



An Essay:

HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Ken Garfield

The church calendar is a funny thing. Officially it says August 31. But in a spiritual sense, a new year has begun, with all the hopes, resolutions and programs that come with it. Such is life at Myers Park United Methodist Church... The flock has returned from Blowing Rock and the beach and reclaimed their rightful place in the pews on Sunday morning. Suddenly the shuttle bus that carries us to and from worship is filled with the chatter of fellowship. There is barely room in *the Cornerstone* and Sunday bulletins for our news: Dr. Howell's two Monday evening programs on talking civilly, and the tricky mix of religion and politics. Little ones in our booming Children's Ministries moving up to the next class on their way to grownuphood. Bible study and other small groups forming. People packing for mission trips to Brazil and Haiti, and

“Saints cannot exist without a community...”

-Duke Divinity School's Stanley Hauerwas

making sandwiches for neighbors closer to home. Confirmands starting their journey on September 11. That sweet aroma in Jubilee Hall telling us H.O.T. Wednesday's back on September 14. Music Ministries welcoming people of all ages and ability to add to the harmony. Stephen Ministers, Care Team members, casserole-makers, hospital visitors, prayer shawl-knitters, all taking love to a higher level... All together, the church and its people, praying that in this “new” year, we finally turn the tide toward love.

MYERS PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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SNAPSHOTS

Local Missions Coordinator Jen Rothacker writes: “If you’ve been through the Parish Life Building lately (just down from the gift shop), you’ve probably noticed the TV screen outside the Missions Office, playing videos and scrolling messages about missions. It’s been great to see lay members and staff pausing to look, and to think about how best to tell our stories. The lineup has included videos about upcoming trips to Haiti and Brazil. Look for more videos, announcements and news of upcoming outreach.”

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sanctuary services
8:30, 9:45, 11:00 a.m.

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

Holy Communion
9:30 a.m., Chapel.

Sunday School
9:45 a.m.

A Conversation On Faith

THE PANTHERS BEAT WRITER

Church member Joe Person has one of the coolest jobs going, covering the Carolina Panthers for *The Charlotte Observer*,



Ken Garfield

traveling to stadiums across the country, chasing down Cam for quotes, kazillions of fans hanging on his (and Cam's) every word. And yet, over an iced coffee in Starbucks, one eye on his phone lest breaking NFL news appears, Joe knows there's more to do. There is fulfillment in satisfying the passion of fans whose team has brought us together. Blacks, whites, rich, poor, we've all rallied around the Panthers, their success offering a brief reprieve from life's harsher realities. But beyond “feeding the beast,” as he calls his daily stories on players and games, Joe appreciates that deeper stories wait to be told. He sees the challenge, and accepts it as his calling.

Joe and I missed each other at *The Observer* by a few years, though we could talk for hours about mutual friends and bosses. A



Joe Person

former tight end for William & Mary, Joe's been a sportswriter for 24 years, the last seven covering the Panthers. He never turns his phone off, but he's talented enough to balance the job and his great family – Beth, a teacher at Dilworth Elementary, and three young kids. Joe, 46, is a good Methodist, too. Occasionally (not always, he admits with his smile) he'll attend the 8:30 a.m. Sunday service on the way to the game.

But as we talked NFL, Joe shared some reservations about their son, John, 9, playing tackle football. That kicked off our conversation on the issues that tend to get lost in our national obsession: The player

Continued Inside...

In Memory

The sympathy of the ministers and members is extended to:

The Families Of...

Pauline Brown Brady, mother of Jerry Brady and grandmother of John Brady and Jenni Hight, who died on August 10, 2016. *Margaret Perry Fricks Glenn*, mother of Lynn Rogers, who died on August 14, 2016. *Gary Lynn Polk*, brother of Ron Polk and uncle of Julie Hough, who died on August 20, 2016.

Babies

John Winfield Scott Ross, son of Jennifer and Jack Ross and brother of Ella and Charlotte Ross, born on July 20, 2016. *Elizabeth "Ellie" Grace Spencer*, daughter of Christy and

Brandon Spencer, born on August 7, 2016. *Everett Coleman Milbourn*, son of Leigh and Dave Milbourn and brother of Landon Milbourn, born on August 15, 2016. *Benjamin Samuel "Sam" Dobson Jr.*, son of Sarah and Ben Dobson, brother of Elizabeth and Kate Dobson, grandson of Liz and Carl Wicker and Sassy and Tug Tugwell, nephew of Katie and Christopher Lundin and Chuck Dobson and cousin of Anna Lundin, born on August 15, 2016. *Roan Alexander Vance*, son of Whitney and Travis Vance and brother of Haleigh Vance, born on August 19, 2016.

Weddings

Camilla Calloway Johnston and William Samuel Smoak Jr., married on August 6, 2016, in Blowing Rock. *Jordan Padgett and Josh Cash*, married on August 27, 2016, at the church.

God's Word, In My Life

'HE MUST BECOME GREATER; I MUST BECOME LESS'

A new Cornerstone feature offers church members and staffers the opportunity to share a Bible verse and its meaning at that moment in their life. Here, Middle School Youth Associate Mollie Grooms offers a verse that resonated in this summer of youth missions.

"You work with middle schoolers? Bless you! You're taking them on a mission trip for a whole week? I don't know how you do it!"

I often hear these statements, and they make me smile. I love working with middle schoolers, and leading them on mission trips is one of my favorite parts of youth ministry. How do I "survive" a middle school mission trip? I get out of the way and let God work.

My prayer this summer has been based on what Jesus said in John 3:30: "He must become greater; I must become less." When I'm tired from sleeping on a floor all week, when I'm hungry from not eating enough camp food, when a middle school boy is trying to push my buttons, I pray, "God, become greater. I can't do it on my own."



Mollie Grooms (left) and middle schoolers on a mission.

It's in those humbling moments that God's grace becomes evident. It's through God's grace that I had the opportunity to teach a sixth-grade girl how to use a power washer and lead middle schoolers in building (and rebuilding, oops!) a fence. It's in those moments that they, like me, feel God's grace.

A Conversation On Faith

THE PANTHERS BEAT WRITER...

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concussions that ruin lives and threaten to undermine the NFL brand. The rise of gambling and fantasy football that, if left unchecked, can ruin families. Players getting bigger, stronger, faster, some naturally, others with pharmaceuticals. The lust for violence that has turned the game into a spectacle, stadiums full of fans cheering for bone-crunching hits. "There are some hits," Joe says, "that make you cringe."

Why do some of us cringe, then cheer?

Joe and I had no answers during our afternoon together. But just asking the questions, and seeing the hunger in Joe's eyes to take them on, was inspiring enough. A calling indeed.

Director of Communications Ken Garfield writes about church life.

Each issue of the Cornerstone offers a bonus page of programs, classes and other activities offering the faithful a chance to learn, serve and grow. To share news for The Life Of The Church, reach Director of Communications Ken Garfield at 704-295-4819 or ken@mpumc.org.



August 31, 2016

- **TALKING CIVILLY** Dr. Howell will lead a program at 7:00 p.m. Monday, September 12, in Jubilee Hall on how to initiate a civil conversation with someone you don't understand or even know. He'll engage in a dialogue with Molly Barker, whose Red Boot Coalition (www.theredbootcoalition.org) is focused on what it calls "honest sharing and compassionate listening." Molly's campaign puts it this way: "Our goal is to get beneath the issues and ideologies that perpetuate the us-and-them mindset so prevalent in the world today, and look to the human...the story...the humanity of another."
- **RELIGION AND POLITICS** In the midst of this bitter election season, Dr. Howell will explore religion and politics from a Christian and Methodist perspective at 7:00 p.m. Monday, September 26, in Jubilee Hall.
- **SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP FORMING** Energy seems to be bubbling at the church around race, reconciliation, education, economics and housing. Those who sense a calling to think about how to engage the issues from a Christian and Methodist perspective can reach Dr. Howell at 704-295-4850 or james@mpumc.org. The *Step Jump Leap* plan urges the church to advocate for social justice.
- **STEP, JUMP, LEAP ONLINE** The plan to reignite church efforts in five areas – Grow In Faith, Radical Hospitality, Community Building And Partnerships, Education, and Affordable Housing – is at www.myersparkumc.org. Read *Step, Jump, Leap*, as it's called, then reach Dave Lank at 704-909-8152 to learn more.
- **NEW CLASS FOR WOMEN** Women of all ages are invited to a new class – *Simply Women* – that will meet at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday in Room 167 in the Youth Building starting September 18. Participants will share Bible study and fellowship. Details: Director of Young Adults Jessica Stevens at 704-295-4803 or jessica@mpumc.org.
- **MINDFULNESS BOOK STUDY** Parish Nurse Susan Mobley will facilitate a book study on *Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World* by Mark Williams and Danny Penman. The class will meet Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to noon from September 19 to November 14 in Room 103 in the Parish Life Building. To sign up, reach Carmen Rivera at 704-295-4818 or crivera@mpumc.org.
- **SING AND PLAY** Want to sing or play music at church? Opportunities abound for all abilities and commitment levels with the Chancel Choir, Women's Ensemble, Church In The Round group and handbell choirs. Find out about rehearsal times and other details at www.myersparkumc.org or reach Nancy Hamff at 704-295-4831 or nancy@mpumc.org.
- **RISING STRONG WORKSHOP** Church member Frances Baldwin will lead a six-session workshop at the church based on Brene' Brown's book, *Rising Strong*, from 9:30 a.m. to noon Fridays from September 16 to October 21 in Room 105 of the Parish Life Building. The workshop will focus on helping people "get up when they find themselves face down in the arena," as Brown puts it. To learn more and sign up, reach Frances at 704-654-0064 or frances@baldwindavis.com.
- **ACOLYTES, BIBLE CARRIERS, CRUCIFERS** Youth in Grades 5-12 are welcome to serve in this Sunday morning ministry: Fifth-graders serve as Bible carriers, processing into Sanctuary worship with the Bible. Youth in Grades 6-9 serve as Acolytes, processing in with torches and lighting the altar candles. Youth in Grades 10-12 lead the processional, carrying the cross into the Sanctuary. Training for all three roles is from 10:00 a.m. to noon Saturday, September 24, and 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Sunday, October 16, both in the Sanctuary. Youth must attend one session. A parent must attend, too, to learn about scheduling, procedures and dress requirements. Adults are also invited to train to serve as Sunday morning coach, a commitment of once every four to six Sundays. Details: Amelia Miller at cmiller5@carolina.rr.com.
- **CARING FOR AGING PARENTS** The congregation and community are invited to a panel discussion on *Issues In Caring For Aging Parents* at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 20, in Francis Chapel. Sponsored by Stephen Ministries, the panel will include Parish Nurse Susan Mobley, Rev. Bill Roth and church member Bob Truscello. Among the topics: Spirituality, and expectations when facing this challenge in life.
- **HABITAT BUILD** The church will team with Myers Park Presbyterian to build a Habitat For Humanity house starting Friday, September 9. To sign up or learn more, reach Rob Weller at rweller1973@yahoo.com.



All in pink, church youth gathered for the annual Flamingo Banquet in Jubilee Hall. Photo by Ellen Spence.

FAITH, FUN AND FLAMINGOS



Abby Shipp, a rising senior at Myers Park High School, has graced the congregation with her storytelling skills this summer in the Cornerstone. Here she reports from Youth Ministries' annual Flamingo Banquet celebrating a summer of service with videos, a taco bar and the promise of youth with heart. Abby is the daughter of Scott and Jill Shipp.

Jubilee Hall was filled with love, life and High School Youth Associate Jason Rhymer's hot pink pants at the Flamingo Banquet. Youth and their parents had the opportunity to see the amazing work and bonding that came from each mission trip we took this summer. And the rising high school seniors – including me – continued to live in the moment of lasts as we look toward college and life beyond.

Each mission trip was featured in a slide show of photos and videos. A snapshot shown on the screen was a moment from

the trip worth remembering. The room filled with giggles, and some of us kids shouting, "I remember that! Now I really want to go back."

The "Mission Trip Blues" have definitely kicked in once we have returned home after a summer of service. The Flamingo Banquet remind us of friendships made and friendships strengthened. As rising high schools seniors, we are reminded of how important this church has been in our young and unfolding lives.

This is a year of lasts for sure. But it is a year as well of looking back and remembering just how great it's been.

PRESCHOOL STARTS THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 6

The Children's Circle church preschool begins its 70th year the week of September 6, welcoming more than 200 children to a ministry devoted to growth, spiritual and otherwise.

The half-day preschool this year features 41 staff members working with children ages one to five in 19 classes. Enrollment is at capacity, and an early heads up: School starts at 9:00 a.m., so anticipate that preschool line of traffic on weekdays. Art, science, math, media, music, chapel and creative movement will all be offered this year. Children again will flock to the natural playground. As always, three family-friendly special events are planned: The Children's Circle Ball, Spring Carnival and Art Night. The Parent Council helped raise money to buy new furniture.

To learn more about the preschool, visit www.thechildrenscircle.org or call 704-376-5208.



Fun at the last preschool Spring Carnival.

News & Notes

BLOOD DRIVE, SPIRITUAL RETREAT, SWIM PARTY

- Mark those calendars: The next chance to give blood at church is Sunday, October 16, in the Youth Building Gym. Details to come.
- The church will host a series of four October programs – *Spiritual Wellness* – to help health care providers navigate the challenges of their work. Each gathering will be at 7:00 p.m. in Room 108 of the Parish Life Building. On October 3, Dr. Howell explores *Incorporating Spirituality In Patient Care*. On October 10, life and business coach Nicole Greer leads a conversation on *Receiving Peace Throughout The Day – Avoiding Caregiver Burnout*. On October 17, Dr. Warren Kinghorn of Duke Divinity School and Duke University School of Medicine considers *Practicing Christian Ethics In Health Care*. The series ends October 24 as Dr. Ray Barfield of Duke Divinity and Duke medical schools looks at *Standing In Hope Amidst Suffering*. The series is for doctors, nurses, therapists, speech pathologists and others engaged in health care. Details: Parish Nurse Susan Mobley at 704-295-4836 or smobley@mpumc.org. Church members are encouraged to let their health care providers know about the series.
- *Staffer Christine Mull reports:* “An excited group of 28 gathered at Caraway Conference Center outside Asheboro for a recent spiritual retreat led by Rev. Bill Roth. As we considered *How, Then, Shall We Live*, we learned ways to reclaim our identity and the gifts we offer the world as children of God. Ranging in age from their early 50s to early 80s, each person rediscovered that we have much to offer in our second half of life. Said Tamea Price, a Rock Hill resident and frequent participant in the Single Boomers ministry: ‘I am grateful that you all included and accepted me in your group. The fellowship and the delicious food was outstanding and heartwarming. My heart has been tickled and warmed.’”
- The church regularly hosts meaningful programs put on by outside ministries, including this one open to church members: A *Women & Alzheimer’s* workshop from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Thursday, September 29, will feature a talk by Kim Campbell. She’s the wife of country music legend Glenn Campbell, who suffers from Alzheimer’s. The workshop will explore the disease’s impact on caregiver and patient. The program, including lunch, costs \$50. Details: 704-577-3186.
- Church member Rachel Humphries of Refugee Support Services shared the joy of a recent swim party at the Jewish Community Center for 120 adults and kids new to this country – many of them new to a swimming pool. Our church provided transportation.
- Nothing like a little Sunday School class pride. Folks in *Living The Questions* shared that class member Linda Hartell graces the cover of the Aldersgate retirement community brochure. That’s Linda in the full-color photo, walking her dog, Callie. Thanks to Margaret Claiborne for bringing it to *the Cornerstone’s* attention.



Thanks to Barbara Hambacher for these photos, including folks enjoying fellowship over their meal at the retreat.



A group enjoys a game of dominos on the “How, Then, Shall We Live” retreat led by Rev. Bill Roth.



With the church’s help, Refugee Support Services threw a swim party at the Jewish Community Center.

ADULTS' PLUS! ANSWERING A BROADER CALL

Staffer Christine Mull writes about Adults Plus!, as she puts it, "Not just another seniors' group."

Adults Plus! is more than 30 years old, a caring Christian community at church that enriches the lives of adults 55 and over. Initially meant to provide daytime programs for adults transitioning into retirement, the ministry has seen its ups and downs. Today, it enjoys revitalized attendance and purpose. At one time considered the group for the 70-and-over crowd, now we see men and women of a range of ages, drawn to the diverse programs and fellowship over lunch.

This mixing of the generations adds another layer to the lasting success of this ministry, which continues offering enriching programs, fun entertainment (join us for our Christmas concert) and fellowship.

Adults Plus! embraces another purpose: To remind us that we are all called to act on issues affecting the world around us, no matter our age or stage in life. To that end, we must remain connected and educated about current events. Throughout this next year and beyond, Adults Plus! will explore how we can *#livedifferently*.

A new year of Adults Plus! programs kicks off at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, September 21, in Room 103 of the Parish Life Building. Molly Barker of Charlotte's Red Boot Coalition will discuss her work promoting what she calls "honest sharing and compassionate listening." This follows up her conversation with Dr. Howell at 7:00 p.m. Monday, September 12, in Jubilee Hall. After Adults Plus!, a barbecue chicken lunch follows at noon in Jubilee Hall. To make a reservation by noon September 20, call 704-376-5520 (option two) or e-mail cmull@mpumc.org.



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LIVE! FROM NEW YORK! IT'S ELLEN ROBISON

Rev. Ellen Robison, our dear friend and former staffer, checks in from New York, where she's the new Minister of Worship and the Arts at The Riverside Church in Manhattan. You can say hey to Ellen at erobison@trcnyc.org.



Rev. Ellen Robison

in an old office with mold so Kevin Wright (another former staffer at Myers Park United Methodist) has lobbied for me to move up to a new office on the education floor across from him. It pays

to have friends in high places! I preached on a recent Sunday and afterward, at the door, all these closet Methodists came out of the woodwork to tell me they were glad to have another Methodist on staff. So many fun things to do here in New York City. I plan to start taking advantage of them after I get my NY ID card that gets me into a lot of museums, concerts and more for free. I miss you all and hope you can visit soon."

The church continues seeking a successor for Ellen as our Minister of Worship and the Arts. Stay tuned.