Together in Mission and Ministry
News from the Greenwood District

LOVE NOTES:

A CHANCE TO BE THE DIFFERENCE

Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

Esther 4:13-14

It was over 35 years ago that I shared a message as a young adult member of my home church, Cedar Grove UMC. The title was “We Can Make A Difference.” I never thought about how relevant that would be for my life.

In the passage above Mordecai offers a word that leads to encouragement and hope for his cousin, Esther. He explains to her that the role she was currently in and the opportunity she had was bigger than her. He suggested that perhaps God had put her in that position “for such a time as this.”

The drastic changes since the COVID-19 pandemic began and the ways we have had to adjust every aspect of our lives brings with it unique opportunities. Some have said it is time to get back to church and yet many others can witness to the fact that the church never stop being the church but rather discovered additional ways to live out the ministry of the church. I want to thank all of you for your faithfulness in the midst of the challenges of doing church differently. I continue to pray as you evaluate your worship plans, in person and online presence. We have been given the opportunity to be the difference in this age and I celebrate the many ways you have discovered to accomplish ministry through connection and Christian witness. Mordecai said it well “who knows perhaps you have been placed in this role as the church, pastors, and laity for ‘just such a time as this.’” You have made significant impact in your respective areas.

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I thank you for the many ways you have been, and are being, the difference and your commitment to Jesus Christ. We are faced with many other strains on us individually and collectively. We are the people of God who have continued to be in positions where we are called to be the difference. Be the difference in our nation and world. Be the difference needed in our communities. Be the difference needed in our congregations. We are also called to be the difference needed in our homes.

I encourage you to stretch yourself and not settle for anything less than doing your best in every area of ministry. We are all experiencing adjustments and as I write this month’s Love Notes, the impact of our challenges have affected our churches’ support and resulted in decreased payment of our apportionments. I ask that you give some prayer, time, and energy to planning as we re-commit ourselves to supporting our missional askings and be the difference, by doing our best in this area. I personally know that this continues to be another way that we help the least of these, locally and beyond. Now is a needed time. We all are being affected and yet some of us have been blessed to be a blessing and even in these times are able to do more. Maybe we are the ones and maybe this our time. Reflect upon the words Mordecai sent to Esther, “Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”

I call upon each of us to pray that our future be brighter as we give our best efforts, as we give all honor, glory, and praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. “We Can Make A Difference” by being willing to be the difference that is needed.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Love
District Superintendent
BIRTHDAYS

July 1: John Elmore
July 4: Ben Barnett

ANNIVERSARIES

July 12: Corey & Suzy Sullivan
July 13: Daniel & Summer Eplee
July 14: Charles Wilbanks & Shin Chung
July 25: Mitchell & Carol Wray
July 31: Bob & Rachel Huggins

The theme for the 2020 Carolinas Black Clergy Leadership Retreat is Crossroads: Where Faith and Innovation Meet. All clergy are invited to attend the gathering August 24-28 at the Kingstown Plantation, Myrtle Beach.

Registration is open through August 10. Clergy—$150. Spouse—$50

Click here to read/download the schedule and full conference details.

Bishop Jonathan Holston and the Reverend James Friday, director of the Office of Congregational Development, are among the retreat leaders.
This year’s Mission U will be held virtually via ZOOM on three consecutive Saturdays. Registration is FREE but required. [Click here to register online](#). A Youth Study is also being offered; the dates will be announced later. Registration is also free; follow the above link to register for the Youth session.

NEW CLERGY ID BADGES

Many thanks to those of you who have already responded that you need a new/replacement ID badge. If you need a new/replacement ID badge and have not responded yet, please let Martha know [no later than July 15](#).

ID badges for all clergy new to the district will be ordered at the same time. There is no need for new clergy to respond; we have you on the list already.

ID badges will be distributed in August. Normally we would include your ID badge in your Set-up packet; however, this year being such a mess, we will most likely mail the ID cards to you.
2020 APPORTIONMENT UPDATE

2020 continues to be a “terrible, horrible, no good, very bad” year, to borrow the words from Alexander in Judith Viorst’s book. We still hope and pray for better times for the remainder of the year. Unfortunately even during the spread of the novel coronavirus and now the social unrest sweeping our country, church finances—local, district, and conference—have not taken any time off. Despite the grace period for paying direct billing, the need for churches to pay apportionments continues. Sadly payment of 2020 apportionments has declined a lot since this time last year.

As of June 30, 2020, the report from the Conference Treasurer shows where the Greenwood District stands with regards to 2020 apportionment payments:

- 32 churches have paid 0% toward their 2020 apportionments
- 11 churches have paid 1% - 24% of their 2020 apportionments
- 13 churches have paid 25-49% of their 2020 apportionments
- 18 churches have paid 50-74% of their 2020 apportionments
- 0 churches have paid 75% - 99% of their 2020 apportionments
- 4 churches have paid 100% of their apportionments

Your church/charge may have re-opened for in-person worship beginning on June 14 or you maybe continuing with outside/drive-in worship or a combination of in-person/outside/online worship. We celebrate your intentionality and creativity to be the church offering Christ to the world in these uncertain times. Despite the creativity and intentionality of you and your church leadership, some churches have seen a decline in tithes and offerings, and yet others have seen an increase as churches have re-opened. You are encouraged to work with your church leaders to explain to your congregations the importance of paying apportionments so that the work of the local, district, conference, and general church may continue to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”
PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM UPDATES

If your church was approved for an SBA loan under the PPP, you should be aware of the eight key updates to the PPP made through the Flexibility Act of 2020 that was passed on June 3, 2020. These updates mainly concern loan forgiveness.

1. Extension of the Minimum Loan Maturity
2. Extension of the PPP Loan Program
3. Expansion of the Loan Forgiveness Covered Period
4. Extension of Time to Rehire Workers
5. New Exemption from Proportional Reduction in Loan Forgiveness Amount
6. Reduction of the Payroll Costs Expenditure Threshold to 60 Percent
7. Extension of the Loan Deferral Period to Coincide with Date of Loan Forgiveness
8. Deferral of Payroll Tax

There is not enough room in this publication to add details. Explanations and an accompanying interview with experts are available online. We also recommend that you read Unpacking the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act article.

**An important take-away from this article is a recommendation that a church should seriously consider engaging a paid CPA, with a thorough working knowledge of the special accounting rules that apply to churches, to assist in completing the PPP Loan Forgiveness Application.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020

This year’s Annual Conference will be August 1, 10:30 a.m.—6:00 p.m., at the Florence Civic Center. ALL ATTENDEES (CLERGY AND LAY) MUST REGISTER BY JULY 17, whether you plan to attend or not. Click here to register. You will be asked to check yes or no to designate your attendance.

Visit the Conference web page for full details, including the Pre-Conference Packet and Registration Packet (these will be posted at a later time); no hard copies will be mailed this year. You may also download/print a copy of the Action Items Report, which contains only those items that will require a vote during Conference.
SET-UP MEETING

Can you believe it? We have found a bright side related to the continuing spread of the novel coronavirus...everyone has been forced into the 21st Century to learn, adopt, adapt the technology to help us continue worshipping, working, and collaborating. To that end, our 2020-2021 SET-UP MEETING will be held virtually via ZOOM on AUGUST 11, 9:30 A.M.—12:00 P.M.

You will receive an invitation to the meeting directly to your email inbox (hint: remember we use your Conference email address) so check your email regularly for the meeting information. As an aside: it’s a good idea to check your email daily to make sure you see all the announcements and information sent to you from the District Office and from your District Superintendent.

SPOUSES MEETING

Please let your spouses know that we will be hosting a separate ZOOM meeting for spouses this year. The plan is to hold this meeting in the early evening so that those who work can participate. We ask that you or your spouse send an email to the district office (gwdist@umcsc.org) giving us your spouse’s email address so that we may contact them directly about the upcoming meeting.

DISTRICT OFFICE OPEN ON A LIMITED BASIS

Reminding you that the Greenwood District Office is open on a limited basis—by appointment only. If you need to meet with Rev. Love, or maybe Martha, in person, please call or email (864-223-2650 or gwdist@umcsc.org) to schedule an appointment. A mask and social distancing are required for any in-person meeting.
WELCOME TO THE GREENWOOD DISTRICT

- Reverend Ben Barnett (Laura): Wightman UMC
- Mr. Donny Black: (Marcia) Mt. Carmel, Greenwood
- Reverend Donna Eidson: Capers Chapel, Langley
- Reverend Arthur Gamble (Zenovia): Mt. Lebanon and Kinards Charge
- Reverend Kendell Healy (Evelyn): Wightman UMC (Associate Pastor)
- Reverend Joe Long (Kathy Jo): Central UMC, Newberry
- Reverend Nona Woodle: Aldersgate, Greenwood

MOVES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

- Reverend Kile Antone: McKendree UMC
- Reverend Mike Evans: Edgefield UMC
- Reverend Cheryl Remchuk: Lowell St./Panola Charge
- Mr. Adrian Rogers: Ebenezer/Mathews Charge
- Ms. Myra Taylor: Central UMC, Laurens

GREENWOOD DISTRICT CLERGY COVENANT GROUP OPPORTUNITY

The Greenwood District will be offering a clergy covenant group for continuing education credits (CEUs) starting in September. The group will meet on the second Wednesday of each month ending in May. We will follow the traditional format with a three-hour didactic session in the morning and a three-hour covenant session after lunch. The topic for study for the year will be determined by the group at the first session on September 9, 2020, at Edgefield UMC. A total of three CEUs will be awarded for those who fully attend six of the eight sessions. A flyer with more details will be in your August start-up packet. For further information, please contact Tommy Wilkes (803-622-2264) or Susan Maddox (803-507-7365).
MATCHING GRANTS FOR ONLINE TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE TO LOCAL CHURCHES

The SC Annual Conference through the Office of Congregational Development has announced a matching grants program to help local churches begin or sustain online worship services and an online presence.

The grant funds may be used for such things as equipment, software license, etc. According to the announcement, “If the total start-up investment needed is $450 and the church or charge invests $225, a grant of $225 could be awarded. If the total start-up investment needed is $1,000 or more and the church/charge invests $500 or more, a grant of $500 could be awarded. “

The application deadline is **July 31, 2020.**

The [grant application is available online](#). Priority will be given to churches with a history of faithful apportionment payments.

GREENWOOD DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON ORDAINED MINISTRY

The DCOM organizational meeting for the 2020-2021 Conference Year will be on Tuesday, **August 18**, beginning at **9:00 a.m.**, at the District Office. The interview schedule and other information will be sent to all Committee members by the end of July.