

BY OUR SERVICE				
	October 6	October 13	October 20	October 27
GREETERS/ USHERS	The Brocks	Mildred Campbell Jeannine Weatherford Barbee & Barbara Parsons	The Catoes	The Youth
ACOLYTE/ CRUCIFER	Jacob Zeller Abby Deas	Nathalie Boron Nicholas Boron	Ashlynn Reynolds Jacob Rabon	Ryan Matney Morgan Matney
NURSERY WORKERS	TBA	Susan Thomas Tomie Christofaro	Wanda Cooke Colby Christofaro	Laura Barton Colby Christofaro
TRUSTEE OF THE DAY	Joe Boron	Darlene Moore	Kristie Alvey	Kathy Keith
FELLOWSHIP	Youth (Jason Rabon)	Coffee Only	Coffee Only	Coffee Only
FLOWERS	Frances Stewart Billy & Lynn Smith	Barry & Jane Julian Mary Reynolds	Rodney & Karen Ortiz Don Stewart	Elwyn & Ann Roberts Robert & Toni Stamm
FINANCE TELLERS	Ann Roberts Perry Hill	Jean Dixon Betty Reynolds	Pat Norris Sandra Wardlaw	Dennis Nichols Sharon Lezak
LAY READERS	Britton Williams	Janet Groubert	Jeannine Weatherford	Youth

Thank you for agreeing to serve. If you are unable to attend on your assigned date, please contact the individual in charge of the area to which you are assigned or arrange to change dates with someone else on the calendar.

St. John's United Methodist Church

Open hearts, open minds, open doors



45 Roseborough Road, PO Box 218, Lugoff, SC 29078

October 2019

**A Little Dash of S.A.L.T.
Serving And Learning Together
October 2019**

**Everybody, Somebody, Nobody and Anybody
Ephesians 4:15 – 16**

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Thank you to everyone who helped make St. John’s very first Tailgate Sunday a success! I was overwhelmed with joy to see all of the different ministry groups, as well as individuals, working together to make sure that the message of the day, “This is Our Community: Teamwork Makes the Dreamwork” wasn’t just heard - but it was seen and experienced! As I looked out across the front lawn, at all the different team colors and so many of you who stepped out of your comfort zone to worship in a new way, I once again thanked God for answering a prayer that I didn’t even realize I should have been praying by allowing Lee and I to join the St. John’s family for a time such as this.

When I think about our Tailgate Sunday worship and fellowship experience I am reminded of a story I once heard:

There was a Sunday School teacher that closed her class every Sunday with the same routine. As the Sunday School hour came to a close, she invited the children to join her in their usual routine. “Let’s make our churches,” she said. “Here’s the church, and here’s the steeple, open the doors and see – ”

The teacher stopped in mid-sentence as she suddenly remembered Sam, the new child that had come to Sunday School that morning for the first time. Sam had been born with only one arm. She had been so worried about one of the children making a comment about his one arm or saying something to embarrass him and now she had done the very thing she worried about the children doing.

As she stood before the class, speechless and trying to recover from her blunder, the little girl sitting next to Sam glanced at his one hand, reached over with her left hand and placed it up to Sam’s right hand and said, “Let’s make the church together!”

My friends, when it comes to being the church, I dare say that (figuratively) we are all missing an arm. No one person or ministry team or committee can do everything. It takes all of us! God gave all of us gifts so that we would share them for his glory. As the scripture from Ephesians says, in order to build up the Body of Christ in love, it takes *every part* of the Body – contributing to its growth. As we, the family of St. John’s strive to be the Church –the Body of Christ – what a joy it will be to offer our hands and our hearts! Let’s make the church together!

God’s peace,
Angela

Office Hours
Monday – Thursday:
8:00am – 4:00pm

Phone Numbers:
Church Office:
803-438-1335
Fax Line: 803-438-0335

Website:
www.stjohnslugoff.com

Church Email Address:
s.j.umc@truvista.net

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor:
Rev. Angela Marshall
ahmarshall@umcsc.org

Youth Director
Jason Rabon

Childcare Director:
Lisa Wilson

Music Director:
Jerome Ogburn

Pianist:
Sylvia Stone

Organist:
Jose Soler

Audio/Visual Coordinator:
Chuck Horton

Administrative Assistant:
Kay Lott
klott@truvista.net

Financial Secretary:
Casie Anderson
canderson@truvista.net

Sexton:
Catherine Swinton

**Sunday Worship
Schedule**

**9:30 am Sunday
School**

10:15 am Fellowship

**10:45 am Worship
Service**

PRAYER CONCERNS

Thurman Bruffey
Chris & Sarah Floyd
Bud Hallberg
BJ Livingston

Ruth Poletto
Jerome Ogburn
Jay Richardson
D. J. Rivers

If you have a prayer request, please contact the church. Your request will be posted for 4 weeks. If you would like it to remain longer, please contact the church.

Quilts blessed last month for:
Kristie Shuler-Scott and Kinsley Dent
Friends of Jackie DeWitt & Margaret DeGroat
and
Margaret Cox
and
Linda Caggiano
Future mother-in-law of Cori Mulder

SERVICE AREA	CONTACT
Greeters/Ushers	Lynn Smith
Crucifers/Acolytes	Church Office Admin Asst.
Nursery Workers	
Trustee of the Day	Johnnie Shirley
Fellowship Family	Committee Chair/Church Office
Flowers	Margaret Hawkins
Finance / Tellers	Susan Weatherford /Ann Roberts
Lay Readers	Church Office Admin. Asst.

OCTOBER MEETINGS

Worship Committee Meeting
Sunday, October 6th – 6:00 p.m.

Nominations & Lay Leadership Committee Meeting
Monday, October 7th – 6:00 p.m.

Finance Committee – October 8th – 6:30 p.m.
In the Conference Room

Nominations & Lay Leadership Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 9th – 5:30 p.m.

Prayers & Squares - October 10th - 10 a.m.
in the metal building

Charge Conference – October 15th – 6:30 p.m.
In the sanctuary

St. John's United Methodist Church 45 Roseborough Rd. PO Box 218 Lugoff, SC 29078	PERMIT NO. 6 NON-PROFIT ORG CARRIER ROUTE U.S. POSTAGE P-A-I-D LUGOFF, SC 29078
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Address Service Requested

 **GOLDEN HEARTS**

Golden Hearts is a wonderful weekly fellowship opportunity created for all adults age 50 and up – as well as anyone younger than 50 who enjoys spending time with others!

Thursday, October 1st

10:00 AM - Bible Study with Rev. Barbee Parsons followed by a covered dish lunch

Tuesday, October 8th

10:00 AM – Art and Communication

Cheryl Reynolds (daughter of Mary Reynolds and graduate student at Columbia College) will lead us in an American Folk-art activity

Tuesday, October 15th

SC State Fair in Columbia, SC

(We will meet in the church parking lot at 10:00am to ride together.)

Tuesday, October 22nd

10:00 AM – In-house Games or In-house Movie and Out to Lunch

Tuesday, October 29th

10:00 AM – Shopping trip to Hamricks in Columbia and Out to Lunch

Ministries for Youth

**OCTOBER 2019
YOUTH MINISTRY CALENDAR**

UMYF - 5 PM - 7PM in the Metal Building

BIBLE BREAKFAST - 6:45 AM in the Fellowship Hall

OCT. 6TH - Host Fellowship before Worship Service

OCT. 6TH – 1:30 PM leave for Epworth Children's Home Service Project

OCT. 13TH – 4:00-7:45 PM Clinton Sease Farms

OCT. 18TH – 6:15 PM MercyMe Imagine Concert

OCT. 20TH - Volunteer at St. John's Fall Festival

OCT. 27TH - Youth Sunday

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4 Bible Breakfast	5
6 Host Fellowship Epworth Children's Home	7	8	9	10	11 NO Bible Breakfast NO School	12
13 Clinton Sease Farms	14	15	16	17	18 Bible Breakfast Mercy Me Concert	19
20 Volunteer at St. John's Fall Festival	21	22	23	24	25 Bible Breakfast	26
27 Youth Sunday UMYF	28	29	30	31		



The youth and youth leaders would like to offer a BIG thank you to Susan Thomas, Mara Jones, Sherry Geiger, Wanda Cooke, Susan Weatherford, and Jeannine Weatherford for providing a delicious meal to our group during the month of September. These volunteers either sponsored a Bible breakfast or prepared a home cooked meal for UMYF. Our youth volunteers are the BEST!

Ministries for Children

Children's Church: Every Sunday in October

Clinton Sease Farms - Sunday, October 13th

All children are invited to Clinton Sease Farms on Sunday, October 13th. This is a joint children and youth event. Cost is \$10 per **child**. Includes - corn mazes, hay ride, campfire hotdogs, smores, chips, and drink. Please email Morgan Rabon for more details and to sign up Morganweatherford@yahoo.com



Thank You!

Dear St. John's UMC,

Thank you so much for your tremendous support of Wateree Salkehatchie! We greatly appreciate all of you providing such a delicious supper during camp this summer! Because of your help with this ministry, six local families now live in much safer homes!

Thank you again for your generosity!

In His Service,

Thank You!

Dear Rev. Angela Marshall & All the Parishioners of St. John's UMC,

I wanted to thank each and every one of you for the beautiful quilt. I love to sit with it on my lap and feel the knots. It warms my heart knowing they represent a prayer from the church losing a loved one is never easy, but this quilt is so heartwarming. I will treasure it forever.

God's Blessings,
Margaret Cox

Thank You!

Dear St. John's UMC,

A gift more precious than gold. I thank the Lord for your prayers and the beautiful quilt. He has been so good to me and I pray for a special blessing for your church.

Love,
Pam & Tim Anderson

Thank You!

Dear St. John's UMC,

Randall and I would like to thank everyone for their support for our Spirit Night at Chick Fil-a. It was great seeing everyone and because of your support we made \$285 to help find a cure for MS. Our ride is coming up and we ask you to keep us in your prayers. Thank you!!

Randall & Martha Watts

Amy Pope, Dennis Turner, Richard Hagins and Ellen Smith

HARTSVILLE DISTRICT FALL LAY SERVANT MINISTRY SCHOOL

The Hartsville District Fall Lay Servant Ministry School is set for Saturday, October 19, 9:00AM - 3:00PM and Sunday, October 20, 3:00PM – 5:00PM at St. Luke UMC, 302 Dunlap Drive, Hartsville, SC 29550. Registration fee is \$40.00 which covers all course-related materials and lunch. Note that **registration deadline is October 14, 2019** and **late registration fee is \$45.00**. Please complete the registration form and mail it with your registration fee to the Hartsville District Office, 108 W. Pinewood Avenue, Hartsville, SC 29550.

Restricted Funds – Brought to you by St. John's Finance Committee:

Beginning in the August 2019 newsletter we shared with you that St. John's United Methodist Church provides an opportunity for you to provide monetary support for ministries that go above and beyond your weekly giving and yearly tithe. These opportunities are designated for special missions and ministries done by, with, and for the members and friends of St. John's throughout our world and community as well as missions and projects done within our church and are not part of the general budget. We refer to these accounts as "Restricted Funds".

Each month we will highlight one or more of the Restricted Fund accounts as we offer you information and understanding about these special accounts that already exist at St. John's UMC.

Restricted Sacks of Love: a restricted account that will be used to purchase food for Children in the local elementary school so that they will have meals over the weekend during the school year.

Restricted Children's Ministry: a restricted account that can be used for the Children for ministries and activities that are not funded by the general budget.

If you would like to give to any of these restricted funds, please designate on your offering envelope the restricted fund for which

you would like to make a contribution.

A Note About Charge Conference from the Pastor
October 15, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

One of the things that I have noticed about the churches during the last 20 years of ministry as I have served on staff, is that even though Charge Conference comes around every year during the fall, very few people know what Charge Conference is and even fewer people choose to attend the annual celebration and meeting. There could be dozens of reasons why people don't attend and yet, I wonder if one of the main reasons is because most people don't know what a Charge Conference is all about or why it is important for our Church. So, let's fix that! I'd like to invite you to take a moment to familiarize yourself with the term "Charge Conference" and why it is important that you make plans to join us on October 15th at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary of St. John's United Methodist Church.

The Charge Conference is an annual meeting of a church where officers are (generally) elected for the coming year – but that's not all! Our very own Reverend Dr. Robin Dease (the Hartsville District Superintendent) will call the meeting to order and preside over it as we review church goals and objectives, celebrate ministries and missions, elect new church leaders, set clergy salaries, remember those of our congregation that have finished their race on earth since our last charge conference, as well as approve members and friends of St. John's for Lay Speaking and Lay Servant Ministries.

Members of the Church Council are members of the Charge Conference and therefore have a vote - but - this doesn't mean that they are the only ones invited to attend this annual celebration and meeting – ALL are invited to be witnesses to the ministries that are taking place in and through St. John's United Methodist Church.

So why attend? Well, why not? The annual Charge Conference is an opportunity for us to bring renewed vitality to our congregation. As the United Methodist Church continues to develop great churches, great leaders, and great disciples of Jesus Christ who transform the world, you are invited to engage in a process of prayer, discernment, and planning for ministry that can lead St. John's toward an exciting future. Often times we are quick to point out the things that might be going wrong with the Church as a whole – so why not come and celebrate the things that are going right!

Mark your calendars and plan to attend!! The 2019 Charge Conference for St. John's United Methodist Church will be held on October 15th beginning at 6:30pm. All committee chairpersons and ministry team leaders should have completed a charge conference report for their ministry area by September 26th. If you have not yet done so, please complete your report and turn it into Kay in the church office as soon as possible.

Now You Know...

What in the world is a sacristy?

Webster's dictionary defines sacristy as "a room in a church where sacred vessels and vestments are kept and where the clergy vests."

Many churches provide a space referred to as the Sacristy. It is the designated space for the storage of communion ware (in drawers or cupboards), unused brassware, and paraments (the best place is a large closet where the cloths can be draped over rods, rather than folded in drawers or on a hanger). Often, the room, or a large walk-in closet, includes a sink for washing and light cleaning.

When standing at the double-door entrance to the sanctuary at St. John's United Methodist Church, our sacristy is meant to be located through the door at the front right, behind the organ. At the moment, a good definition of this sacristy is "a room used to store items needed for worship and other things that no one knows where they go..." :) ☺ As for the vestments mentioned in Webster's dictionary, there is a closet in the Pastor's Study that is used to hold the pastor's vestments since that is where our pastor vests.

One of the things that the worship committee will be working on in the coming weeks is to help make this space a more reverent location for our communion supplies, sanctuary paraments, and other special items used for worship. How can you help? I'm glad you asked! You can assist the worship committee in the cleaning of the room by contacting Margaret DeGroat or Kara Matney to offer assistance. Another way to help is to refrain from placing items in the sacristy without first checking to make sure it is something that should be stored there.

If you'd like to know more about the sacristy, visit the following website for a 3-minute video filled with great information.
<https://chuckknowschurch.com/archive/9sacristy>

Everything used in our worship services should have a place to rest – especially those items that are instrumental in helping us to celebrate the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. Our goal is to make the sacristy a place where our worship enhancing items can be respectfully stored when they are not in the sanctuary.

Now you know...

Fill'er Up!



Just a friendly reminder that if you use the church bus it is your responsibility to fill the bus before returning it to the church parking lot.



October Birthdays

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Richard Geiger | 10 Barbara Parsons | 17 Autumn Edwards |
| 2 Emily Block | 10 Monroe Weatherford | 18 Hunter Smith |
| 2 Laura Meyer | 12 Kristie Alvey | 19 James Taylor |
| 3 Janet Groubert | 12 Herb Aycock | 21 Jan Satcher |
| 4 Janet Smith | 12 James Ray | 22 Barbee Parsons |
| 7 Millie Bryant | 12 Mary Sullivan | 24 Alysa Lane |
| 7 Sylvia Stone | 13 Megan Robey | 25. Arthur Barnett |
| 7 Mildred Campbell | 13 Elise Satcher | 26 Seth Addeo |
| 7 Michael Reynolds | 15 Mary Herrera | 26 Ryan McRoy |
| 7 Jill Wolfe | 15 Danielle Moore | 27 Bruce Costello |
| 8 Linda Bennett | 15 Susan Weatherford | 27 Tabitha Satcher |
| 8 Taylor Jones, Jr. | 16 Steve Roller | 31 Ann Roberts |

First Wednesday Meal
 Wednesday, October 2nd
 6:00 p.m.
 Theme – Halloween
 Menu: Baked Potato Bar with
 Salad, Dessert & Drink

Medicare Health Plans
 versus
Employer/Retiree Plans
What are the Differences?
 Joe Boron to Host this
 Educational Event
 at St. John's UMC - Metal Building
 Saturday, October 12th – 5:00 p.m.
 rsvp to: 803-422-7491
 or email: kershawcnty@yahoo.com



Address for Herb Aycock

Herb Aycock
The Haven In The Summit
3 Summit Terrace
Columbia, SC 29229

St. John's UMC

Fall Festival

Sunday, October 20th from 4 PM to 5:30 PM

We will be giving away FREE Halloween bags for collecting candy!
Fun Activities: trunk or treating, pumpkin decorating, interactive games, prize wheel, hotdogs, chips and snacks, bouncy house with slide

***** The Children's Ministry needs two things to make our Fall Festival a big success. First, we need "trunkers" who will decorate their car or truck and hand out candy to children. If you are willing to be a "trunker", please let Jason or

Morgan Rabon know as soon as possible. Second, we need candy donation. Please drop off your donations in the candy box located in the conference room.

Upcoming Bible Studies

A Disciple's Path

by James Harnish and Justin LaRosa

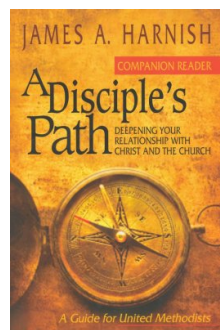
Make plans to join us for a 6-week study designed to help deepen your relationship with Christ and the Church. "A Disciple's Path - A Guide for United Methodists" by James A. Harnish, is an engaging approach to discipleship from a distinctly Wesleyan perspective. The study and conversation will guide each of us in taking the next steps in discipleship to become dynamic, engaged followers of Jesus Christ.

The study combines a Wesleyan understanding of our growth in God's love and grace with the time-tested practices of spiritual disciplines expressed in the membership vows of the United Methodist Church to uphold the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. During our time together we will develop spiritual practices, discover our unique gifts, and become engaged in ministry that brings transformation in our lives, the lives of others, and the world.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign up by contacting the church office by October 14th. You will need to specify if you would like for the church to order your workbook or if you would like to order your own materials. The cost of the workbook is \$12 which you will need to turn in to the church office by October 14th so that we can purchase the needed materials. If you choose to order your own workbook, the ISBN number is: ISBN-13: 978-1501858123 and the name of the material you are looking for is "A Disciple's Path Daily Workbook: Deepening Your Relationship with Christ and the Church".

This study will be led by Pastor Angela and will be held on Monday evenings from 6:00-7:30pm beginning October 28, 2019

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| October 28 | A Disciple's Path Defined |
| November 4 | <u>Prayer:</u> Prayer and Scripture Meditation |
| November 11 | <u>Presence:</u> Corporate Worship and Small-Group Community |
| November 25 | <u>Gifts:</u> Financial Generosity |
| December 2 | <u>Service:</u> Spiritual Gifts and Gifts-Based Service |
| December 9 | <u>Witness:</u> Invitational Evangelism |



Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph

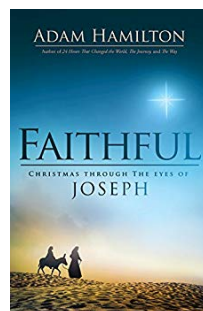
by Adam Hamilton

Exchange your doubt for courage this Advent and Christmas season. Joseph's story is much like our own. In life, we encounter circumstances that we would never have chosen for ourselves. Joseph provides a great example of humbly obeying God even when we don't understand and faithfully moving forward in the strength that God provides. From his beginnings as a humble carpenter to his all-important role as the earthly father of Jesus Christ, Joseph's place in the nativity story is sometimes overlooked but contains valuable lessons for all of us. Join us as we examine Christmas through the eyes of Joseph who was absent from much of the biblical narrative, never spoke a word, but whose courageous actions were crucial to the birth of Christ and God's plan of salvation.

This study will be led by Judy Robertson and will be held on Wednesday mornings at 10am beginning November 13, 2019

The Chapters are:

- A Carpenter Named Joseph
- Whose Child Is This?
- Raising a Child Not Your Own
- The Journey to Bethlehem
- The Rest of the Story



Every Journey Starts With the First Step



"The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds *him* with His hand." Psalms 37:23-24 (NKJV)

For many of us, a healthy lifestyle is more of a dream than reality. Sometimes making changes seems too hard. But the first step toward a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be big. A first step can be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or swapping your daily candy with a piece of fruit. Once you decide to improve your health, start with something easy. Every

change after that will seem easier. **Be a FAN for your health!** Small steps can begin today.

Questions about the FAN Program? Please contact your church FAN Coordinator.

A Report from St. John's UMC Trustees

Brought to you by Dennis Weatherford, member of the Trustees Ministry Team

I would like to announce that the St. John's United Methodist Church Trustees have been completing a five-year capital improvements plan. More information on this plan will be made available in the near future once competitive quotes are obtained for the nearly 35 needed projects.

As you may remember, in early 2019, the septic tank system was replaced with a Kershaw County sewer tap lift station. This capital improvement cost in excess of \$100,000.

The five-year plan contains some large ticket items such as replacing the parking lot pavement and replacing the entire Church Campus roof. Both of these items will cost in excess of \$70,000 each. These high-priced capital improvements will require longer term strategic planning and financing.

Many lower cost / shorter term capital improvements are also listed in the plan. For instance, the Trustees' plan includes improvements to the youth room in the metal building. Specifically, in the youth room the flooring will be replaced in the main room, kitchen, and both bath rooms. The four rooms will be painted. The existing ceiling light fixtures will be replaced with flush mount units. Then all stained ceiling tiles will be replaced. The existing couches will be replaced also. In the coming weeks the youth and Sunday School participants will select flooring and paint colors. These capital improvements have been donated by church members. A new ping pong table and foosball table were recently purchased and donated by church members.

Other shorter-term needs that are considered priorities are parking lot improvements and security improvements. While awaiting the longer-term pavement project listed above, a short-term plan includes patching holes in the existing parking lot, sealing the entire area, and re-painting all parking lines. This project will cost \$9,000. The security improvement plan includes a recording system capable of handling 50 cameras with only 21 initial cameras. Twenty cameras will be externally mounted to monitor all campus doors, the parking lots, and the playground. One camera will be strategically located indoors. In the future, the system can be expanded in the event that cameras are installed in each Day Care classroom. The initial cost (recorder and 21 cameras) will cost \$16,000. If any Church members would like to help in any way on either of these projects, contact Johnny Shirley or Angela Marshall.

There are many good things going on at St. John's United Methodist Church. As more information becomes available, I will share it with the congregation.

An Invitation to Fellowship Time

from your Family Life Ministry Team

Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in the weekly fellowship time between Sunday School and worship (from 10:20 – 10:40am) in the Fellowship Hall. Please invite others that you encounter in the parking lot, the hallway, and in your Sunday School classes to join us as well. Fellowship Time each Sunday is a great opportunity to catch up with each other while meeting newcomers and visitors. Coffee is always provided, and now that summer is coming to a close, milk, juice, and pastries will also be provided.

Over the next few Sundays, a member of the Family Life Ministries Team will be stationed in the Narthex with a sign-up sheet for anyone who would like to volunteer to provide fellowship refreshments. Our hope is that Sunday School classes, ministry teams, leadership committees, families, and others will sign up. Nothing fancy is required as donuts and cookies a great addition to the coffee already provided.

If you have any questions please contact a member of the Family Life Ministry Team.

A Memo about Worship Preparation

from your Worship Team

Centering Time

Please join your church family each Sunday morning before worship for a time of joyful greetings and conversation in the Fellowship Hall. Then upon entering the sanctuary, please be mindful of each member's need for worship preparation which might include intentional quiet time in God's presence. Our beautiful sanctuary is a holy space; it is a peaceful and sacred space offering an opportunity for us to be calmed, centered, and comforted. When entering this sacred space, all are encouraged to sit quietly in a pew or kneel at the altar to pray, reflect, and/or meditate. As we prepare our hearts for worship in this way or allow others to prepare their hearts in this way, we will surely experience the beauty and peace through our reverence of our St. John's home.

WHY I GO TO PRISON

Cyndi Macleod

For many years, Don, my husband served with KAIROS in GA. When we moved to SC, we had a lot going on settling in and placing down roots, so he took a break from KAIROS for a while. We really didn't know anyone in SC that was involved in the ministry.

After a few years, I happened to meet Kay Raffield at Quilt Guild. At some point she mentioned something about participating in KAIROS. That sparked my interest, because I now had a point of contact for Don. After talking with Kay, she told me she would get the information for Don. As time went by, I became good friends with Kay. One day she asked me if I would ride out to the Y-camp where the woman's KAIROS team was staying, as she needed to drop something off. I said, "Sure", not knowing what I was getting ready to experience. I now look back and am pretty sure Kay knew exactly what she was doing.

I had always admired Don for serving with KAIROS, and I understood what a great ministry it was, but I never felt a calling to participate. Don is a retired Military Police Officer, so of course he is brave enough to go into a prison; he's "equipped". I make quilts, do crafts, and love dogs and horses, and although I was in the Army, I was an Admin Specialist. So, I certainly had not been building my resume to volunteer in a prison.

On a Wednesday evening in early Oct 2017 I rode out to the Y-camp with my friend, Kay. I walked into a room full of woman who looked just like me! They were filling large bags with "salty snacks" and packing cookies in big containers to get them ready to take to Camille Graham Griffin the next day. There was no one there that looked like they had been "equipped" in any special way other than they were focused, determined, working together, laughing, organizing, and having the time of their life, for Jesus!

Everyone spoke to Kay and of course greeted me and then a few begin to ask me if I would be interested in serving with KAIROS (at that point I began to realize that Kay had probably mentioned I was coming and that she thought I might be a recruit prospect). Well, she was right. I did want to be part of this. It was incredible.

Never in my life have I seen so many women having so much fun, doing s*o much work. I still didn't feel "equipped", but I did feel safe with them. If they could do this, so could I. There were ladies in their early 30's right up to several in their late 70's and early 80's. They had driven from all over SC and NC to volunteer.

I told them I would come in the Spring. And I did. I felt "called", not "equipped", but called. Or, so I thought.

When you serve as part of a KAIROS team you may have previously participated in a Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo, or Tres Dias which is a 3-day weekend for those who are not incarcerated and where someone would normally learn about the existence of KAIROS. They are ministries that are structured very much like KAIROS and they help "equip" you to understand the ministry and process of KAIROS.

Don and I both attended the Walk to Emmaus and then afterwards, Don began serving with KAIROS. When I had time, I served on Emmaus teams so we were familiar with the different elements that make KAIROS special because of our past experiences.

In KAIROS, we attend team meetings before a weekend. In both KAIROS and Emmaus you are assigned responsibilities for the weekend. Both ministries share a similar structure, just a bit different content so as to relate to those who attend. Emmaus is an experience of Christian spiritual renewal, to inspire, challenge, and "equip" local church members in Christian action in their homes, churches, and places of work. KAIROS shares the transforming love and forgiveness of Christ to those incarcerated and their families.

In early 2018 I began attending team meetings for the March KAIROS. There were four team meetings designed in such a way for us to grow closer to one another every time you met. As a group we represent a variety of different backgrounds, churches, denominations, races, and ages. Over time we become one unit, interdenominational, focused on the fundamentals common to all Christians. Church trappings, traditions, and doctrines are left at the door. We are one in our belief that Jesus is the son of God, who died for our sins, rose from the dead, and who loves us unconditionally. Just that simple.

Honestly, to be part of a group like this is enough for me, but that is a bit selfish because we haven't even gone into the prison yet. That is where the rubber meets the road. Nothing in life prepares you for the first time you walk into any prison. I had been to KAIROS closing worship services to support Don in the past, so I knew what to expect – and I'll admit, I was afraid. I was with a group and we would be there for an hour or so, then we would leave. I could do that... for Don. Men's prisons are usually pretty scary in appearance. So that is all I had to go on for what might be awaiting me at Camille. I was braced and ready. We were going in for 3 ½ days. Only leaving to go back at the Y-camp in the evenings until we returned the following morning.

Much to my surprise and relief, Camille was much easier to enter. Not that it isn't dangerous, but in appearance it wasn't nearly as scary. Once you get past the main entry and the two sets of barred doors, one might think they were on a College Campus. However, my first reaction to seeing all the ladies we were going to work with was shock. They were beautiful. Many are VERY talented. Some were young. Some old. A few crippled. But if you ignore the teal uniform they are expected to wear, you can see your daughters, aunts, mothers, and sisters. You wonder what they could have done. Well, they made mistakes, some very big, some violent, some accidental. And they must pay the earthly penalty. We don't ask them what they did, but sometimes they tell you anyway.

As you spend time with the women and get to know them, you realize how important choices you make are. And you realize how important it is to surround yourself with good companions, or how lucky you were to be born into a certain family. But sometimes you don't get choices. They are made for you before you can choose or before you were even born. Many of the women were incarcerated due to drug charges. YOUNG ladies. Late teens, early 20's. And they have a story of growing up in a family where their parents did drugs and gave the drugs to them. Many have been victims of incest and rape, some are witnesses to murder, or were forced to be accomplices in crimes. Some are there because they killed or tried to kill their abusive husband or boyfriend who was attacking them and their children. Some are there because they took one drink too many and chose to get behind the wheel of a car and someone died. Most have never had the love of Christ demonstrated in their life. For many, they are glad to be in prison because it broke a cycle.

When you sit down with the ladies one on one, you realize they have dreams. They are just like anyone of us they have often never been equipped to live a productive life. KAIROS and other ministries and services that are offered in most prisons are the first second chance many have ever had. Yes, they committed a crime – for which they are paying their earthly penalty. But Christ redeems and forgives. Everyone needs to know that. These ladies need to know that.

The most real conversations I have ever had are those done inside the prison walls. I am amazed at the peace I have while I am there. The KAIROS motto is "Listen, Listen, Love, Love". As disturbing as some of things heard are, there is a peace that comes from just being present with someone - not judging, not correcting - just listening and always trying to love them the way Christ loves us all while pointing them to Christ, who forgives.

For most of us, the choices that we have made or that have been made for us haven't had the dire consequences as those who are incarcerated. However, many of us can honestly say, "That could have been me." Have you driven your car too fast? Have you ever texted and drove? Just one mistake can happen in the blink of an eye that would change the course of your life or others. It is a very fine line.

Jesus loves these ladies. Just like he loves me. He wants them to have a future, with Him.

I never knew a time when I could say, "Yup, I think I'm equipped to volunteer in a prison." But as I look back, God was "equipping" me my whole life. I am equipped with the knowledge that that God stays with us no matter what. I know that He continues to forgive when we can't forgive ourselves. I know that God loves all equally. And I know that we are told to go visit those in prison. Those in prison need to be equipped also with the knowledge of Christ's love. I can witness to that love.

God led me to a place over many years and many life experiences that gradually "equipped" me for prison ministry. He led me to a place he could "call me" through the invitation of a trusted friend.

Here I am, Lord.

Friendship Rosters

Many years ago, St. John's United Methodist Church invested in the Friendship Rosters that are located in each pew and are situated near the center aisle. Many people refer to them as "attendance pads" because these small books offer an opportunity for worshippers to check-in to worship as well as inform the church office of any address or information changes. We encourage you to fill out the Friendship Roster each week for several reasons: 1. so that we have a record of your time spent with us so that we might be intentional about reaching out to those who we might be missing in our worship time together; 2. so that you might greet those seated on your pew by name (because they will list it in the roster); 3. as an opportunity for you to let Pastor Angela know if you are ready to take the next step in your faith journey. Thank you in advance for helping us to use these resources so that together we might become better!

SAFETY AND SECURITY – DOORS AND LIGHTS

Just a friendly reminder that if you lead or participate in ministries or activities that take place on the campus of St. John's United Methodist Church, please make sure all doors are locked and all lights are turned off upon leaving. If everyone is intentional in these responsibilities it will increase the safety and security for all who enter our facilities. Thank you!

First-Time Visitor Bags

Did you know that St. John's United Methodist Church has special gift bags for our first-time visitors? If you happen to notice a first-time visitor sitting near you in worship, please help us make sure they receive this special gift by informing a youth or one of the ushers who will be happy to present them with a bag.

