

# CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts / Open Minds / Wide Open Doors



## Pastor's Note

How do we reach out to new and diverse people for Jesus Christ who might never come to a Sunday church service? Fresh Expression! What is Fresh Expression? Rev. Luke Edwards, a Pastor in the Western North Carolina Conference, summarized what a Fresh Expression is.

- Fresh Expression is a new form of church designed for spiritually open people who are not already a part of church. Fresh Expressions meet people where they are on their spiritual journey. They typically gather in small groups where people can ask questions, share their thoughts and experiences, and grow alongside others in intimate community.
- Fresh Expression meets outside of the church building. A gathering typically occurs in public spaces, homes, cafes or the outdoors. We follow the example of Jesus and go to the people with whom we'd like to connect.
- Fresh Expression often gathers around shared interests, passions or life experiences. Community is formed around shared interests like kayaking, or shared passions like ecological justice, or shared life experiences like single parenthood. Out of these connections we look for opportunities to form social and spiritual community.
- Fresh Expression is lay-led and clergy supported. Typically, a team of 2-3 people from a church come together to listen to the community and form a gathering. Clergy offer support to the Fresh Expression leaders, whether that is coaching, prayer or administering the sacraments.

Fresh Expression is already taking place at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. We have the “Dinner Church” at Bethel UMC that meets once-a-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. Most of the folks that come to the “Dinner Church” don’t usually come on Sunday morning service at Bethel UMC.

On the other hand, we have “Journey” and “The Gathering” at Plank Chapel UMC. Both of them are Fresh Expressions that meet once-a-month, connecting to a particular group of people who are not coming to Sunday worship service and yet, they are looking for a place to belong and a place where they can engage in building relationships and grow their faith in God. Just last week, the Connect Church Team and volunteers who are involved with “The Gathering” met for a Planning Session to assess, rethink and develop future plans. We agreed that “The Gathering” is a new way of being the church. We also agreed that many people in the community are coming to “The Gathering” because it’s creating a space where everyone belongs, where they experience authentic relationships, and where they meet their spiritual, emotional and physical needs. And we also agreed that “The Gathering” requires committed lay volunteers, teamwork, collaboration and partnership with community organizations such as Salvation Army, Kittrell Fire Department, Community Watch, etc.

On the other hand, “Journey” is another Fresh Expression at Plank Chapel UMC that is reaching out to children and youth ages 5-18. Launched in May 2024, “Journey” is a safe and caring space where children and youth can encounter the love of Christ Jesus through “becoming, belonging and believing”. At last Sunday’s “Journey”, we had 19 kids and 12 adults who participated representing Bethel UMC, Flat Rock UMC and Plank Chapel UMC. Praise the Lord!

Therefore, this month of August, Bethel UMC and Plank Chapel UMC will participate with the 8-month Fresh Expressions Pathway sponsored by the Center for Leadership Excellence of the North Carolina Conference. We are now forming a Fresh Expressions Team composed of similarly minded leaders (from both Bethel UMC and Plank Chapel UMC) who believe that reaching people for Christ means forming relationships based on common interests and connections, helping others explore their faith. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Edgar. The kick-off event will be held on August 5th at the United Methodist building in Garner. Monthly coaching sessions will be on Zoom, the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm from September 2025 to June 2026, except for December.

Indeed, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to make disciples and to reach out to the lost. We must be willing to commit ourselves to join the search for those who don’t know Jesus and do whatever it takes to bring them into a transformative relationship with Jesus. This Pentecost season, I invite you to pray to God and commit to reach out to your families, co-workers and friends, and invite them to one of our Fresh Expressions. After all, church can happen anywhere, not just in the sanctuary!



## **The Journey to Faith: Helping People Consider Jesus**

The Evangelism and Discipleship Committee and the Center for Leadership Excellence present a workshop with Brent Campbell from InterVarsity Christian Fellowship...

September 9 @ 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

\*Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

St. James UMC  
2000 E 6th St  
Greenville, North Carolina 27858

### About the Workshop

Do you want to help your congregation approach evangelism with compassion and confidence? While everyone's journey is unique, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has learned that people often follow a predictable pattern toward faith called the 5 Thresholds: trusting a Christian, becoming curious, opening up to change, seeking after God, and entering the Kingdom. Come learn this pattern and some practical tools to address the needs of people at each threshold and at every age and stage of life.

On September 9, we'll work through strategies for identifying where people are on their spiritual journey and helping them journey through the first three thresholds in person. Then, we'll present follow-up webinars to continue the conversation about the fourth and fifth thresholds. With this training, you'll have practical tools to offer to your congregation that will empower them to be evangelists at work, school, and throughout the community.

## **Journey Welcomes Youngsters From Two Churches During July Gathering**

Journey children and youth met Sunday, July 27, with 19 youngsters in attendance for a gathering filled with activities.

Leadership team member Scott Ritchey was busy at the registration table welcoming new participants from Bethel United Methodist Church - the sister congregation of Plank Chapel - as well as youth from Flat Rock United Methodist Church in Henderson.

Following an opening prayer by Wayne Young, everyone was introduced during an ice-breaker coordinated by Lora Young and then the kids gathered in a large circle for a round of hot potato.

The youngsters then took their seats to decorate and construct kite kits. Games followed, including four square, corn hole and UNO.

Chicken nuggets, macaroni and cheese, potato chips, watermelon and cantaloupe were served during the wrap-up meal with Nancy Gustafson providing a devotional from Isaiah 40:31.

Journey will conduct a fieldtrip on Sunday, Aug. 24, to Camp Chestnut Ridge in Efland, North Carolina. The facility is part of the NC United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministries, Inc.

The Journey leadership team is currently planning fall events, including the Second Annual Trunk or Treat on the church lawn on Sunday, Oct. 26. This community event, 4 to 6 p.m., is free and open to children ages 15 and under. A trunk or treat trail will include candy, games, music and a prize table. Children may wear their Halloween costumes.

Church members as well as community organizations and businesses are encouraged to participate in trunk or treat event. Contact Ron Gustafson at 203-641-2889 for more information.

**2025 CHARGE CONFERENCE 2025**

**The 2025 Charge Conference is set on Sunday, October 19, 2025, 6:00pm at Trinity UMC. In preparation, here some important dates to remember:**

**August 7, September 2 & 9, 2025- Nominations Team meets to recommend the 2026 Lay Leadership**

**Early September 2025 – Pastor-Parish Relations Team meets to recommend the 2026 Clergy Compensation & finalize the 2025 State of the Church Report**

**September 17, 2025 – Finance Team meets to finalize the 2026 Church Budget**

**September 24, 2025 – Church Council approves the 2026 Church Budget, 2026 Clergy Compensation & 2025 Lay Leadership**

**October 5, 2025 – Deadline of all the 2025 Charge Conference Paperworks**

**October 19, 2025, 6:00pm, Trinity UMC – 2025 Charge Conference**

The next Journey gathering at Plank Chapel will be 4 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 28. Children and youth ages 5 to 18 may participate.

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





**CHANGE BUCKET**

The August 2025 Change Bucket has been designated for Rise Against Hunger-- an international hunger relief non-profit organization that coordinates the packaging and distribution of food and other aid to people in developing nations. It was founded as Stop Hunger Now in 1998 by Ray Buchanan and John Hewitt. Rise Against Hunger mobilizes more than 400,000 volunteers each year to package meals for people in need around the globe.

**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 August 3rd, 10th & 31st. There will be no "Awakenings" on August 17th & 24th.

**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.



"Journey,' the children and youth outreach program at Plank Chapel, holds gatherings on the fourth Sunday of the month and provides a meal at 5:30 p.m. for kids in attendance. If you would like to contribute a meal to assist the 'Journey' program, we have openings for:

**July and September.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Month selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to Lora Young or Ron Gustafson, or contact Lora at 336-504-7247.

Suggestions: Pizza, chicken tenders, veggies, fresh fruit, sandwiches, tacos,

potato chips. (No nut products, please)

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

### **KOFFEE KORNER**

"Koffee Korner"-- a women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month. We will meet on August 6th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, please contact Nancy Gustafson @ 203-232-1145.

### **STRONGER TOGETHER" EXERCISE CLASS**

The "Stronger Together" Exercise Class meets every Monday & Thursday @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to everyone. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ 252-915-7005.

### **PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR**

If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir! We have Choir Practice every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 3:00pm (August 13th & 27th).

### **UNITED METHODIST MEN**

United Methodist Men Breakfast Fellowship will be held on Sunday, August 17th, 8:00am-9:00am. All men are invited!

## **CLERGY EDUCATION**

Continuing Education for Clergy

The North Carolina Conference and the UMC Book of Discipline require the church to make "provision for time and financial support of continuing education for ministry, professional development, formation and spiritual growth for the pastors serving their primary appointment in that local church."

Therefore, I would like to share Pastor Edgar's Continuing Education events this summer for your prayers and support.

### **NAFAUM 18th Convocation July 30th-August 2, 2025, California, USA**

### **World Methodist Council Steering Committee Meeting August 11-15, 2025, Accra, Ghana**

### **Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics & Management for an Economy of Life August 16-30, 2025, Seoul, Korea**

Note: All travel, lodging and other costs related to the above continuing education events are paid through the generosity of the sponsoring organizations such as WesleyMen, World Methodist Council, World Council of Churches, NC Conference and personal funds.)

Please note that there are two Sundays that I will be away from the pulpit at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. Rev. Jenny Wilson will preach on August 17th. While Garry Dickerson will preach on August 24th.

Regarding pastoral care, Garry Dickerson (919-691-6971) will be on call for July 30th-August 2nd. While Rev. Carol Dean (919-801-7181) will serve as Pastor-on-Call from August 11th-30th.

I'm grateful to God for the prayers and support of our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. David Joyner. I'm also grateful to Rev. Jenny Wilson, Rev. Carol Dean & Garry Dickerson for helping me with pastoral care and preaching while I'm away. Finally, I'm **grateful to** God for Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC for your continuing prayers and support. Thanks be to God!

### **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 21st, 3:00pm. All women are invited!

### **Prayer Requests**

Tim Smith, Frances Beckham, Faye Moss, Ricky Satterwhite, Sammy Burgess, Bessie Newman, Fawn Westmoreland, Rose Marshall, Alston Monroe, Ronnie Currin, Jeanette Weaver, Kerry Alexander, Cecil Brown, Bryant Bobbitt, Freddie Oettinger, Donald Rose McGhee, Joni Ayers, Bill Rohr, Jamie Kearney, Debbie Fleming, Karin Driver, Bonnie Allgood, Will Pernell, Allison Tackett, Penny Howard, Connor Hicks, Mallon Twisdale, Margaret Hicks' sister & brother-in-law, Kittrell community, our nation and the world. Shut-Ins: John 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).)



Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week from 7:00pm-7:30pm. We will meet on August 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)*

Please see the Zoom link below.

Vernon Ritchey is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: PCUMC Prayer Meeting

Time: Jul 30, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Wed, until Aug 27, 2025, 5 occurrence(s)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78612158635?pwd=7tffyMNbhYXO8A2jnpIVcuUaSOE7hQ.1>

### JULY SENIOR CIRCLE 2025



The July Senior Circle meeting was full of summer blessings. Pastor Edgar surprised us with a video presentation of the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness", performed by Carrie Underwood. He followed the stirring performance with a devotion about trusting in a faithful God who is Lord of our lives and who directs our paths in moments of trials and uncertainty as well as joy.

After the devotion Cristina De Jesus, Reverend Edgar's daughter, spoke to us about her work with the Global Missions ministry in Spain. The main purpose of the ministry is to address issues of poverty, education, and justice. We saw pictures of the many children she worked with during her seven months mission trip. We also learned that she traveled to Germany where she received a certificate of commissioning and will be leaving for the Philippines to help coordinate programs for marginalized communities, focusing on street children and poverty.

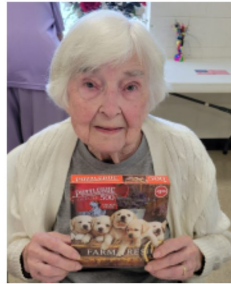


*Following Cristina's presentation, it was time for BINGO.*



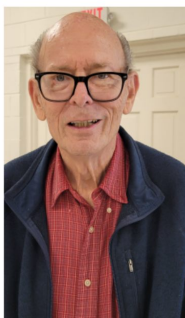
*Don Rose McGhee was the caller for many fast paced games of Bingo.*

*Betty Stanton was the first to fill her entire card.*



*Sue Beal was the only player brave enough to claim a miniature 500 piece puzzle as a prize.*

*Everyone was a winner at this Bingo game. Janet Bobbitt won sooooo many times she started giving prizes away. The prize table was full of everything from snacks, to stationery supplies, to grooming products, to yard ornaments, household organizers, kitchen towels, and more. Many thanks to those who donated gifts and made it possible to play so many games.*



### Happy July Birthday

*Happy birthday wishes to Richard Roberts, Alice Braswell and Roxie Kearney. We had fun singing happy birthday and celebrating with our friends. This is a new "tradition" we hope to continue. You can never have too many celebrations with friends.*

*With Love,*

*Your Friends at Senior Circle*



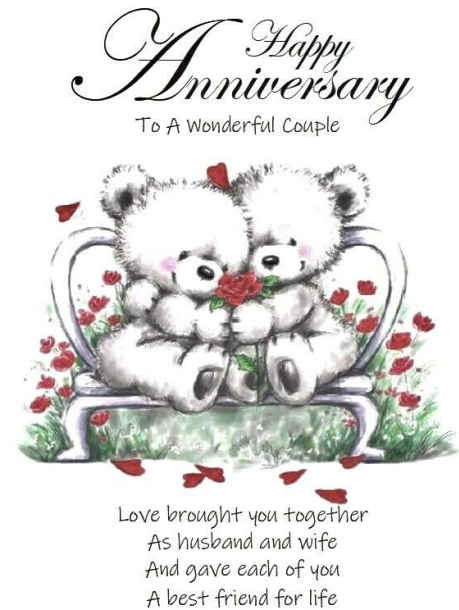
**Happy Birthday!!**

**Michelle Denton - August 4th**  
**Daryl Spencer - August 6th**  
**Nicole Koons Lewis - August 6th**  
**Linda Rowland - August 8th**  
**Isabella Hernandez - August 10th**  
**Lori Wilson Miller - August 15th**  
**Ann Vanzandt - August 19th**  
**Lora Young - August 20th**  
**Charlie Marie Rowland - August 25th**  
**Patrick Medlin - August 26th**  
**Makayla Beckham - August 27th**  
**Donald Rose McGhee - August 29th**  
**Martha Rowland - Martha Rowland**



**Happy Anniversary!!**

**Richard and Sally Coghill - August 10th.**  
**Scott and Jennifer Finch - August 15th.**





| Sun  | Mon   | Tue  | Wed  | Thu   | Fri | Sat                   |
|--|---|--|--|---|-----|-----------------------|
| 27   | 28  | 29   | 30   | 31  | 1   | 2                     |
| 8am - Awakenings @<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @<br>4pm - Journey Youth @  | Pastor Edgar's Day Off<br>6pm - Stronger Together-                          | Pastor Edgar@Bethel                              | Pastor Edgar at NAF-AUM (California)<br>7pm - PCUMC Prayer | 6pm - Stronger Together-                                    |     |                       |
| 3  | 4   | 5  | 6  | 7   | 8   | 9                     |
| 8am - Awakenings @<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @   | Pastor Edgar's Day Off<br>6pm - Finance Meeting<br>6pm - Stronger Together- | Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC<br>Nominations Meet- tbd | 10am - Coffee Corner @<br>7pm - PCUMC Prayer               | Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC<br>6pm - Stronger Together- |     | Nominations Team Meet |
| 10   | 11  | 12   | 13   | 14  | 15  | 16                    |
| 8am - Awakenings @<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @   | Pastor Edgar at WMC (Ghana)<br>6pm - Stronger Together-                     |  | 3pm - Choir Rehearsal<br>7pm - PCUMC Prayer                | 6pm - Stronger Together-                                    |     | Pastor Edgar at       |
| 17   | 18  | 19   | 20   | 21  | 22  | 23                    |
| Pastor Edgar at Ecumenical School (Korea)<br>Rev. Jenny Wilson Guest<br>8am - UMMI Breakfast<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @<br>3pm - UWF @ Parlor | 6pm - Stronger Together-  |  | 10am - Senior Circle @<br>7pm - PCUMC Prayer               | 6pm - Stronger Together-                                    |     |                       |
| 24   | 25  | 26   | 27   | 28  | 29  | 30                    |
| Pastor Edgar at Ecumenical School (Korea)<br>Garry Dickerson Guest<br>8am - Awakenings @<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @<br>4pm - Journey Youth @  | 6pm - Stronger Together-  |  | 3pm - Choir Rehearsal<br>7pm - PCUMC Prayer                | 6pm - Stronger Together-                                    |     |                       |
| 31   | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4   | 5   | 6                     |
| 8am - Awakenings @<br>10am - Sunday School @<br>11am - Worship @   | Pastor Edgar's Day Off<br>6pm - Stronger Together-                          | Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC<br>Nominations Meet-tbd  | 10am - Coffee Corner @<br>7pm - Prayer Group Zoom          | Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC<br>6pm - Stronger Together- |     | 4pm - The Gathering @ |