



## The Grapevine

*I am the vine, you are the branches*

**Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.” John 15:5**

Friends,

As I have shared on several occasions in worship, there have been recent misleading news reports that The United Methodist Church has decided to separate. While there *are* five different plans for dividing or restructuring the denomination that have been proposed by various groups, the only body with the authority to make such decisions is the General Conference, which meets (usually) every four years. The next General Conference will take place May 5-15, 2020 in Minneapolis.

The reason for recent talk of a separation or restructuring is the UMC’s longstanding disagreement about homosexuality, particularly with regard to marriage and ordination. I wish I could tell you what General Conference will likely decide, but I cannot. I wish I could tell you what The United Methodist Church will look like following General Conference, but I can’t do that, either. What I *can* do is make sure we pray and prepare ourselves to be in ministry regardless of the Conference’s decisions.

To this end, Mt. Zion’s Staff-Parish Relations Committee will soon begin engaging in a process with one another for having difficult conversations about the issues that confront our denomination. After working through this process with that small group, everyone in the church will be invited to participate in a similar process so that we will all be better equipped to talk about our concerns and hopes in the midst of uncertain times.

The one thing we can always be certain of is God’s presence with us and love for us. While there are many things we can’t control, we can always control how we make God’s presence real to the community around us. I leave you with words from Bishop Gary E. Mueller of the Arkansas Annual Conference, reminding us of what we mean to the community around us and what God has called us to do, regardless of what happens at General Conference in May:

“I love the United Methodist Church and the way of being Christian it shares. But ultimately, local congregations matter more than denominations – even our beloved United Methodist denomination. People need your local church, not a (continued on Page 2)

# Pastor's note, continued from page 1

denomination. And most importantly, Jesus needs your local church, not a denomination....

Live out your purpose. Jesus uses your church, and the disciples in it, to continue his mission of making disciples, forming disciples, and equipping and sending disciples to transform lives, communities and the world. Help people discover their spiritual gifts, bless them and then unleash them in your congregation and into the mission field that begins right outside the doors of your sanctuary.

Demonstrate the difference Jesus makes. Almost every congregation has figured out how to thrive with a diverse group of people who have perspectives that are diametrically opposed. Don't see this as a problem; see it as a wonderful opportunity to show how Jesus brings together people who normally wouldn't give each other the time of day. Keep people worshiping together on the same pew, praying together, studying together, serving together and caring for each other.

I want to be absolutely clear about something that some people may consider to be a scandalous idea. Yet I am convicted of its truth. The future of your church is not dependent upon what happens in the United Methodist Church. Don't let the uncertainty, or brokenness, paralyze you. Move ahead boldly and confidently. Your church will still be part of the Body of Christ. Your church will still make disciples of Jesus Christ. Your church will still form deeper disciples. And your church will still equip and send disciples to transform lives, communities and the world.”

Thank you for the many ways you form disciples and transform the lives of people throughout Central, Clemson, Seneca, and the other places you go. Please continue to be in prayer for all General Conference delegates, for our church, and our community. If you have any questions about General Conference or the denomination, please consider attending the General Conference listening session on February 16 at 3 p.m. at Mauldin UMC. I am always happy to listen, as well. Even in uncertain times, know that I am grateful to be your pastor!

In Christ, Pastor Jonathan

# The Church Calendar at a glance

The following take place at church unless otherwise indicated. More details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter or will be in an upcoming church bulletin.

**February 2nd** - Church-wide pancake breakfast, 9 a.m.

**February 5th** - United Methodist Women Joint Circle Meeting, 2:30 p.m.

**February 13th** - free concert/Clemson Community Care fundraiser at the Newton Hobson Chapel on the campus of Southern Wesleyan, 7 p.m.

**February 16th** - United Methodist Women's Valentines meal, noon

**February 16th** - General Conference Listening Session, Mauldin UMC, 3 p.m.

**February 17th** - Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, 6:30 p.m.

**February 22** - Mental Health Conference at Bethesda UMC, 516 Piedmont Rd Easley, SC, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**February 26th** - Ash Wednesday Pancake Supper (5:30 p.m.) and Service (7 p.m.), Lawrence Chapel UMC

**March 1st** - Men's breakfast, 8:30 a.m.

**March 4th** - United Methodist Women Joint Circle Meeting, 2:30 p.m.

**March 16th** - Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group, 6:30 p.m.

**March 17th** - RAPpers breakfast meeting & devotion, 9:30 am. Location TBD



## **February Birthdays**

**1st** Grayson Bowman - **2nd** Peggy Bodie - **3rd** Bill Carson

**3rd** Will Mullinax - **5th** Lon Martin - **9th** Larry Wisham

**10th** Chery Amidon - **15th** Taylor Ray - **16th** Logan Rice

**20th** Trent Allen - **22nd** Virginia Norwood - **24th** Mac McWilliams

**28th** David Wingard - **29th** Rae A. Romesburg

## **March Birthdays**

**5th** Karen Martin - **9th** Abby Wingard - **11th** John Reeves

**18th** Mike Ferguson - **24th** Dot Johnston - **24th** Kaitlyn West

**25th** Allison Wingard - **28th** Scott Smith - **28th** Elizabeth Finley

**29th** Johnnie Walker

## **February Anniversaries**

**21st** Fred and Judy Cone

## **March Anniversaries**

**8th** John and Kristine Reeves

**13th** Trent and Ginger Allen

**21st** Ron and Eileen Nonnenberg

**27th** David and Chery Amidon

**30th** Scott and Karen Smith

# Children's Ministry



Look for more details soon about the **annual Easter egg hunt**. There will be breakfast, followed by an egg hunt in the park. Bring your friends and a basket!

Our children's ministry intern, Zechariah Copeland, is planning a **soccer camp** for the children of our church and surrounding community for the spring. More details to come soon!



## Nursery Workers

### February

- 2nd** - Elizabeth Bowman / TBD
- 9th** - Jane Jones / Janet Crenshaw
- 16th** - Libba Carson / Randy Martin
- 23rd** - Martha Rowland / Ansley Green

### March

- 1st** - Heather / Benji Cumbie
- 8th** - Jan Miller / Vicki Miesbauer
- 15th** - Ashley / Drew Gelder
- 22nd** - Haley Lee / Elizabeth Bowman
- 29th** - Karen Smith / Cindy Owens

# Introducing our student ministry interns!



## **Zechariah Copeland** (children's ministry)

Hi, my name is Zechariah Copeland, and I am a youth/children's ministry major at Southern Wesleyan University (SWU). I am aspiring to become a Children's Pastor because teaching kids about God's love, word and will for them brings me much joy! I have over eight years of experience volunteering and working in children's ministry settings (e.g. Sunday School,

Summer camps, etc.) Most of this experience comes from the church I grew up in, University City United Methodist in Charlotte, NC. I am very thankful to everyone at Mount Zion for the warm welcome I have received and for allowing me to make this my new church home while I am studying at SWU. I am also honored to have been chosen to serve as your Children's Ministry Intern.

A few of my favorite hobbies are: 1.) Watching and playing almost any sport, with my favorites being NASCAR, soccer, NFL and basketball. 2.) Riding my bike around campus and downtown Central. 3.) Playing Pokémon Go, one of my favorite video games. 4.) Listening to a wide variety of Christian music.

My spiritual gifts are knowledge, service, faith and Administration.

My favorite movies are Lincoln (2012), Batman vs. Superman and Lilo & Stitch.

My favorite hymns are Victory in Jesus, Blessed Assurance and Great is Thy Faithfulness.



### **Kyle Cook-McCrary** (youth ministry)

I was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, where I lived for 14 years. I moved to Irmo, South Carolina at the end of the 8th grade. I graduated from Dutch Fork High School. I went to Erskine college out of high school and then transferred to Southern Wesleyan to finish my undergraduate degree. I played baseball at Southern Wesleyan for two seasons. I decided to step away and focus more on ministry and open up time for more important things. I am a huge fan of the Tennessee Volunteers! I love coffee, because in college you kind of have to.

**Pre-General Conference Listening Session** – In preparation for The United Methodist Church’s upcoming General Conference (May 5-15), you are invited to a listening session with SC’s delegates to the conference on February 16 at 3 p.m. at Mauldin UMC (110 E. Butler Ave., Mauldin, SC). If you would like to attend or carpool to the event, please let Pastor Jonathan know.



### **Anderson District Mental Health Conference** - The

Anderson District will host a mental health conference on February 22 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Bethesda UMC (516 Piedmont Rd in Easley, SC). Topics will include anxiety, depression, and suicide prevention. If you are interested

in attending this free conference, please let Pastor Jonathan know.



# United Methodist Women news

Sharon Miller recently donated *Women United for Change* to the Church Library. Written to commemorate the 150th anniversary of United Methodist Women, this important book surveys the organization's work from 1869, when two female missionaries were sent to provide health and educational services to women and girls in India, up to the present day, when the mission and advocacy work of UMW extends throughout this country and the world. We wish to thank Sharon for making this book available to our congregants.

To borrow a book from the Church Library (next to the Pastor's Office), simply fill out the pertinent information on the book borrowing sheet attached to a clipboard.

## Valentine's Pot Luck Luncheon

The United Methodist Women of Mount Zion are sponsoring the annual **Valentine's Pot Luck Luncheon** this year on **Sunday, February 16, 2020**. We hope that you will be able to join us for this fun luncheon that reflects our love for one another. We ask that you bring "hearty" casseroles or a "meat" item, a side item, or a dessert. We will partake of these delicious items that are provided to one another immediately after the worship service.

This pot luck luncheon is our **MAIN** fundraiser for our group. We use the monies collected to help fund our **Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes Project** by purchasing the **BOXES** for the church members to use and buying some of the **ITEMS** like school supplies, balls, a clothing item, and a stuffed animal. We hope that even though you may be bringing a "hearty" casserole, a meat item, sides, or a dessert, that you will dig deep into your pockets to keep this mission project going. A basket will be provided for donations.

John 13:35  
By this shall all  
men know that ye  
are my disciples, if  
ye have love one to  
another.



## Thanks!

A HUGE “thank you” to members of the Beverly Smith Guild for polishing brass and preparing Chrismons and greens for the season of Advent. The sanctuary was beautiful!



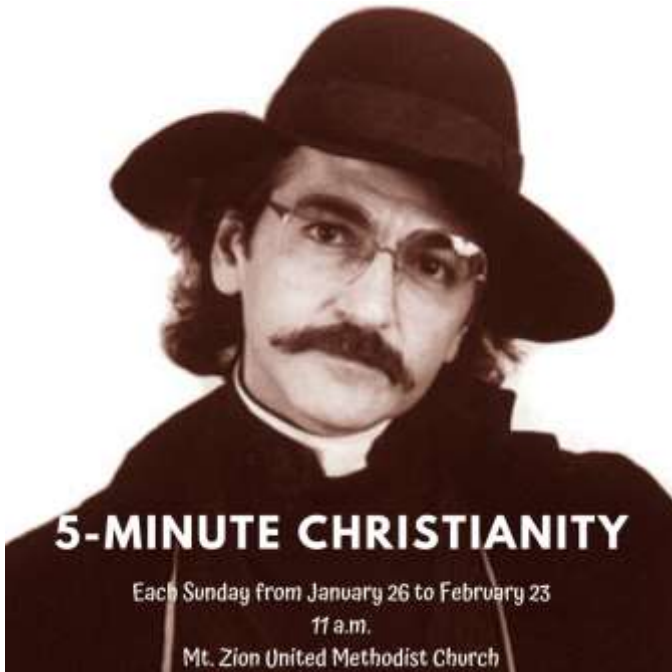
## Other upcoming events:

Please mark your calendars! On **Thursday, February 13th at 7:00 p.m.** at the Newton Hobson Chapel on the campus of Southern Wesleyan a concert will present an assortment of local church choirs sharing their gifts. This is a free concert, but a love offering will be collected for Clemson Community Care. This is a beautiful evening of sacred music.



The RAPPers group will attend a breakfast meeting at a restaurant to be determined closer to the meeting day and time. The date will be on March 17th at 9:30 am. A short devotion will be given.

## Coming Soon in Worship!



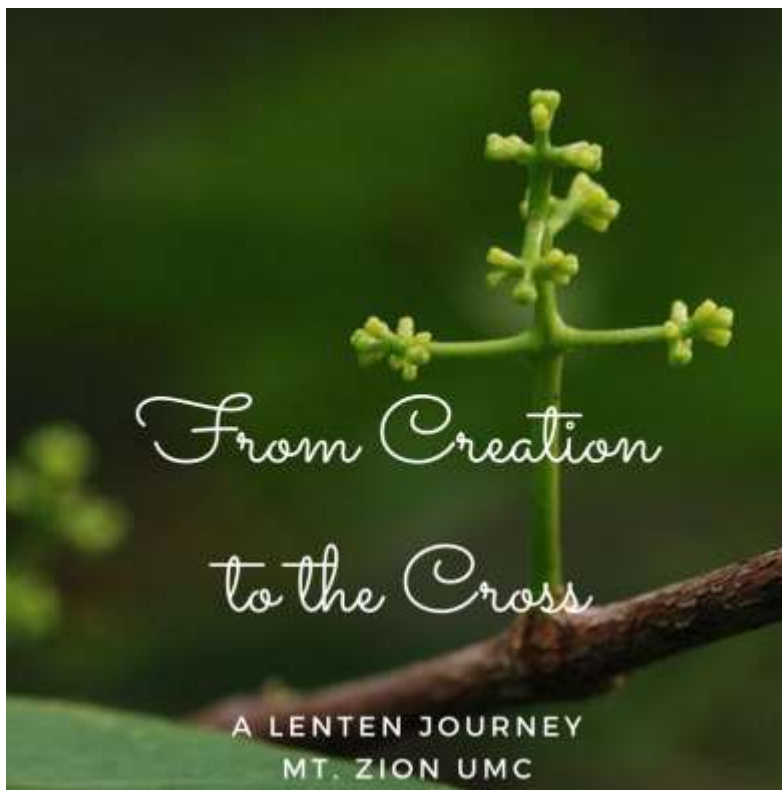
In the late 1970s-early 1980s the Saturday Night Live character, Father Sarducci, pitched what he called the “Five Minute University,” a place where people could learn in five minutes the most important things a college graduate should still remember five years after graduating. Each Sunday in February, we will explore “**Five-Minute Christianity**,” some of the most important things a Christian should still be able to remember, articulate, and practice five years later. Come find out what some of those things are!

### Ash Wednesday

Come join with others from area United Methodist churches for a pancake supper at 5:30, followed by an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00. Lawrence Chapel UMC will host the supper and service. Come for a special time of fellowship and remembering our mortality and brokenness in this special beginning to the season of Lent.



# Worship during Lent



Beginning the first Sunday of Lent on March 1 through Palm Sunday on April 5, our worship will follow the story of God's people from the creation story in Genesis through the death of Jesus in the gospels. Come hear this amazing story of God's love, redemption, and forgiveness each Sunday morning at 11!



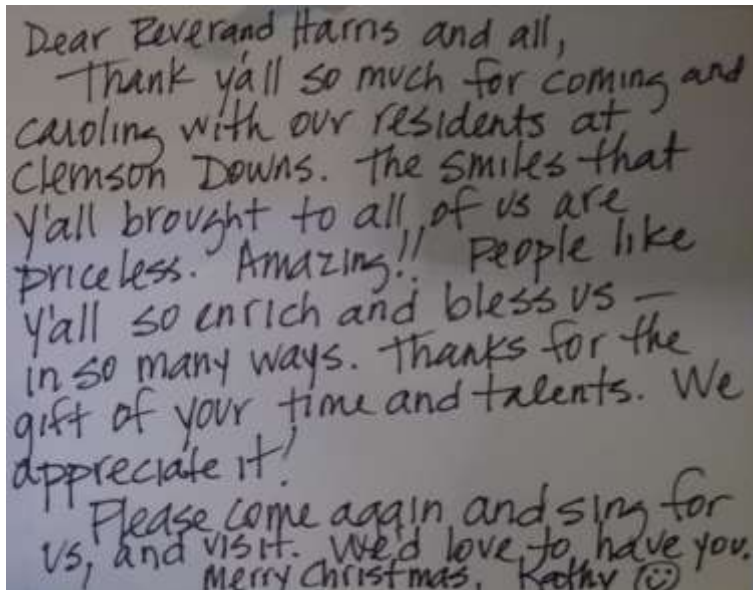
Lent began as a season of preparation for baptism and continues today as a time of preparation for Easter and for growing as disciples of Jesus. If you would like to grow through the practice of Bible study, please consider attending **Bible study** each **Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.** at the parsonage (203 Joseph St. in Central).

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 186  
310 Church Street  
Central, South Carolina 29630

*Address Correction Requested*

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## Thank you note from Clemson Downs to Mt. Zion UMC



Dear Reverend Harris and all,  
Thank y'all so much for coming and  
caroling with our residents at  
Clemson Downs. The smiles that  
y'all brought to all of us are  
priceless. Amazing!! People like  
y'all so enrich and bless us —  
in so many ways. Thanks for the  
gift of your time and talents. We  
appreciate it!  
Please come again and sing for  
us, and visit. We'd love to have you.  
Merry Christmas, Kathy ☺