



# THE CONNECTION

June 9, 2021

## The Rev. Patricia J. Parrish

By Fran Zupan

In January 1979, the Rev. Patricia J. Parrish was called by God to be in ministry with God's people. She remembers the time well.

She had been in prayer about her future for a couple of years, ever since she graduated from Winthrop, but on this particular day, she had been denied a raise and met with her department head to appeal the decision. He said no, she couldn't have a raise because she had a husband. She didn't have a husband, but even if she did, it was a sexist comment.

"I couldn't process it because I was so angry," Patricia said. She left work, went home, and prayed. She didn't hear an audible voice, but an inner voice that said, "Minister to my people." In that moment, she grew calm and continued to pray.

After three days, she called her parents, met with the pastor of her home church in York, S.C., and decided to enroll in the Candler School of Theology at Emory in Atlanta. As her discernment process continued, she realized God had been calling her to ministry for many years.

Now, as Patricia retires, she looks back on a career that started with three small churches in St. Matthews and is ending at Washington Street, where she has served five years. Along the way, she served two churches in Saluda and then Belair UMC in Indian Land, the first time she had a single church.

Then, Patricia was an associate at Shandon UMC in Columbia, followed by Boiling Springs UMC in Lexington, Beulah UMC in Gilbert, and eight years as district superintendent in Charleston, before coming to Washington Street.

Patricia grew up in the small town of York where her mother was a part-time church secretary once Patricia started school, and her father had an optometry practice on Main Street. Many people told her, "Your daddy gave me my first pair of glasses."

She had two older brothers, Ron and Jerry, and she was a tomboy. She wore overalls and a shirt; played football, baseball, and war; and without telling her parents, rode her bike three miles across town to visit a friend.

Her family had strong beliefs. When they took their beach vacation at Cherry Grove, they stopped in Florence where the kids changed clothes at a service station, so the family could attend Sunday school and church.

Patricia's father had been an assistant to a chaplain when he was stationed in Panama during World War II. An uncle was founding pastor of Heyward Street United Methodist

Church in Columbia and the first executive director of the United Methodist Foundation in South Carolina.

Her freshman year at Emory, Patricia met her future husband Gary Phillips. When they started dating, they didn't have a lot of money, so they mostly cooked and studied together. Patricia recalled two memorable dates when Gary took her to the Fox Theatre in downtown Atlanta to see *The Lettermen* and *The Nutcracker*.

Patricia and Gary married in 1982, right after graduation, in Glenn Memorial Chapel on the Emory campus.

Patricia said she was the first woman minister almost everywhere she went. People wouldn't express their bias, but neither would they support, nor even discuss, proposals she brought to the Church Council. She arranged to have a male member of the council put forth her ideas so they would pass. When she had lunch with a female insurance company owner in one of the St. Matthews' congregations, the woman told her, "I won't let them run over you."

The three small churches in St. Matthews were not alike; the members differed from one another in educational and socioeconomic traits. One church had a man with a third-grade education, while another was filled with people with various post-high-school degrees.

Patricia found that the smallest church with the least educated members was the most supportive of her. In her eyes, all the churches were important.

"Each church is important," she declared, "and I found that to be true as a (district) superintendent,

"A lot of places I served, I felt really good about what I did," she said. "And in two or three, I felt at home; I felt comfortable in my own skin. I feel that way about Washington Street and about the Charleston district."

Among her most important accomplishments at Washington Street, Patricia mentioned the establishment of a ministry with the people of Ecuador. Washington Street has



sent a mission team to Ecuador three times.

She also mentioned the establishment of local mission projects, such as the Sunday Dinners to feed the homeless and hungry.

Patricia said she led Washington Street through a response to the General Conference 2019 decision to adopt the Traditional Plan. That plan continued policies against same-sex marriage in the church and the ordination of homosexuals.

"It was monumental, not because of anything I did, but because we faced the reality of where we were as a congregation," Patricia said. She said, "The congregation had failed for 10 or more years to address the hurt that came from these issues."

Washington Street wrote an "excellent statement" in response to General Conference 2019 and developed a plan to discern the church's long-awaited decision regarding membership in The Reconciling Ministries Network, Patricia said. According to one definition, reconcilers are "people of faith committed to the affirmation and inclusion of all God's LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) children."

"It wasn't something I would have signed up for . . . , but it was work that had to be done before this church could begin healing," Patricia said. At the end of the process, the Church Council voted unanimously to make Washington Street one of the first reconciling United Methodist congregations in South Carolina.

As they look toward retirement at the end of June, Patricia and Gary will be moving from the parsonage of Salem UMC, where Gary has served for five years. Located between Irmo and Ballentine, it is a place where they have established a patio garden, including blueberry bushes, four kinds of lettuce, cherry tomatoes, and cauliflower, among other produce.

They will live at Lake Junaluska, NC, where they own a house. Their daughter Rebekah Phillips Tozer and her husband George Tozer are expecting a baby boy on July 5, and they are looking forward to being grandparents. Rebekah and George live in Mount Pleasant.

"I'm looking forward to being able to walk around the lake and have more freedom with my time," Patricia said. She wants to volunteer at either the Haywood Pathways Center in Waynesville, which provides a person-centered, six-month, residential program for inmates released from the nearby jail, or at the Haywood Street Mission in Asheville, a United Methodist church that ministers to those facing shelter insecurity and other issues of poverty.

Patricia would like to care for the swans on the lake, and Gary hopes to engage some of the members of First United Methodist Church of Waynesville in planning a mission trip to Ecuador.

RSVP no later than Friday, June 10  
for the Retirement Reception for

Rev. Parrish!

3-5 pm, this Sunday in

Christ Chapel Courtyard

(Wesley Room is rain location)

Sign up at

[wsmethodist.org/reception](http://wsmethodist.org/reception)

## Prayer List

Pete Bailey  
Thom Berry  
Martha Brooker  
Sally Christian  
Mickey Epting  
Charles Garren  
Bud Harrelson  
Karen Horne  
Geneva Hutchinson  
Lisa Johnson  
Rev. Judy King  
Alisa Liggett

Karen Lowrimore  
Beverly McClanahan  
Lauren, Greg and Nora Blair  
Middleton and family  
Angela Powers  
Rick Rowe  
Boyd Saunders  
Stephanie Saunders  
Nan Self  
Sarah Threatt  
Our homebound

*Rev. Patricia Parrish as she prepares to transition into retirement, Rev. Becky Shirley as she prepares to transition to WSUMC*

Volunteers Needed!  
Sign up at  
[wsmethodist.org/sundaydinner](http://wsmethodist.org/sundaydinner)

Washington Street

Sunday Dinner on the Grounds  
June 27 | 4:00-6:00 pm  
WSUMC Parking Lot & Threatt Hall



# Sunday School

• **Aldersgate Class** is continuing a 6-week program on *Simon Peter: Flawed but Faithful Disciple* by Adam Hamilton. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information contact David Anderson at [danderson@richardsonplowden.com](mailto:danderson@richardsonplowden.com).

• **The Dawsey Class:** The Dawsey Class continues its study of *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* by Jim Wallis. This Sunday, June 13, Janelle Rivers will teach Chapter 1, "Race Is a Story." On June 20, Tom Wall will lead a discussion of Chapter 2, "The Parables of Ferguson and Baltimore." The class will continue to meet through FreeConferenceCall.com at this time. Class members should call in before 9:15 a.m., but not before 9:05 a.m. The call-in number is (425) 436-6321. The access code is 326159#.

• **The Grace Class:** The Grace Class will take a relaxed approach to Summer Sundays, (June 6 - August 15), by simultaneously gathering in person and via Zoom during the regular Sunday School hour to share a devotional led by a class member or guest. Join in person or contact Jim Lane at [jlane@columbiasc.edu](mailto:jlane@columbiasc.edu) for the zoom link to gather at 9:45 AM for fellowship, and at 10:00 am for spiritual reflection. Also, be on the lookout for the Grace Class Summer Calendar for extra opportunities to meet up outside of class to share in community.

• **The Joy Class:** is meeting in-person at 10:00 am in our 3rd-floor classroom and we invite everyone to join us! If you would like to join us, please contact Lee Haynes at [lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com](mailto:lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com). com or Sylvia Stevens at [sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com](mailto:sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com) for an invitation.

• **Open Door Class:** The class is continuing its study of *How Happiness Happens* by Max Lucado. For Zoom dial-in information, please contact Ann Jessup at [jessup.ann@gmail.com](mailto:jessup.ann@gmail.com).

• **The Paul Harmon & John Harper Classes** will start in-person classes on June 6 and will meet in Threath Hall at 10:00 am. The topic will be "What is the word of God in our time?" and will be led by Rev. Don Britt. For more information contact Suzanne Joye at [sjoye@sc.rr.com](mailto:sjoye@sc.rr.com).

• **YASS** will be taking a break for the summer. Anyone interested in joining please contact Rev. Alston at [aflippert@umcsc.org](mailto:aflippert@umcsc.org). To attend SS this summer, please join in with the Paul Harmon & John Harper classes or any of our other adult SS classes which are now meeting at the church.

• **WSUMC Youth Class:** June 13th - Making an Impact - John 13: 34-35 and Acts 8: 26-40; June 20th - Parables - Matthew 13: 31-32 and 2 Corinthians 4: 7-8. To participate, please email Mackin Wall at [mackin@wsmethodist.org](mailto:mackin@wsmethodist.org).

## Gifts



IN HONOR OF REVEREND PATRICIA PARRISH  
to WSUMC

Given by Neal Woods & Andrea McAtee

IN MEMORY OF DON FOWLER  
to WSUMC

Given by Lanneau & Mary Lide

IN MEMORY OF MILLIE LIDE  
to the Soup Cellar

Given by Lanneau & Mary Lide

IN MEMORY OF OREN & LUCILE LONG'S  
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY  
to WSUMC

Given by Virginia Vaughan

IN HONOR OF INEZ TENENBAUM  
to the Foundation

Given by Anne Walker

## Small Group

### Movie Discussion of Marvel's *The Black Panther*

On Tuesday, June 15 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Rev. Alston will lead a discussion of the spiritual themes found in Marvel's *The Black Panther*. You are encouraged to watch or re-watch the movie making note of any spiritual themes that you see. We will discuss these themes and how you can find evidence of God and spirituality everywhere—even in the movies. We hope you will join us for this Zoom discussion. To register, and receive the Zoom link, email Rev. Alston at [aflippert@umcsc.org](mailto:aflippert@umcsc.org). *The Black Panther* can be streamed for free with subscriptions on Disney+, Apple TV, and Amazon Prime, or it can be rented from Google Play Movies.

## Come Together!

A FAMILY-STYLE PICNIC

WATER &  
DESSERT  
SUPPLIED

Saturday, June 12

5:00-7:30 pm

Sesquicentennial Park

Pad #2



For more information contact Terence Goodwin  
[tgoodwin@wsmethodist.org](mailto:tgoodwin@wsmethodist.org)

The event will be canceled by 3 pm if weather becomes inclement



**RIDE@50+<sup>SM</sup>  
PROGRAM**

The AARP Ride@50+ Program is your one-stop shop for access to transportation options in the area for you or your loved one! Learn more and book an essential ride today!

**LEARN MORE! JOIN US FOR AN INFORMATIVE LUNCHTIME SESSION ON THIS PROGRAM!**

**JULY 28 | 11:00-12:00 PM | CHAPEL**

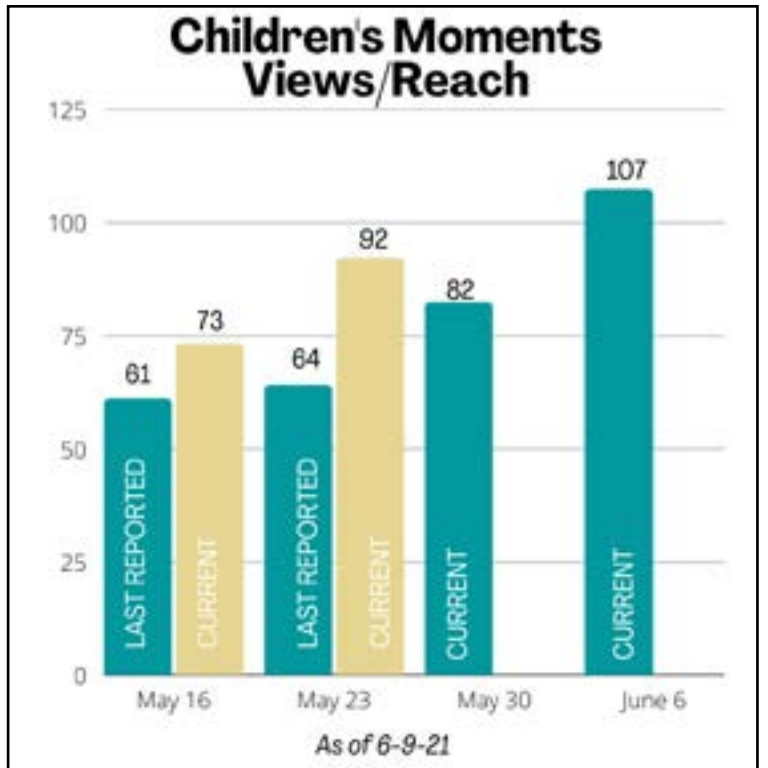
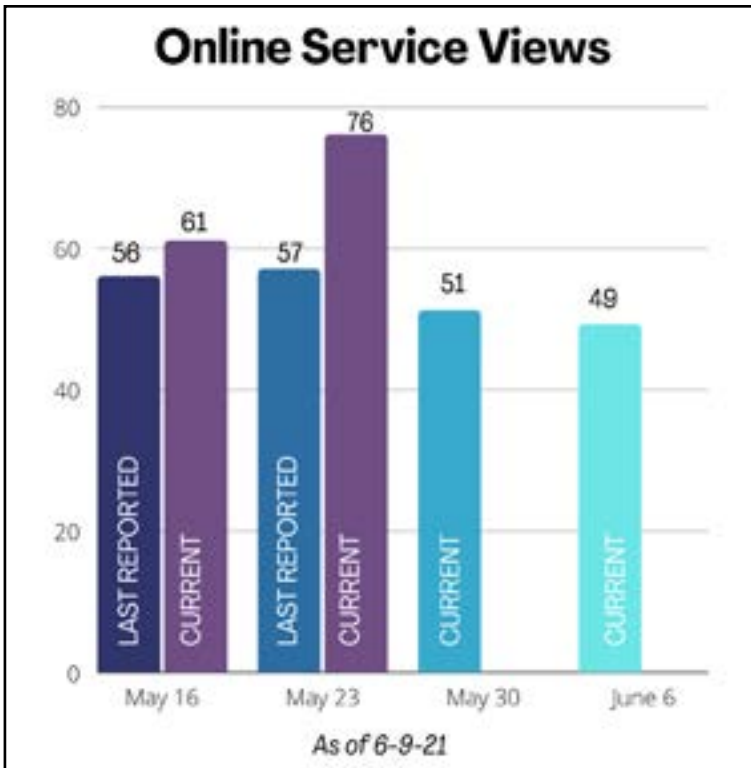
**BRING A LUNCH & JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP IN THREATT HALL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING!**



*Outdoor Service*

8:45 am | Parking Lot | Lake Casual!  
Bring a chair | Masks not required!

june  
27



**GIVING (FROM 5/26 to 6/9):** Church: \$21,812; Soup Cellar: \$460 Foundation: \$0

**IN-PERSON/INDOOR ATTENDANCE:** 5/2: 75; 5/9: 51; 5/16: 53; 5/23: 44; 5/30: 67; 6/6: 70 • **OUTDOOR ATTENDANCE:** 4/18: 57; 5/2: 38; 5/16: 16; 6/6: 25.