



THE CONNECTION

September 17, 2023

Ongoing Small Groups Starting Soon!

It's not too late to sign up for some of our Fall Small Groups. **Kids Choir** has started, but there is still time to join in the fun. Kids ages 5-12 are welcome to join in on Sundays from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Some of the songs that will be learned throughout the fall will be sung in a Christmas Celebration during Advent. Children are invited to come early to eat dinner with the youth group from 5:00 to 5:30 pm in the Youth Room. This group is led by Sarah-Kate Gravely, and Licia Jackson.

Youth Group for 6th through 12th grades meets on Sunday evenings at 4:30 p.m. and includes dinner from 5:00-5:30. Youth are then welcome to attend the Children's Choir following dinner (5:30-6:30 p.m). The Youth also meet on Tuesday nights for a lesson, as well as games and activities. This group provides space to learn about the Bible and how it relates to our lives, as well as getting connected with other young Christians who may be experiencing the same things at school or at home. Youth volunteers are Safe Sanctuary Certified.

If transportation or work conflicts are hindering your child from participating in either of these groups, please contact Sarah-Kate (sarahkate@wsmethodist.org).

The Adult Choir meets on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the choir room. The choir is led by Dr. Catherine Nance. If you would like to become a choir member, please contact Catherine at catherine@wsmethodist.org.

The **Drama Group** will have their first meeting on Sunday, October 1st at 12:00 p.m. in the Open Door Classroom. This group is led by Larry Hembree and Jane Peterson. No prior experience is necessary. The first meeting will consist of scheduling meetings and a discussion of the plans for the group. Creating live theatre takes a village so we are looking for anyone interested in performing, as well as production folks (costumes, set design and construction, stage managers, etc.) For more information contact Larry Hembree at larryhembree1@gmail.com.

Tabitha's Table Sewing Group will start on Thursday, October 7 and will meet in the Tabitha's Table room on the 2nd floor. You do not need to know how to sew to join this group! The group will meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month and will stitch items to be given away. The first two projects will be cooling neck cloths to be given to patrons of the Washington Street Soup Cellar and prayer cross squares to be given to worshippers during the Advent season. The group is being led by Ann Jessup and Licia Jackson. For more information, contact Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.

The **Book Discussion Group** began its first book discussion on Sept. 12, but there is time to sign up for two other discussions this fall. Led by Christine Hait and Evelyn Middleton, the group will be reading and discussing *Selected Poems* by Mary Oliver and Robert Frost on Wednesday, Oct. 11th at 7:00 pm; and *Everyday Use and Nineteen Fifty-Five* by Alice Walker on Nov. 8th at 7:00 p.m. These discussions will take place in the Open Door Classroom on the 3rd floor. For more information, contact Christine at chrishait@columbiasc.edu.

The **Movie Discussion Group** will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 25th at 7:00 p.m. both on Zoom and in the Wesley Room. The movies are all based on WWII topics and stories. The first movie will be *Imitation Game*. Other movies and dates include *Woman in Gold* (Oct. 23rd), and *Inn Keeper's Wife* (Nov. 22nd). Register online through Realm, or contact the front office to sign up.

Sole Mates (Walking, Running, Hiking) meets at various times depending on your mode of movement. Members can choose to engage in as many of the planned activities as they are able to and at the level that is most comfortable for them. To join any of these groups, contact Sara Wilcox at wilcox@mailbox.sc.edu. The first meeting is Sunday, Sept. 17 after worship in the Aldersgate Classroom.

United Women in Faith Circles. WSUMC has several Circles to choose from. You may join them at any time. Meeting dates and times may vary. Circles include: **Mary's Maidens** (girls grades 1-6) led by Mary Lide and Kathy Wright (neaudl@aol.com); **Circle 2-Tony White Circle** is led by MJ Fox. This group meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30-6:30 p.m.; **Circle 5-Charles Pfeiffer Circle** is led by Mary Lide (neaudl@aol.com) and meets at various members' homes and at the church. Dates and times vary. **Circle 6-Diana Westerkam Circle** is led by Betty Cribbs (bacribbs2@gmail.com). This group meets on Tuesdays from 10:00-11:00 am at the church. **Circle 9** is led by Elizabeth Aravena (elizabeth.aravena@gmail.com). They meet monthly on Mondays, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Open Door Classroom.

Getting to Know...Pato Aravena

By Fran Zupan

The stereotypes about American society being closed and cold were shattered for Pato Aravena when he came to Washington Street UMC. He found our church to have a strong sense of family and a warm and friendly congregation.

"It felt like my home church in Chile," Pato said.

Pato came to Columbia to marry Elizabeth Lide who had been a participant in the church's Volunteers in Missions program in Santiago, Chile.

Pato was born and grew up in Curacautin, which had a population of about 12,000. In Chile, that's considered a city, while in the States it's a small town, Pato said.

Pato is a fourth-generation Methodist. His church was the first Protestant house of worship in his town.

After high school, Pato was a lay pastor in Patagonia for a year. Then he moved to Santiago where he was a web designer for the Methodist church. Part of his job included traveling around the country and consulting with local churches and national church institutions to get input for the website.

Asked where he got his computer skills, Pato replied, "self-taught." In high school, he and his friends would find a neighbor, a friend, or a friend of a friend with a computer. They would take turns for hours honing their skills.

Pato and Elizabeth met in the commons area of their seminary, or dorm. He wanted to practice his English. He taught her to play "El gorro de Lana" (the wool hat), a traditional folk song from southern Chile, on the guitar. They teamed up to help other volunteers with logistics and interpreting when they ventured out to meet with churches,

"We got to know each other a little bit more," Pato said. They started dating. They went to parks, to the botanical gardens, or to a convenience store to buy food for a picnic.

Pato took Elizabeth to his hometown

to meet his parents. This entailed a nine-hour bus ride, with the last hour on mountain roads. Elizabeth didn't get sick, but she felt sick.

"She didn't do well on the bus, but she still wanted to come," Pato said. "She's a keeper."

In Curacautin, Pato and Elizabeth stood on the flat roof of Pato's parents' house and picked cherries from a nearby tree. They ate the cherries and competed to see who could spit their pits the farthest.

Back in Santiago, Pato and Elizabeth sat at a table with children doing crafts.

"I knew she wasn't going to stay in Chile," Pato said.

He wrote her a note and passed it across the table. It read, "Would you like to marry me?" She read it, wrote "yes" and passed it back. As is customary in Chile, Pato and Elizabeth bought engagement rings to wear on their right hands. They were "very cheap rings" from a store, Pato said.

Pato came to the United States on September 1, 2005. He called his journey "a leap of faith." Pato lived with the Lides; he and Elizabeth had "two rooms but the same roof," he said.

Pato and Elizabeth married on March 26, 2006, at Washington Street. They wanted his parents to come to the wedding, but their visas were denied twice with no reason given. Later, his parents visited Columbia four times under a visa waiver program.

Pato enrolled right away in the English program for internationals at USC. Next, he went to Midlands Technical College to earn his core credits in math, English, science, and history. These were transferred to USC where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education. While he was at USC, Pato had a part-time job as an interpreter and translator for the state Department of Social Services. This work was done over the phone with the client and DSS.



In 2012, after he was certified to teach, Pato went to work as a music teacher at Windsor Elementary School in Richland Two. He is in charge of the morning show, produced by students over a closed-circuit TV system. He teaches his students songs, basic theory, rhythm, and lots of movement.

The third- through fifth-graders have computers and keyboards to compose their own beats and songs.

"I love it," Pato said of the job.

Some of the older kids ask him if they may call him Mr. A. The first syllable of his last name is pronounced "air," not "are," and the e is a long e. He tells them, no, if all the kindergarteners can pronounce his name, they can too.

Pato and Elizabeth have three children: Alma Louise, 10; Rosemary, 8; and Teddy, 5. Pato said he enjoys watching his children develop as individuals. The girls are not carbon copies of one another, and Teddy isn't similar to his sisters, he said.

Ever since he was a baby, though, Teddy has wanted to be included in whatever the girls were doing, whether that be tea parties or dress up.

Pato said the most influential person in his life was his mother, Noemi, who

died of cancer in May 2020. He had gone to see her in March, and “two weeks after I arrived, everything shut down. It was like God was sending me there to stay with my mom and help her in any way I could.”

Pato said his mother was a strong woman. She was a homemaker who stretched the budget by selling homemade baked goods when money was tight.

“She had a really good reputation (as a baker) and made good money,” Pato said. His mom also had an amazing faith, Pato said.

“She was a prayer warrior,” Pato said.

“She died with the conviction that she was in God’s hands, that she was God’s child.”

In December 2018, Pato became a naturalized American citizen in a Charleston ceremony. His South Carolina family attended. Alma Louise and Rosemary were two of several children who led the pledge of allegiance. One of the first things Pato did after the ceremony was to go online and register to vote.

The next time he went to school, Pato had a special parking place marked by red, white, and blue balloons. When he stepped inside, he stepped onto

a red carpet. Students lined the hall, clapping as he walked through the school. Elizabeth and the kids were there as was a television news camera. At the morning show, a teacher sang the national anthem. An ROTC group presented him with an American flag.

Although he felt somewhat embarrassed, Pato said he also felt honored and touched.

Pato has been a leader and interpreter for nine mission trips, five for USC’s Methodist Student Network and four for Washington Street, including the most recent one to the Texas-Mexico border at McAllen/Rio Bravo.

Sunday School Updates

• **The Aldersgate Class:** The Aldersgate class has started a study of 1st & 2nd Kings with the new book, *Trustworthy: Overcoming our Greatest Struggles to Trust God* by best-selling author Lysa TerKeurst. In this study, which is both video-led and includes workbook questions, join author and Charlotte, NC native Lysa TerKeurst in Israel as she 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, Sept. 17, we will have our annual potluck brunch. On Sunday, Sept. 24, we will resume 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 Wall will teach “Can’t, Not Won’t: Losing Faith Is Not a Choice” by Bart Compolo and “You Reap What You Sow: How I See Bart’s Deconversion” by Tony Compolo. 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, Sept. 10, Vickie and Lisa Voegeli will continue leading 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, God’s lack of intervention hurtful, and God’s 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 Oct. 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 class is currently partnering with Solomon’s Porch and is studying the book of Psalms. If interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaudersstevens@gmail.com.

• **The Open Door Class:** The class is studying the Bible Project’s *Torah* series. 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:** On Sunday, Sept. 17, we will have a social and planning meeting. We will update our plans after this meeting. 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 the book of Psalms. Anyone interested is welcome to join in. The class meets on the second floor and is led by Adrienne Fink. For more information, contact Adrienne at ajhamm@umcsc.org.

Gifts (as of 9-13-23)

IN MEMORY OF PAUL BROWN
to Sing-Along Messiah
Given by Susan Brown

STEWARDSHIP REPORT As of 9-14-23

General Budget: \$866,231

Church	\$460,849
Soup Cellar	\$47,771
Foundation	\$15,129

ATTENDANCE (as of 9-14-23)

Sept. 10:	154 (in-person); 175 (online) = 329
Sept. 3:	108 (in person); 216 (online) = 324
Aug. 27:	173 (in-person); 151 (online) = 324
Aug. 20:	172 (in-person); 194 (online) = 366

Prayer List

Betsy Alexander
 Karen Basso
 David Byrum
 Mickey Epting
 Pat Griffin
 Betsy Halloren
 Rev. Paul Harmon
 Karen Horne
 Lisa Johnson
 Jean Kaness
 Martha Helen King
 Lin Fesperman Lord
 Beverly McClanahan
 Paul McClanahan
 Sharon McCullough
 David Middleton
 Shawn Powers
 Genie & Ron Quinn
 Nancy Ward
 Peggy Ward
 Nancy Williams
 Our homebound



Coming Up:



Fall Festival

October 29th
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Trunk or Treat
 Games, Pumpkin Carving
 & More!

Sign Up with Sarah-Kate
 to bring your trunk!




Sing Along Messiah

Monday, Dec. 11th
 7:00 pm | Sanctuary
 Reservations open Nov. 1




\$15,000	\$15,000
\$10,000	\$10,116
\$5,000	
\$0	
Goal	Raised

GIVE NOW!

wsmethodist.org/sam



Pre-Weekend Celebration!
Thursday, Oct. 18 – Celebration of Diversity
6 p.m. | Ebenezer Lutheran Church
1301 Richland St.

Friday, Oct. 19, 2023	Saturday, Oct. 20, 2023
Preparty and parade	Pride Festival & Booth
5-8 p.m. Location TBD	12-5 p.m. Main St.

Join the Reconciling Next Team
 and all of our friends and allies for

PRIDE WEEKEND

WASHINGTON STREET
 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 PROUD MEMBER OF



COLUMBIA, SC
 OCTOBER 19-20, 2023
 See you there!

Questions? Email Jim Lane at
jlane@columbiasc.edu