

**THE MESSENGER**  
**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**601 NORTH PINK STREET**  
**CHERRYVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28021**  
**Phone (704) 435-6732 Fax (704) 435-4468**  
[firstmethodistcherryville.com](http://firstmethodistcherryville.com)

**April 25, 2024**

**Vol. XXXV No. 5**

Rev. Zack Christy  
Pastor

Teresa Gardo  
Administrative Assistant

Bess Thornburg  
Director of Christian Education

Nancy Catena  
Organist

Linda Barger  
Chancel Choir Director

Andrew Harmon  
Handbell Director

Cam Alfaro  
Audio Visual Tech.

Mildred Young  
FUMC Weekday Preschool Dir.

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**May Reflection**

John 15:6 "Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

I don't know if you could hear the voices of United Methodist from all over the world raised this past week. I'm not sure if within the cadence of the wind you could hear the refrain of "And Are We Yet Alive," the anthem to open every conference of the Methodist Movement since the first Christmas conference in 1768, "Let us take up the cross till we the crown obtain and gladly reckon all things loss so we may Jesus gain." But Charlotte has been visited by Methodist from all over the world.

Like locust upon the harvest, they have descended from every corner of the earth, Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, and Europe. They have come together for General Conference, the first general conference since 2016, and they have come during a time in which our church has been in great upheaval. These past few years have been challenging to say the least for the United Methodist Church, debates about human sexuality among a myriad of other issues have splintered the church. Where at one point in time we were the largest Protestant denomination, we no longer are. Where Western North Carolina used to have 1,200 United Methodist Churches, we now only have 900.

I will admit that I have been anxious about this date, I have been dreading the general conference and the changes that are sure to arise from it. I have been fearful because I don't like change, I tend to be more fearful of new things, in many respects I crave consistency and homeostasis. But in the midst of my anxiety and my fear surrounding General Conference, I came across John 15 in my morning devotionals.

John 15 is smack dab in the middle of the farewell discourse of Jesus. It contains four of the seven "I am" statements from Jesus, (each of which is beautifully represented on our stained glass), I was struck by 15:6. This teaching from Jesus, comes from Jesus' self-revelation "I am the vine." Every time I have come to this teaching from Jesus, I have always focused on how Jesus tells us that we as gentiles have been grafted into the vine. For some reason verse 6 has never jumped out to me. This week it stood out like a sore thumb.

Jesus says, "Whoever does not abide in me is cut off and thrown out." At first glance this teaching from Jesus seems too heavy handed. It doesn't seem to flow with all the teachings from Jesus about grace, love, and mercy, how could Jesus be so callous as to throw out someone just because they weren't producing fruit? How long does Jesus give someone to produce fruit before they are cut off? What kind of fruit does Jesus expect the disciples to produce?

But then the more I pondered on this question the more I saw the answers right in front of me. Since 1968 the UMC has declined in membership by about one percent per year. That is fifty-six years of decline! Maybe it was time for some paring down. In Western North Carolina, 1 in 4 churches has not had a baptism in the past three years. Maybe it was time for some paring down. Of the roughly 300 churches that are left, 250 of them had not had a new member join in the past five years. Maybe it was time for some pairing down.

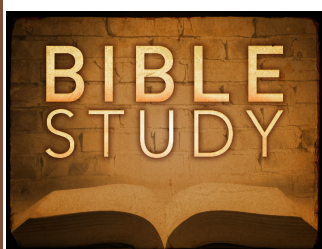
Maybe just maybe I had been reading the situation of our church wrong. Perhaps fear and anxiety were not the right response, and instead of being afraid, I should have been curious as to what God was up to in this season. Instead of dreading the future and shunning newness, I should have been celebrating the fact that God still cares enough about the church to shake us to our core. I learned that one of the main reasons you would prune a grapevine is because pruning allows for new growth and new fruit.

I'm not sure as I sit here typing what the future of the church will be. I don't know what the UMC will look like in five years, but what I do know is that it will be a little bit different, and that's a good thing. During this season we have been carefully pruned, our church is not exempt from feeling some of these pains, yet what lies ahead is a more faithful and fruitful church. I have decided that going forward, instead of being fearful about the future, I'm going to be joyful. Jesus Christ has not called us to a life of comfort or ease, he has called us to a life of discipleship, a life of bearing fruit. Our church has seen much fruit over this past year, and I so look forward to seeing what God is going to do with us in the future, as we continue to make disciples and transform this community and this world!

Grace and Peace,

Zack Christy

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**Bible Study** continues to meet each Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. in the June Medlin Classroom. Our study is on the Book of Isaiah.



**CHILDREN'S CHURCH** is held during our 10:30 worship service for all children **3yrs thru 3<sup>rd</sup> grade**. The children will leave from the sanctuary worship service following the children's sermon and go to a classroom on the educational hall for lessons and crafts. Parents can pick-up their children at the end of worship. A packet will be available outside the sanctuary in the Narthex for children 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders or older with pencils crayons and coloring pages and Children's Worship bulletin. Again... **volunteers are needed for Children's Church teachers and helpers.** Please let Bess know if you are willing to help with children's church.



## National Day of Prayer Service

Thursday, May 2, 2024

Time: Noon

Cherryville Community Building



Our Children's Sunday School Department has a new class division. Of course we offer classes for everyone! We still have our children's classes but the ages have been reorganized. Maria Gunnell is teaching the Nursery / Toddler Class, 2yr - Kindergarten. And

NOW...announcing our new class: the Younger Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> grades will be taught by Teci Webb. **THANKS SO MUCH TECI** for volunteering and helping to teach the class and age group! This new class is now meeting down stairs at the end of the hall each Sunday morning. Chrystal and Andrew Harmon are teaching our Older Elementary, 3-5<sup>th</sup> graders and Seth Freeman is leading the Youth class, 6-12<sup>th</sup> grades; Of course, our adult classes are meeting upstairs: Romans 12 class, young adults; Etheleen Dover Class, young to middle age adults; June Medlin Class, middle age and senior adults and Men's Bible Class, any age men of the church. You are invited to be a part of any one of these assemblies. **THERE IS**

**A PLACE FOR YOU AT SUNDAY SCHOOL!!!**

Thanks to all of you who have so graciously volunteered to teach and lead our classes, but volunteers are still needed.



## MAY NURSERY WORKERS

We are proud to offer an infant nursery, provided each Sunday morning, for our sweet babies

during the 10:30 worship service. Our nursery is located at the end of the hall and to your right just below the church office. **A BIG THANK YOU** to all who have agreed to help in the Nursery. Below is the Nursery Workers list for May. You will receive a reminder card and text on your given Sunday. Please let Bess or Susan Beam know if you cannot be there on your Sunday.

May 5	Jenny Emerson
May 12	Susan Beam
May 19	Kelly Brown
May 26	Emily Webb



## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR ACOLYTES AND CRUCIFERS

Thanks so much for serving your church as Acolyte and Crucifer. You are an important part of our worship service each week. Please see the below Acolyte/Crucifer schedule for the month of May. **If you cannot serve on your Sunday, PLEASE contact Bess @ 704-435-6732, cell: 704-836-6803 or 704-435-5185 or switch with one of the other people on the list.**

May 5	Sophia Williams	Lydia Bradley
May 12	Mikki Jane Emerson	Mallie Emerson
May 19	Riley Shuford	Grayce Pruitt
May 26	Caroline Carswell	Amber Grace Brittain

# Breakfast

On **Saturday, May 25**, we will have our Community Breakfast. Serving times will be from 7:30 - 10:30 a.m. Come join us for a time of fellowship and a delicious all you can eat breakfast buffet. Cost will be by donation. Our profits have gone toward assisting our local community by giving to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, to the local "Handy Man's Ministry" for helping with minor repairs to homes, and to our youth for retreats and mission trips. We hold this event the last Saturday of every month.



It's hard to believe that our regular UMK Wednesday night meetings have come to a close for this year. On April 24 we celebrated our end of the year cookout and fun night with a slide and bounce house complete with a closing "POGO STYLE / MOSH PIT!" We also ended up our year by sharing two of our favorite songs and singing during the worship service on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

**A BIG THANK YOU** to all those that made this year at UMKs a wonderful time of learning the scriptures and God's love and plans for us as well as singing praises and filling our tummies each night. **Thank You** to Debbie Gantt and Juanita Gunnell who served as our kitchen helpers and servers each Wednesday night and to all those who prepared and provided meals. Also, special thanks to Crystal Christy, Amy Shedd, Melanie Ross and Brian Emerson for teaching and leading classes throughout the UMK year. Our music and songs were led by Brian Emerson and huge thank you to Cam and Krystal Alfaro for being our audio visual and sound techs at each meeting. Our youth helpers were Amber Grace Brittain and Mallie Emerson. We could not have had such a fun and gratifying year without all of these folks and other volunteers!

Our Summer activities will continue with **"WILD WACKY WEDNESDAYS"** beginning in June. More about that will be announced at a later date and our VBS will be held the week of July 21-25 here at our church.



**UMYF:** U.M.Y.F. (United Methodist Youth Fellowship) meets on Sunday nights at 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. in our youth room down stairs. This group is for all 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders. We have been planning for our spring/Summer activities.

We gather in fellowship each week and of course play games, have our snack suppers, devotions and make plans for the year. Our lessons coming up will be

### **"SWIPE RIGHT"**



### **Making the Right Choices!**

The UMYF will meet May 5<sup>th</sup> and May 19<sup>th</sup> but will not meet May 12<sup>th</sup> in hopes that everyone can have a great time enjoying Mother's Day with your mom and family. Our mission project for the month of May will be making gifts for shut-ins of our church and filling the blessing box with food. May 19<sup>th</sup> will be our last meeting for this year. Everyone is asked to bring a small bag of nonperishable foods for our blessing box to the next 2 meetings.

We will have various special activities throughout the summer including our Hickory Crawdads game and concert and a movie night to see "Unsung Hero."

Watch your FUMCY News flash text for details!!

We have held several fund raisers for a summer Mission activity or camps. Tekoa Missions camps have been canceled by the camp for the 2024 summer session. However, we are still working on a summer mission project. All of this is TBD as we plan on Sundays! We need everyone's help and every one's attendance to get these activities going for our youth group! All 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> graders is invited to be a part of UMYF. And yes, you can Invite!!!

**\*\*\*\*\*Also.... PLEA FOR HELP!** Youth helpers and counselors are needed for the coming year! If you are a parent or a friend of our young folks, please prayerfully consider volunteering to help on Sunday evenings with our fun, energetic group of Christian young people and UMYF members! We need you!!!





## Attention all 2024 College Graduates

Graduation Day is approaching fast! We would like to honor our graduating College students for 2024 during our 10:30 worship service on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Please meet in the fellowship hall at 10:15 a.m. and prepare to march into our worship service. Also, please provide Bess with your degree information, and if possible, provide a picture and bring your cap and gown that Sunday. You will be recognized with a gift. We are proud of you!!!!

Congratulations!

- Note: to our knowledge we have no High School graduates this year on our records. If this is not correct, please let the church office know asap!!!!



## KINGDOM KIDS KORNER

Our school year is passing so quickly! On May 7 we will be visiting KidsSenses Childrens Interactive Museum in Rutherfordton for this year's final field trip. All students, as well as parents, are welcome to attend. This is always a really fun time!

On Tuesday, May 21, eighteen of our students will graduate to move on to kindergarten. All forty-six of our children will be a part of the graduation program. We have had a good year with learning, laughter, (some tears), and lots of love! Some of the graduates have been with us since the two year class, while others have joined us along the way. They have formed a close bond, some of which will be life-long friendships.

Most of the students from our two and three year classes will be returning for the next school year. We have also already signed up a number of new students for the next year. There are very limited openings. If there are those who are interested in enrollment, please contact me as soon as possible.

We are so thankful for the support we receive from our church staff and the church members.

Ms. Millie



## Prayer Breakfast

Our Prayer breakfast has resumed. We will continue to meet May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, then we will break for the summer months. Our prayer breakfast is such a blessing to all who attend. It's a great start to our school day, work day or any day! We are meeting at Homefolks Café at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings to feed our tummies, our souls and our hearts with friendships, devotions and prayer time before school. Everyone of all ages and all denominations are invited to join the prayer breakfast group! Our church van will be there to provide a ride to school for anyone who needs it. BUT Buckle UP! There may be a BUMP in the road!!!



The Cherryville Area Ministries and the Second Harvest Food Bank will sponsor a **Mobile Food Pantry** on Monday, May 6, at 10:00 a.m. in the St. John's Lutheran Church Dixie Street parking lot. Volunteers are needed to distribute the food and to unpack the trucks and food boxes and need to be there by 9:00 a.m. If you can help, please let Bess Thornburg know at the church office.



*We gratefully acknowledge gifts presented to the church in loving memory of:*

**MARGIE ANGEL**

Jack & Judy Bingham

**BEN BLACKBURN, SR.**

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Steve & Lynn Bowen  
Richard & Martha Cornwell  
Clarice Harrelson  
Janice Hovis  
Bill Sneed  
Jerry Thornburg (Backpack Ministry)  
Mr. & Mrs. Vee Thornburg

## HEATH BRAY

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown

**MIKE "DANGO" DELLINGER**

Linda Alexander  
Pam Anthony  
Libby Ballard  
Linda Barger  
Joyce Baxter  
Gail Beam & Ephriam Beam, Jr.  
Ben & Robin Blackburn (Church Renovations)  
Mac & Jewel Brawley  
Sandra Carpenter  
Nancy Catena  
Jodean W. Davis  
Chuck & Julie Dellinger  
Debbie Gantt (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)  
Curtis Harrelson  
Fred Rudder & Teresa Hopper  
Bill & Quita Moss  
Sylvia Norton  
Vee & Melanie Thornburg  
WCSL 1590 AM  
Danny & Teci Webb  
Doug & Dawn Whitworth  
Shumate & Gail Yamada

**PAT EAKER**

Guy Eaker

**TRENT GARDO**

Linda Barger (Playground Fund)

## FREDDIE HEAVNER

Johnny, Kelly &amp; Nickolas Brown

**JUDY HOUSER**

Linda Barger (Playground Fund)  
Danny & Teci Webb

**ROGER HOYLE**

Johnny, Kelly &amp; Nickolas Brown

## ANICE LAWING

Jack & Judy Bingham

**PAT MCGINNIS**

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Jodean W. Davis  
Jerry Thornburg (Backpack Ministry)  
Mr. & Mrs. Vee Thornburg  
Shumate & Gail Yamada

## DAVID MOSS

## Hazeline Moss (Youth Missions)

## RONALD MOSS

## Hazeline Moss (Youth Missions)

**ANN NEWTON**

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Richard & Martha Cornwell  
Hazeline Moss (Youth Missions)  
Bill Speed

## DAVID NIVENS

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Richard & Gail Summey

# DON PORTER

Debbie Gantt (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)  
Hazeline Moss (Youth Missions)

**VICKIE PORTER**

Jack & Judy Bingham  
Richard & Martha Cornwell

**MARILYN SHEARER**

Sandra Carpenter (Backpack Ministries)  
Sylvia Norton (Backpack Ministries)

**JOE WISE**

Jack & Judy Bingham

[illegible]

*We gratefully acknowledge gifts presented to the church in honor of:*

# JACKSON WRIGHT CARPENTER

Tammy Campbell & Brent Davis  
Ricky & Laurie Carpenter  
Doug & Dawn Whitworth

## THE CHOIR

Linda Barger

**RICHARD & MARTHA CORNWELL**

*67th Wedding Anniversary*  
*On April 7*

Richa Clark

**LARSON MCNEELY**

Danny & Teci Webb

[illegible]

## PRAYER LIST (Members)

Mike Avery, Bo & Betsy Baity, Chris Barrett, Michael Beam, Steve Bowen, Dennis Bradley, Mike Burgess, Deanna Daggerhart, Bob Faires, Ruth Gaston, Curtis Harrelson, John Hines, Reid Huss, Ken Mayhew, Barbara McGinnis, Ray McSwain, Dave Owens & family, Dave Plake, Rev. Harry Queen, Vernon & Betty Smith, Ron Walls, Wayne & Belinda Watts, Earlene Williams, and all our homebound and nursing home members.

### PRAYER LIST (Family & Friends)

Kim Alexander, Eric Carpenter, Reid Chapman, John Crocker, Mary Crocker, Whitney Ledford, Carolyn Summer, Shayne Turner, Iris Walls, Greg Yount and our loved ones in the military.

## LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY:

#Ethan Beck, Edward Blackburn, Caleb Dickerson,  
\*Jessica Lovell.  
# Church Member, \*Deployed



**On Sunday, May 19**, following the worship service the Family Life / Special Events Committee is sponsoring a “birthday bash” for **ALL** church members regardless of age in the fellowship hall with a catered meal. We will set up 12 tables representing each month of the year and everyone will sit at the table representing their birthday month. There are sign up sheets available on the table in the Narthex to sign up if you plan to attend. Please list your name and month of your birth on the form or contact the church office.

## May Birthdays

1	Samantha Moss
2	Amber Brafford
4	Susan Beam
6	Renee Allen
7	Betty Dellinger
8	Harper Beck
8	Paige Sigmon
9	Audie McGinnis
13	Greyson Haynes
13	Pam Huffstetler
13	Bertha Maxey
13	Landis Moss
16	Dawn Whitworth
19	Michelle Bingham
19	Jennifer Bradley
20	Lance Hudson
20	Rozzie Norwood
20	Bayne Phillips
20	Kevin Thornburg
21	Jerry Hudson
21	Nate Thornburg
22	M'Shel Bowen
22	Wayne Watts
24	Andrew Harmon
24	Lucas Smith
24	Ben Sneed
25	Eddie Pursley
25	Robert Sneed
25	Kim Young
27	Hayden Morehouse
28	Genea Moss
28	Hazeline Moss
30	Kent Ballard
30	Chelsea Thornburg



If your birthday is in May and not listed, please contact the church office.





Mrs. Ray McSwain  
Carolina Care Health & Rehab.  
111 Harrilson Rd.  
Cherryville, NC 28021

**Sunday, April 28**

9:30am - Sunday School  
10:30am - Worship  
6:00pm - Youth

**Monday, April 29**

7:00pm - Finance Committee meeting

**Wednesday, May 1**

6:30pm - Bible Study

**Thursday, May 2**

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast at Homefolk's Café

**Sunday, May 5**

9:30am - Sunday School  
10:30am - Worship  
6:00pm - Youth

**Wednesday, May 8**

6:30pm - Bible Study

**Thursday, May 9**

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast at Homefolk's Café

**Sunday, May 12 (Mother's Day)**

9:30am - Sunday School  
10:30am - Worship

**Wednesday, May 15**

6:30pm - Bible Study

**Thursday, May 16**

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast at Homefolk's Café

**Sunday, May 19**

9:30am - Sunday School  
10:30am - Worship  
11:30am - Birthday Bash for all/catered meal  
6:00pm - Youth

**Tuesday, May 21**

7:00pm - Preschool Graduation

**Wednesday, May 22**

6:30pm - Bible Study

**Saturday, May 25**

7:30am - 10:30am - Community wide breakfast  
buffet

**Sunday, May 26**

9:30am - Sunday School  
10:30am - Worship

**Monday, May 27**

Church Office closed

**Wednesday, May 29**

6:30pm - Bible Study

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT, APRIL 21**

Total Giving To Date ..... \$111,311.47

Needs to Date ..... \$131,912.00

**MAY USHERS:**

Seth Freeman, Allen Fraley, Chesley Walls,  
Tommy Allen, Justin Winter