, other provisions (e.g., six month rule and premises monitor) should be more firmly stated than would otherwise be acceptable under the Two Adult Rule. It is also recommended that the age, capacity, and familial relationships of ministry participants be considered when approving the Rule of Three. Legal difficulties are posed by the competency and credibility of testimony from relatives, very young children, or individuals with other legal incapacities.*
3. Churches are asked to contact their insurance provider to ensure necessary coverage and language are in place for their church. (Your insurance company is a tremendous resource in regards to liability and coverage.)
4. The South Georgia Conference strongly urges all local churches, Conference agencies and ministries to insist that outside groups using their facilities comply with Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures and have a written Facility Use Agreement in place for such groups. With the unfolding of the Boy Scout lawsuit and settlement, the need to be more diligent with layers of protection in place for ALL individuals that come to our church for a program or event is evident.

I truly can't say thank you enough to our local churches for your continued commitment in your focus around Safe Sanctuaries. Because South Georgia has been so diligent in the area of Safe Sanctuaries since first implementing in 2007, you understand the need to provide a safe and nurturing environment for our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as ministry volunteers.

The Nurture Team and the Office of Connectional Ministries continue to be a resource for questions, training and assistance regarding Safe Sanctuaries in your local church. [For more information and additional resources, visit the Conference website.](#)



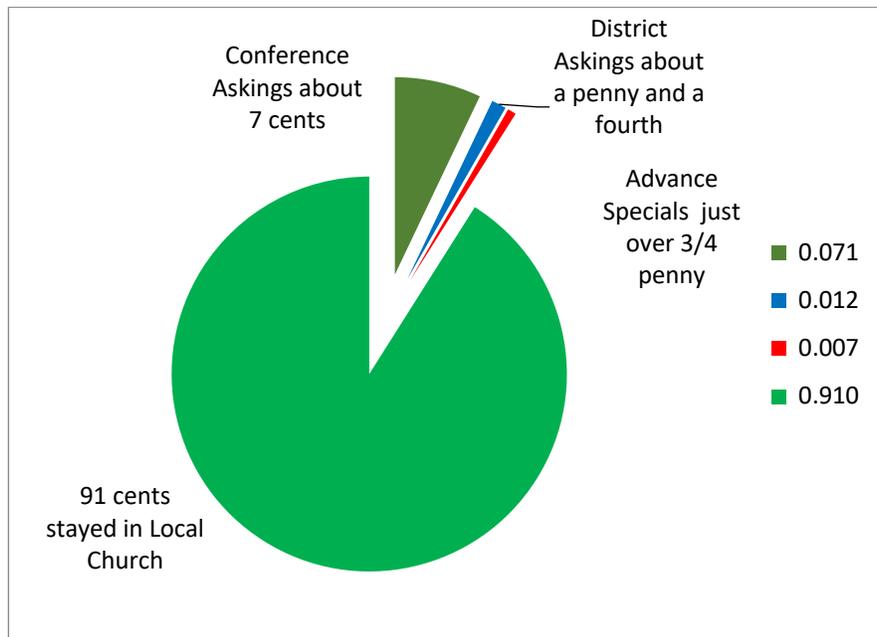
Where Does the Dollar Go?

By Dr. Derek McAleer, Conference Director of Administrative Services/Conference Treasurer

One of the questions I heard as a pastor and often get in my role as Conference Treasurer is: “Where does the money I give to my local church go?”

People are interested in how much stays in the local church and how much goes beyond the local church. People also want to know what the funds sent beyond the local church go towards.

If you gave a dollar to your local United Methodist Church in South Georgia in 2021, here’s where it went:



91 cents of your dollar stayed in your local church. Of the 9 cents that was sent to the larger UMC, 7 cents went to Conference and General Church Apportionments, while about one and a quarter cent went to District apportionments. Three-fourths of a cent was sent to United Methodist mission giving the local church chose to support (such as Advance Specials).

How did the local church spend its 91 cents? Based on data reported by local churches, 47 ½ cents went to staff salaries and benefits, while another 20 cents went for local operating expenses. 5 cents were spent on local church programs, and another five cents went to local benevolences, or non-United Methodist charities (such as a local community food bank or local mission team). 4 cents went for debt payment, and the remaining 9 ½ cents was used for capital expenditures on church facilities.

The amount spent on staff and operations is not surprising; the largest cost for most businesses is labor. Many church members are surprised that only seven cents go to the annual conference and general church. Other members would like to see a larger share be put into mission and evangelical work. This is a combined look at all United Methodist Churches in South Georgia, but each church has its own pattern of spending. I would encourage you to take a look at your specific church and see how the funds get spent.

At the end of the day, I hope every church is asking: how is my church’s spending helping us fulfill the Gospel’s call on our local church in our community?



LaGrange College enrolls large freshman class

LaGrange College welcomed its largest freshman class since 2019, the school announced earlier this month. Final numbers show 226 new first-year students enrolled on campus, an increase of 94 from last year’s freshman class and 48 from the 2020 cohort.

“This influx of new students is a promising sign that we are beginning to return to pre-pandemic numbers after two COVID-19 influenced years,” said college President Susanna L. Baxter. “Our Admissions team and coaches have worked tirelessly to help more students hear about the opportunities available on the Hill.” President Baxter says she has enjoyed getting to know the new class during their summer orientations and is excited to be on campus and in LaGrange.

“The Class of 2026 is a highly qualified and engaged group of students ready to forge their own path at LaGrange College,” said President Baxter. “We look forward to seeing what they will accomplish during their time with us.”

Fall semester classes began on August 22, and enrollment numbers weren’t official until after class rosters were finalized earlier in September.

The college’s highest freshman mark was set in 2017 with 275 new students.

“This year’s class represents a diverse and academically accomplished group,” said Dr. John Head, vice president for enrollment management and student experience. “Overall, they carry a 3.33 average GPA, and they come to campus from around the country—and world.”

While nearly 80 percent of this year’s class are Georgia residents, the remainder arrived from states as far away as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and countries including Argentina, Canada, Germany, and South Africa.

“These students are eager to get involved in their new community,” said Dr. Head. “Please welcome them as you encounter them off campus.”

The large freshman class was accompanied by a substantial group of 53 new transfer students.



Encounter Youth Retreat set for November 18-20

Registration is open for Encounter, the Conference's annual youth retreat for students in sixth through twelfth grades. **Encounter Youth Retreat** will take place November 18-20, 2022, at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. [More information & registration](#)



Bishop Graves to meet with laity at Richmond Hill UMC September 25

Bishop David Graves has traveled across South Georgia during the month of September meeting with clergy and laity in various settings. On September 11 he met with the laity of the North Central & Northwest Districts, and on September 18 he met with the laity of the South Central & Southwest Districts. He will meet with the Coastal & Northeast Districts on September 25 at Richmond Hill UMC from 4pm – 6pm. The purpose of these gatherings is to provide necessary and accurate information around current denominational matters.

[Click here for more information](#). Already know a question you would like to ask Bishop Graves? You can submit your questions ahead of time using the following links. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions at the gathering. [Questions for the September 25 Gathering](#)



The Scepter Given to Judah

Fall Quarter: God’s Exceptional Choice
Unit 1: God Calls Abraham’s Family
Lesson 4

Sunday School Lesson for the week of September 25, 2022
By Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 35:22b-26; 38:12-19, 24-26, 49:8-12

Key Text: The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

Authors note: This is a supplemental lesson for the lesson in the Teacher’s Book. The traditional masculine pronouns are used for literary flow. We all must be mindful that God transcends gender.

Introduction and Context

As cited in previous Sunday School lessons, there is a repetitive pattern in Genesis of men and women abusing God’s grace, or being unfaithful to covenant. Thankfully, there also exists the pattern of God redeeming the covenant people in spite of their sins and mistakes. Those of my generation might call today’s narrative a “soap opera.” It is a story sated with self-righteous judgement, sexism, and shame. Let’s examine the basic events in this narrative.

Levirate Law

We need to travel historically backward to Jacob. His name has been changed to Israel, but our narrative uses his former name. He had twelve sons, which are later known as the 12 tribes of Israel. Remember, our story predates Mosaic Law. *Grace predates law*. This does not mean the near-eastern people who lived prior to the Mosaic Law were lawless. Customs and laws did exist. Many of them were assimilated in the Mosaic Law. The law governing marriage and families was known as Levirate.

Violation of Levirate Law

Jacob’s fourth son, Judah, married a Canaanite woman named Shua. (Note: The Jewish people were never totally of the same bloodline. Many of the men married women from other tribes. It is interesting to note that

the male bloodline counted, and the woman's never considered. Yet, if the couple was childless, it was always blamed on the woman). Judah's and Shua's first son was named Er. Later as Er approached adolescence, Tamar was chosen to be Er's wife. These arranged marriages could occur when the children were very young. Tamar is one of the central characters in this tense, unsettling story. The Bible informs us that Er did evil in the sight of the Lord. It is interesting to note that the near-eastern people recognized a state of heart in which the person was evil, prior to Mosaic Law. According to the Bible, Er's sinful life led to his death. Under Levirate Marriage Law, Judah was to give another of his sons to marry Tamar. He was to have a son with her for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of his name and bloodline. It is difficult to image how important this law was to near-eastern people. They lacked a clear understanding of the afterlife. Thus, they believed a person continued to live through their descendants. If the Hebrew male had no descendants, his name would disappear from the face of the earth. This thought was horrifying for a Hebrew couple. Thus, Judah gave his son Onan to marry Tamar. However, Onan refused to have a child with her. Instead, he is known as "spilling his seed upon the ground." This was severe violation of Levirate Law, and the act itself was judged as sinful by many into the 1950s. However, the reason Onanism was judged as sinful was because it hindered procreation. Scripture reveals that God was greatly displeased with Onan for refusing to obey Levirate Law. Onan's rebellion, like Er's, is understood to have led to his death.

Can you identify the benefits of the Levirate Law in that era? Can identify the weaknesses in Levirate Law?

Mistreatment of Tamar

Now, Tamar is widow for the second time. Judah is required by Law to provide another son to Tamar. However, he commits a judgmental, sexist, selfish act that leaves Tamar unmarried. He told Tamar to remain under the care of his house until his young son Shelah grew up. Then, she could marry him. Asking Tamar to wait ensured she would never marry one of his sons again. Tamar was now most likely near what we call midlife. Let's examine Judah's sin against Tamar.

Judah has blamed Tamar for the death of both sons. He was so certain their deaths were Tamar's fault that he did not want to lose another son. Thus, he devised a plan to promise her the marriage of Shelah. Undoubtedly, Tamar would be too old by the time Shelah reached age to marry. This act ensured that Tamar would live without a husband, and most likely die without one. This was a judgmental act for there was no merit to his accusation. Judah refused to observe the obvious sins of his sons. Er and Onan sinned, leading to their deaths. Judah chose to believe in their virtue (which was mediocre at best) while blaming Tamar.

What role did patriarchalism play in the sin of Judah? Can you identify the "blindness" of Judah to the sins of his son after their deaths? What is obviously human about Judah's sin as father? Can you identify Judah transferring the real guilt of his sons upon Tamar? In what ways can we transfer known sins that make us so uncomfortable to face unto another?

Tamara's Quest for Justice

Tamar was a wise person. Tamar used her circumstances to acquire justice. Since Judah refused to give her justice, she would receive justice for herself. Tamar dressed and disguised herself as a harlot. She lured Judah into her trap. Judah had promised Tamar a young goat for payment. Wise Tamar asked Judah to leave his identifying seal and walking stick as collateral. Judah agreed. Weeks later, news reached Judah that Tamar was with child. She had no husband, so to Judah her pregnancy represented a grave sin and violation of Levirate Law. Unknown to him, the child was his own. Judah calls for her death, which would also take the life of her child.

Tamar then reveals the seal and walking stick regarding the father of the child. We can only image the stunned, shamed look that must have covered Judah's face. His sins have indeed found him out. He has sinned against Tamar in not providing her a husband. He has sinned against her for blaming her for her son's

deaths. He had lain with Tamar, disguised as a prostitute, and he impregnated her. Judah has done what his son Onan refused to do.

Was Tamara's plot to gain justice ethical? If it wasn't, why? What unique circumstances apply to Tamara since she would never receive justice from Judah or the Israelite tribe? Did her circumstances make her actions acceptable?

At this point, Judah is a shamed, broken man. He would have understood King David's cry in Psalm 51, "My sins are ever before me." His confessional statement is honest and genuine, "She is more righteous than I."

Lessons from the Narrative

Our Witness as a Law-Abiding People

Within this "soap opera" dwells so much truth about human nature, sin, and God's grace. Levirate Law, and later Mosaic Law, provided society with a system of order and protection. Breaking law always disrupted society whether that disruption was small or great. This remains true for our modern functioning. We are a people of laws. Law is intended to bring order and protection. When laws are broken people suffer.

As Christians we believe in living orderly for the good of all. However, we also recognize the need to live by spiritual law, especially the law of love. Jesus claimed that if a person loved God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves, they would actually obey all law. If I love you, I will not steal from you, I will not kill you (with weapon or words), I will not covet what you have, etc. If I love my wife, I will not commit adultery. If I love myself as the temple of God, I will not harm my body or abuse it. If I love God, I will not take his name in vain or worship other gods.

Our text reveals the consequences of violating law and covenant. When Jesus said in John 13:35, "the world will know us by our love," it also means they will know us through our law keeping, our respect for others, our refusal to harm, etc. There is so much pain in our story, inflicted pain. When Er and Onan sinned they unleashed harm and pain which unfolded like a row of falling dominoes. Tamar is inflicted with terrible, deep pain. She has lost two husbands, has been covertly blamed for their deaths, has been denied a future with a husband, and has been assigned to an existence offering little more than shelter and food. She has been so devalued by Judah that she has to participate in an act she most certainly disdained. Judah, in the end, had been hurt. His sins came home to roost, and they were not pretty. He had hurt so many in his life.

Do you believe our sins indeed eventually find us out? Can you recall an experience whereby you experienced this O.T. truth without calling names? Have you even experienced a time when your sins found you out?

God Uses Our Sins and Failures for Redemptive Purposes

Guilt is an interesting word. It is both an emotion and a fact. All of us have uttered the phrase, "I feel guilty." If we didn't say it, we felt it. There is a difference between "*feeling* guilty" and "*being* guilty." It is possible for us to feel guilty for something that wasn't a sin. Various branches of Christendom have condemned people for behaviors they considered sin. However, when one honestly studies in context the Biblical text they use to condemn, we discover it isn't a sin at all. This condemnation can damage the spirit of the "guilty" individual and lead to a misunderstanding of God's nature. God is often perceived as an angry God who is difficult to please.

Can you share a list of actions and behaviors once considered sin, that are no longer perceived in the same manner when studied in context? Can you identify the pain caused when people are made to feel guilty about a matter that wasn't a sin at all?

On the other hand, there are behaviors and thoughts that make us feel guilty because we “are guilty.” That is fact. If I harm an individual intentionally, as a Christian, I will feel guilty. I will feel guilty because I am guilty. There are individuals in relationship with the Lord who are masterful at burying the feeling of guilt beneath justifications and rationalizations. In actuality, they are postponing feeling the effect of guilt. Guilt does not disappear apart from confession and forgiveness. As stated previously, our sins do find us out! Guilt will weave its way through our insensitivity and manifest itself in a myriad of ways. Years ago, I counseled a member suffering from severe insomnia and physical tics. After a few conversations the member confessed to something. He spoke on his own, and out of the blue. It was actually the soul deeply trying to rid itself of the guilt. After praying for forgiveness, the tics immediately lessened and disappeared. Eventually, the same happened with the insomnia. Guilt is a powerful, serious state of being.

God created us to feel such guilt. The human spirit was created for serenity, creativity, joy and meaning. Guilt stifles all four. The desire for redemption is a gift from God in the conscience that leads each of us to seek forgiveness, restoration, community, and new life. On occasion God uses our experiences to confront us with our destructive sin and guilt. Why? God allows us to experience guilt to draw us toward the Lord and forgiveness.

In our narrative, Judah has to face his sin and guilt. In facing Tamar, he is facing his own unrighteousness. Tamar holds the proof of his sin before him. He cannot deny his own seal and staff.

Judah’s sin and hypocrisy stare him in the eye. He condemned Tamar to death, along with the child within her. Now, he cannot run from his part in the awful situation confronting him. Judah is not only aware of his sin in lying with Tamar, he realizes he has sinned against her prior to that moment. This is the rationale behind his saying, “She is more righteous than I.”

This painful moment in Judah’s life occurred, not because God desires to condemn and punish Judah. It occurs because the Lord desires that Judah become a better man, an honest man of faith. He is the man who will live in covenant, and pass the meaning and call of covenant to his descendants. The Lord is not going to allow Judah to destroy himself or dishonor the Covenant without confronting him and offering incredible grace.

When we experience guilt, and seek to rationalize or justify it, the guilt remains. God is never going to abandon us. Whether we own our sins and repent is our decision. But the Lord’s decision is to hound us. The God who hounds us is the God of Jonah. We cannot run or hide. We can run until we find ourselves in the stomach of sea serpent, God will be there.

Our sins always find us out. However, guilt and its aggravating, even painful consequences are not intended for punishment. They exist to call us to repentance. They call us to experience grace and a new life.

Can you recall a time when your guilt led you to confession and forgiveness? Can you share such a moment? Can you identify the negative aspects of unnecessary guilt? Can you identify the grace of God present in our real guilt?

Covenantal Promises for the Forgiven Who Walk with God

In Gen. 49:10-12, we read poetic prose of God’s covenantal blessings. We are given a vision of a rich vineyard, yielding the best of wine. The writer uses God’s blessings in covenant to paint the picture of Judah, dressed in the “colors of covenant.” His robes are washed in wine. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk. Remember, the Promised Land will yield fruit, wine, and be a land that flows with milk and honey.

What is truly beautiful in this hymn is the reality that the fulfilling of the covenant will continue through Judah in spite of his sins. He is now a man of confession and forgiveness. A new life awaits him. The “scepter” is still planted between his feet. He and his descendants will be used to bring the nations to God.

This is a poem of promise for us. God not only forgives and restores, God leads us toward the promises available in Jesus Christ. We began with a wild soap opera, and we end with forgiveness, redemption, restoration, and promise!

Prayer

Almighty God, grant us humility, the humility to face truth, especially the truth concerning our own heart. We confess our sins, while acknowledging the great guilt we experience. Wash us as white as snow. Though our sins be as scarlet, let them white as wool. Thank you for never giving up on us. Lead us always toward your great, loving promises. In Jesus name, Amen.

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



The Birth of Moses

Fall Quarter: God’s Exceptional Choice

Unit 2: Out of slavery to nationhood

Lesson 5

Sunday School Lesson for the week of October 2, 2022

By Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 1: 15 – 2:10

Key Text: *She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, when she saw that he was a fine child she hid him in the brushes for 3 months. Exodus 2:2*

Lesson Aims:

- 1. The meaning of prevenient grace as it applies to Moses’s life.
- 2. Recognizing prevenient grace in the life of a parent and family.
- 3. Prevenient grace can involve risk.
- 4. The difference between prevenient grace and coincidence.
- 5. Prevenient grace accomplishing God’s sanctified will.

Grace is a foundational, all-important reality in Wesleyan theology. Our Wesleyan theology is founded upon grace:

- 1. Prevenient Grace – Grace that goes before. This grace is at work even when we are unaware.
- 2. Justifying Grace – Grace that declares one righteous before God in Christ, though we are guilty.
- 3. Sanctifying Grace – After being declared righteous, Sanctifying Grace transforms us daily through the indwelling Holy Spirit in our hearts, setting us apart for God.

Of course, I have oversimplified the beauty, wonder and power of these expressions of grace. Far more can be stated about each dynamic of grace. Our lesson especially reveals the love and power of prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is expressed in God’s love for us *when we were unaware*. This grace precedes us, leaving

its redemptive mark upon each soul though we are oblivious to it. Prevenient grace is given freely, unconditionally by God for the sole purpose of drawing us unto Himself, and into the divine will.

The Narrative of Grace in Moses' Story

Moses' parents were from the tribe of Levi. After the Exodus, the priests of Israel arose from the tribe of Levi. Moses was born during a terrifying time in Hebrew history. The Pharaoh ordered that all male Hebrew babies be drowned. Through Joseph's initial plight and ensuing success, the children of Israel now lived in Egypt. The earlier years in Egypt allowed the Israelites to prosper and fill the land with their children and their children's children. The land was also filling with Israelite livestock. The number of Israelites in Egypt had grown so greatly in number they threatened Pharaoh. This was an "assumed threat." We find little material that the Israelites threatened to one day overthrow Pharaoh. Still, Pharaoh's paranoia reacted by enslaving them for labor and having every male Hebrew baby drowned. Pharaoh concluded he could control the number of Israelites in the land and achieve gain through their forced labor.

As a parent and grandparent, I can only imagine the fear in which Israelite parents lived. Moses' mother looked upon her new son, as most mothers, as one of the most beautiful sons ever. For her, he was the most beautiful baby in the world! Every loving parent will most likely experience moments when we have to take an action that breaks our hearts, yet is for our child's good. Yet, what I've experienced thus far isn't close to the painful choice made by the parents of Moses. Our narrative addresses only the mother's choice. While his father labored for Pharaoh, she nurtured her newborn son for approximately three months. In fear she hid him from the Egyptians. The story doesn't reveal exactly how she hid him. However, we can imagine trying to hide a newborn who needs to be held and fed. The babe would have cried, been fussy as all new born infants are, cooed, and giggled. Hiding Moses had to be an exhausting task.

Eventually, hiding her son became too difficult. Now the parents of Moses faced one of the most difficult decisions in their life. Parental love would take a risk - a life and death risk. They would place Moses in a small ark of papyri sheaves. Papyri was used to write upon, much like paper in the ancient Egyptian and near-eastern world. However, the sheaves were thicker and stronger. Later, papyri scrolls would be employed for the writing and transmission of holy Scripture. Though the text doesn't draw attention to this fact, as a Christian, I find it touching to think that papyri would be used to save the one chosen to reveal the Law. The Law would be recorded on papyri and passed for generations.

Can you remember a moment when you had to "let your child go" for their own good? Did it hurt? Did you feel it was best for them?

Moses was placed in the ark and placed among the reeds of the Nile. This location was extremely dangerous. What if the ark capsized? What if animals and reptiles preyed upon the child? The fact that Moses was placed here reveals the dangerous world into which Moses was born. The odds of Moses surviving were better in the shallows of the Nile than on land at the hands of Pharaoh's servants! Moses' mother's desperation and love allowed her to consider perhaps the only hope available. When life offers us little or no opportunity, a glimmer of hope still shines through the darkness. Pharaoh's daughter bathed regularly in the Nile. The mother of Moses hoped the daughter would find the child, and hoped she would feel compassion and save him. We often forget that other family members experienced the pain of "letting Moses go." Moses' sister stood nearby and watched over him. She loved her brother and revealed such love by placing herself at risk standing nearby watching the ark. How thankful she would have been to share with her mother and father the news her brother at last was saved.

Can you identify prevenient grace in the love of your siblings? Can you recall a specific moment when your sibling played a role in saving your life? Can you recognize the touch of your siblings upon your life that was instrumental in your walk with God?

Pharoah's daughter felt sorry for the child and had her servant remove him from the river. The events that followed are too grand to assign to coincidence. The child would need a wet nurse. Moses' sister was near enough to overhear Pharoah's daughter express the need for the nurse. Thus, she immediately took a risk of her own. Who was she to approach Pharoah's daughter? Who was she to make any request? Moses' sister asked Pharoah's daughter if she would like her to find a Hebrew to nurse the child. Therefore, she knew the best mother to nurse Moses: his true mother! Moses continued to be nursed by his biological mother and by the one who loved him more than anyone in the world. A terrifying story became a story of amazing events, unfolding into a redemptive end.

The workings of God often involve risk. Abram and Sarai risked leaving home. Elijah risked confronting Ahab. Deborah risked doing battle in the Jezreel Valley. Paul risked everything to become a Christian. All of the disciples risked their life to follow Jesus.

The narrative records the events in Moses' early life, but it cannot convey all of the emotion: the loving, the fretting, the worry and the hope. The text asks us personally to make a prayerful, personal connection with the story. How would we have felt? What emotions would we have felt? Where would we have looked for hope? Can you identify the prevenient grace of God in this story? Can you share the specific places in the narrative where God's grace is at work in Moses' parents, in the decisions of the parents, in the love of the sister, and in the compassion of Pharoah's daughter? Can you recognize the movement of grace that transcends the very idea of coincidence?

Application of the Narrative to Our Life

It is important to realize that Moses was unaware of the grace that saved and nurtured him. God determined a purpose for Moses' life and was at work in Moses' life from the earliest moments. There are many faces and voices in our pasts. Some of those faces we have forgotten, or perhaps never personally knew. We have been shaped by words and actions to which we were oblivious at the time. A group of men chose to take their elementary aged sons to watch Dr. Martin Luther King march in Albany, Ga. A parking lot was chosen and we, the sons, sat on the hoods of the car. As Dr. King and the others passed by I began hearing loud, vile curses. I looked at my father. He stood silently and looked extremely uncomfortable. He was embarrassed and embarrassed that he had exposed me to such hate. God has never allowed me to forget that moment. I was a young, innocent boy who had no idea what was occurring. Yet, that moment has shaped my understanding of the evil of racism to this day. All of us have such moments. Perhaps we were never placed in the reeds of a river and left to nothing but hope. Yet, there are moments God has used to save us. We have been saved from apathy, hatred, selfishness, etc.

As I've stated in previous lessons, formerly I shared, "I gave my life to Jesus." Now I state, "I surrendered to Jesus." We did not attend church regularly in our family. Truthfully, attendance was rare and sporadic. However, I attended Bible Schools in the summer. I didn't know how pictures and stories of the cross were related to my life. I learned the words of hymns, and the images of Jesus remained embedded in my consciousness. I actually began attending church when I met the love of my life, my spouse Gail. I began to hear those hymns and actually listened to the words of a preacher. One day everything came together. All of the stories, prayers, hymns, and lessons God has used to draw me conquered my resistance. As Christians, we have been "conquered" by prevenient grace.

Though I have used the name "Moses" in all that is written above, it was Pharoah's daughter who named the child Moses. It is interesting to note that when transforming events occur in the Bible, they are often

accompanied by a change of name. Abram and Sarai become Abraham and Sarah. Saul becomes Paul. Simon becomes Peter. What is the significance of the child being named Moses? Each of us received a new name when yielding to God’s grace. That name is “Christian.” It is a name of meaning and purpose. It is a name that declares the life I am living. It is a name that places me in relationship with hundreds, if not thousands, of others. It is a name that transcends every culture and distinction. When I ministered on the Yucatan, I could not speak Spanish, and most of the residents did not speak English. Yet, we worshipped together. We laughed, and, yes, we cried. The name “Christian” is the most powerful name in the world.

Can you share the moments in your life that dramatically changed you? Can you share the moments that saved you? Can you share how God used the significant, and often “common,” events in your life to draw you to Christ? What does the name “Christian” mean to you? How does this name define our ministry as individuals and the church?

The Divine Will

We commonly think of God’s will as it applies to us. We might ask the question, “What is God’s will for my life.” In Colossians 1:9 Paul greets the church. He reminds them of his prayers and his desire that they be filled with “the knowledge of God’s will.” Notice, he did not ask that each individual possess that knowledge. Paul wanted the “Church,” the body of Christ, to be filled with the knowledge of God’s divine will. What about our need to know God’s will? We discover God’s will for our life most often in and through the Church. Each of us can discover our place in the body of Christ. We can become awakened to the gifts and graces God has given us through the Holy Spirit as we worship and serve together in the Church.

I heard my call to pastoral ministry as I worshipped in the body of Christ. The Church illuminated and encouraged me. The Church educated me and helped me to always strive to serve God as best as I can. I have little doubt I would be a clergy person today apart from the body of Christ.

When a particular church understands God’s will for them, they then in turn are to involve every member in that will. God’s will is to bring the world unto Himself through Christ. God’s will is to care for one another as Jesus would. Every act of love and compassion is used of God to draw people to Himself. We are the voices, prayers, and people God is using right now as instruments of prevenient grace in the life of another.

It is obvious the inspired author, believed to be Moses, believed God’s greater will was at work above, in and through human affairs. The story of Moses is not presented as haphazard events or wonderful coincidence. God is present in every moment, using every moment to draw the world unto Himself.

Prayer

Almighty God, we have been the recipients of grace upon grace. We are the recipients of so many prayers, so many lessons, and have been touched by so many people that have left their eternal mark upon our hearts. It is our prayer that you use us likewise, that we might become the indentations upon another’s heart for the goodness of Jesus. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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



The Importance of the Work

**WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN
ANNE PACKARD**

In other parts of this wonderful country, the approaching season is called autumn. In South Georgia, the approaching season is called football, and in many of our coastal communities the approaching yearly cycle is known as hurricane season. Whatever else it may be called, it heralds the beginning of school, and in the Methodist movement the beginning of Sunday School. What's old is new again.

According to the Sunday School Board's report in the 1908 South Georgia Conference Journal, 40% of those who "pass through the Sunday School are converted and become members of the church." The 40% of Sunday School members who do join the church make up 87% of the members of the churches. So, 87% of the people who joined the church participated in a Sunday School class. That is an amazing return on investment! In contrast, only 13% of church members joined while not participating in Sunday School. From these figures, the Sunday School Board declared that Sunday School is "the most successful evangelizing agency in the church."

This is something that Methodists have known for quite some time. Rev. John Wesley knew this to be true in the mid-1700s which is why he went to such trouble creating societies and bands. These classes must be populated with locals who share specific needs, blessings, and troubles so members could support each other and also hold each other accountable. Rev. Georgia Whitefield knew this to be true as well when in 1749 he surrendered the leadership of the Calvinist Methodist Societies so that he could travel easily between America, England, and Scotland preaching to all who would listen. In contrast, John Wesley would not send preachers to any place where societies could not be formed. He thought it was like "begetting children for the murderer."

The report of the Sunday School Board in the 1908 South Georgia Conference Journal continues with the importance of Sunday School classes by asking each church member and each church to support this ministry with two actions. The first is that every church should have a Sunday School class and the second is that every member of every church should regularly attend a Sunday School class. Not only should every member regularly attend a Sunday School class but each member should "be on time, with a studied lesson, an offering, his/her own Bible, a mind to learn, and a heart reaching out to the unsaved of earth."

I can almost hear the Sunday School leaders rejoice at the mere thought of members being on time and prepared in heart, mind, and soul. The children's scissors would open and close spontaneously in glee and anticipation. Cokesbury would double its sales. Gallons of coffee would be brewed, and thousands of mini muffins gobbled up. What a year that would be!

To the Methodist churches of 2022: the 1908 church has just issued a double-dog dare to us. Let's rise to the challenge. A class in every church, and every member in a class. Oh, what a year it will be!

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.



Kindness Makes the Coffee

By Hal Brady

If anybody had a case not to be kind, it was the biblical character, Joseph. His brothers treated him like dirt and sold him into slavery. This action by his brothers resulted in practically everything going wrong in his life for the next 30 years.

What happened next? He was falsely accused of committing adultery and thrown in prison. But, later, as you recall, Joseph's fortune reversed, and he became second in command over all of Egypt. Then came the day that Joseph's father, Jacob, died and his brothers knelt before him. To be sure, these brothers were fearful, and they had every reason to be. But Joseph, rather than being vindictive, spoke kindly to them. The scripture says, "In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them." (Genesis 50:21)

What is kindness? Simply stated, kindness is described as love in action. It is those things we do. In the original language, the word for kindness carried an added idea and refers to an act of grace, to a deed or person who's "useful, serviceable, adapted to its purpose." The apostle Paul said, "Love is kind." "The fruit of the Spirit is kindness."

In this article, I'd like to focus on kindness. It is so needed in our culture today,

First, kindness is of divine origin! Why are we to be kind? First and foremost, we are to be kind because of God's special kindness to us. Paul says in Ephesians, "For by grace (God's kindness) you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). The truth is, it is God's kindness toward us that produces our gratitude and enables our kindness toward others.

Second, kindness is all inclusive! Not too long ago while waiting for a light to change, I saw one of those old bumper stickers. It said, "Keep on honking, I'm reloading." To say the least, that thought does not sound very kind. Friends, our fractured, violent, mistrusting world is literally begging for kind neighbor, for people willing to show some compassion. As people of faith, our kindness should be of such quality that it embraces all of life - pets, livestock, shrubs, trees, flowers, the forests, lakes, rivers and all the resources of earth entrusted to our care. And, of course, it should include our fellow human beings, especially our fellow human beings.

Third, kindness is a choice! There is a cartoon in which Charlie Brown is talking on the phone to a girl who says, "Hey Chuck, guess what I'm running for? I'm running for the queen of the day at our school." Charlie Brown says, "That's very interesting. Lucy has already been chosen at our school." The girl on the phone responds, "Your school has pretty low standards, huh Chuck."

After Charlie hangs up the phone, he looks at Lucy and says, "She says, 'Congratulations!'" Now, that's diplomacy. That's kindness, and that's our choice.

Fourth, kindness makes the coffee! Kindness is absolutely essential to the life of faith. "Love is kind," said Paul. Kindness is essential to God, to others, and to ourselves. Much of God's good work in the world is accomplished through mercy and kindness. But to be kind takes time, lots of time. Understand that the main enemy of kindness is busyness. Kindness is not to be done in a flippant way. I repeat, kindness is time consuming, taking up time we might spend on ourselves. It takes time to visit people, to do little favors, to listen, to run errands for others, to bear someone's burdens, to pray for others, to think of ways we can brighten the lives of others. Kindness does indeed make the coffee.

I close with the words of William Penn, "I expect to pass through this life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being let me do it now and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."

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).



Retired Clergy Birthdays – September 2022

- 9/01 – David Boggs: 7715 Church St.; Bartow, GA 30413
- 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 31086
- 9/06 – Sanford Wills: 1021 Sunrise Rd.; Preston, GA 31824
- 9/09 – Richard Soper: 102 Ingham St.; St. Simons Island, GA 31522
- 9/13 – Bernie Khaw: 344 S. Old Middletown Rd., Media, PA 19063
- 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: 414 Chambliss Rd; Cataula, GA 31804
- 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
- 9/16 – Carl Barnhardt: 146 Laurelbrook Drive; Leesburg, GA 31763
- 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
- 9/21 – 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: 122 Asbury St.; St. Simons Island, GA 31522
- 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



Obituary: Dr. Robert (Bob) F. Williams, Jr.

Dr. Robert F. (Bob) Williams, Jr., age 80, of Dublin, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Sunday, September 11, 2022, surrounded by his loving family.

Services will be held at 2:00 PM on Thursday, September 15, 2022, at Dublin First United Methodist Church. Burial will follow at Piney Mount United Methodist Church Cemetery in Washington County. Rev. Keith Goodlett and Mr. Mark Eden will officiate.

The family will receive friends on Thursday from 1:00 PM until the service hour at the church.

Dr. Williams was a native of Eufaula, Alabama, and a graduate of Eufaula High School. He received a B.S. Degree with double majors in Journalism and Social and Rehabilitation Services from Troy State University and the Master of Divinity and the Doctor of Ministry degrees from New Orleans Theological Seminary. In addition, he received the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology from the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

Prior to entering the ministry, Bob was an accountant and Assistant Treasurer for American Buildings Company, a major manufacturer of pre-engineered steel buildings, headquartered in Eufaula, Alabama.

Bob was a faithful servant in ministry for 48 years. He was ordained to the ministry in 1975 and has served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia. Bob was appointed Associate Pastor at Dublin First United Methodist Church in 2009. He has served as pastor of the Davisboro UMC, Piney Mount UMC, McRae UMC, and Dawson UMC.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Robert Franklin Williams, Sr. and Lessie Vinson Williams, his daughter, Carol Maria Williams, and sisters, Annie Pelham, Katherine Moore, and Marjorie Teal.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 29 years, Kathy Janes Williams, his son Bryan Williams, and grandchildren Maegan and Jayce. He is also survived by his sisters, Sue Hopson, Myrtice Shirley, and Sylvia Koonts, as well as several nieces and nephews.

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Obituary: Rev. Charles (Buddy) Coss

Charles Douglas "Buddy" Coss was born November 27, 1941 in Nashville, Tennessee to the late Charles A. and Mary Elizabeth (Baird) Coss. Buddy passed away August 31, 2022 at the age of 80 in his home in Edison, Georgia under hospice care.

Buddy attended school in Nashville, Tennessee and graduated from Central High School. He also attended Lipscomb University. Buddy attended Emory Course of Study in Atlanta and Georgia Pastor's School of Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia.

In November, 1997 he met Gloria Yockers and were married in November, 1998.

While working at IAP-Port of Brunswick, he received the call to pastor two churches. This is when our journey began with the Methodist church. He has pastored churches in Waresboro-Waycross, Baxley and then Edison, Arlington and Vincent. Buddy was the happiest when he was preparing sermons and taking care of his churches.

Buddy is survived by his wife of the home, Gloria. Children: Debbie (Steve) Antes and Christopher Coss of Tennessee. Stepchildren: Patrick Yockers, Brunswick, Georgia, TSgt Nathan (Kelly) Yockers, JBER, Arkansas, Anastasia Kosowski, Jacksonville, FL

Brother: Robert (Donna) Coss, Nashville, Tennessee; Sister: Diane (James) Stinson, Dickson, Tennessee.

Mother-in-law; Esther Beaushaw, Beloit, Kansas

Grandchildren: Matthew Antes, Joshua Antes, Robert Antes, Sarah Henry, Morghyn Yockers, Gryphon, and Kayla Kosowski. Five great grandchildren.

Services: September 9, 2022 at Arlington UMC, Arlington, GA. Visitation 12-2 and Service 2 pm

Services: September 24, 2022 at Baxley First UMC, Baxley, GA

Visitation 12-1 and Service 1 pm

Buddy loved his family, his church, and most of all the Lord. He loved to fish at the St. Simons Pier and any pond available. He will be greatly missed by everyone buy especially by his fur babies Gracie, Prissy, and Skeeter.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be given to the Arlington Charge or Phoebe Hospice.



Scripture Readings – September 20 edition

September 25

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost, Year C

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

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

1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31

October 2

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost, Year C

Lamentations 1:1-16

Psalm 137 (UMH 852)

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

