

THE CONNECTION

Sunday, October 3, 2021

A Natural Connection: Main Street and Washington Street United Methodist Churches

*Article by Michael Broome
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The United Methodist Church announces itself as a “connectional denomination.” This term most certainly refers to its international administrative and organizational structure with various conferences and districts that are linked to provide effective stewardship of resources, interdependent local church relationships, and shared programs of mission and ministry. This connectional concept is never better illustrated than through the proximity in distance and mission of Main Street Church and Washington Street Church in Columbia.

During the early and middle parts of the 19th Century, the city of Columbia was moving slowly but consistently toward its prominent role in South Carolina history. In addition to its importance as State Capital, as site of a growing state university, and as a developing commercial center, Columbia was beginning to assert itself as a place of religious influence, not, of course, yet to be compared to the “Holy City” of Charleston but nevertheless to occupy a spiritual niche in a most rural section of the state. And according to Dr. John Hammond Moore in *Columbia and Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990*, Washington Street Methodist Church was growing “faster than any other congregation and by 1813 could count 147 whites and 170 blacks as members” (p. 82). Moore goes on to quote Edward Hooker, who in his diary at the time wrote that “only the Methodists (‘peculiarly engaged on the subject of religion’) were holding Sunday meetings regularly and that their ‘noisy zeal’ irritated some residents” (p. 82). It appears as if this “noisy zeal” was somehow catching on.

By 1848 the population of Columbia had reached almost 6,000, many of whom lived in the city’s northern area (Huff, p. 27). A number of Washington Streeters lived in this northern section and



were unable to worship at their church on a consistent basis because of the distance factor (an interesting problem even at the time given what is now observed as not a substantial trek between the two churches). Be that as it may, “on July 4, 1847, Louis Pou, a member of the Washington Street congregation who lived on Assembly Street, began a Sunday School for children in the north area” (Huff, p. 27). Almost immediately the need for a larger facility became apparent, “and, under the leadership of the Rev. William Martin [who later was to play a pivotal role in the life of Washington Street Church during the Civil War and afterwards through the financing of a major rebuilding project], Mr. Louis Pou and others, funds were solicited and a lot purchased on the northwest corner of Marion and Lumber Streets. (The latter was later named Calhoun Street.)” (Ellisor and Brazil, eds., p. 1). A small Sunday School building came first

followed by the construction of a church. This genesis is explained in History of Main Street United Methodist Church: 1848-1996:

Soon a church of similar design and the approximate size of the Sunday School building was underway, again under the leadership of the Rev. William Martin. He is said to have met with some opposition when he began soliciting funds for the church. Some felt that even if the church could be built, it would never be self-supporting. Nevertheless, most of the cost of the church was raised and paid in cash. The church was constructed beside the Sunday School building, and the Marion Street Church was occupied and dedicated by Bishop William Capers, December 31, 1848 (Ellisor and Braziel, eds., p. 1).

This church became a needed and strong house of worship in Columbia for fifty years until, in 1898, the church, the Sunday School building, and the parsonage were completely destroyed by fire.

The rebuilding of Marion Street Methodist Church was completed in 1900, following a decision by the congregation to purchase property on Main Street and site the reconstructed church in this new location. The name was changed to Main Street Methodist Church by approval of the next Annual Conference. A subsequent fire in 1921 damaged the sanctuary area beyond normal use, but the members forged ahead not only to repair the fire damage but also to enlarge the sanctuary (Ellisor and Braziel, eds., p. 5). Growth and leadership in the faith ensued for Main Street Church. A Southern Christian Advocate article in 1929 assesses the church's status:

The growth of Main Street church has been a constant gain from year to year. In the General Minutes and Yearbook of our Church, Main Street is listed among the 'One Hundred Largest Churches' in Southern Methodism. In this list she occupies the nineteenth place. Among the churches in South Carolina from a numerical standpoint she occupies the first place (Lupo, Southern Christian Advocate, November 14, 1929, p. 11).

A short time later, in 1934, Main Street Church reached its record membership of 2,399 (Ellisor and Braziel, eds., p. 6). And this church has continued as a revered, important Methodist house of worship for over 170 years.

Washington Street Church can be justly proud of the status and accomplishments of its Main Street Church connection. In this instance with Main Street and several other local churches under like influence, Washington Street has become known as the "Mother Church of Columbia Methodism."

This "natural connection" of Main Street and Washington Street churches has come about owing to Main Street's founding from an expansion need of Washington Street, to the in-common strength of leadership offered by men such as Rev. William Martin and Louis Pou, and to crucibles of challenge by ravaging blazes. It is most appropriate that vision statements from these churches ring with similar language:

Main Street Church: "A Church in the Heart of the City for the Hearts of the People" Washington Street Church: "A Church with Heart in the Heart of the City" Columbia, South Carolina, is indeed blessed to embody this special Methodist connection.

Sources

Ellisor, John, and Dorothy Braziel, eds. *History of Main Street United Methodist Church: 1848-1996*. Columbia, South Carolina: Vogue Press, 1996.

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

Lupo, J. F. "Main Street Church." *Southern Christian Advocate*. 93 (November 1929), 10-11.

Moore, John. *Columbia & Richland County: A South Carolina Community, 1740-1990*. Columbia, South Carolina: USC Press, 1993.

Sullivan, Maxine. *The Church on the Corner of Washington and Marion Streets*. Columbia, South Carolina: Wentworth Printing Corp., 2005.

(I'm indebted to Mr. Bill Adams, Main Street UMC Historian. Bill provided the WSUMC archives with a most useful history of Main Street Church and with his gracious gift of personal time to discuss his church's history and to clarify important events for the record.)



Mark your calendars! The WSUMC Fall Festival is just around the corner! The Festival is planned for Sunday, October 31 in the parking lot of the church from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, with some craft activities taking place in Threath Hall.

Director of Family Ministries, Mackin Wall has a lot of great things planned for the afternoon: dunking booth, Tommy, inflatable slide, pumpkin carving/ decorating, cotton candy, Trunk or Treat, a Cake Walk, costume parade and contest (prizes awarded!), face painting, and more!

Volunteers are needed to bake cakes and other goodies for the Cake Walk, and to participate in Trunk or Treat. Prizes will be awarded for Trunk or Treat, so be sure to sign up for one or both of these events, or to volunteer to help by emailing Mackin Wall at mackin@wsmethodist.org, or registering online through Realm Connect.

Gifts

IN HONOR OF MRS. VIRGINIA VAUGHAN
to the Foundation

Given by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Duggan

IN MEMORY OF PETE BAILEY
to the Soup Cellar

Given by Patricia & Don Britt

IN MEMORY OF RICK HEPFER
to Missions

Given by the Dawsey Class

IN MEMORY OF PETE BAILEY
to the Soup Cellar

Given by the Dawsey Class

**REMINDER! THE CHARGE CONFERENCE IS SET FOR OCTOBER 10 VIA ZOOM AT 1:30 PM.
WATCH YOUR INBOXES FOR THE ZOOM LINK!**

New Small Group Study Starts Oct. 4 & 6—Learning How to See Day and Evening Sessions Available!

As we progress through Reverend Becky's sermon series on "wisdom," are you seeking wisdom? Would you like to learn how to recognize bias and see past it? If so, our new small group study, "Learning How to See," is for you. It is based on an e-book, *Why Don't They Get it: Overcoming Bias*, and Podcast, "Learning How to See, Season 1" by Brian McLauren.



These sessions are being offered both as a morning session, which will be held both in-person and on Zoom; and in an evening, Zoom only session.

The morning session will be a listening and discussion session which will be held in the mornings where we will first listen to

the podcast and then discuss it. The morning sessions will be on Wednesdays beginning October 6 and will run from 11:00 am–12:30 pm. You may come for an in-person discussion or join via Zoom.

The evening sessions will consist of a discussion of the "Learning How to See" Podcast that you will already have listened to and will be held on Monday nights from 7:00–7:45 pm and will be Zoom only. The evening session will begin on October 4. Both sessions will run for 6 weeks and will be co-facilitated by Ann Jessup and Reverend Alston.

Recognizing and overcoming bias are so important because we can become blinded due to incomplete information. As McLauren says, we don't know how much we don't know. In addition, we don't realize how much of what we know is distorted or false. Thus, we can be metaphorically blind. Just as Jesus healed people who were blind, we can begin to see more clearly. Recognizing how our unconscious biases are formed is an important step in overcoming our biases and opening our eyes to wider points of view.

Join us and learn to see more clearly. The Podcast is available at the Center for Action and Contemplation website, and on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you download podcasts.

Sunday School

- **The Aldersgate Sunday School Class:** is finishing up a 10-week study program on Adam Hamilton's new book *Words of Life Jesus and the Promise of the Ten Commandments Today*. Beginning Oct. 10, the class will start a new series, *Unafraid* by Adam Hamilton. A five-week study, Hamilton explores the worries and fears that all of us experience. Learn to identify fears and discover practical steps to overcome them all in the light of Scripture. All are welcome to join this discussion which will run until October 4, 2021. For more information contact David Anderson at danderson@richardsonplowden.com.

- **The Dawsey Class:** This Sunday, October 3, the class will continue its study of *Grateful: The Subversive Practice of Giving Thanks* by Diana Butler Bass. Tom Summers will teach Chapter 5, "Grateful Together." On October 10, Grant Jackson will teach Chapter 6, "Thankful and Festive." The class will meet by FreeConferenceCall. Class members should call in before 9:15 a.m., but not before 9:05 a.m. The call-in number is (701) 802-5115. The access code is 7252934.

- **The Grace Class:** is studying *Acts: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. In this commentary, award-winning author and theologian Willie James Jennings explores the relevance of the book of Acts for the struggles of today. Oct. 3 – "The Desire of God Exposed," (pages 102 – 151); Oct. 10 – "The Spirit and the End of Segregation," (pages 152 – 202); and Oct. 17– "The Disciple-Citizen," (pages 203 – 252) Join in person or contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the Zoom link to gather Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM for fellowship, and at 10:00 am for spiritual reflection. All are welcome to join!

- **The Joy Class** is studying the book of Romans. We invite all to join us in-person as we learn & grow together on our journey to be Christ's light in the world. If you are interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at

sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com for more information.

- **Open Door Class:** is studying *Moses the Reluctant Prophet* by Adam Hamilton. All are welcome to join via Zoom or in person. For Zoom link information, contact Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.

- **The Paul Harmon Class:** Reverend Don Britt is leading the Paul Harmon Class in a study of the Apostles' Creed. All are welcome. For more information contact Suzanne Joye at sjoye@sc.rr.com.

- **John Harper Class:** is currently studying the Gospels using the Cokesbury Adult Sunday School materials. The class is led by Tracy Powers. All are welcome. Contact Tracy for more information at tjpowers65@gmail.com.

- **WSUMC Youth Class:** On Oct. 3rd, the youth will be talking about worry. "What are we worried about? How can we trust God with our worries?" Matthew 6: 25-27. Oct. 10 the youth will be making "Halloween bags" for our children, elderly and homebound To participate, please email Mackin Wall at mackin@wsmethodist.org.



Circle 9 invites you to join them
in their fall study

**Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and
Loving the Bible Again**
by Rachel Held Evans

Group 9 plans to meet virtually one weeknight per month. We do our best to schedule monthly on an evening that suits the majority of our group. Anyone interested in participating should email Michelle Bizzell at bizzell.michelle@gmail.com

October is Minister Appreciation Month!

During the month of October, a basket will be placed on the table outside of the Church Office in which you can place notes or cards of thanks to our ministers. This is an opportunity for all who attend worship to express their appreciation as we observe Minister Appreciation Month.

Youth Door Project Celebrating Gay Pride Complete

Over the last several weeks, WSUMC Youth have been collecting old doors in order to create a unique show of support for the LBGTQI+ individuals in our community. This wonderful installation is set up outside of the WSUMC Christ Chapel and will remain through the month of October. On Oct. 22 WSUMC members will meet up at The Grand at 5:00 pm to have a little social time and perhaps a bite to eat prior to the Gay Pride Parade which starts at dusk.

WSUMC has also purchased a booth for the Gay Pride Festival which takes place on Saturday, Oct. 23 from noon to 6 pm. We invite everyone to stop by and see us. We are currently still seeking a few volunteers to help us man the booth on Saturday. We have several slots open that need to be filled. You can sign up by registering online through Realm Connect, or you may call or email Jane (jane@wsmethodist.org) to assign you a spot.



BECAUSE WE ARE ALL EQUAL

**WASHINGTON STREET**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**JOIN US FOR A PRE-PARADE CELEBRATION
AT THE GRAND • 5 PM TO 8 PM**

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR THE WSUMC
BOOTH AT THE FESTIVAL
• SATURDAY, 12-5 PM
SIGN UP ONLINE AT
wsmethodist.org/event/sc-pride-festival**

**SC PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL
OCT. 22-23**



**All Saints Sunday is Nov. 7.
Order your rose in memory
of loved ones online at
wsmethodist.org
or through Realm Connect
Registrations**

**Orders must be received by noon on Nov. 1
FORMS MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER!**

Prayer List



Thom Berry
Martha Boynton
Martha Brooker
Sally Christian
Mickey Epting
Frances Grimes
Bud Harrelson
Karen Horne
Geneva Hutchinson
Lisa Johnson
Rev. Judy King
Beverly McClanahan

David Middleton
Lauren, Greg, and Nora
Blair Middleton and family
Rick Rowe
Boyd Saunders
Stephanie Saunders
Sarah Threatt
Tom Wall
Peggy Weston
Our homebound

ATTENDANCE:
Aug. 1: 94
Aug. 8: 123
Aug. 15: 122
Aug. 22: 71
Aug. 29: 95
Sept. 5: 94
Sept. 12: 80
Sept. 19: 94
Sept. 26: 104

**GIVING YEAR-TO-DATE
(as of 9-30-21):**
Church:
Budget: \$471,497.25
Actual: \$516,827.00
Soup Cellar: \$59,951.00
Foundation Gifts: \$31,686

**Or text "connections"
to 732566**

**Give online today
wsmethodistorg/giving**