

# CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors



## Pastor's Note (August 2024)

I am writing this note as I prepare myself to be away for a continuing education and vacation from August 5th-23th. I give my praise and thanksgiving to God to the Leadership Team of Bethel UMC and Pastor Parish Relations Team of Plank Chapel UMC for the life-giving gift of Sabbath rest and renewal. While I am away, Pastor Natalie Gonzalez (Life Coach, Author & Pastor) will preach on August 11th while Garry Dickerson (Lay Leader of Bethel UMC) will preach on August 18th. I am immensely blessed with their faithfulness and servant leadership. I'm also grateful to God for Rev. George Loveland (cell: 540-493-0656) and Rev. Carol Dean (cell: 919-801-7181) who will serve Pastor-on-Call for any emergency pastoral situation while I'm away. They are truly a blessing!

One thing that God reminded me lately— gratitude! Our lives must be pulsing with gratitude. At the center of Christian life is a life of grace and gratitude. For if we really understand our lives redeemed by a costly grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then our primary response can only be gratitude. Karl Barth says that “grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. If the essence of God is grace, then the essence of human beings as God’s people is our gratitude.”

In a sense, our gratitude should not only be an occasional act like during Thanksgiving Day or an expression like thanking God for our health, our families, our salvation, daily food and unexpected blessings. Rather, God wants our heartbeat to be thankfulness and praise to Him. In other words, gratitude must become our identity and not just an act or an attitude. However, as humans more particularly as Americans, gratitude is not easy because we are discontented people. There is an

Therefore, I challenge everyone including myself to take a moment each day to reflect on the blessings that summer brings. Give thanks for the warm sunshine, for the moments of laughter, for the friendships that enrich our lives, and for the simple pleasures that make each day special. A few weeks ago, it was an extremely hot summer day and then all of a sudden, there was a big downpour in outside of the parsonage. And we are just so excited and grateful that my daughter and I went outside while raining hard. Cultivating a mindset of gratitude helps us recognize the abundance that surrounds us and allows us to see life through a more optimistic lens.

I heard someone say, "Summer is a season of simplicity and leisure. It's a time to relish in the joy of icy-cold lemonades on a scorching day, to devour succulent fruits that burst with flavor, and to delight in the aroma of freshly cut grass. We often get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that we forget to pause and savor these little pleasures. Let summer be a reminder to slow down, to take a deep breath, and to appreciate...life's simplest gifts."

Finally, be grateful not on something, but in the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "I'm not saying this because I need anything for I have learned how to be content in any circumstance. I know the experience of being in need and of having more than enough; I have learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance, whether full or hungry or whether having plenty or being poor. I can endure all these things through the power of the one who gives me strength...My God will meet your every need of his riches in the glory that is found in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:11-13)

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### **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."

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

While Pastor Edgar is away, the Pastor-on-Call will be **Rev. George Loveland (cell: 540-493-0656) from August 5th-11th and Rev. Carol Dean (cell: 919-801-7181) from August 12th-23rd.**



**KRISTINA DE JESUS, NEW GLOBAL MISSION FELLOW**

For the year 2024-2026, 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/>

**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, August 21st, 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.

**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.

Dear Bethel & Plank Chapel Family,

**Please check this out!**

This leadership opportunity will further equip and empower the lay leadership of both Bethel & Plank Chapel. It will train our leaders on the "how to" in terms of reaching out and building relationships to new and diverse people in the community through the

"Dinner Church", "Journey", "Stronger Together" & "Koffee Korner".

This will be a great follow-up after the 2024 Connect Church.

**After my vacation, I will start recruiting leaders to join. Please pray and let me know if you are interested in joining the team.**

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Edgar

### 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:

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)



Edgar,

Does your church seek vitality, growth, and most importantly, to offer a welcoming home for new people?



Rooted in Love  
Rural Church Gatherings

We spent time listening to rural church leaders to hear what resources they were looking for. What we clearly heard was a deep desire to go from good to great. Our United Methodist churches know how to show hospitality, and yet *Rooted in Love* will move a welcoming congregation to one that embraces visitors and helps them find their forever church home!

North Carolina Conference rural churches, church leaders, and pastors have an opportunity to fine-tune and further develop an identity focused on hospitality. This program is a right-sized commitment for clergy and laity with opportunities for insights and new perspectives!

If your church is a Duke Endowment-eligible church, check out this link for more information about a chance to be a part of this community-building, hospitality-focused program!

<https://nccumc.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5520f6d654a662d3887beb73&id=277855969b&e=cc57a4ee92>

With a theme of Wind & The Rock, 19 children and youth were in attendance Sunday, July 28, for the meeting of Journey, the new youth ministry at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church.

During registration, coordinated by Scott Ritchey, the kids were provided with brightly-colored visors with adhesive crosses.

Gathering at the church pavilion, the group experienced an opening prayer by Wayne Young followed by a wind demonstration using balloons. Scripture readings and a devotional based on the Wind & The Rock theme were then presented. Lora Young coordinated a rock-painting activity, with many participants adding phrases of praise and hope to their artwork.

Children and youth also had the opportunity to take part in outdoor games.

Macaroni and cheese and chicken tenders, courtesy of Joyce Edwards, were served in fellowship hall following the activities. Dessert included fruit cups provided by Darlene Ranes and cookies provided by Laurie Miller.

As the meal ended, Pastor Edgar shared a message on how wind relates to God and the Holy Spirit and that God is the solid rock on which we can stand.

The two-hour Journey concluded with everyone receiving a bottle of bubble solution and forming a line outside to create a large display of bubbles floating in the air.

The next Journey is slated for 4 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 25. Children and youth ages 5-18 are invited to attend for free. Weather permitting, there will be outdoor activities at the August 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.





**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 [August 18th](#).

**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. No meeting in August. Our next regular meeting of the United Women in Faith will be [on Sunday, September 15th, 3:00pm](#).



**All women are invited!**



## **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 month of August. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts



## **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](mailto:Judith9563@gmail.com) or [\(252\) 492-0624](tel:2524920624).



Come join the “Dinner Church” on **Wednesday, August 28th, 6:00pm-8:00pm @ Bethel UMC** ([4193 Fairport Road, Kittrell, NC 27544](https://www.bethel-umc.com/4193-Fairport-Road-Kittrell-NC-27544)).

“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.

# Senior Circle July 17, 2024!!

## We celebrated Roxie's 90th Birthday!!



# Senior Circle July 17, 2024!!

## Kristina did an amazing presentation about Global Mission Fellow



# 2024 Come to the Table Conference

September 30 @ 8:00 am - October 1 @ 5:00 pm



The Come to the Table Conference is hosted by the Come to the Table Program of RAFL. The theme for the 2024 conference is "Food, Land & Sacred Stories," which will explore these pieces as individual concepts and as a continual thread through the lens of race and equity. With a special emphasis on lived stories, the conference will incorporate storytelling and story-making in several different mediums, featuring workshops, panels, farm tours, keynotes, networking events, and more.

## [Click here to register.](#)

<https://web.cvent.com/event/c65b1106-8a0d-470b-acb4-2688b5f93653/summary>

### DETAILS

Start:

[September 30 @ 8:00 am](#)

End:

[October 1 @ 5:00 pm](#)

### VENUE

Rocky Mount

Rocky Mount, [NC](#) United

States + [Google Map](#)





Center for Leadership Excellence



**NextGen Faith Builders**  
A Cohort for Children's Ministry Leaders

Do you oversee faith formation or kid-min programming for children in your congregation? Want to connect with others engaged in the same work?

After two cohorts were completed in early 2024, we have opened two fall cohorts! There is space remaining in one of the groups. Sign up now.

[I'm Interested!](#)

### About the Cohort Experience

**Tell me more!** Cohorts of 6-8 children's ministry leaders gather together to delve into the essentials of building a strong children's program. Whether you have five kids or 50, these sessions will help you think about what children's ministry can look like in your church. The cohorts meet on Zoom for seven sessions, and include learning, idea-sharing, and mutual support from fellow children's leaders and guest speakers.

**Commitment:** One of the NextGen cohort benefits is the community and trust built from regular interaction on Zoom. To facilitate this community-building, we ask all participants to commit to attending at least 5 of the 7 sessions live. Sessions will be recorded for participants who must miss a session.

**Cost:** The total cost to participate in the full cohort experience is \$75. We are happy to provide scholarships for North Carolina Conference United Methodist Churches when needed, bringing the participant contribution down to \$25.

### About the Facilitator

Rex, Carol Van Buskirk is a United Methodist Deacon passionate about transforming the world with God's inclusive love. Carol has a seminary degree from Claremont School of Theology, with emphases in religious education and worship arts.

She has more than fifteen years of experience in hands-on kids ministry at various UMC congregations in California, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. Carol's current calling is resourcing children's ministry workers through her new website: [GLU-kids.com](http://GLU-kids.com).



### Fall Cohort Dates

All sessions are held on Thursday and include September 19, September 26, October 17, November 21, January 16, February 20, and March 12.

### Session Descriptions

#### Session 1: Gathering and Getting to Know One Another, September 19, 2024

During this introductory session, we will introduce ourselves, get to know one another, chart the path for the following sessions, and get a sense of the resourcing offered in the North Carolina Conference.

#### Session 2: Planning, Planning, Planning, September 26, 2024

Planning children's ministry means organizing and scheduling for effective and predictable ministry. Learn how to manage an annual children's calendar and prioritize what you and your team can do. Right size your ministry for current kids, and determine how you can prepare space for more!

### Join the Second Fall Cohort!

#### Commitment:

I understand that one of the NextGen cohort benefits is the community and trust built from regular interaction on Zoom. With that in mind, I plan to attend at least five of the seven sessions (barring emergencies). Since sessions will be recorded, I can watch a recorded session that I miss.

- Yes, I affirm this commitment.
- No

Name

**Name (required)**

First

Last

**Email (required)**

Enter Email

Confirm Email

Phone

**Church (required)**

determine how you can prepare space for more!

**Session 3: Volunteers are a Gift, October 17, 2024**

Successful volunteer management and relationship building are essential in children's ministry. Learn how to identify the right leaders for your ministry and determine your volunteers' gifts. Learning into their gifts means more fulfilled volunteers who find the joy of serving that brings them back.

**Session 4: Creating a Trusted Church Home, November 21, 2024**

How do ministry leaders create a trustworthy environment where parents know kids are both nurtured and safe? Get a handle on best practices and draft an outline of Safe Sanctuaries guidelines and policies so parents can trust the church for kids' safety and spiritual development.

**Session 5: Understanding Learning Styles and Successfully Supporting Disability Ministries, January 16, 2025**

Deepen your awareness of age-appropriate learning strategies integral to teaching and discipling children effectively. Also, increase your understanding of how to shape your ministry to welcome children with different needs (neurodivergent, sensory needs, ADHD). Discover the abundant resources available to support United Methodist congregations with theologically sound studies and other curricula.

**Session 6: Making your Ministry Integral in the Life of the Church, February 20, 2025**

How can your children's ministry be integrated seamlessly into other ministries? What are the best practices for successful intergenerational opportunities? How can your church support not only children attending programs but also the families who care for them?

**Session 7: Moving your Ministry into the Community... Thinking Beyond the Church, March 20, 2025**

How can you share Christ beyond the walls of your church? Can your children's ministry meet needs in the community? And how could such opportunities provide avenues to engage in mission and enable your congregation to build relationships with people who would not otherwise have visited your church? Learn about the ways the children and youth in your church could be a part of new initiatives.

**About Your Children's Ministry (Required)**

Write a couple of sentences about your church (size, location) and the children's ministry program now.

**About Your Role (Required)**

Write a couple of sentences about your role. For example, are you paid or volunteer? Full time or part time? Does your ministry focus exclusively on children, or does it include other areas of ministry as well (youth, adults, etc.)? And how long have you served in this position?

**Payment (Required)**

I will pay the \$75 today to secure my spot.

Please reserve my spot \$25, pending a conversation about a scholarship.

**Submit**

<https://nccumc.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5520f6d654a662d3887beb73&id=1048c7625d&e=cc57a4ee92>



Edgar,

Join us to learn about Fresh Expressions with United Methodist leader Michael Beck. This event is presented by the Center for Leadership Excellence and New Faith Communities.



### About the Day

*Fresh Expressions, Garden Day* is a one-day training kick-off event with a wide-net approach. The purpose of this Day of Learning is to equip churches to reach new people, in new places, and in new ways by focusing on imagination and seeding ideas.

The workshop helps people envision new Christian communities that serve the present age. By exploring biblical frameworks, blended ecology, current stories, and methodologies of the Fresh Expressions movement, teams will be prepared to cultivate inclusive, accessible, transformative, and connectional forms of church.

### Take Aways

- Along with teaching and interactive exercises, participants will learn about real stories of everyday people of God reaching their communities.
- The training is practical, exploring simple and creative ways churches can connect with new people.
- There is a strong emphasis on how traditional established churches and new expressions can work together.

### *Fresh Expressions, Garden Day*

Presented by Michael Adam Beck

Tuesday, October

29, 9:30am – 3pm

Genesis UMC (Cary, NC)

\$40 (includes lunch)

<https://nccumc.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e5520f6d654a662d3887beb73&id=d4e6b4ee1c&e=cc57a4ee92>

### 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" will meet [on August 4th & 25th](#). [There will be no Awakenings on August 11th due to Pastor Edgar's vacation and August 18th due to UMM Breakfast Fellowship](#)

### 4th SATURDAY FREE MARKET

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.

**There will be no Free Market in August. It will resume September & October 2024**



## 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

The “Stronger Together” Exercise Class will not meet in August and will resume after Labor Day. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ [252-915-7005](tel:252-915-7005)



## UPDATE ON CONNECT CHURCH 2024

The Connect Church Cohort attended the Connect Church Regional Gathering on July 13th @ First UMC Rocky Mount. During the morning session, there were table discussions about "Asset Mapping" and "Community Assessment". We spent time responding to the following questions:

**"What asset themes have we noticed in our church, the community, and ourselves? How might these assets connect to work? Has the community responded with realistic needs? If so, have we listed them? Have we considered every voice in the community?"**

After this process, we spent some time doing connect team activity on the topic: "From Toxic Charity to Upstream Solutions" and had networking time during lunch break. After lunch break, we went back again to table discussions covering the topics "ABCD Intersection of Impact" and "Community Project Development". We spent time responding to the following questions: "After discovering community needs, in which do we find our passions? Where do we see possible intersections between our gifts and these needs of the community? Do we feel as if we have a list of manageable project possibilities? How might we prioritize these potentials?"

After the Regional Gathering, we decided to meet again on July 16th for a deeper conversation about Individual & Congregational Assets. We identified common themes about our Individual & Congregational Assets including Community Assessment. We processed questions like "What are some of the greatest strengths in our community? What community connections do you have? What could be an ambitious goal to help improve the quality of life in your community?"

After much discernment and sharing time, we came out with three possible focus areas of community engagement namely: Senior Citizen/Safety, Journey/Children & Youth, and Food/Dinner Church. These focus areas are intersecting and converging into a "hub" called "The Community".

Finally, we met w/ Coach John Parker on July 26th @ Plank Chapel UMC. Coach John shared some demographic information of areas within the 27544 zip code particularly Kittrell, Bobbitt area and southern part of Franklin county. The demographic information came from both the US Census and Mission Insite. We went into a "collective reflection" about the demographic information including discerning what they had experienced so far on their journey with the Connect Church process.

We processed the emerging three focus areas that were also identified at our July 16th meeting namely:

**Senior Center, Journey & Dinner Church**. Pastor Edgar shared how the three focus areas are linked together and converging into a hub of relationships, fresh expressions & mission called "The Community".

These three focus areas will require strong commitment from lay leadership, be adaptive and seek collaboration and partnership with stakeholders in the community.

The next meeting of the Connect Church Cohort w/ Coach John will be on Tuesday August 13th, 6pm @ Plank Chapel UMC.

**Please continue to keep the Connect Church 2024 in your prayers!**

SUN 28	MON 29	TUE 30	WED 31	THU Aug 1	FRI 2	SAT 3		
<b>Birthday: Jay Fu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8am Awaken</li> <li>10am Sunday</li> </ul> <b>2 more</b>	<b>Pastor Edgar's I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>	<b>Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC</b> <b>Birthday: Rudy F</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7pm Prayer C</li> </ul>	<b>Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>				
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<b>Birthdays: Mich</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8am Awaken</li> <li>10am Sunday</li> <li>11am Worshi</li> </ul>	<b>Pastor Edgar Continuing Education/Vacation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>			<b>Birthdays: Daryl</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7pm PCUMC</li> </ul>	<b>Birthday: Linda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>	<b>Anniversary: Sa</b> <b>Birthday: Isabel</b>		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
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<b>Birthday: Charli</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8am Awaken</li> <li>10am Sunday</li> </ul> <b>2 more</b>	<b>Pastor Edgar's I</b> <b>Birthdays: Patri</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>	<b>Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC</b> <b>Birthday: Makay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3pm Choir R</li> <li>7pm PCUMC</li> <li>7pm Prayer C</li> </ul>	<b>Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC</b> <b>Birthday: Donal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6pm Stronge</li> </ul>	<b>Birthday: Marth</b>			