



THE CONNECTION

August 6, 2023

ANNOUNCING FALL SMALL GROUPS!

Signing up for small groups is a great way to connect with others in your community and grow in your faith. These groups offer opportunities for you to plug in to Washington Street through service, study and discussion, and fellowship that can help you deepen your relationship with God and with others.

To get started, you'll want to find a group that fits your interests and schedule. Once you've found a group that you're interested in, it's important to sign up and commit to attending regularly. This helps build trust and connection within the group and ensures that everyone can benefit from the group's activities and discussions.

In several of the small groups, you'll have the opportunity to serve others through local outreach projects. This can be a powerful way to put your faith into action and make a difference in our community.

You'll also have the chance to study and discuss Scripture and other faith-related topics through books and movies with a group of like-minded individuals. This can help you deepen your understanding of your faith and grow in your relationship with God.

Finally, small groups offer opportunities for fellowship and community building. By getting to know others in your group, you'll be able to share your joys and struggles, support one another through difficult times, and celebrate each other's successes.

Overall, signing up for a small group is a great way to connect with others and grow your faith. Whether you're looking for service opportunities, Bible study, or just a community of like-minded individuals, there's sure to be a small group that's right for you. So why not sign up today and see where your faith journey takes you?

Pick up your Small Group brochure in the narthex, and join us next Sunday at noon for the potluck luncheon. You will be able to meet some of the leaders and sign up! If you are unable to join us, you can pick up a copy in the office, or online at wsmethodist.org/groups.



UPCOMING GROUPS

Fellowship

- Sharing Meals & Sharing Faith Supper Club
- Children's Music
- Youth Group
- Adult Choir
- Drama
- Walking-Hiking-Running

Service Groups

- Tabitha's Table Sewing Group
- Visitation Ministry
- Stephen Ministry
- Circles (United Women in Faith)

Study & Discussion Groups

- Disciple Bible Study
- Book Discussions
- Movie Discussions

Getting to Know...Lee Smith

By Fran Zupan

What means the most about Washington Street to Lee Smith is the love he's experienced during the 43 years he's been a member here. Whether it was in choir, a committee, Sunday school, or congregational worship, the common denominator has been the support and connection that the church provided.

Lee grew up in Spartanburg. His mother died when he was in the second grade. His dad remarried about a year later, and "she was incredible, too," Lee said of his stepmother. But, it was still a tough time for him.

His paternal grandmother — Mema — stepped in and helped him navigate those tumultuous, preteen years.

"She was stern and well-respected, but she laughed with me often and heartily, and she just seemed to enjoy having me at her home," Lee said. "When I was eight years old, she told me the facts of life, and she also took me to see the movie 'Psycho' because she was afraid to go alone!"

Lee had a brother Larry who was five years older than he was, a sister Barbara, who is two years younger, and a stepsister Billie Beth, who was Barbara's age.

Although he grew up Baptist, Lee said he didn't really become a Christian until early in his sophomore year at the University of South Carolina when a student at Columbia Bible College, named Floyd, talked to him about having a personal relationship with God.

"He presented the gospel in such a way I never had caught on to," Lee said. After Floyd left his dorm, Lee decided he wanted to be a Christian. He joined the Navigators on campus, a ministry that practiced not only being a disciple, but also making disciples of others.

Lee earned a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1974 and a law degree in 1979. He went to work for the South Carolina court system until 2002 when he changed careers. Now, he specializes in insurance benefits consulting and Medicare options.

Drawn by the reputation of Washington Street's Soup Cellar and its Child Development Center, he and his first wife, Donna, started attending WSUMC in 1980. Their daughters, Sarah and Claire, were active in youth groups until leaving for college and relocating to Charlotte.

In 1998, Lee met Joy, a dental assistant who was to become his second wife. They started dating a year later and married Nov. 9, 2001, at Joy's church, Mt. Tabor Lutheran in West Columbia.

Lee likes doing home improvement projects. At their home in the Cayce Avenues, he built a large deck, screened the porch, constructed a shed where they park their truck, added a greenhouse to the back of the garage, and built a treehouse for the grandkids. Lee and Joy enjoy supporting their grandkids' activities. They have seven grandchildren between them, ranging in age from three to 14.

His heart for the less fortunate has shaped his politics and his strong views on social issues, Lee said.

Although the Soup Cellar is one of the church's signature ministries, Lee said he was initially uncomfortable interacting with people he thought were too different from him.

The pandemic lockdown changed his attitude toward the men and women who eat in the Soup Cellar. Almost overnight the Soup Cellar changed from a sit-down lunch to takeout. The volunteers from other churches stopped coming. Lee was one of a team of six who made all the sandwiches, and assembled and handed out the soup, sandwich, fruit, and dessert.

"You have an almost daily connection with some people, and then you don't see them and you worry about them," Lee said, explaining that one homeless man had frozen to death. "Once I began to see these folks as individuals, they weren't nearly so scary."

And, Lee said, the Soup Cellar kind of became the center of his life for most of the pandemic months.

In a similar vein, Lee said racism has become the most important social issue for him. He is a member of the Racial Justice Action Team at Washington Street, a committee that was formed shortly after the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

"Many of us felt that the police brutality we watched over and over on TV was a turning point," Lee said, "that we were unable to sit on the sidelines any longer." Lee participated in several protests at the State House and even a racial justice march with his older daughter Sarah and her family in Monroe, NC.

But the first time Lee participated in a racial justice protest was June 27, 2015, following the massacre of nine parishioners at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on the evening of June 17. White supremacist 21-year-old Dylan Roof had been invited into a Bible study, and after a few minutes, he pulled out a handgun and shot nine of the blacks present.

Publicity after Roof was arrested stated that he wanted to start a race war and showed him holding a Confederate flag.

Removing the flag from a prominent place on the State House grounds was the theme of the protest Lee attended on



continued

June 27. A couple of weeks after that, the flag was removed.

"I now choose to think of that day (of the rally) as the real day I got serious about systemic racism," Lee said. Since the massacre of the Emanuel Nine was such a turning point in his life, Lee decided to commemorate it with a tattoo on his left shoulder.

The image originated from a decal that USC football players wore on their helmets that fall. It was an imitation of the state flag, but instead of palm fronds, nine doves represented the Emanuel Nine.

Today at Washington Street, Lee wears many hats. He is an usher, sings in the Sanctuary Choir, and is chairman of the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee. He continues his volunteer work in the Soup Cellar and he and Joy attend Solomon's Porch, a Sunday school class taught by Christine Taylor. Christine was an intern at Joy's home church, Mt. Tabor Lutheran, the year before she came to Washington Street as director of congregational & volunteer engagement.

Lee summarizes his relationship with the church this way:

"Throughout most of my adult life, Washington Street has been one of my favorite places to go to understand and receive God's love – from God directly and from other people – and also to learn the reverse, how to love God and others more completely. I mean, really, isn't that exactly what church is all about?"



Gifts (as of 8-3-23)*

IN HONOR OF NANCY WHITTLE
to the Grace Class
Given by Chip Williams

IN MEMORY OF LAURA HOLLADAY
to WSUMC
Given by Ms. Beatrice J. Pruett

Prayer List

Betsy Alexander
Karen Basso
Martha Boynton
David Byrum
Mickey Epting
Pat Griffin
Betsy Halloren
Rev. Paul Harmon
Karen Horne
Lisa Johnson
Jean Kanes

Martha Helen King
Lin Fesperman Lord
Beverly McClanahan
Paul McClanahan
Sharon McCullough
David Middleton
Shawn Powers
Genie & Ron Quinn
Nancy Williams
Our homebound

Who Is Pop Waterman?

Last year, extreme heat in the western United States often led the evening news. One story highlighted the plight of homeless people and their risk of dehydration when access to water isn't always convenient.

"So unfair," Lee Smith thought. "When I need water, it's just a few steps away."

Lee's mind drifted to a plan he had thought about over the years but had never implemented. Simply put: drive around downtown and hand out free bottles of water.

He could buy a pack of 40 for less than \$6 or 15 cents apiece. He could use the church's big ice machine to ice the bottles down in his two big coolers several hours before he went out around 3:00 p.m.

He only went out on the weekdays he could fit it into his work schedule as an insurance benefits consultant. And, he limited his water runs to afternoons when he thought the "feels like" temperature would be approaching 100. He estimates that he made a water run 15 afternoons last summer.

Almost everyone he offered water to came to the passenger side of his gray Nissan Rogue, so he had one open cooler in the front seat with him, and all the windows open.

"It didn't feel right for me to be AC-cooled while the folks I'm serving are so hot," Lee said.

Lee would be his friendliest self, yelling out some variation of "Hey! How'd you like a cold water?" Once in a while he would be turned down, but it only took him 45 minutes to an hour to distribute all 40 bottles.

About 90 percent of the people he served were black, about 75 percent were men, and 25 percent were women. They all looked to be older than 50. Less than half seemed to be homeless, but all seemed to be needy, Lee said.

One dimension that is important to him is that he was able to take four of his grandchildren with him: Lilly, 11, and Highsmith, 8, live in the Midlands. Carter, 12, and Henry, 9, live in the Charlotte area.

"I explained to them how this miniscule act of kindness communicates that we care about, we value, these men and women," Lee said.

Once when he had Carter and Henry with him, the issue came up about a name for what they were doing.

"They call me 'Pop,' and we came up with the Pop Water Man Ministry, and thus my alias, Pop Waterman," Lee said.

As it grew cooler last fall, Lee began to think about what the second act of this ministry might be. Maybe it would be delivering warm broth on a cold winter night.

That would require different logistics and new supporters. It was definitely something to think about and work on.

Sunday School Updates

• **The Aldersgate Class:** The Aldersgate Class is studying *Chasing Vines* by New York Times bestselling author, Beth Moore. If you have ever tended your own garden, you know that the fruit is most delicious when you've seen it grow. In this study, she explores the ways God delights in watching things grow—and how the vineyard holds the secret to a more abundant and meaningful life. As she traces the metaphor through scripture, Beth uncovers how every part of our own lives—even the rockiest soil—can be used by God to make a difference for His Kingdom. Please join us in the Aldersgate classroom for a donut, coffee, and excellent fellowship. Our class meets in the Aldersgate classroom on the 2nd floor at 10:00 am. If you have any questions, please call David A. Anderson at 803-318-8821 or email him at danderson@richardsonplowden.com.

• **The Dawsey Class:** This Sunday, Aug. 6, John Evans will lead Chapter 16: "Because Innocence is an Addiction and Solidarity is the Cure", Chapter 17: "Because I'm Human", and Chapter 18: "Because Christianity is Changing" (for the Worse and for the Better) from *Do I Stay Christian?* by Bryan D. McLaren. Next week, August 13, the class will cover Chapters 19 and 20. Class members who join from home will use FreeConferenceCall and should call in between 9:50 and 10:00 am. The call-in number is (701) 802-5115. The access code is 7252934. For more information about the class, contact the class president Caroline Seigler at caroline.seigler@gmail.com.

• **The Grace Class:** The class continues with "topic of choice." Leaders choose a topic/scripture/reading they want to discuss. On Aug. 6, Jim Tuell will share his story. On Aug. 13, Jan Baker will lead a class discussion of "No Regrets." Join us in person on the third floor, or contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the Zoom link. We gather on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am for fellowship, and at 10:00 am for spiritual reflection.

• **The John Harper Class:** The John Harper class discusses lessons from Adult Bible Studies published by Cokesbury. For more information, contact Tracy Powers at tjpowers65@gmail.com or meet with us in the classroom on the first floor by the elevator.

• **The Joy Class:** The class is currently partnering with Solomon's Porch studying the book of Acts. If interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaudersstevens@gmail.com.

• **The Open Door Class:** On Sunday, Aug. 6, the Open Door Class will begin a new study on "Social Media and The Sermon on the Mount." In this study, we will discuss the principles Jesus laid out in Matthew chapters six and seven, and also the impacts of social media on today's society. Visitors are always welcome! The class meets in person on the third floor and via Zoom each week. For Zoom link information, contact Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.

• **The Paul Harmon Class:** The class is participating in a study from The Great Courses titled "How Jesus Became God" by Professor Bart D. Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Ehrman is a New Testament scholar who focuses on the origins and history of early Christianity. We are enjoying the lessons and our discussions. All are welcome to join us on the third floor. If you have questions, please contact Suzanne Joye at sjoye@sc.rr.com.

• **Solomon's Porch:** The class is currently studying the book of Acts. Anyone interested is welcome to join. The class meets in the Traxler classroom on the second floor and is led by Christine Taylor. For more information, contact Christine at christine@wsmethodist.org.

Active Faith is collecting vases!

Active Faith is continuing to collect vases & baskets to sell to our florist. We will make several trips to deliver them.

If you have any vases of any size (especially standard sizes) that you wish to donate, please **bring them to the Flower Room**. All proceeds will go to Active Faith for their missions.



Sing-Along Messiah

15,000

10,000

5,000

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Goal

Raised

Monday
Dec. 11, 2023
7:00 pm
Sanctuary

GIVE NOW!



wsmethodist.org/sam