

JESSICA STEVENS, GRIEF SUPPORT

• Dr. Howell shares news of Director of Young Adults Ministries Jessica Stevens: "As we know, life is about priorities, and sometimes the priorities we need to honor make it difficult to do the things we love. Jessica Stevens has discerned that she needs to step back from her role as Director of Young Adult Ministries to attend to the priorities of family and school. As you know, Jessica has four children under the age of five, and is currently working on her Master's degree at Duke. While she remains excited about the current activities in Young Adult Ministries, and knows that the future holds many possibilities, she feels that to give the ministry the attention it deserves she needs to make room for someone else



Jessica Stevens

to fill that role. She will remain an active member at Myers Park, and will enthusiastically participate in the ministries of the church. We are considering several options for moving forward and for making sure that this vital ministry continues to be successful. Express to her your deep gratitude, and ongoing support and love!"

- Rev. Bill Roth and Parish Nurse Susan Mobley are leading workshops to support those grieving a loss from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, November 19 and 26, in Room 109. Details: Carmen Rivera at 704-295-4818 or crivera@mpumc.org.
- Women in the church are invited to the Women's Fall Gathering from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, November 15, in Jubilee Hall for fellowship, hors d'oeuvres and a holiday missions market. Hear from speaker Lisa Koons, local pastor and Director of 24-7 Prayer and End Slavery Charlotte. Cost is \$10. Scholarships are available. Register at www.myersparkumc.org/women.



Building the treasure of a good foundation for the future.

- 1 Timothy 6:18-19

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Ken Garfield

We hope you received the postcard in the mail kicking off this season of making a difference through your financial commitment to the church in 2019. We share it again here, in case you missed it. Perhaps you wonder how we picked these folks to be in the photo, illustrating the works we do in the world. Truth be told, we "grabbed" them on a typically busy Sunday morning and said, "Come be in a photo!" There is, to be sure, a spiritual soundness to the randomness: We could have grabbed most anyone and they, too, would have illustrated how, together, we make a difference. In the photo at left are Reagan Oglesbee and her two kids. She has taught children's Sunday School. The three of them have visited a nursing home to spread a little sunshine. In the middle is Charles Lloyd, He makes a difference by ushering on Sunday mornings. He also helps serve the homeless through Room In The Inn, and more. At right are Jennie and Ry Winston. Members here



for years, their family has made a difference through Scouts, Bible study, hosting visitations after funerals and more. The beautiful thing is that we could have "grabbed" six others at random and the story would have been the same. Nearly all of us make a difference. Look in the mail soon for your packet of material on how to make a difference financially, including an Estimate of Giving card to support the 2019 church operating budget and Jubilee Plus! outreach fund. You can also make a commitment at www.myersparkumc.org/give. Maybe next time, we'll "grab" you for the photo shoot.

Snapshots

Advent awaits. It's never too early to note the many meaningful services, concerts and other activities that Myers Park United Methodist Church offers the congregation and community. Turn inside for the Advent calendar that shares dozens of opportunities now through the new year. Please note the slightly revised Christmas Eve schedule of services. Make time to serve our neighbors in need, here and around the world. You will also find the Advent calendar at www.myersparkumc.org. We will share it in the days ahead in the Sunday bulletins, churchwide eblasts and on social media. If you have any questions, reach us at 704-376-8584. In this season of excitement, pay particular attention to one very tender gathering. The annual Service of Hope and Consolation at 6:30 p.m. Monday, December 10, offers the bereaved a chance to light a candle and share in the fellowship of prayer. Whether you have lost a friend or loved one, or some other reason leaves you struggling to see the light of the season, join us. Perhaps the glow of the candles will warm you.

Sunday Schedule

Sanctuary Services
8:30, 9:45, 11:00 am

Church In The Round
8:45 a.m., Jubilee Hall

Holy Communion
9:30 a.m., Chapel

Sunday School
9:45 a.m.

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LEIGHTON'S BOOK IN GIFT SHOP; PARKER'S NEWS

- Evangelist Leighton Ford's new book is for sale in the Goodness Gracious! gift shop. In *Places of the Heart - A Journey with Paintings, Poetry and Reflections*, he shares his watercolor paintings and poetry to reflect on the places he's visited all over the world. Leighton will do a reading and sign books at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, November 11, at Park Road Books. Proceeds from book sales go to Leighton Ford Ministries, which mentors young Christian leaders. Leighton hosts his ministry's annual Christmas breakfast at 7:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 11, in Jubilee Hall. Our Director of Communications Ken Garfield helped edit and publish Leighton's book.
- Heads up, new carpeting is coming to Jubilee Hall and the upstairs lobby. Installation is planned as soon as it is delivered.



Leighton Ford

- Rev. Parker Haynes of St. Timothy United Methodist Church in Brevard - formerly an Associate Pastor here, of course - shares blessed news; He and Alisha had a little boy, Luke William Haynes, born on October 30. Baby, father, mother and big brother Wesley, 2½ are doing great.
- Middle schoolers are invited to help serve the city November 17-18, starting with a 24-hour famine at 9:00 a.m. Saturday, November 17, as they head to Loaves & Fishes food pantry to sort food. The holidays are among the busiest times of year for ministries like Loaves & Fishes, working to make sure the brightness shines for everyone. Youth will also serve alongside other organizations as they learn about hunger here and abroad, then spend the night at the church before going together to Sunday School. Register at www.mpumcyouth.org.



Parker Haynes

WON'T YOU REACH OUT THIS ADVENT?

Jubilee Store: We are teaming with Myers Park Presbyterian and Christ Episcopal churches to offer the Jubilee Store on December 8-9, this season at St. John's Baptist Church. The store gives families in Charlotte Family Housing the chance to buy Christmas gifts for their children at a cost that is affordable to them. To sign up to serve, access the store's Amazon Wish List or learn more, visit myersparkumc.org/jubilee-store.

Alternative Gift Market: Support our school partners in honor of a favorite teacher or any number of other worthy causes in honor of someone on your shopping list. View the Alternative Gift Market catalog at myersparkumc.org/alternative-gift-market or shop at the table in the Parish Life lobby from 9:00

a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunday, December 9, 16 and 23.

Angel Tree: This Christmas, more than 2.7 million children will mark the holiday with a mom or dad in prison. Working with Prison Fellowship Ministry, our church will have an Angel Tree with names and ages of local children whose parents are incarcerated. Stop by the tree in the Parish Life lobby starting Sunday, November 25, to pick up your angel. To volunteer or learn more, visit myersparkumc.org/angel-tree or reach Doug Caldwell at dougscaldwell@bellsouth.net.

Please turn inside for the Advent calendar of activities and services.

Passages

In Memory

William Hampton Ballentine, husband of Beverly Ballentine, who died on October 12, 2018. Bonnie Stonestreet Sturkey, mother of Beth Bryant and Jeff Sturkey and grandmother of Graham and Olivia Sturkey, who died on October 19, 2018. Betsy C. Thomas, mother of Charles Thomas and grandmother of Bill Thomas, who died on October 24, 2018. John Willard Dickens Sr., brother of Al Dickens, uncle of Bo Dickens and brother-in-law of Sharon and Ken Garfield, who died on October 29, 2018.

Babies

Abigail Margaret Goodman, daughter of Kimberly and Brad Goodman, born on October 5, 2018. Luke William Haynes, son of Alisha and Parker Haynes and brother of Wesley Haynes, born on October 30, 2018.

Weddings

Christine Anne Urbowicz and Jonathan David Sauter, married on October 27, 2018, at the church. Allison Herdman Meyer and Jay Michael Hoekstra, married on November 3, 2018, at the church.

After Three Quarters:

WHERE DO WE STAND FINANCIALLY?

Church member Richard Wood, chair of our Finance Committee, shares this update at the close of the third quarter. For more on any aspect of the business life of the church, reach Executive Director Saribeth Dozier at 704-295-4844 or saribeth@mpumc.org. Look elsewhere in the Cornerstone and in your mail for information about the campaign to support the work of the church in 2019.

Greetings all. I'm pleased to report that contributions to the church for the first nine months of 2018 totaled \$3,384,723. That's a 9.3-percent increase over the same period last year. The church operating budget for 2018 is \$5,635,568. Our operating expenses increased two percent over the same time period last year, which combines for a year-to-date operating deficit of \$614,477. By

comparison, the deficit at this same time in 2017 was \$806,474. I would ask that everyone prayerfully consider their giving pattern as we approach the holiday season and end of year.

Contributions to Jubilee Plus! out-the-door outreach fund for the first nine months of 2018 were \$522,621, which includes a carryover from 2017 of \$210,283. The goal is to raise \$1 million in 2018, so your support of this local and world outreach program is vital.

I look forward to reporting on the church's full-year 2018 financial results in the Cornerstone in January. Best wishes for a safe and wonderful holiday season, filled with peace.

SECURITY CONSULTANT TO STUDY WHAT WE DO; WHAT WE CAN DO BETTER

By Ken Garfield

Charlotte's Chris Swecker, who spent more than 24 years with the FBI, has been hired by our Safety/Security Committee to help the church do the best it can to protect people and property. The horror in Pittsburgh serves as the latest reminder of the need to act.

Swecker serves as a security consultant to houses of worship and others, providing counsel to institutions trying to respond aggressively yet prudently to the violence in our midst. You may also know him from his appearances as a security/terrorism "expert" on CNN and other cable news shows. His is a voice of objective reason.

He will take two to three weeks this autumn to assess our safety/security measures by talking with church staff and others, and studying what we do now. By the end of January, he intends to offer a written report and recommendations in four areas: Technology (cameras, locks, access, alarms, panic buttons and the like); people

(level of security provided by off-duty police officers, security professionals and others during business and other hours); an emergency response plan (lockdown, what to do when an intruder strikes); and soft security (background screening of volunteers, signing in children and others to church activities). A particular focus in all this is our preschool. It will then be up to the church to decide what to do with his recommendations.

The Safety/Security Committee is chaired by church members Tom Harrall and Jim Zopp. The group is preaching this key tenet to the congregation: *If You See Something (that seems amiss), Say Something.*



Chris Swecker

TOGETHER, WE TALKED BOLDLY ABOUT RACE AND RECONCILIATION

By Ken Garfield

It's going to take something bold and out of the box to reconcile our differences, most notably race. Maybe the best place to begin is with a bold and out-of-the-box conversation.

As our congregation continues to take on the racial divide, 150 gathered in Jubilee Hall for a give-and-take with pastor/author/activist Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove of Durham. He wrote *Reconstructing The Gospel: Finding Freedom from Slaveholder Religion*, and his visit with us was as honest as his book. Racial blindness is part of the white experience, he told us. Such was White Christian culture in the South back in the day, believers read the Bible in a way that opposed abolitionists fighting against slavery.

But we didn't just talk predictably about the past and what ails us today. This gathering went outside that box. Instead of straight rows of chairs, we sat in a circle to inspire the hearing of other's words. We opened this latest step on the race journey by singing a freedom

song – *Lord, hold my hand while I run this race...* We listened to Jonathan suggest that we begin with an admission: "Honest to God, we don't know what to do because we've been blind." We agreed that reconciliation is going to take all of us working together – churches, schools, neighborhoods, "Our common life," as Jonathan put it. We handed out action sheets, suggesting how to turn our good intentions into great practices. Among them: Shop and eat at businesses owned by people of color. We wrote on slips of paper the words that come to mind when we reflect on this night, among them: Bridge. Risk. Love.

As we began with a freedom song, we closed with one that can carry us through to the next time: *Somebody's hurt my brother and it's gone on for too long. And we won't be silent anymore.*

To learn more about our church's lay-driven racial reconciliation initiative, reach John Clarkson at JClarkson@med.miami.edu or Ron Knappe at ronknappe@icloud.com.

WHY OUR FAMILY CHOSE SEDGEFIELD

Church members Jen and Rob Ford and their family have had the opportunity to get to know Sedgfield Middle School from two perspectives: As our church's partner school, and then as their son's school after she and Rob decided to enroll Robert this year. Here Jen shares the experience of becoming a Sedgfield Middle School family.

As our family weighed middle school options for Robert, we had more choices due to CMS rezoning. We toured Alexander Graham Middle School, our neighborhood school; Sedgfield Middle, and several magnet options. Here's why we chose Sedgfield:

Smaller Classroom Sizes. Sedgfield Middle has a smaller enrollment (500 students in Grades 6-8). We felt the difference in the student population size when we toured. Our son is experiencing the benefits of small classroom sizes and more teacher attention.

Neighborhood School. Robert loves that he can ride his bike to and from school each day with his two best friends. They live in Dilworth and chose to attend Sedgfield Middle, too.

More Opportunities. Because the student population is small, Robert has more opportunities to join clubs, achieve leadership positions and play on athletic teams. We also wanted to help the school so we joined the Hoplite Booster Club and PTO as board members.

Principal Erik Turner. Our opinion of Principal Turner sealed the deal. We were impressed when we spoke to him. Everyone



The Fords of Myers Park United Methodist Church.

in the school community speaks highly of him.

Several weeks into this school year, our family feels strongly that we made the right decision. We look forward to the continued improvements that the school will make – improvements that will positively impact the Sedgfield neighborhood and all of Charlotte.

My family is happy to talk to you about Sedgfield Middle and our decision. Reach us at robandjenford@yahoo.com. To get involved in our school partnership, visit www.myersparkumc.org/school-partnership-ministries.