



THE CONNECTION

October 1, 2023

WSUMC Stewardship Campaign: Releasing God's Blessings

Christine Hait, Chair, Stewardship Campaign Committee Chair

If you are like me, when you count your blessings, you count as one of your dearest blessings Washington Street United Methodist Church. This October, as a congregation, we will be counting our blessings and reflecting on how God blesses us and how we release those blessings into the world.

The theme of this year's stewardship campaign is Releasing God's Blessings and will include a sermon series of the same name offered by Rev. Becky. The sermon series will highlight not only how God blesses us, but also how God promises to bless others through us.

Throughout the stewardship campaign, we will be celebrating the church members and church ministries that make Washington Street UMC a vibrant and loving community. As part of the campaign, we will ask members of the church to participate by sharing their thoughts about how the church, through its members and its ministries, releases blessings into the world.

Here is what we have planned for each Sunday in October:

On **Sunday, October 1**, we will begin by joining other United Methodists in celebrating World Communion Sunday.

On **Sunday, October 8**, and **Sunday, October 15**, members can stop by the Stewardship Campaign table in the Narthex before or after the church service to write down a blessing on a balloon-shaped card. Our young members will be in charge of "releasing" these blessings throughout the church building. Please take time to read these blessings and be inspired by the testimony of your fellow WSUMC members.

On **Sunday, October 22**, Pledge Sunday, we will celebrate the commitment our church members have made to Washington Street UMC when we gather in Threath Hall after the church service for a potluck lunch and for fellowship. We will have available pledge cards, updated ministry menus, and an information table where you can learn more about opportunities to serve.



To prepare for Pledge Sunday, you will receive a letter in the mail inviting you to submit a pledge of financial support to the church. Members' pledges of financial support allow the church to plan spending and budget wisely for next year. In addition, pledging provides members an opportunity to give careful thought to their financial support of the church and to choose a plan for giving (weekly, monthly, annually; online or during church services, etc.) that works best for them.

Because you are generous with your time, talent, and treasures, Washington Street is able to be the blessing it is to its members and to the larger community. Thank you!

Stewardship Campaign Committee members: Robbie Douglas; Mary Edmonds; Joe Epting; Carol Fowler; Sarah-Kate Gravely; Christine Hait; Suzanne Joye; Rev. Alston Lippert; Jane Peterson; Rev. Becky Shirley; and Lynn Shirley.

We Like Banned Books and We Cannot Lie!

Banned Books Week is October 1-7, 2023. The theme for Banned Books Week 2023 is "Let Freedom Read."

According to UMC Church & Society, banning these books supports a misguided revisionism that erases important aspects of our past, hindering us from knowing historical truths that helps move us towards a more just and equitable society. The other notable dimension of book bans is the exclusionary nature which runs contrary to the message of inclusion we profess in our faith. Taking away access and representation sends a message of exclusion.

Taking away books by and about LGBTQ+ and people of color sends the message that their existence and experience as fellow children of God is somehow less valid or altogether invalid.

As United Methodists, we believe that "academic freedom is protected for all members of the academic community and a learning environment is fostered that allows for a free exchange of ideas," (Social Principles ¶164.E). Educational freedom creates an environment for students to engage and grapple with concepts and truths that might make them feel uncomfortable.

The Racial Justice Action Team and the Reconciling Next Team are encouraging members of the congregation to purchase banned books for donation to the church library. To find out how you can help contact Cindy Cox, chairperson of Church & Society at ckcrg@bellsouth.net.

For more information you can visit the following sites:
www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/public-school-districts-face-threats-and-political-pressure-to-ban-books-1799 (full statement of UMC Church & Society); Links to American Library Association's lists of top 10 banned books for 2022 and earlier years:

www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10
www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10/archive



Prayer List

Betsy Alexander
Karen Basso
David Byrum
Mickey Epting
Pat Griffin
Betsy Halloran
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
Peggy Ward
Nancy Williams
Our homebound

Gifts (as of 9-28-23)

IN MEMORY OF NELLE MURRELL
to WSUMC
Given by Brian Murrell

IN MEMORY OF CAROL CLEMENTS
to the Flower Fund
Given by Deborah Rowe

**Seeking volunteers to help us show our pride
at the 2023 Pride Festival!
Several slots still available!**

**OCT. 20-21
PRIDE
WEEKEND**

**Friday, Oct. 20, 2023
Preparty and parade
Preparty location TBD
Parade starts at dusk**

**Saturday,
Oct. 21, 2023
Pride Festival
12-6 p.m.
Main St.**



Contact
dianawesterkam@gmail.com
to volunteer to help in our booth!

Charge Conference Planned for Oct. 4

Join us for the Charge Conference
planned for
Oct. 4 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
in Christ Chapel

Everyone is welcome to attend!

**We will be joined by Rev. Fran Elrod
from the UMC Columbia District.**

Join the WSUMC Choir!

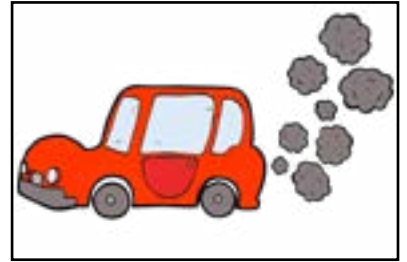


Washington Street has a long history of ministry through music. Thanks to some talented scholars from the Columbia area, our music ministry is enhanced year-round.

One thing that could make our music ministry even better is for more church members to join the choir. Give it a try for Christmas! We will offer special music on December 10, participate in the *Sing-Along Messiah* on December 11, and help celebrate Christmas on December 24. Do you have to be an expert music reader? No! Do you have to participate in every single thing we are planning through the season? No! Do you have any specific questions? If so, feel free to call Catherine Stapleton Nance at 803-270-1313 or email her at catherine@wsmethodist.org.

Day Trippers to Visit the Anne Frank Center

The Day Trippers will be touring the Anne Frank Center on Friday, October 20, at 10:00 a.m. We will have lunch following the tour at the church. The cost of the lunch will be \$10.



You may join us for the tour only, lunch only, or for both.

We will meet at the church at 9:30 a.m. to carpool or walk to the Center. The cost of the tour is a \$10.00 donation which we will collect the morning of the tour. Contact Rev. Lippert if cost is a concern for you.

Space is limited for the tour. Reserve your place now! Contact Mary Lide, neaudl@aol.com to get the link to obtain your electronic ticket. An electronic ticket and photo ID are required for the tour.

Melanie Dobson to Lead Educational Session

**“Show the Stuff of Which We Are Made:”
Stories of Black Methodists in America**

Oct. 15, 2023

**Open Door Classroom & Zoom
3:30-4:45 p.m.**

This session will share the history of African American experiences, witnesses, and leadership in the context of Methodism in the U.S. From John Wesley’s emphatic stance against slavery in the late 1700s, to the preaching of Black Methodists in early Methodism, to the formation of Black denominations in the 1800s, to the schism of 1848 General Conference, to the Central Jurisdiction in the 20th century, this session will cover lots of stories! A time for discussion and reflection will be included.

Email Melanie.Dobson@lr.edu to participate.



Sunday School Updates

• **The Aldersgate Class:** The Aldersgate class is studying 1st & 2nd Kings with the new book, *Trustworthy: Overcoming our Greatest Struggles to Trust God* by best-selling author Lysa TerKeurst. In this study Lysa TerKeurst honestly reveals the places of distrust in her own heart, while exploring the deeply personal and applicable scriptures that teach us how to truly trust God. Join our class for an interesting study with pastries, coffee, and fellowship! Our class meets in the Aldersgate classroom on the 2nd floor at 10:00 a.m. 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, October 1, we will continue our discussion of *Why I Left, Why I Stayed: Conversations Between an Evangelical Father and His Humanist Son* by Tony

Compolo and Bart Compolo. Tom Summers will lead a discussion of "Life on the Other Side: The Happy Reality of Secular Humanism" by Bart, and "The Heart of the Matter: Why Humanism Doesn't work Without Jesus" by Tony. Next Sunday, October 8, John Evans will teach "The Dark Side of Grace: Why Jesus Doesn't Work for Me" by Bart, and "Not So Fast: Why Secularists Should Take Another Look at the Cross" by Tony. Class members who join from home will use FreeConferenceCall and should call in between 9:50 and 10:00 a.m. 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:** This Sunday, October 1, the Grace Class will celebrate President Jimmy Carter's 99th birthday, (October 1) by watching a video recording of one of his many Sunday School lessons delivered at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, GA. On June 30, 2017, President Carter taught from the last act of the book of Ezekiel. The scripture reading is titled "The River of Life," Ezekiel 47:1, 3-12. Jan Williams, a special guest, resident of Plains, and member of Maranatha Baptist Church will join the Grace Class via Zoom to help introduce the lesson. Next Sunday, October 8, Vickie and Lisa Voegeli will continue to lead a book discussion of *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way* by Lysa TerKeurst, president of Proverbs 31 Ministries and *New York Times* bestselling author. Life often turns out very differently from what we expected or how we hoped it would be. Some events bring much disappointment, while others shatter us completely. What do we do when God's timing seems questionable, His lack of intervention hurtful, and His promises doubtful? We may wonder about the reality of God's goodness. We have all experienced disappointments in our lives. Journey with us as we discuss where the disappointment comes from, what to do so it doesn't keep stealing our joy and peace today, and how to live in the certainty of God's love. This series will run through October 15. Join us in person on the third floor, or contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the

Zoom link. We gather 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 Joy Class is looking forward to having John Adams lead our class in a study of the minor prophets. He will begin our study with the Book of Hosea on October 1. You are welcome to join us. If interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaudersstevens@gmail.com.

• **The Open Door Class:** The Open Door Class is hosting the Border Missions Team on Sunday, October 1. If you haven't had an opportunity to hear about this very interesting and inspirational briefing, please feel free to join our class for this presentation. On October 8, Ann Jessup will return and we will resume our study on the Torah. To all teachers, technology helpers and speakers, we have much gratitude to all of you who stepped up to help during this time! 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. 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 studying of the book of Psalms. Anyone interested is welcome to join in. The class meets on the second floor and is led by Rev. Adrienne Fink. For more information, contact Adrienne at ajhamm@umcsc.org.

