

CHAPEL CHATTER

To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ and Impact the Community Through Faith and Action



Pastor's Note

Keep scattering seeds! These are the words that keep coming into my mind in the middle of this beautiful warm summer. And I can't help but to go back to the Bible and Jesus' story about the Parable of the Sower recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the Gospel, a farmer goes out to scatter or sow the seeds across his field. As he scatters the seed, it falls on several kinds of ground. Some fall along the path and are quickly eaten by birds. Some plants grow on rocky soil where they spring up quickly but wither because the roots cannot go deep. Other seeds fall among thorns that grow up and choke the young plants. But some seeds fall on good soil, producing a crop thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times what was planted.

Jesus later explains that the seed represents the Word of God, and the different soils represent the various ways people receive it. As modern-day readers, we tend to focus on identifying which soil best represents our own hearts. But there is another part of the story that is easy to overlook. The sower keeps scattering seeds. He does not stop when some seed falls on the path. He does not hold back when seed lands among rocks or thorns. He scatters the seed everywhere, trusting that some of it will find good soil and produce a harvest far greater than what was planted.

This parable reminds us that sharing the good news of Jesus does not depend on knowing how every person will respond. Some will ignore it. Some will receive it for a moment and then walk away. Some will allow other concerns to crowd it out. But some will hear the Word, receive it, and bear fruit beyond anything we could imagine. In other words, our calling is not to control the soil. Our calling is to scatter seeds.

We scatter seeds despite having little control over the lives of those people we are reaching out to. We scatter seeds even though sometimes, it seems there's so much work to be done and we don't know when they will bear fruits. We scatter seeds hopefully without judgment about the receptivity of the ground because we never know where it will take root. As a Christian community, we scatter seeds to children and young people in the "Journey" who are facing challenges at home, in schools and in their neighborhood. We scatter seeds to people going to the "Dinner Church" or "The Gathering" who are lonely, disconnected and looking for a place to belong. Sometimes we can only pray that the thorns don't overwhelm them, but still, we must keep scattering seeds.

We keep sharing Jesus and living out our faith in everyday moments. We keep scattering seeds of the Kingdom. And then we wait and watch. A seed doesn't bloom to harvest instantly. There is no "on-off" switch. The seed takes time to nurture, grow, and mature through a natural organic process. That is why scattering seeds takes a tremendous amount of patience. The sower takes action now knowing whether all the factors will be favorable to producing a crop. As the days and weeks go by, he may get discouraged wondering if there will be a crop. He probably sees the presence of a crop as the measure of his success. What if the measure of our success is not in the size of the crop? What if our success is determined by whether we have scattered the seeds? In some cases, we won't see the outcome of our efforts right away. But the success is in scattering the seeds.

Same true with the church. There is not a quick fix in revitalizing and growing a church. We got to keep scattering seeds, and have the patience and resilience in the waiting and watching. We have to keep focusing on God's mission— to make disciples of Jesus Christ, to be intentional in reaching out to new and diverse people, to offer a place of belonging and hospitality and to build authentic relationships centered in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Are you scattering seeds of the Kingdom? Do you wait and watch with patience and resilience? Keep pressing on! The road may be hard and obstacles may feel overwhelming, but every step forward matters. The Bible promises us that ultimately, God will bring the harvest. Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."* (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Keep scattering the seeds! Wait and watch! And let us completely trust God who will bring the harvest



Plank Chapel UMC Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

Plank Chapel UMC's Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) is here to build and maintain a strong positive relationship between staff and congregation to fulfill the mission of the church "to make disciples of Jesus Christ and impact the community through faith in action.

According to the UMC Book of Discipline 2024 (§ 258), "The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts, maintaining holistic health and work-life balance, and setting priorities for leadership and service." The PPRC works with Pastor Edgar and is devoted to encourage, strengthen, support the pastor, church staff and their families. It is the committee's charge to openly communicate with the pastor, church staff and congregation.

Therefore, we encourage the congregation to reach out to PPRC with any questions or concerns so that might be addressed in an orderly fashion. Please reference the PPRC members below.

Respectfully,

Ron Gustafson
Chairperson
Plank Chapel UMC PPRC

Ron Gustafson (203) 641-2889 rongus72@gmail.com
Beth Heaton (252) 425-5565 Seh754@yahoo.com
Kris Edwards (252) 425-5902 Kristen2305@hotmail.com
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Larraine Abbott (252) 432-4748 jtalsa@centurylink.net
Mike Ranes (252) 762-8840 mhranes@hotmail.com
Lay Leader: Peggy Hernandez (252) 204-3045 sapphireblue1027@yahoo.com

PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR

Choir Practice is every Wednesday, 7:00pm. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir! Please contact Janet Bobbitt if you are interested.

ACOLYTE TRAINING

Pastor Edgar led an Acolyte Training with young people last July 30th. We may offer another training in September as needed. Please contact Pastor Edgar if you know any young people interested in serving as Acolyte.

NEW BOOK CLUB

Plank Chapel UMC is birthing a New Book Club. We meet every third Sunday of the month. Our next meeting will be on August 16th, 4:15pm in the Fellowship Hall. We are studying together the "Twelve Extraordinary Women" by Rev. John MacArthur. All who are interested are welcome to join.



The 2026 Charge Conference is set on Sunday, November 1, 2026, 5:00pm. Plank Chapel UMC will be one of the host churches for this year's Charge Conference.

In preparation, here are the important meeting dates to remember:

September 8th & 15th, 6:00pm - Nominations & Leadership Development Team Meeting to finalize slate of 2027 Lay Leadership.

September 29th, 6:00pm - Pastor-Parish Relations Team Meeting to recommend the 2027 Clergy Compensation and finalize the 2026 State of the Church Report.

October 6th, 6:00pm - Finance Team Meeting to finalize the 2027 Church Budget.

October 6th, 7:00 pm - Church Council Meeting to approve to approve the 2027 Church Budget, 2027 Clergy Compensation and 2027 Lay Leadership.

October 18th - Deadline of all the 2026 Charge Conference Paperworks

November 1st, 5:00pm @ Plank Chapel UMC - 2026 Charge Conference w/ Plank Chapel UMC, Bethel UMC, Trinity UMC & Louisburg UMC

PROJECT BE A BLESSING

"Project Be A Blessing" is a new outreach ministry of Plank Chapel UMC with the main goal of being the hands and feet of Christ to foster children in the community and church members who are in nursing homes and homebound. Currently, there are more than 10,000 children and teenagers in the foster care system in North Carolina. To support this ministry, please make your check payable to Plank Chapel UMC and note: "Project Be A Blessing". For more info, please contact Peggy Hernandez (Lay Leader) @ (252) 204-3045.

CHANGE BUCKET

Change Bucket for August 2026 has been designated for Karen Cheek (#S-00296). Karen is a Deaconess serving with Hope for Humanity (H4H), an ecumenical and interfaith mission of HOPE re-imagining all people as the image of God and of sacred value. Karen is a Court Navigator with the Family Justice Center of Alamance County, assisting victims of domestic violence as they go through the confusing and intimidating court process. For more information, please contact Karen @ kcheek@nccumc.org and phone: (336) 290-2916.

PASTOR EDGAR'S CONTINUING EDUCATION & VACATION 2026

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. Clergy members of the Annual Conference under appointment to local congregations shall receive one full month of vacation per calendar year. Vacation time shall include four (4) Sundays per year and shall be negotiated between the pastor and Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and may be taken in either segments adding up to one full month or as whole."

Therefore, here's Pastor Edgar's Continuing Education and Vacation this month of August for your prayers and support.

Convocation on Rural Church
August 3-5, 2026, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

2026 World Methodist Council Meeting
August 10-15, 2026, El Salvador

Doctor of Ministry Intensive Week
August 16-21, 2026, Dayton, Ohio

Pastor's Vacation
August 22-September 4, 2026

Please note that Rev. Jenny Wilson will preach on August 23 and Garry Dickerson on August 30. Also, Rev. Jenny Wilson will also serve as on-call for emergency pastoral care/needs from August 3-5 and August 22-September 4. While Rev. Keith Sexton will be on-call from August 10-22.

We give thanks to God for the prayers and support of our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Gloria Winston. We are also grateful to Rev. Jenny Wilson, Garry Dickerson & Rev. Keith Sexton for helping us with pastoral care and preaching. Finally, we are grateful to Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC for your continuing prayers and support. Thanks be to God!

AWAKENINGS

Renew, refresh 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 2nd & 9th (w/ Pastor Edgar), August 23rd (w/ Rev. Jenny Wilson) and August 30th (w/ Garry Dickerson).

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.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

On behalf of Plank Chapel UMC, we offer words of deep appreciation to all helpers and volunteers who cleaned-up the water in the church's Fellowship Hall last month due to heavy rain. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ!

LAY VISITATION TEAM

Biblical Mandate: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then he will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." ~ Matthew 25:35-36, 45

Plank Chapel UMC launched a new ministry called Lay Visitation Team composed of Lora Young, Julia Johnson, Beth Jones, Peggy Hernandez and Joni Ayers. They were commissioned on July 26th during the 11am Sunday Worship Service. We are grateful for their commitment and servanthood.

The team will complement the pastoral visitation and will focus on addressing the community's needs such as loneliness, connection and isolation. Pastor Edgar will continue visiting those who are sick and bereaved, in emergency situations and hospitals, and those who are in need of pastoral care. While the Lay Visitation Team will focus more on visiting those who are homebound, inactive members and people in the community.

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 a wonderful luncheon fellowship @ Plank Chapel UMC Fellowship Hall. This month's Senior Circle will be held on Wednesday, August 19th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited!

**BLESSING BOX MINISTRY**

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 launched the Blessing Box Ministry in 2022 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.



Prayer Requests

Bessie Newman, Tim Smith, Fawn Westmoreland, Kerry Alexander, Debbie Fleming, James Satterwhite, Karin & David Driver, Jay Fuller, Susie Beal, Marvin Daniel, Donna McDaniel, Arvelle Abbott, Mike Smith, Martha Rowland, Jeanette Weaver, Karen Lee Driver, Edward Woodlief, Bryant Bobbitt, Wayne Stegall, Dave Driver, Family of John Rogers, Maggie Economides, Kittrell community, our nation, earthquake in Venezuela & Japan, peace in the Middle East and the world. Shut-Ins: Sammy Burgess, Frances Beckham, Tim Smith, Martha Rowland, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee & Frances Roberts. (For prayer requests, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ edejesus@nccumc.org.)

KOFFEE KORNER

"Koffee Korner"-- a women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month. We will meet on August 5th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. For more information., please contact Nancy Gustafson @ (203) 232-1145.

WEDNESDAY ONLINE PRAYER MEETING

Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week from 7:00pm-7:30pm. We will meet on August 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th.

Please **see the Zoom** link below.



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

SENIOR CIRCLE JULY 15, 2026



Pastor Edgar opened the July meeting with a personal testimony about the goodness of God. He said Psalm 100 was a great comfort to him as he dealt with the pain of a kidney stone at the emergency room. He encouraged us to believe that the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations as spoken by the writer of Psalms. Relying on the word of God gave him strength and peace even in his pain.

After the devotion, it was time for the biannual Bingo game. Items donated by guests ranged from pints of fresh blueberries and homegrown potted plants to tasty snacks, wordsearch books, kitchenware, fire blankets, and stationery as well as many other items. Everyone was a winner. Special thanks to Elaine DeJesus for calling out the numbers. She did a great job.



DOOR PRIZES

Janet Bobbitt donated two jewel box doorprizes that looked like frogs, and they had a special message:

F - Fully
R - Rely
O - On
G - God



Pastor Edgar looks happy as he welcomes Elaine, Judy, and Kristina home from Ireland. We are looking forward to Kristina's program on Ireland in September.



We were happy Sue Beal was able to return after recovering from a fracture. God is good. We missed you.



It was a treat to see grandmom, Lyn Gaid, wearing souvenirs from her family's trip.

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY,

Alice Braswell, Roxie Kearney

Richard Roberts

and

Jay Fuller



HAPPY 250, AMERICA



Thanks to Sally Coghill's patriotic decorations and Mike Fuller's artwork, we were reminded of the freedoms we have in America and the special meaning of 1776.

*With Love, prayers and best wishes,
Your friends at Senior Circle*





Center for Leadership Excellence

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Edgar,

The Center for Leadership Excellence presents an online workshop with Margaret Brunson, *A Shared Path Forward: Consensus Building in the Church*.

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

12pm – 1:30pm ET

Zoom

About the Workshop

In the church, we are called to be one in the body of Christ...how does that translate when we are sitting at a conference table trying to decide whether to build a new sanctuary, where to allocate the budget, or who to hire to disciple our kids? It would be easy to “take a stand” on any one of these real-life decisions – but consensus building requires a different approach of deep listening, creativity, and a willingness to recognize Christ in one another...even when we don’t agree

Laity and clergy, we invite you to join in a workshop designed to help us act more like Christians. Learn to engage in faithful discussions and dialogue about issues that are central to the ministry and life of the church. Explore consensus-building frameworks that offer practical tools for navigating disagreement with grace, helping your congregation move from gridlock to shared discernment. You can find ways to honor each voice and navigate differences while maintaining the unity you and your congregation desire.

What You'll Gain

- A better understanding of consensus-building
- Insights into how to build consensus in your team or committee
- Practical strategies to align your leaders around articulated priorities

Who Should Attend

- Laity and clergy who are involved in decision-making
- Those who want to develop healthy relationships and patterns in their church meetings

About the Presenter

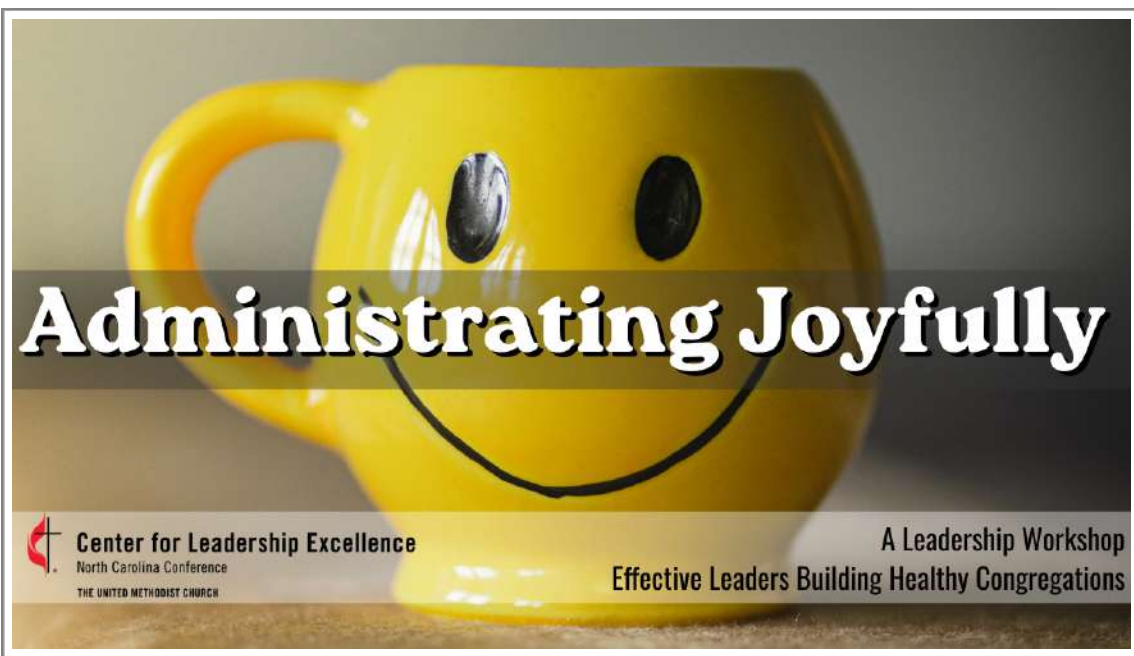
Dr. Margaret A. Brunson is a leader and luminary who considers brunch a verb, wellness a priority, dance floors sacred, and music one of life's greatest treasures. After a successful leadership career in healthcare and the nonprofit & public sector, she founded Illumined Leadership Solutions, a consulting and coaching firm that leads people to and through transformation.

As a thought leader, scholar, + practitioner, Dr. Margaret's passion guides leaders, executives, entrepreneurs, organizations, and businesses to and through transformative leadership practices and solutions that will lead to holistic success.

Dr. Margaret earned a BA in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Master of Public Administration from North Carolina Central University, and a Ph.D. in leadership studies from North Carolina A&T State University.



Center for Leadership Excellence
North Carolina Conference
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Edgar,

The Center for Leadership Excellence presents an online workshop with Jana Holiday, *Administrating Joyfully: How To Take Good Care Of Our People, Resources, and Projects*.

Tuesday, October 6, 2026
10am – 11:30am ET
Zoom

About the Workshop

In this workshop, we will look at a life-giving approach to administration as we talk about the implications of stewarding our people, resources, and projects with a particular posture. We will explore what it looks like to bring proper presence to our work, how to engage in administration with hospitality, and how bringing our imaginative capacity to our administrative work frees us to live in the fullness of our ministries.

This workshop will be both practical (we will talk about communication with servant leaders, managing capacity, and problem-solving), as well as provide mindsets and postures so that our administrative practices allow us and our churches to flourish.

What You'll Gain

- Helpful practices and postures so that administrative work is an expression of care for others
- An understanding of how imagination relates to administration
- An effective way to collaboratively solve problems through engaging different kinds of imagination

Who Should Attend

- Clergy and laity who want to improve processes and creatively solve problems
- Church administrative professionals and those who supervise others (paid and unpaid)
- Anyone who wants to view administration as serving joyfully!

About the Presenter

Jana Holiday is a consultant for theological education and church leadership/practice. She serves as an Adjunct Professor of Practical Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She completed her doctorate in educational studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Her dissertation research was on administrative imagination, a capacity leaders can develop to see new ways to solve problems. She spent 14 years working in college and seminary Student Life and 6 years as director of community life at a church in Chicagoland.

Jana grew up in Maryland, the oldest of four kids, and was very involved in church and school activities while growing up. After an unexplained year as a nursing major in college (Jana eventually realized that dealing with bodily fluids was going to be a problem), she became a philosophy major. Jana served at Black Forest Academy in Germany, and later taught high school and college, solidifying her love of developing young people. Jana enjoys hiking, painting, reading, and hanging out with her nephews and nieces. She is an Anglican, loves the church and finds working with its leaders to be a delightful calling. Jana's favorite thing to teach is whatever she happens to be presently thinking about—it could be "Administration for Ministry," "Educational Ministry," or something else related to learning and formation. Her book, *"Taking Good Care: Administration as Christian Formation,"* was released in 2026 by Eerdmans.



The Roofing Project of Plank Chapel UMC Parsonage is completed this week. Praise the Lord! We are deeply grateful for all your prayers and generous support. Special appreciation to the Board of Trustees, United Methodist Men and Greg Hunt who initiated and coordinated the fundraising effort. To God be the glory!

Journey Celebrates America's 250th Anniversary with Family Picnic and Special Guests

More than 30 children, youth, and adults gathered Sunday, July 26, to celebrate America's 250th anniversary as part of Plank Chapel's Journey program for children and youth.

While the afternoon featured a variety of outdoor games and a family picnic, the highlight of the event was a heartfelt tribute to the nation by guest speakers Jared and Kim Boyd, both Marine Corps veterans. The husband-and-wife team delivered an emotional joint address during dinner, encouraging everyone to honor and love the country. They repeatedly invited the group to join them in shouting "250 years!"

Every attendee received a pamphlet containing the U.S. Constitution to take home.

The day also included a family picnic, with parents and guardians invited to join Journey participants for fellowship and fun. Creedmoor United Methodist Church and Flat Rock United Methodist Church in Henderson, now partnering in the Journey initiative, were both represented.

After an opening prayer in the fellowship hall by Journey leadership team member Wayne Young, the group moved outdoors for activities that included volleyball, basketball, cornhole, badminton, four square, and Journey's newest addition—pickleball—which stayed busy throughout the afternoon.

Journey leaders Shakita Huerta, Lora Young, and Nancy Gustafson prepared and served a taco bar dinner, accompanied by watermelon and orange slices. Cupcakes and mini ice cream cones rounded out the meal. Pastor Edgar DeJesus offered the blessing before dinner, and Scott Ritchey managed the registration table.

Anyone interested in contributing food, juice, or bottled water for future Journey events may contact Lora Young at 336-504-7247.

Journey provides a safe and caring space where children and youth ages 5 to 18 can encounter the love of Christ through becoming, belonging, and believing. For more information, contact Ron Gustafson at 203-641-2889 or visit plankchapel.org.



