



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

October '23

Volume 19 Issue 10

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

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“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



In 2001 I was hired as a PRN Chaplain with one of the two Hospices in the area where I lived. (PRN is an abbreviation of the Latin “pro ne nata” which stands for “as the situation demands” or “as needed.”) There were times with them that I was needed and others when I wasn’t needed. That wasn’t good for our bank account. I then applied to be a PRN Chaplain with the other Hospice in our area, thinking that I could do both jobs. They hired me and told me, without me saying anything, that I couldn’t work for both. I quit the first job and stayed with the second company for 9 years, most of it as a full-time employee with benefits. So it worked out.

I find myself in a similar situation today. You, as a congregation, have decided to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church. You, as a congregation, have asked to join the Global Methodist Church. They have accepted you as part of that denomination. Currently, you are both a United Methodist Church working towards disaffiliation AND a Global Methodist Church working towards becoming fully part of them. As a United Methodist Pastor I cannot do both things and remain faithful to my vows.

What does that mean on a practical level? It means I will preach at Ebenezer from now until the end of this year. I will provide pastoral care as needed. I will teach the Wednesday Night Bible Study through Thanksgiving and then it will transition back to Bleaka. I will not be able to participate in the fundraisers you are having to pay disaffiliation costs. I will not be able to lead in any way to set up the new polity (way of governing) as directed by the Global Methodist Church.

It is a strange time. All of this can be covered under the phrase, “things I didn’t learn in seminary.” We will remain in the parsonage from January 1st to June 30th, 2024, yet I will not be your pastor. I can return for funerals if invited by your pastor at the time (I checked on this). None of this is normal. It is unusual and a time that must be navigated with grace on the part of all.

You are in my prayers and I covet yours for myself and my family. Let us stay focused on the ministry of Christ with one another and to this community.

In God’s grace,

Pastor Alan

Homecoming

Oct. 8
10:30 a.m.
See p. 3.

Sunday Services

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

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, 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

Next meal will be on Monday, October 16 (12-6:00 p.m.) Drivers need to arrive by 4:30 p.m. Cook's helpers, see Ricky Baker for when to arrive.

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on Tuesday, October 17 at 11:00 a.m. Meal will be provided by the church. Bring a dessert to share if you can.

Church Council

The Church Council will meet on Sunday, October 22 at 4:00 p.m.

EMW Meeting

The Women will have their next meeting on Sunday, October 22 at 6:00 p.m.

Charge Conference

The Council will meet on Monday, October 23 at 7:00 p.m. This will involve a virtual or zoom call with D. S. Rev. Lori Beth Huffman.

Our Military

Ricky Garland
Shane McRary
Jamie Mullinax
Hunter Tolbert



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

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

WORTHLESS LEADERS

Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed. —Proverbs 11:11 NIV

References: Judges 9:1-15, 16-57; Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2, pp. 751-755

Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. But God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem; and the lords of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. —Judges 9:22-23 NRSV

Overly ambitious Abimelech, the illegitimate son of Gideon (aka Jerubbaal), schemes to be appointed king of the territory by the men of Shechem where many Canaanites of his mother's lineage still dwell. He then proceeds to murder all but one of Gideon's 70 sons to cement his rule. Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal escapes, and later stands upon Mt. Gerizim and tells a fable as a prophetic warning to the people of Shechem who have agreed to let Abimelech reign over them.

The strange story of trees asking an olive tree, then a fig tree, and then a vine to reign over them and protect them; then finally settling for a bramble to be their king indirectly shows the people of Shechem their stupidity in appointing Abimelech as king. As the bramble is unfruitful and not tall enough to lord it over the trees, Abimelech himself is not worthy of being king or able to rule and protect those who have fallen under his spell.

"Oil, figs, and wine were the most valuable productions of the land of Canaan, whereas the briar was good for nothing but to burn...The briar, which has nothing but thorns upon it, and does not even cast sufficient shadow for anyone to lie down in its shadow and protect himself from the burning heat of the sun, is an admirable simile for a worthless man, who can do nothing but harm. The words of the briar, 'Trust in my shadow,' seek refuge there, contained a deep irony, the truth of which the Shechemites were very soon to discover." (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary of the Old Testament IV, pp. 563-564)

Unfortunately, this story can also be a picture of how good men and women prefer to spend their efforts in business and on personal matters and refuse to take up the mantle of political or church leadership; so that the less able and less faithful or selfish end up being elected or appointed to "rule over us" in government or in the administrative offices and ministries of the church. We need good and righteous leaders in both government and the church.

The rest of Judges Chapter 9 tells how the lords of Shechem and Abimelech turn to violence against one another, leading to the death of many, including 1,000 men, women, and children burned alive in a tower, the total destruction of two cities, and Abimelech's demise at the hands of a

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October Events

Homecoming/\$10,000 Sunday

October 8, 10:30 AM

Come help us celebrate a year of blessings from our Lord. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Frank Gordon. After the worship service, we will share a pot-luck meal. If you can, bring a dish of a favorite food or dessert to share.

We ask you to prayerfully consider a special gift to our church on this Sunday. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 over our normal Sunday offerings.



Join us as we worship our merciful and generous Lord and Savior, and remember all the blessings he has provided and continues to provide us. Also, We will be celebrating all our members and friends who have stood with us and by us in these troublesome and uncertain times. Certainly, we have learned in the past few years that:

God's Got This!

(Note: Sunday school classes will not meet on this Sunday.)

Something, cont'd

woman who pushes a millstone from the top of the second tower that lands on Abimelech's head—a fatal wound. But Abimelech orders his armor-bearer to finish him off to avoid people saying, 'A woman killed him.'

Power corrupts, and power obtained and used corruptly and for selfish reasons destroys. †

Trunk R Treat

Saturday
October 28
5-7 PM



It's that time again—spooky time! But you can play it safe at our church.

Bring all your kids and the neighbors kids, dressed up as their favorite hero or something spooky.

Our members will be dressing up their truck beds and trunks for the occasion. All our guests can walk down the line of vehicles and collect all the candy they can eat—and then go inside for a hotdog and brownie or cookie.

ALL FREE!



Happy Halloween!

We are collecting candy for this event now. We will also need brownies for the meal.

Dress up your car trunk or truck bed and help us distribute candy. We have some decorations available that you can use.

Time Change Coming
Regular time returns Nov. 5.
Turn clocks back ONE HOUR.

October Celebrations



- 3rd—Kevin Simmons
- 4th—Bleaka Hollar
- 5th—Brenda Kirby
- 5th—James Pitts
- 8th—Jackson Behmer
- 12th—Skylar Helton
- 12th—Michael Knepp
- 19th—Katelyn Mareece
- 21st—Loretta Helton
- 22nd—Colby Collins
- 26th—Victoria Coffey
- 27th—Aimie Gaylord
- 28th—Randy McRary

\$14,370+ profit

We shout out a GREAT BIG THANK YOU

To all our friends and neighbors who helped make our Barbecue Fundraiser such a success.

Special recognition goes to:

The Jeff Yount Family and Business who orchestrated the event;

Dudley Shoals Baptist Church;

Christ United Lutheran Church;

Grace Chapel Methodist Church;

And all the businesses that ordered barbecue plates for Friday and Saturday Lunches.

And the BIG TIPPERS, too.

May God Bless You All as you have blessed us.



Church Council — September 17, 2023

Attendees: Irene Austin, Rosanna Bachman, Ricky Baker, Ted Daniel, Kim Ellis, Bleaka Hollar, Monte Hollar, JoAnn Knepp, Kim Knepp, Marilyn Kohnle, John McCrary, Judy McCrary, Marsha McCrary, Cindy Sears, Becky Silver, Kenny Silver.

Our Scripture reading was from Psalm 84:1-7, 10-12: “How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God...Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you...Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere...O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.”

Marsha expressed how much comfort she felt when entering the church sanctuary. We are a welcoming church, too. God has always taken us up those steps we have come through in our efforts to remain true to His word. The disaffiliation process has made us all stronger, and God will be with us as we continue the process, paying for the costs, and continuing our ministries for God in our church and community. Marsha opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the two council meetings in August, and two charge conferences in August were read and approved. First motion to approve by Bleaka; second by Judy.

Financial Report – Irene Austin

We paid \$9,410 to our UMC apportionments for this year. We will not pay anymore until we get the total cost to disaffiliate, which will include the remainder of what we owe for this year. Irene reported that we have taken in \$101,796.79 in year-to-date contributions for the General Fund but have spent \$114,352.50. Our giving remains behind our spending. On a good note, we have received \$11,223 for our Action-MISC (disaffiliation)

fund. Our pastor’s health and retirement cost are running over budget (cost increases?) Other items that are slightly over budget at this point include propane, the church’s insurance (we had to increase and add coverage because of the disaffiliation process), security service, and music licensing.

We had a glitch in our bank deposits because the bank provided the wrong deposit slips for us (they had the UMM’s account number, instead of the church’s account number). That has been remedied.

John McCrary reported that the men have been busy and have more projects to do, such as, trimming trees, and cleaning out gutters, etc. for some of our members.

Trustees Report – Ricky Baker

Our flat roof area between the main buildings may be leaking again. That will be checked by the people who put the roof on last time. The outside kitchen faucet is leaking and will be replaced. The insurance people will be conducting an inspection soon. The AC in the CLC classrooms is having problems again, and the belt is squeaking badly again. Both will be checked and dealt with.

Pastor’s Report

Marsha McCrary went over Pastor Alan’s report, since he was at an Appalachian District required event for pastors. Our membership total is 169. He needs an address for Heather Wallace. He announced that anyone who expresses interest in joining Ebenezer will be passed on to whomever is appointed through the GMC. Pastor Alan will not be allowed to participate in any fundraisers that are specifically stated as being for raising funds for disaffiliation.

We will not have a regular Charge Conference this year. We will need to work on that with the

GMC regarding issues such as election of officers and the membership audit. Budget will need to wait until we know what our apportionments with the GMC will be, and the pastor’s salary, and what we will need to pay for the loan to pay for disaffiliation.

Pastor Alan thanked Billy Long’s brother-in-law for the beautiful containers for the Bible Retirement. He wants us to select a location to bury the items. He plans on during the ceremony in the first part of November.

Our Homecoming speaker will be Frank Gordon on October 8th. Pastor Alan will be attending the Pastor’s School and Convocation at Duke University October 15-17, so Bleaka will preach on the 15th.

See the Worship information on p. 5 for all the October services.

Since Pastor Alan is not disaffiliating from the UMC, his last day as our pastor will be December 31, 2023, though he will probably continue to live in the parsonage until the end of June.

Also, on December 31, we will have a Wesleyan Covenant Service “as a means of both celebrating [our] new relationship as a member congregation of the GM Church and renewing [our] covenant with God.” Please make plans to attend this very important service.

Global Methodist Church

Marsha announced that we have been accepted into the GMC. We received the welcoming letter which was signed and mailed on September 11, 2023. Our membership is effective as of August 30, 2023.

Marsha told us that the structure of the GMC is slightly different. We will have fewer committees, for instance. Ricky Baker and Wayne Ellis of the Trustees have signed

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Church Council, cont'd

(Continued from page 4)

some papers from the lawyer for the GMC; and Marsha sent them some of our officers and committee members names. There are lots more papers to be signed, and legal aspects to be taken care of before we finish with this process of disaffiliation. We will reincorporate under the name "Ebenezer Methodist Church Dudley Shoals" to differentiate us for all the other Ebenezer Methodist churches out there and acquire a new tax id and apply for tax exempt status. As of January 1, 2024, our name will no longer be Ebenezer United Methodist Church. We have been informed by the Global Methodist Church that we so not need to include their name in our title or in any other way on stationary, website, etc. We will add a link to the GMC on our website and include a note that we are affiliated with them.

Marsha encouraged us to be trusting in God as we complete this process and pay off the loan we will need to get to pay the fees and monetary obligations. May we do it all for God's glory.

New Business

Kim Ellis brought up a question about Homecoming and the \$10,000 giving goal for that day. Do we raise that amount or keep it the same. Though someone suggested that we shoot for one million dollars, we decided to keep it at \$10,000 over our regular offering amount, which would bring the total that we would like to get that Sunday to around \$13,000. Please be in pray about your giving for this special Sunday. We also agreed to participate in the annual Tree Lighting event at Granite Falls this year.


Kim Ellis said that we have plenty of Hole Sponsors for the Golf Tournament, but we need more golfing teams and volunteers to help with the lunch and at each golf hole. Please contact her if you can help.

We discussed the barbecue and the times our volunteers need to be there. On Thursday, around 8:30 a.m.; and on Friday around 8-8:30 a.m. You can come later too, since volunteers will be leave to deliver the plates and we will need other people to replace them for the plate preparation. Our church will be open for the barbecue supper from 4-7:00 p.m.

Monte Hollar requested the use of the CLC for a memorial/honor meal to be served to all the living veterans in the Dudley Shoals and Oakhill communities' area. Motion made to let him use the CLC free of charge. First by Judy. Second by Cindy. Motion passed. We would like to have some volunteers to help serve and clean up during this event. See Monte Hollar to volunteer.

Cindy brought up a problem with the Phone Tree system. She can't get it to work with the new computer using Windows 11. She suggested a change to an online service and was given permission to check that out. She also presented a picture of the new logo and header for Ebenezer's website that removes the cross and flame and United from our name. It was suggested that we add a link to the GMC, and a line saying that we are affiliated with the GMC.

Note that all our signage not a built-in part of our buildings must be changed by January 1, 2024.

Becky Silver closed the meeting with prayer. Minutes recorded by Cindy Sears. 

Other Dates to Know

- ◆ *October 8th*—Homecoming
Our guest Speaker will be former Ebenezer pastor, Rev. Frank Gordon.
Mark your calendar now!
- ◆ *October 28th*—Trunk R Treat
- ◆ *November 4th*—Country Store

Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts in Sept.:

- **In memory Bob** by Anonymous.
- **In memory of Kelly Minton** by Garry & Phyllis Minton.
- **In honor of Ebenezer's Men's Group** by Cindy Saterwhite.
- **In honor of All Who came to our fundraisers and Helpers and in honor of all our Dudley Shoals Baptist Friends and other Methodists and Churches and all others who helped us. Special Thanks to the Yount Family and Ronnie Spencer, Jean Spencer, Billy Wayne Campbell** by Delores and Gary Paul Campbell.

Oct. Worship Information

- *Oct. 1* — Matthew 21:23-32 (Communion Sunday & Baptism of Noah Baker)
- *Oct. 8* — Homecoming, 10:30 a.m. w/Rev. Frank Gordon
- *Oct. 15* — Laity Sunday (Bleaka Hollar preaching)
- *Oct. 22* — Matthew 22:15-22
- *Oct. 29* — Matthew 22:34-46 (Anointing will be offered)

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

Be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to be shaped by those desires you had when you were still ignorant. Instead, be holy in all that you do, just as God who called you is holy.

—1 Peter 1:14-15 GNT