

CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors



Pastor's Note (July 2024)

The month of July officially begins my second year on "dual appointment" at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. Praise the Lord! How time flies when we moved to the Kittrell community, unloaded our furniture, personal stuff and boxes from the U-Haul to the parsonage. Y'all welcomed us with unconditional love, radical hospitality and extravagant generosity. My family and I are truly humbled and blessed to be in a shared journey with y'all!

In our United Methodist system, the Bishop appoints clergy to each local congregation in consultation with the Pastor-Parish Relations Team, Pastor and District Superintendent. The process involves discerning the gifts and abilities of the pastor, determining the context and needs of the congregation, and soaking everything in prayer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, I'm also moving to my 24th year of humbly serving our Awesome God through full time pastoral ministry in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. I remembered my commissioning as probationary member in the year 2000 and my ordination as full elder in the year 2003.

As a United Methodist preacher, just as Jesus' disciples were called to move and follow Him, I'm ordained to remain faithful to God's call upon my life to serve Him and "go wherever He leads me!" As people called Methodists, we have a heritage grounded in John Wesley's circuit riders who traveled from one place to the other to spread God's Word wherever they were needed.

As we journey together this conference year, let us continue to pray and discern God's preferred future for both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. Let us get involved! Let us get involved with Dinner Church, Journey, Awakenings, Stronger Together, Koffee Korner and others! Let us be passionate in sharing Christ to others and be intentional about being part of the movement called "the church"! And let us champion our mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Let us pray: Holy Spirit, set us ablaze with consuming passion and love. Holy Spirit, overtake all we are. We believe in who You are and know You are good. We need You to come and fill us, Jesus. Have Your way in our hearts and in our lives. Remove anything within us that is not of You. Refine us, purify us. Our hearts yearn for only You. In Your presence we are satisfied. We receive Your love. May Your love overflow out of us and Your light shines into the darkness. We offer this prayer in the Name of Jesus, Amen.



KRISTINA DE JESUS, NEW GLOBAL MISSION FELLOW

Kristina De Jesus will serve as a Global Mission Fellow (international track) in Spain with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. She was recognized by the bishop and prayed over by the delegates during the 2024 North Carolina Annual Conference. Please keep her in your prayers and support her mission work by using her Advance number ([#3022815](#)) to donate through the link below.

<https://umcmision.org/missionary-bio/de-jesus-kristina-esther-gaid/>

JUNE SENIOR CIRCLE 2024

Unexpected things happen at Senior Circle . When we arrived we didn't know we would be praying with a member in Henderson over a speaker phone or singing Happy Birthday to Sarah Cruz who turned 91 on the 21st at her home in Plant City, Florida.

As Pastor Edgar gave the devotion about spreading the seeds of Christ's love, we didn't know Paul Faucette, the guest speaker, would repeat the phrase of scattered seeds throughout his presentation about a program called "A NEW BEGINNING" sponsored by Grace Ministries, a non denominational church in Henderson. We learned this program reaches out to people who suffer from the illness of addiction. It is a Christ centered organization that offers help to those seeking a new life free from the emotional and physical chains of chemical bondage. Mentors like Paul work with individuals to find them rehab facilities which are faith based and in almost all cases the cost is nothing. These facilities are located within and outside North Carolina. Most of them provide rehab services from 9 to 12 months and include a work program and study program which focuses on God's word.



Paul's many stories increased our realization that there is help available for those who seek it. He also made it clear that a person's financial situation should never stop anyone from seeking help.



The Senior Circle presented a special donation to Paul and others made personal contributions to help with this ministry. We each received handouts that explained the ministry in detail and contact numbers.



ANOTHER UNEXPECTED SURPRISE

Betty Stanton added a lot of joy to our meeting as she surprised Pastor Edgar with one of her handmade quilts that she recently completed. Kristina, Judy and Pastor Edgar were not expecting this gift and deeply appreciated her kindness and expression of love.

Remember the old saying about quilts?

A quilt is pieces of love sewn together



Following the quilt surprise, Pastor Edgar invited us to fill out the Connect Church questionnaire and we participated in a brief discussion about the needs of the community and how the church can help.



Birthday Celebrations are special and we had fun surprising Joyce Roberts on her 91st birthday, talking to Sarah and singing to her for her 91st birthday and welcoming Sue Beal and thanking her for the invitation to her 92nd birthday party.

We will be celebrating Roxie Kearney's 90th birthday in July with a program called "Roxie Kearney, This Is Your Life" and hope everyone can come and maybe even tell a story about Roxie.

VAYA CON DIOS A MISSIONARY AMONG US BON VOYAGE

In July we will also be celebrating with joy a very special person, Kristina De Jesus, whose quiet, gentle way has meant so much to us. We hope to hear about her new adventure and the plans she has to serve God as she prepares to leave for Spain in September for two years.

SENIOR CIRCLE

Senior Circle is a wonderful way to meet new friends, build relationships and have fun among fellow Christians! We meet every third Wednesday of the month with a program and light lunch @ Plank Chapel UMC Fellowship Hall. We will meet again [on Wednesday, July 17th, 10:00am](#) and every third Wednesday of the month. Bring your family and friends!



BLESSING BOX MINISTRY

In 2022, Plank Chapel UMC saw a great need in the community for those vulnerable to have access to the food they cannot always afford. And so, we birthed the Blessing Box Ministry and encouraged church members as well as the community to help keep the box stocked with non-perishable food items for those in need. We give thanks to God for your generous gifts and support for this outreach ministry.



4th SATURDAY FREE MARKET

[July 27th](#) is the 4th Saturday Free Market [from 9:00am-11:00am](#) in the Fellowship Hall. We open the free market with a brief worship and prayer time. As an outreach ministry to the community, we need your donations of clothing, books, dishes, pots & pans, etc. Please bring them on the week of [July 21st](#) and place them in the youth room. [On Friday, July 26th](#), we need volunteers to help set-up the free market in the Fellowship Hall.





LISTENING SESSION W/ THE NEW HERITAGE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Listening is the first step in any relationship. [On July 1](#), we will begin a new season together in the Heritage District. Over the past few months, we have shadowed current DSs and participated in cabinet meetings, where it has often felt like we were drinking from a fire hydrant. One theme I return to as I reflect on these times is the importance of listening. I am inviting everyone, laity, and clergy, to attend a listening session in your area so I can be fully present and listen to your dreams for our local churches, our district, and our conference. I want to hear your frustrations and concerns as we prepare to begin our journeys together in this beautiful, connectional ministry.

I invite the laity to attend any of the four gatherings we will hold across our district. These will be held on:

- [July 1, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Mt. Zion UMC
- [July 8, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Zebulon UMC
- [July 15, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Rosemary UMC
- [July 22, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Rehoboth UMC

I am inviting clergy to one-on-one meetings to be held [on July 10](#), 17, and 24.

Rev. Dr. David Joyner
District Superintendent
Heritage District





Dear Bethel & Plank Chapel Family,

I'm excited to share with y'all that GBGM Missionary Ronald Julian and wife Debbie, will be coming to NC from [July 5th-7th](#).

Ronald & Debbie will share their life-giving stories at the Dinner Church [on Friday, July 5th from 6:00pm-8:00pm](#). Everyone is invited and dinner will be served.

[On Saturday, July 6th](#), Pastor Edgar & Judy will tour them to various sites and have a dinner meeting w/ pastoral leadership of Louisburg UMC & FUMC Henderson.

Special thanks to Ms. Roxie Kearney for generously providing Ronald & Debbie a place to stay during the weekend.

[On Sunday, July 7th](#) is designated as Mission Sunday. Ronald & Debbie will be our main speakers during the [8:00am](#) Awakenings. While Ronald will be preaching on both Sunday worship services at Bethel UMC ([9:30am-10:30am](#)) and Plank Chapel UMC (11:00am-12noon). A Special Offering will be given for Ronald's missional work in Japan (advance [#3021881](#)).

Finally, an "old-fashioned" Church Picnic will be held [on July 7th](#) right after the [11am](#) Worship Service in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is requested to bring their own picnic food while desserts and drinks will be provided. All are invited!

Please keep Ronald & Debbie in your prayers!

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Edgar

JULIAN, RONALD
 Country: Japan
 Advance #3021881
[DONATE NOW](#)



Serving At: International Seafarers Ministry
Home Country: Philippines, Asia and Pacific
WAYS TO REACH ME:
 Email: RJulian@umcmision.org

Ronald C. Julian is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church serving as a chaplain with the International Seafarers Ministry in Yokohama, Japan. He was commissioned in October 2013.

Yokohama is one of the busiest ports in the world. The Seafarers Ministry there was set up under ecumenical sponsorship in 1983 to provide pastoral care, counseling, and practical assistance to sailors. The chaplain must be non-Japanese because Japanese nationals are not allowed to go on board visiting vessels. Many of the sailors are from the Philippines.

Ronald Julian is Filipino and succeeds two United Methodist missionaries, the Rev. Lamberto and Angelita Valino, who have retired after leading the ministry for 11 years.

Ronald is a member of the Alpha & Omega United Methodist Church in Marilao, of the Bulacan Philippines Annual Conference, and a local Pastor in that district. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from Technological Institute of the Philippines. He also has a degree in Bachelor in Ministry from Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines. Serving in Japan with his wife, [Devorah Umipig-Julian](#), a United Methodist missionary, also from the Philippines. He previously served as a United Methodist Individual Volunteer in Mission.

While he grew up in a Christian home, Ronald says he became a "searcher" during college years, trying out various religious points of view. He had difficulty settling into a profession after school, until he found his way into a secular company with a Christian orientation and a Bible study every Friday.

The first study he attended was on the parable of the prodigal son in Luke, a passage he remembers from childhood, always identifying with the "good" son who stayed home. "During this session," he recalls, "I had this revelation that I am the prodigal son. I am not the son who stayed. I am the lost son and God was calling me back and wants me to come home.... And I so spent more time in Bible study until I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

Ronald met his wife in church and accompanied her to Japan. The couple has two sons, Matt and Josh.



Center for Leadership Excellence

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Edgar,

Join us [on Thursday, September 12, 2024](#), for a Day of Learning with the Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath...



During this day, clergy and laity will become equipped with descriptions and definitions to better understand the range and types of trauma. Elaine Heath will outline practical trauma interventions for harm prevention and suggest ways to respond and nurture individuals who have encountered trauma in their lives or the church.

Knowing that we cannot foster healing in the world without attending to our healing, we will explore the interconnectedness of personal healing with communal healing, and initial pathways to integrate the two. Drawing from ancient and contemporary wisdom from Christian tradition and trauma studies, participants will learn how to embrace with self-compassion, their own experiences of pain, in order to become “wounded healers.”

This interactive day will incorporate small group discussions and time for personal reflection.

**Understanding Trauma and
Cultivating Compassion in Faith Communities
Presented by the Center for Leadership Excellence
and Elaine Heath**

[Thursday, September 12, 2024, 9:30am – 3pm ET](#)

Christ the King UMC (Clayton, NC)

\$40 (includes lunch)

Register Now

About Elaine Heath:



**Author, Speaker, Retreat Leader,
Consultant**

We are at the forefront of a new reformation, one that is freeing the Christian faith from the sinful structures of patriarchy, racism, classism, many phobias, and exploitive forms of mission and evangelism. The new reformation is all about the emergence of a generous, hospitable, equitable form of Christianity that heals the wounds of the world. I believe much of the work for the church in the years ahead must focus on healing the wounds inflicted by Christendom so that the beauty and inclusive goodness of the Gospel can be heard, seen, and experienced. My work as an author, speaker, retreat leader, and consultant focuses on helping leaders and organizations lean into the healing, liberating, and spiritually transformative journey into which God is calling the church in this new era.

Along with my spouse and several friends I live at Spring Forest, a new monastic community in rural North Carolina, where I serve as Abbess. We tend a forest and small regenerative farm, and we have a range of ministries that support immigrants. We also hold retreats for small groups and individuals. Our broader new monastic community beyond the farm is called The Church at Spring Forest.

I have served in pastoral and academic ministry, including serving as the McCreless Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, and Dean of Duke Divinity School, and am the founder of Neighborhood Seminary and co-founder of the Missional Wisdom

Foundation. I'm the author of thirteen books, including, *Trauma Informed Evangelism* (co-authored with Charles Kiser), *Loving the Hell Out of Ourselves: A Memoir* (co-authored with Jeanine B. Heath-McGlenn), *God Unbound*, and *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*

[Register Now](#)



The "**Awakenings**" will have a Fellowship Meal [on Sunday, July 21st](#) in the Fellowship Hall right after the [11am Sunday](#) Worship Service. Our main goal is connect & deepen our relationships w/ each other, and have a wonderful fellowship at the table.

All worshipers who attend "Awakenings" are invited, including those who are interested to know more about our community. Please bring your favorite covered-dish!

AWAKENINGS

Renew, fresh and revive your spirit as we worship our Awesome God at "Awakenings" every [Sunday, 8:00am-9:00am](#) (except third Sunday of the month due to UMM Breakfast Fellowship).

"Awakenings" offers contemporary music, come-as-you-are setting, relevant Bible-based conversation and a good cup of coffee! The "Awakenings" meets [on July 7th, 14th & 28th](#).



Join us for "Dinner Church" [on Saturday, July 5th, 6:00pm-8:00pm](#) @ Bethel UMC (4193 Fairport Road, Kittrell, NC 27544).

GBGM Missionary Ronald Julian & wife Debbie will be our Guest Speakers. Everyone is invited and dinner will be served.

"Dinner Church" is a new way of being the church. It is a "fresh expressions" church that gathers people during the week or the month for a meal and conversation around faith. The movement gets its inspiration from the early church and Jesus' ministry through meals. An invitation to eat was an invitation to faith. Similarly, the "dinner church" movement centers on breaking bread and sharing God's Word with conversation.

Prayer Requests

Patricia Rogers, Freddie Oettinger, Thomas Beckham, Tim Smith, Tonja Tooley, Wayne Young, Tilley Hughes, David & Karin Driver, Evie Odom, John Brown, Perez family, Jimmy Bizzell, Tommy Cottrell, Randy Rowland, Debbie Shearin, Margie Clayton, Frances Beckham, our nation, Israel, and communities affected by conflict and violence. Shut-Ins: Martha Rowland, Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee, Faye Young & Frances Roberts. (For prayer request, please call [919-418-0682](tel:919-418-0682) or email Pastor Edgar

Dear Bethel & Plank Chapel Family,
 Good morning! Many of you are requesting Tim Smith's address so that you can send care cards to him. Here's Tim's mailing address:

**UNC HOSPITALS
 c/o Timothy Smith
 5 West, Room 5239
 101 Manning Drive
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514**

We give thanks to God for His faithfulness and healing! And let us continue to offer our prayers and support for Tim and Midge.



WEDNESDAY ONLINE PRAYER MEETING

Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week [from 7:00-7:30pm on July 3rd](#), 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st.

Edgar Raymund A. De Jesus is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Prayer Group Zoom Meeting
 Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://nccumc.zoom.us/j/98771477114?pwd=TVRTVHcwWWU0UytHOGhTYXFaZmxhdz09>

Meeting ID: [987 7147 7114](#)
 Passcode: [288519](#)

Edgar Raymund A. DeJesus is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Prayer Group Zoom Meeting (Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC)
 Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://nccumc.zoom.us/j/98771477114?pwd=TVRTVHcwWWU0UytHOGhTYXFaZmxhdz09>

Meeting ID: [987 7147 7114](#)
 Passcode: [288519](#)

[+16465588656](tel:+16465588656).,[98771477114#](tel:+16469313860) US (New York)
[+16469313860](tel:+16469313860).,[98771477114#](tel:+16469313860) US

KOFFEE KORNER

"Koffee Korner"-- a Fresh Expressions women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month is on "summer hiatus". We will resume our gathering [on September 4th](#). For more information, please contact Jan Hicks @ [919-525-4778](tel:919-525-4778).



"STRONGER TOGETHER" EXERCISE CLASS

We are starting a new Exercise Class named "Stronger Together" that meets every Monday & [Thursday from 6:00pm-7:00pm](#). We will resume "Stronger Together" [from July 8th](#) onwards. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ [252-915-7005](tel:252-915-7005).



UPDATES ABOUT THE CONNECT CHURCH 2024

On June 18th, the Connect Church Cohort met again w/ Coach John Parker of the NC Rural Center with the following in attendance: Lorraine Abbott, Wayne Young, Lora Young, Susan Sears, Martha Sears, Scott Ritchey, Jan Hicks, John Parker & Pastor Edgar

Coach John opened the meeting and Pastor Edgar led the Opening Prayer. Coach John reminded everyone about the importance of the upcoming Connect Church Regional Gathering to be held [on July 13th](#) at First UMC Rocky Mount. The main goal of the gathering is to have a time of connecting with others in the cohort and hopefully, everyone will leave energized to finish out the last few months of the program strong.

Everyone was invited by Coach John to share their experiences regarding the interview/process from the Connect Church Questionnaire. There was a strong recommendation to include the Kittrell Fire Department and the Social Worker of Zeb Vance Elementary School to be interviewed.

After this, Coach John & Jan Hicks read and recorded all the responses that were received so far regarding the Connect Church Questionnaires.

1. In your opinion, what are the greatest needs in our community, in our church?
2. What ways do you think the church should respond to these needs?
3. How can you join us?

Coach John suggested for the Cohort to meet again [before July 13th](#) Regional Gathering to discuss Session 4 (Toxic Charity) and Session 5 (Upstream Thinking). The Cohort decided to meet again [on Thursday, June 27th, 6:00pm-7:00pm](#) in the Fellowship Hall.

Finally, Coach John suggested for the Cohort to meet with him after the [July 13th](#) Regional Gathering. It was decided to meet [on Friday, July 26th, 6:00pm-8:00pm](#) in the Fellowship Hall. There will be no Cohort Meeting in the month of August.

Pastor Edgar closed the meeting with a prayer.



Our Connect Church Regional Gatherings are fast approaching!

The Connect Church Cohort of Plank Chapel UMC are invited to join w/ Calvary Presbyterian Church, Chatham UMC, Contending for the Faith, Jackson Chapel First Missionary Baptist, Pilmoor UMC, St. John AMEZ Church, or Total Impact Outreach Ministries to our Northeast Regional gGathering at First UMC Rocky Mount [on Saturday, July 13 from 10AM to 2PM.](#)

Attached you will find a draft of our agenda for each gathering. Our intention is for this to be a time of connecting with others in the cohort and hopefully everyone will leave energized to finish out the last few months of the program strong.

Andrew Hudgins

Faith in Rural Communities Program Associate, NC Rural Center

Office Hours: [Mon - Thurs 9am](#) - 5pm

www.ncruralcenter.org | (c) [434.942.6264](tel:434.942.6264)

Pastor's Edgar Vacation & Continuing Education

Pastor Edgar will be away for a vacation and continuing education [from August 5th](#) to 23rd.

The Book of Discipline 2016 (paragraph 602.1) states that *"clergy members of the Annual Conference under appointment to local congregations shall receive one full month of vacation per calendar year. Vacation time shall include four (4) Sundays per year and shall be negotiated between the pastor and PPRC and may be taken in either segments adding up to one full month or as whole."*

Nathalie Gonzalez (Life Coach, Author and Pastor) will be our Guest Preacher [on August 11th](#) while Garry Dickerson (Lay Leader of Bethel UMC) will be our Guest Preacher [on August 18th](#).

Rev. Carol Dean (phone [#919-801-7181](tel:919-801-7181)) will serve as Pastor-on-Call during emergency situations while Pastor Edgar is away.

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

This year, we will be working on a new church directory. Please fill out the information slip located in the sanctuary and put the slip in the box marked "Directory Information." You do not have to list children unless they are living at home. If you know any member that would like to be in the church directory but does not attend, please fill out a slip for them.



UNITED METHODIST MEN

All men are invited to our monthly United Methodist Men Breakfast Fellowship every third Sunday of the month [from 8:00am until 9:00am](#). Our next breakfast fellowship is [July 21st](#).

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The United Women in Faith are composed of women who are "powerful, fearless force" driven by God's love and united in sisterhood. With a focus on women, children and youth, we act for justice and transform communities. Our next regular meeting of the United Women in Faith will be [on Sunday, July 21st, 3:00pm](#). All women are invited!





HERITAGE DISTRICT
NC CONFERENCE

**LISTENING SESSION W/ THE NEW HERITAGE
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

Listening is the first step in any relationship. [On July 1](#), we will begin a new season together in the Heritage District. Over the past few months, we have shadowed current DSs and participated in cabinet meetings, where it has often felt like we were drinking from a fire hydrant. One theme I return to as I reflect on these times is the importance of listening. I am inviting everyone, laity, and clergy, to attend a listening session in your area so I can be fully present and listen to your dreams for our local churches, our district, and our conference. I want to hear your frustrations and concerns as we prepare to begin our journeys together in this beautiful, connectional ministry.

I invite the laity to attend any of the four gatherings we will hold across our district. These will be held on:

- [July 1, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Mt. Zion UMC
- [July 8, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Zebulon UMC
- [July 15, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Rosemary UMC
- [July 22, 6:30-8:00 PM](#) at Rehoboth UMC

I am inviting clergy to one-on-one meetings to be held [on July 10](#), 17, and 24.

Rev. Dr. David Joyner
District Superintendent
Heritage District

**CHANGE BUCKET & RAINBOW
COVENANT**

The Change Bucket for June-October 2024 has been designated for "Rainbow Covenant". To be a "Rainbow Covenant" church, Plank Chapel UMC must pay 100% of all 2024 apportionments and give a contribution in each of the five lanes. Therefore, please give generously to the Change Bucket for each lane:
June 2024

Lane 1: Persons in Mission (Ronald Julian [#3021881](#) Japan)

July 2024

Lane 2: NC Conference Advance Specials (Dinner Bell Farm [#S-00306](#) North Carolina)

August 2024

Lane 3: National Missions (Native American Comprehensive Plan [#982615](#))
September 2024

Lane 4: World Missions (Rise Against Hunger [#S-00101](#))

October 2024

Lane 5: UMCOR (Global Migration [#3022144](#))



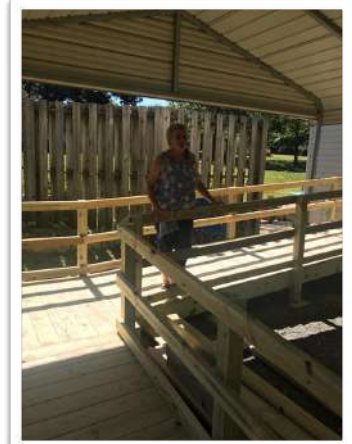
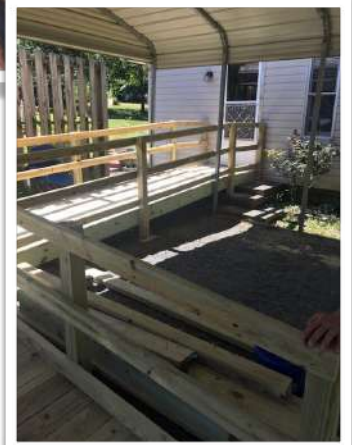
4th SATURDAY FREE MARKET

[July 27th](#) is the 4th Saturday Free Market [from 9:00am-11:00am](#) in the Fellowship Hall. We open the free market with a brief worship and prayer time. As an outreach ministry to the community, we need your donations of clothing, books, dishes, pots & pans, etc. Please bring them on the week of [July 21st](#) and place them in the youth room. [On Friday, July 26th](#), we need volunteers to help set-up the free market in the Fellowship Hall.

BLESSING BOX MINISTRY

In 2022, Plank Chapel UMC saw a great need in the community for those vulnerable to have access to the food they cannot always afford. And so, we birthed the Blessing Box Ministry and encouraged church members as well as the community to help keep the box stocked with non-perishable food items for those in need. We give thanks to God for your generous gifts and support for this outreach ministry.

On June 22 the UMM met at Tim and Midge Smith's home to build an access ramp for Tim's use when he returns home from an extended hospital stay. There was a great turn out for the event and the ramp will meet Tim's future needs. Thanks to all that participated, giving their time and sharing their talents for such a worthy cause.





Eight children and youth were in attendance Sunday, June 23, for the second meeting of Journey, the new youth ministry program at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church.

With a theme of Let There Be Light, the gathering heard scripture readings and a devotional followed by an educational and entertaining presentation on laser light.

The group broke out into a variety of indoor activities and games for an hour before pizza, fruit cups and cookies - courtesy of Darlene Ranes and Laurie Miller - were served.

As the meal finished, Pastor Edgar shared scripture related to how God wants His light to shine in all of us.

The two-hour Journey concluded with everyone receiving a lighted LED candle before singing This Little Light Of Mine.

The next Journey is slated for 4 to 6 p.m., Sunday, July 28. Children and youth ages 5-18 are invited to attend for free. Weather permitting, there will be outdoor activities at the July event along with music, food and storytelling.

Anyone wishing to contribute food and (or) juice and bottled water for Journey may contact Lora Young at 336-504-7247. There is also a signup in the church foyer.

Journey is a safe and caring space where children and youth can encounter the love of Christ Jesus through "becoming, belonging and believing."

For more information, contact Ron Gustafson at 203-641-2889 or visit the Journey website at plankchapel.org.



PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR

Plank Chapel UMC Choir usually meets for practice every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. However, there will be no choir practice during the summer months of July & August. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir!



GIVING FLOWERS IN HONOR OR IN MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

You are invited to generously give flowers on Sunday Worship Services for God's glory and in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Please contact Judy Wilson @ Judith9563@gmail.com or (252) [492-0624](tel:492-0624).



AC 2024: Day 1

Opening Worship & Communion

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton welcomed members of Annual Conference 2024 to opening worship and introduced the worship leader, Dr. Kylan C Pew, and members of the conference band from here in the NC Conference. Worship began with the praise song "A Place at the Table," intermixed with spoken word by Takudzwa Chikepe. Worship continued with prayer in both Korean and English led by Rev. Eunsoo Kang.



During her message, Bishop Shelton focused on Romans 12:1-2 and shared a compelling story of how, in the midst of transitioning from Mississippi to North Carolina, she intentionally visited all her doctors before her insurance changed. While at the ophthalmologist, the doctor asked, "How long has that brown pigment been in your eye?" This led to a follow up appointment with a specialist the next day. Bishop Shelton expressed how she didn't have time for an extra doctor's appointment. She was annoyed with the doctor for wasting her time. Then the specialist shared that the brown pigment was melanoma. "I am not trying to save your vision. I am trying to save your life."



Bishop Shelton stated plainly that, “I was so self absorbed with my plans and my timeline that I almost walked away from healing.” The Bishop went on to remind those gathered of Paul’s words to the church in Rome and his vision of a mind renewed. With these words, Paul was shaping the early church in practices of discernment. He reminded them and the modern church to be careful. Don’t rely on ethical commands. Test and prove what God’s will is.

Bishop Shelton continued, “We are called to embody lives of worship. We need God. We need each other. I need you. You need me. We can’t be self absorbed and miss the healing. We are in a continual process of becoming perfect in love.”

The Romans experienced a lot of cultural change in their time similar to what the Church is experiencing today. In the midst of transition, the Church can lose focus. In these times, the Bishop reminded the body that the church continues to need renovation and renovation takes time.

Bishop Shelton then touched on the changes The United Methodist Church has experienced in the last several years. “Our new reality is emerging. We lament that the church has fenced many people out. There is a place at the table. There is a place for everyone. Our world desperately needs a witness that people with different perspectives can love and respect one another.”

The Bishop warned that there is a danger in having everything you need because we get self-absorbed. We can inadvertently walk away from healing. May God give us eyes to see that our healing and renovation comes from God.

Ice Cream Social, Karaoke, and NC Conference Authors Book Signing



Inside the Emerald Ballroom, North Carolina Conference-related authors met fans and signed copies of their books. The books ranged from children's books to graphic novels to Lenten studies to an in depth look at women in the early Methodist movement. The NC Conference is full of talented folks!

This year, campus ministers and college chaplains added a new activity for the 2024 Ice Cream Social which had the crowd buzzing! Karaoke! Bishop Shelton and friends sang "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," originally recorded by Whitney Houston. Other folks sang their "ABCs easy as 1-2-3" and "Heard It Through the Grapevine." The weather made for a beautiful night of fun and fellowship!

Thanks to the college chaplains and campus ministers in North Carolina, Annual Conference members experienced a great time of fellowship, beautiful music, and delicious ice cream on the evening of the opening day of Annual Conference 2024! Simply Delicious Creamery parked their food truck outside the convention center and fed the masses. While waiting for their turn to choose strawberry or salty caramel, people chatted with friends old and new.

General Conference Report

"There was an underlying sadness for the brothers and sisters leaving our ministry, but also a growing level of hope and excitement in the United Methodist Church at the delayed 2020 General Conference in Charlotte, NC."

Dr. Christine Dodson, Conference Treasurer, then provided an orientation on Annual Conference with an overview of the logistics for the next 2 days. The session ended with information shared by outgoing Beacon District Lay Leader, Tom Santa, about Lay Servant Ministry classes and closed in song and a prayer led by incoming Beacon District Lay Leader Tracy Manigault.

Appreciation for Hosts and Volunteers

Wearing their trademark red aprons, the General Conference Host Committee co-chairs Rev. Trish Archer and Emily Innes shared appreciation for over 850 volunteers from the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences who signed up to serve as volunteers in Charlotte at General Conference. Volunteers served on hospitality teams at the airport, hotels, registration tables, and throughout the Charlotte Convention Center facility.

For more information, news, and updates about General Conference, visit our [General Conference](#)



You, the NC Annual Conference, have truly given me the greatest gift of my life.”

Home Missioner Steve Taylor

Following 23 years of faithful leadership as Director of Connectional Ministries (2015-24) and Director of Outreach Ministries (2001-15), the conference offered Home Missioner Steve Taylor a standing ovation of thanks and appreciation upon his upcoming retirement.

Connectional Ministries partners with church congregations and ministry teams to discover and realize God’s new dreams. Connectional Ministries encompasses ministries and offices such as Youth Ministry, Race Equity & Justice, the Center for Leadership and Development, Communications and others.

Friends and colleagues of Steve shared their thankfulness for the work and friendship of him:

2024 Harry Denman Evangelism Awards



The Harry Denman Evangelism Award was awarded to Rev. Bruce Edward Petty (clergy), Stacie A. Holmes (laity), and Jolie Grace Sullivan (youth) in a video highlight.

The award is given annually to one clergy person, lay person, and youth based on their authentic commitment to evangelism and discipleship. The recipients have proven a strong desire to make connections outside of their base responsibilities.



With the One Matters Discipleship Award, we want to lift up the importance of discipleship and help interpret across the connection what zeros in professions of faith and baptism mean and what moving away from the zeros means. Each 'one' in those categories represents a transformed life – a life that matters to God, and a life that should matter to us,” said Jeff Campbell, General Secretary.

Every year, Discipleship Ministries partners with Annual Conferences by offering the One Matters Award to one eligible congregation at each annual conference. The award, consisting of a commemorative plaque and a check for \$1,000, is delivered to the congregation during the annual conference session.

AC 2024: Day 2

Safe Sanctuaries



The NC Conference **Safe Sanctuaries Team** report was presented by the Chair, Rev. Mamie Alley. Safe Sanctuaries is a movement and initiative to fulfill a call to make our churches safe places for the young and the vulnerable and those in ministry with them. Sample policies are available for **Small Membership Churches** and **Large Membership Churches**, and a team is available to resource local churches as they develop their own unique policies. Once those policies are in place, it is the responsibility of a local church to train its members on the policy.



Leader Forming Plenary Session

Following the conference theme of Leader Forming, Friday's morning plenary included a number of presentations celebrating the work of the denomination and within the conference – especially in the area of Connectional Ministries.

Center for Leadership Excellence

Executive Director, Leah Wiebe-Smith, highlighted the work of the **Center for Leadership Excellence** which offers the Leadership Fellows Program, webinars and workshops, days of learning, Impact for the Rural Church program, NEXTGen Children's Ministry Cohort, Lay Servant Ministries courses, and January Leadership Committee Training. She celebrated that almost 3,000 participants have participated in center offerings since July 2023 – both in person and online. Recordings of many of these are archived at nccumc.org/leadership/events-archive. Upcoming training sessions will discuss topics including safe gun storage, unity in a world of disunity, dementia, understanding trauma, and fresh expressions in church.

Connectional Ministries

Rev. Ernesto Barriguete and Home Missioner Steve Taylor celebrated the work of conference **Connectional Ministries** in the areas of leader-formation, disciple-making, and peace-building. The presentation included a video overview of ways that Connectional Ministries teams including Race, Equity and Justice Ministry, Native American Cooperative Ministry, Youth Ministries, and the Lay Minister programs are forming a more inclusive church, shaping leaders, and promoting spiritual growth.

Celebrating 100 Years of The Duke Endowment



The **Duke Endowment** is celebrating 100 years of impacting healthcare, higher education, rural United Methodist churches, and children and families through their four focus areas.

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton invited the body to stand as she named organizations and initiatives where The Duke Endowment intersects with local churches. From hosting students in field education at Duke Divinity School to local building projects to the Summer Literacy Initiative, churches feel the investment of The Duke Endowment across the NC Conference. It was impressive to see the number of folks touched by the work of the endowment.

Rev. Rob Webb, Director of the Rural Church initiative for The Duke Endowment, came to the stage in the midst of a shower of balloons to share the story of Mr. James B. Duke and his **100 years of philanthropic influence** in North Carolina. He said, “Mr. Duke’s fingerprint is all over the North Carolina Conference.”



Rev. Webb went on to share that, “Formation matters. How we gather and how we form matters. Mr. Duke said if it weren’t for his father and a Methodist minister, he wouldn’t amount to anything.”

He went on to describe how Mr. Duke created the endowment with the input of 10 of his closest advisors. When creating the endowment, Mr. Duke emphasized rural churches as the “bone and sinew of our country” and knew that “economic development would get communities to a certain point but philanthropy would be required to fill the gap.”

Rev. Webb concluded by saying, “Our roots are tied to your roots. How grateful we are to be in ministry with you. We give thanks for our partnership in ministry together!”

Office of Clergy Life



Friday morning, Rev. Beth Hood, Assistant to the Bishop for the **Office of Clergy Life**, shared with the body that, “Clergy life is like no other life,” and noted that it is a life whereby “disciples are made for making disciples.” The Office of Clergy Life focuses on the areas of calling, equipping, and sustaining those called to lead people in faith, partner with faith communities, and seek justice and freedom for all people.

Hood shared highlights about two efforts to support the equipping of candidates for ministry and supporting sustainable pastoral leadership. These initiatives are focused on helping those answering God’s call break forth and move in innovative ways:

Co-creating new areas of ministry

A new position has been created collaboratively with the Office of Clergy Life and **New Faith Communities**. Rev. Hope Ledbetter-Bock, Associate Pastor at Fuquay-Varina UMC for five years, will be appointed as Associate Director for New Faith Communities and Clergy Life. She will work to intentionally identify and equip potential candidates for ministry who have the gifts for co-creating new places for new people to gather in communion with Jesus Christ.

The Esther Project

Through a partnership with **The Duke Endowment**, a pilot project is being completed designed to fill a gap for individuals responding to their call to ministry — either before or after completing the Residency in Ordained Ministry (RIOM) program. Hood celebrated that the Duke Endowment recently granted the project four years of support — totaling \$850,000 — to invest in clergy life through this new program. Developed from feedback from those in “gap” seasons, The Esther Project focuses on offering support and growth for those in ministry during times of uncertainty, just like the leadership offered by Queen Esther to her people during a critical season. Citing recent political turmoil and church disaffiliations as seasons of need, Hood shared that The Esther Project guides participant small group cohorts through training, coaching, personal assessments, and interactive experiences to help them manage their inward emotions and understand the emotions of those around them. The hope is to equip participants to be their “best Spirit-led self” and develop skills for challenging times in “knowing what to do when you don’t know what to do.”

For those hearing a **call to ministry**, the Clergy Life team also offers the “Taste and See” internship program. The office also oversees the **Course of Study** and **Residency in Ordained Ministry** programs. Visit the **Office of Clergy Life website** to learn more.



Friday afternoon began with our session on Peace Building. Bishop Shelton stated that “peace building is an expression of our discipleship.” It includes creating wholeness and righting wrongs.

Teachings on Peace Building

Rev. Molly White, associate pastor at Hayes Barton UMC, brought the teaching segment of the session. She shared her story and preached on the sermon on the mount. White’s story includes being a pastor of spiritual formation, serving and chairing the Board of Church and Society, being a mother of two children, and being a widow and a homicide survivor. She shared how her husband, Patrick, was shot and killed while at work in his law office. He modeled the love of Christ by laying down his life for his colleagues. White narrated her experience of learning of Patrick’s death, having to share that news with her family, the long road of surviving homicide, and how her heart has been broken open.

White framed her presentation around words from Mary Oliver’s poem, “Lead,”

“I tell you this
to break your heart,
by which I mean only
that it break open and never close again
to the rest of the world.”

White said that “heartbreak is the beginning of peace-building.” We don’t need peace unless something is broken. White explained that “being a homicide survivor made me a peace-builder, but it didn’t have to be that way. It’s a choice.” She chose to remain part of the world instead of retreating from it.

Suffering this trauma led White to dive into the topic of evil. She clarifies that the *action* the shooter took was evil. The man was not evil. Though she was angry, she worked to transform it into righteous anger that the children of God let evil win. She declares, “We become peace-builders because we don’t want evil to do this to anybody else. Peace-builders don’t let evil win.”

Referencing the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant, White points out that it is the work of the baptized to resist evil. We renounce that we are giving up evil. We must speak love and truth to the powerful to reject their evil. We repent of our failure to be genuinely human. We do more than just think about resisting evil – we build relationships, listen to stories, and embrace peace.

Reading Matthew 5:1-12 from the sermon on the mount, White notes how these blessings are for the brokenhearted and that Jesus is in solidarity with those who suffer. As Jesus suffered on the cross because of evil, we, too, have suffered because of evil. Imagine sitting at the foot of the cross – it breaks our hearts. Every person has been hurt and is loved by God. We live with broken open hearts, and our love can pour freely like the love of Jesus.

White proclaimed, “Disciples are peace-builders: The Witness of the Church.” She said, “When you’ve been wounded and survive, you can do hard things.” The next two speakers shared the hard things they have been doing in the work of peace-building.

Peace Building in Connectional Ministries

The Peace Building session continued with a Connectional Ministries video introduced by Rev. Jaye White. The video highlighted the work of Creation Care Ministries, the Refugee & Immigration Committee, and Living the Word. Living the Word is a yearlong process that helps churches discern how to do outreach ministry by addressing inequities in their local context. Rev. Ismael Ruiz-Millán, the incoming Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, followed the video by challenging the church, “Peace-building will not only be words we say but a call to actively transform our world.”

Rev. Jaye White and Bishop Connie Shelton led the Conference in blessing and sending two Global Mission Fellows, Kristina De Jesus and Mia Salvaggio.

Methodist Home for Children Update

Rev. Bruce Stanley brought a report from [Methodist Home for Children](#) (MHC). Part of their work is representing peace to juvenile offenders. MHC is the largest provider in North Carolina for therapeutic alternatives for court-involved children. They also offer educational projects at their residential facilities that build the foundations for children to thrive. It is long work that they do in the business of building peace especially for those who feel peace is unattainable.

Recognizing Retirees

Always a bittersweet time at Annual Conference, Friday’s retiree recognition was no exception. During the afternoon session, fellow clergy, laity, leadership, and families had the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the clergy retiring class of 2024, and their spouses, for their many years of tireless service and dedication to ministry.

The 37 retirees include:

Sheila Ahler, Robert Albritton, Jane Almon, James Bell, Jane Brannock, Patrice Cheasty-Miller, Suzanne Cobb, Sylvia Collins-Ball, Joyce Day, Rodney Dorn, Henry Dunbar, J Farron Duncan, Laura F Early, Edie Gleaves, Richard Greenway, Martin Greer, Elizabeth Haas, William Craig Ham, Donna Hammond, William Holliday, Brenda Jones, Jimmy Oxendine, Elizabeth Reynolds, Curtis Keith Sexton, Mary Anne Shivers, Charles Cooper Smith, Jon Strother, Thomas Sweeley, David Wade, Clinton White, Jaye White, Kathie Wilkinson, Kristin D Williams, Ben Witherington, Toni Wood, Sam Wynn

Memorial Service

After Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton opened the memorial service with a call to worship and litany, members of the Conference Worship Committee led everyone in prayers, scripture readings, and music. An excerpt from “The Romero Prayer” by Bishop Ken Untener served as a beautiful reminder of the faithful servants being remembered:

“We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”

AC 2024: Day 3



Rev. Dr. Sangwoo Kim offered a message of hope and humility during the Ordering of Ministry service on Saturday morning through his own story of receiving an unexpected, quarter-time appointment at a small church in a different conference — a four-hour drive from where his family lived.

Feeling alone and “forgotten by the powerful” during the appointment process, he struggled to reconcile a quarter-time appointment with the financial needs of his family: his wife was entering a graduate program, they had an infant at home, and they were living in an expensive city. Disheartened, Kim asked God, “What can I possibly share with this community?” The answer he received was an echo from Isaiah 40: “Comfort. Comfort my people.”

Although it seemed, from the outside looking in, to Kim that the congregation was doing well and perhaps he was in more need of comfort than they, he spent months making brief, weekend visits with the families of the local church. At each home visit, he somewhat reluctantly shared that message of comfort with his new church families.

Kim reflected that many of those he visited with, hearing that God sent him to offer comfort, began to cry. The tears were flowing out of pain from challenges including miscarriages, suicide, infertility, infidelity, broken relationships, racism, social isolation, and mental health care issues.

Offering comfort, Kim shared that he, himself, found comfort, healing, and recuperation. As he drove the weekly 4-hour path over the mountains between the city where his family lived and the church, he reflected on the words of Isaiah 52:7 and the blessing of his unexpected ministry as the bringer of the Good News. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’” Over time he saw much more clearly than when first appointed, the ways God was working in the church and in himself “in strange and unexpected ways.”

Drawing insight from that experience, he spoke to those being licensed, certified, commissioned, and ordained at Annual Conference 2024: “Pay attention to the strange ways of God’s work in your ministry. Stop trying to control how God works in your new ministry.”

Referencing the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10, Kim noted with humor that, “Nobody in the story has any clue of what is happening! But strangely, it didn’t matter at all. They simply played roles as faithfully as they could and then God’s promise was fulfilled...not because of our plan but in spite of our stupid and stubborn plans.”

Noting that, “Holy Spirit is in the details – nothing is under our control,” Kim encouraged all of those gathered to rest in the knowledge that God was the Planner. “It is biblical not to know everything about God’s plan.” With that reassurance, he said each person was called to live in a place of curiosity, courageousness, and commitment. A life of curiosity means a life filled with listening for God’s will. “Don’t stop being curious about what God wants you to do ... your success might be your biggest stumbling block.” A courageous life is a life where each person recognizes that they “have no clue,” takes a deep breath in times of challenge, and chooses to trust God. A committed life is one focused on what Kim called “the basics.” This means being committed to works of mercy and piety, means of grace, holy conferencing, and love. “When you are committed to these basics you will be part of the divine scheme,” he said, “You will still feel lost, but you will enjoy being lost in the mystery of divinity being lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Certified Lay Ministers

Jeanne Gregory
Richard G. Morrison
Lusi Radford
Sue Ann Campbell Jatko
Lisa O’Donnell
Rick Stanford
Mary McLeod
Shannon Perkins

Commissioned as a Deaconess

Amy Nicole Balfour

License for Pastoral Ministry

Joshua Thomas Abraham
Angela Carraway Denton
Kevin Lee Rollison
Takudzwa Chipeke
Grace McGee
Andrew Mark Watkins
Asya Denise Coles
Timothy Odell Nicholson

Commissioning as Deacon

Anne Louise Pass

Commissioning as Elder

Cole Gunther Breit
Miles Baker Hunt
Sarah Jane Majors
Robert Tyler Daniels
James Logan Jackson
Austin Anthony Meadows
Schylar Ann Ferguson
Kudakwashe Kagura
Howard Keith Porter
Saul Gastelum Flores
Joseph Dawson Lane
Han Sol Sim
Amanda Gail Hedden
Heather Marie Locklear
Joshua Andrew Tester

Ordination as Deacon

Catherine Earle Neal

Ordination as Elder

Gordon John Christen
Rachel Elise Price Kwashe
Donald Clayton Parker
Rebecca Ellen Detterman
Stephan Thomas Margeson
Damion Taj Quaye
Jacob Marshall Dye
Kathryn M. Medinas-Lockley
Cassidy Anna Salter
Mark Edward Gustafson
Tobi Anne Nguyen
Benjamin Cornelius Van
Staalduinen

Changing from Order of Deacons to Order of Elders

Kristina Johnson Yeatts

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	Jul 1 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	2 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	3 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	4 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	5 6pm Stronger Together-Exercis	6
7 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship 12:15pm All Church Picnic	8 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	9 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	10 3pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	11 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	12 6pm Stronger Together-Exercis	13
14 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	15 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	16 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	17 10am Senior Circle 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	18 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	19 6pm Stronger Together-Exercis	20
21 8am UMM Breakfast Fellowship 10am Sunday School 11am Worship 3pm UWF	22 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	23 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	24 3pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	25 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	26 6pm Stronger Together-Exercis	27 9am Free Market Saturday
28 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship 4pm Journey Youth	29 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	30 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	31 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Aug 1 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	2	3