

# The Methodist Messenger

Whitville United Methodist Church

902 Pinckney St.  
Whiteville, NC 28472

Rev. Howard James

July / August Newsletter



## Pastor's Note

Greetings friends!

As we arrive (all too soon) at the halfway mark in 2026, I am excited to announce that I will be moving! That is, moving into another year of ministry and worship here at Whiteville UMC. 😊 (sorry, I couldn't resist). And, I couldn't be more excited to continue this partnership in ministry with you folks at Whiteville UMC! Certainly, we have our share of challenges (and changes) yet to come this year, and while change can be daunting, it can also open doors to new opportunities for growth and spiritual revival. Two of those changes have been anticipated for some time. As we know, our beloved Gus (Mr. C), and Chalmers are set to begin new chapters in their lives. After a long and distinguished teaching career (including all the many hats that role entails), Gus has retired from teaching and is making plans to move soon from Whiteville to Greensboro to begin his retirement. Chalmers also is planning his move to be closer to family near Houston TX. Suffice it say, we will miss them both! Their faithful efforts toward the life and work of the church have been a blessing, and we send them off with our love, care, and hope for their future endeavors.

Otherwise, things are progressing along as normal for the summer. Our pre-school students and teachers are enjoying a break for the summer. And though I'm sure the teachers need (and deserve) that respite, it gets awful quiet in the church office when they are gone. We miss the joyful noise of children's laughter and play and all the smiles that go with them. Annual Conference was recently held in Greenville, NC. One of my favorite things about AC has always been the chance to reunite with friends and colleagues and to hear about all the new and exciting things being done by God in the churches in our conference and beyond. This year the business of the Conference went very smoothly. It seems like our conference cabinet is working hard to minimize the burden of resources placed on struggling local congregations. I honestly feel that after the last few years of turmoil the church has endured, we're finally beginning to turn the page on that chapter and to forge ahead with new and exciting opportunities for ministry. What does God have in mind for the UMC (and Whiteville UMC specifically)? Let's find out together!

One such new ministry opportunity will be starting out this fall. Pat Ray and myself have been selected to participate in a new Pilot program called Sacred Sorrow, which is sponsored by the Duke Endowment. The outcome of the program will be some type of "grief

related ministry offered to the community through Whiteville UMC. Classes and retreats are scheduled to begin in late September/ early October and will run through spring of 2027. Please keep this project in your prayers that God can put it to use in our community.

Finally, we are currently planning our Vacation Bible School, scheduled for August 9-11th. Our theme this year is Snowball Mountain Challenge (a little snow in August will be a welcome miracle). Of course, that means plenty of opportunities for our church to engage with the community and share the love of Christ with these children. Please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Debbie Conway for more information or if you would like to help with this event.

As you can see, there is a lot happening at and with Whiteville UMC that we are excited about. Our congregation are some of the most welcoming and loving Christians I have been blessed to partner with in ministry. This church is a place for all to come, plug in, and recharge your spirit as we study God's Word together and learn how to put it into practice.

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

As of the end of May, Sunday morning attendance is averaging 38. This compares to 42 last year at this time. As we enter summer vacation months, attendance declines due to travels. It is also easier to take a lazy Sunday morning absence. Make every effort to attend when you are in town.

Offerings as of May 31 are \$1,888 more than last year at this time. We are thankful for this increase. However, expenses exceed offerings by \$32,000. Other income sources, including conference salary support and the rummage sale, contributed \$4,200. This results in a \$27,800 net short fall. Fortunately, the shortage was anticipated, and we have funds on hand to fund the shortage. Thanks again to Claire Bazley for coordinating the successful rummage sale. As usual the fellowship was enjoyed by the volunteers.

Of concern is our upcoming annual July property insurance premium that is expected to exceed \$25,000. For the past two years we have thankfully had members increase their offerings to meet this challenge. Keep our financial needs and decline in attendance in your prayers.

Thank you again for your support and may God continue to bless us in 2026.

Tom Leggett, Finance Chair



## RUMMAGE SALE SUCCESS!

Our June 6th Rummage Sale was a wonderful success, thanks to the generous hearts of our church family! Last December (2024) we held a special sale to help a flood-ravaged Methodist church. This year, I decided to postpone the November 2025 sale and moved it to June of this year. The decision paid off! The outpouring of good-quality items from our members made this one of our best sales yet. We are thrilled to report that the sale raised over \$2,200 for our church's General Fund! Several especially nice donations were set aside and are being sold in my local antiques space to bring even more value to the church. Additional funds from those sales will be added in the coming weeks. Although it was a lot of work, I was so fortunate to have wonderful help from our church family. The Rummage Room was filled to capacity, and we spent most of the week before setting up tables with items already sorted into "like" categories. Special thanks to Chalmers for setting up all the tables and to my fantastic crew of helpers. The sale started at 8:00 a.m., and there was already a long line from the door and down the street! The excitement was contagious as eager buyers found great treasures at very reasonable prices – including furniture and household décor. The sale ended at 2:00 p.m., and we closed the day with fun group photos and a heartfelt prayer of gratitude. Everyone who participated said they actually had a lot of fun! My sincere thanks to all who helped – from painting signs to organizing tables, cashiering, and helping customers carry out their finds. It was truly a great day for our church. All leftover items were donated and picked up by Families First, so nothing went to waste. Thank you again to every person who gave, volunteered, and supported this effort. Your kindness and hard work are a beautiful reflection of God's love in action.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

– Colossians 3:23



## AI: A Tool You Can Use – An Introduction:

Have you ever wondered about AI but felt a little nervous or unsure? You're not alone! Just like when the internet first arrived, AI is a powerful new tool that can be friendly and helpful once you understand it. Join us for a fun, relaxed class where we'll explore:

- What AI really is (and what it isn't)
- Common fears about AI – and honest, reassuring answers
- How to spot what's safe to use and what to avoid
- How to tell truth from misinformation online
- Live examples where you can ask questions and see AI in action!

We'll keep it light-hearted with some gentle humor and even touch on the spiritual side – because God gave us curious minds and creativity. Tools like AI can be used wisely to bless our lives and serve others. No experience needed – just bring your curiosity! All are welcome.

Proposed Date: Wed: Aug 19 10:00 am to 11:30 In the Parlor at Whiteville United Methodist Church.

Class led by Clare Bazley

"I used to own a teahouse in the historic Gold Rush town of Columbia, California, and now live in Whiteville North Carolina. I've spent years working with small business details, helping customers, and now being part of church and community life. Like many of you, I'm not a tech expert – but I've learned how to use tools like AI in practical, everyday ways, and I want to share what I've discovered so we can all feel more confident and less concerned."

### Save the Date!

Sunday, July 26th the church will host a luncheon after Sunday morning worship service, celebrating Chalmers Waddell for his years as our church custodian and friend!

# VBS 2026



## AUGUST 9<sup>TH</sup> - 11<sup>TH</sup>

### 5:00-8:00

### Announcements to Note

- Summer Office Hours begin July 1<sup>st</sup> 9:00-1:00.
- The WUMC Food Pantry will be accepting toiletry/self-care items throughout the summer. Items desired include soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and deodorant.
- Chancel Choir and Handbells are on hiatus until August and September.
- The WUMC Preschool will resume in September.

## Birthdays

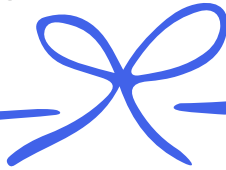
### JULY

8th Annette Daniel  
10th Lewellyn David  
13th Brad Leggett  
17th Julie Daniel  
20th Dee Waddell  
24th Claudia James  
25th Emily McLam  
30th Jonathan James



### AUGUST

2nd Thomas McLam  
5th Greyanna Ashley  
6th Phil Stoll  
15th Chalmers Waddell  
18th Nicolas Bell  
19th John Duncan  
20th Brad Crowell  
25th Layton Dowless  
30th Rob Conway  
31st Margie Rabon



## WUMC

### Office Staff

---

Rev. Howard James, Pastor  
Tuesday-Friday/ 9:00 a.m.- 1:00  
p.m.

Mrs. Morgan Simmons,  
Administrative Assistant  
Monday-Thursday/9:00 a.m.-  
1:00 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)

## Whiteville United Methodist Church



902 Pinckney St.  
Whiteville, NC 28472

Office Hours: 9:00 - 1:00  
Monday - Friday

Phone: 910-642-3376  
Email: [wumc@whitevilleumc.org](mailto:wumc@whitevilleumc.org)