

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – JULY 19 EDITION

Cordele First UMC bridges gap between underserved community, healthcare

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Cordele First United Methodist Church recently hosted a health fair to help bridge the gap between healthcare providers and underserved people by bringing the two together for a three-day event.

From cholesterol screenings to COVID-19 tests and car seat checks, Cordele First UMC's health fair provided free care for those who need it most.

“Many people not in the Church think of the Church as only a place to praise God and to read the Bible,” said Rev. Tania Montero, associate pastor at Cordele First UMC. “I think this event was good to let people know that the Church is not only to praise the Lord and read the Bible, but also to serve the community.”

The church, which has both Anglo and Hispanic congregations, recognizes many in the community don't have access to needed healthcare. Fear and distrust are additional barriers to people receiving adequate care, said Rev. Larry Rollins, who serves as lead pastor. The church's outreach team wanted to reach out and serve the community.

“Because of the Hispanic part of our congregation, there's that connection and a closeness and the ability to say, ‘Here's part of our community that needs service,’” Rev. Rollins said. “Part of the idea was to be the Church and open the doors and say, not only are we here for services, but we love you and you're welcome and you're blessed.”

During the three-day health fair, which ran June 28-30, the Georgia Mobile Dental Van, Baptist Dental Mission, and several local dentists provided dental services to 93 patients, some who had never before had dental work done. Dozens had cavities filled and one patient had six teeth pulled.

Other services, including eye exams; COVID-19 tests; blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose level checks, were performed. Referrals to ophthalmologists, physical therapists, and other specialists were provided. In addition to medical assistance, education about how to open a bank account, legal advice about immigration, translation services, and free car seats were offered. Each family was given a box of food to take home and 445 meals were served during the event.

“The planning work, led by Rev. Tania Montero, was excellent and precise to what the Hispanic and general population of the area needed,” said Rev. Daniel Medina, pastor of Nueva Vida UMC, Warner Robins First UMC, and associate director of Hispanic Ministries in the Office of Connectional Ministries. He and his wife, Julie, along with Rev. Felipe Ricardo, pastor of El Faro UM Hispanic Ministry in Albany and Morgan Hispanic Church, served as volunteers and

translators. “I have seen many health fairs as a community leader in my years of ministry, but this fair was special. This event was not only extensive and very well organized, but you could also feel the love of Christ and the heart of pastor Tania, her Hispanic congregation, and the general congregation of Cordele First UMC church in every act and space offered. They are really the eyes, the hands, and the heart of Christ.”

Rev. Montero hopes the community sees Cordele First UMC as a place where everyone is welcome and loved and can receive what they need.

“I think it’s another way for the community to know us but also for the church to come together and work hand in hand. It’s another way to be united as a church.”

Bemiss UMC reaches out to community with hot dogs, prayers

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Hot dogs are synonymous with summer.

Long associated with baseball games and summer celebrations, hotdogs are now, at least in one South Georgia town, quickly becoming associated with a United Methodist church.

At Bemiss United Methodist Church in Valdosta, the last Saturday of each month is “Hot Dogs and Jesus” day. From about 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., folks can drive up to the church and receive a free hot dog with all the fixings, snacks, drinks, prayer, encouraging conversation, and fellowship.

What began almost as a whim has turned into full-fledged ministry. Since beginning “Hot Dogs and Jesus” in March, the church has had dozens of new visitors and a few have even decided to make Bemiss UMC their home.

But it’s not all about visitors and new members, said Rev. Jerry Hudson, pastor of Bemiss UMC. The congregation wanted to meet more people in the community and pray for their neighbors.

“We had been looking to do ministry outside the church, some sort of outreach beyond the church walls,” said Rev. Hudson. “We wanted to reach people face to face on a consistent basis to meet them and let them know we love them and are here for them.”

When he arrived at the church a little more than a year ago, Rev. Hudson found a congregation that was mostly older but still wanted to see the church grow and do new things.

“They wanted to see it alive and excited again,” he said of the Bemiss UMC members. “They like new ideas and new things and excitement. They like to see new people and they still had a lot of fire in them.”

After a new hot dog roller and bun warmer machine was found tucked away in the church, the ministry was launched. The church sits on a busy highway, and the idea was simple and inexpensive: cook hotdogs, offer them plus a few snacks and drinks for free, be friendly, and offer to pray with people.

The response was better than anyone expected, Rev. Hudson said.

“What has surprised us the most are the number of individuals and families who will pull through just to ask for prayer,” he said. “This has been a wonderful exercise in outreach and evangelism for our church, as our members are able to connect relationally with people in our community who we otherwise would never meet.”

Rudy Koop isn’t surprised so many drive up asking for prayers. He believes in the power of prayer and enjoys praying with people and for people. He’s had strangers share their worries, problems, and fears, and Koop prays with each one.

“God hears all prayers,” he said. “I let them know the power of prayer; it works wonders. They might not be answered today or tomorrow, but I believe all prayers are answered.”

Bemiss UMC member and “Hotdogs and Jesus” volunteer Lorelei White, who usually holds a sign that reads “Free Hotdogs” or “Free Prayer,” quickly jumped on board to help.

She’s seen the ministry invigorate the congregation while serving the community.

“This has definitely helped encourage our church to be more active in the community. I hope it will continue for as long as it can.”



Isle of Hope UMC VBS raises \$3,000 for Wesley Community Centers

By Kara Witherow, *Editor*

Mission work – serving the least, the last, and the lost – is integral to the Isle of Hope United Methodist Church congregation.

Whether youth, children, women, or men – all ministry groups are encouraged to be involved in missions.

Vacation Bible School is no exception, and the 200 children and 80 volunteers who attended the church’s recent VBS, held June 20-23, raised a total of \$3,115 for Wesley Community Centers, Inc. in Savannah. The children raised more than \$1,800 themselves and Isle of Hope UMC’s United Women in Faith chapter raised \$1,200.

“It was pretty amazing,” said Rev. Shannon Baxter, Isle of Hope UMC’s Minister of Missions and Outreach. For years the congregation has set a goal to be a 50-50 church, giving as much to missions as it spends on its regular operating budget. Encouraging and teaching children and youth to think similarly is part of the church’s Christian formation and education program.

“This helps everyone realize who we are as a church and what we feel is important,” he said. “It’s wonderful to see (our children) growing up into that and even making that a part of their own faith. That’s the ultimate goal.”

The children were enthusiastic about raising money, said Chrissy Ruehl, Isle of Hope UMC’s Minister of Children and Families. They raided piggy banks; did extra chores; checked under sofa cushions; asked parents, grandparents, and neighbors to contribute, and even set up lemonade stands to earn extra money.

Piggybacking on this year’s VBS theme, “Food Truck Party,” Ruehl and other VBS volunteers used scripture and Bible stories to teach children about food and also taught them practical, real-world examples of how to help others with food. In addition to raising more than \$3,000, the children made to-go bags full of fruit, granola bars, socks, tissues, and other necessities. They were given to Wesley Community Centers and others who work with Savannah’s homeless population.

“While we want to talk about God and teach really good theology, we also want to emphasize that being a Christian is so much more than knowing your Bible, it’s really living out the Bible stories,” Ruehl said.

Coming up in September: District Gatherings with Bishop Graves and Clergy Time Apart with author Tod Bolsinger

During three weeks in September, Bishop Graves will spend time in the districts visiting, talking with, and listening to clergy and laity. In these three weeks he wants to accomplish two things: to resource ways we can “restart” our focus on mission and to share relevant information that will help your church be equipped and informed about the South Georgia Conference. [More information](#)

And clergy, don't miss speaker Tod Bolsinger, author of “Canoeing the Mountains” and “Tempered Resilience,” who will join us Thursday, Sept. 15 for a Clergy Time Apart. Hosted by Bishop David Graves, we will meet from 10 a.m. until noon via Zoom. [More information and registration](#)

The Word Resurrects

Summer Quarter: Partners in a New Creation

Unit 2: The Word: The Agent of Creation

Sunday school lesson for the week of July 24, 2022

By Dr. Jay Harris

Lesson Scripture: John 11:17-27, 38-44

Jesus Prepares for His Seventh and Final Sign

In this unit we have been seeking a deeper understanding of the Word as “the agent of creation.” Each lesson has been uncovering another layer of who the Word is and what the Word does. Today’s lesson is entitled “The Word Resurrects.” Remember that John’s gospel is the gospel that presents the miracles of Jesus as a series of seven signs – each sign pointing to the Word made flesh and revealing an aspect of his nature. The presentations of these signs have been building as a crescendo. Today’s lesson presents the seventh and final sign.

Our scripture lesson begins:

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

This scripture begins with Jesus’ arrival to the tomb of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. The three were close friends of Jesus. It is Jesus’ first contact with a member of the family since he first heard that Lazarus was so gravely ill. The real beginning of the story happened four days earlier when Jesus was located a good distance away from Bethany and heard the news that Lazarus was ill and near death. Mary and Martha had sent word to him to come and heal Lazarus.

The problem was that Bethany was only two miles away from Jerusalem. When Jesus told the disciples that they were being summoned to Bethany, the disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” Jesus and the disciples had gotten a good distance away from Jerusalem because of the antagonism of the religious leaders. They were plotting to arrest him and put an end to him. Jerusalem represented extreme danger. None of this was lost on Jesus.

The strange thing was that 1) Jesus was committed to go to Bethany, and 2) he was in no hurry to get there. He, of course, was not simply procrastinating. He was not simply being cold and unfeeling toward his friends. In fact, John is careful to tell us how much Jesus loved this family.

So, the question is, if Jesus loved Lazarus, and loved Mary and Martha, why did Jesus delay? Jesus was waiting for Lazarus to die – and to be dead long enough to be beyond any hope of resuscitating him. The delay was designed to give Lazarus time to die, for the mourners to gather, and the stench of death to surround the tomb. Jesus intended to perform his greatest sign to date: to bring the dead to life.

This sign would reveal Jesus' divine glory as no other sign had before, but it would also bring the conflict between the religious leaders and Jesus to a head. Jesus could see the very near future when there would be no effort or means to escape his death as he had numerous times before. Going to Bethany, only two miles from Jerusalem, was to go to the center of the Jewish world, where his actions would have the greatest effect. It was also a very dangerous place. Thomas felt the impending doom of the moment when he said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:16) Jesus knew there was no going back after Bethany. Jesus was committed to perform this last sign.

Jesus Explained What He Was About to Do

When Jesus arrived, the first thing he had to hear was Martha's disappointment, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died..."

²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Martha was clearly disappointed that Jesus had not come to heal her brother, but she still held out hope that Jesus could pray and God would give him whatever he asked. Jesus told her that her brother would rise again. Martha said that she knew her brother would rise again in the resurrection at the end of time, which was a widely held Jewish belief at the time. (Matthew, Mark, and Luke confirm this belief by telling of a sect of Sadducees who came to Jesus to test him about the resurrection, which this particular Sadducee sect did not believe.) Martha believed Lazarus would be raised in a resurrection at the end of time, but that's not what Jesus meant when Jesus said that her brother would rise again. Jesus meant that Lazarus would rise again *that day*.

This is how Jesus began to communicate this truth to Martha. Jesus said to Martha: "I AM the resurrection and the life." In other words, resurrection is not some distant hope. Jesus himself was and is life and resurrection. Jesus held the keys to life and resurrection. This is one of seven "I AM" sayings in John's gospel. Below are the seven "I AM" sayings:

1. I AM the bread of life.

2. I AM the light of the world.
3. I AM the door.
4. I AM the good shepherd.
5. I AM the resurrection and the life.
6. I AM the way, the truth, and the life.
7. I AM the true vine.

Just as John presents seven signs, he also presents seven “I AM” sayings. Seven is the Jewish numerical symbol for perfection. In John’s gospel, when Jesus says “I AM,” there is an emphasis in the original Greek (ego eimi). Jesus is saying the words “I AM” when it was not necessary because the first-person singular would normally be understood. To emphasize “I AM” in this way connects the reader to the “I AM” of Exodus 3:14 – God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Jesus connected himself to the “I AM” who spoke through the burning bush. Every metaphor connected with these sayings reveals something about the great “I AM.”

So, when Jesus tells Martha, “I AM the resurrection and the life,” he wants her to put her trust in Jesus as the divine One who himself wields the power of resurrection and of life. This power belongs to him, and it is therefore his to give as lovingly and generously as he desires. Notice that Jesus is not just applying this power in the case of Lazarus. Here, Jesus is saying that *all those* who believe in him, even though they die, will live. *Everyone* who lives and believes in Jesus will never die.

Jesus asked Martha if she believed all this. She professed, right then and there, her belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the promised One. Notice that everything Jesus does, he does so to bring about belief, because all who believe in him become children of God, experience spiritual rebirth, and are ushered into eternal life.

Knowing what we know in the story, Jesus’ offer of eternal life comes at the cost of Jesus’ life. It is ironic to recall that when Jesus made the decision to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus to life, Jesus had consciously moved toward his own imminent arrest and death – death by crucifixion. As Jesus prepared to call Lazarus *out* from the tomb, Jesus was setting in motion the chain of events that would put Jesus *in* a tomb. None of this was lost on Jesus.

In John 11:28-37, we’re told that Mary, the other sister, came to Jesus weeping for her brother and lamenting that Jesus had not come earlier to heal her brother before he died. When Jesus saw Mary weeping and the community weeping with her, Jesus was profoundly moved, even disturbed in his spirit. When they approached the tomb, Jesus began to weep openly. Even though Jesus knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, the reality of death and grief and mourning hit him hard. He was greatly disturbed again when he drew near to the tomb and smelled the stench of death. Why wouldn’t he? In short time, Jesus would be taking the place of Lazarus, in a sense, when his own body would be placed in a tomb.

When we take in all this, we see the stark contrast between life and death. Jesus accepted the inevitability of his own death so that not only Lazarus could live, but we also, those who believe in Jesus, could live.

Jesus Raises the Dead to Life

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

John's gospel takes us to the tomb of Lazarus and describes the cave, the stone lying against it, and the smell of death. When Jesus ordered the stone to be removed, Martha reacted as anyone would. Jesus reassured her that she was about to see the glory of God. Jesus was just as capable as we are of praying silently, but Jesus prayed aloud so his audience would know that the power about to be displayed was coming from the unity of the Father and the Son expressed in prayer. Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" With these words, Jesus commanded Lazarus back to life. The Word made flesh is the Word that resurrects. Lazarus came out still wrapped in the cloths used to prepare a body for burial. Jesus then commanded the bystanders to unwrap Lazarus to release this man who was now alive.

This was Jesus' seventh sign. The resurrection of Lazarus did bring things to a head with the religious leaders just as Jesus knew it would. Jesus and the disciples went to a town on the edge of the desert wilderness to wait until the Passover festival which was near. With the Passover of the Jews being near, many went up from the country to Jerusalem to the temple to prepare themselves. John's gospel tells us that everyone was wondering where Jesus was. They were looking for Jesus. They were asking one another whether or not Jesus would dare step into Jerusalem: "Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?" Common sense told them that Jesus would stay away from the festival. Little did they know that Jesus was committed to his mission and destiny in Jerusalem. We're also told that the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should let them know, so that they might arrest him. (John 11:55-57)

Everything about the raising of Lazarus and the aftermath underscores the fact that this seventh sign of Jesus was to be his last. The raising of Lazarus was his climactic sign. This sign was a defining moment. With this being a sign, we need to consider where the sign points. A sign

always points outside itself to a larger reality. We know that the raising of Lazarus pointed to none other than Jesus' own resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is the larger reality that changed everything. The story of resurrection in the 11th chapter of John was intended to be a preview of the resurrection story that will come in the 20th chapter – Jesus' own resurrection.

Resurrection is essential to understanding the gospel. This cannot be emphasized enough. The gospel story without the resurrection is not just a story without its final chapter – it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ at all. Believing in the Word means embracing the resurrection as an essential truth. If we are to answer the call to be partners in a new creation, we must incorporate the truth of the resurrection into our theological view of life.

We are Easter people. We are people of hope and divine possibilities. We can die to self, and sin, and all short-term gratification because we take the long view. We live not for rewards on earth, but for rewards in heaven. We live for eternity because it has been promised to us by the Resurrection and the Life that believers, when they die, shall live again. So, in a way, believers never die, because they go on to live in eternity with God.

Eternity does not begin the moment we die. It begins the moment we become believers in Christ. In John's gospel, Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me *has* eternal life and does not come under judgment but *has passed* from death to life." (John 5:24) Eternal life becomes a present reality for believers in terms of their hope and in terms of their priorities.

The Apostle Paul said it another way in the 2nd chapter of Galatians: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." He could imagine his life being crucified with Christ, nevertheless understanding that he gets to go on living. He lives, but it is no longer he who goes on living, it is Christ living in him. Therefore, the life he now lives in his flesh, he lives by faith in the Son of God who loves him and who gave himself for him. The one who gave himself on the cross was raised to life, so that he could die and be raised to new life – not just in the hereafter, but in the here and now.

Do you have an Easter perspective? Is Easter a distant hope for you, or is it the starting point of your faith journey? Try reflecting on this question each day in this next week. When you are feeling despair, come back to this question.

Prayer

Lord God | Jesus announced that he is the resurrection and the life and that he holds the keys to life | Help us to believe in life as a gift – Jesus' gift to give – and the importance of a relationship with Jesus | That we may put all of ourselves into this relationship and live into this reality | Through Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, Amen.

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The Word Gives Peace

Summer Quarter: Partners in a New Creation

Unit 2: The Word: The Agent of Creation

Sunday school lesson for the week of July 31, 2022

By Dr. Jay Harris

Lesson Scripture: John 14:15-29

Jesus Prepares the Disciples for His Departure

As we have said before, John’s gospel is unique. One interesting feature in John’s gospel is how Jesus often explained the meaning of an event before it happened. When the event happens, we remember how Jesus foreshadowed it earlier in his ministry. We know something about it because Jesus already went into a deeper explanation of its significance earlier.

For instance, when we get to the Last Supper in John’s gospel, we do not hear the familiar “words of institution” that we hear in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where Jesus explains that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood. In John’s gospel, Jesus already went into a long explanation of this in chapter six after he fed the 5,000. He said, “I am the bread of life.” He uses the metaphor of eating and drinking to talk about how we incorporate Jesus and his sacrifice into our lives. When we get to the Last Supper in John’s gospel, not much is said about this because Jesus had already gone into a long explanation about it, and it did not need repeating. In place of this, John talks about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, which the other gospels do not discuss.

Likewise, Jesus taught about the resurrection and what it means for believers before his own resurrection occurred. He taught about it when he raised Lazarus back to life. We can put together the story of Jesus’ resurrection in John 20 with Jesus’ own teaching about the resurrection in John 11 where Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

In the same manner, John’s gospel does not include an account of Jesus’ ascension into heaven. The ascension story is a big climactic moment in the other gospels. Instead, in John’s gospel, Jesus goes into a long explanation of the implications of his ascension – much longer, in fact, than any of the other gospels. Jesus talked about the implications of the ascension *before* the

ascension occurred. He talked about it at the Last Supper and while they were departing to the place where Jesus would be arrested. This long discourse is found in John 14-16. It is often called Jesus' farewell discourse. It's as if he was starting his goodbyes early, before the crucifixion, before the resurrection, and before his ascension.

He had so much to tell them. When we talk about Jesus' ascension we are talking about two different matters. We are talking about 1) his departure from earth, and 2) his entrance into heaven from where he will reign until Jesus returns at the appointed time to bring his reign to completion. When Jesus departs, is the story over? Does it all go downhill from that point? No, things are just getting started good. When the Word became flesh and lived among the members of the human family, we know God had drawn near – Emmanuel – God with us. When Jesus departs, do things go back to the way they were before Jesus came into the world? The answer is no. There is greater intimacy with God to be experienced. How this happens is the subject of this lesson.

You Will Not Be Left Alone

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.”

When Jesus departs, we will not be left alone because Jesus will ask the Father to give the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. The Holy Spirit is “another Advocate” or mediating Presence of our Triune God. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. Jesus in John's gospel is giving us the full Trinitarian view of God.

¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

Jesus said that believers who love him and keep his commandments will receive the Holy Spirit. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit the way that believers can receive him. It is because the world “*neither sees him or knows him,*” Jesus said. If we are a believer, we know there is a difference between us and non-believers in the way we have come to know of God and experience God. The Holy Spirit accounts for this difference. Our non-believing friends do not understand why we believe what we believe. They have not come to this understanding – yet. God longs for them to believe, and this is why we are compelled to share our faith, which includes the way we experience Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples that they already knew the Holy Spirit because the Spirit had been abiding *with* them as they followed Jesus. Jesus promised that soon this same Spirit would come to live and be *in* each one of them.

How We Experience Jesus

¹⁸ “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will

know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

As Jesus was teaching his disciples in the Upper Room at the Last Supper, he knew they would be going through a lot very soon. Jesus would be taken from them when the authorities arrested him. They would run scared. They would witness his trial and then his crucifixion and death. They would be plunged into despair. Then they would hear of his resurrection. They would be reunited with Jesus after his resurrection, but only for a period of 40 days. Jesus would be taken away from them again when he ascended into heaven.

Before any of this started, Jesus reassured them that they would not be orphaned. As he did this, he told the disciples where he would ultimately be headed and what it would mean. In a little while, the world would no longer see him. On that day, the day of his ascension, the disciples will know that the Son has been reunited with the Father. Jesus described the reunion in the most intimate terms – “*you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.*”

So, this is not just about Jesus’ reunion with his Father, this is also about the disciples, after the ascension, being in Jesus, and Jesus being in them. Furthermore, this is not just about the disciples to whom Jesus was speaking. Jesus said, “*They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.*” As Jesus was reassuring his disciples that they would not be orphaned, he was also talking about other believers, including future believers. He said, “they.” “They” includes all those who love Jesus and have Jesus’ commandments and keep them.

In chapter 10 of John, when Jesus was telling the crowd that he was the Good Shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep, he said, “*I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*” (John 10:16) Jesus spoke of this again in his prayer in John 17. In this prayer, he says, “*I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*” (John 17:20-21). Who were these other sheep that did not belong to the fold yet, but would soon be brought into the flock? The other sheep were the Gentiles who would listen to the voice of Jesus and recognize it. If you are a believer, then all that Jesus was saying to the disciples also applies to you.

One of the disciples was still trying to picture how Jesus would continue to be with them when the world would be experiencing Jesus' physical absence from this earth. Jesus said those who love him and keep his word will be loved by his Father, and they (both the Father and the Son) will come to them and make their *home with them* – all this through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are taken into the trinitarian life of God and the trinitarian life of God comes to dwell in us – Jesus in the Father, believers in the Son, and the Son in believers, through the Holy Spirit.

So, not only will we not be orphaned, we will have the possibility of having the most intimate relationship with Jesus. We will know that Jesus lives – “*because I live, you also will live.*” We know he lives because his life enlivens, animates, empowers, and guides us in the life of faith. When Jesus lives in us, life is never the same.

Notice that the test for loving Jesus is keeping his word. *Whoever does not love me does not keep my words*, Jesus said. Our love cannot just be based on mere lip service or feelings. If you are married, you wouldn't have thought of leaving your beloved at the altar after the “I do” and then going your separate ways. It is the same in our relationship with Jesus. Will we be faithful 100% of the time in keeping his word? Of course we won't. But it is the effort of trying, and when we fail, asking for forgiveness, and all the while relying on him as we seek to keep his word. The “relying on him” part is everything. This is what a loving relationship with God looks like. This, the good and the bad, is where the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit is felt.

When the Word became flesh and dwelt within the human family on earth that was just part of the journey Jesus intended to make. That's the story of Jesus' gracious life on earth. After Jesus left the earth in his physical form, through the ascension, Jesus' desire is to complete the journey and come and dwell in receptive hearts through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Will Continue Their Teaching

²⁵ “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

Jesus told the disciples all these things while he was still physically with them, but the days of being with Jesus physically were about to come to an end. Had Jesus taught them everything? The answer is no. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would continue their teaching, and teach them everything. The Holy Spirit would also *remind* them of the many truths that Jesus taught. There was more to learn, and they would need reminders of what they had already learned.

Later in the conversation, in John 16:12-13, Jesus provided an additional insight into why their teaching would need to continue beyond the time of his ascension. He said, “*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*”

The first point Jesus made was that the disciples could not bear all that Jesus still had to teach them. They could not bear it because a believer's mind can take in only so much at any given time in his or her life. They could not bear it, also because they were not mature enough spiritually at the time to receive or understand a lot of what Jesus had to teach them.

The second point Jesus made was about the things that are to come. The disciples would not be able to understand the relevance of what Jesus still had to teach them until they were in the particular moment – the particular life situation where the teaching would most apply. There were situations to come in the future where the Holy Spirit would need to be able to teach them at that moment. This is why the Holy Spirit's ability to *remind* believers is so important. Have you ever recalled something – a truth you learned in the past, a particular verse of scripture, or a sermon that spoke to you – just when you needed it? Did it feel as if there was something supernatural in your ability to recall this? This is the Holy Spirit in action.

In this conversation in our scripture lesson, Jesus was speaking to the first generation of believers – the eyewitnesses to Jesus' earthly ministry. Everything Jesus was teaching them about the Holy Spirit is not less relevant to us; it is infinitely more relevant. For we were never eyewitnesses to Jesus' earthly ministry. We have the record of what Jesus said and did in scripture. We are dependent on the holy scripture. What an awesome resource we have! What countless present-day believers have discovered is the role of the Holy Spirit in making the scriptures come alive – especially the words and deeds of Jesus in the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit teaches us through the reading of scripture. The Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding. The Holy Spirit helps us makes connections with the different parts of scripture and make connections with our daily lives. These a-ha moments are real, not only for what we learn, but also for the closeness we feel to Jesus in these moments. This is why we can speak of the Word of God while speaking about the Bible, and also speak of the Living Word while speaking about Jesus. Believers who avail themselves of the means of grace, like prayer and study, allow the Holy Spirit to be active in their lives. When the Holy Spirit is active in the life of believers, the Bible and the Word made flesh are divinely connected.

The Word Gives Peace

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

Everything Jesus was telling his followers was aimed at giving them peace so their hearts would not be troubled or afraid when he departed from them. Peace in this context means assurance – assurance that Jesus will be with them through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believer's hearts. Jesus echoed this message later in the conversation: "*Because I have said these things to*

you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:6-7)

This is why believers should rejoice that Jesus would ascend to heaven, because it means that the Holy Spirit would be able to come and dwell in the life of believers. Think about it. When Jesus walked the earth, people were given an unprecedented view of God through the Word made flesh. But Jesus’ presence was limited during that time to those who could see, touch, and hear him while Jesus was physically present with them. It really was to our advantage that after Jesus accomplished his mission on earth that he ascended to heaven. His earthly mission allowed him to teach and for eyewitnesses to record his words and deeds. His earthly mission allowed him to accomplish our redemption through his death on the cross and his victory over death in his resurrection. After his mission on earth was accomplished, he could then be present with believers all over the world through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that telling about all this *before* it occurred means that *when it does occur* we will believe him. Because Jesus told us what would happen before it happened, we know this was his plan all along. There was purpose in all that unfolded. Today, when we experience the peace that Jesus gives, we know he is present with us through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Jesus was, and is, and will always be our Emmanuel – God with us. The peace Jesus gives confirms his existence and his presence.

We know that when Jesus departed the story was not over. Things were not destined to go downhill from that point. No, the best was just beginning to unfold. Normally, we might think that the effects of events that happened 2,000 years ago would have diminished in their impact today. But this is not true. People are still coming to Christ. New generations of believers are being spiritually reborn every moment. Lives are being turned around today just as they did so long ago. There has been no diminishment or dissipation of the works of Jesus Christ so long ago. What accounts for this? It is because Jesus still lives today and the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that this is true.

As I write this, it is within a few days of the 44th anniversary of the day I gave my life to Christ. When I gave my life to Christ, the Holy Spirit confirmed for me that Christ was alive and had entered my heart. I felt it. Everything was new for me as if the events behind it had just happened – because the effects were happening to me. My life in Christ today is not based on the memory of an experience that happened 44 years ago. No, it is based on how Christ is still living in me today. I know I must continue to keep my life open to the ongoing work of God in me through prayer, study, and obedience on my part. I have learned over the years that the Holy Spirit is always faithful doing his part.

The Word, The Agent of Creation

When we began with the summer quarter's theme, "Partners in a New Creation," we looked at an affirmation of faith that is in the United Methodist hymnal. In the first unit, we learned about the deliverance and restoration of God's people through the Book of Isaiah. We learned that:

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating...

In this second unit, we have explored passages in the gospel of John. We are concluding this unit having learned much about the Word, the Agent of Creation. We have learned about the Word:

who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

Because of what we have learned about the Word made flesh and the work of the Holy Spirit, we understand what we, as members of the Church, are called to do:

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

As we live into all this, we come full circle. We can believe and profess the last lines of this beautiful affirmation of faith and understand their full impact in our lives:

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Dr. Jay Harris serves as the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministerial Services for the South Georgia Conference. Email him at jharris@sgaumc.com. Find his plot-driven guide to reading the Bible, the "Layered Bible Journey," at www.layeredbiblejourney.com.

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Do you want to get well?

By Dr. Hal Brady

Since my wife and I have recently tested positive for covid, I have been thinking more about health and healing than normal. I am pleased to report that both of us are steadily improving.

However, my hat is off to the multitudes of others who have suffered or are suffering the same or similar plight. My best to all of you. At any rate, I am reminded of an incident in scripture where a man suffered with an infirmity for 38 long years. One day Jesus comes to him and asked a very peculiar question. Jesus asked the sick man, "Do you want to get well?"

Undoubtedly, Jesus had multiple reasons for asking that strange question, but one implication seems reasonably clear. The implication is that the sick man might be able to do something to enhance his own healing. Of course, Jesus is the healer, but there still may be something the sick man can do to help with his own wellness.

So, what is, at least, one thing that we can all do to assist in bringing about our healing?

ATTITUDE! Our attitude plays a crucial part in our healing! Jerry Kramer, once a star football player for the Green Bay Packers, compared his coach, the late, great, Vince Lombardi, to a spiritual healer. "Coach Lombardi never takes second place when it comes to Oral Roberts or any of the rest of the healers. He can just walk into a training room filled with football players, and he'll say, 'What's the hell's wrong with you guys? There's nobody in here hurt.' And the dressing room will clear immediately. And all the wounded will be healed." If it were only that simple. But attitude does play a crucial part in our healing.

"Do you want to get well?" Jesus asked. The sick man on the porch replied, "I have no person to help me..." You know, there is something to be said for the porches of life. It is so much easier to remain in our self-pity. It is so much easier to cling to our problems. It is so much easier to give up and succumb to the odds. It is so much easier to allow life to overcome us. "Do you want to get well?" It's a valid question for all of us.

My minister friend, the late Jim Moore, told of a lady named Ann Turnage of Houston, Texas, who, because of her strong faith, great attitude, and the grace of God, has overcome a terrific hurdle. Ann Turnage is a cancer survivor who is now dedicating her life to the difficult but necessary task of helping other people fight the dreadful, frightening disease. Ann has developed a cancer ministry, a cancer support group called "Can-Care." The mission of Can-Care is to improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their families. When Can-Care sponsored its first National Cancer Survivor's Day Luncheon, Ann was one of the speakers. In her speech she said something tremendously significant. She said, "Attitude is your paintbrush; it colors every situation."

In his book, "Peace Love and Healing," Bernie Siegel described an older man who had cancer and remarkably recovered. In describing the man's recovery, Dr. Siegel said, "Jake is too busy to

be sick. That's his real secret." I was talking not long ago to a friend with a serious illness. He said that three things kept him going: his faith in God, his love for humankind, and his determination to live.

Good for him. Attitude always makes the difference.

"Do you want to get well?" It's a valid question, not only for us as individuals, but for our communities as well.

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).

Methodically human

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

ANNE PACKARD

Only a few days after arriving in Savannah in 1736, John Wesley met Sophia Christiana Hopkey, the 18-year-old niece of Mrs. Thomas Causton. Wesley, being determined "to have no intimacy with any woman in America," understood the temptation Sophia presented and worked diligently to only meet with her in public spaces or when other people were present. However, in early summer, he arranged to tutor Sophia and another young woman in the parsonage after early morning prayers, thereby courting the exact temptation he had hoped to avoid. As if written in a script, by midsummer, Wesley found himself alone with Sophia and "took her by the hand, and before we parted I kissed her. And from this time, I fear there was a mixture in my intention, though I was not soon sensible of it."

Despite all of Wesley's writing regarding theology and grace, his strong opinions on predestination and justification by faith alone, his ecclesiastical arguments with Whitefield and the Moravians, it is this simple story of an unmarried minister and a young, beautiful girl that so often captures people's imaginations and hearts. Why is that? Could it be that most of us have had a midsummer's day when we were young and romance was in the air?

Here was a man who longed to serve God and God alone, every single minute of every single day. He could read, write, pray, speak with others, and minister to those in need in the most methodical of ways to serve this end, but he couldn't change one thing. He couldn't stop being human and, as a human, he had feelings and needs, he had fears and doubts, and he had hopes and dreams, and no amount of praying could change this.

After struggling with his feelings for Sophia for many months and consulting friends hoping for sound advice, Wesley did the incomprehensible: he drew lots. He wrote on three pieces of paper,

put those pieces into a hat, and had his friend Charles Delamotte draw one out. What were the choices Wesley gave himself? Marry. Think not of it this year. Think of it no more.

Delamotte, who had been against Wesley's courtship of Sophia, drew out the piece that read, "Think of it no more." Wesley was dismayed but obedient. Eventually Sophia agreed to marry another and when Wesley refused to read the banns for the marriage, she traveled to South Carolina and married there. Wesley, being hurt and rejected, used the pretense of religious law to deny Sophia Williamson communion on August 7, 1737, which resulted in a warrant being attained for his arrest. After months of legal wrangling and division of public opinion both for and against his actions, John Wesley left Georgia, never to return.

As the Methodist movement struggles with truly difficult theological concerns and conversations, may we remember to read, write, pray, speak with others, and minister to those in need. May we also remember that we are humans with feelings, fears, doubts, hopes, and dreams and that no amount of methodical living can change that. May we also remember what Wesley did not: that kindness to ourselves and each other is even more important than religious law.

Anne Packard serves as Conference Historian and director of the Arthur J. Moore Methodist Museum on St. Simons Island. Contact her at director@mooremuseum.org.

Retired Clergy Birthdays – July 2022

- 7/01 – **Donald Wood:** 157 Arlington Row; Macon, GA 31210
- 7/01 – **Kenneth West:** 4183 GA Hwy 93; Pelham, GA 31779
- 7/02 – **Hugh Davis:** 102 Mossland Dr.; Perry, GA 31069-9213
- 7/03 – **Carl McDonald:** 315 N. Wheeler Ave.; Douglas, GA 31533
- 7/04 – **Glenn Martin:** 4418 Saddle Ridge Dr.; Columbus, GA 31907
- 7/08 – **Earl Bishop:** 143 Beale Court Dr.; Blairsville, GA 30512
- 7/08 – **Larry Rader:** 971 Willian Henry Cowart Rd.; Cobbtown, GA 30420
- 7/09 – **Marshall Singletary:** 200 White Blossom Trail; Thomasville, GA 31757
- 7/10 – **Betty Lou Miller:** 485 Tylerstone Dr.; Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526
- 7/10 – **Rickey Rushing:** 17575 SE 106 Terrace; Summerfield, FL 34491
- 7/11 – **Thom Davies:** 1 Seventh Street #1004; Augusta, GA 30901
- 7/12 – **Eric Sizemore:** PO Box 472; Rochelle, GA 31079
- 7/13 – **Randy Carnley:** PO Box 345; Midville, GA 30441
- 7/14 – **Loran Smith:** 121 Hidden Creek Circle; Lizella, GA 31052
- 7/14 – **Ronnie Wills:** 81 Gatlin Bluff; Thomasville, GA 31757
- 7/16 – **Roland Fall:** 321 Lake Joy Rd.; Perry, GA 31069
- 7/18 – **Ray Bittner:** 130 Ford St.; Poulan, GA 31781
- 7/18 – **Sonny Mason:** 2218 Glendale Rd.; Augusta, GA 30904
- 7/19 – **Sam Rogers, III:** 5300 Zebulon Road, #15; Macon, GA 31210
- 7/20 – **Man Lee:** 18 Mannering Dr.; Dover, DE 19901
- 7/20 – **Isaac Moon:** 100 Riverside; Griffin, GA 30224

7/21 – **Richard Lanning:** 104 Macintosh Lane; Centerville, GA 31028
7/22 – **Wayne MacDonald:** 203 Laurel Dr.; Sylvania, GA 30467
7/23 – **Norman Dunlap:** 708 Robins Nest Ct.; Columbus, GA 31909
7/24 – **Donald Woeltjen:** PO Box 1322; Fitzgerald, GA 31750
7/27 – **Charles Ricks:** 4191 Mt. Union Rd.; Huntington, WV 25701
7/27 – **Mark Zeitlin:** 154 Sweetwater Blvd.; Brunswick, GA 31525
7/28 – **Ron Dixon:** 1194 Country Club Dr.; Wrens, GA 30833
7/28 – **Donna Sue Roberts:** 1209 Loblolly Lane; Bainbridge, GA 39817
7/29 – **Jim Kenney, Sr.:** 139 Altama Connector; Brunswick, GA 31525
7/29 – **Sylvia Kersey:** 861 Pine Hill Rd.; Dublin, GA 31021
7/29 – **Al Lewis, Jr.:** 915 E. 42nd St. E; Tifton, GA 31794
7/31 – **Lowery Brantley:** PO Box 125; Pineview, GA 31071

OBITUARIES

Rev. Gil Tripp

Mr. Charles Gilbert “Gil” Tripp, age 88, of Americus, passed away Saturday, July 16, 2022, at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center. Graveside services were held Monday, July 18, 2022, at Oak Grove Cemetery. Rev. Rex Odom and Rev. Al Lewis officiated the service.

Charles Gilbert Tripp was born October 25, 1933, in Sumter County. He was the son of the late Charles Russell Tripp and the late Rosa Lee Bass Tripp. As a youth, he felt the Dooly Campground in Vienna, Ga. was his second home. This is where he felt the call to ministry and met his future wife. After working as Scout Executive for the Boy Scouts of America and the Tog Shop, he began serving churches in the old Americus district of The United Methodist Church. This service lasted for 36 years. During this service time, he served as Director of the Dooly Campground. He had a special love for all the churches he pastored throughout his career. There was nothing he enjoyed more than fishing, telling stories, reading and enjoying friends and family.

Survivors include his wife, Angelyn Oakley Tripp of Americus, and a son, Charles Troy Tripp of Sandy Springs. Ga.

Mr. Tripp was preceded in death by a son, Christopher Leon Tripp, a sister Audrey Tripp Hall, and a brother Leroy Tripp.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Dooly Campground, P.O. Box 7 Vienna Ga., 31092, or to a charity of choice.

To sign the online guest book and share your condolences with the family go to www.aldridgefuneralservices.com. Aldridge Funeral Services at 612 Rees Park is in charge of these arrangements.

Scripture Readings – July 19 edition

July 24

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Hosea 1:2-10

Psalms 85 (UMH 806)

Colossians 2:6-15

Luke 11:1-13

July 31

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Hosea 11:1-11

Psalms 107:1-9, 43 (UMH 830)

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

August 7

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Psalms 50:1-8, 22-23 (UMH 783)

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Luke 12:32-40

Events in the South Georgia Conference – 7/19/2022 edition

SEJ Historical Society Meeting – July 26-29

The SEJ Historical Society and the Historical Society of the UMC are joining together for a gathering focused on “Walking With Wesley” July 26-29, 2022. Highlights include: The Wesleys at Frederica, The Decision for Georgia, The Wesleys’ Travels in South Carolina; Saddlebag Book Award; optional tour of Savannah and Cockspur Landing; and tour of St. Simon’s Island and Frederica. For more information, contact Anne Packard at 912-638-4050.

Online Basic Lay Servant Training – Aug. 9, 11, 16, 18

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 basic class is based on Cokesbury’s book, “Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course,” which teaches a basic understanding of ministry in the United Methodist Tradition. Included in the course is the following: Wesleyan Tradition and

Foundations, Spiritual Gifts, Servant Leadership, Caring Ministries, Communicating, and Sharing Your Faith. Basic LSM Training includes a basic foundation of the faith and an introduction to leadership. This training will be offered via Zoom. You must complete all of the scheduled dates 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 wifi 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, anne@thechapelministries.com. [More information](#) / [Register](#)

Called Annual Conference Session – Aug. 20

Bishop David Graves has called a special session of the SGA Annual Conference. www.sgaumc.org/called-annual-conference-session

Golden Cross Sunday – Aug. 21

Golden Cross began in 1908 with the commitment of Methodists in Dallas, Texas to provide the first health care to persons who could not afford it. They began to receive offerings for the expenses of the poor patients at Methodist Hospital in that city. By 1930, the concept was officially adopted throughout the predecessor denominations of The United Methodist Church. Today, Golden Cross is a ministry that reaches out in love to the laity in our Annual Conference who are experiencing financial difficulty due to excessive medical expenses. Through Golden Cross, United Methodists care for members of our local churches in time of emotional stress and financial need. Each church is asked to observe Golden Cross Sunday to receive an offering and send it to the conference treasurer.

Online Advanced Lay Servant Training – Sept. 13, Sept. 15, Sept. 20, Sept. 22

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 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 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 anne@thechapelministries.com. [Register](#)

Clergy Time Apart with Tod Bolsinger – Sept. 15

Speaker Tod Bolsinger, author of "Canoeing the Mountains," will join us Thursday, Sept. 15 for a Clergy Time Apart. Hosted by Bishop David Graves, we will meet from 10 a.m. until noon via Zoom. [Register](#)