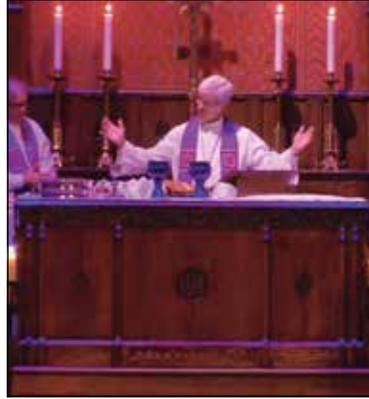


CELEBRATING 2017

MYERS PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR



Bailey Caudle, Dr. Howell in mission in Armenia. Maundy Thursday.

Friends,
 We are so happy to provide you with this look back, prepared so ably by Ken Garfield, to another stellar year in 2017. I have a sense that we countered the animosity in our country and culture by listening to and caring for one another. We worshipped and learned more about God. We responded well to God's call to be in mission — especially around the idea of building relationships with people who are in need or are just plain different with *The 100K Dream* challenge. I am always moved when I see teams going all over the world — to Puerto Rico, Armenia, Kenya, Mexico, Costa Rica, Haiti and more — and also when folks hunker down in our classrooms to wrestle with God's Word. Then we gather in worship to raise our voices in praise, to hear God's challenge, and then to exit the building, determined to be more holy, prayerful, and generous. God has done great things for us, and through us in the past year — which gives us good cause to look forward to even more in 2018. What a privilege it is for me to serve as your pastor.

DR. JAMES C. HOWELL
 SENIOR PASTOR

ABOUT THE COVER

CELEBRATING 2017
 MYERS PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT



Take a look at the cover of our 2017 annual report and admire the beauty of the stained glass in Francis Chapel. Now look again — closely! — and admire the uniqueness of the photo. It's made up of the 349 photos of church life that we posted on Instagram in 2017. Assistant Director of Communications Melissa McGill had the idea and designed it to perfection. From the retirement reception for Sarah Sumner to an Easter lily, the mosaic reflects the vibrancy of life at Myers Park United Methodist Church. Now turn inside to read about the vibrancy of church life in 2017.

MYERS PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Address: 1501 Queens Road, Charlotte, NC 28207 | Phone: 704-376-8584 | Web: www.myersparkumc.org

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Dennis Heydanek doesn't shy away from tough conversations. For the last 10 years of his career at Dow Chemical Co., he negotiated thorny environmental issues with the goal of finding common ground and getting to the win-win. So when our church announced the formation of a racial reconciliation dialogue group soon after the riots in the Fall of 2016, he thought it might make a good fit.

Dennis joined a half-dozen Myers Park United Methodist Church members and a half-dozen members from the predominantly black St. Mark's United Methodist Church to discuss the book *Shout* over several months. He heard about the need for strong male mentors and less biased zoning laws. He shared his upbringing near Chicago as it struggled with racial violence in the 1950s and 1960s.

"I didn't pay enough attention then," Dennis says of his youth. "Maybe this is the Lord saying to me: 'I showed you what was wrong, so maybe now you can make it right.'"

The work of making it right is slow. As Dr. Howell has



Sharing fellowship in these challenging times.

noted, our attention spans are short when it comes to matter of race. "Unfortunately," he says, "we live in a portion of the culture that has a been-there-done-that attitude when it comes to diversity, and our internal, unseen racism (and more so the cultural, institutional racism) are rather contentedly left unaddressed."

Dennis hopes he can maintain a relationship with St. Mark's and continue the honest conversations. It's a hope he shares for all of us. "I always said if you're going to stand on the outside and throw bricks at people, that won't get us to a solution. You have to contribute one of your most precious things: Your time."

— Jen Rothacker

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

SO OFTEN YOU WATCH THE news report on the tension between races and you feel powerless. What can one person do? You can become immobile thinking about the causes of racial division and the solutions. That feeling is often where the process ends — there's nothing I can do so

I will do nothing. When I read in 2017 about our church youth being invited to participate in *Pass the Peace* dinners with African-American neighbors and police, I thought to myself, "Now there's a place to start." This is something I can do, something my son, Wray, 14, can do to make

a difference in the community. It isn't hard. It doesn't take a PhD. As I learned in 2017, all we have to do is eat dinner together.

— Rebecca Farlow

ON A MISSION IN 2017

Local Missions Coordinator Megan Jones shares the stories of four powerful ministries in 2017.

THE 100K DREAM



The 100K Dream kickoff.

Rev. Nathan Arledge, our Minister of Missions, dreamed that the people of Myers Park United Methodist Church would serve 100,000 hours in 2017 — *The 100K Dream*. More than a metric, this was meant to encourage people to think about where they serve, whom they meet and how their lives are enriched. “When you learn someone’s name,” Nathan says, “the game changes.”

No story better captured *The 100K Dream* than that of nine-year-old Davis Berger, who met a new friend named Jamil while serving at Room in the Inn. “After dessert, we met Jamil. He’s five and goes to kindergarten. His dad was very quiet. But after dinner, his dad played the piano. Some of the parents started to sing along. I thought Jamil’s dad looked sad.

After a while, we went to the gym to play basketball. Someone got out some toys and I pushed Jamil on a truck. He’s just like us. He goes to school, he likes to read and he can dribble two basketballs at the same time. I asked if we could do Room in the Inn again. I’d like to play with Jamil. I hope his family gets a home, with a piano, soon. I think it would make his dad smile.”

ZOE



Nathan and friend in Kenya.

In 2017, we were blessed to come to know a group of 36 young people, *The Conquerors*, who make up our working group through ZOE, our partner in Kenya.

Brandon Lowery, who traveled there with Rev. Nathan Arledge in February, shares: “Seeing the sunrise in northern Kenya while elephants and giraffes make their way across the landscape is an

image hard to forget. But nothing we saw on that morning compared to the children of ZOE we met. ZOE’s model works. It is not relief aid, but empowerment to help orphans help themselves. This is done by grouping orphans and vulnerable children in working groups of 20 to 30 heads of household, providing them with a new family and support system. ZOE provides training on food/water security, child rights, health and hygiene, shelter, economic training and psycho-social support. We met Winfrend in Kiula village. Just 18, she is in charge of caring for five younger siblings. Winfrend completed her ZOE training and opened a tea shop and general store in her village. She is thriving after just seven months in ZOE. Her tea shop has what appeared to be the only TV in the village. After ordering and receiving your tea, once your cup is empty, you must buy another or give up your seat to a waiting customer. Winfrend is now a confident young woman able to provide the funds needed to re-enroll her younger siblings in school.”

ON A MISSION IN 2017

HURRICANE RELIEF



Our team in Houston.

Sadly, 2017 brought far too many opportunities to walk alongside neighbors around the world in the wake of hurricanes and other natural disasters. While many of us donated resources — including more than \$64,000 — others were able to get their hands dirty, traveling to Houston and Puerto Rico after the two storms.

Says Rev. Hannah Terry of Westbury United Methodist Church in Houston: “In August, the beautiful people of Myers Park reached out to Westbury, saying, ‘We’re praying. We’re fundraising. It’s our practice to build relationships with local folks who have their nose to the ground and know the neighborhood. Are you open to us partnering with you?’ We answered: ‘PRAISE GOD, YES.’ For the next month, these amazing Methodists were praying for us and encouraging us. They prepared to come, see and serve. Then they came in the flesh, walking alongside,

serving where needed. They are amazing partners. Thank you, Lord.”

A trip to Puerto Rico followed in November, where more than half the population lacked access to power and clean drinking water after Hurricane Maria. In all these places, we sought to bring tangible help and a reminder that those struggling to rebuild are not forgotten.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



Freedom School fun.

Our partnerships with Sedgefield Elementary School, Sedgefield Middle School and Freedom School represent some of our most enduring connections to the community.

For The Love Of Reading matches second-grade students with twice-a-week reading buddies. For Pam DeRamus, one of the ministry’s lay leaders, the experience was incredibly meaningful. She shares: “As *For The Love Of Reading* wound down, I looked back on what a joy it has been. This week, I joined the students for lunch,

2018 MISSION TRIPS

Details: www.myerspark.umc.org

ADULTS

- ZOE in Kenya (two trips): January 30-February 9 and February 20-March 2
- Costa Rica: March 31-April 7
- Mexico: Alumni mission, May
- Cuba: June 2018
- Brazil: July 6-15
- Cambodia: Fall 2018

YOUTH

- Mountain T.O.P. in Tennessee: June 23-30
- Passport Camp at Furman University, Greenville, S.C.: July 9-14
- Reynosa, Mexico: July 22-28
- Kenya Senior Mission Trip: Last two weeks in June

and the hugs and smiles I received when I got there were such a gift.”

Many students we came to know during the school year continued learning in the summer as Freedom School scholars. Says Lynn Hodges, who served with both ministries: “It was my pleasure to be a part of Freedom School. It was a great opportunity for me to see my little friend, Ahnyla, who I read with during the school year.”

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In Music Ministries, a new (used) organ was purchased for Francis Chapel. Myers Park Bells participated in their first road trip, joining the Chancel Choir to perform *The Armed Man: A Mass For Peace* in New York. Our various musical ensembles are home to 284 participants, with another 40 volunteers helping in all sorts of ways. Together, they inspired us in 2017, including at the Christmas concerts and on a two-set CD of choral and instrumental music for Advent and Christmas, *Expectation*.

- A Planned Giving Committee expanded its work in 2017, sharing with the congregation the importance of planned gifts in insuring the future financial foundation of the church. The group produced a video (available at www.myersparkumc.org) and met with Sunday School classes to tell the story. Those who have already made a planned gift or who do so in 2018 will be eligible to become a member of the Wesley Circle, honoring the commitment to the future of Myers Park United Methodist Church.

- In *Faith Formation*, the *Lenten Focus On Prayer* deepened the season. The prayer pilgrimage in the South Tryon community “was



Some of our young friends in Kenya.

a beautiful way to practice being neighbors together in prayer,” Dr. Melanie Dobson said. A Wednesday lunchtime Centering Prayer practice began in 2017. The Weekend Apart at Mepkin Abbey offered silence and solitude amid the noise and distractions of our fevered culture.

- In Health Ministries/Parish Nursing, six new Care Teams were formed in 2017, bringing the number of active teams to 15. Each one assists individuals in need. A Caregiver Support Group began meeting monthly, offering caregivers a chance to share the rewards and challenges of caring for a loved one.

THERE IS SO MUCH MORE...

- Dr. Howell and Rev. Bill Roth explored the meaning of Christian marriage, then hosted a Vow

Renewal Service in the Sanctuary.

- The church welcomed incoming committee chairs while applauding the work of outgoing chairs: Will Barr succeeded Mark Kinghorn as Administrative Board chair. Richard Wood succeeded Dennis Soter as Finance Committee chair. Beverley Shull succeeded Tina Weinberg as Trustees chair.

- Director of Information Technology Ron Clontz coordinated stepped-up efforts to monitor and enhance online security. Staff training was also expanded, to keep the church one step ahead of cyber threats. Also, aging servers are being replaced.

- Overall security continues to be studied in the wake of wanton violence elsewhere. A committee is looking at how best to safeguard the

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

church and congregation, including beefed-up police presence, better communications, staff and usher training and more. That committee will begin meeting in January. To learn more about this vital focus, or to make a suggestion, reach Executive Director Saribeth Dozier at (704) 295-4844 or saribeth@mpumc.org.

- In everything we did in 2017 and will continue to do — worshipping, praying, knitting prayer shawls, offering a listening ear through Stephen Ministries, holding each other accountable in small groups, enjoying fellowship at H.O.T. Wednesday, wrapping high



Ruth Circle members making Easter baskets for children in Kenya, and at Sedgefield Elementary.

school seniors in blankets, raising a community garden, ringing bells, shopping at Goodness Gracious!, bringing food for Loaves & Fishes, making sandwiches for Urban Ministry Center, greeting Sunday

morning visitors, driving the van to Aldersgate, celebrating a baptism, toasting a marriage, mourning a death, learning through Disciple Bible Study and more — there is a common thread. And it is love.

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

THURSDAYS ARE THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WEEK

because of the yoga class I faithfully attend — and it's at my church. I have been attending *Ground of Grace Yoga* led by Dr. Melanie Dobson. I love sharing with fellow yogis that my favorite yoga class is the one I attend at my church, led by one of our pastors. "That's so cool" they say. I like yoga because of the attention to

the inner self that it provides, along with stretching and strengthening my body. *Ground of Grace* adds another dimension by relating Scripture to the poses and breathing. Melanie takes the Lectionary reading for the week and plans her yoga class around the theme of the Scripture. After centering ourselves, Melanie reads the Scripture, offers a short reflection, then leads us through

poses linked to our breath, relating them to the theme. Our yoga class becomes moving Scripture. Working through difficult passages by holding difficult poses or trying a new pose makes Jesus' words relatable. We are in different stages of life. But when we are on the mat, we are one in the fellowship and grace of God.

— Lynn Cacchione

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Growth and change characterized Children's Ministries in 2017. We celebrated the lifelong ministry of Sarah Sumner with love, and welcomed Amy Harriman with excitement for what the future holds.

Since January 2017, 42 babies have been born into our church family. Three new Sunday School classrooms were added for the many children who worship, learn and grow here. We average 300 children, infant through fifth grade, each week in Sunday School. A new family Advent Night in December was a big hit, and may become a new tradition for little ones. Throughout the year, Children's Ministries serves more than 600 families with 1,100 children.

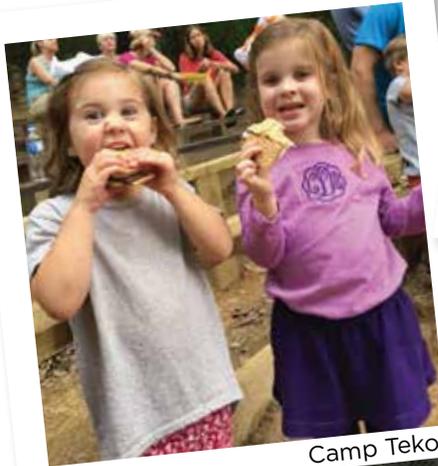
After 17 years as Director of Children's Ministries, Sarah Sumner retired in September, surrounded with love and gratitude for her caring, teaching and guidance. Also in September, her successor, Amy Harriman, joined our church family with the calling to deepen the faith of our children and to guide our growing Children's Ministries. Our Children's Ministries team — Heidi Giffin, Katharine Willis and Julie Wentz — kept the ministry flourishing during the transition.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come," and they have, in great numbers. But most importantly, the sweet little soul that each of those numbers represent has found a church home here — a safe place to grow and learn to love God.

— Melissa McGill



Loaves & Fishes



Camp Tekoa



Agape Kit assembly



Sunday School



Sarah Sumner

YOUTH MINISTRIES

A sign hanging in the Youth Building speaks to the mission of reaching young people for Christ: *Pray About Everything, Worry About Nothing*. In 2017, there were an abundance of prayers, as 500 youth in Grades 6-12 served God in many ways:

- Hundreds of young people participated in Sunday night worship, mission trips, service projects and special events — building relationships with each other and those with whom they served.

- Youth continued their beloved Christmas ministry, selling 255 Christmas trees and 263 wreaths and garlands to raise money for youth missions. The annual youth-led Moravian Love Feast raised \$1,500 for *Good Soles*, a ministry

started by church member Jeremy Coffey to provide steel toe work boots for the Men's Shelter. A simple thing, but those boots allow our neighbors to work.

- Eighty young people are working toward Confirmation in 2018, mentored by 18 adults who are learning as much as they are teaching and guiding.

- Youth Ministries staffers Lauren Stines, Jason Rhymer and Ellen Spence, supported by parents and families, offer immeasurable guidance. But some of the most powerful ministries in 2017 were shaped by young people themselves. A number of church youth participated in the *Out of the Darkness* walk and activities in

uptown Charlotte to focus attention on suicide. The rate of teen suicide is frankly shocking. The Praise Band that plays at Sunday worship at 6:00 p.m. in Jubilee Hall is led by the kids themselves: Kerrington Bostick, Grayson Carter, Alex George, Riley Hagemeyer, Porter Kennedy, Megan Spence and Murphy Tye.

- The youth mission trip to Reynosa, Mexico, set for July 22-28 (see the complete list of 2018 adult and youth mission trips elsewhere in this report) is already filled, with 40 youth signed up to serve. The church plans to welcome a successor to Middle School Youth Director Mollie Grooms in 2018.

- The work goes on. *Pray About Everything. Worry About Nothing.*

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

SINCE STARTING WORK at the church in November 2006, I've made it a point to attend the Trinity's Table annual Thanksgiving feast served by our volunteers at South Tryon United Methodist Church. Each year, it reminds me that the light of the season doesn't shine for everyone. Thanksgiving 2017 was special. As our

neighbors enjoyed their free turkey dinners, a few stood up to lead the group in gospel hymns. Several rose to offer aloud a prayer of thanks — for the meal, and for life's blessings even if life is hard. Dwight Little, 60, had the last word. A father of two grown children, he was in the drapery business for years but was

“freelancing” now, as he put it. On this day, he told the group he was thankful for the volunteers who served the meal, the delicious food, his two kids, and the little bit of sanity he has in a world that seemingly is going mad. “All these things,” Dwight said in closing, “Wal-Mart don't sell.”

— Ken Garfield

WHAT CAN WE EMBRACE IN 2018?

- The *12:12 Ministry* launches early this year, offering newcomers and others help finding their place in the life of the church. Read more about it soon, in print and online. As Rev. Barbara Barden says, “This is a big church with many opportunities. How do I find my place here in the body of Christ?” The inspiration comes from 1 Corinthians 12:12 — “*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*”

- Director of Worship and the Arts Megan Argabrite looks ahead: “This year, we are committing to *Worship Fully*. We will explore our beloved worship traditions and fall in love with new ones. We will ask how what we do Sunday

morning affects the rest of our lives, and how the fullness of our lived experience affects how we worship together. Keep an ear out for new worship opportunities in Francis Chapel. With the installation of the organ, you will be invited to encounter God through worship styles ancient and new. We will launch the *Creative Church* movement, a growing network of artists and creatives. Through *Creative Church*, artists will have the opportunity to use their gifts in worship, mission, congregational care and more, and build relationships with God and each other through the creative arts.”

- A rich year of reaching out is planned: The 2018 missions theme is *Relationships Matter*, and how we might *#LiveDifferently*

by developing deep, personal relationships with those with whom we serve. A continuing focus on race and reconciliation will include an invitation to laity to attend the Duke Summer Institute for Reconciliation. Nationally known activist Rev. Michael W. Waters will speak here on our national racial divide. Dr. Howell and Rev. Nathan Arledge will lead a discussion of his book, *Stakes Is High: Race, Faith, And Hope For America*. A mission team that traveled to Puerto Rico to help with hurricane relief is leading to a deeper partnership with the Puerto Rico Annual Conference and more opportunities to serve with residents of that devastated island nation. We will continue to expand our partnership with Sedgefield Elementary

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

MOMENTS I WON'T FORGET WERE SPENT READING

with my second-grade friend at Sedgefield Elementary School through *For the Love of Reading*. When we met at the start of the school year, my little reading buddy

wasn't particularly thrilled about having to read for 40 minutes, especially with a random “grown-up.” But reading together most every Tuesday, week after week throughout the school year, helped us build a friendship, along with his vocabulary.

When our last reading session rolled around in May, he greeted me and his Thursday reading buddy with a huge smile and big hug, excited to read with friends. — *Melissa McGill*

WHAT CAN WE EMBRACE IN 2018?

and Middle schools, building relationships with students, families, teachers and staff.

- Another Freedom School is in the works, the summer program designed to blunt learning loss among at-risk student scholars.

- A series of five programs during Lent will explore a complicated topic — *Mental Health: A Journey Toward Wholeness For All*. Addictions, anxiety, depression and other issues will be explored, along with a key question: What's the role of the church in helping foster mental health?

- The new (used) organ should be up and playing in Francis Chapel. Music Ministries is also planning work on the Sanctuary organ, plus a special concert in May.

- *Forward*, a ministry for that “tween age” of Grades 4-5, began on January 7, offering faith, fellowship and fun for kids who find themselves at a transitional point in life. Here they can share worries and ask questions.

- Starting in February, a specialized Confirmation program will be offered for students in Grades 7-12 with learning challenges who cannot complete the traditional Confirmation process. Students will engage with the current eighth-grade Confirmation class for dinner and group learning. But they'll also be able to join in small group experiences.

- Youth Ministries will expand its work with Refugee Support Services, a ministry led by church member Rachel Humphries that

is devoted to helping newcomers find a home in our midst. Our youth leaders will also work with Sedgefield and Dilworth Elementary schools to determine what the Freedom School CHAMP mentoring program looks like once the two schools merge.

- Among the growing number of small groups, *FOUNDATION* on Tuesday evenings in January and February will offer everyone a chance to learn about church history, Bible basics, Methodism and more.

We will share details on all this and more in the days ahead. You can learn more about these and many other opportunities at www.myersparkumc.org or by calling 704-295-4819.

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

Church member Rachel Humphries is the driving force behind Refugee Support Services, helping refugees settle into life in Charlotte.

ONE OF MY greatest memories is from the Christmas tree lot. I watched

refugee families enjoy food out of the food truck and express great delight as they chose a Christmas tree from a bundle of trees. But the greatest memory from late 2016 was watching the Myers Park United Methodist youth and the children of

our refugee friends play hide and seek amid the Christmas trees. Both groups were crawling on their bellies under, through and around the trees and screaming with delight when they found each other. It was magical.

— Rachel Humphries

THE CHURCH IN DECLINE? I DON'T THINK SO

I'm always bemused when I read that the church as a whole is in decline. I suppose the numbers



A CONVERSATION
ON FAITH
KEN GARFIELD

don't lie — that fewer people are finding their way to worship, or putting their faith in organized religion. But those are just numbers, and while they matter to those charged with keeping the mainstream church vital, they don't matter as much to me, at least in the context of this conversation. I suspect they don't matter as much to you, as we look

back together on the life of Myers Park United Methodist Church in 2017.

• A church in decline?

In 2017, I saw a church that mobilized when the hurricanes hit, sending mission teams to Texas and Puerto Rico, and thousands of dollars to storm victims around the world.

I saw a church that responded to racial discord by organizing dinner meetings with an African American church and police officers. *Pass The Peace*, they call it. As church member Rebecca Farlow writes elsewhere in our annual report, "This is something I can do."

• Something we can do?

I saw people comforted by worship and music — emboldened to overcome the struggles of the day, reminded of what really matters in this crazy world.

I saw people pore over their Bibles in Sunday School, Disciple classes, small groups and circles, searching for the wisdom of the ages.

I saw a small group of laity lift up the importance of planned giving to insure the future of the church, may it thrive for generations.

I saw people praying for those who shared requests with the church in a letter or an email. Knitting prayer shawls for the

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

I HAVE CO-LED A HIGH SCHOOL SMALL GROUP for the past three years. The students we meet with weekly are now high school seniors who will be going to college in the spring. Our gathering begins with each person identifying a rose (what's good in your life),

thorn (what's rough in your life) and bud (what are you looking forward to). While this can take most of the hour, it's in these moments when the dreams, hopes and fears of the students and leaders are revealed. This year, the sharing has taken on more weight with the students on the

edge of a new chapter of their life. It's been gratifying to see these young women and men grow over the years and rely on the spiritual and emotional resources that have come by being part of a community of faith.

— Doug Caldwell

hurting. Serving meals to the needy. Running errands for the homebound. Warmly greeting visitors on Sunday morning. Singing their hearts out. Handing out bulletins at funerals. Preparing beds for Room In The Inn. Welcoming Christmas shoppers to the Jubilee Store. Sharing a moment's fellowship in Goodness Gracious! Traveling to the farthest corners of the world in God's name. Sharing love in God's name.

In the 11-plus years that I have served at Myers Park United Methodist Church, I have seen too many expressions of community to count, small and large moments, encounters we barely notice. We come to know God, but we come to know each other, too, to remind ourselves that we are not alone. A 2016 national survey found that 72 percent of



Red Cross volunteers deliver relief supplies in San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico. *Red Cross photo by Iris Medero.*

Americans experience loneliness — many as often as once a week.

- Loneliness?

In 2017 and all the years to come, God willing, we open our doors and our hearts. We shine the light in the Sanctuary at night, to pierce the darkness, and to guide the lost

toward tomorrow.

Director of Communication Ken Garfield has been covering the life of Myers Park United Methodist Church since 2006 — its people, ministries and impact on a fragile world. To share a story idea, or just a word, reach him at 704-295-4819 or ken@mpumc.org.

A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

WHAT I'LL REMEMBER FROM 2017 IS COMING TO CHURCH

on Sunday morning and seeing Officer Todd walking around the campus. It's beyond sad that a church needs to hire an off-duty police officer. But after Charleston, Newtown, Sutherland Springs (Texas) and too many other

shocks to the system to name, we know we must. So Officer Todd joins us on Sunday morning, even as we explore other ways to keep us safe. As unfortunate as this is, Officer Todd has become part of the flock. He smiles and says "Good morning" to everyone he encounters. He told me he's gotten

to where he recognizes the regulars, and can tell who's visiting. As we round a corner on the way to Sunday School or worship, there he is, a welcome presence, providing peace of mind so we can pursue the mission of bringing peace to this troubled world.

— Ken Garfield

OUR CHURCH BY THE NUMBERS

35,400+

Guests who enjoyed a meal or refreshments at H.O.T. Wednesday, Sunday mornings, Youth Sunday Night, Trinity's Table, funeral visitation, off-site event and other church gatherings

75,000+

Meals we packed for *Rise Against Hunger* (formerly *Stop Hunger Now*)

5,250

Membership (up from 5,200)

20,540

Cups of coffee put out on Sunday mornings

87

Third-graders who received a Bible on Bible Sunday (up from 84)

105

Baptisms (up from 96)

\$5.4 million

Church operating budget for 2017 (rising slightly to \$5.6 million in 2018)



255

Christmas trees sold by youth

80

Confirmands in 2018



189

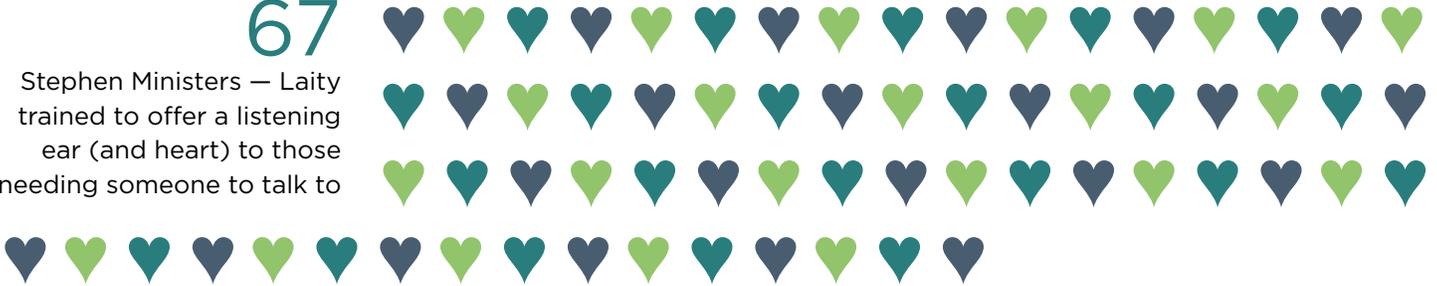
New members (up from 185)

500

Youth who are a part of Youth Ministries

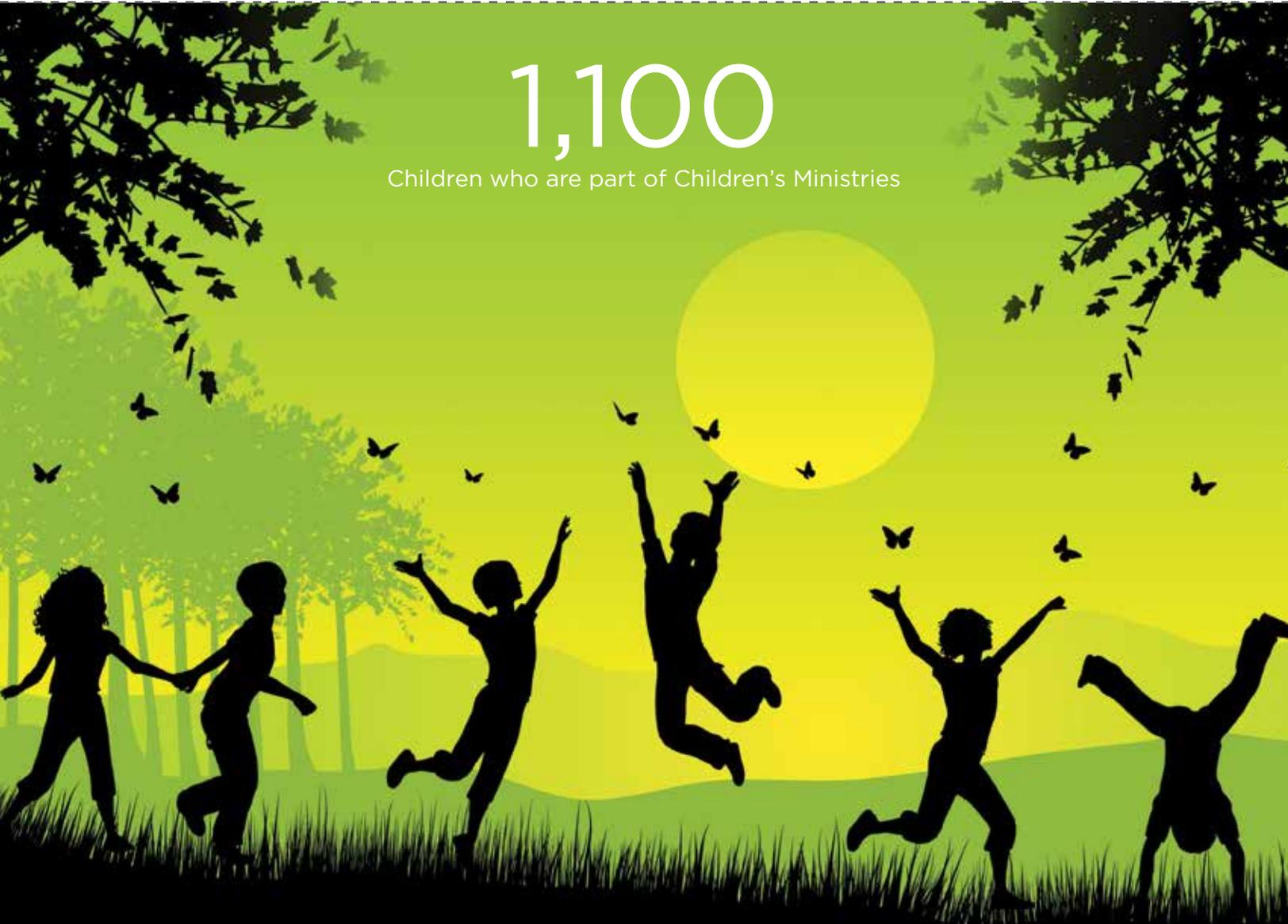
67

Stephen Ministers — Laity trained to offer a listening ear (and heart) to those needing someone to talk to



1,100

Children who are part of Children's Ministries





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A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

GOD CALLS US TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF CHRIST.

Our church knocked this calling out of the park in September when we packaged more than 75,000 meals for *Rise Against Hunger*. Four hundred sets of hands packaged rice, soy, food packets and vegetables while our Boy Scouts and elementary children sped between stations. Through the managed chaos, I noticed my arm buzzing halfway through the first session. It was my Fitbit alerting me that I'd already achieved my 10,000-step goal for the entire day. In all, I took 25,000 steps during our two sessions, making sure everyone had what they needed to be successful. That small notification meant the world to me. It let me know we were moving forward serving God and our community. And it let me know God has much higher goals for us than we set for ourselves.

— Chris Turner



Rise Against Hunger, and hair nets.

2017, A YEAR OF GIVING (AND LOVE)

Jubilee Plus! giving to outreach:
\$698,569 (up from \$644,837)

Wesley Foundation outreach grants:
\$175,000 (up from \$170,000)

Wesley Foundation:
\$12.9 million

Goodness Gracious! gift shop outreach grants:
\$28,000

TO LEARN MORE about *Jubilee Plus!*, the Wesley Foundation and giving — and to make a gift to support the work of the church in the world — visit www.myersparkumc.org.