

Faith & Generosity

A quarterly newsletter for Foundation partners and friends

FALL 2022

From David Snipes

Remembering where I come from

My faith story began long ago at Cooleemee United Methodist Church, located at the southern tip of Davie County just north of Salisbury.

Technically, the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and Methodist Church had not yet occurred when I was born. But all I can recall from my earliest church memories surround the United Methodist Church. Maybe some of you born in the 1960s can relate?

#BeUMC celebrates the connectional system and asks the question: Why am I United Methodist? I suppose the answer for me could be, "I was born into it!" At Cooleemee, my great-grandfather built the pulpit. The organ was dedicated in memory of my grandfather (who sang bass in the choir). My parents held various leadership positions, and I had my first experience of publicly speaking the word of God during the annual Christmas program.

This small, mill-town church was the setting for transformational points in my life, beginning with my infant baptism through my call into ordained ministry as a young twenty-something. It was the place where Debbi and I married approximately 29 years ago.

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Remembering where I come from

The preceding is a “simple answer” for why I am United Methodist. Plainly and simply, as a child I was guided toward the United Methodist Church without much thought or input on my behalf. It was what I was supposed to do because of my family heritage along with the expectations of my parents. I really didn’t know anything else or consider other possibilities, although many of my closest childhood friends were Baptist.

Besides, my maternal grandmother thought if you weren’t of a particular political party affiliation (you decide which one) and United Methodist, you were going to hell! Today, as an adult and in my 28th year of ordained ministry, I remain United Methodist.

There is no such thing as a perfect Christian; likewise, there is no such thing as a perfect Church. As my father used to say, “If you want to find something wrong, you’ll find it. Remember, there’s always something good to be found.” So, rather than focus on our imperfections, I choose to focus on the ways the United Methodist Church encourages us to move on to perfection:

- The biblically-centered mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
- A tried and true theology of salvation that focuses on God’s grace and calls us to acts of mercy as well as acts of piety;
- The methodology of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral for theological reflection through scripture, tradition, experience, and reason; and
- A connectional nature whereby ALL of God’s children from all over the world, no matter how diverse, travel together the path of discipleship.

As I write, I am imagining your faith story. Maybe, like me, you were born into the United Methodist Church. Maybe you made a choice somewhere along the way. Maybe that choice is taking you down a different path. I imagine there are common threads within our shared stories. And many common goals yet to be experienced.

As we move forward on our different, yet similar journeys, may we be mindful that God’s love, forgiveness, and respect for one another must prevail if we are to truly be God’s representatives in the world.

David

Spotlight Story



NEW BOARD CHAIR TAKES THE GAVEL

Anne Martin steps into leadership role

It was a momentous day for the Foundation as members of the Board of Directors welcomed Anne Martin as their next chairperson.

Anne, the first woman to serve in this role in the organization's 45-year history, sees the Foundation as a steady influence during seasons of change in the broader denomination.

"Our goal is to remain that way long into the future," she said.

Anne sees the Foundation as a steady influence during seasons of change in the broader denomination.

The newly elected board includes Class of 2025 returning members Mark Bailey, Wanda Musgrave, Dave Mildenberg, Steve Wilson as well as newcomer Melvin Scales of Winston-Salem.

Anne's roots run deep in the United Methodist Church. She's married to Dan Martin, a retired elder in the WNCC. Her son, Duncan, is lead pastor at Hawthorne UMC in Charlotte.

Anne brings an extensive background in finance, having worked in mergers and acquisitions at Wachovia. She graduated from Salem College with a degree in mathematics and earned an MBA from Wake Forest University.

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NEW BOARD CHAIR TAKES THE GAVEL

Celebrating the service of Tom Jordan

Foundation leadership recognized the faithful service of outgoing chairman Tom Jordan of Greensboro. A gift in Tom's honor will support one of his favorite causes, the Matt Brown Learn-to-Swim Endowment, committed to making water safety available to all second-grade students in Guilford County Schools.

At Annual Conference in June, Tom presented the Foundation's largest ever contribution toward Conference initiatives, a gift of \$217,000 in support of the Comprehensive Plan of Equity, Peacemaking in Communities and Strengthening "First" churches across Western North Carolina.

Two months later, it was time for a new leader to take the helm. After a ceremonial passing of the gavel, the board worked through a busy agenda that included a look at an upcoming organization-wide strategic visioning process as well as updates on Foundation ministries and partnerships. Then, it was only fitting for a memorable day to conclude with cake.



LOANS AVAILABLE TO HELP CHURCHES ENHANCE WORSHIP SPACES

The Foundation will help churches make space for missional innovation — with a focus on hospitality, accessibility, mobility, technology and energy efficiency.

The Space Enhancement Loan Program grew out of a partnership among the Foundation, the Western North Carolina Conference, Boundless Impact, and Wesley Community Development Corporation.

With the goal of creating spaces for missional innovation, this program is designed for churches to improve hospitality, accessibility and mobility, as well as update facilities with modern technology, equipment, and energy efficiency to improve ministry programs of the church.

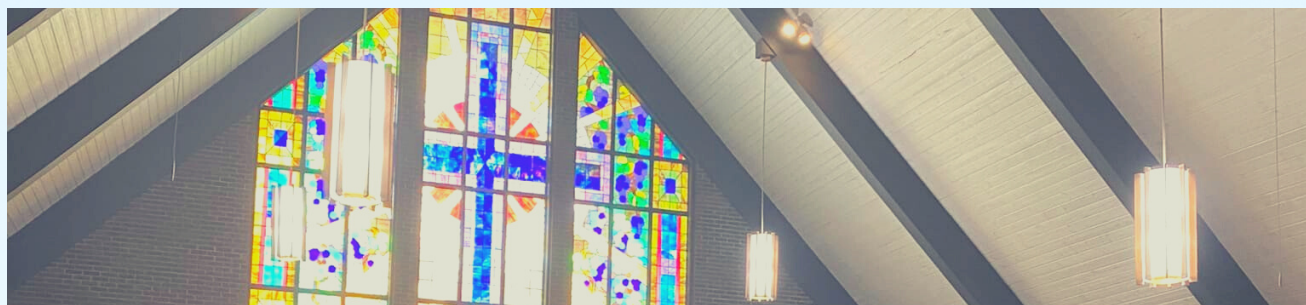
Eligibility:

- United Methodist Churches in the Western North Carolina Conference
- Current on apportionment payments (if applicable)

Loan Terms:

- Loan amounts from \$5,000 to \$15,000
- Limited to 80% of total project costs
- Maximum loan: lesser of 20% of church property value or 20% of annual revenue
- Fixed interest rate
- 5-year amortization period
- No prepayment penalties, loan origination fees, appraisals, or closing costs
- Simplified application process

To learn more, please contact Brad Crossley, Chief Financial Officer. Reach Brad at 704-817-3990 ext. 1502.





GIVING TO CHURCH-OWNED FUNDS JUST GOT EASIER

Give directly to the managed funds invested with the Foundation

Donors can make gifts — without having to write a check or mail a letter — through a secure online giving portal on our website. Our team can add your church to the portal and include as many funds as you wish.

Did you know: Churches receive an average of 30 percent of their annual donations in the month of December alone.

Contact us and we will guide you through the process.

- You'll get a personalized page with a photo at the top followed by fund names and a description of each fund. (No account numbers will be shared online).
- Donors will receive an acknowledgement for making a tax-deductible gift for the full amount of their donation.
- The Foundation will notify your church or organization when a gift has been made.
- A similar service was launched last year for Foundation-owned permanently restricted endowments, which are typically set up in honor of individuals and families.

"Once we perfected the ability to accept Foundation gifts online, we worked with our web developer and said: "Can we add an opportunity for our clients' donors to make gifts to the managed client funds?" said Susan Cothorn, the Foundation's chief operating officer.

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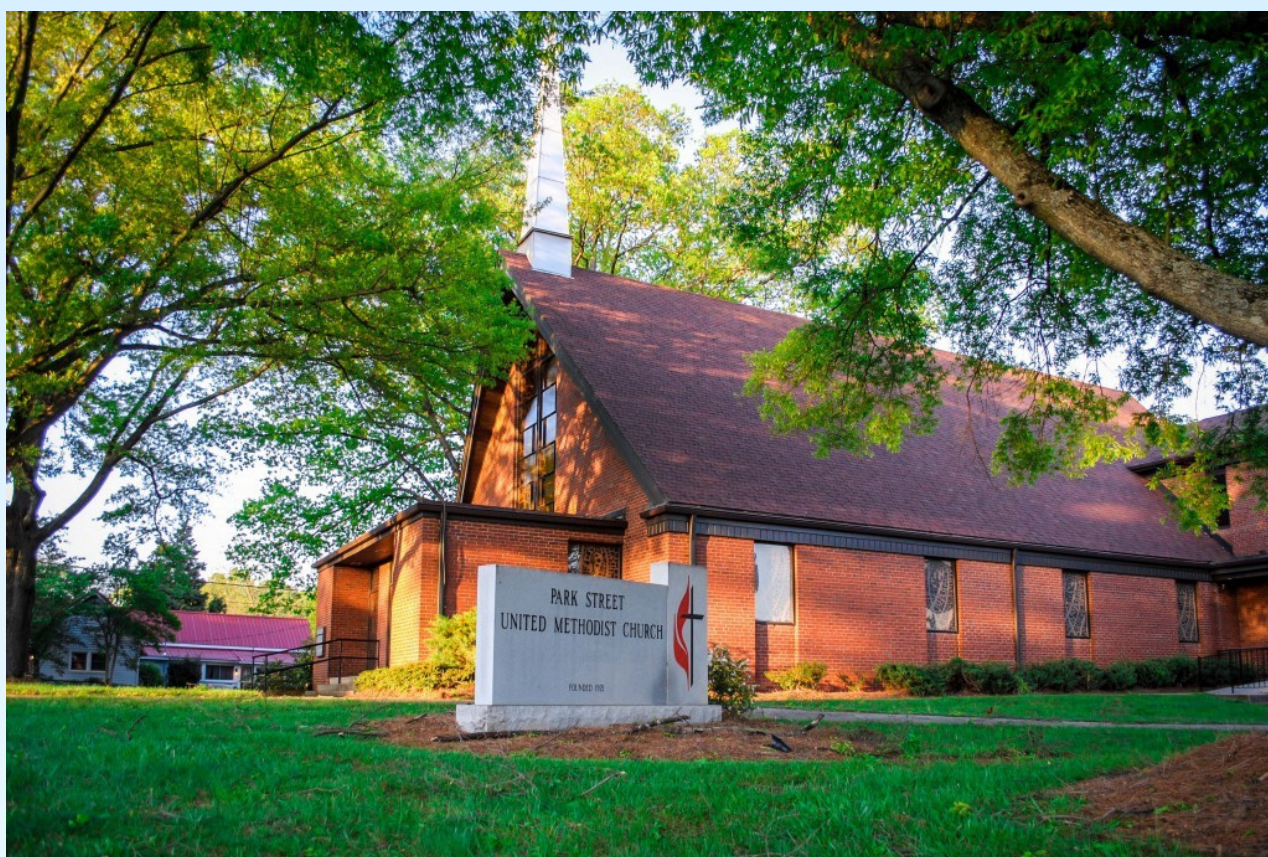
GIVING TO CHURCH-OWNED FUNDS JUST GOT EASIER

This project reflects the Foundation's mission to find innovative ways to add value and serve individuals, churches and related institutions who invest in our managed funds. It also sets us apart from secular financial institutions.

The first church to sign up was Park Street UMC in Belmont. Pastor David Hiatt called it an easy decision.

"As the landscape of giving continues to change, this new service offers yet another option to help fund mission and ministry," David said.

"Generosity is an important piece of our faith, and by expanding the ways in which people can give, we hope their generosity will grow."





METHODIST CAMP PREPARES TEENS TO BE HANDS AND FEET OF GOD

“It’s actually pretty fun to build all this stuff,” participant says

Now in its 35th year, Carolina Cross Connection puts young people on the front lines of social change – with a new emphasis on serving communities of color.

Of all the ways Caroline Vassil could choose to spend her summer break, you might think sawing lumber would rank somewhere near the bottom of the list.

Yet here she was on a July afternoon in rural Gaston County, sizing up boards to install a wheelchair ramp at the home of an elderly couple. Under a blazing sun, with temperatures reaching into the mid-90s, Caroline was exactly where she wanted to be.

“It’s actually pretty fun to build all this stuff,” she said. “You learn all these skills you can’t really learn just playing at the pool.”

In rural, isolated corners of North Carolina, youth volunteers like Caroline deliver hope and find inspiration in God’s call to love our neighbors.

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METHODIST CAMP PREPARES TEENS TO BE HANDS AND FEET OF GOD

It has been this way since 1987, when CCC debuted its first summer mission camp in support of folks who are some combination of disabled, elderly and economically disadvantaged.

When the workday ends, youth return to camp for worship, prayer and small group reflection on what they learned. Then it's up at 7 a.m. to do it all again.

A central part of the mission is to build relationships with homeowners.

"It's an eye opener, I guess you could say," said Catie Black, who, like Caroline, is part of the youth group at Light of Christ UMC in Charlotte's Ballantyne area. "Getting to meet the people we're working with, and learn their stories, is the most rewarding part."

CCC has welcomed 31,550 campers from as far away as Texas, Florida and New Jersey. However, 90 percent of the youth groups that attend camp are from United Methodist churches in North Carolina.

The Foundation's Reynolds Ministry Fund serves as a catalyst. Grants help to expand the home repair program and provide training for college-age summer staff.

Broadening the reach

In February 2021, CCC confronted an uncomfortable realization. A diversity and inclusion team found that while the organization serves some of the poorest areas in North Carolina, a disproportionate number of projects had taken place in predominantly white counties.

In response, board leaders created goals and target areas to grow into communities with both high levels of poverty and racially diverse populations, to ensure that campers serve all of God's children in a balanced way.

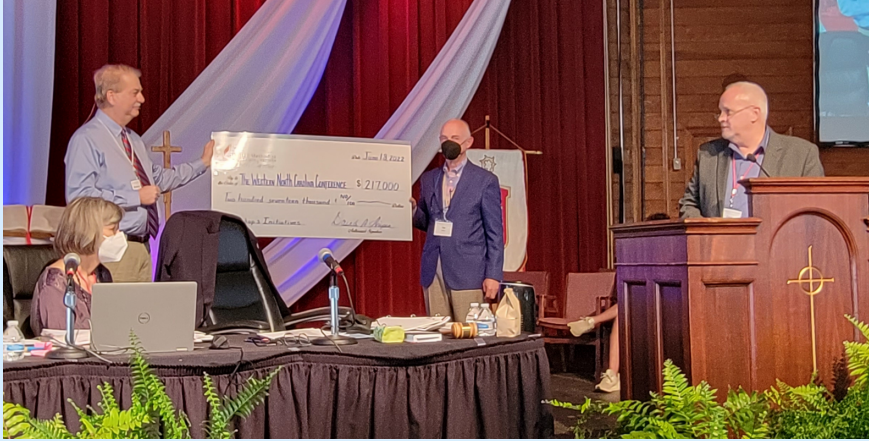
"We want to broaden the table – for more people to feel welcome and invited in," said executive director Brittany Bethel, who joined the staff in 2004.

Camp has become more challenging in the pandemic era — but also more needed than ever. Students are suffering from loneliness and depression. Many have lost a meaningful connection with the church. At the same time, the needs of folks on the margins have only increased.

That's why it's so important for teens to see firsthand what it means to be the hands and feet of God.

"They learn a lot about the way other people live – and how we can better live together," said Salem Sheridan, a former camper who now serves on the staff. "There's not many times they're able to be in a community focused on Christ and serving others. And they gain a lot of skills that are kind of cool."

PHOTOS OF FOUNDATION HAPPENINGS



During Annual Conference in Lake Junaluska, Board Chairman Tom Jordan presented the Foundation's largest ever contribution toward Conference initiatives, a gift of \$217,000 in support of the Comprehensive Plan of Equity, Peacemaking in Communities and Strengthening "First" Churches across Western North Carolina.

A group of clergy gathered in May for the final session of the Reynolds Program for Church Leadership, an experience designed to strengthen leadership skills and equip clergy to more effectively lead their congregations.



Allison Cockrill (pictured at left) is our Executive Support Specialist. Amanda Goedert (right) transitions to Financial Services Support Specialist from her previous role as Executive Support Specialist.