

# CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors



## Pastor's Note

What comes to mind when you hear the word “thrive”? If someone or something is thriving, that means it is doing well, right? Full of life! To thrive is to grow vigorously and healthier. Plants can thrive, businesses can thrive, people can thrive and churches can thrive. And when they are thriving, great things are happening! But not everything goes perfectly all the time. The opposite of thriving is what we call, “failure to thrive.” And it can lead to death!

Without a doubt, failure to thrive can be a very scary thing, and it's especially scary when it happens to the church. It's very scary when the church fails to thrive. “What do you think the church will look like in ten years?” It's a question that every church leader ought to be asking right now because here in America, the writing is on the wall. Many churches in America are not thriving and in fact they are surviving and worst, they are dying and it's a scary reality.

But I chose to believe that the church will find a way to thrive again. The good news: with God's grace and through the work of the Holy Spirit, the church can thrive again! We serve a God of life, not death! But in order to thrive, we have to make some changes. We have to let go of the things that aren't working, and we have to get out there and start sowing new seeds!

And it's not just that we plant the seed in exactly the right place, we have to scatter the seed in every way possible and in every place possible. Sure, sometimes our efforts will fail, our seed will fall among rocky or thorny ground and nothing will come of it, but that's part of life, it's okay. If we're not experiencing failure, then we're not risking enough, we're not trusting enough. We don't need to be afraid of failure because God promises that if we will just get the seed out there, then we will experience a yield of thirty, sixty, even one hundred fold. Can you imagine? Can you imagine that kind of life, that kind of growth? This is what it means to thrive!

My friends, I strongly believe that God called me to this place so that we can work together to offer Christ's love, grace, hope and generosity, and to sow seed to this community and be a thriving church! Therefore, this Sunday, September 1st, we begin a six-week sermon series entitled "Thrive". We're gonna dive into the Word of God and understand more of what the Bible has to say about how to be a thriving church.

We remember and celebrate the faithfulness and generosity of the saints and people of Bethel & Plank Chapel and many years of growing together and making the church a thriving church. We also intentionally do this today through Dinner Church, Senior Circle, Journey, Stronger Together, Connect Church, among others. We witness the lay leadership and church members stepping up, giving your energy and resources to care for children through Journey, praying for others by joining on Wednesday Prayer Meeting and doing many wonderful things to stay healthy so that we continue to grow and thrive.

Indeed, thriving churches are healthy and alive because of an intentional decision they made to be thriving and healthy. Thriving churches are not thriving because of an accident. Thriving churches do not just happen by chance. Thriving churches are very good at doing six critical things. And they are the same things commonly neglected by declining and dying churches. Therefore, I hope that you will come to the church every Sunday, tune in to the sermon series and do whatever it takes to make our church truly a thriving, vibrant and healthy church, all for the glory and praise to Christ our Lord and Savior!



## Charge Conference

It's Charge Conference season again! The 2024 Charge Conference is set on Sunday, October 6th, 3:00pm at Rehoboth UMC ([2951 Old Watkins Road, Henderson, NC 27537](#)).

Here are the following important meeting dates:

Tuesday, September 3rd, 6:00pm- The Finance Team will meet to receive the 2025 Pastoral Compensation Package recommended by the Pastor-Parish Relations Team, review the 2025 Connectional Apportionment Calculations, finalize the 2025 budget and submit recommendation to the Church Council.

Thursday, September 5th, 6:00pm- The Pastor will meet w/ BOT Chair to complete the 2024 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and Parsonage Checklist.

Monday, September 9th, 6pm- The Nominations & Leadership Team will meet to finalize the slate for 2025 Lay Leadership.

Sunday, September 15th, 12noon- The Council Council will meet on Sunday, September 15th right after the 11am Sunday Worship Service. The agenda is to vote for the 2025 Clergy Compensation, 2025 Lay Leadership, Anti-Racism Report, State of the Church Report and other items related to the 2024 Charge Conference.

Sunday, September 22nd- Deadline to submit online all the required 2024 Charge Conference forms.

Sunday, October 6th, 3:00pm- The 2024 Charge Conference will be held at Rehoboth UMC. We are clustered w/ Bethel UMC, Rehoboth UMC & White Memorial UMC. All Church Council leaders are requested to attend.

**We are grateful for you and our shared lives together as we seek "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."**



## UPDATE ON CONNECT CHURCH 2024

The Connect Church Cohort met w/ Coach John Parker of NC Rural Center on August 13th with the following in attendance: Jan Hicks, Susan Sears, Martha Sears, Debra Newman, Frank Winn, Peggy Hernandez, Mike Raines, Larraine Abbott, Scott Ritchey & John Parker.

The Cohort continued its discernment and exploration of feedback from church members and the community in developing a community engagement project with a 10K grant from the Duke Endowment.

**There are three main targets of need according to the feedbacks:**

- First: Community Connectedness-- Safety and Security
- Second: We Are The Community-- Food & Dinners
- Third: Deeper Existing Relationships-- This includes continuing community curiosity through engagement and outreach such as the "**Journey**", "**Stronger Together**" & "**Koffee Korner**".

There was a discussion about signage to inform the community of activities and a brochure we can handout (Scott has one on our website that we will modify into a handout.)

The Fire Department has expressed a need for help supplying **smoke alarms** to the community and also has noted a need for **cooling in homes with no air conditioning**. It was also noted that costs tied to activities might mean **gas cards and food**.

The Cohort Meetings will continue bi-weekly or monthly until a proposal is drawn up before the November 2nd deadline.

Our next Connect Church Cohort Meeting is set on September 10th, 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

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

### 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 will be on Sunday, September 15th, 3:00pm. All women are invited!



### 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 September 15th.



## KOFFEE KORNER

A Fresh Expressions women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month. We will resume our gathering on September 4th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, please contact Jan Hicks @ 919-525-4778.



## "STRONGER TOGETHER" EXERCISE CLASS

The "Stronger Together" Exercise Class will resume on September 9th, 6:00pm. We meet every Monday & Thursday @ 6:00-7:00pm. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ 252-915-7005.



Dear Bethel & Plank Chapel Family,  
Last August 23rd, we arrived back safely in Kittrell. We give praise and glory to God for the wonderful opportunity and blessing to attend the 22nd World Methodist Conference and at the same time experiencing renewed body, mind & spirit.

My deepest appreciation to Pastor Natalie Gonzalez and Garry Dickerson for preaching last August 11th & 18th. I also want to express my deepest appreciation to Revs. Carol Dean & George Loveland who both served as Pastor-on-Call while I was away. And I also want to thank Scott Richey, Alice & Terry for picking-up Judy & Elaine from RDU Airport.

Finally, I thank the Pastor-Parish Relations Team & Church Council of both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC for your prayers, encouragement and support on the pastor's continuing education and spiritual renewal.

Thank you for all that you do!

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Edgar

## Fresh Expressions, Garden Day...A Day of Learning

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

- There is a strong emphasis on how traditional established churches and new expressions can work together.

## CHANGE BUCKET & RAINBOW COVENANT

The Change Bucket for September-November 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:

September-October 2024 Lane 4:  
World Missions (Rise Against Hunger #S-00101)

October-November 2024 Lane 5:  
UMCOR (Global Migration #3022144)



- 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.

***Fresh Expressions, Garden Day***  
**Presented by Michael Adam Beck**  
**Tuesday, October 29, 9:30am – 3pm**  
**Genesis UMC (Cary, NC)**  
**\$40 (includes lunch)**

<https://nccumc.org/leadership/event/fresh-expressions-garden-day/>

### **Bring Your Team!**

We believe this Day of Learning, like most of our events, will have the biggest impact when clergy and laity attend together. Bring a group of 3 or more from your church and **receive a 20% discount** on your total registration. The deadline to receive this discount is **October 7**.



### **4th SATURDAY FREE MARKET**

September 28th 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 September 22nd and place them in the youth room. On Friday, September 27th, we need volunteers to help set-up the free market in the Fellowship Hall.

### **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.



**Ron Gustafson**, a journalist, photojournalist, publicist and historian, was the guest speaker at the Aug. 21 meeting of Senior Circle in fellowship hall at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church.

A retired newspaper editor, Ron reflected on his years as a writer and photographer with daily newspapers and incorporated a slideshow to highlight some key stories he covered throughout his career.

From the largest rescue in the history of Lake Erie, to a killer tornado that swept through his hometown near Buffalo, N.Y., his work made front-page headlines on many occasions while other stories and photos have been published worldwide.

He also touched on personal interviews with celebrities such as country music icon Brenda Lee and Danny Hutton, the founding member of classic rock band Three Dog Night.

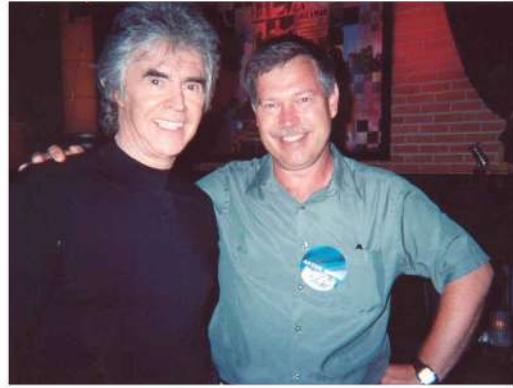
As a historian, Ron has chronicled countless articles related to the amusement industry as well as authored two books on Trolley Parks, some the oldest amusement parks in existence in the nation.

In 2022 he co-authored "75 Years Of America's First Theme Park," a history of Holiday World & Splashin' Safari in Santa Claus, Ind., which was published by the University of Indiana. He retired the same year as marketing and public relations director at a family-owned park in Connecticut.

He continues to write and take photos related to the amusement industry for trade publications and also serves as a consultant.

Ron and wife, Nancy, are members of Plank Chapel and are on the leadership team of Journey, the church's youth ministry. Nancy also sings in the choir and the couple occasionally share original music at the 11 o'clock service.

***Danny Hutton of Three Dog Night with Ron following show in New York***



**PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR**

Plank Chapel UMC Choir meets for practice on the following dates and time. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir!

- September 11th, 3:00pm
- September 25th, 3:00pm
- October 9th, 3:00pm
- October 23rd, 3:00pm
- November 6th, 3:00pm
- November 20th, 3:00pm
- December 4th, 3:00pm
- December 18th, 3:00pm



**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). "Awakenings" offers contemporary music, come-as-you-are setting, relevant Bible-based conversation and a good cup of coffee! The "Awakenings" will meet on September 1st, 8th, 22nd & 29th.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Freddie Oettinger, Tim Smith, Tonja Tooley, Tilley Hughes, David & Karin Driver, Evie Odom, Tommy Cottrell, Margie Clayton, Frances Beckham, Faye Moss, George Abbott, Anne Vanzandt, Ricky Satterwhite, Sammy Burgess, Mac Ayscue, Nancy Leonard, Debra Newman, Fawn Westmoreland, Bessie Newman, Family of Faye Young, our nation, Israel, and communities affected by conflict and violence. Shut-Ins: John & Patricia Rogers, Martha Rowland, Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee & Frances Roberts. (for prayer request, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ [edejesus@nccumc.org](mailto:edejesus@nccumc.org))

## WEDNESDAY ONLINE PRAYER MEETING

Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week from 7:00-7:30pm. We will meet on September 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th.

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

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1>

Meeting ID: 967 3107 2214  
 Passcode: 1RL4uP

## 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. Also, please check your book shelves so that we can offer children and adult books as a lending library. We give thanks to God for your generous gifts and support for this outreach ministry.



## 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





More than a dozen children and youth received some coaching on dealing with conflict in their lives at the Aug. 25 meeting of Journey, the youth ministry at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church.

Following an opening prayer by Wayne Young, the kids witnessed a simple experiment showing how baking soda and vinegar don't mix well, creating a "conflict." They were then encouraged to be peacemakers should disagreement confront them.

Nancy Gustafson presented a brief testimonial, sharing Bible verses related to the evening's theme and then the entire group enjoyed several rounds of bingo.

Activities shifted outdoors with the highlight being volleyball, 4 square and corn hole games. Thanks to donations from the United Methodist Men and Marie Gillard, a new volleyball set and 4 square game were acquired for Journey.

The group was treated to a meal of freshly-made chicken tenders, french fries, veggie tray and watermelon, provided by Beth Heaton and Daryl Spencer. Ice cream and brownies were served for dessert.

As the dinner concluded, Pastor Edgar shared three key points he said the kids should consider when dealing with conflict with others.

Lora Young and Nancy Gustafson presented school supplies - on behalf of Journey - to the children and youth as they departed. The next Journey will be held Sunday, Sept. 22.

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](http://plankchapel.org).



I would like to share with y'all a new leadership development opportunity called "Rooted in Love" sponsored by Center for Leadership Excellence & the Duke Endowment. The main goal of the program is to develop & equip our lay leadership on the "how to" in terms of reaching out and building relationships for Jesus Christ to new and diverse people in our community. ***Specifically, the "Rooted in Love" aims to strengthen the ongoing ministries such as Bethel UMC's Dinner Church and Plank Chapel UMC's Journey & Stronger Together.***

I will start reaching out to y'all this September to sign-up and be part of the team. Please let me know if you are interested.

Grace & Peace,

**Pastor Edgar**



Rooted in Love  
Rural Church Gatherings

### **What is Rooted in Love?**

*Rooted in Love* is a short-term program with potential for significant, long-term impact. It's an opportunity to equip rural churches with thorough hospitality resourcing and a step-by-step process to visit nearby churches to evaluate what others are doing. Seeing how others welcome can be eye-opening and ministry-changing.

Congregations will also learn the importance of building authentic relationships with people they are helping through mission and ministry – working with our neighbors in solidarity instead of seeing the needs as charity. Finally, you will gain tools to build relationships with others in their community who are different than those they see sitting in the pews on Sunday. After all, being a United Methodist is about building connections with others, not with our own church members!

## **Rooted in Love**

By participating in *Rooted in Love*, your church leaders will better understand the value of building relationships with people outside of their current church community. In doing so, they may fully claim the vitality the rural church can offer.

### **Who should participate?**

We believe in the importance of laity and clergy learning together. We desire to include as many of your church leaders and members as can come! Pastors and laity alike will be equipped for hospitality and new relationships with visitors and others they serve.

### **What is the commitment?**

*Rooted in Love* includes four in-person gatherings with worship and content, starting in the fall of 2024 and ending in the spring of 2025. Each gathering aims to bring several churches in one region together to build community across the United Methodist connection. Worship and sessions will be about four to five hours long and will include a meal, provided for you. A fourth and final shorter gathering will bring the churches back together to celebrate, share a meal, and reflect on the content and lessons learned.

We will bring our session leaders to you so that travel is not a barrier. Your churches will provide worship leaders and space to gather. We will take care of the rest!

### **What did I hear about a mini-grant?**

Being a part of *Rooted in Love* means that when your team dreams of a way to make your church more welcoming, there will be some funds to help you do it. Each church that fully participates in the program will receive a \$750 mini-grant to spruce up a sign, build a welcome cart, throw a neighborhood block party, improve your food ministry outreach, or run a campaign on social media.

SUN Sep 1	MON 2	TUE 3	WED 4	THU 5	FRI 6	SAT 7
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