

SOUTH GEORGIA ADVOCATE – APRIL 4 EDITION

Bishop Graves announces one new District Superintendent appointment, district alignments

Bishop David Graves announces the projected appointment of one new District Superintendent to the South Georgia Conference Cabinet, effective June 2023.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Hagan, currently serving as senior pastor of Statesboro First United Methodist Church, will be appointed to serve as superintendent of both the Coastal and Northeast districts.

Dr. Hagan was ordained an Elder in The United Methodist Church in 2006. Born in Brunswick, Georgia to Dan and Miriam Hagan, he grew up in Statesboro with his brother, Kirk. Along with his wife, Julie, they have served local churches in Fayetteville, Albany, Waverly Hall, Columbus, Bonaire, and Statesboro.

Dr. Hagan will join Rev. Doreen Smalls, the Rev. Dr. Paula Lewis, and the Rev. Dr. Jay Harris on the Appointive Cabinet in the [new district leadership structure](#). Dr. Harris will assume an expanded role as the Superintendent of Clergy and District Services.

In this structure, the six existing districts will remain as is. However, there will now be three regions composed of two districts each. One District Superintendent will oversee one region.

Along with Dr. Hagan's service to the Coastal and Northeast districts, Rev. Smalls will give oversight to both the Northwest and Southwest districts while Dr. Lewis will oversee both the North Central and South Central districts.

"It is an honor to welcome Scott to the appointive cabinet," said Bishop Graves. "He has demonstrated fruitful and effective leadership and will help guide our conference in the coming years. I consider it a privilege to welcome Scott to conference leadership in this capacity and look forward to our partnership in ministry."

After a stint in men's basketball - working for Georgia Tech, the Atlanta Hawks, and USA Basketball - Dr. Hagan answered the call to ministry in 1999. He has been a minister in the South Georgia Conference since 2003. Scott earned degrees from Georgia Tech (BS in Management), Georgia Southern University (Master of Business Administration), Emory University (Master of Divinity), and Columbia Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry). He has served in leadership roles on the district and annual conference levels, including the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Dr. Hagan was elected to serve on the South Georgia Conference delegation in 2016 and 2020. He and Julie have two sons, Sam and Jack, who love beating their dad in tennis. Sam is a senior at Georgia Southern University, and Jack will enroll there in the Fall.

"Julie and I have loved serving in the local church," said Dr. Hagan. "Departing from that brings grief, but God is already shining through with a sense of excitement at what is ahead. I am humbled at the chance to join Bishop Graves and the Cabinet to equip churches and laity and partner with the amazing clergy of South Georgia. There is so much joy ahead."

Rev. Steve Patton, current Northwest District Superintendent, will retire at the Annual Conference Session in June. Rev. Craig Hutto, current North Central District Superintendent, will take a local church appointment in the North Georgia Conference, and Rev. Stephen Grantham, current Northeast District Superintendent, will take a local church appointment in the South Georgia Conference. Rev. David Thompson, current

Coastal District Superintendent, will go on spiritual renewal leave beginning May 1 and will not seek a pastoral appointment in June.

“When I was assigned to serve in South Georgia I knew having a strong Cabinet would be instrumental in my ability to serve two conferences,” said Bishop Graves. “I have relied heavily on the giftedness and wisdom of the six members of my current Cabinet. They have served faithfully in a tough season, and I am grateful for their dedication to God and to this conference. I know you will join me in thanking Steve, Craig, Stephen, and David for their exceptional work on the Cabinet and in their districts.”

The restructuring of district leadership will take effect June 2023.

Bishop Graves and the Appointive Cabinet now continue their work to prayerfully discern the pastoral appointments of the South Georgia Conference. They will meet nearly weekly through April to make decisions and to prayerfully seek God’s guidance. Throughout the process, District Superintendents will continue to be in conversation with congregations and clergy as needed.

All appointments are considered firm projections pending the official announcement at the conclusion of the Annual Conference session on June 6, in Tifton.



Brooklet United Methodist's "Pillowcase Angels" are sewing with love

By Brandon Robinson, Grice Connect newspaper

A group of local women from the Brooklet United Methodist church are in the business of pillowcase making. The group has been dubbed by local foster care organizations as “The Pillowcase Angels.” The coalition of angels come together every third Friday of the month to stitch pillowcases for children in local foster care facilities. The angels begin their work in the Brooklet United Methodist Church Dining Room at 10am.

The angels launched their group in mid-2015. The catalyst for the group’s creation came after they trekked to the Macon Methodist Children’s Home with supplies and toiletries. After arriving at the facility, the facility director offered them a tour of the grounds. However, once the director showed them the children’s dormitories, something special there caught their eyes. Each child had handmade quilts and blankets on their beds -- but that was not the same for their pillowcases.

So, the leader of the Pillowcase Angels, Sandra Williams, decided that her church would step in to fill that void.

When the group returned home to Brooklet, they only had a handful of sewing supplies to begin with from their individual homes. However, over time, the group has received donations of sewing supplies and machines to carry out their work with increased ease and efficiency. To date, the group has made 823 pillowcases for foster care children across the lowcountry. Each pillowcase is hand-stitched with heart and completed with an emblem of love on the inside. The emblem reads: “Made with Love - From the Pillowcase Angels - Brooklet Women of Faith.”

The Pillowcase Angels group is regularly comprised of 10-12 women who carry out the divine Samaritan work. Each of them varies in skill-level and sewing ability. In fact, some of the women only choose to iron the pillowcases made, instead of participating in the pillowcase making itself. Yet, each angel plays a vital role in the process of successful pillowcase making and completion. These angels volunteer their time and

energy to seam together these fabrics for the good of humanity and the emotional welfare of these foster children.

The group's efforts were temporarily postponed once the pandemic ensued in 2020. In fact, they did not meet at all from February 21, 2020 - September 17, 2020. However, the group's passion was never lost among any of them. And once they were able to resume their efforts in September 2020, the angels recouped all progress lost due to their swelling motivation to complete their charity.

The angel group sings the praises of their fearless leader, Sandra Williams. In fact, angel Marjorie Frazier expressed that "Sandra Williams has a gift from God" regarding her eye for piecing together fabric colors and combinations.

Williams, however, modestly redirects the limelight back to the group effort and how rewarding it can be for them.

"Sometimes the children will mail us pictures of their pillowcases, and we get to see how excited they are to receive them," Williams said. "The work that we do is highly rewarding, and we pray that the pillowcases assist those children in having sweet dreams when they slumber."

In fact, many of the children who receive those pillowcases go on to carry them with them when they leave the foster care system. So, no matter what, they always have a handmade symbol of heart and soul to sleep on each night no matter what challenges they may face in life.

[Brandon Robinson](#) is a freelance writer for Grice Connect, a local newspaper in the Statesboro, Ga. area. This article was originally published on February 26, 2023, in the Grice Connect.



Diversity and Justice Ministries: What's happening, you ask?

By Rev. Abra Lattany-Reed

We often use sports metaphors to express transitional moments and collective efforts. When baseball players are hitting every pitched ball or quarterbacks are completing every pass, people say things like, "They're in the zone." Well, that statement expresses the ongoing work of Connectional Ministries. We are truly living in our spiritual zone. Currently, within our spiritual zone is the work of the Bishop's Task Force on diversity, inclusion, and vitality.

This Task Force has been meeting since September 2022, and we have been in conversation about the South Georgia Conference's opportunities to better connect with our communities. Many times, local churches can look around and realize that sometimes our communities do not reflect who is in our neighborhoods. The Task Force is creating strategies and building a contextual framework so that all our churches are strengthened. We are focusing on many dimensions of diversity, including race, age, and culture. Oftentimes, churches have a unique opportunity to help people find common ground around their shared faith.

We are nearing the end of our process, which included a goal-setting workshop, individual and group meetings, and praying for the South Georgia Conference. At the 2023 Annual Conference session, we will report on our shared goals and opportunities for South Georgia congregations where we see growth and where we have opportunities for further connection and conversation.

What's happening, you ask? God is at work in South Georgia!

Rev. Abra Lattany-Reed is the Director of Diversity and Justice Ministries for the South Georgia Annual Conference. She can be reached at abra@sgaumc.com

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Laity, are you ready to plant? Lay Planter's Training planned for this Fall

By Anne Bosarge

I'm not much of a gardener. I don't know what to plant or when to plant it; how much water and care something needs or the best techniques to get a good yield on my crops. However, I have a neighbor who lives behind me who is a great gardener. Dr. Douglas always seems to be able to sense when it's time to plant each spring. He has favorite varieties of tomatoes and squash that produce far more than they are able to eat, and I do my part by receiving produce across the back fence. I have the desire to plant, but I don't have the knowledge and training I need to do it.

Jesus actually has a lot to say about planting. In Mark 4 He talks about planting and gives us some advice about the best soil in which to plant. "The farmer is like a person who plants God's message in people" (Mark 4:14). Notice that Jesus isn't just talking to priests and religious leaders here. He is talking to everyday people like you and me - laity! If this kind of planting interests you but you feel ill-equipped to do this work of planting Gospel seeds in people's lives, you have an opportunity to explore what Jesus says about planting and be equipped to live out the commission Jesus gave each of us to go and make disciples of all nations!

Here in South Georgia, we are seizing the opportunity to start new things for new people in new places. We are seeing a resurgence of grassroots efforts among our laity to dive deeply into disciple-making using new models for church planting like home churches, fresh expressions and more. Can you imagine what it will be like in a few years when laity across the conference will be engaged in leading discipleship efforts across the conference? These discipleship groups and home churches will be able to meet in all kinds of places, made up of all kinds of people.

Coming up on **July 22**, we will have an informational zoom session to find out more about an online Lay Planter's Course we will be offering this Fall to interested laity. Coming to the meeting doesn't commit you to the course; it's an opportunity to hear more about it. Then soon after, we will open the online Zoom course for those who wish to learn how to become planters. Between August 14 and October 16, participants will have the chance to grow in their leadership and prepare themselves to be effective gardeners of God's people, planting new things across the conference. The course includes sessions on:

- Christology
- Missiology
- Ecclesiology
- Discerning
- Visioning
- Gathering
- Discipling
- Worshiping
- Maturing
- Multiplying

The closing of the class will be an in-person gathering on **October 28** in Macon with the opportunity to submit a mini-grant for funding a new ministry you might be interested in planting. You don't have to be a Lay Servant or Certified Lay Minister to take the course, but if you do, this course counts as the requiring CEUs toward your recertification. If you're ready to register for the information session, [click here](#). For questions, email me at abosarge@sgaumc.com

Anne Bosarge serves as the Director of Leadership Strategies and Local Church Resources for the South Georgia Annual Conference. Email her at abosarge@sgaumc.com.



2023 prayer emphasis: April prayer guide now available, district prayer days announced

The South Georgia Conference is centering itself around prayer in 2023. April's prayer guide, written by South Georgia Certified Lay Ministers Anne Bosarge, Joeli Chance, Sara Fullerton, Gracie Martin, Whitney Weyeneth, Chris Moncus, and Ben Hasty is now available at www.sgaumc.org/year-of-prayer. This month's prayer guide includes prayers for each day of holy week. A bulletin insert is also available for local churches to use.

District prayer days are also being planned. This year for Annual Conference our theme is, "When They Prayed." During the six weeks leading up to Annual Conference each district will be assigned one week to pray for our Annual Conference. Laity and clergy from each district will gather over Zoom and spend time praying through scripture, liturgy, response, and silent individual prayer. If you'd like to join us, choose your district's date and fill out the registration below to the appropriate district. If you would like to participate and you can't make your assigned date, join another district! The most important part is that we all pray! Each Zoom will begin at 6:30 and conclude by 8:00pm.

Week 1: April 27- South Central District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomSouthCentral>

Week 2: May 3 - North Central District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomNorthCentral>

Week 3: May 10 - Northwest District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomNorthwest>

Week 4: May 17- Southwest District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomSouthwest>

Week 5: May 24 - Northeast District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomNortheast>

Week 6: June 1 - Coastal District
<https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/DistrictPrayerZoomCoastal>

In addition to the prayer guides and prayer days, book studies centered on prayer and hosted by Connectional Ministries, will expand our minds, challenge our hearts and encourage our prayer walks. [Click here for a synopsis and links to register for these fruit-filled conversations.](#)

Book Two: "Praying with Our Feet" by Lindsey Krinks

Book talk hosted by Abra Lattany-Reed on Monday, May 22, noon-1pm

Book Three: “From Burned Out to Beloved” by Bethany Dearborn Hiser
Book talk hosted by Grace Guyton on Monday, Aug. 21, noon-1pm

Book Four: “Dynamite Prayer” by Rosario Picardo and Sue Nilson Kibbey
Book talk hosted by the author, Rosario Picardo, on Monday, Nov. 27, noon-1pm

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Moore Methodist Museum to host British Lecturer David Worthington on April 20

The Moore Methodist Museum staff and volunteers will welcome David Worthington, Director of Global Relations New Room in Bristol, England, to St. Simons on his long-planned U.S. east coast lecture tour. The free lecture, entitled “Methodism Comes to America: The Bristol Connection,” will be presented Thursday, April 20 at 1pm in Lovely Lane Chapel at Epworth By The Sea on St. Simons Island, Ga. A Meet & Greet opportunity immediately following the one-hour lecture will be held across the street at the Moore Methodist Museum with Worthington and South Georgia conference historian, Rev. Dave Hanson. Refreshments will be offered. Please call the Museum staff at 912-638-4050 or email assistantdirector@mooremuseum.org to register.

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Denman Award Nominations deadline is April 20

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.

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.



SGAUMC Connectional Ministries Highlights

Imagine Day 2023 - April 15

Can you imagine what it would look like to have new expressions of church sprouting up all over the South Georgia Conference? Can you imagine the life and growth that would happen in every district if people in your congregation answered God's call on their lives to make disciples in new ways?

South Georgia's Imagine Day is a training kick-off event with author and Fresh Expressions Cultivator, Michael Beck. Both clergy and laity are encouraged to attend. You can even bring a team!

The purpose of this training day is to equip churches to reach new people, in new places and in new ways. The workshop helps people envision a distinctly Wesleyan Spirit-led movement of new Christian communities that serve the present age. Through exploring Biblical frameworks, early Methodism, as well as current stories and methodologies of the Fresh Expressions movement, teams will be prepared to cultivate accessible, transformative, and connectional forms of church.

Even if you aren't interested in starting a Fresh Expression, join us and learn about how you can support those in South Georgia ready to say yes to the new thing God is doing!

This event will take place on April 15 from 9am-3pm at Epworth by the Sea.

To register, click here: <https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/ImagineDay>.

MissionInsite Mosaics Webinar - May 10

Let's learn about our neighbors! MissionInsite Mosaics is a powerful web-based tool for learning about your community and the neighborhood in which your church is planted. MissionInsite allows you to study your community, learning about their preferences, lifestyles, and desires. In MissionInsite Mosaics, you learn about the types of people in your community and can even receive suggestions on ministries that would directly meet their needs. Mosaics are people types, non-numerical, qualitative data. They are little short stories of the groups of people living around the church and in the larger community. Mosaics provides information about their preferred leadership style, hospitality, type of worship, and outreaches they will best respond to. It also includes educational, small group, financial, and communication preferences.

If you're ready to learn more about how to put MissionInsite Mosaics to work for you, plan to join us for our upcoming training online with our South Georgia MissionInsite representative on May 10 via Zoom. Let's take time to study our community and neighborhood so we can make the Gospel relevant to the people God has sent us to reach. Both clergy and laity are invited to attend!

To register, click here: <https://sgaumc-reg.brtapp.com/MissionInsiteTraining>.

Clergy Mental Health Retreat - May 18

In a season of high anxiety, we realize that those called to meet the needs of others are in need themselves. According to the Barna Group, 42% of American pastors have considered quitting full-time ministry this

year, citing stress and loneliness (two factors that contribute to mental health disorders) as reasons. One pastor surveyed said, "We need sages to advise us, leaders to direct us or hold us accountable, peers to remind us that we aren't alone, healers to dress our wounds and companions who carry us when we can't carry on."

To help address the needs of our clergy, the South Georgia Conference Clergy Mental Health Task Force is putting together a series of retreats to support clergy in their mental health. The first retreat, Anxiety: Enemy or Ally, is set for May 18 from 10am-4pm at [Wesley Gardens](#) in Savannah, Ga.

Led by Jason Mehl and Christian Swails, this one day retreat will focus on what anxiety is and is not, how to work through anxiety, and how to speak to fear. Spiritual formation components will also be a part of the day. Jason is a former missionary who faced debilitating anxiety, sought treatment, recognized thought and life patterns that needed to be adjusted, made adjustments, and returned to fruitful work, stronger and more effective. Christian is a Spiritual Director at Wesley Gardens Retreat Center and founder of CoCreations ministry, a spiritual formation ministry focused on one thing: making space for others to experience the presence of God in all areas of life.

The cost for this event is \$20 (lunch is included). To register, click here: <https://sgaumc-reg.brapp.com/ANXIETYEnemyorAlly>. Please note: this retreat will be capped at 30 participants. Additional clergy retreats are being planned for the Fall.



FROM THE BISHOP
A Hope that is out of this world!

Bishop David Graves

In January of 2018, Nancy, and I journeyed with 140 people to the Holy Land where we visited the areas of Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the region around the Dead Sea, along with many Biblical sites in between. The experience truly felt like standing on Holy Ground.

As I think of this time on Holy Ground and the places we walked where Jesus walked, I think of Holy Week. It is a time of remembering the last days of Jesus: Palm Sunday remembers Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Maundy Thursday represents the Last Supper and arrest of Jesus, while Good Friday bears witness to more trials, the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

Black Saturday is a day not known to many but exemplifies a time when all seemed hopeless. Yet Sunday comes, and with that, the resurrection. Holy Days represent the eternal hope that as a follower of Christ, the best is yet to come of our eternal life in Heaven.

Leading up to Holy Week, Christian churches of all types and denominations will have been observing Lent. Lent is a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word lencten, meaning, "spring." The 40 days represent the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

For Christians, Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming Easter. For many, it is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism and some churches will celebrate baptisms this Easter. Other Christians focus on their relationship with God. A tradition for some is choosing to give up something for Lent while others give of themselves for

others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a “mini-Easter” while joyfully anticipating the Resurrection. God so loved the world that Jesus came into it and loved us enough to die for our sins on the cross; He rose on the third day and Christ shares his resurrection with each one of us.

The word "holy" means set apart, sacred, transcendent, revered and unique from everything created. There are many other descriptors, yet Holy is of God. May you experience the Holy of these first days of April and may your Easter be filled with joy and hope. If you need this hope, I know you will find a great message of hope in any of our United Methodist Churches this Easter Sunday. You will experience a hope that is out of this world!



April 9 Lesson: Disciples Believe the Resurrection

Spring Quarter: Jesus Calls Us
Unit 2: Experiencing the Resurrection
Lesson 6: Week of April 9, 2023
By Dr. Hal Brady

Lesson Scriptures: Luke 24:13-27, 30-31

Key Verse: Luke 24:31

Lesson Aims

1. Summarize the conversation that took place on the road to Emmaus.
2. Compare and contrast the disciples’ experiences of Jesus when they did not and then did recognize him.
3. Write a prayer for his or her eyes to be opened to Jesus’ presence during personal “road to Emmaus” times.

What do you think of when you hear the term “revolution”? Perhaps you think of socio-political revolutions, like the American Revolution. But other much less bloody revolutions have since occurred, and these revolutions have provided a similar sense of cultural change and upheaval in their wake.

The writer of the lesson states that with the creation of the transistor in the mid-twentieth century, the Digital Revolution has changed the way people engage with the world. From the transistor came the ability for more advanced computers and, ultimately, the internet. And any person who has access to the internet can experience a life previously thought unattainable. All this has resulted in humanity’s transition into a new era of history: The Information Age.

Now, the story of Scripture comes to one climax with a revolution: the resurrection of Jesus. This revolution overthrew the reign of death and brought the possibility of new life, one free from fear and despair (Romans 5:12-21). Today’s Scripture reveals the surprising nature of that revolution.

Lesson Context

The Scripture lesson today follows after the women discovered the empty tomb. Two apostles wanted to see the empty tomb for themselves (Luke 24:12, compare John 20:3-10).

Many first-century Jews believed in the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead. This doctrine is rooted in certain Old Testament prophetic texts (see Daniel 12:1-3, 13 etc.). Jewish texts from the period between the Old and New Testaments developed this doctrine further. Not all Jews, however, believed in the resurrection (see Acts 23:8). Jesus' followers, though skeptical of the empty tomb, would not have entirely denied the possibility.

I. The Journey Begins **Luke 24:13-16**

These “two” travelers were some of Jesus' followers who had heard the women's report regarding the empty tomb and had begun their journey on the same day that the women had seen the tomb: “the first day of the week.” Scripture doesn't indicate the reason for their journey.

However, one possibility is that the two had come to Jerusalem for the observance of Passover, which had been during the previous week. Jews were required to travel to Jerusalem to participate in that annual event (see Deuteronomy 16:5-6; compare Luke 2:41-42). Since the observance of Passover had passed, plus the fact that the Sabbath was over, the two travelers could have been returning home.

A village called “Emmaus” is only mentioned here in the New Testament, and its exact location is unknown. But even at the slow pace of two miles per hour, the travelers could complete the approximately “seven” mile journey to Emmaus in under a day.

Undoubtedly, the slow-paced walk back to Emmaus provided ample time for contemplation and conversation regarding what “had happened” during the previous week. The primary discussion had been, of course, Jesus' arrest, trials, crucifixion, and burial. In their perspective, the final chapter of Jesus' life and ministry had been written. However, the women who visited Jesus' tomb had described a different reality (see Luke 24:1-12). Was there any way for the two men to make sense of “everything”?

At this point, in verses 15-16, Jesus comes up and walked along with them as they intensely discuss these happenings. The fact that the two “were kept from recognizing him” could mean either that God obscured their vision in some way or that Jesus' physical appearance was somewhat changed from before his burial. As Edmund Steimle, former professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, put it, “We have to remember that it was the crucified Jesus who was raised from the dead and appeared to the disciples. And it was the crucified Jesus who they were unprepared to recognize as the Christ, even before the death.” Remember, “they all forsook him and fled.”

Another possibility is that these followers were so engaged in conversation that they failed to recognize Jesus. The two had absolutely no reason to think that this other traveler would have special insight regarding the previous week's events. Later, other followers of Jesus would also fail to recognize him in their midst (see John 20:14-15; 21:4).

I have another thought here. I simply cannot think of a greater tragedy than the Living Lord of this universe in our company, and we fail to recognize him. God in Christ in history, in the people and events of our lives, in our heart—hungers and search for meaning and we do not recognize him.

II. The Travelers Lament **Luke 24:17-24**

As the all-knowing Son of God, Jesus knew the reason for the two travelers' discussion and resulting sadness (see Mark 2:8). Thus, Jesus' question was intended to start a conversation, not to gain knowledge.

What these two disciples left behind in Jerusalem is painful to recall, for hope departed with Jesus' death. One of the two, Cleopas, is amazed. With irony, he asks, "Are you the only one who travels in Jerusalem and does not know the things that happened in these days?" Of course, Jesus knows exactly what has happened, since it happened to him. Nonetheless, Jesus asks, "What things?"

Before proceeding further, the narrative says that one of the two travelers was named Cleopas. Providing the name adds authority and credibility to the story, the name is close to the Clopas of John 18:25, but there is no basis for identifying the two as the same person.

"What things?" Jesus asked. The travelers' response is composed of six verses (Luke 24:19-24). These disciples answer immediately, "about Jesus of Nazareth," and note his prophetic work as one "powerful in word and deed before God and all the people."

The designation of "Jesus of Nazareth" occurs 15 times in the New Testament, functioning as an identifier of his earthly origin. Jesus' followers invoked this description when they did miraculous works in the name and power of Jesus (Acts 3:6-8).

As Jesus showed his might and proclaimed Scripture, people considered him to be at heart a "prophet" of God (example, see Matthew 21:10-11). In addition to foretelling and forthtelling, prophets like in the Old Testament did miraculous works in the name of the Lord (I Kings 18:30-38).

For the two, Jesus' power was evident through his teaching and miraculous deeds. However, even Moses was "powerful in speech and action" (see Acts 7:22). Did the travelers believe that Jesus was more than a prophet and was truly the Son of God? In all probability!

Then these two travelers note how the chief priests and rulers handed him over for death by crucifixion. No first-century Jew anticipated that God's Messiah would have been "sentenced to death and crucified." The Roman Empire used crucifixion as a tool to terrorize subjects and assert its authority. Jesus' followers expected him to overcome the Roman Empire and free God's people from oppression.

Without a real doubt, the disciples thought Jesus was more than a prophet and hoped he would be the one to redeem Israel. That was the hope they saw nailed to the cross in the capital.

By speaking of "the one who was going to redeem Israel," the travelers likely shared the viewpoint. They had "hoped" and trusted that Jesus would free their people from foreign oppression. To see Jesus put to death in such a horrifying manner brought them deep sorrow and disappointment.

But there is more to tell! Three days later, some of the women among the disciples stunned the group. They went to the tomb only to find it empty. They also reported angels telling them that Jesus was alive. Other companions (an allusion to Peter and others) went to the tomb and found it empty, just as the women reported, but Jesus was nowhere to be seen. How ironic this report is in light of Cleopas' audience. The two travelers (disciples) are absolutely baffled by what has taken place. The last thing they expect is a resurrection.

III. The Stranger Responds **Luke 24:25-27, 30-31**

Jesus then launches into a rebuke! Note here that Jesus does not rebuke these two travelers for not believing the resurrection; he rebukes them for their failure in accepting the Scripture. The rebuke came because the

two were “slow to believe and accept the teachings regarding the promised Messiah.” Jesus had previously brought together his Twelve Apostles and proclaimed that “everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled” (Luke 18:31). He followed with a prediction of his arrest, death, and resurrection (18:32,33).

For Luke’s readers, these disciples must believe all that the prophets have spoken, a brief way of referring to the messianic promises of the ancient Scriptures—what Christians call the Old Testament and Jews call the “Tanakh.”

Although these two disciples were not among Jesus’ Twelve Apostles, they had received the teaching of “the prophets” regarding the Messiah. And the career that Scripture outlines for the Messiah is suffering, then glory. This sequence is necessary since God designed it. These things have to be since they are part of God’s effort to restore relationship with humanity.

Reviewing, Jesus had previously attested to the ways that the Son of Man would suffer (example, see Luke 9:22, 44). He then related that to the suffering experienced by “the Messiah.” The title Christ is the Greek equivalent of Messiah (see John 1:41), both titles meaning “the anointed one.” God’s plan of salvation required that Christ suffer before being glorified. As a result, salvation is available (Acts 5:30-31; Hebrews 2:10).

Jesus referred to Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the Old Testament, to prove his point. Its contents in Jesus’ day are traditionally seen in these categories. First are the writings of “Moses,” the first five books of the Old Testament. These five are often referred to as the five books of law, the Pentateuch, or Torah. Two passages Jesus may have discussed from this section include Genesis 3:15 and Deuteronomy 18:15. The second section is called “Nevi’im,” which is the Hebrew word for “prophets.” Some passages Jesus may have cited from this section include Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6, Ezekiel 34:23, and Malachi 3:1.

The third section, not mentioned in the verse (Luke 24:27), is called “Ketuvim,” which refers to all the other books of the Old Testament that are not in the writings of Moses or the prophets. The author Luke does not refer to this third category, but he does do so in Luke 24:44 by using the phrase “the Psalms” loosely as a catchall category.

As the scholars inform us, taking the first letter of each word “Torah,” “Nevi’im,” and “Ketuvim” and adding vowels yield the word “Tanakh,” used to describe the entirety of the Old Testament.

Now, this three-fold division is rather different from the division most often used today: 5 books of the law, 12 of history, 5 of wisdom and poetry, 5 of major prophets, and 12 of minor prophets.

In a recent cartoon, a teenager is talking to a friend on the phone: “I think I’ve made a great step toward unraveling the mysteries of the Old Testament. I’m starting to read it.” I think Jesus would have enjoyed that touch of humor and truth!

As these three travelers approach Emmaus, the two disciples sense that this stranger intends to go further. So what do they do? They invite him to dinner. And as the late theologian, Robert McAfee Brown, suggests, this is the turning point! Rather than continuing to talk about redemption, they actually act it out. They invite a total stranger to dinner, to share a meal. They are just extending hospitality to a stranger.

Hear me now! It is only when these two disciples move from words to deeds, when they actually break bread together, that clarity really comes. Jesus was not known to them in the discussion on the road, but “He was known to them in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:35). The Risen Christ was known to them when they acted out their redemption.

Now, it is no accident that Jesus is revealed as he sits having table fellowship with the two disciples. The table was the place for fellowship in the ancient world. Here family and friends gathered to share time with each other. Luke has underscored the importance of meal scenes throughout his Gospel. The table was a place where Jesus was heard and where his presence came across most intimately. This suggests that Jesus reveals himself in the midst of the basic moments of life. He is at home in the midst of our everyday activity. Jesus did not linger with the two disciples. The fact that Jesus could be seen and recognized or unrecognized yet “vanished from their sight” indicates both a continuity and a discontinuity with his physical body after the resurrection (see Luke 24:36-43; John 20: 19-29).

The interaction left the two disciples realizing that they “recognized” and knew the resurrected Christ. Their previous saddened hearts had burned within them (Luke 24:32). Only after they knew Jesus could they explain the sensation in their hearts. The two disciples then returned to Jerusalem and told the other disciples of their experience with the resurrected Christ (Luke 24:33-35). Thus, despite the presence of unbelief, the revolution of the resurrected Christ was underway.

Here are a few suggestions for Christians who are interested in the Resurrection Revolution of Christ:

- Invest in the Scripture.
- Remember the fellowship.
- Act out your redemption.
- Note the presence of Jesus—recognized and unrecognized.

Action Plan

1. How should believers respond when God’s plans turn out differently than they had expected?
2. How should you respond to someone who says that the Old Testament is not valuable for Christian faith and life?
3. Explain how table fellowship can be an opportunity for you to introduce the gospel to unbelievers.
4. What is the most helpful consideration out of this lesson?

Resources For This Lesson

1. “2022-2023 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Lesson, International Sunday School Lessons,” pages 273-280.
2. “The NIV Application Commentary (Luke)”, by Darrell L. Bock, pages 611-616.
3. “The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume IX, Luke John, pages 475-481.

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).



April 16 Lesson: Jesus Cooks Breakfast

Spring Quarter: Jesus Calls Us
Unit 2: Experiencing the Resurrection
Lesson 7: Week of April 16, 2023
By Dr. Hal Brady

Lesson Scriptures: John 21:1-14

Key Verse: John 21:12

Lesson Aims

1. List key points of the disciples' third encounter with the resurrected Christ.
2. Provide reasons as to why the disciples did or did not recognize Jesus.
3. Write a prayer asking for eyes that recognize Jesus at work or play this week.

Some scholars question as to whether John 21 was originally a part of John's Gospel. The evidence for this can be summarized as being based on (1) the fact that John 20:30-31 contains a natural conclusion to the Gospel; (2) perceived differences in language, style, and content compared to the rest of the Gospel; and (3) a supposed divergence from the story John told before chapter 21. Despite these observations, those who don't think John 21 is original generally argue that it was added by close associates of John very shortly after the Gospel was completed.

However, against the idea that John 21 is not original is the fact that the earliest manuscripts we have all include the epilogue. There is no reason to believe that the Gospel ever circulated without it. And such epilogues can be found in other ancient writings, showing that this is not a particularly remarkable literary characteristic. Arguments about supposed differences in language and style can be explained by differences in the material that makes up the story. The epilogue also ties up loose ends of the Gospel, particularly Peter's redemption after his denial of Jesus and adds further evidence of John's faithful witnessing of Jesus' life and teaching. Further the epilogue fulfills Jesus' promise that he would meet the disciples in Galilee (Matthew 26:31-35; 28:5-10).

As the late Fred Craddock noted in his commentary on John, "While it is clear that this chapter (21) is not part of the main fabric of the Gospel it is also clear that this chapter is part of the received text and no less "Scripture" than chapters 1-20."

I. Gone Fishin' John 21:1-6

While the Resurrected Jesus appeared to his followers in Jerusalem according to John and Luke (Luke 24, John 20), the other Gospels point to Galilee as the place where they will meet him. Mark 16:7 (also Matthew 28:7) records the word of an angel, "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." This suggests no contradiction. The disciples have simply been instructed to return to what had been their "base" throughout Jesus' ministry and there receive further instruction. In John's narrative, Jesus appeared already on Easter day and then eight days later, moreover, he appears a third (and final) time on the shore of Galilee. John 21:14 helpfully numbers these appearances.

In verse two, John identifies some but not all of the seven disciples who had been fishing all night. The obvious are Simon Peter, Thomas (Didymus), Nathanael, James and John. The two unidentified disciples are generally thought to be Andrew and Philip because Andrew probably could have gone with his brother Peter, and Philip is usually identified with Nathanael. Not all, but most commentators believe Nathanael was also called Bartholomew, one of the Twelve. This is the first mention of Nathanael in the Gospel since Chapter 1. In the third verse, Peter announces his decision, "I am going fishing." Since he was the leader, the others went with him. Some have considered Peter's plan to go fishing an abandonment of his discipleship. However, this is not a necessary conclusion, and several indicators suggest it was not the case. First, the disciples' presence in Galilee, itself demonstrates obedience to Jesus.

Second, it seems so out of place that Peter could be opting out of discipleship after the post-resurrection events he had been privy to. He was the first disciples to go inside the empty tomb (John 20:6-7). Later, that evening Jesus came to the disciples in a locked room; he did so again one week later (20:19-20, 26-27). Peter's actions and presence during Jesus' appearance point to renewed dedication.

Third, those who accuse Peter of discarding his apostleship must assert the same for the disciples who went fishing with him on this particular occasion. Yet no one seems inclined to make this assertion.

Fourth, multiple times Jesus had said that he was going to his Father (example: John 14:12, 32; 16:29), but he had given little specific context about what the disciples' post-resurrection role would be. But he had told them he would meet them in Galilee—whether because Jesus knew they would naturally go home to fish, or as a sort of permission to visit home before receiving their commission.

Fifth and finally, Jesus had not told them exactly when he would appear. While home in Galilee, waiting on Jesus to come, there was no reason for Peter and the others to sit around idle. They did better to work as they waited—rather than to stare out a window and twiddle their thumbs.

Next, we are told in 3:b that the disciples went that night, got into the boat but caught nothing. Fisherman typically worked at “night” on the Sea of Galilee (see Luke 5:5). Fish would come up to the surface to feed at night then dive deeper as the sun warmed the surface of the water throughout the day. This rendered nets useless as they did not sink far enough into the water to catch fish in the warm daylight water.

Now Mary Magdalene at the tomb and, later, other disciples on the road to Emmaus did not immediately recognize “Jesus” (Luke 24,13-16, 30-31; John 20:13-16). How could all these people not recognize Jesus when faced with him? In the previous examples, it could be that something about Jesus' resurrected appearance had shifted, making him less immediately identifiable by physical sight. Or perhaps because these people were not expecting to see Jesus after he had died, their eyes simply did not accept the clear evidence before them.

For these disciples in John 21:4, the distance and quality of light could be contributing factors. “Early in the morning” does not necessarily mean that the sun had risen; it could be that the light of predawn, enough to see nearby but not in detail far off. Furthermore, the disciples were tired from their work night, a condition that does not facilitate clear sight.

Years ago when I was serving as pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Clayton, Georgia, along with others, I had the privilege of starting “Boat Church” on Lake Rabun. It was a 30-minute worship service we offered very early on Sunday mornings from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Seeing these boats coming out of the coves in the mist and fog on Sunday mornings was a beautiful sight indeed, but we couldn't recognize these friends in those boats till the mist lifted. That was the closest I ever got to those disciples failing to see clearly on the morning we are describing.

As Jesus shouted out to his disciples, He called them “children.” Greco-Roman literature often used “children” (a more literal translation of “friends”) in the context of education. It was a term of endearment from teacher to student that communicated affection deeper than mere collegiality (see 1 John 2:18). In choosing this word, Jesus positioned himself as a benevolent authority over the disciples and a caring mentor.

After a previously unsuccessful night of fishing, Jesus met Simon Peter one morning (read Luke 5:1-11). On that occasion, Jesus commanded Peter to go cast the nets for a catch, at which time Peter and the sons of Zebedee caught so many fish that the nets began to break. Why these disciples obeyed now, when the night

was over—whether they had an inkling this was Jesus, or they remembered that other incident of abundant fish—is unclear. But the resulting “large number of fish” is the same.

II. “It is the Lord”

John 21:7-14

John 21:20 & 24 indicate that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was the author of this Gospel. Early church tradition unanimously identified this as John. Moreover, multiple other factors indicate this disciple as John, the son of Zebedee. And elsewhere John appears in tandem with Peter, as he does here (Luke 22:8; John 20:2; Acts 3:1-4:23, 8:14).

The Greek word translated “Lord” has a range of uses. It could be the polite address “sir” (John 12:21), but it could also designate the “lord” over a slave (15:20). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) utilized this Greek word to translate “Yahweh,” a use reflected in New Testament references to God (6:68-69; 11:27; etc). So, who did that disciple think the man on the shore was? Simon Peter’s quick action makes it clear that both fishermen understood the man on shore to be Jesus.

The beloved disciple knew it was Jesus on the beach, and when Peter realized it, he immediately jumped into the water. Peter was not actually naked. He was girthed with a loin cloth as the fisherman changed when he plied his trade. Now it was the Jewish law that to offer a greeting was a religious act, and to carry out a religious act a man must be fully clothed. So, Peter, before he set out to come to Jesus, put on his fishermen’s tunic, for he wished to be the first to greet his Lord.

The image of Peter’s dressing himself in order to jump into the water paints a comical picture of his eagerness; he is caught between his overwhelming desire to greet Jesus with proper respect (that is, fully clothed) and his eagerness to greet him immediately.

Peter’s eagerness reminds me of my own experience the day the District Superintendent gave me the keys to my first appointment church in The United Methodist Church. After a four-year study with the call to preach, I was so excited. I grabbed those keys, drove as fast as I could and wound up at the wrong church. In complete embarrassment I drove back and got further instruction. Even in his own zealousness, Peter did much better than I did.

None of the other disciples responded with Peter’s impulsiveness. John tells us that the other men turn their backs toward shore and slowly drag the bursting cast net (21:8). Rather than anchoring at a coastal harbor, they likely drop their stone anchor when the water becomes shallow, as it does quickly on the Northern Coast. Later, Peter runs out to the net, frees it from the boat, and pulls it to shore.

In verse 9a we read, “When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there...” Peter had stood beside a “fire of burning coals there...” Peter had stood beside “a fire of burning coals” when he denied Jesus (John 18:18). It was here that Jesus would reaffirm Peter (21:15-19).

Verse 9 continues with these words, “with fish and oil, and some bread.” The presence of “fish and bread” likely reminded the disciples of when Jesus converted five loaves and two fish into a filling lunch for five thousand. After all, they had no idea where he had procured them from this time! But there was Jesus, and there were the bread and fish. They needed no other explanation. Jesus’ presence and power were sufficient. In Judaism, an abundant catch was a sign of God’s favor and blessing. This is precisely what Jesus has done. He blesses them further by greeting them with a fire and roasting fish together with fresh bread (the mainstays of a first-century meal in Galilee). Peter is told to haul the 153 netted fish to shore not to supplement Jesus’ breakfast, but to preserve the catch as any responsible fisherman would do. Some of the

main harbors in Galilee had stone catch-bins where nearly caught fish can be kept fresh for later cleaning. Peter either drops the fish into one of these or heaps them in the shallows.

Whenever “Jesus” ate with “the disciples,” they recognized him (example: Luke 24:30-32, 40-43). In John 6:35, Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Both the miracle of the fish and Jesus sitting down to dine with these fishermen confirmed Jesus’ identify as the Lord.

Just a word about the number 153 before proceeding. Though many have tried to find special significance in that number, it’s more important as an indication that “so many fish were caught,” in contrast with the “nothing” caught earlier. There is a sense of marvel that “the net” did not break (contrast Luke 5:6-7). This detail points not only to Jesus’ power to give abundantly but also to provide in such a way that his followers benefit. Nothing is lost and nothing is broken when Jesus gives.

The fellowship of the meal in verse 13 confirms the intimacy of the relationship between the risen Lord and his disciples (Luke 24:30-35), where the meal is the moment of recognition. The emphasis is on Jesus’ presence and the sharing of life that is significant in sharing of a meal (John 6:26-40). The resurrected Jesus would send the spirit to be present with his disciples as they embarked on the mission he would give them (John 15:26; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4).

The purpose of this miracle was for Jesus to reveal Himself (John 21:1), which is more than just an appearance so that they could see him. This appearance was for them to see and understand the resurrection. What He revealed in the previous appearance they apparently did not fully understand. The first Sunday they still had doubts (John 20:25; Mark 16:11-13), and on the second Sunday they were upbraided for their unbelief (Mark 16:14). Also, when the eleven disciples met Jesus on a mountain in Galilee “some were doubtful” (Matthew 28:17). However, this revelation of Christ was so extensive that none of the disciples had to ask anything, “knowing that it was the Lord” (John 21:12).

A well-known Methodist minister of notable influence said he was first challenged in younger days by his bishop’s words. His bishop said, “Be very sure of Jesus.” That was becoming the story of the disciples at the Sea of Galilee, and that also should be the story for us wherever we are—Be very sure of Jesus.

The grave could not contain “Jesus;” he had risen just as he said. And with this meal, Jesus was preparing his disciples for the world he would leave for them—and also for us!

Action Plan

1. Which spiritual practices help you to persist when your efforts seem to end in failure?
2. What groups are you a part of in which all of you intentionally seek time with Jesus?
3. How would you explain the bishop’s statement, “Be very sure of Jesus”? How can that happen in a person’s life?

Resources For This Lesson

1. “2022-2023 NIV Standard Lesson Commentary, Uniform Lesson, International Sunday School Lessons,” pages 281-288.
2. “The NIV Application Commentary (John)”, by Gary M. Burge, pages 578-586.
3. “The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume IX, Luke John, pages 856-858.
4. “John Believe and Live” by Elmer Towns, pages 211-216.

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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John Wesley DID Publish Notes on the Old Testament!

JOHN WESLEY MOMENTS DAVE HANSON

Ooops! I made a mistake in a recent John Wesley Moment when I stated that John Wesley wrote Notes on the New Testament, but never wrote Notes on the Old Testament. Wesley gave three reasons for not writing Notes on the Old Testament. He was busy with other important things like evangelism. There were things in the Old Testament he did not understand, and others had already done an adequate job on the Old Testament.

Actually, these reasons were contained in the preface to his Notes on the Bible, including Notes on the Old Testament. He went on to explain that most of his information was taken from the works of others, which he usually made simpler and more understandable for the common man.

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

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Obituary: Rev. John Milton Bagwell

On March 28, 2023, the Reverend John Bagwell of Macon, Georgia died at the age of 95 years. Rev. Bagwell is survived by three children, Timothy John Bagwell (Susan) of Macon, Georgia; William Key Bagwell (Sue) of St. Simons Island, Georgia; and Nancy Bagwell Martin (Glenn) of Lawrenceville, Georgia. Grandchildren are John H. Bagwell (Greta), Emily Bagwell (Erin), Margaret Frazier (Caleb), Sarah Glass (Will), Rachel Poli (Gabby), and Janell Martin. Great grandchildren are Timothy Bagwell, Margaret Bagwell, Reed Bagwell, Ruby Frazier, Everett Frazier, Bobby Glass, Willa May Glass, and Sunny Poli.

John was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 63 years, Bertha Nell Key Bagwell, his mother Bertie Bagwell Shinall, stepfather Horace Shinall, and brother Eddie Bagwell.

John was born near Cartersville, Georgia in the mill town of Atco on February 4, 1928, and then spent most of his childhood on a nearby farm. During his youth, John excelled in school and was valedictorian of his high school class. Through the encouragement of local ministers and educators as well as his loving family, John was able to achieve his goal of attending college. He graduated from both Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. During his time at Asbury, John met Bertha Nell Key and they married in August 1952, shortly after his graduation from seminary.

John was ordained as a Methodist minister in the South Georgia conference and served churches in Waresboro, Waverly Hall, Macon (Martha Bowman), Metter, Cuthbert, Thomasville (Dawson Street), Quitman, Nashville, and Fort Valley. Compassion, personal relationships, and kindness were hallmarks of his ministry, and these traits endeared him to those he served. He retired in 1992 after 40 years of pastoral ministry.

After retirement, John and Bertha Nell lived in Macon and Americus. They eventually became part of the Carlyle Place community in Macon. During his 14 years at Carlyle Place, John was known as both pastor and dear friend to his fellow residents as well as the staff. His loving kindness and encouragement to all was a testament to his unwavering commitment to others and his strong faith in God.

The funeral will be at 11:00 AM, Friday, March 31 at Centenary United Methodist Church. A time of visitation will be held in the fellowship hall following the service. The burial will be at 4:00 PM at Poplar Springs Cemetery in Adrian, Georgia.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Centenary United Methodist Church, 1290 College Street, Macon, GA 31201 or the Navicent Health Foundation, P.O. Box 7718, Macon, GA 31209 ATTN: Carlyle Place Employee Continuing Education Fund.

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Conference Happenings

2023 Lay Servant Ministries & Certified Lay Ministry

Check out the [dates & registration for the 2023 classes](#).

Clergy Ethics Training – April 11, April 20

Every three years, according to the South Georgia Conference Sexual Ethics policy, persons serving under appointment by the bishop (clergy, local pastors, extension ministers, appointed lay speakers) are required to attend a Sexual Ethics Workshop. Under the guidance of the Office of Ministerial Services, the South Georgia Conference will offer Clergy Ethics trainings in March and April 2023. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

Eagles Fish Fry – April 13

The South Georgia Conference Eagles After-Easter Fish Fry is set for April 13, 2023, at 12:00 noon at McRae UMC in McRae, Ga. All retired pastors and spouses are invited to attend. The McRae United Methodist Men will cook fish, grits, fries, hush puppies, and provide the tea. Attendees are asked to bring salads, vegetables, and desserts. To RSVP or if you have any questions, please email me Rev. David Tart, Eagles President, at revdtart@bellsouth.net.

Men's Spiritual Life Retreat – April 21-22

A Men's Spiritual Life Retreat is set for April 21-22, 2023, at Epworth By The Sea on St Simons Island. This in-person event is sponsored by the United Methodist Men of South Georgia and is open to all Christian men of South Georgia to attend. The retreat will be a time of spiritual renewal through: solid biblical teaching by Rev Tommy Mason, dynamic and uplifting music led by the Goshen Travelers Band, shared fresh testimonies of God's Grace, worship, prayer & fellowship, and a brief annual business session of the South Georgia United Methodist Men. [Click here for more details](#).

MissionInsite Mosaics Webinar - May 10

Let's learn about our neighbors! MissionInsite Mosaics is a powerful web-based tool for learning about your community and the neighborhood in which your church is planted. If you're ready to learn more about how to put MissionInsite Mosaics to work for you, plan to join us for our upcoming training online with our South Georgia MissionInsite representative on May 10 via Zoom. Let's take time to study our community and neighborhood so we can make the Gospel relevant to the people God has sent us to reach. Both clergy and laity are invited to attend! [To register, click here](#).

Clergy Mental Health Retreat - May 18

In a season of high anxiety, we realize that those called to meet the needs of others are in need themselves. To help address the needs of our clergy, the South Georgia Conference Clergy Mental Health Task Force is putting together a series of retreats to support clergy in their mental health. The first retreat, Anxiety: Enemy

or Ally, is set for May 18 from 10am-4pm at [Wesley Gardens](#) in Savannah, Ga. Led by Jason Mehl and Christian Swails, this one-day retreat will focus on what anxiety is and is not, how to work through anxiety, and how to speak to fear. The cost for this event is \$20 (lunch is included). To register, click here: <https://sgaumc-reg.brtaapp.com/ANXIETYEnemyorAlly>. Please note: this retreat will be capped at 30 participants. Additional clergy retreats are being planned for the Fall.

Called Annual Conference Session – May 21

A special called session of the annual conference has been set for Sunday, May 21, 2023. The meeting will begin at 4 pm using the Zoom Webinar platform in conjunction with an online voting system. The sole purpose of the special called session of the Annual Conference is to complete the process of ratifying the current requests for disaffiliation of local churches who have met the requirements outlined in ¶2553 of the Book of Discipline and who have met the published South Georgia Conference deadlines. [Click here for more information.](#)

Annual Conference Session – June 4-6

The 2023 South Georgia Annual Conference session will be held Sunday, June 4, 2023, through Tuesday, June 6, 2023. The conference theme will be: *When They Prayed*, based on Act 4:31. [Click here for full Annual Conference details.](#)

2023 Summer Camps

Don't let your kids miss out on this summer's Camp Connect - the South Georgia Conference Camping Ministry at Epworth By The Sea. These week-long residential camps are offered for elementary, middle and high school students in June and July. For more information, [click here.](#)

2023 Georgia Pastors School – July 17-20

Georgia Pastors School is set for July 17-20, 2023, at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island. This spiritual formation event for pastors will feature Rev. Juanita Rasmus, co-pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church in Houston, TX, and Johnny Sears from The Upper Room as this year's teachers. To register and for more information, visit www.georgiapastorsschool.org.



Resource Roundup – April 2023

Tips to protect churches from fraud

(Discipleship Ministries) Eight steps can help churches avoid being the victims of fraud when it comes to their finances. Among the tips are having someone different from the check signer approve invoices for payment, regular financial reports and an annual audit. [Read story](#)

How to Plan for Church Emergencies

(UMCom) If you don't already have one, it is vital that your church put together an emergency preparedness plan. Having a solid plan will help to hasten whatever recovery efforts may be needed, whether you are faced with a natural disaster, health crisis or fire. If you don't already have one, it is vital that your church put together an emergency preparedness plan. Having a solid plan will help to hasten whatever recovery efforts may be needed, whether you are faced with a natural disaster, health crisis or fire. [Read more](#)

Why being mobile-friendly matters

(UMCom) People in the United States are now spending more than five hours a day on their telephones. Their user-friendly ease and mobility factor have made mobile phones the No. 1 driver of web traffic. This means that it is essential that your website is mobile-friendly. [Read more](#)

Achieve great graphic design

(UMCom) Graphic design doesn't have to be hard. The age old principle of "less is more" really does ring true when trying to be most effective in designing graphics for your church. Find help for your designs here, or you can even let us take it off your shoulders altogether. [Read more](#)

UMCOR Mustard Seed Migration Grants program accepting applications

More United Methodist churches will have the opportunity to help immigrants, migrants and refugees living in their local communities thanks to an expanded Mustard Seed Migration Grants program from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). For 2023, the number of grants awarded will be increased from 50 to 100. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until October 1, 2023, and processed within four weeks of application. The grants program, now in its third year, continues the agency’s 80-year tradition of helping refugees, immigrants and migrants seeking to build new lives. [Learn more here.](#)



Retired Clergy Birthdays – April 2023

- 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.; Coffeeville, 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: 619 Tattnell St.; Savannah, GA 31401
- 4/16 – Jimmy Sharp: 2225 Teate Rd.; Vienna, GA 31092
- 4/18 – Frances Howell: PO Box 658; Midway, GA 31320
- 4/22 – Howard White: 9577 English Ivy Court; Fortson, GA 31808
- 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



Scripture Readings – April 4 edition

April 6
Maundy Thursday, Year A

- [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 7

Good Friday, Year A

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

April 8

Holy Saturday, Year A

- [Job 14:1-14](#)
- [Psalm 31:1-4](#)
- [Peter 4:1-8](#)
- [Matthew 27:57-66](#)

April 9

Easter Sunday, Year A

- [Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 \(UMH 839\)](#)
- [Acts 10:34-43](#)
- [Colossians 3:1-4](#)
- [Matthew 28:1-10](#)
- [John 20:1-18](#)

April 16

Second Sunday of Easter, Year A

- [Acts 2:14a, 22-32](#)
- [Psalm 16 \(UMH 748\)](#)
- [1 Peter 1:3-9](#)
- [John 20:19-31](#)