

CHAPEL CHATTER

Open Hearts/Open Minds/Wide Open Doors

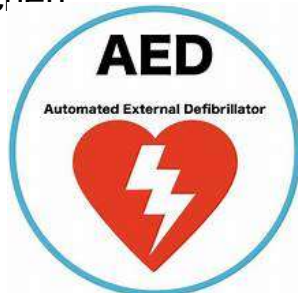
AED TRAINING

Plank Chapel sponsored an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training class on Jan. 25 in the fellowship hall. The very informative session was conducted by Abner Cobb. We learned the location of the device in the church and how to properly use it. Why is AED training important? The sooner an AED can be used, the greater chance of survival for the victim.

We thank Abner for his time and for sharing his knowledge with us.

Hopefully, there will be more classes in the future. Also, Abner and his mother Terry, have given the church a very nice first aid kit.

This will be kept in the fellowship hall kitchen



SPAGHETTI DINNER

Plan to attend this year's Spaghetti Dinner on Feb 10th at 5 pm. Bring your favorite Valentine and join in for some good food and fellowship!! Dinner will include spaghetti with meat sauce, salad, rolls and of course desserts.

Look for a sign up sheet in the church entrance. We need to have a head count for preparation. Also, please feel free to sign up for a dessert, bread or rolls, or drinks.

And remember- this would be a great time to invite a friend or neighbor to come and join in with our fellowship.

Any questions? Call Sally Coghill at



Pastor's Note (February 2024)

The season of Lent is a time of self-reflection, of spiritual examination and re-committing our lives for Jesus Christ. Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

Each year, many faith communities including Plank Chapel UMC are gathered for the Ash Wednesday focusing on the liturgical act known as "the imposition of ashes." We mark ashes in the shape of a cross on the forehead of every believer as a reminder of our human mortality, our need to repent of our sins and return to our loving God.

"Ash Wednesday directs us toward our common vulnerability, finitude, and weakness and announces the truth of human solidarity: 'You are but dust and to dust you will return' ...Ash Wednesday thus inaugurates us into what Bonhoeffer calls the "service of bearing," in which "those who bear with others know that they themselves are being borne." (from Dr. Jennifer McBride, Radical Discipleship)

Therefore, this year, we begin our journey of forty day of Lent with a Joint Ash Wednesday Service with Bethel UMC on February 14th, 6:00pm and will be held at Bethel UMC. I hope that you will make every effort to attend.

Throughout the Lenten season, we are continuing our "Restart" sermon series based on Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank's book, "Restart Your Church". 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, I would like to share with y'all some important dates for this year's Holy Week and Easter:

- March 24, 2024- Palm Sunday Service (9:30am Bethel UMC & 11:00am Plank Chapel UMC), Easter Egg Hunt & Luncheon Fellowship (12noon Plank Chapel UMC)
- March 28, 2024- Joint Maundy Thursday Service, 6:00pm @ Plank Chapel UMC
- March 29, 2024- Joint Good Friday Tenebrae Service, 6:00pm @ Plank Chapel UMC
- March 31, 2024- Joint Easter Sunrise Service w/ Pancake Breakfast Fellowship & Flowering of the Cross, before sunrise @ Plank Chapel UMC
- March 31, 2024- Easter Sunday Service w/ Holy Communion (9:30am Bethel UMC & 11:00am Plank Chapel UMC)

As we journey together during this Lenten season, let me close this note with a prayer from The Book of Common Prayer:

*Everlasting God,
because of Your tender mercy toward all people,
You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ,
to take upon Himself our flesh,
and to suffer death upon the cross,
that all should follow the example of His great humility.
Mercifully grant that we may follow the example of His patience
and also be made partakers of His resurrection;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



2024 Connect Church

The 2024 Connect Church Orientation Session was held at Edenton Street UMC in Raleigh last Saturday, January 27th attended by Pastor Edgar and a Cohort from Plank Chapel UMC: Lorraine Abbott, Mike Raney, Jan Hicks, Debra Newman, Frank Winn, Wayne & Laura Young, Peggy Hernandez, Susan & Martha Sears, Bryant Bobbitt, Greg Hunt & Scott Ritchey

Both Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC were selected for the 2024 Connect Church— a ten-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
- grant up to \$10,000 for Duke Endowment eligible churches to launch a new or expanded missional engagement project

Please hold Pastor Edgar, Cohort and the entire process of the 2024 Connect Church in your prayers.





The Center for Leadership Excellence presents a webinar with Patty Meyers...

February 16 @ 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Free

About the Webinar:

Deepen your awareness of age-appropriate learning strategies integral to teaching and discipling children effectively. Also, our presenter will share several pointers about shaping your ministry to welcome children with different needs.

Be prepared at your computer with a thin wire hanger and some colorful art supplies such as a few crayons, watercolors, or markers.

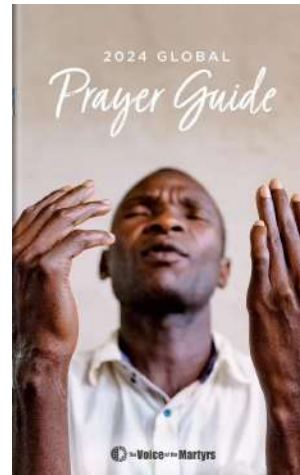


About the Presenter:

Patty Meyers retired from Pfeiffer University in 2018, where she taught for 17 years. This lifetime Christian educator has two doctorates, a master's, and a bachelor's degree. An ordained deacon, she is a member of the Oregon/Idaho Conference and co-chair of the Order of Deacons.

[https://nccumc.org/leadership/
event/teaching-so-kids-can-learn/](https://nccumc.org/leadership/event/teaching-so-kids-can-learn/)

The Voice



Dear Friend,

As Christians, we are called to “remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body” (Hebrews 13:3). It is important for us to pray for our persecuted Christian family members, but sometimes it’s hard to know where to start.

Today, I am excited to share a unique resource with you from The Voice of the Martyrs — the VOM Global Prayer Guide. VOM is offering this guide for free to help equip you to pray more specifically for our brothers and sisters in Christ who risk rejection, imprisonment and even death as they obediently serve the Lord on the world’s most dangerous and difficult mission fields.

This free resource includes summaries of the hostile areas and restricted nations where Christians are persecuted today as well as information on the current situation for Christians in those countries. I encourage you to visit the link below to request your free copy today.

[https://www.persecution.com/prayerguide/?
_proj=D2D&_proj_user_id=13996838&_paem_id=139&_sour
ce_code=EML84A24A](https://www.persecution.com/prayerguide/?_proj=D2D&_proj_user_id=13996838&_paem_id=139&_source_code=EML84A24A)

AWAKENINGS

Renew, fresh and revive your spirit as we worship together our Awesome God at Awakenings every Sunday, 8:00am (except third Sunday of the month). Here are the following Awakenings worship dates for the month of February 2024-- February 4th, 11th & 25th.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Both youth groups of Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC will have joint youth event at Winter Jam on February 9th in Raleigh. Also, the youth and parents of Plank Chapel UMC are invited to Bethel's Valentine's Fundraiser on February 3rd, 5PM - 8PM



PLANK CHAPEL UMC CHOIR

Plank Chapel UMC Choir is back again! Praise the Lord! The Choir Practice is held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month, 3:00pm. Here are the practice dates for February-June 2024: February 14th, February 28th, March 13th, March 27th, April 10th, April 24th, May 8th, May 22nd, June 12th, June 26th.

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).



**TO PLANK
CHAPEL!!
Ron & Nancy**



Nancy & Ron Gustafson

Nancy and Ron Gustafson both grew up in dairy farm country of Western New York - south of Buffalo - in small communities (villages) of around 500 persons, As high school sweethearts, they performed in a rock'n roll band with other classmates and friends and graduated together in a class of around 80 students. Married in 1974, they rekindled their music interest a year later, performing as a duo across the U.S. in hotels and private clubs, managed by a number of entertainment agencies.

In 1979, the couple welcomed their first child - son, Lynn - and had settled into careers locally, living in Nancy's hometown, yet still performing some local weekend venues. Both gave up the music business in 1981 after the birth of their daughter, Amber.

Ron had a successful career as a newspaper editor, yet kept his hand in the outdoor amusement industry with a close friend in Rochester, N.Y., working part time as his marketing director.

Nancy transitioned into banking and eventually went to work for the Home Depot, serving in numerous capacities.

Ron's interest in the amusement park industry blossomed further and he entered the business full time in the early 1990s as marketing director for a park 11 miles from where he grew up.

During that same timeframe, the couple became heavily involved with Park United Methodist Church in Sinclairville, N.Y., serving with the youth group and on various church committees.

In 1998 Ron reunited with long-time friend and high school classmate Wayne Saxton and formed a Christian rock trio with another church member. After several months of rehearsals, the band (Messenger) was commissioned as an official outreach ministry of Park UMC and was performing - on average - six concerts a month at churches and youth gatherings in Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The band released two albums of all original music, which have been broadcast on two Christian radio networks.

Nancy and Ron moved to Sanford, N.C., in 2001 with Nancy transferring to the South with the Home Depot.

While in Sanford, they attended Jonesboro United Methodist Church where Nancy again became involved with the youth program. Ron became a member of the church's 10-piece praise band. He also performed with the praise band at Goldston United Methodist Church.

Both retired in 2022: Nancy from the Home Depot (25 years) and Ron as marketing and public relations director of a Connecticut amusement park, serving 20 years in that position. The couple lived at the park during the summer season with Nancy transferring to Home Depot locations in Connecticut.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Come join our next UMM Monthly Breakfast Fellowship will be [on February 18th, 8:00am-9:00am](#) and every third Sunday of the month.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Patricia Rogers, Freddie Oettinger, David Lee, Thomas Beckham, Dennis Wilson, Tim Smith, Jeanette Weaver, Angie Rowland, Jan Hicks, Driver Family & church members recovering from COVID. 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.)

SHUT IN

Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee, Faye Young & Frances Roberts. (for prayer **requests**, please call [919-418-0682](tel: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. Our next regular meeting of the United Women in Faith will be [on Sunday, February 18th, 3:00pm](#). All women are invited!



NEW WOMEN'S GROUP

We are birthing a new Women's Group-- an intentional gathering that meets regularly and building relationships centered in Christ. We decided to meet the first Wednesday of each month for a "coffee klatch" in the Fellowship Hall. If you are interested, please contact Jan Hicks @ [919-525-4778](tel:919-525-4778).

BLESSING BOX MINISTRY

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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, February 21st, 10:00am and every third Wednesday of the month. Bring your family and friends!

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.

Greetings!

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I hope this email finds you well. I'm sending this message to all of our clergy sisters and brothers throughout the conference to share some of the work of our conference Board of Laity that we believe will be a benefit to your church and ministry. I invite you to partner with and discuss this work and the associated resources with your church leadership.

We came together at Annual Conference in June 2023 to share in the life and work of our church. As part of our Laity Executive Session, we heard stories from across our conference of how our laity are living their faith story. We heard stories of the disciple-making process from Bishop Shelton, as she reminded us that discipleship begins with relationship. We heard stories of engaging, connecting, equipping, and sending.

In that session, we asked each of our laity to share how each of us could participate in the disciple-making process of engaging, connecting, equipping, and sending that the bishop introduced. We asked the question, "What do you and your church family need to fulfill God's vision of engaging, connecting, equipping, and sending?" Each person was asked to share their thoughts with each other, as well as write them on Post-it notes.

We collected over 400 replies during our 'sharing session,' stories of encouragement, and ways to move forward in our churches.

Your Board of Laity and conference staff have actively worked through your notes, categorizing and organizing the data and developing action plans. We plan to share these results and associated resources through a series of weekly emails, starting this week, that will help you and your congregation engage, connect, equip, and send. These emails will be sent to your Lay Leader, your Lay Member(s) of Annual Conference, and your Church Council chair. I will also send you a summary report of our work. Here are the 12 categories of our analysis:

- Community Outreach
- Engagement
- Discipleship
- Leadership
- Young People
- Connectionalism
- Ideas
- Communication
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Financial Resources
- Training
- Healing from Disaffiliation

We've compiled a list of conference and denominational resources that specifically address what we heard in each of the categories.

We encourage you to share this information with your local church council and other leaders in your church. We have organized the data so that it is broadly shareable - not only in the weekly emails but also on our conference website. I'll share the link for this in a follow-up email in our summary report in mid-February.

Our Board of Laity is excited about sharing these results and resources with you to help you engage, connect, equip, and send as together we live out our mission - to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Continued blessings on your ministry!

John Hall

NC Conference Lay Leader



North Carolina Conference
The United Methodist Church

Early Response Team Training

The foundation of effective disaster response is built on willing and well-trained volunteers. UMCOR provides several courses for Early Response Teams (ERTs) through a network of badged local trainers. ERTs fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to help to prevent further damage while providing a caring Christian presence.

Basic ERT Class

Cost: \$20 - Required to receive an ERT badge and become part of a fully certified team. You will be badged after your background check is complete.

Recertification Class

Cost: \$20 - Your ERT badge is good for three years, at which time you will need to take an ERT Recertification Class.

**February 24, 2024 from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm at Hampstead UMC
15395 Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC 28443**

**March 15, 2024 from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm at Mt. Zion AME Zion Church
2251 Mt. Zion Lane, Eastover, NC 28312**

**February 24, 2024 from 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm at Hampstead UMC
15395 Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC 28443**

[Register Now](#)

2024 Youth Event Registration Now Open



The design teams for the Conference Youth events have been working hard to put together an amazing schedule of events for 2024, and registration for the events is now open!

Conference Youth events are a wonderful opportunity to gather for worship, fellowship, mission, and study and to find out more about leadership opportunities in the Conference and the districts.

We want you to be involved! Here's the schedule of events – click on the links below for more information about each event:

- **Global Vision** (9th-12th grades) – March 15-17, St. James UMC, Greenville
- **Kaleidoscope** (6th-8th grade) – April 12-14, Camp Don Lee
- **Breakaway** (6th-12th grade) – June 24-29, NC Wesleyan University
- **Más Diversity** (6th-12th grade) – October 11-13, Location TBA (*More information and registration coming soon*)

Visit the **registration page** to sign up for one event or multiple events. Please make sure to note the registration deadlines for each event – we don't want you to miss out!

Adults, we need volunteers to staff our events. Go check out our **staff application page** and apply to help out. We'd love to have you join us this summer!

If you have questions about the events, registration, or applying to staff, please contact **youth@nccumc.org**.

Lent & Easter Resources

Dear Friends,

Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024, and Easter is on Sunday, March 31. Now is the time to request resources that your church or small group would like to use during the Lenten season.

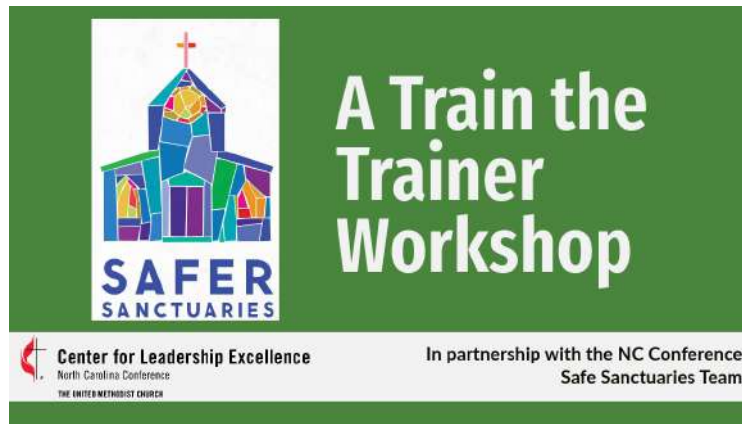
On the website, I highlighted new and popular resources used during Lent and Easter, including online resources, but I have many more available, including:

- Video-based small-group studies
- Book-based small-group studies
- Documentary and dramatized DVD movies
- Devotionals
- Program and worship planning books
- Youth and children's curriculum
- Activity books for use with children and families
- Animated videos for children
- Picture books for children

Browse what is available or contact me for recommendations. I'm glad to assist you as you prepare and plan for Lent and Easter.

Laura Dallas
Marketing & Resource Coordinator

[https://nccumc.org/media-center/2023/12/
lent-and-easter-resources-for-2024/](https://nccumc.org/media-center/2023/12/lent-and-easter-resources-for-2024/)



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

<https://nccumc.org/leadership/2023/12/safer-sanctuaries-a-train-the-trainer-workshop/>



Dear friends and colleagues,

We are honored to announce the official launch of The Duke Endowment's yearlong centennial celebration! Throughout the year, we will share stories that highlight a century of transformative grantmaking across North Carolina and South Carolina — stories told through the lens of our many grantee partners. These stories, and the work of these dedicated partners, demonstrate the Endowment's enduring commitment to the Carolinas.

Industrialist and philanthropist James Buchanan Duke established the Endowment in 1924 with a promise to enrich lives and strengthen communities across the Carolinas. His Indenture of Trust, our founding document, established guidelines for grantmaking that remain relevant 100 years later and will continue to guide our next century of philanthropy. To date, the Endowment has invested \$4.5 billion in [Higher Education](#), [Child & Family Well-Being](#), [Health Care](#) and [Rural United Methodist Churches](#) in the Carolinas, a testament to Mr. Duke's steadfast determination to do "big things for God and humanity," as he once put it.

Join us as we highlight our partners' work to bring Mr. Duke's vision to life by nurturing children, improving health, educating minds and supporting the United Methodist Church in rural communities. With foresight, boldness and an ongoing commitment to the Carolinas, they are producing positive change that will benefit our region for generations to come.

With gratitude,

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



Welcome to Don Lee Camp & Retreat Center

March 8-9, 2024

Camp Don Lee will host its annual Confirmation Retreat on the weekend of March 8-9th. Bring your confirmation group to Camp Don Lee as we explore Confirmation as an important step in the journey of faith. Confirmands will be led through a retreat that will serve as an opportunity to delve deeper into what it means to be a United Methodist as a supplement to their confirmation work in their local church. Youth will examine what it means to claim their Christian calling for themselves and create stoles expressing this personal faith and calling. We will use the Credo curriculum as our theological guide for this retreat.

Rev. Adam Charville and Rev. Caitlin Delamar will lead our 2024 Confirmation Retreat. Rev. Charville is a United Methodist pastor at Four Oaks UMC and a student at Duke Divinity working towards his D. Min. degree. Rev. Charville feels close to God whenever he's at Camp Don Lee and loves ministering to other people so they can feel God with them in this place. Rev. Delamar is the Faith Formation Coordinator at Camp Don Lee and an ordained deacon of the Virginia Conference of the UMC. Rev. Delamar is excited to serve as a part of the Confirmation Retreat team this year at this place God has blessed!

As we continue to plan and put in the faithful work to make this retreat a milestone experience for those who attend, please reach out to [Julia Royall-Johnson](#) or [Caitlin Delamar](#) for more information.

- Confirmands: \$75,
- Clergy Members: \$30
- Adults: \$60,
- Clergy Members: \$30
- Clergy Members: \$30

Sample Schedule

Friday:

7:00pm - Check-in and move into Cabins

8:00pm - Opening - Session 1 - God names us and claims us

9:45 - Campfire & S'mores

11:00 - Lights out

Saturday:

7:40am - Morning Watch

8:00am - Breakfast

9:00am - Session 2 - Called by God

10:30am - Free Time - Canoeing and Archery

11:30am - Session 3 - Answering the call

12:30pm - Lunch

1:15pm - Session 4 - Answering the call

2:00pm - Free Time - Recreation activities and the Camp Store will be open

3:15pm - Session 5 - Affirmation of Faith

4:00pm - Closing Worship with Communion

5:00pm - Dinner

6:00pm - Depart



Upcoming Grant, Scholarship & Loan Opportunities

The NC Conference recommends the following grants, scholarships, and loans available to United Methodist churches and ministry leaders in the North Carolina Conference. These programs are funded by the Conference or our partner organizations.

The funding opportunities listed here have application deadlines in the near future. Additional opportunities have deadlines coming up later in the year. View the complete list at **[Grants, Scholarships & Loans](#)**.

<https://nccumc.org/news/2023/12/upcoming-grant-scholarship-loan-opportunities-5/>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	29	30	31 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Feb 1	2	3 6pm Bethel Valentine's Youth F
4 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	5	6	7 Pastor: Fresh Expressions National Gathering - Charlotte, NC	8	9 Youth Winter Jam 2024, - Rat	10
11 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	12	13	14 3pm Choir Rehearsal 6pm Joint Ash Wednesday Serv	15	16	17
18 8am UMM Breakfast Fellowship 10am Sunday School 11am Worship 3pm UWF	19 7pm Revival 2024	20	21 10am Senior Circle 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	22	23	24
25 8am Awakenings 10am Sunday School 11am Worship	26	27	28 3pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	29	Mar 1	2