



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

Mt. Zion family,

As we continue emerging gradually from this pandemic, I felt led to share with you three Bible verses that have guided my thinking throughout the past 14+ months. These verses have shaped decisions I have made, whether those decisions impacted the church, my family, myself, or all of the above.

I share these verses with you, first, because it will still be months before children under the age of 12 in our church and community will be able to be vaccinated, so the pandemic is not yet over. In other words, these passages of Scripture will continue to shape our response to this pandemic. Second, even once the pandemic is over, these verses can be a helpful guide to each of us as we navigate other decisions in our church, families, and personal lives in the future. These passages are Philippians 2:4, Matthew 25:40, and 1 Corinthians 8.

In Philippians 2:4, Paul writes, "Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." It is understandable that many of us—myself included—are asking a lot of "I" questions these days: What can *I* do now? Do *I* get to go mask-less? Do *I* get to do this activity that *I* have been missing? Do *I* get to do whatever *I* want to, whether I've been vaccinated or not, wear a mask or not, etc.? Let's be honest. This year has been tough on all of us, and it is natural and okay to be concerned for ourselves.

But Paul's words remind us that the more important question for the follower of Christ is not, "What can *I* do?" but, "What can I do *to care for others?*" This is what it means to let "the same mind be in [us] that was in Christ Jesus," who "emptied" and "humbled himself" for *us* (Philippians 2:5-8). Just as Jesus was primarily concerned about our needs, he calls those of us who bear his name to follow his example and look to the needs of others. **(continued on p.2)**

Pastor's note, continued from Page 1

Matthew 25:40 takes Paul's point even further, with Jesus saying, "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." We are judged, not merely by our concern for other people, but particularly by our concern for "*the least*." During much of this past year, this has meant giving extra weight to the concerns of people with pre-existing medical conditions, and making an extra effort to reach out to people who were at an increased risk of experiencing loneliness and isolation. Now that the vast majority of Americans have had the opportunity to be vaccinated, this means giving particular attention to those in our midst who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated (particularly children under the age of 12), for whom a return to "normal" is still months away. In future seasons, the identity of "the least" might change, but Jesus's call to give particular care to them will not.

And this brings me to 1 Corinthians 8. In this passage, Paul answers a question from the early church about whether it is okay to eat food sacrificed to idols or not. While this debate is seemingly irrelevant to our current times, the principle Paul shares is incredibly relevant to us. Paul basically says, "We know idols aren't real. There is no god but God, so it is perfectly fine for followers of Jesus to eat food that has been sacrificed to idols that we know are make-believe." But then Paul adds this point: "But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Corinthians 8:9). In other words, "You have the right to do this; but if your exercising that right becomes a hindrance to someone else's faith and their participation in the faith community, then care more about the other person than about your right."

During the rest of this pandemic and beyond, it will be tempting to focus primarily on what we can do, and have the right to do, and should be able to do. That is true for me as much as it is for anyone. In those times, however, may we remember Paul's words and Jesus's example by being primarily concerned with meeting the needs and building up the faith of others.

I am grateful for the many ways you continue to live out these teachings and inspire me to follow them, too!

In Christ, Pastor Jonathan

The Church Calendar at a glance

June 2 - Bible study moves to **Wednesday** evening each week, 6:30 p.m.

June 3 - Church Council Visioning Meeting (Zoom), 6:30 p.m. (details below)

June 5 - “Touch a Truck” at Lawrence Chapel, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (see p. 6)

June 6 - Worship resumes in the Mt. Zion sanctuary, 11 a.m.

June 6 - “Making Peace in a World of Discord” worship series begins, 11 a.m.

June 6-7 - Virtual Annual Conference (see p. 12)

June 21-23 - Mission Week, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (more details on p. 7)

July 4 - Special service of anthems led by the choir, 11 a.m. (see p. 9)

July 5 - Church office closed for Independence Day

July 11 - “A Place to Belong” worship series begins, 11 a.m.



VISIONING
MEETING

RESHAPE
TRANSFORMING CHURCH INITIATIVE

FORWARD
FOCUS

JUNE 3 AT 6:30 P.M.
ZOOM ID: 880 8504 5637
PASS CODE: 787968

Church Council met on May 20 to learn about two visioning processes that could guide our ministry over the next few years. These two processes are the conference’s **Forward Focus**, which takes 4-8 months and could be completed whenever Mt. Zion chooses, and Mark Tidworth’s **ReShape**, which would run from July-December 2021. Church Council will meet again via Zoom on **June 3 at 6:30** to decide which process would best achieve Mt. Zion’s goals, which include articulating a purpose statement and central tenets for the church, discerning how to best partner with others in our community in ministry, and developing three specific next steps Mt. Zion can take to accomplish

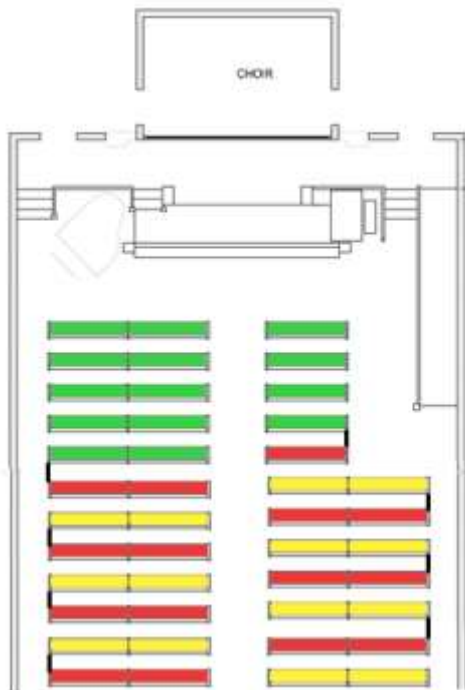
the purpose God has given us. Whether you are a member of Church Council or not, you are invited to be part of this online gathering as we dream together!

Updated COVID-19 Protocols

In light of recent updates in guidance from [the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the [South Carolina Conference](#) of The United Methodist Church, and in consultation with Benji Cumbie (Lay Leader), Ed Martin (Church Council Chairperson), and Kathy O'Brien (Staff-Parish Relations Chairperson), the following COVID-19 protocols are in effect for indoor activities starting June 6:

Do I need to wear a mask during worship? Everyone is asked to wear a mask over their mouth and nose when entering and exiting. The following seating arrangements will be offered:

- **If you prefer to not practice masking and social distancing**, please sit in the first five pews on either side of the sanctuary. You may remove your mask once seated.
- **If you prefer to continue practicing masking and social distancing**, please sit from the 6th row to the back of the sanctuary, where social distancing and masking will continue to be followed.



Seating Diagram Key:

- **Green pews** - Social distancing and masking not required in this section once you are seated.
- **Yellow pews** - Please practice social distancing (6 feet between you and other individuals or families), and wear a mask over your mouth and nose)
- **Red pews** - Please leave these pews empty to allow for social distancing.

Please note: Please wear a mask over your mouth and nose while finding your seat and exiting, regardless of where you choose to sit.

Do we get to have congregational singing? Not yet. However, we will begin having a choir again. Anyone who is fully vaccinated is invited to participate in the choir.

What if I have to go to the bathroom? Please use the restroom that is accessed through the door at the top of the sanctuary ramp. Our “Potty Patrol” volunteers will make sure the bathroom gets cleaned between each user.

Is there a nursery? Not at this time. We encourage families to worship together!

How will we give our offering? You may continue giving online or by mailing a check to PO Box 186, Central, SC 29630. There is also an offering box where you may place your offering as you enter or exit the service.

Are masks required for indoor small group gatherings (such as Adult Sunday School)? Those who are fully vaccinated and are comfortable removing their masks may choose not to wear a mask during indoor small group gatherings. Those who are not yet fully vaccinated or are not comfortable removing their masks are encouraged to continue wearing masks during indoor small group gatherings.

What if I learn I have COVID-19? If you attended a service or small group gathering, and you learn that you may have had COVID-19, please let Pastor Jonathan know immediately at 843-251-3279 or mtzion@nctv.com. Your identity will be kept confidential. There are conference protocols that require the church to notify others who attended that service that someone may have had COVID-19 (without sharing who it was).

What if I don't yet feel comfortable being around other people? It is perfectly okay to continue participating from home! We will continue posting the service online each Sunday morning at facebook.com/mtzioncentral. You may also join Bible study or Sunday school via Zoom (see details on pages 6 and 7).

Please note: In keeping with guidance from the SC United Methodist Conference, the CDC, and DHEC, all who are eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19 are encouraged to please do so. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the vaccinations, please talk to your doctor.

Discipleship for Children and Youth!



Sunday School

Stay connected with God and with other children and youth through these weekly Bible lessons led by caring adult leaders!

Pictures for shut-ins

All children and youth are invited to place pictures they have drawn or colored in the offering box each Sunday. Pastor Jonathan will share these with homebound members of the church and community!



Touch a Truck at Lawrence Chapel UMC, June 5

All children, youth, and families are invited to a time of fun and fellowship with one of our sister United Methodist congregations and others from our local community. A free, kid-friendly lunch will be provided.

Saturday, June 5th
10am to 1pm.

Lawrence Chapel United
Methodist Church
2101 Six Mile Hwy
<https://lawrencechapel.church>

More for Children and Youth!



Youth Mission Week, June 21-23, 2021

All youth (13+) and adults are invited to team up with youth and adults from other local UMCs for home repairs in the local community! If you would like to participate, please let Pastor Jonathan know at mtzion@nctv.com.

Time: Drop-off at Clemson UMC at 8:30 a.m.; Pick-up at Clemson UMC at 5:30 p.m.

Food: To-go breakfast or snacks available at Clemson UMC; bag lunch provided

Cost: \$50 per person (covers T-shirt, food, and donation to Re-build Upstate)

Other info: Orientation and opening worship at Clemson UMC Sunday night, June 20; closing worship at Clemson UMC Wednesday night, June 23)

To register, please fill out the online form at <https://forms.gle/drvieponPM3PWvWHA>.

Adult Discipleship!

<p>Sunday school At church and on Zoom 10 a.m. Zoom ID: 743 6065 8361 Pass code: 1Ukg5q</p>	<p>Bible Study Wednesday evenings At parsonage porch and on Zoom 6:30 p.m. Zoom ID: 733 349 126 Pass code: 456030</p>
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Worship

April and May Outdoor Services



Thanks to everyone from Mt. Zion, Central, Bethel, and Lawrence Chapel UMCs who participated in the combined outdoor worship services in April and May. A lot of work went into setting up and cleaning up before and after each service. A special thank you to **Rev. Alfred Wright**

(preaching), **John Reeves** (set-up and music), **Jerry Chandler** (set-up), **Sharon Chandler** (live stream), **Barbara Anderson** (music), **Benji and Quint Cumbie** (set-up and sound), **Grayson Bowman** (live stream), **Mason Sims** (set-up and sound), **Serena Miles** (music), **Allan Bomar** (music), **John Malmgren** (set-up), **Zechariah Copeland** (preaching), and **Scott Smith** (set-up and ushering), along with all of our readers and Potty Patrol volunteers. Way to be the church together!

Worship Flowers

Thanks to **Ansel and Sharon Miller**, who provided these beautiful sunflowers for one of our outdoor worship services. **Everyone is invited to sign up to place flowers in the sanctuary to make our worship even more beautiful!** You can sign up on the flower calendar or email mtzion@nctv.com to request a date.



July Communion Change

Did you know that in The United Methodist Church, Communion can be administered only by an ordained elder or by a pastor appointed to that charge? Because Pastor Jonathan will be away on July 4, we will celebrate Communion in July on the second Sunday, July 11.



Coming up in Worship!

June worship series

Do you ever get tired of conflicts and divisions among people? Just like today, people throughout the Bible experienced conflict, disagreement, and discord. Join in worship each Sunday in June as we hear some of these stories and learn how God made peace—and invites us to do the same!



Special 4th of July Service!

One of the things people say they have missed the most during the COVID-19 pandemic has been Mt. Zion's choir. Join in worship on July 4th as the choir leads a special service of anthems that we have missed hearing over the past 14 months!

July worship series

One of the most basic needs we all share is the need to belong. When that need is met, we can be our best. When we don't feel like we belong, we can feel isolated and afraid. Join in worship the last three Sundays in July as we hear stories from the Bible that remind us that we have a place to belong in God's family!



Serving the Community



Food Distribution to the Community

On Saturday, May 8, Bethel and Central UMCs distributed grocery bags filled with food to dozens of members of the local community. Thank you to everyone from Mt. Zion who donated and helped distribute food!

Epworth Mother's Day Offering

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Epworth Children's Home Mother's Day offering! Together, we collected \$639 for this important ministry of the United Methodist Church in South Carolina! Thank you for generously supporting this ministry that provided a home to 196 children and placed 73 children with foster families last year. If you missed the chance to give, donate at <https://www.epworthchildrenshome.org/give>.



Community garden meeting

The Missions and Evangelism Committee and others who are interested in starting a community garden will meet behind the church building on June 15. The goal for a garden is to build relationships among one another and our surrounding community, provide

healthy food for people facing food insecurity, and to give people with gifts for gardening the chance to use those gifts to glorify and serve God. The purpose of this meeting is to draw out plans and write up a proposal to be presented to the Mt. Zion Trustees and Parsonage and Grounds committees.

June birthdays

2 Dot Wilbanks	17 Edith Wisham
2 Ashley Gelder	17 Isaiah Mullinax
8 Beth McWilliams	21 Fred Cone
12 Doug Walker	21 Karen Smith
14 Holly Gelder	21 Anna Ray
14 Ansel Miller	26 Randy Martin
16 Jerry Chandler	29 Zechariah Copeland
16 John Malmgren	

July birthdays

1 Tyler Ferguson	19 Paige Campbell
2 Vicki Miesbauer	20 Sonny Sims
9 Sam Blackman	23 Loretta Todd
9 Wes Witcher	24 Tommy Still
10 Marissa Harris	27 Nelson Rice
11 Albert Drexler	28 Ann Wilbanks
11 Libba Carson	30 Al Cumbie
14 Braelin Cumbie	31 Sharon Chandler

June & July Anniversaries



June 5 - Benji & Heather Cumbie
June 8 - Stan & Cindy Owens
June 24 - Mac & Beth McWilliams

July 2 - Dick & Helen Singleton
July 13 - Kris & Elizabeth Bowman
July 17 - Jonathan & Marissa Harris
July 21 - Tommy & Kathy Still
July 22 - Charles & Pam Baker
July 28 - Herb & Karen Sprouse

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

Address Correction Requested



For the second year in a row, the South Carolina Annual Conference will meet online. Those participating from Mt. Zion are Rev. Jonathan Harris, Pastor, and Peggy Bodie,

Lay Member to Annual Conference. At this annual gathering, United Methodist clergy and laity from all across the state will worship together, approve a budget for our conference's shared ministries, and celebrate all that God has done through us during this very unusual past year. It is also at Annual Conference that the Bishop officially fixes pastoral appointments for the coming year. If you would like more information about Annual Conference, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/ac2021>. As Mt. Zion's Lay Member to Annual Conference, Peggy will also share a report about Annual Conference in a future newsletter.