

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – APRIL 5 EDITION

Annual Conference Special Offering to benefit North Katanga partnership

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Over the past two years, South Georgia has helped the North Katanga Annual Conference build and reconstruct several local churches, host empowerment training events and leadership training conferences, and train local farmers.

The [mission partnership](#) that began three years ago when a team of six South Georgia United Methodists traveled to the North Katanga Annual Conference, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), continues to develop.

During the 2022 Annual Conference session, South Georgia United Methodists will have the opportunity to partner with North Katanga United Methodists to support two of their ministries, Kamina Orphanage and Wings of the Morning Aviation.

“We are excited to once again put focus on our partnership with the North Katanga Annual Conference,” said Kelly Roberson, assistant to the Bishop and director of Conference Ministries/Communications. “These ministries – the Kamina Orphanage and the Wings of the Morning Aviation – are two examples of the great work being done in and through United Methodists all over the world. What an honor to be in ministry with them as they help those who need it most.”

Since 1997, Kamina Orphanage has helped thousands of children, orphaned by disease, violence, and poverty, have hope and a future. South Georgia’s support of the orphanage will help provide children with meals, healthcare, tuition, and care.

An aviation ministry of The United Methodist Church in North Katanga, Wings of the Morning is under the care and supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

With little or no transportation infrastructure such as paved roads or a railway system, the Wings of the Morning airplane is a lifeline to the 6 million people of the Katanga province and provides vital services including: carrying life-giving pharmaceuticals and supplies to remote villages and towns; transporting critically ill patients to clinics and hospitals; providing transportation for pastors, missionaries; and volunteers; and delivering payroll and other supplies to villages, towns, and churches.

“The Wings of the Morning Aviation Program is saving the lives of many people, especially those living in remote villages and yet seeking high quality medical attention,” said Bishop Mande Muyombo, episcopal leader of the North Katanga Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church. “I am grateful to the South Georgia Annual Conference for giving hope and

loving these young men and women. Thank you for advancing God's kingdom with Christlike concerns for the orphans."

For more information about the special offering, visit www.sgaumc.org/specialoffering. Congregations are encouraged to send and present their offering during Annual Conference's June 5 opening worship service.

UMW change name, keep mission

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

New name, same mission.

For 153 years, women united by their shared love of Christ and desire to serve women, children, and youth have put their faith into action.

Over the years, what was first known as the Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society became known as the Woman's Society of Christian Service and then eventually United Methodist Women. Today, the organization has rebranded itself again, this time to "[United Women in Faith](#)."

The new name, which was five years in the making, better reflects how the organization answers its calling to faith and action today, said Tara Jones, president of [South Georgia's United Women in Faith](#).

"It's a more apt description of who we really are."

The main goals with the name change, according to an [article by UM News](#) that quoted United Women in Faith executives Harriett Jane Olson and Sally Vonner, are to be more inclusive and to sustain and grow the organization for the next generation.

"This helps show that we're relevant to so many women," Jones said. "We've always welcomed women of other denominations into our organization. In my own local unit, we've had several Baptist members, and this really does make it more inclusive and draws that circle wider and better tells our story."

The process of renaming the faith organization came after several years of self-examination and research, including surveys, focus groups, and a communication audit. Nothing was done in a vacuum, Jones said, and the name was voted on by the organization's board of directors.

She hopes South Georgia women will embrace the new name, celebrate it, and find it welcoming to all.

“I’m hoping we will all learn to live into it, accept it, and use it as a tool to attract women of all ages, especially younger women.”

South Georgia’s United Women of Faith will continue serving women, children, and youth in their local communities and around the world, Jones said. They’ll continue to develop church leaders, study issues through the reading program and mission studies, and participate in global ministries of the church. They’ll still support missionaries and the mission agencies – Vashti, Open Door Community House, and Wesley Community Centers.

Jones is excited about the new name and the opportunities it will bring for mission and ministry.

“Our mission remains the same,” she said. “Our mission has not changed.”

Conference to consider, vote on seven resolutions

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Seven resolutions have been presented to the Conference Committee on Resolutions for consideration and vote by the 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference. Resolutions, if approved by the Annual Conference, are statements that represent the position of the conference on a subject.

Two resolutions, submitted in 2020 by members of the Advocacy Committee and its ad-hoc teams, will be considered and voted upon by the 2022 Annual Conference session. Discussion and voting on resolutions were postponed during the virtual 2020 and 2021 Annual Conference sessions and were agreed to be held until the next in-person session.

The first of the 2020 Advocacy Committee’s resolutions, “Say ‘No’ to Single-Use Plastic,” calls on those responsible for planning Conference, district, and local church events to adopt Creation Care practices that focus on waste prevention and waste reduction with the goal of moving toward eliminating the use of all single-use plastics.

The second of the Advocacy Committee’s resolutions, “Resolution on Wage Equality,” denounces “any policies that prohibit, condone, or reinforce the inopportunity for women to be paid less wages than men doing the same job.” It also asks that women be treated fairly in their jobs by getting the same pay as their male counterparts and that other minorities be treated fairly in jobs with pay. In addition, the resolution asks that the church and all of its members denounce policies that do not grant equal employment opportunities and Title IX in education and support and adopt those policies which will help women enter higher paying jobs in fields and occupations that are still off limits to women.

“Our main purpose of both of these (resolutions) is to be not just our brothers’ keeper, but our sisters’, and keepers of this beautiful earth God entrusted to us,” said Denise Rooks, chair of the Advocacy Committee and a member of Harper’s Chapel United Methodist Church in Baxley. “These are the legacies we want our children to inherit.”

South Georgia’s delegation submitted the third resolution, which calls upon South Georgia members, laypersons, and clergy to remember both the content and the intent of the “Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation.”

Signed by each lay and clergy member of the current General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation of the South Georgia Conference, the resolution calls upon the Conference to adopt the resolution and state its intent of being affiliated with a traditional Wesleyan denomination when that path is allowable and wise.

A fourth resolution, “A Resolution for a Called Session of the Annual Conference in Response to a Meeting of the General Conference,” calls for a called session of the Annual Conference if General Conference meets in 2022, to allow the Conference to make decisions in response to the General Conference, to allow churches to petition for disaffiliation, and to clarify how churches that wish to remain United Methodist may do so.

Resolution five, “A Resolution for a Called Session of the Annual Conference in Response to a Decision of the Judicial Council,” would, if passed, provide for a called session of the Annual Conference if the Judicial Council issues a decision regarding the ability of conferences to withdraw from The United Methodist Church. The called session would allow the Conference to make decisions in response to the General Conference, to allow churches to petition for disaffiliation, and to clarify how churches that wish to remain United Methodist may do so.

The sixth resolution, “Resolution to Amend the Disaffiliation Policy of the South Georgia Conference,” proposes to amend the Disaffiliation Policy of the South Georgia Annual Conference to provide for churches to petition for disaffiliation at called sessions of the Annual Conference.

The final resolution, “South Georgia Resolution in response to the Judicial Council declaratory decision stating an AC may withdraw from the UMC,” asks the 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference to vote on three matters.

The issues include “‘To declare our intentions’ to remain together as an annual conference and withdraw from The United Methodist Church to join the Global Methodist Church (GMC),” “to ask Bishop Graves to empower and instruct the Conference Leadership Task Force to develop an orderly process for our AC to live into its ‘declared intentions’ be that to withdraw from the UMC and join the GMC or remain affiliated with the UMC,” and “Having the direction the AC desires to move determined by the majority, churches seeking to go in a different direction,

should be released with our blessing at the special called AC provided they have satisfied the following condition prior to the called AC.”

“Five of the seven resolutions coming to this year’s Annual Conference deal with issues of disaffiliation and discerning the future direction of the South Georgia Conference,” said Rev. Jim Cowart, head of the clergy delegation and pastor of Harvest Church in Byron. “There seems to be a lot of interest in our Annual Conference staying together. But at this point, there are several questions that go along with that decision. One, can the Annual Conference leave The UMC as a whole to transfer into a more traditional Wesleyan denomination? And two, is that the preferred future of the Annual Conference or would the majority wish to remain in The UMC? The Judicial Council will give us insights into the ‘can we’ question, but we have to decide the second...where do we want to go from here? These five resolutions are efforts to give every church, member, and pastor in the South Georgia Annual Conference a voice in that decision.”

The resolutions were received and reviewed by the South Georgia Resolutions Committee, which includes chairwoman Rev. Doreen Smalls; lay members Mr. Steve Allen, Mrs. Patricia McRae, and Mrs. Flo Sapp Martin; and clergy members Rev. Kathy Israel-McLeod, Rev. Isaac Salgado, and Rev. Jonathan Brown.

“The committee takes seriously the work of the authors of the resolutions and reviews each resolution with great attention,” Rev. Smalls said. “The Resolutions Committee has already had numerous meetings and may continue to do so leading up to the conference session.”

The committee will present each resolution, a recommendation for it, and rationale behind the committee’s recommendation to the annual conference on Monday, June 6. Each resolution will be voted on by clergy and lay members of the Annual Conference.

[Read the resolutions in their entirety here.](#)

Annual Conference Update: Special Offering, Resolutions, Basic Agenda

The following is an email sent out by Meredyth Earnest, Conference Secretary, with updated details about the 2022 Annual Conference Session set for June 5-8 in Columbus.

Dear Lay/Clergy member to Annual Conference,

Our 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference Session is set for June 5-8 in Columbus, Ga. All Sunday activities and all business sessions will be held at [The Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center](#), a wonderful venue along the banks of the Chattahoochee River. The memorial service and the service of ordination and commissioning will be held in the beautiful sanctuary of [St. Luke UMC](#).

The Annual Conference Program Committee, the Local Arrangements Team, and the Northwest District are working hard to prepare for our arrival and are excited about welcoming conference members to Columbus.

We are looking forward to being led by our Episcopal leader, Bishop David Graves. He will lead us around our conference theme, “Great Is Your Faithfulness.”

Bishop Graves has invited Bishop James Swanson to be the preacher for our Opening Worship Service on Sunday evening and Rev. Bill Bagwell to be our Memorial Service preacher. Bishop Graves will preach our Service of Ordination and Commissioning on Monday evening. In addition, morning worship services will be held daily as we center ourselves prior to beginning the business of the day. Rev. Adriane Burgess will lead us on Monday, Rev. Teresa Edwards will lead Tuesday, and Rev. Daniel Medina on Wednesday.

We are excited to announce that our 2022 Annual Conference special offering will provide South Georgia United Methodists the opportunity to partner with North Katanga United Methodists to support two of their ministries, Kamina Orphanage and Wings of the Morning Aviation. We ask each church to take an offering prior to conference and present it at the opening worship service. More information about these ministries can be found at www.sgaumc.org/specialoffering.

Seven resolutions have been received by the Conference Committee on Resolutions for consideration this year. A link to view the resolutions as well as a link to a survey from our General Conference delegation is listed below. In addition, Bishop Graves has filmed a FAQ video that will be extremely helpful for clergy and laity.

Please note that the Book of Recommendations and Reports will be available for clergy and lay members by late April. Also, if there has been a change in the lay member(s) representing your charge, please log in to your church dashboard, www.sgaumc.org/dashboard, and make the change in the "My Church's Leaders" section. Please also share the change with your district office.

I look forward to greeting you in Columbus in June!

Meredyth Earnest
SGA Conference Secretary

FAQ Video, Resolutions, & Delegation Survey

FAQ Video with Bishop Graves

In this 25-minute video, Bishop Graves answers recent questions about General Conference, denominational matters, and disaffiliations. [Click here to watch the video.](#)

Resolutions

Seven resolutions have been submitted to the Conference Committee on Resolutions for the 2022 session of the South Georgia Annual Conference. The committee will present each resolution, along with a recommendation for each, during the business session June 5-8, 2022. [Click here to view.](#)

Delegation Survey

[The General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation of the South Georgia Annual Conference](#) wants to hear from the lay and clergy delegates in order to better represent local churches and pastors. They are asking you to respond on behalf of how you understand your local church's preferences.. This survey is not binding. The results will be included as part of the delegation's report to the Annual Conference in June. [Click here to take the survey.](#)

Meeting Details

Venue

The 2022 Annual Conference Session will take place at [The Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center](#) (801 Front Avenue Columbus, GA 31901). All Sunday night activities as well as all business sessions will be held at the Convention Center.

The Memorial Service, Service of Ordination with Commissioning, and the complimentary Methodist Home BBQ dinner will all be held at [St. Luke UMC](#) (1104 2nd Ave).

Schedule

The 2022 Annual Conference Session will begin with an Opening Worship Service on Sunday evening, June 5, at 7:00 pm. Conference will conclude with the Sending Forth Service on Wednesday, June 8. [Click here for a link to the basic agenda.](#) A more detailed schedule will be posted on the [conference website](#) in the coming weeks.

A few notes about this year's schedule:

- The Clergy Session will be held in two parts: [Part 1 on Sunday, May 22](#) (via Zoom) and Part 2 on Monday, June 6 (at the Columbus Trade Center).
- A conference business session will be held Tuesday evening, following a dinner break.
- Our goal is to adjourn by lunchtime on Wednesday.

Reminder: Bishop David Graves has called a special session of the Annual Conference for Saturday, August 20. [More details can be found here.](#)

Displays

Display spaces are available to groups and agencies related to the South Georgia Conference. Other non-UM agencies and vendors also have the opportunity to set up displays. Please see the [display policy](#) for those prices and conditions. The display policy, as well as the registration

form to reserve booth space, can be found at www.sgaumc.org/displays. Reservations for the space must be made by the May 1 deadline prior to the conference.

Registration Fee

The registration fee for all pastors and lay members to Annual Conference is \$20. Retired clergy not serving a church are exempt from this fee. You will pay when you register at Annual Conference.

Expenses / Per diem

Clergy and lay delegates who represent a local church shall have their expenses (including registration) paid by the local church (this includes retired clergy who are serving a church). Lay delegates who represent an organization and extension ministers shall have their expenses paid by the organization they represent. Retired clergy not under appointment and clergy on disability shall receive a per diem of \$65 per day for each day attended. Lay members who do not represent a local church or conference organization shall receive a per diem on the same basis. Retired local pastors who are not serving a church do not retain their clergy status according to the Book of Discipline, and so do not qualify for a per diem.

Has There Been a Change your in Lay Member?

There is one lay member per appointed clergy per charge. If there has been a change in the lay member(s) representing your charge, please make sure to share the change with Meredyth Earnest at meredyth@sgaumc.com or let your district office know. Lay members should be entered into the church dashboard no later than May 1, 2022. Only credentialed delegates will be able to vote at the session.

Columbus Logistics

Hotels

Valley Hospitality in Columbus has secured more than 600 rooms at a discounted rate for our event. Valley Hospitality has created a [website just for South Georgia Conference United Methodists](#) to make booking your hotel easy and streamlined. For those who prefer to make reservations over the phone, they have provided the phone number for each hotel on the website. [Click here to view the list of hotels](#). If you have any questions or issues booking rooms for your group, please contact their Concierge Service Team at (706) 489-4037 or concierge@valleyhospitality.com.

Childcare

Childcare for infants through 5th grade students will be provided by St. Luke UMC (1104 2nd Ave), located just blocks from the Convention Center, during this year's Annual Conference Session. Registration information will be available at www.sgaumc.org/childcare soon.

Communications & Questions

Book of Recommendations and Reports

Most of the business items for the conference session are contained in the Book of Recommendations and Reports (BOR). Inside the BOR you'll find a complete conference agenda, driving and parking information, helpful annual conference information, detailed reports from conference ministries, pension and benefits recommendations, conference budgets, and much more. One of the purposes of the BOR is to allow you to read the recommendations and reports before you come to conference.

By late April, the BOR will be made available in two ways. It will be made available for download as a PDF file at no cost, in its entirety or in sections, on our conference website (www.sgaumc.org/annualconference), and disseminated through other electronic means. You will also be able to purchase a professionally bound printed copy through lulu.com. Ordering information will be provided when the BOR is ready. The Book of Recommendations will not be mailed nor will printed copies be available at the Annual Conference session. If you prefer a printed copy versus a digital download, you must print it at church, at home, or purchase one through lulu.com.

Questions

For questions regarding the business of Annual Conference, please contact Meredyth Earnest at meredyth@sgaumc.com. For questions regarding local arrangements or for general inquiries, please contact Kelly Roberson at kelly@sgaumc.com.

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Please welcome Reverend Lynn Meadows-White to The Methodist Home!

Written and submitted by The Methodist Home

Beginning this summer, Reverend Lynn Meadows-White will be officially joining our ministry as the Vice President of Church Relations and Chaplain for our Carpenter's Way Ranch and Americus sites! She will be available to speak on behalf of The Methodist Home in churches across Georgia and work with folks who want to support our mission in the Columbus area.

As a Full Elder, Pastor Lynn has faithfully supported The Methodist Home for many years. Her call to ministry unfolded over time as she followed God's guidance in leading her to where she is today. After graduating from seminary, where she met her husband, Rev. Howard White, they moved to Columbus and have served as a clergy couple at the Pierce Chapel UMC for 31 years. They have 2 adult children, Elizabeth (27) and John Howard (21), who also call Columbus their home.

Over time, God has orchestrated beautiful relationships between Pierce Chapel UMC and The Methodist Home staff members and youth. Lynn believes in caring for our staff members just as much as the children we serve because they are "the backbone of our ministry." Pierce Chapel

has provided meals, game nights, and the annual “Birthday Party for Jesus” for many years! Lynn has also baptized some of our children, and recently received a call from one of the young boys she baptized who is now a husband and father.

Lynn says she is **“proud of and grateful for Pierce Chapel’s commitment to The Methodist Home over the years...These connections led me to have a heart for these kids and what they have gone through.”** Lynn’s experience with ministry has included missionary work and pastoral ministry, where God revealed her passion for the local community. She loves being able to walk with families over time and experience their ups and downs alongside them. As Lynn moves into her new roles at The Methodist Home, she will get to do just that!

Lynn will walk alongside our young people and spread the mission of The Methodist Home with the community, sharing ways they can support God’s work here at The Home. She is thankful for this opportunity because, **“I have a heart for kids who are in difficult situations and know brokenness. I want them to know they are beloved children of God and they are worth our time. I get to be a part of reminding them how much they matter and how precious their lives are. I want them to know wholeness and hope and purpose... I love this mission and ministry!”**

Please join us in prayer as we prepare to receive Rev. Lynn Meadows-White as an integral part of our Methodist Home Family!

Andrew College professor awarded grant for sustainable agriculture workshop

Andrew College sustainable agriculture program director Dr. Adam Redhead will receive a grant in the amount of \$3,000 to fund an agricultural training program.

The grant was awarded by the southern division of Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grants and outreach program. The overall objective of SARE, according to their website, “is to position agricultural communities, so the most sustainable approaches available permeate U.S. agriculture.” The sponsorship funds support education and training activities for historically underserved farmers and ranchers in areas of sustainable agriculture.

The criteria for the grant states that the training topics must pertain to sustainable agriculture. They can include issues related to heirs’ property, education, and training resources; safety and health; market challenges; food access; disaster recovery; access to technology; and stress and mental health.

Dr. Redhead feels that the issues at the core of this project are important for farmers not only in Southwest Georgia but all over the world. Redhead stated, “the global population is going to reach 9 billion people by 2050 with the need for food production to increase by 70 percent to meet these demands. It is essential to do this with the intention of preserving the environment.”

Dr. Redhead has planned a virtual approach to reach the farmers on a grassroots level. The three-day online event is scheduled for June 6 and will feature some of the brightest minds and innovative thinkers in the field of sustainable agriculture.

The workshop will provide insight into current techniques and best practices in sustainable agriculture that farmers can apply to their current production systems. The event is open to anyone who would like to attend and is targeted towards agricultural entrepreneurs, professionals, and those who may be considering a career in agriculture or farming.

For more information on the online sustainable agriculture workshop or how you can support its community efforts, please visit www.andrewcollege.edu/sustainable-agriculture-workshop-2022, or email Dr. Adam Redhead at andrewag@andrewcollege.edu.

Established in 1854, Andrew College is related to The United Methodist Church and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Situated in the rural southwest Georgia community of Cuthbert, Andrew College offers the Associate of Art, Associate of Music, Associate of Nursing, Associate of Science and Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Elementary Education degrees.

Bishop Graves: Focus on Jesus, the local church

FROM THE BISHOP DAVID GRAVES

My passion is sharing Jesus, seeing the overlooked, joining God in transforming lives, and changing the world one person at a time.

That’s what I want the South Georgia Conference to focus on, too.

I realize, however, that The United Methodist Church is in a season of life where questions are being raised and uncertainty and anxiousness are apparent throughout the system.

In a spirit of transparency and forthrightness, I recently had a conversation with Kelly Roberson, Director of Conference Ministries/Communications, about General Conference, denominational matters, and disaffiliations. In this [video](#) I answer a few frequently asked questions, clear up some confusion, and remind us that we are, indeed, better together.

I hope you find our conversation helpful and informative.

I can't stress this enough: Let's focus our commitment on strengthening every local church, where the word is preached and Christ is offered, and where the table is set before all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, confident in the prayer we have learned to say and share, "By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet."

[Watch the full video](#)

Denman Award nominations sought

The South Georgia Annual Conference is now accepting nominations for The Harry Denman Evangelism Award for Clergy, Lay, and Youth.

The Harry Denman Evangelism Award program recognizes United Methodists in each annual conference whose exceptional ministry of evangelism – expressed in Word (what), Sign (why), and Deed (how) – brings people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

Evangelism happens in many contexts and many settings; impacts and engages all generations; and requires relationship among a variety of persons. Persons who demonstrate the spirit of this award are ones whose life and ministry exemplifies the teaching of Christ and the Great Commission.

Recipients of these awards, nominated by individuals, churches, or districts and selected by the Conference Witness Team, live their call to "Offer Them Christ" daily as modeled by Dr. Harry Denman, founder of The Foundation for Evangelism that sponsors these awards.

Neither the size of the local church with which the person is affiliated, the age or gender of the person, nor the length of their service limits a person's eligibility. What is important are the persons whose lives have been changed by the life and ministry of the nominee. (Note: the youth award is limited to individuals who would be considered students - college age or younger.)

The award is named for the late Dr. Harry Denman, who was a distinguished lay evangelist. The awards are made possible by The Foundation for Evangelism, which was founded in 1949 by Dr. Denman, who felt it was the business of every Christian to be an evangelist. It is most fitting that annual conferences today honor persons who carry on the spirit of Harry Denman.

Nominations

To learn more about the award or to download nomination forms [click here](#) or contact the SGA Conference Witness Chair, Rev. Danita Knowles, at danitaknowles52@gmail.com.

Nominations must be received no later than April 20.

Camp Connect is hiring college summer staff

Applications are now being accepted for the 2022 Camp Connect Summer Leadership Team at Epworth By The Sea. Applications are open to college students who have completed at least one year of college. The Leadership Team will commit to 9 weeks of camping ministry which will include serving hundreds of youth and children while making Christian friendships with other staff members that last a lifetime. For more information, visit www.campconnectumc.org/applytobeonstaff.

Passover with the King

Spring Quarter: God Frees and Redeems

Unit 2: Liberating Gospels

Sunday school lesson for the week of April 10, 2022

By Dr. Hal Brady

Lesson Scriptures: Matthew 26: 17-30

Key Verse: Matthew 26:29

Lesson Aims

1. Summarize what Jesus said at the last supper.
2. Explain the historic significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover
3. Suggest a way to improve his or her church's observance of the Lord's Supper.

The story is told of a little girl whose parents had taken her forward to receive Holy Communion.

Disappointed with the small pieces of bread she was given to dip in the cup, the child cried loudly, "I want more! I want more!" While embarrassing to her parents and amazing to the congregation, their little girl's cry accurately expresses the feelings of many contemporary United Methodists. They want more. They want more. They want to understand why communion is so important.

Let's begin! The Passover Meal commemorates the struggles that began in Egypt. When eating it together Jesus and his disciples not only remembered what had happened to their people but also anticipated what was to come.

Lesson Context

Our lesson takes us about midway into the week of Passover, after Jesus and many others had arrived in Jerusalem for the feast. (Various accounts of the meal are found in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:17-20, John 13:1-30.) God commanded the Jewish people to observe the Passover Feast in memory of their dramatic deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). Passover became a national spiritual holiday. God had commanded it to be celebrated in Jerusalem on the 14th day of first month (Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16). This was the month of Nisan (formerly called Aviv in the Hebrew religious calendar), which is late March and early April.

We are told that during Jesus' time, groups of pilgrims slew their lambs at the Jerusalem temple, where the blood would be sprinkled on the altar. Then they went to celebrate the meal with their families or other companions in groups of at least 10 people. Despite the lamb's centrality to this feast, the bread and fruit of the vine play much larger roles in the accounts of Jesus' last supper (example, Mark 14:12-26). The symbolism of the animal's absence from the story should not be lost on us. As our lesson moves forward, the sacrifice was already present.

I. **Reading the Passover (Matthew 26:17-19)**

Jewish tradition made Jerusalem the ideal destination for Passover celebrations. The number of pilgrims arriving to celebrate "Passover" in Jerusalem in Jesus' time likely exceeded 85,000, or several thousand more Jews than lived in Jerusalem. In this severely overcrowded environment, finding a room in which to observe the meal could be difficult. Note here that because of the long journey, pilgrims had taken to purchasing sacrificial animals in Jerusalem instead of traveling with them. This was not considered problematic until the merchants moved inside the temple, making the prayerful space into a commercial market (see Matthew 21:12, 13). Since Jesus did not own a house or livestock (8:20), his disciples would have purchased a lamb.

The "Festival of Unleavened Bread" lasted a full week immediately following the night of the Passover Meal (Deuteronomy 16:1-8). We are told that baking bread with yeast was a slow process. A piece of dough was set aside and allowed to rise; before the next meal, the leavened dough was worked into a new batch of dough so that it too would rise. The speed of unleavened bread's preparation reminded Jesus of the haste of the flight from Egypt (Exodus 12:39).

Knowing that Jesus had come to Jerusalem to participate with them in the Passover meal, his disciples ask where they should prepare for the celebration (26:17). They are still in Bethany, early in the day on Thursday. Jesus directs them to go into Jerusalem where they will find a specific man, whom they will tell, "The Teacher says: my appointed time is near, I am going to celebrate Passover with my disciples at your house" (26:18).

Finding a man carrying a water jar would not be difficult, since women normally lugged water. Either Jesus has made pre-arrangements for the room with friends in Jerusalem in order to avoid

Jewish authorities, or else there were divine arrangements. Either way, Jesus' statement "My appointed time is near," recognizes that he is on a divinely ordained time-table (Matthew 26:45).

The Passover Plot (Matthew 26:20-25)

Judas already had agreed to the contract on Jesus' life (Matthew 26:14-16), but none of the other disciples knew that. Therefore, "when evening came" for them to share the Passover, it was easy for Judas to join as one of "the twelve" with his plan undetected.

In Jesus' time, the seating for special meals like this involved reclining on low couches. Participants leaned on the left elbow with their heads toward "the table" and their feet away from it, and they would eat with their right hands.

During the Passover, Jesus reveals the betrayer: "I tell you the truth; one of you will betray me." Jesus has anticipated the betrayal and even warned the disciples on this journey to Jerusalem that he will be betrayed (Matthew 20:18; John 6:71; 12:4), but his prediction of the treacherous act at the meal apparently comes as a surprise to all. Hence, "they are very sad" or distressed. They do not expect a betrayal to come out of their tight-knit group that has experienced so much together for the last three years. Yet the disciples are now fully aware that Jesus has an understanding of events beyond their comprehension. He knows more about them than even they know about themselves. So one after another they ask, yet hesitantly declare, "Surely not I, Lord?" This question expects a negative answer, but they do not speak confidently.

Now Jesus prolongs their dismay as he states, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me." As with many cultures still today, the custom was for food to be shared by everyone out of large serving dishes rather than individual place settings. Therefore, Jesus' statement could refer to anyone in the room, for all of them were sharing in that activity during the evening meal. In Matthew's telling Jesus did not narrow down the list of suspects (contrast John 13:25-28). This emphasized a sentiment expressed by the psalmist's lament, "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me" (Psalm 41:9). Most certainly, Jesus knew that the betrayal would indeed come from within their group.

But even with the treachery, the betrayal does not stop God's plans, for Jesus declares: "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him." Jesus affirms the divine certitude of his death by referring to what "is written" about him, which is a reference to the Suffering Servant prophecies (Isaiah 42-53). Here Jesus drives home the truth that the Scriptures have prophesied the coming of a slain messiah.

Then Jesus sternly warned that his betrayer would not be allowed to dodge the consequences of his rebellion either (see Acts 1:15-20). In the terrible judgment he would face, Judas could not argue "I wasn't warned!" Jesus lamented Judas's choice and the loss of his beloved friend.

Thus Matthew 16:24 presents both the human and the divine sides of this event. From the divine side or point of view, Judas's treachery was predicted in Scripture and was part of the plan of God. But from the human point of view, Judas was guilty of a base crime and was completely responsible for what he did. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not in conflict, even though we may not always be able to understand how they work together to fulfill God's will. In verse 25, Judas addressed Jesus with the same form of question as the other disciples, except that he used the title "Rabbi" rather than Lord. While this was an honorary title for exceptional teachers of the law (23:7-8), when applied to Jesus it missed the heart of his identity – Judas is the only disciple in the Gospel of Matthew to refer to Jesus this way (see 26:49). Judas may have believed that Jesus was a wise teacher, but there is no record that he confessed Jesus as Lord.

Judas maintained his charade of loyalty to the very end. Knowing full well that he was the one, he still asked, "Surely you don't mean me?" But in true prophetic fashion, Jesus threw off the cover to reveal Judas's wicked betrayal. If Judas thought he had successfully hidden his evil work, he found out what he should have known all along: nothing can be hidden from the Lord.

Although Jesus made it clear to Judas he knew about his plan of betrayal, Judas would betray him anyway. The chief priest and elders had previously planned to wait until after the weeklong feast in order to avoid any riots (Matthew 26:5). However, perhaps Judas, feeling exposed, accelerated his plans to betray Jesus that very night (Matthew 26:45-47).

II. Passover and the Kingdom (Matthew 26:26-30) "Institution of the Lord's Supper"

According to scholars, it was after Judas had left the room that Jesus initiated something new, the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-34). He took two elements from the Passover feast, the unleavened bread and the cup, and He used these to picture His own death. The broken bread pictured His body given for the sins of the world. This is a new symbol of God's miraculous salvation to be remembered and shared by the community of believers.

The "fruit of the Vine," (Matthew 26:29) pictured His blood shed for the remission of sins. The blood of the Passover lamb had protected the Israelites from God's final plague (Exodus 12:13), and blood was later sprinkled on the people as they entered a new relationship with God. However, nowhere was it suggested that the people should drink the blood. This practice was explicitly forbidden for any animal (Leviticus 17:10-14).

So while symbolism of being covered in the blood of the Lamb persists, ingesting the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" speaks to an inner change, not only an outer show (compare Isaiah 53:11-12; Romans 5:15).

Now, the covenant in Exodus required obedience to God and strict loyalty to him alone (Exodus 20:1-6), which the Israelites proved unable to do. The prophesied new covenant would be

different from the one their ancestors entered into at Sinai (see Jeremiah 31:31-34). This new covenant was enacted by the shedding of Jesus' blood.

The biblical text here does not indicate that anything special or mysterious happened to these two elements. They remained bread and the "fruit of the vine," but they now conveyed a deeper meaning, the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

A teenager said, "I asked Jesus if he loved me? And he stretched out his arms and died."

The Lord's Supper reminds us to "look ahead" for Christ's return. And we are to observe this supper until He comes (1 Corinthians 1:26). Important to remember! The Passover pointed ahead to the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). The Lord's Supper announces that this great work has been accomplished.

As we are reminded in Matthew 26:29, Jesus Himself added the note of future glory in the kingdom. Though he did eat bread, fish and honey after his resurrection, there is no record that he drank the "fruit of the Vine." Even though He faced the rejection of his nation and the suffering of the cross, he was looking ahead to the kingdom that would be established because of his sacrifice.

There were traditionally four cups drunk at the Passover feast, each cup relating to one of the four promises of God in Exodus 6:6-7: "I will bring you out...I will free you from being slave to (the Egyptians)...I will redeem you...I will take you as my own people." The third cup associated with "I will redeem you" was typically a benediction. So Jesus likely offered his own "thanks" in place of a more traditional blessing with the third. The "cup of thanks-giving" named in 1 Corinthians 10:16 further suggests that the third cup is in view.

The Passover Meal ended with singing, traditionally from the Hallel Psalms 113-118. These songs exalted the Lord as the one true God of all the nations, among other praises. Imagine our Lord being able to sing praises to God in the face of rejection, suffering and death.

Conclusion

Jesus' life was given in sacrifice for the sins of humanity, washing us clean in his blood so that our sins are forgiven, never to be brought against us. One last Passover with his closest friends would mark the beginning of a new Lord's Supper that empowers Christian worship to this day. We participate together in remembrance and thanksgiving knowing that we are part of a body in a new covenant with God, forgiven of sins through the body and blood of Jesus. What the prophets dreamed of is the life that we today have been given in Christ. So every bite of bread or sip of the fruit of the Vine connects us to the past, present, and future of God's story.

The late Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, chaplain of the United States Senate, said that he called a minister friend in another denomination. When Dr. Ogilvie asked to speak with his friend, the secretary said, "He can't come to the telephone now, he's celebrating."

Dr. Ogilvie said, “Well, I’m all for that. But what is he celebrating at this hour of the morning?”

And the secretary said, “He’s celebrating Holy Communion!”

I like that! That’s also what we do when we participate in the Lord’s Supper with our fellow believers.

Action Plan

1. What is your understanding of the connection between Passover and the Lord’s Supper?
2. How do you prepare yourself to eat the Lord’s Supper and do you feel that your preparation honors Jesus? Please explain!
3. What memories of Christ do you focus on when eating the Lord’s Supper?

Resources for this Lesson

1. “2021-2022 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Series, International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching,” pages 273-280.
2. “The NIV Application Commentary, Matthew” by Michael J. Wilkins, pages 823-826; 831-838.
3. “Be Loyal, Matthew,” by Warren W. Wiersbe, pages 240-242.

Dr. Hal Brady is a retired pastor who continues to present the Good News of Jesus Christ and offer encouragement in a fresh and vital way through Hal Brady Ministries (halbradyministries.com).

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Resurrection of the King

Spring Quarter: God Frees and Redeems

Unit 2: Liberating Gospels

Sunday school lesson for the week of April 17, 2022

By Dr. Hal Brady

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Key Verse: Matthew 28:10

Lesson Aims

4. List facts of Jesus’ first post-resurrection appearance in Matthew’s account.
5. Compare and contrast that account with those of the other Gospels.
6. Sing with fellow classmates “Because He Lives” as an act of communal worship.

If you ever go into an old cemetery and look around, more often than not you will find one heading on many of the monuments: “Here lies.” This wording will usually be followed by the name, the date of death and perhaps the praise of the good qualities of the deceased. But how different is the epitaph on the tomb of Jesus! It is neither written in gold nor carved in stone. It is spoken by the mouth of an angel and is the precise opposite of what is put on all other tombs: “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said” (Matthew 28:6).

Today is Resurrection Sunday, when Christians around the world focus attention on a Sunday 2,000 years ago. On that day “everything” changed, and the world has never been the same. “He is not here; he has risen...,” the angel said.

Lesson Context

Jesus’ followers had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel (Luke 24:19-21), but he had been brutally executed at the hands of the Jewish leaders and Roman officials. And ominous events had accompanied his death. A deep darkness covered the land, the curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom, and an earthquake had split rocks and opened graves in the area (see Matthew 27). The manner in which Jesus died led a Roman centurion and other guards to acclaim Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 27:54).

Matthew 28:1-10 is the first of four resurrection narratives in the Gospels (see Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20). These all paint the same picture in broad strokes: Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead. The overarching truth of these three events guides each writer, even when they differ on details. And that differing on the details of the resurrection narratives should bring us comfort. They indicate that the accounts are not the product of a conspiracy created by a group focused on getting their stories straight. The resurrection narratives complement one another as they affirm that witnesses saw an empty grave and the risen Savior.

And every Gospel account counters the disinformation and lies of the chief priests and Pharisees that resulted after Jesus’ resurrection. Simply stated, the Jewish leaders feared that Jesus’ disciples would steal the body from the grave and then claim Jesus was alive. The religious leaders had convinced Pilate to authorize guards to be placed at the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66).

I. The Empty Tomb (Matthew 28:1-7)

Matthew left off the crucifixion narrative with Joseph of Arimathea wrapping the body of Jesus in burial clothes and placing him in Joseph’s own tomb. Nicodemus had aided Joseph in placing Jesus in the tomb on Friday without any ceremony – the Sabbath and its rest fast approached with sunset Friday (John 19:38-42).

Matthew begins his narrative of the resurrection scenes by recounting how certain women came to the tomb after the Sabbath. Jesus repeatedly said he would be raised on the third day (Matthew 16:21, 17:23; 20:19). Keeping in mind that the Old Testament regularly reckoned as part of a day as a whole day. We understand that Jesus was in the tomb for a part of three days. Dying at

approximately 3 p.m. on Friday, he was placed in the tomb before sundown (day one). He remained in the tomb all day Saturday (day two) and from sundown Saturday until his resurrection on Sunday morning (day 3). Thus, he was raised on the third day, as he prophesied.

The women arrived on Sunday, not out of morbid curiosity or even simple mourning, but with spices to continue preparation of Jesus' body for burial (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1).

“Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” are the two women who have key roles in Matthew's passion narrative. In contrast to the apostles, the women were present at Jesus' crucifixion (Matthew 27:50-56) and saw where he was buried (Matthew 27:57-61). Mary Magdalene was a follower of Jesus from the early days of his ministry. Jesus had delivered her from a terrifying case of demon possession (Luke 8:2). We also remind ourselves that Magdalene is not a surname in the modern sense. Rather, it designates this particular Mary as being “from Magdala.”

The other Mary was the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 27:56) and possibly the wife of Clopas (John 19:25). Though the other Gospels name additional women (Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10), we are told that Matthew may have focused on these two because of their prominence among those of Jewish background who first read his Gospel.

Prior to verse 2, we need to keep in mind that an earthquake had already occurred at Jesus' death (Matthew 27:51). God's presence or work was sometimes accompanied by grand disruptions of nature (examples: Exodus 19:16-19; Acts 16:26). Those who did not know that God was present would be terrified in the face of nature's fury without realizing that the far more terrifying Lord of the universe was present.

In verse 2, another earthquake now rocks the Jerusalem area, apparently before sunrise. While not uncommon for this region, this second earthquake surrounds the supreme supernatural event, the resurrection of Jesus. Quoting Cornelius a Lapide, the scholarly A.T. Robertson said, “The earth, which trembled with sorrow at the death of Christ as it were leaped for joy at His Resurrection.”

The conjunction “for” that begins the phrase “for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven” (28:2) suggests that the earthquake accompanies the appearance of the angel or is the means used by the angel to roll the stone away or perhaps the angel's moving the stone causes the earthquake. The miraculous conception, birth, and infancy of Jesus were superintended by an angel of the Lord (1:20-21; 2:13, 19), so it is not surprising that an angel of the Lord now superintends the resurrection, thusly framing Matthew's story of the divine message God gives to his people in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. As in the infancy narrative, this angel is one of God's privileged messengers, perhaps Gabriel, who seems to have a special role in announcements (see Luke 1:11-20, 26-38).

Stones used to close tombs were usually disk shaped and extremely heavy. For added difficulty in accessing “the tomb,” those guarding it had placed a seal on the stone (Matthew 27:65-66).

Matthew alone relates that as the angel of the Lord rolls away the stone, he sits on it. The stone that was sealed by the guards to assure that the body of Jesus would remain in the crypt now becomes the seat of triumph for the angel. The stone is rolled away, not to let the risen Jesus out but to let the women in to witness the fact of the empty tomb.

The “angel’s appearance” was similar to Jesus’ own during the transfiguration (compare Matthew 17:2). The angel’s physical appearance clearly marked him as a supernatural being and caused “the guards” great fear (compare 17:5-6). When the guards see the angel, they are so afraid that they shake and become “like dead men.” Now, these guards are battle-hardened veterans, used to facing fearful situations, but nothing has prepared them for this encounter. After the angel speaks to the women, the guards hurriedly go into the city to report to the chief priests.

Earlier in Matthew, an angel had told Joseph not to be fearful about the events around Jesus’ conception and birth (Matthew 1:20). Now, even though the guards – whom we would expect to be lions of courage – were incapacitated, the women in verse 5 were called “to not be afraid.” This angel was potentially a much more frightening presence than the guards. The women’s reaction to this exhortation is not immediately revealed (not until 28:8).

These women have come for Jesus in whom they placed their hopes of messianic deliverance, but who is now merely the One who was crucified. Matthew has demonstrated the power of the cross, and he does not negate that. The women are seeking Jesus as the one who was crucified, but he is no longer in that state. He is not there as the crucified One.

In verse 6, the angel said, “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.” This is the first explicit notice that Jesus “has risen.” The New Testament contains no accounts of Jesus’ resurrection per se. Instead there are records of disciples finding the tomb empty and encountering the resurrected Jesus (examples: Matthew 28:9; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Those serve as part of the validation that the event occurred, even though no one was present to observe it.

Paul’s letters consistently emphasize the Father’s role in raising the Son (examples: Roman 6:4; Galatians 1:1; compare Acts 5:30). The Son had trusted the Father and submitted to the Father’s will even to the point of death (Matthew 26:42). As a result, the Father had exalted the Son.

Nell Mohny (pronounced “money”) wrote a book a few years ago entitled “Don’t Put a Period Where God Put a Comma.” At the crucifixion, the world said, “There, that takes care of that. We silenced him. We stopped him. So put a period there.”

But God said, “No, that’s not a period. It’s only a comma. It’s not over! I’ve got a resurrection for you.”

And, in that resurrection, God validated Jesus.

In 6b, the angel said, “Come and see the place where he lay.” The emphasis on the empty tomb counters any notion that Jesus’ followers were only experiencing Christ’s spiritual presence. Jesus’ resurrection involved the coming to life again of his physical body – even though that body was changed (see 1 Corinthians 15:35-53). Jesus had been dead for three days, but he was alive again. “The place where Jesus lay” was vacant!

“Come and see!” was followed by “Go and tell!” We must not keep the resurrection to ourselves. The angel then instructed the women to go immediately and tell Jesus’ disciples about this remarkable news and tell them that they will see him in Galilee. The expression “his disciples” probably refers to the Eleven. They will go to Galilee to spend concentrated time with their resurrected Lord who will clarify his role in salvation history in relationship to the arrival and nature of the kingdom of God and so prepare them for their leadership in the church (Luke 24:44-47; Acts 1:3).

One of the most important perspectives of the women here is that God uses them as witnesses not only to the central redemptive act of history, Jesus’ death on the cross, but also to his resurrection. Since the women were present for Jesus’ death on the cross and his burial by Joseph of Arimathea, they can verify that he was truly dead, not just unconscious. Several of them witnessed the sealing of the tomb, and they are the first witnesses of the empty tomb and the resurrected Jesus.

So Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were not called to testify that Jesus’ body was gone, which anyone could see by looking in the tomb as they had. Instead they carried the much more wonderful and astounding message that Jesus “has risen from the dead!” And from this point forward the resurrection of Jesus would be the heart of the church’s proclamation (example: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Galilee was the location of Jesus’ boyhood, but even more importantly the central location of his earthly ministry. Now Galilee continues as a central place of his ascended ministry. This fulfills Jesus’ own prophecy that after he was raised, he would go before them to Galilee (Matthew 26:32). Jesus will appear to his disciples over the course of about a week in Jerusalem until they can fully comprehend the fact of his resurrection. Then they go to Galilee where he appears to them over the course of about 30 days.

II. The Risen Lord (Matthew 28:8-10)

In obedience, the women hurried away in a mixture of emotion. Their fear likely stemmed both from awe of their contact with the angel and the magnitude of what they had heard. But they were also “filled with joy” that was sweeping away the grief of previous days. This great joy actually propelled them to run on their mission “to tell his disciples about Jesus.”

As though the honor of announcing the angel’s words was not enough, the women were met by Jesus himself! Their faithfulness to him was rewarded in his faithfulness and care for them.

“Greetings” can also be translated “rejoice” (example: Matthew 5:12). This ordinary greeting which these women must have heard Jesus utter on many occasions now prompts them to fall at his feet to “worship” him. The presence of the risen Jesus turns their fear into worship.

The woman’s actions on encountering Jesus make two very important points. Taking hold of Jesus’ feet shows that Jesus was present physically, having experienced a bodily resurrection (Matthew 28:6b). He was not a hallucination, vision or phantom.

Second, they “worshipped” Jesus, and Jesus accepted that “worship.” The Old Testament Scriptures make clear that worship belongs to God alone (example: Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 8:19). Neither angels nor apostles allowed people to worship them. The women’s actions signaled that they rightly believed Jesus was God in the flesh.

The women are probably still afraid because of the extraordinary events they have just encountered and the appearance of Jesus escalates their apprehension. Events are unfolding at a pace that outstrips their ability to cope. So Jesus calms their fear by repeating the same words of comfort from the angel (“Do not be afraid”), but he also repeats a charge from the angel: “Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there they will see me.”

As we see, Jesus switches from “disciples” to “my brothers.” This may simply be a stylistic variation to refer to the Eleven, or it may indicate the larger group of disciples, who also will witness the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:6). And this latter may explain the reaction of “some” who doubt (Matthew 28:17).

Conclusion

A family was watching a movie of the life of Jesus on television. Their 6-year-old daughter was deeply moved as the movie-maker realistically portrayed Jesus’ crucifixion and death. Tears ran down the little girl’s face as they took him from the cross and lay him in a burial tomb. She watched as a guard was placed outside the tomb. And then suddenly a big smile broke out on her face. She bounced upon the arm of the chair and said with great anticipation, “Now comes the good part!”

Now comes the good part, indeed! At the center of the Christian faith is the affirmation that Jesus rose from the dead. This is the testimony of women who saw the empty tomb and who encountered the resurrected Jesus. We can trust their words and we can live in the light of the message they were given. Said the angel, “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said” (Matthew 28:6). Hallelujah!

Action Plan

4. Do displays of natural destruction cause you to fear God? Why or why not?
5. How does your belief in the resurrection of Christ influence your daily life?
6. What prevents you from running to tell others the news of Jesus’ resurrection?

Resources for this lesson

4. “2021-2022 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Series, International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching,” pages 281-288.
5. “The NIV Application Commentary, Matthew” by Michael J. Wilkins, pages 936-942.
6. “Be Loyal, Matthew,” by Warren W. Wiersbe, pages 263-266.

Dr. Hal Brady is a retired pastor who continues to present the Good News of Jesus Christ and offer encouragement in a fresh and vital way through Hal Brady Ministries (halbradyministries.com).

Fighting Decision Fatigue

By Anne Bosarge, *Director of Leadership Strategies and Local Church Resources*

Do you have decision fatigue? If you're exhausted after making decisions, procrastinating, impulsive, or indecisive, it may be because you're experiencing decision fatigue. Psychologists have discovered a correlation between the quality of decisions and the number of decisions that must be made in a short period of time. The more decisions you are required to make, the lower the quality of your decisions.

Leaders stuck in a season of decision fatigue will make increasingly poorer and poorer quality decisions. Their focus shifts from long-term outcomes to short-term efficiency. They begin to do just what is needed to get by and sacrifice what is best but requires more investment, time, or resources.

How can you make higher quality decisions in a world that changes so fast? How can you prevent yourself from suffering decision burn-out? Use DECIDE, an approach to problem solving that adapts as conditions shift and keeps you focused on the end result, even as you make short-term adjustable plans. We often experience decision fatigue when the path we thought would take us to the destination falls short. When that happens, we are forced to make another decision about what to do next. When we place too much certainty in our plans, we find ourselves discouraged and exhausted when they fail. DECIDE helps you create flexible plans with a defined end result you can commit to.

Step 1 – Define the Problem

Accurately defining the problem is the most important part of the problem solving/decision making process! When we fail to clearly define the problem, we waste time, energy, and effort pursuing a solution that won't solve the actual problem. Look for root causes and broken systems.

Step 2 – End Result

Start with the end in mind. What do you want to see happen in this situation? What is God's purpose and goal? To end up in the right place, you must know where you are and where you want to be. The distance made between the problem and the end result is the gap you need to fill with the path you devise.

Step 3 – Current Reality

It's time to get real. This is where we own 100 percent of the results for where we are – no blaming or justifying. How did we get here? Why did we get here? What got us off track? What are the facts of the current reality? What is the current reality of our problem?

Step 4 – Investigate

Get curious! Wonder about and wander around the problem! Take your time and don't rush this step. Explore things you haven't thought about before; be inventive and creative. Push past assumptions. When we operate by assumptions, we allow past experience to drive future possibilities. This keeps us trapped in a cycle of ineffective problem solving and decision fatigue.

Step 5 – Determine Your Path

“In light of my past experience, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing for me to do?” (Andy Stanley in “Ask It.”) Determine the actions that will lead you step-by-step toward your desired end result. Create a timeline for implementation but don't be married to the plan. Be committed to the destination and flexible in the implementation.

Step 6 – Execute and Evaluate

As you implement your plan, it's important to monitor for signs of success.

Experiencing success? Learn from it! What went well? What did you learn? What was surprising? What could you improve for next time?

Not seeing strong signs of success? Are you making assumptions in your action steps? Do you have a realistic timeline?

Has something different happened since you created the plan? Are your expectations unrealistic? What can you adjust to get a better result?

Not seeing any signs of progress or resolution? There is probably an underlying root cause you did not discover or address in your first plan. Revisit the problem and redefine.

Adjust the path based on your new learnings and continue down the path toward your end result.

Ready to battle decision fatigue? DECIDE with the system that helps you evaluate and adjust the path while consistently staying committed to the end result. Instead of making a new decision with every failure or shift in circumstances, simply reevaluate and adjust the path leading to your end result.

Anne Bosarge serves as the Conference's Director of Leadership Strategies and Local Church Resources. Email her at anneb@sgaumc.com.

Why John Wesley never wrote "Notes on the Old Testament"

JOHN WESLEY MOMENTS

DAVE HANSON

John Wesley wrote "Notes on the New Testament" which, along with his "Forty Standard Sermons" and the Church of England's "Articles of Religion," form the theological foundation of the Methodist Church. Many urged him to also write "Notes on the Old Testament," but he never did so. Why?

Wesley gave three reasons for not writing this document:

1. Others have written on this topic in an adequate way.
2. If I undertook this major project it would take away massive amounts of time from my major mission in life which is to be an evangelist.
3. There is a lot about the Old Testament which I do not understand.

These reasons give us insight into the nature of this great Christian leader. He was realistic and practical-minded. He was focused in his response to God's call on his life. He was humble and honest.

The Rev. Dave Hanson is a retired pastor and John Wesley scholar.

Meet Gaston

By Rev. Garth Duke-Barton, *Conference Secretary for Global Ministries*

As part of my role as the Conference Secretary for Global Ministries I have the privilege of researching and highlighting missionaries who might otherwise go unnoticed.

Gaston Nkulu Ntambo is based in Luena, Angola, where he serves as a pilot and mechanic with the Wings of the Morning Aviation ministry in the North Katanga Conference. The ministry

provides transportation in hard-to-reach areas of Africa, especially in emergency situations. Recently there was an outbreak of measles. This is what he told me via email:

“Measles entered the town of Manono, a town of about 400,000 people with only about 5 percent of the locals previously vaccinated. The town was averaging about 40 deaths each day and mostly children. I pushed myself in very difficult weather to get the medicine to Manono town. I flew a total of three times but it is all gone this weekend. Bishop Mande promised to reach out to UMCOR for help. The medicine I flew came from a mining company and the Catholic Church. We hope to do more flights next week. My wife Jeanne and I are very much looking forward to hearing back from you and sharing with you the work that the Lord is doing for our people through Wings of the Morning flight ministry.”

Gaston is married to Jeanne Kabove Ntambo, also a GBGM missionary. They have five children: Andy Nkulu, Lorree Nkulu, Gabriel Kahenga, Noah Kabove, and Eileen. Gaston’s father is retired Bishop Ntambo Nkulu of the North Katanga Conference. Gaston is a member of a local United Methodist church in Luena.

Please be in prayer for Gaston, Wings of the Morning Aviation, and, if possible, support this vital ministry, which will be one of the recipients of the 2022 South Georgia Annual Conference special offering. For more information about the Annual Conference special offering, visit www.sgaumc.org/specialoffering. Congregations are encouraged to send and present their offering during Annual Conference’s June 5 opening worship service.

Rev. Garth Duke-Barton, pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church in Jesup, also serves as Conference Secretary for Global Ministries.

Retired Clergy Birthdays – April 2022

- 4/01 – Ed Chance: PO Box 524; Wrens, GA 30833
- 4/01 – Danny Treadway: 1417 Peabody Dr.; Maryville, TN 37803
- 4/03 – Jennifer Sherling: 2447 Tuxedo Place; Albany, GA 31707
- 4/05 – O.C. Dean, Jr.: 265 Three Oaks Dr.; Athens, GA 30607
- 4/05 – Kay Stanaland: PO Box 905; Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
- 4/07 – Jim Hamlin: 322 S. Houston Springs Blvd.; Perry, GA 31069
- 4/08 – Terry DeLoach: 209 Dixie St.; Brooklet, GA 30415
- 4/09 – Sandra Henry: 111 Laurel Overlook; Canton, GA 30114
- 4/09 – Glenn McCranie: PO Box 493; Grandy, NC 27939
- 4/12 – Tim Bagwell: 192 Barrington Hall Dr.; Macon, GA 31220
- 4/12 – Gerald Goodman: 1572 Fluker Kiel Rd.; Coffeetown, AL 36524
- 4/15 – Leigh Ann Raynor: 212 Torrington Blvd.; Thomasville, GA 31757
- 4/16 – Nick Hazelton: 517 Ferncliff Terrace; Macon, GA 31204
- 4/16 – Wesley Kaylor: 855 Chokey Rd.; DeSoto, GA 31743

4/16 – Barbara Nelson: 1106 Merrill Dr.; Dublin, GA 31021
4/16 – Tom Nichols: 414 Cardinal St.; Pooler, GA 31322
4/16 – Jimmy Sharp: 2225 Teate Rd.; Vienna, GA 31092
4/18 – Frances Howell: PO Box 658; Midway, GA 31320
4/24 – Willie Lucas: 607 Holloway Ave.; Albany, GA 31701
4/27 – B.J. Funk: PO Box 187; Chula, GA 31733
4/28 – Bert Alexander: PO Box 964; Pine Mountain, GA 31822
4/28 – Carol Smith: 1931 4th Street Lane NW; Hickory, NC 28601
4/29 – Sam Watkins: 1937 E. DeRenne Ave., Savannah, GA 31406
4/30 – Don Kea: 5300 Zebulon Rd., Garden Home 20; Macon, GA 31210

OBITUARIES

Lt. Col. William D. Clark, USA, Ret.

Lt. Col. William D. Clark, 69, passed away peacefully on Friday, March 11, 2022, at St. Joseph's Hospital, surrounded by his loving family to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Don was born in Biloxi, Mississippi, the eldest son of Billy and Eva Clark. He was raised and educated in Jackson, Ohio and later attended Ohio University. He went on to receive his Masters in both Education and Theology, as well as a Doctorate in Ministry.

In 1974, Don married the love of his life, the former Beverly Graves of Jackson, Ohio. They have five children and 11 grandchildren. Don retired in Savannah, GA as a Lieutenant Colonel from the United States military after 27 years of service. During that time, he also served as a United Methodist minister and educator in the public school system.

Don's life was exemplary of service: to God, his family, and country. His greatest service, though, was in his discipleship and the many people who came to know Jesus through Don's ministry. Don enjoyed spending time with his family, his grandchildren most of all. He loved traveling; in particular, traveling to Florida, annual family trips to Myrtle Beach, and family trips to Disney. He enjoyed playing and watching all sports, but most of all rooting for the Ohio State Buckeyes. His family will miss his big presence in their lives but rejoices knowing he is in peace and resting as the good and faithful servant he was.

Don was preceded in death by his father and best friend Billy Clark.

Don is survived by his beloved wife, Beverly; son, Scott Clark (Crissy); daughter, Kellie Ruiz (Frank); daughter, Heather O'Rand (Matthew); son, Joshua Clark (Shelley); son, Donnie Clark (Amy); grandchildren, Ryleigh Clark, Griffin Clark, Zoey Clark, Bella O'Rand, Ethan Ruiz, Zander Ruiz, Harper Clark, Kallie Clark, Miles O'Rand, Kayden Clark, and Isaac Clark; mother, Eva Clark; brother, Doug Clark (Lale); sister, Kathy Henderson (Earl); sister, Dianna Goff (Randy); and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, March 19, 2022, at Fox & Weeks Funeral Directors, Hodgson Chapel. Burial followed in Oak Hill Cemetery in Richmond Hill.

Rev. B.G. Roberts, Sr.

Rev. Beaufort G. Roberts, Sr., 89, entered eternal rest Saturday, March 19, 2022.

Rev. Roberts leaves to cherish his memories a loving wife, Mrs. Eunice Geraldine Williams Roberts; son Marcus Horace Roberts; daughters Pastor Angela Roberts Jones, Marcella Roberts Charles (Boisy); sisters Jeanette Moie, Beverly Hamilton; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held Saturday, March 26, 2022, at St. Andrews United Methodist Church in Sylvania. Interment followed at Friendship Memorial in Sylvania.

Rev. Wallace Grable Page, Jr.

In loving memory of Reverend Wallace Grable Page, Jr., who passed away Tuesday March 22, 2022, at his home in Beaufort, South Carolina.

A memorial service was held Sunday March 27 at Carteret Street United Methodist Church in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Reverend Grable Page served as a minister to several churches for 57 years in the South Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Reverend Page touched many lives and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He was known for giving out little pocket crosses to who he came into contact with.

Reverend Page is preceded in death by his wife Barbara Jean Vining Page and Juanita Collins Page and survived by his wife Barbara (Bobbie) Page, sons Dr. G. Andrew Page (Sharon), Barry Page (Andrea), granddaughters Morgan Faunce (Greg), Lauren, and Summer. Step children Marcia Pace (Alan) and Tra Taylor (Paula), brother Dennis (Sandy) of Texas, two nephews and several cousins.

Rev. Anne Bridgers and Rev. Bryson Williams officiated.

Rev. Robert Wayne Poston

Rev. Robert Wayne Poston, 76, passed away March 28, 2022, at his residence.

The Tennessee native was a Congregational Methodist Pastor serving in Louisiana, Texas, and Georgia before joining the South Georgia United Methodist Conference in the 70s and retired pastoring from Black Creek United Methodist Church in Newington. Robert loved music, genealogy, and was a loyal Tennessee Volunteers fan. Above all else he loved his family, spoiling his children and grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Martha Wayne Powell Poston; son, Timothy James Poston; and brother, Franklin Poston.

Survivors include his wife, Joyce M. Poston; children, Missy Lee (Steve), Chris Poston (Mandy), Rob Spence (Juper), Chuck Spence (Hazel), and Shelley Spence (Jake Dent); 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; siblings, Ralph Poston, Marilyn Hickey, Nancy Brasher, and Ann Hartman; and a number of nieces and nephews.

Services were held Friday, April 1, 2022, at Black Creek United Methodist Church.

Interment followed in the church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to Unto the Least of His, PO Box 15874, Savannah, GA 31416 or online at, totheleast.com.

Scripture Readings – April 5 edition

April 10

Passion/Palm Sunday

Palm Service

Luke 19:28-40

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 (UMH 839)

Passion Service

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16 (UMH 764)

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

April 11

Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 36:5-11 (UMH 771)

Hebrews 9:11-15

John 12:1-11

April 12

Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 71:1-14 (UMH 794)

1 Corinthians 1:18-31
John 12:20-36

April 13

Wednesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 70 (UMH 793)
Hebrews 12:1-3
John 13:21-32

April 14

Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10) 11-14
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 (UMH 837)
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

April 15

Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22 (UMH 752)
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19:42

April 16

Holy Saturday

Job 14:1-14
Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16 (UMH 764)
1 Peter 4:1-8
Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42

April 17

Easter Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (UMH 839)
Acts 10:34-43
1 Corinthians 15:19-26
John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12



Events in the South Georgia Conference – 4/5/2022 edition

Online Basic Lay Servant Training – April 12, April 14, April 19, April 21

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. Basic LSM Training includes a basic foundation of the faith and an introduction to leadership. This training will be offered via Zoom. Registration fee for the class is \$25. For more information contact Anne Bosarge at abosarge@sgaumc.com.

United Methodist Men Spiritual Life Retreat – April 22-23

The South Georgia Conference's United Methodist Men will gather for their annual retreat April 22-23 at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island. Bishop James Swanson, episcopal leader of the Mississippi Conference and president of the General Commission of United Methodist Men, will be the featured speaker. The Goshen Travelers Praise Band will provide musical leadership. [Download brochure](#)

Basic ERT Training, Gray – April 30

A Basic ERT Training Course will be held Saturday, April 30 at Gray UMC. The ERT training will begin at 8 am. Lunch is included. For questions, please contact Rob Belknap at RWBelknap@cox.net or 478-397-8712.

Native American Ministries Sunday – May 1

Native American Ministries Sunday celebration is May 1, 2022. This offering funds urban ministries with Native Americans, scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist seminaries, and annual conference Native American ministries. [Download an UMCOR Sunday Pastor and Leader's Kit](#)

Magnolia Manor Sunday – May 8

Magnolia Manor is a South Georgia Conference ministry that serves older adults of all faiths in eight locations throughout South Georgia. On this Special Sunday, South Georgia United Methodists are asked to take up a special offering to support this vital ministry. To learn more about Magnolia Manor visit www.magnoliamanor.com.

Living Life to the Fullest: An Older Adult Retreat at Epworth By The Sea – May 16-19

This three-day retreat, held May 16-19 at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island, will be fun, informational and spiritual. [Housing Registration](#) / [Schedule](#)

Online Advanced Lay Servant Training – May 17, May 19, May 24, May 26

Lay Servant training is designed to educate those persons interested in stretching their faith to participate more fully in the ministries of the church. They have three main areas of focus: Leading, Caring, and Communicating. The advanced class, based on Cokesbury's book, "Each One a Minister," by William Carter is a study of the book of Ephesians and what it teaches us about how we are called to use our spiritual gifts. Advanced LSM Training includes learning how to put your spiritual gifts into service. This training will be offered via Zoom. You must complete all of the scheduled dates above to complete your training. To participate you will

need either a cell phone that will allow you to download the Zoom app (please do so ahead of time) or a laptop, a steady wi-fi connection, and a willingness to learn in a modern way. Registration fee for the class is \$25. (Note: Basic Lay Servant class must be completed before taking Advanced Class.) For more information contact Anne Bosarge at abosarge@sgaumc.com.