



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

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Church's e-mail: ebenezerumc@yahoo.com

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Special Note

You gave \$654 in August to send to UMCOR for the Kentucky floods ministry work.

Thank you!



Sunday Services

- 9:00a Worship Service
- 10:15a Sunday School
- 6:00p Adult Choir Practice
- 7:00p Every FOURTH SUNDAY United Methodist Women

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” *Matthew 28:19*



Pastor's Note



I do not view myself as a dogmatic person. The definition of dogmatic is “inclined to lay down principles as incontrovertibly true.” It is taken from the word dogma, which means “a principle or set of principles laid down by an authority as incontrovertibly true.” I do admire people who are dogmatic. I wish that I could be so certain of things in this life as they are. Yet, I am not. To me there is always room for being wrong about something. That comes from my faith that believes that there is a God, and I am not God. I could be wrong. After all, I am moving towards perfection in love. As the Apostle Paul states, “Now I know in part, then I shall know fully. (I Corinthians 13.12)

Rather than dogmatic I seek to be pastoral. Pastoral means “concerning or appropriate to the giving of spiritual guidance.” I believe that if I was dogmatic, I would not be able to provide spiritual guidance to people because they would avoid me out of fear of judgment or rejection. This has allowed me to minister to a variety of people in a variety of settings. When I was a hospice chaplain, I discovered that people had not always had good experiences with the church or Christians. I attempted to follow John Wesley’s simple rule of “do no harm.” I put it another way, “Don’t be a jerk.” Too many people are ready to believe that I will judge them. Being pastoral helps me to meet them where they are.

We, the United Methodist Church (UMC) as a denomination, and Ebenezer, as a local congregation are facing challenges about the future. The theology behind those challenges is the place and role of people who are part of the LGBTQ community. Shall we ordain them? Shall we conduct same sex weddings? The denomination is splitting over this, and decisions will need to be made regarding whether Ebenezer stays UMC or goes in a different direction.

Where do I stand on this? Keep in mind that I do not view myself as a dogmatic person.

Currently, with these issues, I do not find that I have much trust of the leadership of the UMC nor of the Global Methodist Church (GMC). As an ordained elder in the UMC I have taken vows to uphold our Book of Discipline (BOD). This book is how we govern ourselves as a denomination. Currently it states that we believe people who are homosexual are people of sacred worth. We also view homosexuality as

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WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:00p Praise Band Rehearsal
- 7:00p Bible Study — Adults.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.—Friday: 8:30—1:00 p.m.
Phone: (828) 396-2214



Meetings, Events, etc.

Prayer Group

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. our weekly prayer group meets. You may call the office or email us prayer requests at ebenezerumc@yahoo.com.

Wesley Class Meeting

Class meets on **Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.**

Food Ministry

The Lord's Supper Ministry will deliver their next meal on **Monday, September 19th at 5:00 p.m.**

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, September 20th at 11:00 a.m.**

Church Council

The Church Council will meet on **Sunday, Sept. 25th at 4:00 p.m.**

United Methodist Women

The UMW will meet on **Sunday, September 25th at 6:00 p.m.** All women of the church are invited to participate.

Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.
Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.
—Psalm 119:36-37 NIV

Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts:

In Honor of Billy Wayne Campbell 53rd Birthday on September 19th
by Delores and Gary Paul Campbell

In Memory of Bill Campbell and Von Healey (Jackie Katsinis' Mom) by Delores and Gary Paul Campbell

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

—Joshua 24:24 NIV

CHOOSE ONE

References: Joshua 24:14-15; Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2, p. 669

"Now then," Joshua continued, "honor the LORD and serve him sincerely and faithfully. Get rid of the gods which your ancestors used to worship in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, and serve only the LORD. If you are not willing to serve him, decide today whom you will serve, the gods your ancestors worshiped in Mesopotamia or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are now living. As for my family and me, we will serve the LORD." —Joshua 24:14-15 GNT

Joshua stands before the people--this ragtag group of Israel's descendants plus various hangers on, and even some of the now conquered peoples--and calls for them to make a choice. This choice is the most important choice they will make in their lives; because this choice will determine how they live from now on, and it will determine whether or not they will be blessed by the One True God or remain condemned, as those are that they have conquered.

"Life is always confronting us with alternatives and choices—God or mammon; the immediate present or the distant future; expediency or principle; the temporal or the eternal. All too often we live by half choices. We have no absolute standard against which all our choices are measured. So often right and wrong seem to have only relative value. There is a desperate need to see things in their proper perspective, to distinguish the temporal and passing from the permanent and eternal, to have our scales of values right, to recognize the clear-cut and ultimate choices with which life continually confronts us (Interpreter's Bible, V. 2, p. 669)."

If we have no ultimate standard to follow, we can and will be blown about like chaff in the wind—first following one path and then another, which leads us into a chaotic life. Having no standards also makes us more vulnerable to deception and being used by others for their own purposes, which will most likely be detrimental to ourselves and others.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord' is the hallmark of the God-centered life...will it be God or the world; Christianity or secularism; militant, atheistic paganism or the gospel of redemption (ibid)?"

We each must choose, and choose daily to follow the Lord or the world (culture). To keep in mind eternal values and activities, or choose to become mired in chasing after the temporal that will turn to ashes in the end. Nothing here on earth is permanent or trustworthy. Only God will never desert you.

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Finding Hope Ministries August Newsletter, ed.

September Celebrations

Hello everyone! We pray everyone is doing well. The summer is nearly over and school is starting soon! The Finding Hope kids are enjoying an awesome summer, full of travels, excursions, and activities. The church plants are growing and bustling with special events and VBSs. Please continue to pray for us, as we spread the Gospel around the world!

Children’s Homes:

The Finding Hope kids have been staying very busy with summer vacations, camps, excursions and legions of activities. They are hiking, camping, bike riding, swimming, etc. Each of our 40 children have been able to take a summer vacation, and go to camp. Some have enjoyed a week in Israel, others went to Legoland and Lalandia waterpark in Denmark; while others went to soccer camp in Germany, a Christian Camp in the Carpathian mountains of Romania, and a Christian camp in London, England.

In addition to summer fun, our children keep growing in the Lord. Many are devoting more-and-more time to personal Bible study/ devotion and prayer. We see them getting more involved in church and with our Saturday evening worship services/outreach in the gypsy communities. A lot of the ministry activities in the gypsy communities are now being lead by Finding Hope children. Three more of our children recently gave their hearts to the Lord, and were baptized at the river this summer. We are so proud of them. This is the reason we do what we do—seeing hearts change for the Lord! Please pray for their continued spiritual growth.

The NC Children’s Home continues to progress—but ever so slowly. It takes time to get such a big venture rolling. Paperwork and government red tape keep delaying things. We know God will make a

way in his time! The home/premise renovations have begun and will continue for the rest of this year, and into the next. We will keep you informed on the progress on our Facebook page and newsletters.

Ukrainian Outreach:

The Ukraine outreach continues: visiting and praying with local Ukrainian churches, hosting and transporting refugees, taking humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and helping Ukrainians any way we can. Since the war began earlier this year, we have made over 30 trips to Ukraine. We expect to be making more trips to continue our outreach there since the war rages on.

Please continue to pray for the people of Ukraine. They are under extreme distress. We are trying to do what we can to alleviate their suffering, but it is very hard as their economy has been stalled because of the war. Car fuel, food, and everyday commodities are scarce and very expensive. It is becoming very difficult for them to move around and secure daily provisions. The stress is never-ending. Please pray for them. They need it.

Church Planting:

The church plant in the Gypsy village continues to grow and flourish. We are seeing more villagers saved and growing in their faith via the church. Each Sunday, the church fills with 40 plus people ready to hear the Word of God. We continue to distribute food, and provide VBS and other activities with the village kids.

Please pray the Lord will raise up leadership for the church. Our missionary team for the village is very small. If you are interested in church planting/discipleship in small underprivileged villages, let us know. We would be delighted to have you on board...

Thank you so much for all your prayers and support!



- 4th—Heather Stone
- 11th—Will McRary
- 11th—Daniel Simmons
- 16th—Chris Haas
- 17th—Tasha Haas
- 18th—Aubree McCrary
- 18th—Kenny Silver
- 19th—Billy Wayne Campbell
- 21st—Flaxen Brookshire-Reid
- 25th—Debbie Gaylord
- 30th—Russ Knepp

Happy Anniversary!

- 3rd—Paul & Linda Moretz
- 10th—Chuck & Tammy Adams
- 13th—Kevin & Teresa Simmons
- 26th—Paul & Annette Burson
- 26th—Wayne & Kim Ellis

Sept. Worship Information

- *Sept 4:* Luke 14:25-33
Communion will be celebrated.
- *Sept 11:* Luke 15:1-10
- *Sept 18:* Luke 16:1-13
- *Sept 25:* James 5:13-20

Our Military

- Ricky Garland
- Trey Hefner
- Shane McRary
- Jamie Mullinax
- Michael Potts
- Hunter Tolbert



Please pray for the men and women who protect our freedoms.



Pastor's Note, cont'd

incompatible with Christian teaching. Within the BOD are restrictions on persons being ordained who are in homosexual relationships ("self-avowed, practicing homosexuals") and as a UMC pastor I am prohibited from conducting a same sex marriage ceremony. Only General Conference can change this language. Yet, we have an openly gay bishop serving out west. I have seen pastors conduct same sex weddings without consequence. Bishops have attempted to consecrate or ordain openly gay people for ministry. Which leads to a question I ask myself, "What parts of the BOD can I ignore or flaunt at my own whim?" If we can ignore the BOD on this one issue, can we not ignore it on all issues? If we can, then what good is it? If the leadership is okay with this, then can I trust them? Once trust is lost it is difficult to regain.

However, I do not trust the leadership of the GMC or the Wesley Covenant Association (WCA). These groups support the traditional understandings of marriage and ordination. The GMC is a separate denomination and the WCA is an advocacy group within the UMC. The head of the WCA, a former UMC pastor and District

Superintendent, recently asked for traditional UMC congregations in certain conferences to place apportionment monies in escrow until issues related to disaffiliation are settled to their liking. This is the same person who helped author the GMC's Provisional Book of Doctrine and Discipline that states that churches in the GMC can be kicked out of that denomination if they don't pay their apportionments. I view that as hypocrisy. The GMC and WCA leadership do not fill me with trust.

Where does this leave me currently? My goal is simply to be your pastor as all of us navigate this uncertain time. The word Ebenezer means "stone of help" (1 Samuel 7.12). I seek to help you to be the stone of God's help to the Dudley Shoals community as we seek God's guidance. Whatever direction God leads, my prayer and goal is that it leaves Ebenezer stronger. Our Discovery Team has met and reviewed the materials from the GMC. We will soon meet to look at other groups and determine if their theology and practice is a good fit here. The Discovery Team does not make any decisions. It will bring information back to the Administrative Council who will determine what groups Ebenezer would like to hear from.

Please be in prayer on this issue. Pray that we will hear God's word. Pray that God's will be done!

In God's grace,
Pastor Alan

Thank You

Matthew Ross, Principal at Dudley Shoals Elementary, thanked us for the school supplies we donated in August: "...We have many students in need, and these supplies will be put to good use. We appreciate your support."

South Caldwell Christian Ministries sent us a Thank You card for the 49.5 lbs of non-perishable food that we sent them from the August food drive: "Without the support of our community, SCCM would not be able to help as many families with food. You and others like you are why we are able to provide these items for our needy families... Your contributions are greatly needed and appreciated! God bless you.

And God bless our members who continue to be so generous!



Something, cont'd

(Continued from page 2)

Only following God's guidance will keep you unstained from the world, and keep you on the straight and narrow road to eternal life with current blessings even in suffering. You will suffer; but those who give themselves over to Jesus, accepting his gift of forgiveness and eternal life, can "rejoice always" and "give thanks to God in all circumstances" for we know he does love us enough to die for us, and he will "never leave us or forsake us." Is there anyone else or anything else we can count on like we can count on Jesus? "Choose this day whom you will serve."

How do I hide God's word in my heart? Memorize it!

I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws. I hold fast to your statutes, O LORD; do not let me be put to shame.

Psalm 119:30-31 NIV



Church Council—August 28, 2022

Attendees: Pastor Alan Gaylord, Irene Austin, Ricky Baker, Becky Clark, Kim Ellis, Bleaka Hollar, JoAnn Knepp, Judy McCrary, Marsha McCrary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Satterwhite, Cindy Sears, and Ted Daniel.

Marsha McCrary opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. with a devotional based on Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.” She presented some stories of God helping people in a “storm.” Yet, at other times letting the storm rage on and cause damage, though the person was saved. “God doesn’t always calm the storm; sometimes he calms the sailor.” We can count on God to be with us; yet he will not always resolve the issues or circumstances we are facing. Let us continue our work for the Lord, and be calm in our trust in him—no matter the circumstances.

Reading of the minutes from June and the special called session in July. Passed as written.

Finance Report by Irene Austin

The good news is that we now have our \$20,000 roof loan down to \$5,702.13! We should be able to pay this off soon. Thank you for continuing to designate to this paydown.

The bad news is that we have spent approximately over \$26,000 more than we have received in contributions for the General Fund this year. Our bank balance at the time of this meeting was \$2,227.81. This gives us a very low balance. It was suggested that we arrange for another fundraising meal in the near future; and to hold off on paying the apportionments until we are in a better financial situation.

Pastor Alan passed along the information that the parsonage washing machine is not working,

since Monte Hollar, Trustees chairman, was not present.

There was no old business.

New Business

Kim Ellis told us that she is planning a mission trip to Belize, and will give us more information after the details are set.

Pastor’s Report

More membership changes were announced. Our roll is now down to 209 (Pastor’s count; 210 by Cindy’s records) members.

We continue to search for addresses for 15 members. See newsletter for the list.

Pastor Alan wants us to think and pray about the following for Ebenezer Church: What is Ebenezer’s mission? Are we Kingdom focused? Do we have God-sized goals?

He reported that the Discovery Team will be meeting in September to look at the Free Methodist Church. He attended a zoom meeting for the Aldersgate Missional Network (attached to the Anglican Church), but was not impressed. Kim Ellis suggested checking out the Independent Methodists organization. We will add that to our list for the Discovery Team.

We will not be considering a simplified Accountable Structure until we have decided about the UMC or disaffiliation.

Pastor Alan then requested input on our Missions projects: What needs to be restarted? What needs to be dropped? Some items mentioned to consider doing were: Kairos, Barbecue Fundraiser, another “Give Away” of water and snacks at Dudley Elementary to parents waiting to pick up kids, and helping Safe Harbor with their fundraising effort this fall. The UMW will be looking into that last one.

The Pastor then brought up our

Safe Sanctuaries book is out-of-date (not revised since 2009). Irene Austin volunteered to look into setting up some first-aid classes here at the church. Please let the Pastor or Cindy Sears know if you are certified in first-aid or CPR, so we will know who to call on in case of an emergency.

The youth summer program went well, though attendance was hit or miss at times. We will think about ways to increase participation next summer.

Burns Road initiative report: we mailed around 80 letters, and received 12 back as undeliverable (wrong name for address).

Upcoming events and dates discussed: Charge Conference was set by the council for November 20th at 3:00 p.m.; Homecoming will be on Sunday, October 9th this year at 10:30 a.m. (no Sunday School) with meal to follow. We will invite Rev. Eric Lane to come speak that day; Trunk R Treat will be on Saturday, October 29th from 5-7:00 p.m.; the UMW Country Store is set for November 5th; we will remember and honor our recently (since last year) deceased members and family members on All Saints Day, Sunday, November 6; the Hanging of the Greens will be on Sunday, November 27th; we will have a Christmas Eve Service on Saturday, Dec. 24th at 5:00 p.m. in the church and then may move to the shed for carol singing with a bonfire; our Christmas Day Service will begin at 10:00 a.m. and Sunday classes will not meet; the next blood drive will be in January—Irene will try to set a date for January 23rd; Pastor Alan is planning and Advent study on Wednesday nights (Suspending the Revelation Study for a few weeks).

Marsha asked Pastor Alan to conclude the meeting with prayer.

Minutes by Cindy Sears.



Lay Servant Ministries Training

NOTE: There will be No registration for the event after September 16, 2022. You must have already taken the Basic Course in order to take any Advanced Course.

Lay Servant Ministries is a wonderful opportunity to serve your church/charge in a ministry leadership role. If you feel called to serve in a different way this might be a perfect route for you. You can take the Basic course to enter into the program and then you can speak from your own pulpit when your pastor may need you to fill in. Once you take the basic course you will need to take an advanced course every 3 years to remain in the program on a variety of topics relevant to ministry in the local church. We offer these trainings once a year and you can take courses online if you would rather at your own pace. If you feel called to speak outside your church or charge you can meet with the district committee on lay servants to become a "Certified Lay Servant."

The Appalachian District will be hosting the 2022 District Lay Servant Training in person and offering certain classes via ZOOM. Each class has the date details below. Please note that these are subject to change. You will be notified ASAP of any changes. You must be able to attend both days and attend the entire session each day in order to receive credit.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS SEPTEMBER 16, 2022, by ONLINE REGISTRATION ONLY. Registration is \$20.00 for in person classes and \$15.00 for online courses. This year you will be responsible for ordering your book directly. Please prepare to order your book so that you can receive it at least 2 weeks in advance. Katie will be in touch with you on recommended places to buy your book.

The schedule for in person classes:

Day 1: Saturday, October 15, 2022
Please plan to arrive at 9:00 AM at the Appalachian District Office located at 1710 Parkwood Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 enter through the "NORTH SUITE" We will gather in the large conference room at 9:30AM for greetings, introduction of the process for the day and for persons to be assigned to their breakout rooms. The individual classes will then begin at 10:00 AM and will end at 4:00 PM. You will receive a lunch break between 12:00 PM-1:00 PM

Day 2: Saturday, October 22, 2022
Individual class and roll call will start at 9:00 AM at the Appalachian District Office located at 1710 Parkwood Drive, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 enter through the "NORTH SUITE". Class will end at 2:00 PM with a break between 12:00 PM-1:00 PM. We will have closing Worship from 2:00 PM-3:00 PM which will be hosted online for the ZOOM students as well to attend.

ZOOM Students Schedule:
(Subject to change for Basic Course)
Thursday, Sept. 29 - 6:30-8:30 PM
Thursday, Oct. 6 - 6:30-8:30PM
Thursday, Oct. 13 - 6:30-8:30PM
Thursday, Oct. 20 - 6:30-8:30PM
Saturday, Oct. 22 - 2:00-3:00PM.

Plan to attend the closing worship online to complete the 10-hour class time requirement.

Brochures on this ministry are available in the narthex and lobby areas; plus a complete list of classes and subjects. Contact Cindy in the church office if you need help registering online.

John Wesley Said:

"I have never known more than fifteen minutes of anxiety or fear. Whenever I feel fearful emotions overtaking me, I just close my eyes and thank God that He is still on the throne reigning over everything and I take comfort in His control over the affairs of my life."

~ John Wesley

Missing Members

If you have contact information for any of these people, please let Pastor Alan or Cindy Sears know. Thank you.

- Cara Benge
- Susan Chester
- Michael Crouse
- Sharon Hodges
- Beverly Laws
- Amber McRary
- William McRary, Jr.
- Erin Mejia
- Ellen Minton
- Michael Potts
- Sydney Richardson
- Allison Thompson
- Cody Thompson
- R. J. Thompson
- Lance Wease



Human law must rest its authority ultimately upon the authority of that law which is divine. . . Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants.

—James Wilson