

THE CONNECTION

Digital Edition | December 3, 2020

Reverend J. Claude Evans and "This Conflict of Race"

by Mike Broome, WSUMC Historian

The "Black Lives Matter" movement and its attendant reexamination of the status of racial justice in our nation are overdue ideas. These ideas have no doubt given rise to the formation of Washington Street Church's Racial Justice Action Team, a strongly led group with the vision "to actively advocate for racial justice within our congregation and community" (WSUMC Racial Justice Action Team "Vision, Mission, and Goals" document, accessed July 31, 2020). Since one of the primary aims of this team is to explore the history of racial justice surrounding our church, it seems fitting to conclude this *The Connection* series with reference to a worship service event that resonates with the work of the RJAT and our congregation's experience with black-white relations.

My wife Charlotte and I were on the verge of becoming Washington Streeters on July 21, 1996, when Reverend J. Claude Evans preached a "replay" sermon recalling his controversial July 27, 1942, message entitled "This Conflict of Race." He came to our pulpit on that day in 1996 at the invitation of our Church and Society Committee. When he finished, the congregation's standing ovation belied the much more negative response of the July 1942 event. The context of this experience is worth a reminder.

When World War II began, the South was slowly recovering from the Great Depression and coping with the ongoing issues of the bigoted Jim Crow era and the revered remembrance of the Lost Cause with respect to race relations. Only a few decades before, "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman had served as governor and

later as a senator from South Carolina. He "was an unabashed and self-proclaimed 'white supremacist' who led South Carolina's notorious red shirts, a paramilitary gang that murdered black people on large and small scales" (SC Information Highway Website, accessed November 22, 2020). His influence was not short term. Another contextual example

was Reverend Samuel Steel, who was appointed to Washington Street Church in 1913. While in some ways progressive, Steel was a product of his generation. "He regularly extolled the Lost Cause in the pulpit . . . and published a monograph while in Columbia entitled, *The South Was Right* (Huff, p. 77). The residue of a social and political system unfavorable to blacks remained in the wings as the young Reverend Claude Evans arrived at Washington Street in 1941.

Evans carved out an impressive career as a clergyman. Born in Anderson, S.C., in 1917, he completed his A.B. at Wofford in 1937 and his B.D. at Duke in 1940, and he received an Honorary D.D. from Wofford in 1957. He completed his graduate study at Union Theological Seminary of New York and the University of Chicago. His church assignments included associate terms at First Methodist in Charlotte,



Rev. J. Claude Evans

N.C., and Washington Street as well as senior positions at other churches in the South Carolina Conference. He was a Navy chaplain during 1944-46. He was editor of the *South Carolina Methodist Advocate* from 1952-57 and served as chaplain of Southern Methodist University in Dallas beginning in 1957.

The Washington Street archives have been fortunate to receive a generous packet of materials from Lowell W. Ross, Esquire, a Seneca attorney who knew Rev. Evans when Mr. Ross was in high school in Walhalla. Rev. Evans passed these writings along to Mr. Ross, who graciously entrusted them to our archives. In this packet, we read a number of life stories from Rev. Evans, including an outline of the controversial 1942 sermon.

One such 1938 story, in summary, involved Rev. Evans's willingness to dive into the Roanoke River to retrieve the body of an unfortunate black fellow who had drowned while fishing. Evans's courage and unhesitating offer to put his Red Cross Senior Life Saver skills to use foreshadow the man who was also willing a few years later to deliver an unpopular but morally important sermon. Evans was successful in locating and pulling up the deceased fisherman, by the way.

On July 27, 1942, the Sunday of the controversial sermon, Rev. Dr. John Owen Smith, our church's senior minister, was away on vacation. His associate, Rev. Evans, was assigned to preach in Smith's absence. Evans had earlier expressed informally social views probably too liberal for the time, but those views had apparently not been presented to the entire congregation. That was to change. The sermon was entitled "This Conflict of Race" and was based on Acts 17:26, in which Paul affirmed that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." A summary of Evans's four main points follows:

Point One: [GOD] HATH MADE . . . Creation is where we all come from. Humanity has a common origin of equality under God. Therefore, humanity has a common destiny under God in a coming Kingdom of God.

Point Two: [God] hath made OF ONE BLOOD. Human blood types, which blacks and whites share in common, symbolize the unity that Creation demands of human beings.

The body shows us that God has kindred purposes for all human beings.

Point Three: [God] hath made of one blood ALL NATIONS OF MEN. Here Paul is saying that there is no such thing as a permanently superior race. God has made "all the nations," so God did not make any race to be permanently superior over other races.

Point Four: [God] hath made of one blood all the nations of men, FOR TO DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. There it is. Paul believes that the goal of life is life together in a Kingdom not made with hands, high and lifted up in the future, but experienced by foretaste in the here and now. (from Rev. Claude Evans's sermon entitled "This Conflict of Race" and quoted from Ross, "This Conflict of Race: A Sermon which Created a Firestorm," monograph, pp. 8-10)

Given the social context of July 1942, we can no doubt highlight parts of the above exegesis that was not well received.

Following the service, one church member approached Evans with the observation that the young minister had made the greatest mistake of his life. Two days after the homiletic firestorm, Rev. John Owen



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With your support, WSUMC can continue to make Christmas special for the children of Epworth. This year, you can sign up online to select a gift to purchase for a deserving child!

Thank you for your spirit of giving as you are providing for children who are so appreciative of your generosity.

Visit wsmethodist.org/christmas-with-epworth/

Smith was called back from vacation to attend a called Board of Stewards meeting, the subject of which, of course, the “inappropriate” sermon. Smith defended Evans and generally defused the situation. Evans could stay but was not allowed to ever again preach from the Washington Street pulpit. A number of Washington Streeters other than Rev. Smith backed Evans, but the majority of the congregation did not. In less than a year Evans left Washington Street.

It is interesting to learn from Evans that his selection as SMU’s chaplain had been made with the selection group’s full knowledge of the sermon in Columbia. SMU was in the process in the mid-1950s of fully integrating its student body, and Rev. Claude Evans was deemed an experienced choice as chaplain to handle any fires of racial dissension. Evans claims at the time that he felt more like Br’er Rabbit being thrown in the brier patch (Paper of Claude Evans entitled “Exodus—Wilderness—Promised Land,” p. 11).

Rev. Evans’s experience at Washington Street Church dovetails nicely in 2020 with the work of the Racial Justice Team. I am certain that this sermon in question, in hindsight, might seem more like a tempest in a teapot and that the negative outcry appears insufferable. But in 1942 the words of Evans challenged Southern cultural norms and were far too socio-political in a time-honored House of the Lord. This young minister’s decision to explain scripture in such a contested way reminds me of a quotation from Theodore Roosevelt:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly...and who... if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.



CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL!

Sunday mornings
on Youtube
with Mr. Terence
[youtube.com/
washingtonstreetumc](https://www.youtube.com/washingtonstreetumc)

Gifts



IN MEMORY OF KATHY GUNTER’S BIRTHDAY
to WSUMC

Given by Linda Fesperman

(Address at the Sorbonne, Paris, 23 April 1910—accessed from “Theodore Roosevelt Quotes,” [https://www.azquotes.com/author/12606—Theodore Roosevelt](https://www.azquotes.com/author/12606—Theodore+Roosevelt), Nov. 22, 2020)

The valiant Evans had been somewhat bloodied on that Sunday in 1942. All things considered, I suspect that he was also proud of the “dust and blood” on his face when he was thrown into the brier patch in Dallas.

A personal note: I’ve appreciated the chance to write about a few notable characters in the history of our wonderful old church. The Racial Justice Action Team was nice to ask me to complete this series for *The Connection*, and Jane has been quite a professional colleague in her publishing and photo selection skills. My best wishes to the RJAT as we all move forward (and away, I hope, from this horrific pandemic).

Sources

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Huff, A.V., Jr.. *Tried by Fire*. Columbia, South Carolina: The R.L. Bryan Co., 1975.

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Way, George K., ed. *Methodist Ministers in South Carolina* 1952. Columbia, South Carolina: SC Methodist Advocate Print, 1952.

Prayer List

Martha Brooker
Jimmy Dawkins
Mickey Epting
Nancy Epting
Linda Fesperman
Don Fowler
Charles Garren
Frances Grimes
Bud Harrelson
Karen Horne

Geneva Hutchinson
Lisa Johnson
Rev. Judy King
Beverly McClanahan
Braxton Murphy
Angela Powers
Rick Rowe
Nan Self
Our homebound



WASHINGTON STREET
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday, December 6

4:00 pm

WSUMC Parking Lot

Preregister online!

Social Distancing Practiced • Masks required

Zoom Advent Studies Continue

As we enter Advent Season still facing COVID-19 restrictions, WSUMC is offering five Advent Studies through Zoom to help us celebrate Advent together.

Sunday Morning Options

1. A discussion of Walter Brueggeman's book, *Names of the Messiah*, will be led by Alston Lippert with her Sunday School class. Currently, this group includes Young Adult, John Harper, and Paul Harmon classes. To participate in this study, contact Alston Lippert at aflippert@umcsc.org.
2. The Grace Class will be discussing Brueggeman's book. To join this study, email Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for a link to join in.

3. To join in a Zoom discussion of Adam Hamilton's book *The Journey — Walking the Road to Bethlehem* with Ann Jessup in the Open Door Class, email her at jessup.ann@gmail.com.
4. To join in a discussion of the book *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas* by Adam Hamilton with Sylvia Stevens and member of the Joy Class, email her at sylviasaudersstevens@gmail.com.
5. **Evening Option:** Ann Jessup and Susan Caskey will co-lead a discussion of the Advent book, *The Gift of the Nutcracker* by Matt Rawle on Wednesday evenings, December 2, 9 and 16 from 7:00-8:30 pm. Email Ann at jessup.ann@gmail.com to join in.



Carol Sing

An Outdoor
Christmas Carol Event

4:00 PM

Sunday, Dec. 20

1401 Washington St. | Parking lot



WASHINGTON STREET
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2021 Offering Booklets Now Available!

The 2021 Offering Envelope books will be available for pick up at the December 6 and December 20 Outdoor Services. If you are unable to pick yours up at these times, please contact Robbie Douglas at rdouglas@wsmethodist.org to arrange a time that is best for you. *Please note this year's envelopes will have no date or numbers on them.

Advent devotional books are available in the volunteer office at the church which is accessible. You may stop by the office and pick one up at your convenience.



Two Great Opportunities for Giving this Holiday Season

We have two opportunities to share and support our local community and the people of Ecuador. One of our church's holiday traditions is the Heifer Project. We hope you will continue to support this program! Our funds will support a project in Ecuador. On the giving page on our church website, the Heifer Project is listed as an option for donations and we hope you will! As you know, donations are usually in honor of someone. Mary Lide and Anne Sinclair will work with donors to ensure that you receive the cards to give to your friends and family.



Also, we are re-igniting our Pack-a-Book Bag Program for Alcorn Middle School. This long-time project of WSUMC has been on hold since March due to COVID-19. The school has requested that we start again in December. Below please find the list of items that will provide the students something to eat during the weekend and holidays.

Granola bars
Breakfast bars
Instant oatmeal
Small jars peanut butter
Graham crackers
Peanut butter crackers
Tuna snack kits

Chicken snack kits
Individual Macaroni and cheese
Boxed macaroni and cheese
Canned spaghetti / ravioli
Canned meats
Fruit cups

Tables will be available for donations to both the Heifer Project and Pack-a-Book Bag Program beginning at 3:00 on December 6th. Our in-person worship service begins at 4:00 that afternoon. If you are unable to attend, you may leave items during the week in the designated box inside the church near the parking lot doors.



SIGNS AND MASKS FOR SALE!

Makes great gifts for loved ones!



\$10 ea.

PURCHASE ONLINE @ WSMETHODIST.ORG/GIVING

Contact Jane to arrange pickup—jane@wsmethodist.org



\$5 ea.

Precious Memories from Washington Street UMC



Christopher and Chipper Peterson, 2002

For many years, WSUMC parents receive a precious gift to use year after year on their Christmas Tree. A handmade ornament with a photo of their child! Normally, these would be made by the children in their Sunday School classes, however, due to our not being able to be together, Mary Lide will take on the project.

Photos of WSUMC Children from nursery school age through 6th grade will be taken prior to the Dec. 6 outdoor service in the parking lot of the church. You may email photos to Mary Lide (neaudl@aol.com) if you are unable to attend the service. Your finished ornament will be mailed to you. These ornaments will be a part of your holiday decor for many years to come!

WSUMC Online Views & Outdoor Service Attendance

as of 12/1/20

YOUTUBE SERVICE VIEWS (LAST RPT.)

Nov. 8: 93 (92)
Nov. 15: 94 (81)
Nov. 22: 160
Nov. 29: 121

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS VIEWS (LAST RPT.)

Nov. 8 with Beth Matthews: 22 (21)
Nov. 15 with Ann Jessup: 19 (17)
Nov. 22 with Susan Caskey: 22
Nov. 29 with Mary Lide: 31

OUTDOOR SERVICE ONLINE VIEWS

Oct. 4: 52 (47)
Oct. 18: 17 (16)
Nov. 1: 48 (46)
Nov. 15: 69

OUTDOOR ATTENDANCE

72
88
98
61

Income from 11/18 to 12-2

Church \$20,176

Soup Cellar \$3,825

Foundation \$250

2020 Poinsettias



In Memory of . . .

Norma Galloway Barr
Ralph Barrett
Noemi Carrasco Montero
Martha "Mott" Cooper
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Epting
Louise Player Galloway
William Brooks Galloway, Jr.
Caroline Campbell Harley
Barbara Martin Horne
L. D. & Ruth B. Lide
Tom G. & Louise C. Mangum
Elizabeth Catherine Maszk
Luke A. Nance, Jr.
Ralph R. Rozier, Sr.
Ansel Arthur Salley
Doris Harley Salley
Roy R. Sutherland, Jr.
James Polk Vaughan

In Honor of . . .

Wendy Clark
Louis Dukes
Rev. Patricia Parrish & Rev. Alston Lippert
Beth Matthews
My Boys - Charlie, Jere & Todd
Lynn Shirley
Soup Cellar Volunteers
Kathy Wright

Given by . . .

John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
Nelle Peterson
Lanneau & Mary Lide
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
Nelle Peterson
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
Lanneau & Mary Lide
Lanneau & Mary Lide
Heidi Conte
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway
John S. & Lynda Salley Galloway

Given by . . .

Mary Lide
Nelle Peterson
Lanneau & Mary Lide
Mary Lide
Nelle Peterson
Mary Lide
Mary Lide
Mary Lide

ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES



- **The Dawsey Class** is continuing our study of *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* by Robin Diangelo. This Sunday, December 6, Caroline Seigler will lead a discussion of Chapter 11, "White Women's Tears." On December 13, Tom Summers will teach the last chapter, "Where Do We Go from Here?" The class meets by FreeConferenceCall.com. Class members should call in before 9:30 a.m., but not before 9:15 a.m. The call-in number is (425) 436-6321. The access code is 326159#.

- **The Grace Class:** will continue its Advent study of Walter Brueggeman's book, *Names of the Messiah*. 12/6: Nancy Whittle to lead Chapter 2, "Mighty God." 12/13: Cindy Cox to lead Chapter 3, "Everlasting Father." The class meets on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am via Zoom. All are welcome, and if interested in joining us contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the link.

- **The Joy Class** will be studying *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas* by Adam Hamilton. If you would like to join us, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com for an invitation.

- **Open Door Class** is studying *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* by Adam Hamilton. After studying about Mary and Joseph, over the next two Sundays we will discuss Mary's visit to Elizabeth and then the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem. All are welcome to join. For Zoom dial-in information, please reach out to Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.

- **YASS, John Harper, and Paul Harmon Class** will be continuing its Zoom discussion of Walter Brueggeman's book, *Names of the Messiah*. All are welcome. For information, or to get a Zoom invitation, email Reverend Alston aflippert@umcsc.org.

WSUMC Youth Class meets on Zoom with Mackin Wall at 9:45 am on Sunday mornings. Upcoming topics: December 6th - peace; December 13th - joy; and December 20th - love. To participate, please email Mackin Wall at mackin@wsmethodist.org.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES!

To schedule any meeting (even if using personal Zoom or other accounts), please contact Abbie (abbie@wsmethodist.org) to put your meeting on the Church Calendar!

Thursday, Dec. 3

Church Chat
10:00-11:00 am
Contact Mary Lide
neaudl@aol.com

Reconciling Next ANGELS

Happy Hour
5:30 pm
Contact Jim Lane
jlane32@gmail.com

Sunday, Dec. 6

Outdoor Worship Series
4:00-5:00 pm
Preregister @ wsmethodist.org
PHOTOS WILL BE TAKEN OF
CHILDREN FOR CHRISTMAS TREE
ORNAMENTS
Contact Mary Lide
neaudl@aol.com

Tuesday, Dec. 8

Charles Pfeiffer Circle 5
7:00-8:00 pm
Contact Mary Lide
neaudl@aol.com

Thursday, Dec. 10

Circle 2 (Toni White)
Contact MJ Fox
mjfoxad@aol.com

Tuesday, Dec. 15

CDC Christmas Party
Threatt Hall/Kitchen

Dawsey Class Meeting

5:30-7:00 pm
Contact MJ Fox
mjfoxad@aol.com

Friday, Dec. 18

Restoration 803 Christmas Dinner
Soup Cellar
Contact Robbie Douglas
rdouglas@wsmethodist.org

Sunday, Dec. 20

Carol Sing
Outdoor Caroling Event
4:00 pm
Parking Lot
With hot drinks and snacks
available for purchase from
Queen's Mobile Cafe!

Wednesday, Dec. 23

CDC Closed for Christmas

Thursday, Dec. 24

CDC Closed
Soup Cellar Closed

Christmas Eve Service I

12:00 pm
Parking lot
with communion

Christmas Eve Service II

4:00 pm
Parking lot
with communion

Friday, Dec. 25

Merry Christmas!

Church Office, CDC, Soup Cellar
closed



WASHINGTON
STREET
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

YOUTH

HOLIDAY
SMALL
GROUPS

High Schoolers | Thursday, Dec. 17
Middle Schoolers | Monday, Dec. 21
Youth Room | 6-7:30 pm