

CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors



Pastor's Note

Warm Pentecost greetings! We are in the season of Pentecost. It is a season that started on Pentecost Day—when we remember the day the disciples received the Holy Spirit in a special way. The story in [Acts 2](#) describes a powerful wind and tongues of fire as the Holy Spirit was poured out on people from all over the world who came to Jerusalem to celebrate a Jewish feast. At the first Pentecost over 3000 people were baptized, creating the first church. This is why Pentecost is known as the birthday of the Christian church.

“The word [Pentecost](#) comes from a Greek word meaning fiftieth. The Jewish Festival of Pentecost (called Shavuot, meaning “weeks” in Hebrew) falls on the fiftieth day after the original Passover. On that day, God gave the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Christian festival of Pentecost falls on the 50th day after the resurrection of Jesus.” (from the United Methodist Communications)

In the Bible, Acts 2 described the day of Pentecost like this: followers of Jesus were gathered in the place they were staying, a home, suddenly, “a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house.” The sound was so loud it caught the attention of many others in Jerusalem, and in a short time a crowd had gathered around this dwelling, where the believers, now filled with the Holy Spirit were speaking in other languages. But the Holy Spirit wasn't only with those who were speaking, it was also with those who were hearing, for they all understood what was being said! Even though there was quite a diverse gathering of folks in this place, each heard the Word in their own language! On that Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit took over and hundreds of people encountered God. Their lives were set ablaze... on fire for God... their lives were changed forever because they received the power of the Holy Spirit!

What happens when the Holy Spirit moves? When the Spirit moves, it changes you! The Holy Spirit empowers us to love in a way that Christ loved one another. The Holy Spirit convicts you whenever you fail to love as you would have others love you. The Holy Spirit fills us with supernatural love that overflows into all areas of our personal lives, relationships and ministries. The Holy Spirit pours out His love into our hearts during difficult time so we are motivated to love one another. The Holy Spirit urges us on whenever we are feeling lonely, anxious, hopeless and about to give up.

When the Spirit moves, you can't be quiet! When the Spirit moves, you can't stay still! You can't be control! You've got to move... you got to stand... you got dance... you got to shout for God! When the Spirit is poured out on you got to love... you got to forgive... you got to let go... you got to be free! When the Spirit is poured out on you, there is nothing but to obey and surrender everything to Jesus! The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit gives us power to serve Christ. “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8).

In other words, when the Spirit moves, the Spirit works in and through you to accomplish God's will. His power leads us, convicts you, teaches you, equips you to do His work and advance God's kingdom. The Holy Spirit's powerful indwelling is an amazing gift each Christian should not be taken lightly!

During the season of Pentecost, may we catch the Holy Spirit's power, reignite a new passion to worship, serve and witness Christ, and live out the gifts we have been given in the Name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit!

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.

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, Israel, and nations affected by conflict and violence.

Shut-Ins: 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 @ 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](#). This month of June, we will meet [on June 5th](#), 12th, 19th & 26th. Please see the Zoom link below.

Edgar Raymund A. De Jesus 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,,98771477114#](#) US (New York)

[+16469313860,,98771477114#](#) US

**KOFFEE KORNER"
WOMEN'S GROUP**

Plank Chapel UMC is birthing the "Koffee Korner"-- a Fresh Expressions women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. Our next meeting is [June 5th @ 10:00am](#). 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](#). For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ [252-915-7005](tel:252-915-7005).



Hi Friends,

May is Mental Health Month. I have collected resources from the NC Conference, the Media Center, and our partner organizations to help you address a variety of mental health topics in your congregations and communities. I have also included resources that you can use to care for your own mental health.

View the Mental Health Resources page to see print and online resources on:



- Self-care
- Emotional health
- Stress management
- Trauma
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Addiction
- Depression & suicide
- Hope & resilience



The resources are for a variety of audiences in the church, including:

- Clergy
- Small groups
- Caring ministries
- Youth & children's ministries
- Caregivers & family members of people with mental illness

There are many online resources, videos, and tools to begin getting help right away. I've also listed lots of books and DVDs that you can borrow from the Media Center.

After the pandemic and disaffiliation and as we continue to confront injustice, it remains the work of the church to care for the whole well-being of the individuals in our communities. I hope these resources help you to begin or enhance ministries that care for our mental health and help you care for yourself as well.

Laura Dallas
Marketing & Resource Coordinator
Director, NC Conference Media Center



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 [June 16th](#).

Dear Plank Chapel Family,

Warm Pentecost greetings! I would like to share some important updates regarding the Connect Church 2024.

On May 10th, the Cohort Team met w/ Coach John Parker of NC Rural Center at Plank Chapel UMC with the following in attendance: Lora Young, Susan Sears, Jan Hicks, Scott Ritchey, Debra Newman, Mike Raney, Martha Sears & Coach John Parker.

There were changes in the two questions that we were to ask in person or in a questionnaire of those interviewed. One additional question was added.

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

The questionnaire should be inserted in the Sunday worship bulletin as soon as possible for church members for both Awakenings and [11am Sunday](#) Worship Service and explained to both as to its reason and importance. If this is done by Sunday, May 26th we should have a good number of responses by the [July 13th](#) Regional Gathering in Rocky Mount.

A fourth question may be asked in personal one-on-one interviews: “Do you know someone I could talk to?” The header on the form to be distributed should say something like “Plank Chapel UMC is Participating in a Community Program”. The NC Rural Center website should be at the bottom of the form. It was also suggested to include the church website on the form.

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, June 16th, 3:00pm](#). All women are invited!



Furthermore, the cohort team determined that Bobbitt, Kittrell and a small portion of Southern Franklin County would be the area of concentration for interviewing. Questionnaires should be given out at the 4th Saturday Free Market as well as any church event or activity that is being held. Bethel UMC's Dinner Church is also a great opportunity to give out questionnaires.

Some members will go in person and others will make phone calls or whatever they feel comfortable doing to get the information needed. Since Bethel UMC had to drop out of the Connect Church, it was discussed that we should consider them when using the Duke Endowment grant that Plank Chapel UMC will receive.

Coach John talked about having personal visits coordinated with the people before visiting by making appointments to make them aware interviewers were coming. We should go in pairs, preferably male and female and it would be best if the younger interviewers interview the younger people, as to make it more comfortable for them. This whole process according to Coach John is to learn about the community including the church and their needs.

Finally, Coach John talked briefly about the project we will choose. It is like pouring everything into a funnel. A lot goes in but it comes out slowly so you have time to look at it all and it gives you time to evaluate what is our true direction and project we wish to choose.

The cohort team set our next meeting for [Tuesday June 18, 2024, 6:00pm- 7:30pm](#) @ Plank Chapel UMC. Coach John reminded each cohort member to read Sections 5 & 6 before the next meeting and save the [July 13th](#) date for the upcoming Regional Gathering of the Connect Church.

Thank you and please continue to keep the Connect Church 2024 in your prayers!

Pastor Edgar

CHANGE BUCKET & RAINBOW COVENANT

The Change Bucket for the next five months 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](#))





Journey, the new experience for children and youth at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church, got off to a successful launch May 19 as seven youngsters attended.

For an enthusiastic kickoff, the group met outside to witness soda launched into the air as Mentos candy was dropped into a pair of 2-liter bottles of Diet Coke. The science behind the interaction of the carbonated drink and candy was explained prior to the experiment.

Everyone moved inside for a welcome and testimonial as to how we are vessels for God's work to be accomplished. A team-building exercise - children teamed with youth - followed as the kids were challenged to make balloons sail down 10 feet of twine.

Outdoor activities followed with group games such as cornhole and four square the most popular. Contemporary and Christian rock music was played during the games.

Returning indoors, the group finished up with Uno card games, art projects and time to interact with the Journey leadership team.

A meal of hot dogs, potato chips and dip, fresh fruit, cupcakes, juice and bottled water rounded out the gathering with a closing message and prayer from Pastor Edgar.

The kids were given goody bags as they departed.

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

Children and youth ages 5-18 are invited to attend the next Journey at 4 p.m., Sunday, June 23. Attendees are encouraged to invite friends in either age group. There will be music, games, food and storytelling. There is no fee to attend.

Registration forms are available at plankchapel.org or by emailing plankchapeljourney@gmail.com.

If you would like to provide or help provide a meal for Journey, please contact Lora Young at [336-504-7247](tel:336-504-7247).



"Journey" Youth Group Registration Form

Participant's First Name _____

Last Name _____

Age _____

Address _____

By signing this form you agree that the above named child may participate in "Journey" Youth Group functions at Plank Chapel United Methodist Church. In addition, you have read and consent to the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Youth Code of Conduct as outlined at Plankchapel.org.

Transportation to and from youth events at the church is the responsibility of parents/legal guardians named on this form.

Name of parent or legal guardian (please print) _____

Relationship to participating child _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Contact phone _____

Please complete the required Patent/Guardian Consent form, which includes emergency contact and medical/allergy information, which is attached to this registration or available on the church website.

Plank Chapel United Methodist Church does not share personal information.



Journey
 - The Adventure Begins!
 Open Invitation To Children & Youth:
 Ages 5-18 May Attend
 4 p.m., Sunday, May 19

* Music * Games * Food * Storytelling
FREE event! Pre-registration required at
plankchapeljourney@gmail.com

'Journey' is a safe and caring space where children and youth can encounter the love of Christ Jesus through "becoming, belonging and believing."
 Plank Chapel United Methodist Church, 3047 Bobbitt Road, Kittrell, NC 27544
plankchapel.org



PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR

Let's sing praise to the Lord!
Plank Chapel UMC Choir
meets for practice every 2nd
and 4th Wednesday of the
month-- [June 12th](#) & 26th. If
you are musically inclined and
willing to offer your gifts
and talents, we would love to
have you join the choir!

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 June
2nd](#), 9th, 23rd & 30th.

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:(252)492-0624).



Class 2024 Graduates!!

**Austyn Marie Abbott- Bachelor of Science in
Nursing, Liberty University**

**Kristina Esther Gaid De Jesus- Bachelor of
Arts in Education,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**Avery Blake Thomas- Bachelor of Science in
Hospitality Management,
East Carolina University**



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, June 19th, 10:00am](#) and every third Wednesday of the month. Bring your family and

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.



COMMUNICATIONS
United Methodist Communications

During the past several weeks, much has been written and said about our United Methodist Church. To help your congregation discern fact from fiction, we've prepared a set of talking points. Equip yourself with this essential information to inspire and affirm your congregation.

TALKING POINTS

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church™

- United Methodists are people of God who, across the connection, share a common mission and values.
- The United Methodist Church transcends geography, borders, barriers and differences.
- Founded on a Wesleyan theology of grace, we are people of faith who experience and extend the love and grace of God as we serve our neighbors near and far.
- United Methodists are anchored in Scripture and committed to a discipleship that is grounded in the love, teachings and example of Jesus Christ.
- The United Methodist Church is a diverse worldwide church serving all people, where everyone belongs and can be fully included and regarded as God's beloved.
- As John Wesley said,
*"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?
May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?
Without all doubt, we may."*
- We are moving forward with renewed hope and a focus on mission and ministry as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- We proudly claim that we are a people with open hearts, open minds and open doors.

Fresh Expressions Movement

By Rev. Edgar DeJesus



I'm excited to share with you about a new Spirit-led, organic and renewal movement that is being birthed in the North Carolina Conference and the connectional United Methodist Church-- the "Fresh Expressions". The Discipleship Ministries defines "Fresh Expressions" as "a distinctly Wesleyan Spirit-lead movement of new Christian communities that serve the present age. We have a singular focus— to cultivate communities of love and grace for people neglected by the church. We are seeking to be the church with new people, in new places, and in new ways." In other words, Fresh Expressions is a new way of being the church. It's missional, contextual, formational and ecclesial. It's a new way of reaching out to new and diverse people for Christ.



"Fresh Expressions" is something God planted in my heart when I was growing up in the Philippines and long before I knew it, something like God's prevenient grace at work through me! I had this Epiphany moment when I attended the first-ever Fresh Expressions UM National Gathering held on February 7th-9th in Charlotte, NC. What a life-giving and empowering experience to be part of this new movement!

After returning from Charlotte, I prayed and prayed, discerning where God is leading me to the next steps. And then the Spirit now nudged me to invite the NC Conference to lay the groundwork in organizing a network of pastors, laity and practitioners within the NC Conference who are already doing Fresh Expressions or who are curious and willing to bring the Fresh Expressions DNA to their local churches or special appointments.



The prayerful goal is to birth the Fresh Expressions NC Network—a diverse, core group of courageous, boundary-breaking leaders from the NC Conference committed to champion Fresh Expressions; and to organize a network of support to the leaders and churches who are already embodying Fresh Expressions or who are curious and committed to bring Fresh Expressions to their local churches or special appointments.

On March 11th, we had our first successful Fresh Expressions NC Network Virtual Informational Session. We were blessed to have Bishop Connie Shelton, Dr. Elaine Heath, Rev. Motoe Yamada Foor, Rev. Tim Catlett, Rev. Luke Edwards & Rev. Michael Beck providing leadership on the virtual session. And we thank God for those who signed-up to be involved with the Fresh Expressions movement.



Indeed, God is birthing something new in The United Methodist Church! The Pentecost Spirit is moving the people called Methodists in a mighty way—listening and learning to one another in re-imagining, collaborating, and creating a network of Fresh Expressions movement in the North Carolina Conference and beyond. We thank you for your courage, curiosity and commitment to journey with us on this new Spirit-led, organic and renewal movement. Please see the link: <https://fxum.org/>.

If you or anyone you know from the NC Conference may be interested in getting involved with Fresh Expressions movement, please email me at edejesus@nccumc.org. Finally, the next Fresh Expressions UM National Gathering will be on February 27-March 1, 2025 at Peachtree Road UMC in Atlanta. Looking forward to our shared journey and to what God's Spirit will do in the birthing of the Fresh Expressions NC Network! +



Plank Chapel Family,

Donald Rose faithfully teaches the Willing Workers Sunday School every [Sunday at 10 a.m.](#) We have about eight regular attendees but each lesson is recorded and I post the video on our [Plank Chapel YouTube](#) page that [Sunday afternoon](#).

I previously sent emails to announce when these lessons were online but my process is stable now so you can safely assume it will be online by supper time on Sunday. If you can't attend in person, please join us virtually at a time that works for you.

Let me know if you have problems or concerns.

4th SATURDAY FREE MARKET

[June 22nd](#) 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 [June 16th](#) and place them in the youth room. [On Friday, June 21st](#), we need volunteers to help set-up the free market in the Fellowship Hall.



The NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Team is trying something new!

Join us for our first-ever collaborative Zoom session, Exploring Safe Sanctuaries Together. This first session will focus on summer programs, VBS, and camps.

Bring your questions and your experience! Because there is abundant knowledge among our ministry leaders, we invite attendees to be a part of the discussion and offer their contextual solutions.

Join us as we explore together best practices for safer sanctuaries...

Exploring Safe Sanctuaries Together: Summer Programs, VBS, and Camps

Presented by the NC Conference Safe Sanctuaries Team and the Center for Leadership Excellence

Rev. Mamie Alley

Wednesday, June 5, 2024, Zoom 1pm - 2pm ET

<https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fncumc.us8.list->

AC 2024: Agenda, Speakers & Outreach Project



Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton

Along with presiding over the conference, Bishop Shelton will preach during Opening Worship on Thursday.

Rev. Dr. Sangwoo Kim

Rev. Dr. Sangwoo Kim is the Associate Dean for Vocational Formation, the Senior Director of the Methodist House, and an Administrative Faculty member at Duke Divinity School.

Rev. Kim will preach during the Ordering of Ministry Service [on Saturday morning](#).



Rev. Jon Strother

Rev. Jon Strother is the District Superintendent in the Beacon and Sound Districts.

Rev. Strother will preach during the Memorial Service [on Friday morning](#).

Rev. Molly White

Rev. Molly White serves at Hayes Barton UMC in Raleigh, NC.

Rev. White will teach during the Peace-Building plenary session [on Friday afternoon](#).



Bishop Paul Leeland

Bishop Paul Leeland will be at Annual Conference assisting Bishop Shelton.

Rev. Jeff Campbell

Rev. Jeff Campbell is the Chief Executive Officer / General Secretary at Discipleship Ministries.

Rev. Campbell will speak [on Thursday afternoon](#).



Outreach Project

This year's collection of items at Annual Conference in Greenville will center around Menstrual Hygiene Kits. These kits are distributed at times of natural disaster when such supplies are hard to access. Also, kits are distributed in communities in many countries where girls and women are not able to go to school or work because of the lack of access to these items.

We are asking members of Annual Conference to bring completed Menstrual Hygiene Kits to our gathering in June in Greenville. Alternatively, members might bring any of the kit items which will become part of the kits at a later time.

Menstrual Hygiene Kit Materials Needed:

- Two, 2 oz bottles of hand sanitizer
- Three, 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- 10 tampons (5 regular and 5 super)
 - unscented
- 10 Sanitary pads (long, super, ultra thin)
 - unscented
- Bath soap (3oz bar or larger)
 - No Ivory or Jergens soap
 - Do not remove from packaging
- One pack of flushable wipes (42 count)
 - unscented
- Six laundry detergent sheets or vending machine sized detergent boxes
- One, one-gallon sized resealable bag

Our goal is to have enough materials to make 1,000 kits. The kits will be used locally and globally this year.

Assembly Instructions

Menstrual Hygiene Kit Materials

- One one-gallon size re-sealable bag
- Two 2 oz. bottle hand sanitizer
- Three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- One travel pack of wet ones
- 10 Tampons (5 regular and 5 super absorbency)
 - Unscented
- 10 Sanitary Napkins
 - Unscented
 - Long super ultra-thin
- Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger)
 - No Ivory or Jergen's soap
 - Do not remove from packaging
- One pack of flushable wipes (42 count)
 - Unscented
- Six laundry detergent sheets
 - Laundry detergent sheets should be placed inside of a small plastic storage bag prior to being added to the kit

Assembly Directions

- Start with a one-gallon resealable bag.
- Place one pack of the flushable wipes and wet wipes in the bag.
- Place three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags and the 10 sanitary napkins in the bag.
- Then, add the smaller items in the plastic bag, remove air, and seal.

Important Notes

- All items must be new.
- Do not wash any of the items as they will no longer be considered new.
- Do not include any personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits.
- Contents of kits or the containers of kits should not be imprinted with cartoon characters, advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage symbols.





Pastoral Statement on the General Conference

Pentecost greetings in the Name of our Risen Savior!

The postponed 2020 General Conference met in Charlotte, NC from April 23 to May 4, 2024 and attended by Bishops, delegates, missionaries and guests from more than forty nations across the world. After much prayerful discernment, I would like to share with you my reflection and understanding about some of the outcomes of the General Conference and how we would move forward as a congregation in the light of the decisions of the General Conference.

First and foremost, no doctrine has been changed for The United Methodist Church. Our doctrine is found in the Book of Discipline, 2016 (BOD) pp.65-78. These doctrines were established in 1784 and have never changed. They can't change because of Section III of the Constitution, Restrictive Rules #1, 2, & 5 which state that our Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, and General Rules shall not be revoked, altered or changed. In other words, no doctrine was changed at the General Conference.

Second, I have been attending the General Conference since 2000 and in previous General Conferences, they were very divisive and confrontational with conservatives and progressives supporting their agenda and working against one another. With God's grace, none of these happened in Charlotte. The Holy Spirit is powerfully manifested throughout the worship and legislative gatherings, and were intensely soaked with prayers.

Third, one of the major changes approved by the General Conference was the proposal on "Regionalization" where each region (i.e. US, Africa, Europe, etc.) of The United Methodist Church can have unique Book of Discipline components and means of functioning. This allows our global denomination to be more equitable in its decision-making and more relevant to its ministry context. Since this is a constitutional amendment, it needs to be ratified by two-thirds of all annual conferences worldwide at their 2024-2025 meetings.

Fourth, the other landmark decision at the General Conference was the removal of the restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that was “harmful to the LGBTQ+ community”. This change allows churches and clergy to operate “according to their conscience, without consequence”. In other words, the General Conference honored the freedom and conscience of local churches to bear witness to the love of Christ in their own contexts and communities.

Fifth, I want to emphasize that the decision of the General Conference to eliminate the restrictive language from the Book of Discipline does not change my personal beliefs and my conviction. I will still uphold my conviction that God’s design for marriage is between a man and a woman. Therefore, I will exercise my disciplinary right to refuse officiating a same-sex marriage under my current and future appointments. The General Conference adopted a statement protecting the rights of clergy to refuse to officiate on any marriage or union. “No pastor is going to be forced to do a same-sex wedding if it goes against their convictions, nor are churches going to be required to host a same-sex wedding.” “Every church can set their own policies.”

Sixth, we are a welcoming and diverse church composed of traditionalists, progressives and centrists. But there has always been a sense of grace about differences in our theological perspective, and our mission remains clear: “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We shall continue to commit ourselves in strengthening both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC where the Word is preached and Christ is offered to all people, and where the table is set before all who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Seventh and finally, I invite both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC to “keep the main thing the main thing”— the centrality of our faith in Jesus Christ who draws us into profound community with one another in love and unity to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to participate in God’s on-going mission to redeem and restore a broken and a hurting world.

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Edgar De Jesus

SENIOR CIRCLE NEWSLETTER MAY 15, 2024

Who would have thought that the Senior Circle would be traveling to Iceland on May 15th? Thanks to Ron and Nancy Gustafson we didn't even have to pack our bags. They began by performing a song Ron had written about God's unconditional love. Nancy then read a passage from Psalms that praised God for His magnificent creation. After the devotion, they took us on a virtual tour of Iceland which they had visited in March.

How can one describe the images Ron and Nancy shared of this unique country? It is known as "the land of fire and ice because of the contrasting natural elements. It has some of the world's most active volcanoes and a very good alert system for its citizens but it also has some of the largest glaciers in Europe. The landscape is covered in snowcapped mountains, rushing waterfalls, rock caves, ice caves, and geysers.

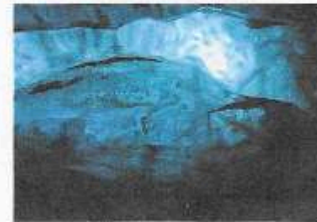
The population of the country is 376,500 with 63% living in the capital region around Keykjavik which is about 105 square miles. Iceland's entire population is about the same as the city of Los Angeles. The entire country is about the same size as Kentucky or Virginia. It is said you can drive across the country in roughly 17 hours. Known for its many natural wonders, tourism has become the number one industry in recent years replacing the fishing industry. ICELAND IS SO UNIQUE. THE PICTURES SAY IT BETTER THAN WORDS.



4,145 NAMED MOUNTAINS INCLUDING SNOWCAPPED PEAKS AND GLACIER CAPPED VOLCANOES



10,000 WATERFALLS



VOLCANIC, GLACIAL, AND ICE CAVES



TURF CHURCH



TREE OF PRAYERS MADE WITH YARN



RON AND NANCY GUSTAFSON, WE THANK YOU.

We learned about customs, history, lore, saw churches and much more. To know there is such a country, so different from our own, expanded our horizons and impressed upon us how great and diverse God's creation truly is.



EVERYONE IN SENIOR CIRCLE IS INVITED TO A BIRTHDAY PARTY

FOR : SUSIE BEAL WHO WILL BE 92 THIS MONTH
WHERE: PLANK CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP HALL
WHEN: SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST FROM 2 TO 4
HOSTED BY : HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS



WITH LOVE,
YOUR FRIENDS AT SENIOR CIRCLE



MAY 6-9 TENT REVIVAL
 MUSIC AND PREACHING NIGHTLY
 MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY

 FRANK BOSSAMON FREEDOM LIFE CHOIR	 RADFORD FRAZIER REVIVE COG CHOIR	 ESTON BAILEY UNASHAMED QUARTET	 RONNIE MORTON GREATER JOY SPIRITUALS
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6:30PM-8:30PM
KITTRELL COMMUNITY CENTER
27 W. MAIN ST. KITTRELL, NC
 ONE GROUP FOR ONE PURPOSE
 TO LEAD PEOPLE TO CHRIST



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 Graduate Recognition Sunday 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	27 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	28 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	29	30 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	31	Jun 1
2	3 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	4 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	5 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeting	6 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	7 6pm Stronger Together-Exercises	8
9 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	10 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	11 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	12 (12:00am) Annual conference - Greenville Convention Center 303 Greenville Blvd SW, Greenville, NC 27834, United States 3pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeting	13 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	14 6pm Stronger Together-Exercises	15
16 8am UMM Breakfast Fellowship 10am Sunday School 11am Worship 3pm UWF	17 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	18 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	19 6pm Connect Church Mtg 10am Senior Circle 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeting	20 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	21 6pm Stronger Together-Exercises	22 9am Free Market Saturday
23 Journey Youth - Plank Chapel, 3	24 Pastor Edgar's Day Off	25 Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC	26 3pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeting	27 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	28 6pm Stronger Together-Exercises	29
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 Meeting	4 Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC	5 6pm Stronger Together-Exercises	6