

on all cylinders.

14. From the **Council on Finance and Administration**, we learned that: 11 United Methodist churches in the eastern North Carolina closed during the last year; the North Carolina Conference paid 100% of its 2018 apportionments (though less than 92% was paid directly by local churches); the 2021 conference budget will decrease by 23% (that is not a typo!) and stand at \$16.2 million; and District Superintendents will be paid salaries of nearly \$118,000 per year.

15. The Annual Conference voted to establish a **study committee on the pastoral care of LGBTQIA+ people**. If there is a real diversity of theological-moral perspectives represented on the committee, this could be a positive and significant step for the conference.

16. According to the **Conference Statistician, Rev. George Speake**, the local churches of the North Carolina Conference lost about 1,200 members. Also, our churches had 71,276 in Sunday worship, though 11,992 attended by technological means. Compared to last year, that meant about 1,200 fewer in the pews. Rev. Speake also noted that United Methodist Men across the conference spent \$1.1 million on projects, United Methodist Women \$1.3 million, denominational and local benevolences totaled \$18.68 million, and building improvements \$20.25 million.

17. Marsha and I took a break. We enjoyed a long conversation and good meal with **Rev. Stephen Bazan, Amanda, and their toddler son**. Rev. Bazan once pastored the Bethel-Lebanon Charge in Columbus County. Wonderful, encouraging conversation was had by all.

18. A conversation with **Rev. Alan Swartz**, pastor of Highland United Methodist Church in Raleigh, revealed that he had served on the conference Resolutions Committee for 27 years. And he competently chaired that committee for 23 of those 27 years. What grand service.

19. On Friday morning, **Bishop Leonard Fairley** -- whose home is the North Carolina Conference, and who now serves the Louisville Area (the Kentucky Conference and the Red Bird Missionary Conference) -- offered strong Biblical teaching on God's generosity generating the Church's generosity and the Christian's generosity. He noted that making ourselves available to others can be difficult (indeed, a spiritual discipline), but it is the Gospel way. Think Mary: "Let it be with me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) Said Bp. Fairley: Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church and the world, no matter what is happening (or not happening) around us.

To this pastor, Bp. Fairley approached the North Carolina Annual Conference with a short agenda: serving Christ, His Church, and the Gospel. He came as a humble servant, and he was a servant of God's word. When Bp. Fairley spoke, few were put on the defensive. When some others spoke, one was tempted to weigh every word, test every claim. Again, by pointing to God, to God's transcendence, and to God's generosity, Bp. Fairley seemed to set the Annual Conference free to trust and obey God anew.

20. **Rev. Edie Gleaves** made a stirring presentation on rebuilding the Rotifunk Hospital in Sierra Leone (response: a \$13,400 special offering), and Dr. Anthony Davis spoke on the Methodist Home for Children.

21. The Annual Conference responded to 14 **resolutions** (+ 1, which was a compilation) submitted from across the North Carolina Conference. As one would guess, the 6 resolutions that concerned the 2019 General Conference drew the most interest and required the most time.

Before consideration of the resolutions began, a question was posed from the floor to the chair. It was: should we delegates, voting on the resolutions, represent our local churches or follow our own consciences? The bishop responded that the Holy Spirit would lead not only our individual hearts to vote in one way or the other, but also the voting of the entire body of the Annual Conference. A question arises: would not Biblical witness and Church tradition play leading roles (especially since both are presumably driven by the Spirit) in the discernment process?

The original authors, presumably with the assistance of the Resolutions Committee, compiled 4 resolutions on human sexuality and General Conference 2019 (Resolutions #7, #10, #11, and #12) into 1 (Resolution #15). Resolution #15 was amended to be titled "Supporting Full Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ Persons and Rejecting the Traditional Plan." That compilation, that move (which involved a suspension of the conference rules), could be understood as the Annual Conference deciding to give the human-sexuality- and-Traditional-Plan debate less time during the Annual Conference. Apparently, the Annual Conference opposed too lengthy a debate on human sexuality and the Traditional Plan.

Resolution #15 was then, evidently, edited by the Resolutions Committee. In the resolution's therefore-be-it-resolved section, the two statements, which called for the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the bishop to disobey church discipline, were deleted. Apparently, the Annual Conference opposed disobedience to The Book of Discipline.

Also, during the debate of Resolution #15, there were at least two corrections in the whereas section

that were made. (Others cried out for correction, but time was limited.) Apparently, the Annual Conference opposed legislative documents that were carelessly and inaccurately written.

Not one person stood to make a speech to oppose this resolution, to support historic Christian teaching on human sexuality, and defend the Traditional Plan. Not. One. Person. (The bishop had suggested that a one-speech-per-person rule was in effect. That was not completely accurate. The Standing Rules actually state: "A member may speak only once on any motion until all who desire to speak have done so, and then he/she may speak only one additional time." [Section I.C.2] In any case, the bishop's interpretation of this rule made some delegates hesitant to speak.) With so little opposition publicly expressed, it was surprising that this resolution was approved by only a 60-40 vote. The margin could have been much wider.

Resolution #9: "Let's Become Better" was also considered. It urged the departure of North Carolina Conference United Methodists from The United Methodist Church if the denomination's moral teaching, marriage practice, and ordination practice are not changed by the 2020 General Conference. The debate over Resolution #9 featured voices (even progressive voices!) that opposed the resolution because of its departure provision. Other voices opposed it because of its revisionist Christian morale. In the end, Resolution #9 failed by the wide margin of 80-20.

So, the North Carolina Conference went on record opposing:

- *disobedience to The Book of Discipline,
- *careless writing in the legislative process caused by ideological zeal,
- *departure from The United Methodist Church, and
- *current church teaching on human sexuality and the Traditional Plan adopted by General Conference 2019.

It is reasonable to believe that, if the Tradition Plan and its morality had been supported by a thoughtful speech or two, 10% of the votes would have flipped, and the vote on Resolution #15 might well have been different.

22. On Saturday morning, it was decided to keep **Annual Conference sessions in Greenville** from 2020 until 2024.

23. Also **Rev. Greg Moore** noted that the North Carolina Conference recently has had the most "church plants" or "new faith communities" of any Annual Conference in The United Methodist Church. According to Rev. Moore's report, most new church plants come out of existing, healthy congregations.

24. During the **Service for the Ordering of Ministry**, the License for Pastoral Ministry blessed 20, Commissioning 8 (including Rev. Seyun Hwang of

St. Paul United Methodist Church in Tabor City), Ordination as a Deacon 5, Ordination as an Elder 10, Recognition of Orders 1, Certified as Lay Missioners 14, Certified Lay Ministers 6, and Commissioned as a Missionary 1. At the beginning of this service, there was a General Examination of all the candidates. Early in the examination, the candidates were challenged: "Remember that you are called to serve rather than to be served, to proclaim the faith of the church and no other [!], to look after the concerns of God above all." Later, the candidates were asked: "Will you be loyal to The United Methodist Church, accepting its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline, defending it against all doctrines contrary to God's Holy Word, and committing yourself to be accountable with those serving with you, and to the bishop and those who are appointed to supervise your ministry?" What a probing question.

25. Thank you for reading this to the end. Please allow **one, last comment**.

During the debate on the resolutions, this pastor rose to speak for traditioned Christian teaching on human sexuality, for the Traditional Plan, and against Resolution #9. Once at the microphone, this pastor could survey roughly 1,000 United Methodists from across the North Carolina Conference sitting attentively. There were some who would support what was about to be said. Others who would oppose what was coming. The speech began. In the middle of it, this pastor was struck by how quiet the assembly was. Eerily silent.

National politics is so noisy and raw. General Conference is so dramatic, emotional, and headache provoking. But there -- in the Greenville Convention Center, during the 2019 North Carolina Annual Conference, during a speech that attempted to stand for traditional teaching that has been maintained for 2,000 years, in front of a crowd that contained strong support and strong opposition -- was respectful silence. Talk about civility -- or love! -- shown by the Annual Conference! It was a reminder that the Holy Spirit was at work, often mysteriously, during those 3 or 4 days in Greenville.

In Christ,
Pastor Paul

YOUTH SUNDAY
July 14, 2019
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
10:00 a.m.
Welcome One, Welcome All!

NURTURE COMMITTEE

The Nurture Committee was honored to provide refreshments for the reception following the memorial service for Helen Cunningham.

We gave out long-stemmed carnations to all the women and young women on Mother's Day, and for Father's Day we gave all the men and young men a key chain with a little flashlight. The flashlight had the words "Men who walk with God light the way." Being a godly parent is one of the most important jobs we have on this earth. One doesn't have to be a mother or father to be a parent- an uncle or aunt, mentor or even a friend to a child, can be a powerful Christian example. Have a safe and restful summer!

– Debbie Conway, Chair

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED

A short time ago, on a Sunday morning, during the worship service, I had an unexpected fall. When I fell, I quickly realized that I must get up as other members were needing to pass me in the Communion line. I want to thank Dial Gray for pulling me up on my feet, and Pat Ray for coming down out of the choir loft to assist me and to find out what happened.

After the service was over, several members offered to drive me home, but I insisted I was ok. Upon my arrival to my home, I noticed that Wayne and Linda Overcash and Betty Hamilton had followed behind me, and so had Pat Ray and Kathy and Terry Simmons. Many thanks to everyone.

Seated on the porch in a rocking chair, Pat checked my vital signs and insisted that I go to the Urgent Care. Pat, Kathy, and Terry waited with me for at least three hours until the doctor finished his observation and gave me a report of no broken bones. I was ok to go home.

Shortly after my arrival home, Ann Worthington and Pastor Paul came to check on me. Again thanks to everyone.

During this experience, I did not have my own family with me, but I did have part of my church family. Thanks and praise to God. I am blessed to have a church family like the Whiteville United Methodist Church. God bless our church family.

– Lewellyn David

ART CLASS

The Tuesdays of July
July 9, 16, 23, and 30
2:00 p.m.

Taught by Mrs. Debbie Conway

Meet and Create in the Parlor!

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER: ANDREW SAULS

Andrew Sauls is the winner of the 2019 Sam T. and Thelma G. Gore Scholarship. Andrew is the son of Ben and Sharon Sauls, and the grandson of Lewis and Ann Sauls. A recent graduate of Columbus Christian Academy, Andrew plans to study at Southeastern Community College for two years. Then he hopes to enroll at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke to major in Software Engineering. On June 23, during the Service of Worship, the Gore Scholarship was awarded to Andrew. Andrew, congratulations from Whiteville United Methodist Church!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

How Many of you have heard about Christmas in July celebrations? Whatever you may feel about that idea, it's a great reminder that it's only five months before shoeboxes will be sent on wings to countries throughout the world! That time for our church is Sunday, November 24.

Our Operation Christmas Child (OCC) team met much earlier this year. We came up with an idea borrowed from other churches of year-round collection for OCC. We called it OCC Month by Month. This idea was born out of the necessity: being short of items to completely fill some of our shoeboxes. We tried to come up with items you can find on sale during the month listed. This is the list we came up with for our church:

February: Wow Items (dolls, stuffed animals, matchbox cars, etc.)

March: Clothes, scarves, mittens, toboggans, etc.

April: Wow Items

May: Hygiene items (wash cloths, soap, toothbrushes, multiple small drinking cups, etc.)

June: Flashlights, batteries, solar calculators

July: School Supplies (notebooks or notepads, pencils, pens, pencil sharpeners, etc.)

August: School supplies (markers, colored pencils, rulers, scissors, etc.)

September: Flip flops or shoes, sunglasses, clothes, plastic shoeboxes

October: Letters, pictures, toys, multiple small drinking cups

November: Shipping cost or other monetary donations; BUILD A BOX; labels for following your shoebox online

What will you give of yourself to do the Lord's work?

– Wendy Hood

THE UNUSUAL JOURNEY OF ONE SCOUTS ROAD TO EAGLE

Juwan Lewis passed his Eagle Board on March 16, 2011. He was in Troop 513 during Brent Hood's time with the Troop. To Brent's knowledge at the time that Juwan passed his Eagle Board, Juwan was the first black Eagle Scout in both Columbus and Bladen counties! (This was about the time Brent had hand surgery due to complications due to gout. Then while recovering from the surgery, he developed an embolism.) As with many scouts, Juwan left the troop shortly after he passed his Eagle Board.

After Brent passed away, I was going through all the Scout paperwork and found Juwan's Eagle packet along with a couple of others. Typically, the Scoutmaster holds onto the Eagle Packet until the Eagle Scout has his Eagle Scout Ceremony. (Some Scouts choose not to have one for one reason or another.) I passed all the Eagle Packets on to Keith Sellars. He in turn passed them on to the new Scoutmaster, Larry Baxter.

Larry didn't have Juwan's contact information; neither did any of the Assistant Scoutmasters. Juwan's mother, Patricia, dropped off some clothing to be repaired. Daphne Burris and her husband Mike, an Assistant Scoutmaster, had a long-term involvement with the Troop. Daphne knew that Larry Baxter was trying to get Juwan's contact info so she passed it on to him.

The trouble was Juwan's work schedule wasn't compatible with Scout meetings on Monday nights. Time passed, and Juwan's Eagle packet was misplaced.

About three months ago I was at Walmart. I was just coming in and Juwan and Patricia were just leaving. I was so excited to see them, since I hadn't seen them in years. I asked them if Juwan had ever had his Eagle Ceremony. They said no, so I asked them what had happened. After we had talked awhile, I clarified for them what needed to be done.

They contacted Mr. Baxter, and he reached out to the National Headquarters for the Boy Scouts of America. He explained that Juwan's Eagle Packet had been lost sometime over the years. National agreed to reissue Juwan's Eagle certificate. Larry went to the Boy Scout store in Wilmington and bought the rest of the items for Juwan.

On June 10, 2019, at the end-of-the-year Court of Honor for Troop 513, Juwan Lewis was presented with his Eagle Packet, his Eagle neckerchief and slide, and his Eagle Medal. Reverend Paul Stallworth and I had the privilege of being in attendance. During the ceremony, I had the honor of being awarded the mentor pin. Juwan is 27 years old.

An Eagle has to be completed by a scout's 18th birthday. For Juwan, the recognition of that award came almost 8 years and 3 months later.

– Wendy Hood

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

June, as always, has been a busy month in the life of WUMC! To our graduates, Margaret High (college) and Andrew Sauls (high school), we congratulate you and extend our best wishes as you continue to grow and use the gifts and talents God has given you. Andrew is also the recipient of the 2019 Sam T. and Thelma G. Gore Memorial Scholarship and will be attending Southeastern Community College.

Also, to all of you who have actively participated in our worship services and to those of you who so faithfully attend, thank you! A special "thank you" to the Chancel Choir, as well as to Jenny Barnhill, Gus Cothorn, Wendy Hood, Chalmers Waddell, and Emmanuel Ross who so graciously shared their musical talents with us this month.

This summer, for the next several weeks, Paul Stallworth will be preaching a sermon series on "The Lord's Prayer." While The Lord's Prayer is one of the most well-know passages in the Bible and one we memorized as children, it is so much more! Let's make a special effort to attend worship services this summer at 10:00 a.m. to find out how the "The Lord's Prayer" affects all of us in our daily lives.

The Worship Committee is scheduled to meet August 26, Monday, at 5:00 p.m. in the Pastr's Study for the purpose of organizing Homecoming and requesting or changing our budget needs for 2020. Please mark your calendars!

– Betty Gray, Chair

GAYLE G. STOLL MEMORIAL

The Whiteville United Methodist Church Preschool has received the third year donation of \$1,200 for the annual Gayle G. Stoll Memorial. Thank you, Phil Stoll and John Grubbs, Jr.

AVAILABLE FOR WORK

Mr. Jay White

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