

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – OCTOBER 4 EDITION

Cooks Union UMC offers meals to nourish and bring hope

By Kara Witherow, Advocate Contributor

Food sustains, nourishes, gives life.

It can also connect, bring hope, and convey love.

Since last September, that's what Cooks Union United Methodist Church, through its Meals of Love ministry, has delivered to about 20 people each week.

Every Wednesday, Rev. Jean Watson, pastor of Cooks Union UMC, and church member Kaye B. Cook dedicate their entire day to cooking, baking, packing, and delivering meals. Both women enjoy cooking and serving those who otherwise may not have a warm, hearty meal to eat, Rev. Watson said.

When considering how the congregation could best serve the Colquitt community, Rev. Watson and Cook discussed their talents and abilities. Cook, a former caterer, suggested the idea of a feeding ministry.

"I love to cook, she loves to cook, and when you love to cook it's really not a chore," Rev. Watson said. "We thought this would be a great opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the elderly and needy in our community."

Most of the people Rev. Watson, Cook, and the Meals of Love ministry feed are homebound, but some are sick or recovering from an injury or illness.

Sort of an enhanced Meals on Wheels ministry, when dinner is delivered, not only does the recipient receive a hot, homemade meal, he or she also gets a visit and prayer.

Meals of Love is more than just a feeding ministry, Rev. Watson and Cook said. It lets people know they're loved and not alone.

"I've had one lady hug my neck and tell me I'm about the only person she sees all week," said Cook, who, prior to moving to Colquitt, owned and operated Southern Elegance Catering at Albany First United Methodist Church for 32 years. "I always hug her. She tells me she loves getting a hug. And that means something. This kind of lets them know the church hasn't forgotten about them."

A self-proclaimed "people person," Meals of Love gives Rev. Watson additional avenues to serve and speak to those outside the walls of the church.

"It gives me an opportunity to minister to people, too. One woman recently lost four people in her family. I let her know she's not out there all by herself, we're praying for her. She may or may not ever come to church; that's not the important thing. The important thing is letting her know there's someone out there."

The meals Rev. Watson and Cook prepare are homemade and homestyle. They've cooked chicken just about every way it can be prepared, from fried chicken and baked chicken to chicken and dumplings, chicken and rice casserole, and chicken and dressing. This past week Rev. Watson made Chicken Spectacular, a one-dish meal with chicken, rice, soup, green beans, and several other ingredients. They've also served hamburger steak, pork steaks, meatloaf, and dozens of other dishes.

In addition to some type of meat, dessert, bread, and a vegetable are included. Rev. Watson, who loves to bake, always adds thick slices of homemade pound cake, dollops of banana pudding, big brownies, or a couple of cookies. A sticker that reads, "Meals of Love, Cooks Union UMC" is placed on top of the take-out box. The servings are large, enough for at least two meals.

While Rev. Watson and Cook prepare and plate the meals, they have a team to help deliver. For much of the first year, Rev. Watson and Cook funded the ministry themselves. This year the ministry received a \$3,500 grant from the Southwest District and the church included Meals of Love in its budget. The team is grateful for the support and sees the difference the ministry makes.

“It gives us a sense of fulfillment to do something that God has commanded us to do in his teaching, to help people and do what you can,” Cook said. “I just believe this is God’s purpose for us, that we take care of other people when we can. He wants us to take care of other people.”



New Wesley at Frederica UMC ministries aim to help the community

By Taylor Cooper, The Brunswick News

Two new ministries of Wesley United Methodist Church on St. Simons Island aim to help different people with different issues.

Wesley Arbor gives people with dementia a chance to have some fun while giving their caretakers a break, with the Norma Lucas Academy of Fine Arts at Wesley offering a chance for people with special learning needs and tuition assistance to learn to play a wide array of instruments.

Beth King, the director of Wesley Arbor, started working with other members of the church to set up the program over two years ago, although COVID-19 pushed the actual execution back for a while. The idea originated with other Methodist churches under an umbrella program called Respite for All.

Edna Romano, who volunteers with the Wesley Oaks program, said the name Respite for All pretty well encompasses the goal. They take the seniors, most of whom have Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia, and give them a structured day of activities and fellowship.

The church held an open house recently to introduce Wesley Arbor to the public. One of the activities they tried was something of a drumming game. Participants got a rubber inflatable ball and pool noodles, and drummed along to a beat.

“We didn’t realize how much fun we’d have doing it,” Romano said. “They (the pool noodles) sort of muffle the sounds, so you get the sounds of a drum, but if you’re not on-beat you don’t get a cacophony.”

She picked most of the music the first time, trying to select songs she thought seniors would enjoy.

“They’re telling me people like Andy Williams. I had the Commodores, the Temptations and what I remember being rhythmically good for drumming,” Romano said. “Well, their favorite was Bruno Mars and ‘Uptown Funk.’ We had a rowdy ‘hallelujah.’”

The open house was a great success, but it also revealed the differences between the participants — some enjoy energetic music more than others, while some like standing and moving and others like sitting down.

“Once you realize the limitations or strengths of the group, you can adapt it to them,” she said. All the games and activities are designed to involve as many people as possible, like a game of volleyball once again using pool noodles and balloons.

Some of their members play instruments, and if they so choose and play for the other people participating in Wesley Arbor.

“There’s one who can’t read music or play anymore, but he for sure knows his songs,” King said. “It’s important they don’t feel alone and isolated.”

Equally important to making sure the participants have fun is giving the caretakers a break to do some shopping alone, play a round of golf or just go home and read a book, King said.

“One of them, she came to me and said ‘I almost don’t know what to do with my time,’” King said.

Also kicking off is the Norma Lucas Academy of Fine Arts at Wesley, headed up by Director Linda Dorsey.

“It’s something the area has needed and wanted for a long time. I feel like parents have been waiting for this to come along,” Dorsey said.

Named after a pianist who played for the church for around 50 years, the academy offers kids and adults private lessons in piano, guitar, voice, strings, brass and woodwind instruments, among others.

“We even have a ukulele class,” Dorsey said.

All instructors are professionally trained and go through the same security screening as public school teachers, she added.

Professional music instruction is proven to boost performance in other areas of life, academic and social, she said.

“(Music is) healing, inspiring,” Dorsey says. “It’s part of growing up and learning to communicate. It’s a very necessary part of all of our lives, even just listening to music.”

Specifically, the academy caters to people who wouldn’t normally get this type of instruction, she said.

“We want everyone to be able to study music if they so desire. We’re not turning away anyone because of price or cost,” Dorsey said. “We need to be self-sufficient, but we’re not in this to make money, we’re in this to minister to kids and adults.”

Anyone with limited income or special learning needs are more than welcome, she said, and the church will work with people to get them into the program.

“This is a ministry, so we are serving children who otherwise would not be able to afford to take these lessons,” Dorsey said. “We’re serving children with special learning differences, and some students qualify for tuition assistance scholarships.”

The first big recital for the fall semester is on Dec. 11, a Christmas show. Once the program is more established, she hopes to take school members around town to nursing homes and assisted living facilities, among others, to let the students show off their skills.

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Disaster Response Update: Hurricane Ian

On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall on Florida's Gulf Coast. Storm surges and Category 4 winds caused significant flooding and damage, devastating the southwest area of the state and beyond. While the Florida Conference is still assessing the damage, at least 100 churches in their Conference have been impacted at varying levels. Supplies are headed to Florida and initial solidarity grants have been issued to both the Florida and South Carolina Annual Conferences to address immediate needs. UMCOR and its local partners have been hard at work preparing for storm response and recovery.

Over the weekend, Luis Morales, conference disaster response coordinator, received a call from UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) inviting him and up to 7 other highly trained persons to the area to help with initial tarping and debris removal. With housing for only 8 persons, UMCOR asked for a team that could travel completely self-contained, bringing their own food, water, and supplies.

On Monday, October 3, Luis Morales (Centerville UMC), Glenn Martin (Northwest District Disaster Response Coordinator), Bruce Getz (Pierce Chapel UMC), Mike Tovey (Midland UMC), and Bob Dreyden (Midland UMC) met in Tifton, GA to travel to Lee County, FL (Ft. Myers area).

As he is able, Luis will provide updates to the conference on immediate needs.

What can you do now?

Wait, Pray, Give

Our best response today is to wait, pray, and give. UMCOR and the Florida Conference are still in the assessment phase and will communicate their needs with the South Georgia Conference.

Give Financially

Your financial gift to UMCOR is especially appreciated. Churches and individuals can financially support the work of UMCOR and its local partners by giving to UMCOR U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery fund (Advance #901670). By giving to UMCOR, 100% of your donation reaches those in need.

- You may give through any United Methodist Church in the South Georgia Conference by designating your donation for UMCOR U.S. Disaster Response #901670.
- You may mail a check to the Administrative Services Office. Please use Conference Advance Special #6796 - South Georgia Storm Relief (Disaster Response) or UMCOR U.S. Disaster Response #901670. Address: PO Box 7227, Macon, GA 31209.
- You may give online at <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/901670/> or <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z747/campaign/C-12VR1>.

Early Response Teams

Reminder: do not self-deploy to an active disaster area. The South Georgia Conference will share information when ERT Teams and other volunteers are invited to affected areas once the Florida Conference is ready to receive teams. The South Georgia Conference has hundreds of trained ERT who are standing by, prepared to deploy upon invitation.



**FROM THE BISHOP
DAVID GRAVES**

Dear Friends of the South Georgia Conference,

What a joy it has been to visit with over 2,000 laity and clergy across the South Georgia Conference in the month of September. The attendance surpassed my expectations, and it was good just to be in connection and conversation with the people of South Georgia. Thank you to those who were able to attend as we sought to bring clarity around where we are as a denomination and a conference.

In my journey over the past two months - in August I was in the Alabama-West Florida Conference holding similar gatherings - it occurred to me that it would be helpful to share with you several reasons why I choose to remain United Methodist. I feel a deep sense of calling from God to stay at the table and to be part of the future of this great denomination that has been such a witness for Christ. I hope you will see my heart in the reasons "Why I Love Being a United Methodist." (see bottom of column)

I have shared with you all in various settings that I am a United Methodist pastor and bishop, and I firmly believe a future UMC needs traditional, orthodox members as well as progressive members, centrist members, and everyone in between. A church cannot effectively reach the least, the lost, and the lonely if it is of one mind on every topic. It takes us all to challenge and encourage one another in our discipleship efforts and our spiritual journey.

As expected, I fielded questions about many relevant denominational topics during our September conversations. However, my heart was warmed to know that many people attended these sessions in order to better understand what the future of The United Methodist Church looks like and what laity can do to encourage their church to remain United Methodist.

Some in attendance wanted more information on the steps for local church disaffiliation. We did not focus our time on the nuances of that topic. However, [a page on our website explains those details](#), and your District Superintendent is always available to answer questions.

Conference leadership is working on a frequently asked questions document based on the questions I was asked over the course of this month in our various meetings. In addition, I will be filming a video in the days to come to provide a summary of the questions and answers. I hope both of these resources will help you in your local church.

Your District Superintendents, conference leadership, and I have spent a lot of time helping churches get to where they need to be. Now as we move forward and some churches make a decision to depart, I want you to know my commitment is focusing on the people and churches of the great South Georgia Conference and moving forward in this next season of ministry together.

My prayers are with each of you, and I welcome your prayers as we continue to focus on mission and ministry.

In Christ,

Bishop David Graves

WHY I LOVE BEING A UNITED METHODIST

1. The United Methodist Church is a GLOBAL CHURCH of 12 million members whose reach and impact can be felt around the world. From Imagine No Malaria to the support of Ukrainian refugees, from Africa University to Camp Connect, The United Methodist Church is empowering people to love God and love neighbor around the world.

2. Jesus is at the center of all that we do. Together, we join in God’s mighty acts of salvation, proclaiming and living the Lordship of Christ throughout the world. Our mission is clear, and we are committed to MAKING DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
3. GRACE is central to our theology, our witness, and our ministry to the world. Steeped in the best of evangelical theology, we believe that salvation is a gift available to all, offered to us without price, through faith in Jesus Christ. In The United Methodist Church, everyone is welcome—including sinners! All are invited to follow Jesus.
4. Our evangelical theology is bolstered with a focus on TWO SACRAMENTS. In the sacrament of baptism, we are adopted into the family of God and given new life through Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of holy communion, all are invited to the table of our Lord where Jesus meets us. In both sacraments, God’s amazing grace is poured out on God’s people.
5. We are a DIVERSE church. “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” With Christians around the world, we worship the Triune God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the same time, we believe there is strength in our diversity. We boldly welcome people from different backgrounds, with different political views, and with a variety of worldviews. As a community born out of the fires of Pentecost and shaped by the cross of Christ, our stories make us stronger, give us resiliency in times of uncertainty, and provide a rich testimony of the steadfast love of God in our lives.
6. We WORSHIP God in a variety of ways, across four continents, in a multitude of languages. United Methodists faithfully worship in traditional high churches and tiny house churches, in contemporary venues and on college campuses. Together, our varied voices proclaim the goodness and grace of God.
7. The United Methodist Church’s IMPACT is felt and known across our country. Countless colleges, universities, hospitals, community centers, and social services agencies were born through the vision and gifts of United Methodists. This cultural impact continues from giant research universities to church- sponsored institutions like Andrew College and Wesleyan College.
8. The United Methodist Church is a CONNECTIONAL church, wherein churches are joined with each other and the global church in a multitude of ways. Our connection provides training and resources for clergy and laity, produces curriculum and devotional material for all ages, sends missionaries and mission teams around the world, and empowers new ministries to reach new generations.
9. When there is a DISASTER our connection responds through The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). United Methodists are often the first ones in and the last ones out when disaster strikes. After Hurricane Michael, our connectional partnerships gave us access to money and aid that enabled us to assist hurricane survivors.
10. The United Methodist Church has a BRIGHT FUTURE, for God is at work in ways seen and unseen across our connection. God is using United Methodist churches to proclaim the gospel, feed the hungry, comfort the broken, and resist the evils of this world. God has called us, God has equipped us, and God will carry us forward to reach new people and new generations for Jesus Christ.



Collab Conference planned for youth leaders

The Office of Connectional Ministries is hosting the Collab Conference **October 13-14** at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. The Collab Conference is led by seasoned youth ministry leaders and tailored for ALL those in youth ministry positions - volunteer, part-time, and full-time. Through learning sessions, discussion groups, worship, meals, networking opportunities, fun activities and practical take-home resources, student ministry leaders will walk away encouraged and equipped for the season ahead! Register now! [Link for more information](#)

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Webinar opportunity for clergy: "Don't Quit, We Need You"

The Office of Connectional Ministries is excited to offer South Georgia clergy the opportunity to participate in a workshop led by Dr. Henry Cloud **Tuesday, October 18 from 12-3 pm.** "Don't Quit, We Need You" is specifically designed with clergy in mind. If you're struggling with the stress, pressure, and loneliness that comes from church leadership, you are not alone. This workshop will help you learn how to move from stress to peace, loneliness to connection, division to unity, and grief to joy. A few things to note: 1 - There is a discount code available for you. When registering, enter the code 20OFF to receive \$20 off your registration price. 2 - Register now for the early-bird pricing. After October 15, the registration price goes from the current \$99 to \$109. 3 - If the cost is prohibitive, please contact Anne Bosarge at abosarge@sgaumc.com to inquire about scholarships. We recognize the importance of this workshop and want to make it available to all who would like to attend. [Register now](#)

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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](#)

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The Song of Moses

Fall Quarter: God's Exceptional Choice
Unit 2: Out of slavery to nationhood
Lesson 6

Sunday School Lesson for the week of October 9, 2022
By Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:30-32:47

Key Text: *Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of the Law. Deuteronomy 32:46*

Lesson Aims:

1. Music: the eternal gift.
2. Music and Lyric possess inspirational power.
3. Hymns of Praise and Proclamation

Introduction: Eternal Music

The gift of music is written into the very fabric of creation. Music isn't a separate item that stands separate from the cosmos, ready to be used when called upon. When planets and stars are held in perfect gravitational tension within our solar system, all planets exist in perfect gravitational relationship. The vibrations, pulses, and echoes create a pulsating sound. The universe is filled, not with silence, but with vibration; and where there is vibration there is sound. All musical instruments operate as one string or note striking another. All celestial bodies create sound as one body interacts with another.

The *musica universalis*, also called music of the spheres or harmony of the spheres, is a philosophical concept that regards proportions in the movements of celestial bodies - the Sun, Moon, and planets – as a form of music. Pythagoras surmised in earlier times the concept of the “music of the spheres.”

Though some question Pythagoras' specific theory, many do believe the universe is filled with sound. Thus, we don't “create” music, we find it. We discover its melodies, patterns, and rhythms. I personally am astounded that from one piano keyboard we have yet to exhaust all the music it can provide.

I am a novice musician and can read some music. Above all, music has a mystical, spiritual power over my soul. I truly believe that some are born with a kinship of the eternal music composed in the heavens.

Have you ever given thought to the eternal origin of music? If not, why not? Does music take on an even greater wonder when you consider it fills the heavens as much as the stars? How does this reality change the way you listen to music, especially sacred music?

Music Finds Its Word

The great Sidney Lanier wrote, “Music is love in search of a word.” I do not believe it is coincidental that music plays a major role in the revelation of Holy Scripture. A vast majority of Scripture is prose and music. When my spouse Gail and I visited the Holy Land, we visited the assumed birth grotto of Jesus. It was the last of February and sleet was falling, mixed with snow outside the entrance. Gail has a pretty voice, and they asked her to sing “Joy to the World.” As we sang I looked about the faces singing, most were smiling and enjoying the experience. I admit, I wasn't the only one with tears in my eyes. I heard the same notes as all the others and shared their tears. I believe I felt something deeper. Was I hearing the music of the spheres? Had the music of the heavens found their word of love that night for me in Bethlehem? Believe me, I am no special guy, but all of my life I heard music differently. The notes resonated with my soul, and I truly felt as though my soul vibrated.

I admit I tend to believe our early biblical ancestors discovered the music that glorified God. It originated from the heavens and sounded through the rocks and rills. It sounded through the trees. Eventually, we learned to harness its sounds with instruments, and an entire world opened, a world that could whisper the sounds of the heavens in daily life. It is for this reason music never grows outdated and continues to touch us for generations. Years ago, I placed Psalm 25 to music. It came almost naturally, but it resonated with my soul. I sing it regularly, and it always moves me. I didn't write it or create it; I found it.

“Show me your way O Lord,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
For you are God, my Salvation,
In you do I wait all the day.”

I sing this hymn regularly. I just hear it from the “music of the spheres.” It blesses me. It is both old and new, ancient and true, beautiful and timeless.

Have you considered music to be an instrument of revelation? Have you considered God chose this special gift to reveal the divine nature to us? What does the beauty of music say to us about the beauty

of God? How has music touched our Judeo/Christian faith for centuries? Can you imagine what our faith would be like apart from the music we sing?

Music Finding THE Word

Again, looking at the words Sidney Lanier so beautifully stated: “Music is love in search of a word.” Let’s apply Lanier’s powerful poetic line to our text. Our song possesses two major emphases. First, the song glorifies God as God over all. It isn’t just any “god” that providentially protected and called Moses; it was THE GOD! Not only is God caring for Moses, the Lord is perfect and upright in all of his actions. His actions toward Moses do not vary to the right or left. God’s steady, righteous hand is upon Moses.

Secondly, the song proclaims that God chose Moses from a wayward people who worshipped their pharaoh, and most likely other Egyptian gods. From among this wayward people, God’s song reminds us he found the covenant child in that polytheistic land and took him unto himself. It is a song of being chosen, protected, nurtured, and raised to the highest calling.

However, it wasn’t just the Egyptians that were wayward. The nation of Israel had settled for a life in Egypt. It offered existence, but no covenant blessing. Israel would have never achieved their destiny as God’s covenant people unless they left Egypt. They could not settle for survival, they had to choose thriving. A land awaited them. There was a land in which they would worship the one and only true God of the world. Nothing could be allowed to deter that destiny.

This is a song of risk. If left to humanity, the story of Moses would prove a sad song indeed. But, this is a song of God’s providence. God made covenant with Abraham, and that covenant is going to continue through Moses regardless of the difficult circumstances. It wasn’t the Pharaoh or any Egyptian god that sustained and prospered Moses. It was the God of creation! It was the God of Abraham and Sarah!

This song proclaims God is true to God’s promises and is faithful to those chosen.

Consequently, as Israel desired to remember and teach the story of their God, and God’s interaction with them, music was the perfect vehicle. The songs recorded in Exodus reveal that God’s people had been singing for years. It was a vital part of their faith and the telling of their story.

From this one song, the people and children of Israel would remember, embrace, and believe one of the more foundational stories in their faith.

Returning to Sydney Lanier’s saying, “Music is love in search of a word.” For years, psalms and prose would be written to record the magnificent faith dealings of God with the covenant people. These stories would be taught to their children, and generations would sing them in the temple.

Music eventually found its word of words. Jesus was that WORD. All of the beautiful music, and the beautiful expressions, and the beautiful truth was embodied in Jesus. Music has never found a more beautiful, powerful, or redemptive word.

Can you think of a sacred song that especially touches your spirit? Is there a song in which you might wonder, “Am I hearing the music of heaven?” How is Jesus the word for all the “seeking songs” in your life? What sacred song never fails to touch you intimately with its truth and beauty?

Prayer

Almighty God, for all the songs, melodies, and lyrics that have enriched our faith, we are thankful. Let us continue to be a “singing people” in our Methodist tradition. Allow our spirits to hear the music of creation in every day, that we might always have a song of hope. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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The Call of Gideon

Fall Quarter: God’s Exceptional Choice
Unit 2: Out of slavery to nationhood
Lesson 7

Sunday School Lesson for the week of October 16, 2022
By Craig Rikard

Lesson Scripture: Judges 6:1-27

Key Text: “Do not be afraid! You are not going to die!” Judges 6:23

Author’s Note: This lesson is intended to supplement the lessons in the Teacher’s Book. It is written to add other perspectives that might help bring depth, width, and height to the existing lesson in the Teacher’s Manual. Also, please note that I use the traditional pronouns used in the Bible itself. However, we must always understand God transcends all labels and thus, gender.

Introduction: Geographical and Historical/Political Background

The Gift of the Mosaic Law and Shema

The book of Judges, like Genesis, contains a repetitive pattern of grace-sin-redemption. Israel has been living their new life in Canaan, the Promised Land. However, the Israelites neglected and abused this gift of grace. Their sin always leads to painful consequences. Joshua has brought Israel to the Jordan, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. At last, they cross into the land of promise.

During the period of the Judges, Israel exists as a loose confederation of tribes. There exist no central government. However, each tribe of Israel is expected to live in obedience to the Mosaic Law. Remember, prior to the giving of Mosaic Law Israel had developed a lawful manner of living like most near-eastern tribes. There was an understanding of living uprightly, and even living in faithfulness to God.

However, the Mosaic Law added the “laws of distinction.” These laws set Israel apart from their neighbors. These laws of distinction served not only to set Israel apart, they were above all to draw attention to Israel’s God. This author believes a sense of the Shema (Deut. 6:4) existed prior to the Mosaic Law, and this great Law was the law that measured Israel’s faithfulness to God and covenant. The Shema is the “Law of love,” the “Law of laws.” Jesus proclaimed this law to the highest expression of moral living and emphasized the dimension of personal relationships by saying: “and love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Israel’s loose confederation of tribes had neglected both the Shema and the specific laws of the Mosaic Law. Their “loose living” opened the door to oppression from neighboring tribes. In Judges we read the repetitive wording, “And Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.” As the consequences became unbearable at last the people would call upon God to save them.

God responds to their need of deliverance by raising a Judge to a role of leadership. A Judge was a prophet/military leader. Israel's judges were not preselected by Israel, they were chosen and empowered by God. Sadly, after a period of liberty and new life, Israel would once again revert to neglecting the Law and their faithfulness to God.

The role of Judge was the predecessor of role of King. Israel did not have a king. They were a Theocracy. That is, God was their King, and their faithfulness to the Law and Shema were the means of being faithful and upright. We could accurately say the Law and Shema served as the moral plumbline for measuring Israel's faithfulness to God.

Do you believe we have a plumbline today? What is it? How is Jesus related to our understanding of "being measured" as faithful to God? How is the Holy Spirit related to it?

The Gift of the Judges

Again, Judges were mostly military leaders under the leadership of God. They were not technically trained for the role. However, they were empowered by God to serve. Deborah is among my favorite Judges as her story illustrates how God chose a Judge and empowered him or her.

Women were hardly ever elevated to a military role in the near-eastern world. Israel experienced great suffering during the time of Deborah and needed a deliverer. If people were searching for one wise enough, militarily skilled enough, and religiously upright, they would not have considered Deborah. God saw in Deborah what others would never see through their cultural eyes.

Deborah is chosen, but not because she is a woman. Her gender has nothing to do with it. Who she is as a person and the state of her heart had everything to do with it. 1 Sam. 16:7 declares that God does not see as man sees. God "sees the heart." This declaration was beautifully expressed in Deborah's ministry. God delivered Israel under Deborah's leadership.

Later, we will study the call of Gideon to become a Judge of Israel.

How guilty are we of judging the capabilities of others related to their gender? To their skin color or ethnicity? Read the story of Deborah in the Book of Judges and note the remarkable gifts possessed by Deborah. What does the story of Deborah have to say to the Church regarding those called into leadership?

Israel's Sin Leads to Oppression by Midian

Who were the Midianites? It is interesting to note that Midian initially had a close relationship to the Israelites. Abraham had more than one wife, and children through another wife. After Sarah died, Moses married Keturah. Midian was a child of Abraham and Keturah. When Moses fled from pharaoh, he was taken in by Jethro. Jethro was a priest of Midian. The fact that Jethro was a priest implies that the early Midianites possessed an acknowledgement of Abraham's God. Thus, Moses felt at home and safe with Jethro. Moses would later marry Jethro's daughter Zipporah.

Since the Midianites and early Israelites once shared a meaningful relationship, how did they become the severe oppressors of Israel during the time of Gideon? The Israelites and Midianites became estranged years later when the Midianites allied themselves with the Moabites, hiring Balaam to curse Israel. (Read Numbers 22) The Midianites became a nomadic tribe inhabiting part of the northwestern Arabian Peninsula. The Midianites invaded Israel along with other tribes during the time of the Judges.

The Midianites were a most oppressive people. For seven years, with great animosity, they made the lives of the Israelites miserable. As the oppression grew, the Israelites began to call upon the Lord for deliverance. Imagine being so oppressed you abandon your home, fields, vineyards and opt to live in caves and in hiding. When we are first introduced to Gideon, he is working in a secret winepress to ensure the Midianites do not discover him and his work.

In our current culture we often define salvation as solely a personal experience. The books of the Old Testament repeatedly reveal God saving a nation, a community of people. Of course, we are concerned about our personal relationship with the Lord. However, we must be as concerned about our relationships with others, the injustice inflicted upon others, and become passionate about helping all to know the Lord and His deliverance.

How do you think we define or understand the Lord's salvation today? Do we regularly pray for others in other places? Do we regularly teach that God's salvation in Christ is for the entire world? If not, what obstacles have led to such neglect? How can we better understand the breadth of God's deliverance?

God had asked the Israelites to be diligent in their refusal to engage in the idolatry of their neighbors. The Lord spoke to Israel as they cried for deliverance from the Midianites, saying, "But you have not listened to me." Over the years Israel has paid little regard to their one true God, while allowing pagan tribes to influence them through their polygamy and idolatry.

Sadly, for years the Israelites slowly accepted the loss of their life under God. As it is with most of us, when things hurt severely enough, we call upon the Lord to save us. Of course, this behavior doesn't offer a pleasing picture of humankind. We are guilty of desiring "convenient grace." However, God's response offers a beautiful picture of God. Why should God help a people who have repeatedly abused grace? Why should God deliver a people who have received so much and often given so little? Yet, God, again, responds with grace and redemption. Many often read the Old Testament as a book of judgement and penalty. However, it is equally a book sated with grace and love.

How would you define "convenient grace?" How can we better ensure our church engages in gratitude, thanksgiving, and devotion while avoiding convenient grace?

God Speaks!

In the darkest of times, God speaks! It is the same redemptive voice speaking to Gideon and the nation that spoke during the Exodus. No other event in the Old Testament represented God's redemption of Israel like the Exodus. The Lord to whom they pray is the same Lord that allowed them to possess the land of Canaan. God calls upon Israel to consider their past experiences with the Lord. This consideration of the past, especially the Exodus, can be encapsulated in the simple statement: "I am the Lord who redeemed and blessed you. Do you believe I am going to abandon you now?"

All of us should regularly consider our past with the Lord. Past moments of grace were not moments independent of one another. Each moment prepares us for circumstances to come in the future. We are a covenant people. As Christians, we are a people of the "new covenant." As Israel was to continue to embody the covenant made with Abraham and Sarah, we are to continue to embody the covenant of love established by Jesus. Considering our past with the Lord can be the creator of faith. Dare we believe that God saved us in the past only to abandon us in the difficulties we face today? When God asks Israel to consider the past, he is reminding them they can trust him in the present. As I've stated previously, one of my favorite statements (author unknown) reads: "I have seen my yesterdays with God, therefore I am not afraid of today or tomorrow; for, the God of the past is the same God today and forever."

Can you share experiences with the Lord from your past that have empowered you later? Can you recognize a continuity in your walk of faith? Can you recognize God's constant grace in spite of our failure?

The Call of Gideon

An angel of the Lord approaches Gideon as he toils in his secret winepress. It is of great interest to note the angel's words, "The Lord is with you mighty warrior!" Gideon is stunned. Yet, I truly believe most of us would have been equally surprised. In the present moment, Gideon is just another oppressed Israelite. He is eking out a living in a hidden winepress. How could he possibly be a "mighty warrior?"

Gideon is filled with self-doubt. In no manner does he envision himself as a military leader of the nation. The man hiding in the winepress is far from the man standing at the head of a national army. He defines his qualifications, or disqualifications, based on the way life looks at the time. He has not considered the God of his people, who is Lord over all. Every year nominating committees in churches ask people to serve in leadership. Many turn them down. Some just are not ready to devote their time. Others truly do not see themselves as capable, even though a prayerful committee has seen God's gifts and graces within them.

Gideon initially hesitates based on what he sees in the world around him. Israel was suffering under a vicious enemy. Gideon is asking, "If you want me to help deliver your people, then where are you?" Gideon did not see God in his present life. The way life happens to be doesn't mean it is the way life will remain. The angel of the Lord is asking Gideon to gaze into God's future redemption.

My call into pastoral ministry keenly mirrors Gideon's call. When I spiritually heard, "The Lord is with you, pastor," I responded as Gideon, "Pardon?" Nothing in my present circumstances qualified me for the call of ordination. However, again, God does not see as we see; God sees the heart. The God who calls us is the Lord who empowers us.

Gideon must have received an impression that this angel wasn't leaving. He uses what he considers is his most evident disqualification. Gideon reminds the angel that he is from the least of the tribes of Israel. Then, he adds further disqualification: "I am the least of my tribe." Gideon claims he does not have the pedigree to serve as Judge. The position from which we've come has little to do with our calling. Where God wills us to go has everything to do with it.

God calls each of us into an expression of ministry. God's past acts of grace in Jesus call us to remember this is the same Lord calling us at present. The last statement in our biblical text provides the perfect ending. God says, "I will be with you."

Can you relate to Gideon's hesitation in responding to God? Do you struggle in responding to God's call upon your life? Do you believe yourself unqualified to serve? Do you measure yourself against others, or do you recognize that if God called you then God will be with you? Have you ever considered, "What could I do for God if I knew for certain that the Lord was with me"?

Prayer

Almighty God, we praise you for your constant mindfulness and care for us. Forgive us for our fear in facing great opportunity. Open our eyes to see as you see. Open our hearts to receive your courage. Empower us to act with confidence as we acknowledge You are with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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



It's not the way it used to be...because it's about to get better

By Anne Bosarge

Do you remember how it used to be? Do you remember times in the life of your church when you opened the doors and people would flood through? Do you remember when everyone in your circle of friends went to church multiple times a week? Do you remember when church attendance was the priority in a family's life? I think we can all agree: it's not what it used to be. Things sure have changed.

But what I've discovered is that God does His best work on the heels of big sweeping change. When the soil of our souls is already uprooted and loose, this is often the best time for God to do His deepest work. It's time to uproot old mindsets and thought patterns that stopped being effective a long time ago and begin to adapt new ways of thinking that encourage kingdom growth and missional movement.

Twenty churches in South Georgia are pressing in to just such a process. The Reset Cohort began in September and will continue through March of 2023. In this 7-month experience, we will be learning what it means to reset our churches, not back to the ministries and programs we had before the pandemic, but back to the way Jesus intended for the church to function: to be disciples making disciples. We are doing the hard work of evaluating mindsets and confronting the ways we have elevated the method over the mission. We're remembering how individually we have been called and equipped to be on mission in the world and confessing our forgetfulness of our mission. And in this next season, we will begin to rediscover what it means to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

My hope is that our churches will come out of this healthier, refocused, and more kingdom-minded. I pray we will see a revival within these twenty churches that will reach out into our communities and make a kingdom difference as we align our focus around building discipling relationships. It's not the way it used to be because God's about to do something better. Join us in watching to see what God will do!

Anne Bosarge serves as the Director of Leadership Strategies and Local Church Resources. Email her at abosarge@sgaumc.com.

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A United Methodist Presence in Japan

By Rev. Garth Duke-Barton, *Conference Secretary for Global Ministries*

The United Methodist Church continues to reach around the world. While we do not have any official churches in Japan, there is a presence. The Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church (GBGM) and serves as the lead pastor of Kobe Union Church in Kobe, Japan.

Rev. Claudia has been a missionary for 27 years. She became a GBGM missionary associate in 1980-82 and worked in the Bott Memorial Children's Home in Machida, Tokyo, Japan. Later she and her husband, Toshi, returned as missionaries in 1993 to work at the National Christian Council of Japan in Tokyo (NCC-J) primarily with peace, justice, human rights, and other Christian related social issues.

Then they went to Kobe, Japan, and she worked with the Kagawa Center Kobe Jesus Band Church and Tengokuya (Heaven's) Café for almost eight years working with community outreach and church

development. In 2019, she was called to be a pastor at Kobe Union Church, where she would be primarily involved with community outreach and church development.

Kobe Union Church is a diverse congregation filled with Japanese, Filipinos, Africans (from Ghana, Tanzania, Congo, Guinea), Malaysians, Chinese, Korean Japanese, Jamaicans, Europeans, and a few Americans.

Rev Claudia often cites her favorite scripture when discussing her work as a missionary from Romans 15:13: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in God, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Her husband, Rev. Toshi Yamamoto, is a Global Ministries Volunteer in Mission and former General Secretary of NCC-J as well as a former Global Ministries missionary. Toshi retired in March 2020 as the Dean of Chaplains and professor at Kwansai Gakuin University. He has authored books in Japanese and written articles on ecumenism and peace in Northeast Asia. The two have two adult children living in the United States.

The United Methodist Church is connected across the world from our towns in Georgia to Africa, Europe, Asia and Tonga, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. God is working through people and places most of us have never heard of, let alone will ever go. Give to the Advance so God’s kingdom can continue to Advance on the Earth.

To give to the Advance send a check to the following:
The Advance
458 Ponce De Leon Ave, NE
Atlanta, GA 30308

To give to Rev. Claudia send a check marked with Advance #11868Z.

Rev. Garth Duke-Barton, pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church in Jesup, also serves as Conference Secretary for Global Ministries.



JOHN WESLEY MOMENTS

DAVE HANSON

The Methodist Rule of Life

“Do you know our rule? Will You keep it?” The Methodist Rule as defined in our Discipline is: “1- Do no harm... 2- Do good... 3- Observe our Ordinances (Worship, Bible Study, Prayer, Fasting, and Holy Communion.” Every Methodist pastor at their ordination answered this question. Every Methodist should also answer this question.

John Wesley believed this rule was the very foundation of the world’s religion. He encouraged us all to follow this rule.

However, in his “Sermon on the Mount” he points out that this rule is only the world’s religion. It is what we as humans can and should do in our quest for God. True, spiritual religion is far more than this important rule. True religion is an inner experience of fellowship with the Living Lord which expresses itself in loving

God with all our heart, mind, body and soul, and our neighbors as ourselves. Our Methodist Rule is a means to that spiritual end.

The Rev. Dave Hanson is a retired pastor and John Wesley scholar.

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Things That Don't Need to Change

By Hal Brady

A well-known minister in one of our largest United Methodist Churches said that when he was in seminary over 15 or so years ago the watchword was "Change the world."

"Today," he said, "the question is 'What do we do when the world changes?'"

Yes, time does change things, sometimes dramatically. Professions change, styles change, expectations change, communication systems change, how we relate to people changes, education changes, and on and on it goes.

But some things have no business changing. The biblical writer of James says, "What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes" (James 4:14). Although we often give the appearance of security, our lives are marked by uncertainty, adversity and brevity. Therefore, we need perspective, and relating with God gives us that perspective. As I said, some things have no business changing. Let's focus on some of those unchanging things.

First, personal integrity! In a play by Channing Pollock, I recall the characters Archie and Jennifer. Archie is home now, tired. He had been down in the village trying to stand against the pressure to do an unethical thing concerning a housing project. He did not give in. He was told by the man who despised him because he would not cooperate, that he was a "little man." Now, seated beside Jennifer, he says, "I'm not a big man, Jen." Jennifer asks, "What is a big man, Archie?" He replies, "Henry Ford." Jennifer says, "No, Archie. A big man is a man who keeps his word." Keep your word. Keep your principles. Keep your soul. Personal integrity! Some things don't need to change.

Second, wholesome thoughts! The apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." I consider this verse to be one of the most important verses in all scripture. You see, what we think about today determines who we are and what we become in life. Our thoughts are the thermostat that regulates negative defeat or vitality and victory. We become what we think about.

Third, love for family! Psychologist William James observed, "In every person from the cradle to the grave, there is a deep craving to be appreciated." Feeling appreciated brings out the best in people. And when that appreciation comes in the home by way of acceptance, love, and encouragement, the bonds between family members grow firm and secure. God intends that our home be a place of "supportive environment."

Fourth, authentic servanthood! "What do you want to be when you grow up?" That's a question we enjoy asking children. And their answers are always fascinating. Let's imagine asking Jesus what he wants us to be when we grow up. Suddenly, it's a whole new question. I honestly believe he would give the same answer to

every one of us. “I want you to be different - to be a servant.” Authentic servanthood! Some things have no business changing.

Lastly, living life to the Glory of God! Our lives, whatever they are, whatever they are going to be, whatever our circumstances are intended to “billboard” God’s faithfulness. That was Israel’s calling and that is our calling as people of God. We know God to make God known.

When he was up in years, William Barclay said something that was probably one of the best quotations ever spoken outside the Bible. He said, “I’m an old man. I have lived a long time, and over the years, I have learned that there are very few things in life that really matter, but those few things matter intensely.” And one of those things is Living Life to the Glory of God.

For sure, times must change! But at the same time, there are some things that have no business changing.

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 – October 2022

- 10/01 – David Haygood, Sr.: 100 Lindsey Barron Dr., Apt. 215; Newnan, GA 30263
- 10/01 – E. Warren Williams: 761 Myna Dr., Unit 7084; Ellijay, GA 30540
- 10/02 – Ross Tracy: 3800 Shamrock Dr.; Charlotte, NC 28215
- 10/04 – Riley Middleton, Jr.: 5002 St. Francis Ave.; Columbus, GA 31904
- 10/05 – Ronald Johnson: 230 Banklodge Drive.; Douglas, GA 31535
- 10/05 – Earl Seckinger: PO Box 766; Springfield, GA 31329
- 10/05 – J.W. Womble: 2935 Cherokee St.; Waycross, GA 31503
- 10/06 – Donald Combs: 5572 New Jesup Hwy.; Brunswick, GA 31523
- 10/06 – Mike Ricker: 154 Palmetto Dr.; Rincon, GA 31326
- 10/09 – Karen Kilhefner: 7 Mistletoe Court; Savannah, GA 31419
- 10/10 – Hugh Baxter: 1272 Smith Bedgood Rd.; Harrison, GA 31035
- 10/10 – Uley Robbins: 130 Hall Road; Sylvania, GA 30467
- 10/11 – Bob Shell: 210 Castlegate Rd.; Macon, GA 31210
- 10/13 – Bill Neely: 1780 Snug Harbor Dr.; Greensboro, GA 30642
- 10/16 – John Bacher: 400 South Main Ave. 106; Pine Mountain, GA 31822
- 10/18 – Madison Morgan: 599 Cloy-Kildare Rd.; Cloy, GA 31303
- 10/19 – Billy Oliver: 135 Hines Terrace, Macon, GA 31204
- 10/21 – Stanley Harrell: 319 Crescent Road; Griffin, GA 30224
- 10/23 – John Brodess: 803 Moore Drive; Americus, GA 31709
- 10/23 – Frank Danner: 1415 Sunrise Ave.; Moultrie, GA 31768
- 10/24 – James Duke, Jr.: 102 Clarksville Ct.; Macon, GA 31210
- 10/24 – Evelyn Duvall: 10502 Regal View Loop; Clermont, FL 34711
- 10/24 – Carl Howard: 154 Ridgeland Dr.; Valdosta, GA 31602
- 10/24 – Willis Moore: 2378 Caladium Dr. NE; Atlanta, GA 30345
- 10/25 – Jimmy Cason: 1321 Kermit Dr.; Statesboro, GA 30458
- 10/25 – Gene Cochran: 4707 120th Blvd.; Lubbock, TX 79424
- 10/25 – Martin Loyley: 1544 Harris Ridge Rd.; Young Harris, GA 30582
- 10/25 – Craig Rikard: 3428 Brandon Dr.; Valdosta, GA 31605

10/27 – Bill Jackson-Adams: 17 Lands End Dr.; Greensboro, NC 27408

10/28 – Bob Hannah: 20 Putters Place; Savannah, GA 31419

10/31 – Bob Moon: 4760 Oxford Rd.; Macon, GA 31210

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Obituary: Rev. John Monroe Clements

John Monroe Clements, age 86, passed away Saturday, September 17, 2022, at Lumber City Nursing Home surrounded by his loving family. He was born and raised in Wheeler County, one of three children on an expansive farm outside of McRae. As a young person, he loved reading books, talking about politics, working hard in school, and running track. As a teenager, he attended Indian Springs Camp Meeting and surrendered to Jesus – a decision that changed his heart and life forever. This encounter led to a call to ministry and devotion to following Christ. A man of deep faith, he spent much of his life on long prayer walks in the countryside, studying his Bible, investing in the lives of his parishioners, and helping people find their way to Christ.

He attended Asbury College in Kentucky, where he studied Bible, theology, and philosophy, as well as a young co-ed from Minnesota named Lois Renner, who was preparing to be a schoolteacher. The two were married after their junior year of college, and after he completed a divinity degree at Asbury Theological Seminary, the two of them set out on a life of service and ministry in the United Methodist Church. One of the greatest honors of his life was his 41 years of ministry, serving in churches all across South Georgia. He never met a stranger and would strike up a conversation with anyone he ran into about life, faith, and most important of all, Jesus. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and the power of living a Spirit-filled life brought him great joy. Countless parishioners were impacted by his tireless service, listening ear, and encouraging spirit, pointing them to the One they were looking for.

Nothing made him prouder than his three sons, and conversations were always lively around the dinner table. All four of them were devoted to Lois, the heart of their family and their home. Heartbreakingly, she lost an eleven-year battle with cancer in 1992. Later, John remarried a dear family friend, Noni Carlson, and the two partnered together in the final years of his formal ministry. They retired in 1999 to live at the family farm, and of course, their ministry continued as they opened their hearts and home to family and friends through the years, until Noni went to be with Jesus in 2014. The final chapter of his life was shared with his third wife, Jeanette Cannady, a fabulous godsend who brought him love, companionship, and selfless care in his last days.

Across the years – in formal and informal settings—John impacted everyone he met. His willingness to strike up a conversation, his peculiar questions, his delightful sense of humor, and his devotion to Jesus, ALL these left a mark on the people of South Georgia, and the ripple effects of his life will be felt in eternity. His intentional, delightful, faithful spirit will be sorely missed in this world and in our lives.

Mr. Clements is survived by his wife: Jeanette Page Clements; three sons: Steve (Markie) Clements of Wilmore, KY, Dan (Wendy) Clements of Lawrenceville, GA, and Paul (Sharon) Clements of Lexington, KY; four step-daughters: Ruth (Mike) Moore of Thayne, WY, Martha (Brian) Rudd of Lawrenceville, GA, Miriam (Jerral) Mayes of Savannah, GA, and Candy (Mike) Wimer of Ashville, NC; seven grandchildren: Lee (Natalie) Clements, Taylor Clements, Parker (Daniela) Clements, Aaron Clements, Katy (Kenny) Ordway, Carolyne Clements, and Renner Clements; three great-grandchildren: Abigail, Isaac, and Peter; brother: David (Melba) Clements of Athens, GA; and sister: Mary Leila Smith of Cochran, GA. He was

preceded in death by his two wives: Lois Renner Clements and Wynona Carlson Clements; and his parents: John Bain and Mary Green Clements.

The Clements family will be receiving friends at Towns Funeral Home Monday, September 19, 2022, from 6 P.M. until 8 P.M. Funeral services will be 11 A.M., Tuesday at Springhill Christian Church with interment following in the Springhill Church Cemetery.

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Obituary: Rev. Jimmy Lee Gilbert

A memorial service for the Rev. Jimmy Lee Gilbert of Cordele will be held Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in the chapel of Rainey Family Funeral Services. The family will receive friends prior to the service beginning at 1:00 p.m. Jimmy passed away peacefully Monday, September 19, 2022 at his residence. He was born in Cordele and was the son of the late Oscar S. Gilbert and Betsy Vernetta Pate Gilbert Whiddon. He was a retired Methodist minister. Jimmy was a 1966 graduate of Crisp County High School Rebels and of Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He served churches in the Americus, Dublin and Statesboro Districts until his retirement in 2010. A loving and faithful pastor, the love was returned from far beyond his congregation, coming from all the surrounding communities where he served. Jimmy is survived by the love of his life and his wife of almost 54 years, Sarah Gutherie Gilbert of Cordele; sisters, Mary Ann Gilbert Lusk and her husband, John Lusk of Unadilla and Kathy Whiddon Arnette and her husband, Roger Arnette of Alabama; his children and their spouses, Jim and Susan Gilbert of Abbeville and Michelle G. and Jeff Collins of Cordele; five grandchildren, Dillion Ordway and his wife, Katelynne Ordway, Shelby Ordway Czerwonka, Samantha Gilbert, Sarah Ann Collins Hopper and her husband, Dr. Russ Hopper, and Jared Collins; and three great-grandchildren, Wyatt Czerwonka, George Czerwonka and Cora Elizabeth Hopper.

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Obituary: Rev. Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Herrington

Rev. Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Herrington, age 93, died Tuesday, September 20, 2022, in Bryant Nursing Center. Funeral services will be held Friday, September 23, 2022, at 3:00 P.M. in the Cochran First United Methodist Church. Burial will be private in Macon Memorial Park in Macon.

Rev. Herrington, born in Terrell County, had lived in Cochran since 1984. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Mary Grace Davis Herrington. He was a graduate of Valdosta State and received his doctorate in divinity from Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. He was a retired United Methodist Church Minister having served many churches in the South Georgia Conference.

Survivors are his wife, Judy E. Herrington of Cochran; his children, Linda (Frank) Campo of Marietta, Robert (Debbie) Herrington of Warner Robins and Mark (Brenda) Herrington of Brevard, NC; seven grandchildren; thirteen great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren; a niece and nephew.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the National Parkinson's Foundation 200 SE 1st St, Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131 or to the Cochran First United Methodist Church, PO Box 87, Cochran, GA 31014.

The family is at 185 S Sixth St., Cochran and will greet friends Thursday from 6:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. at Mathis Funeral Home.

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Obituary: Rev. Frank H. Harris, Jr.

Rev. Frank H. Harris Jr., 91, went to be with his Lord and Savior on Monday, September 26, 2022. A Celebration of his Life will be held on Wednesday, September 28, 2022 at Forest Hills Church at 3:00 p.m. with the Dr. Baxter Hurley and Rev. Doug Walker officiating. The family will greet friends from 1:30 p.m. to service time at the church. Burial will be in Macon Memorial Park Cemetery. Donations may be made to Forest Hills Church, 1217 Forest Hills Road, Macon, GA 31210 or donor's favorite charity.

Frank was born in Screven, Georgia to the late Rev. Frank H. Harris, Sr. and Maude Bennett Harris. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Mabel Burns Harris. He served his country in the United States Air Force and was a retired Colonel with the Georgia Air National Guard where he served as a Chaplain. He served five years as a minister for the Wesleyan Methodist Church and then served from 1957 to 1998 with the South Georgia United Methodist Church Conference. He was a member of Forest Hills Church and the Grace Sunday School Class. Frank was a Paul Harris Fellow Rotary member. He was a graduate of Indiana Wesleyan College and received a Masters of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He was a devoted and loving father and grandfather.

He is survived by his children; one son, Frank H. "Chip" Harris, III of Columbus; three daughters, Kathy (Scott) Adams of Smyrna, Becky (Randy) Gay of Camilla, Susannah (Donnie) Allen of Macon; ten grandchildren; Nikki Weirs (Will), Luke Adams, Rachel Grant (Jair), Bekah Odom (Fred), Kelsey MacMinn (Ben), Matthew Gay, Andrew Gay (McKenzie), Jake, Jordan, and Wes Allen and nine great grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

Visit www.maconmp.com to express your condolences. Macon Memorial Park Funeral Home and Cemetery has charge of the arrangements.

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Scripture Readings – October 2 edition

October 9

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost, Year C

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Psalm 66:1-12 (UMH 790)

Luke 17:11-19

October 16

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost, Year C

Jeremiah 31:27-34

Psalm 119:97-104, or Psalm 19 (UMH 750)

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Luke 18:1-8

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Resource Roundup – Oct. 4 Advocate

Small-group studies available for anti-racism podcast

The United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race has released small-group study guides for each episode in the first season of “Expanding the Table,” the agency’s award-winning podcast on practicing anti-racism. Additionally, the agency has added full transcripts for each episode to aid in accessibility. [View resource](#)

Tell your story

Telling your story as a church can be a vastly underestimated necessity. Telling this story well can make the difference between someone deciding to visit or move on to the next church. [Here are some tips to help you get that story on paper and ready for your community to hear and engage.](#)

Imagine a custom website for your church

A great website can bolster your church’s digital ministry and outreach. If your church doesn’t have one, United Methodist Communications’ Local Church Services team can build you a fully customized website experience at an affordable price. Services include:

- One year of web hosting and domain name registration
- WordPress online training and 1-on-1 coaching
- Email accounts, storage and ID protection

[Get started today](#)

The Return of the QR Code

Once upon a time, QR codes were a punchline to many an internet joke, but in recent years, they've gotten a second chance. If you are looking for a free way to share information about your church, reduce waste and save money, check out QR codes. Anyone with a smartphone can scan a QR code — those ubiquitous bar codes that look like a miniature maze — and be directly linked with detailed information. Churches are finding lots of ways to use QR codes, which are easy to create and share. [Learn more](#)

Get Customized Support for Your Ministry

People in your community are searching for love, acceptance and belonging. Is your church ready to connect with them? Whether you need help with social media or an updated church website or logo, United Methodist Communications is here to train, coach and support you as you engage your community with messages of hope. [Learn more](#)