

The Methodist Messenger

PASTOR'S NOTES

- Friends, Last week I had the honor of attending our 2024 General Conference hosted in Charlotte, NC. As you probably know this was the first General Conference held since the 2019 Special Called GC. It was supposed to be held in 2020, but like everything else, the plans were disrupted by Covid-19. The GC ended up being postponed several times until eventually it was rescheduled for April/May of this year. And as we all know the church has undergone significant change since then, with about 25 percent of the USA Church disaffiliating from our denomination. There have been a lot of different expectations for what would actually happen at GC, but my main interest was in seeing what actually goes on at General Conference. I volunteered at the Charlotte Convention Center on Wednesday (4/24) and Thursday (4/25). The experience was exciting and interesting to say the least. While I was there, most of the work done was focused on setting up the legislative committees, and voting for officers who would be handling the multitude of petitions that needed to be sorted and received before they could go to the floor for a vote. My main task as a "local host volunteer" was to help guide delegates and observers to the various rooms and areas they needed to be.

While there I saw many friends from the NC and Western Carolina Conferences. I also saw and spoke with several of our conference's delegates. I got to see and hear UMC delegates from all around the world. Seeing all the different types of dress and hearing the different languages spoken reminded me of the unique gift we have as a globally connected church. To think that all these diverse people coming from places far and near to cooperate on moving the church forward in a new direction was impressionable to say the least.

One item of special note occurred after I left Thursday morning. The conference voted to "restructure the worldwide denomination into regional conferences and give the U.S. region, for the first time, the same right as international bodies to modify church rules to fit local situations." Of course, this will still have to be ratified by the Annual Conferences in the affected regions. The impact of these changes are still ongoing as the General Conference continues its work this week. After watching these church leaders at work, I have to say that I was left with cautious optimism for the future of our UMC church and individual congregations. I would remind you to continue to lift up the UMC Church and those leaders who are gathered at Conference. May they be given guidance and wisdom by God's Holy Spirit, so that our church (even Whiteville UMC) will continue to be a vital part of God's work here in the world.

Thanks & blessings,
Pastor Howard James



STAFF

Rev. Howard James,
Pastor

Morgan Simmons,
Secretary

Chalmers Waddell,
Custodian

Gus Cothorn,
Music Director

Nan Leggett,
Organist

Geneva Ashley,
Pianist

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

John Turner has completed our 2023 review audit. Only two minor issues were raised and resolved. On behalf of the finance committee, thank you John!

Sunday morning worship service attendance is averaging 42. There has been a declining trend over the past three months. In response to this decline, let's note who is missing on Sunday mornings and reach out to them.

Currently our income is slightly more than last year. However, it is not enough to cover our expenses. Similar to last year, our offerings are approximately \$30,000 below budget.

Our challenge is to overcome our smaller congregation and resulting decline in financial resources. We are in a "sweet spot" now, but several issues are coming this summer. For the first six months the NC Conference is paying our pastor's monthly health insurance and retirement premiums. Additionally, our annual property insurance premium is due in July and anticipated to be around \$20,000. After the September disaffiliation vote last year, we lost several members. Their offerings were replaced by members who made large one time contributions. Hopefully, they will be led to do so again.

Please continue to pray for our church to grow and strengthen and be as generous with your participation and offerings as possible. Thank you for your stewardship response to God's faithfulness to us.

Tom Leggett, Finance Chairperson

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." – Anne Bradstreet, early North American poet

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 4th—Yard Sale
- May 6th— United Women in Faith
- May 28th—Reaching Out

NURTURE COMMITTEE

The Nurture Committee has not had a great deal of action lately since the Lenten lunches but we do have something planned for the staff at Edgewood on Thursday, May 9th. That week is Teacher Appreciation Week and we are planning to take a lunch of subs, etc. for the teacher's lounge. We will hope to do this with the Outreach Committee and anyone else in the church that wants to help with that.

Debbie Conway, Chair



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The United Women in Faith met on April 8 and Sue Lennon, Vickie Pait and Debbie Conway led a discussion about the Mission Study that was held in March in Wilmington, which they attended. We also planned our service project to put together at the May 6th meeting: gift bags for the Preschool staff and the church staff. We will not meet again until September 9th when we plan to have a covered dish dinner.

Debbie Conway, President

GENERAL CONFERENCE IMAGES



BIRTHDAYS

MAY

- 2nd Margie Rabon
- 5th Mary Williamson
- 12th Leah Pait
- 13th Paul Georgis
- 18th Pat Ray
- 20th Keith Sellars
Beth Walters
- 26th Hugh Daniel
- 31st Rev. James Howard

JUNE

- 3rd Kelly Pait
- 5th Carlton Williamson
- 9th Jerry Hall
Lynn Sellers
- 10th Heather Daniel Engroff
Amanda Hall Jenkins
- 11th Becky High
- 14th Kristie Gerogis
Biff Simmons
- 17th Kathy Graham
- 20th Wendy Hood
- 21st Geneva Ashley
- 24th Ellen McLam
- 26th John Turner
Beth Bullard
- 27th Tom Leggett

May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 -Food Pantry	2 -50+Exercise	3	4 -Church Yard Sale
5	6 United Women in Faith 6:00p.m.	7 -50+ Exercise	8 -Choir Rehearsal -Morning Bible Study	9 -50+Exercise -Caregiver's Support 1:00 (parlor)	10	11
12 *Mother's Day	13	14-50+ Exercise	15 -Food Pantry Choir Rehearsal -Morning Bible Study	16 -50+Exercise	17	18
19	20	21 -50+ Exercise	22 Choir Rehearsal -Morning Bible Study	23-50+Exercise	24	25
26	27 *Memorial Day	28-50+Exercise -Reaching Out 6pm	29 -Choir Rehearsal -Morning Bible Study	30 -50+Exercise	31	

June 2024

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

						1
2	3	4 -50+ Exercise	5 -Food Pantry Choir Rehearsal	6 -50+ Exercise	7	8
9	10	11-50+ Exercise	12 Choir Rehearsal	13 -50+ Exercise Caregivers Support 1:00 p.m. parlor	14	15
16	17	18-50+ Exercise	19 -Food Pantry Choir Rehearsal	20 -50+ Exercise	21	22
23	24	2550+ Exercise Reaching Out 6pm	26 Choir Rehearsal	27 -50+ Exercise	28	29
30						

*Father's Day

WHITEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

902 PINCKNEY ST.
WHITEVILLE, NC 28472



Rev. Howard James, Pastor
Tuesday-Friday/ 8:30 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Mrs. Morgan Simmons, Administrative Assistant
Monday-Thursday/8:30 a.m.– 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Chalmers Waddell, Custodian
Monday-Friday/ 7:30-12:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

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