

CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors



Great news! Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC were selected for the **2024 Connect Church** program offered by the NC Rural Center and funded by the Duke Endowment. Praise the Lord!

Please see the link: <https://www.ncruralcenter.org/engagement/faith-in-rural-communities/>

This year's selection process was highly competitive due to so many qualified applicants and only a few slots available. The selection team were "impressed by the congregations' commitment to serving the community and would love to work with you next year to deepen your impact."

The program aimed to help churches renew their faithful witness and connect with opportunities to improve the health and prosperities of their communities. Beginning January 2024 and the next eight months, both churches will receive the following:

- Monthly coaching for a team of church leaders
- Assistance in understanding the community's and the church's assets
- Networking with other churches asking the same questions
- A grant up to \$10,000 for Duke Endowment eligible churches to launch a new or expanded missional engagement project

Each church creates a cohort team who are passionate in leading missional engagement and are committed to meet at least twice per month over nine months and participate in three Saturday workshops.

Please hold the cohort team and the 2024 Connect Church program in your prayers.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Edgar

Pastor's Note (January 2024)

It's new year! The beginning of the year always provides an opportunity for a new beginning in our lives and in the life of our church. Individually and communally, we desperately need a new beginning— a spiritual reawakening, a deep change and a re-start so that we can effectively reach out to new and diverse people for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why God is far more interested in our future than He is in our past. The prophet Isaiah says:

*“Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV)*

This new year [on January 7th](#), we will remember Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan. We will also have a congregational reaffirmation of our baptismal covenant. In our baptism, God identifies us as His own and also claims us. We are claimed not because of who we are on our own, but who we can be through God's grace that justifies and sanctifies us. Just as Jesus' baptism was the beginning of a new chapter in His life, the beginning of His ministry, so also our baptism is a beginning point for us. Our baptism calls us to a new life, no longer just as children of the world, but now as children of God.

This new year, I'm also begin a sermon series entitled: “Restart” based from Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank's book, “Restart Your Church”. We will study the Word of God and be challenged to reclaim the Christian message of death and resurrection—the central story of our faith. I encourage you to buy Bishop Dottie's book “Restart Your Church” which she claims as a “manual of hope”. “She roots this hope well in the biblical theme of death and resurrection and calls each church to join that sacred journey with her and the church she serves. She urges us to let God lead our churches with fresh eyes and hearts, with creativity, tenacity, and hope.”

Finally, this new year, Plank Chapel UMC will be engaged on the 2024 Connect Church sponsored by NC Rural Center and Duke Endowment. Both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC were selected for the 2024 Connect Church-- a nine-month program aims to help churches renew their faithful witness and connect with opportunities to improve the health and prosperities of their communities through:

- Monthly coaching for a team of church leaders
- Assistance in understanding the community's and the church's assets
- Networking with other churches asking the same questions
- A grant up to \$10,000 for Duke Endowment eligible churches to launch a new or expanded missional engagement project

Indeed, God is birthing something new at Plank Chapel UMC. This is exciting news! It may be scary, but it is also fresh and alive with possibilities. God is doing something incredible that we're just starting to see. It may not look the same as before, but this new beginning will be rich in the life of the Kingdom— making disciples of Jesus Christ and becoming a transforming agent of change in the community and beyond.

This new year, I invite and challenge every disciple member to renew your commitment to God and to His church. Let us seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to be part of the "restart" of Plank Chapel UMC. And please join with me in praying together: *"Lord, as a new year begins, we come to You and ask for Your blessing. We pray that You would give us joy to fill our days, peace to fill our hearts, and love to fill our lives. Thank you for Your mission and plans You have for us in this new year. We wait in anticipation to see all You will do!"*





YOUTH MINISTRY

RISE AGAINST HUNGER MEAL PACKING EVENT & ACTS /ACIM FOOD DRIVE

**WHEN: JANUARY 15TH, MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY,
10AM-2:30PM**

Attn: Vance/Granville County Community Stakeholders:

You are invited to partner for an exciting community day of service event. The purpose of the event is two-fold, a time to bring together our community, while at the same time helping fight hunger both on a local and international level. The event will consist of packing meals for Rise Against Hunger, and a food drive benefiting both ACTS of Henderson and ACIM of Granville County.

Vance Granville Community College is graciously providing us the Civic Center for the event.

Collaboration has so many benefits. For our community, the bigger the better - more people in one place brings greater energy, greater diversity, more fun and an amazing opportunity to be in service and fellowship with brothers and sisters, who we might not otherwise cross paths, all while fighting to end hunger.

Please donate to help us reach our goal of \$25,500 (60,000 meals) and 2000 non-perishable canned or box goods for ACTS of Henderson and ACIM of Granville County. Thank you for your support enabling this meaningful event to take place. All checks will be made payable to Rise Against Hunger, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Example of Financial Contribution Meals

\$106.25	250
\$212.50	500
\$425	1,000
\$4,250	10,000

If you have any questions or need assistance please contact:
Sue Nicholas ([252-425-4505](tel:252-425-4505)) or Sandra Wiggins ([252-432-0080](tel:252-432-0080))



Do you oversee faith formation or kid-min programming for children in your congregation? Want a boost? We invite you to gather with other dedicated children's ministry leaders (volunteer and paid) to delve into the essentials of building a strong children's program, whether you have five kids or 50. The cohort will meet on Zoom for seven sessions between January and March of 2024, 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 when needed, bringing the participant contribution down to \$25.



About the Facilitator.

Rev. 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.

Session Dates and Descriptions

Session 1: Gathering and Getting to Know One Another

Monday, January 8, 2024, 12-1pm

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

Session 2: Plannina. Plannina. Planning Saturday, January 13, 9-10:30 am

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!

Session 3: Volunteers are a Gift

Saturday, January 27, 9-10:30 am

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. Leaning into their gifts means more fulfilled volunteers who find the joy of serving that brings them back.

Session 4: Creating a Trusted Church Home

Saturday, February 10, 9-10:30 am

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

Saturday, February 24, 9-10:30 am

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.

If anyone would like more information, Please see Pastor Edgar.

Here is the Link to the website also:

<https://nccumc.org/leadership/2023/11/nextgen-faith-builders-a-cohort-for-childrens-ministry-leaders/>

AWAKENINGS

Renew, fresh and revive your spirit as we worship together our Awesome God @ Awakening every Sunday, 8:00am (except third Sunday of the month). Here are the following Awakenings worship dates for the month of January 2024-- January 7th, 14th & 28th.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Our youth and their families had a wonderful fellowship Christmas Party & Dinner Church at Bethel UMC last December 10th. We had worship, fellowship meal and games. Both youth groups of Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC will have joint youth activities in 2024 which include the Winter Jam and Rise Against Hunger Event.

AWAKENINGS

Renew, fresh and revive your spirit as we worship together our Awesome God @ Awakening every Sunday, 8am (except third Sunday of the month). Here are the following worship dates for the month of December-- December 3rd, 17th & 24th.

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. Last month's Thanksgiving season, we collected non-perishable food items for the Blessing Box Ministry. We also shared fruits, bread and produce for our church members who are homebound. 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 gift flowers 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:(252)492-0624).

Edgar,

The Safe Sanctuaries Committee and the Center for Leadership Excellence present an advanced workshop in Safer Sanctuaries to prepare leaders to train others in their church...

The purpose of this in-person training is to equip leaders with new and updated Safer Sanctuaries material from the recently published resource.

This workshop is relevant for leaders responsible for Safe Sanctuaries in district, conference, and local church contexts. Attendees will leave prepared to train others and will have the ability to implement holistic Safe Sanctuaries ministry in their churches. We encourage you to attend and equip your church for safer ministries, risk reduction, and abuse prevention within your church.

Safer Sanctuaries: Train the Trainer
Presented by the Center for Leadership Excellence
with the NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Team
and Kevin Johnson

Saturday, March 2, 2024, 10am - 3pm ET
NC Conference Building, Garner
\$10, includes lunch

UNITED METHODIST MEN

We give thanks to God for everyone who attended the December 10th Pancake Breakfast Fellowship as an appreciation to all who volunteered and at the annual BBQ Sale last November 3rd. Our next UMM Monthly Breakfast Fellowship will be on January 21st, 8:00am-9:00am and every third Sunday of the month.

PASTOR EDGAR'S SABBATH REST

The North Carolina Conference honors God's guidance for Sabbath rest for all people. Clergy members under full-time appointment shall receive one full month of vacation per calendar year (not including Pastor's continuing education). Pastor Edgar is currently on a Sabbath rest from December 26th-January 4th. We give thanks to God for Mike Ranes who will be our Guest Preacher on December 31st Sunday Worship Service. Also, we thank Rev. Carol Dean for graciously serving as pastor-on-call during emergency situation while Pastor Edgar is away.

Prayer Requests

Patricia Rogers, David Driver, Charlie Brown, Freddie Oettinger, David Lee, Thomas Beckham, Angela Saul, Heather Houppert, Angela Saul, Dennis Wilson, Tim Smith, Jane Emery Caviness & Angie Rowland. Shut-Ins: Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee, Faye Young & Frances Roberts. (For prayer request, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ edejesus@nccumc.org.)

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. During the Christmas season, we initiated the Angel Tree project for needy children at Zeb Vance Elementary School. We thank everyone for your generous support to the Angel Tree project. Our next regular meeting of the United Women in Faith is on Sunday, January 21st, 3:00pm. All women are invited!



Shut-Ins:

Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee, Faye Young & Frances Roberts. (for prayer **requests**, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ edejesus@nccumc.org.)

WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP ZOOM MEETING

We started a new Wednesday Prayer Group that meets every Wednesday via Zoom from [5:30am-6pm](#). YOu can join us either Zoom or phone conferencing (see link below). If you need help to operate a Zoom, please contact Pastor Edgar @ [919-418-0682](#).

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 Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://nccumc.zoom.us/j/98771477114?pwd=TVRTVHcwWWU0UytHOGhTYXFhZmxhdz09>

Meeting ID: [987 7147 7114](#)

Passcode: [288519](#)

Meeting ID: 987 7147 7114

Find your local number: <https://nccumc.zoom.us/u/acGxhP36Dh>



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AWAKENINGS

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CHRISTMAS SOCK & GLOVE DRIVE

We give our praise and glory to God for your generous Christmas gifts of new socks and gloves. These will be distributed to our church members in nursing homes and homebound during Christmas Caroling last December 17th. Special thanks to Lora Young for her servant leadership



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 give our praise and glory to God for everyone who attended our Christmas gathering last December 13th. We will meet again on Wednesday, January 17th, 10:00am and every third Wednesday of the month. Bring your family and friends!



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
 Our December Senior Circle meeting was full of Christmas blessings. Faye opened the program with greetings and prayer requests. Then Pastor Edgar gave a beautiful devotion that encouraged us to remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Janet Bobbitt explained the origin of the word Xmas and we all came to realize that long ago the X was a Christian symbol for Christ. She also prepared Christmas cups filled with cocoa, marshmallows and assorted treats for everyone. In addition to that, she created a beautiful jeweled ornament, Christmas word games and fun filled Christmas fact sheets which we all enjoyed.

We were honored to have the Gospelairees come and sing Christmas songs and hymns. Conrad Hock, Stuart Currin, and Bobby Jackson invited us to join in on a Christmas sing along. It was like old times seeing familiar faces again.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
 Your friends at Senior Circle

CHURCH-WIDE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our church-wide Christmas Party last December 16th was a huge success! Praise the Lord! Special appreciation to the Inward Formation Team led by Susan Coghill, Beth Heaton, Daryl Spencer and everyone who brought Christmas cakes and covered-dish. We also thank Frank Winn for leading Christmas music and United Methodist Men for the generous donation of Christmas ham.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

We give praise and glory to God for sharing God's love and generosity to our homebound and nursing homes during Christmas Caroling last December 16th.

Special appreciation to our carolers-- Lora Young, Donald Rose McGhee, Greg Hunt, John & Patricia Roberts & Judy De Jesus. The Christmas carolers visited and delivered treat bags, socks & gloves to Martha Rowland, BW & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Kay Deans & Roxie Kerney. Lora also visited and delivered socks and treat bags to Faye Young and Freddie McGhee.





Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Today marks the 99th anniversary of James B. Duke's signing of the [Indenture of Trust](#) creating The Duke Endowment. This legal document continues to guide all grantmaking for The Duke Endowment, and while drafted nearly a century ago, incredibly, it remains wholly relevant, timely and visionary.

It is with great anticipation and excitement that we embark upon a celebration of nearly 100 years of philanthropy for the Endowment beginning in January 2024. We invite you to join us on this yearlong journey as we share and celebrate the impact of Mr. Duke's vision to [nurture children](#), [promote health](#), [educate minds](#) and [uplift spirits](#) in communities across North Carolina and South Carolina.

While we'll officially kick off our centennial in January, which will culminate with a significant announcement on December 11, 2024, earlier this month we announced a [centennial gift of \\$100 million to Duke University](#) – the largest single gift in the history of the university – which will support Duke University's vision for the next 100 years and continue to fulfill Mr. Duke's desire of expanding access to high-quality education to students throughout the Carolinas. Duke University is one of four Endowment-supported higher education institutions. The other three institutions, Davidson College, Furman University and Johnson C. Smith University, will also be recognized during the Endowment's centennial.

Throughout the year, we plan to share stories about the incredible work of our grantee partners as well as other announcements related to the centennial. We are also excited to showcase a traveling exhibit that tells the story of The Duke Endowment and will be displayed at museums and libraries across the Carolinas.

To stay up to date with this momentous year ahead, look for our centennial dedicated newsletter each month and visit our centennial website often. Please consider forwarding this email to a friend to help us amplify the Endowment's enduring Commitment to the Carolinas.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Sincerely,

Charlie Lucas, Chair of Board of Trustees, The Duke Endowment
Rhett Mabry, President, The Duke Endowment



Pastors,

Every year, the NC Conference offers equipping for committee members to prepare them for roles in the local church. This year, we are offering workshops for church council, nominations, finance, s/pprc, and trustees, plus a workshop featuring the new resource, *Keeping the Faith: Conversations to Strengthen the Bond Between Pastors and Church Leaders*, from the Duke Clergy Health Initiative.

We have sent invitations to the committee chairs for every relevant committee except nominations (because that's you!) and asked the chairs to invite their committees.

Help us spread the word! We offer these trainings to support your work in equipping laity for effective ministry, but we know our announcements do not reach many laity! **Please share this invitation with those who serve on these committees in your congregation.** In particular, we are counting on you, as chair of nominations, to invite nominations committee members to participate. Those who register will receive the recordings to all six workshops.

About the Workshops:

These workshops are designed to help you understand committee responsibilities and the expectations for church leadership roles in each respective area. Since the workshops are spread across two sessions, you have the option to attend up to two sessions live. If you need more than one training offered during the same session, choose one session to attend live and you can watch the recording of the other session(s).

Session 1, 2-3:30pm

- Keeping the Faith, led by John Hall, Laura Hamrick, and Jessie Larkins
- Church Council, led by Natalie Birdwell
- Nominations, led by Donna Banks.

Session 2, 4-5:30pm

- Finance, led by Christine Dodson
- Trustees, led by Gray Southern
- S/PPRC, led by Beth Hood

Whether you are starting a new leadership role, or have been serving in church leadership for years, we hope this model of leadership training will prepare you for your much-needed ministry.

Who Can Register?

Anyone! We send invitations to the lay leader and the chair of each committee. However, we heartily recommend that all committee members attend the training. It is helpful when all committee members receive the same instruction. In addition, anyone who wants to learn more about how these committees work is more than welcome to join.

What's New This Year?

In addition to our standard workshops, we have added a training for Church Council. Also, we are hosting a special workshop called *Keeping the Faith*. Local church lay leaders are invited to attend this workshop in lieu of the traditional lay leader training. A recording of the traditional lay leader training will be made available for those who need it. We also invite S/PPRC members and other leaders to join.

About the *Keeping the Faith* Workshop:

Recognizing that both clergy and congregations have a role to play in the health of our pastors and churches, *Keeping the Faith: Conversations to Strengthen the Bonds between Pastors and Church Leaders* was developed to facilitate conversations that lay the groundwork of solid communication and trust, so that when they arise, SPRC members and pastors are equipped to wade into tough topics. *Keeping the Faith* provides a model for both covenant accountability and reflection.

<https://mailchi.mp/nccumc/january-leadership-training-1505115?e=cc57a4ee92>