

THE DOGWOOD TREE

After the excitement of this past winter's snow and ice, I find myself especially grateful for the arrival of spring. The season reveals itself in simple but beautiful ways—wild jonquils blooming, forsythia bushes bursting with color, bees returning to gather nectar, and longer days filled with warm sunlight. These are gentle reminders of nature's renewal and provision.

Our culture offers its own signs of the season as well, from the excitement of March Madness to the return of the “boys of summer” on the baseball field, and the tradition of The Masters Tournament. Together, these moments remind us that spring has truly arrived.

Another cherished sign of spring can be found right here at St. John's—a dogwood tree on the parking lot side of our sanctuary. This tree was given in memory of Cameron Joseph Ward by his friends in the UMYF group. A few years ago, when the original tree became diseased and had to be replaced, it was lovingly cared for each day until it could take root. We are especially grateful to Shawne Heeren for faithfully watering the tree that summer.



Today, as we celebrate another spring at St. John's UMC, that beautiful dogwood stands as a living tribute to a beloved child of God we will always remember. It also serves as a meaningful symbol of new life and the resurrection of Jesus, reminding us of the hope and renewal that this season brings.

The legend of the Dogwood tree has always been one of my favorite stories of the Spring. It is a story of sorrow that is transformed into beauty. According to tradition long ago, the dogwood was not the small, delicate tree we know today. It was said to be tall and strong, made of sturdy wood, and large enough for construction. Because of this, the legend says it was chosen to make the cross for Jesus Christ's crucifixion.

After the crucifixion, the tree was filled with grief and shame for having been used in such a tragic event. In response, God transformed the dogwood forever so it could never again grow large enough to be used for such a purpose.

Today, we know the dogwood tree as a small tree with thin branches, compared to other trees such as Oak, Maple, or Pine. The blossoms have taken on special symbolism. The petals are arranged in a cross shape, each petal tipped with a rust-colored mark representing the nails that secured Jesus to the cross. The center cluster represents the crown of thorns on Jesus' head. The dogwood blooms only in the Spring during Easter. Because of the legend of the dogwood, this has become a symbol of hope, renewal and the promise of new life after suffering.

Each time I see a dogwood, I remember this story. I am grateful that Jesus paid a debt for me, which has given me the promise of eternal life. I look forward to seeing everyone during the Easter season, so that we can once again celebrate the resurrected Lord.

Shalom,

Karen

Bible Quiz

WHAT HAS GOD DONE?

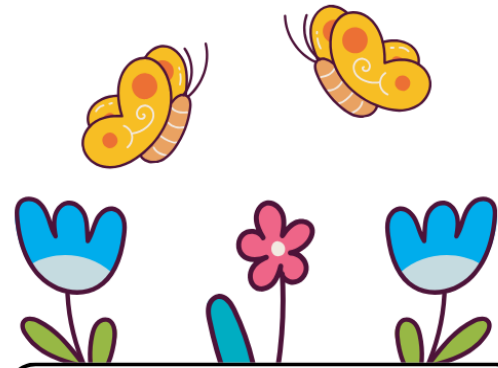
In a home bible study at Betty's and my home, I elected to begin with I Peter, Chapter 1. Gathered around our dining table were maybe ten members of the UMC of Minford, Ohio, and a next door neighbor. A special guest, The Holy Spirit, whose presence glorified that gathering, was there to enliven Peter's words that seemed to leap joyfully into our hearts to remind us of what God had done through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was such a precious moment that I stood to praise God for what he had done. So I ask you, "What did God do for us through the resurrection of Jesus?"

Read chapter one then turn to I Peter I:3 (NIV) to answer below.

_____ be to the God and _____ of our _____!
In his great _____ he has given us _____ into a _____
through the _____ of Jesus Christ from the dead.



Note: As you celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and open your hearts to the truth that Peter left with us, I pray you will do it prayerfully and take the time to think about what it means to you. May God through the Holy Spirit bless you as he did me.



Fill in words and phrases are:

praise
resurrection
Father
mercy
living hope
new birth
Lord Jesus Christ.



APRIL CELEBRATIONS

PARTY
Time!

- April 2 **Max Powers**
- April 3 **Ella Brown**
- April 4 **Linda Anderson**
- April 6 **Nora Emelife**
- April 7 **Kirk Hardymon, Jake Brown & Ruth Brown**
- April 9 **Cillian Lewis**
- April 10 **Phyllis Harroff & John Vaughan**
- April 12 **TC & Kathryn Fuller (Happy Anniversary!)**
- April 14 **Peg Brust**
- April 15 **Grant Robertson**
- April 16 **Zane Emelife & Greg McBride**
- April 17 **Meredith Jackson**
- April 18 **David Helms & Denise Holland**
- April 19 **William Bonéy & Rylee Fisher**
- April 21 **John Johnson**
- April 22 **JoAnn Kane**
- April 24 **John & Rev. Kristen Frick (Happy Anniversary!)**
Craig & Nancy Neal (Happy Anniversary!)
- April 25 **Evan Easterling**
- April 27 **Finn Miller & Jennifer Williams**
- April 28 **Piper Migliorini**
James & Michelle Messer (Happy Anniversary!)
- April 29 **Lillie Creel & Beth Hozey**

● Children & Youth

● College Students



The Debra Frye Edmondson United Methodist Women Mission Scholarship

This scholarship has been established in memory of a lady who loved her relationship with the Lord and her involvement in missions through United Methodist Women at St. John's United Methodist Church. She encouraged others to join UMW and experience the life-long blessing that she did by helping others through mission work and outreach opportunities.

The \$1,000 scholarship, funded by her family and by donations of friends, will be given to a St. John's graduating senior who displays the heart and actions of involvement in missions. The scholarship may be used at the college, university, technical school, or trade school of the recipient's choice.

Applications may be obtained from the church office.

Eligibility requirements are listed in the application.

For questions, contact the church office.

The application is due by Sunday, April 19, 2026. Please return the completed forms to the church office by noon.

The scholarship will be presented on Graduation Sunday, May 17, 2026.

COMMUNITY MEAL & SMALL GROUPS

Wednesday night



5:15pm-6:30pm (dinner served)



Fellowship Center

APRIL MENU:

April 1-Easter Meal

Ham
Hashbrown casserole
Bean Salad
Rolls
Dessert

April 22

Scrambled eggs
Pancakes
Bacon
Sausage
Fruit

April 15

Shredded BBQ chicken sandwiches
Cole slaw
Baked beans
Dessert

April 29

Lasagna
Salad
Garlic Bread
Dessert



MAY 6

Hamburgers
Potato Salad
Baked beans
Dessert

*Last Meal for
the season!

COSTS:

age 12 & under: FREE

age 13 & older: \$8 each

Family Maximum: \$20

SMALL GROUPS

Prayer Group

5:30pm

Ladies Bible Classroom

Bible Study

The book of Matthew

5:45pm

Men's Bible Classroom

"The Chosen" (tv series)

6pm

Zone

Anyone can attend a small group session or begin & lead a small group. We welcome new ideas for the upcoming 2026-2027 season.

MUSIC MAKERS & REAL KIDS

REAL Kids meets

APRIL 1, APRIL 15,
APRIL 22 & APRIL 29

along with Music
Makers from
5:30pm-6:30pm.

APRIL EVENTS & REMINDERS

*If you have need of use of our facilities, please contact the church office for a full list of availabilities

WWW.STJOHNSFM.ORG

Sunday Schedule: 8:30 am Worship Service
9:30 am Hospitality
10:00 am Sunday School
11:00 am Worship Service

Exercise with Avis: Mon-Wed-Fri
11am-11:30am
Fellowship Center

Upcoming Meetings:

April 19 @ 12:15pm - Finance Committee Meeting (MBC)

April 23 @ 6:30pm - WEE School Board Meeting (FC)

April 27 @ 6:00 pm - Church Council Meeting (FC)

Book Club:

April 6 @ 7pm in the Men's Bible Classroom.

The title of the book is "Hello Stranger" by Katherine Center.

April 1: Easter Meal

April 2: Maundy Thursday Service @ 7pm

April 5: Easter Sunday

April 3 & 6: Church Office Closed

April 12: Communion Sunday

Our Communion offering will support Kindness Week.

Circle Meetings:

April 13 @ 5pm - Clara Phillips Circle (Handbell Room)

April 14 @ 10:30am - Morning Glory Circle (MBC)

Scout Troop 130

The scouts will hold their annual Pinewood Derby races on Saturday, April 25 in the Fellowship Center beginning at 9am.

Sunday, April 26 @ 11am Children & Youth Sunday

Lunch Buddies:

Lunch Buddies will be "steaking out" the Outback restaurant next month. We will gather at 11:30 on Tuesday, April 21 at the restaurant located on 1319 River Run Court at the intersection of Celanese Road and Route 77 in Rock Hill. Please sign up by Sunday, April 19 to join us for food, fun and fellowship!

The Saturday Project

Join the Missions Team on Saturday, April 18 for the next Saturday Project. Check out their newsletter page for more information.

*Saturday, April 18 is also the next day for cleaning and restocking at the Bethel Shelters. As always, contact Shawne Heeren to volunteer.

Vacation Bible School Registration:

VBS Registration opens to church members on Monday, April 13. An email will go out with the link to register. On Monday, April 20 registration opens to the general public.

Attention All Graduates:

If you are graduating from high school or college please submit to the church office your biography, including a photo, school name, future plans and any other information you would like listed such as clubs, special awards, sports you have played. Deadline to submit is May 3, 2026.



MISSIONS

Amy Bartholomew, Committee Chair

We have been able to serve several different groups already this year with our Saturday Projects. Last month we spruced up the church, made Easter cards for nursing homes, made "You've Been Egged" bags, and cleaned and organized the closets at the Bethel Day Shelter. Our next Saturday Project will take place on April 18. We will have three options open to everyone, including families this month:

Sunday School Breakfast for the Bethel Shelter:

We will be making breakfast for 80 men at the shelter. We will make the breakfast on Saturday and deliver it for their Sunday morning service. They do not need us to serve the food this time. A sign-up genius will be shared if you would like to donate food items or help us prepare the food. We will start cooking at 10:00am.

Prayer stones for Mothers Day:

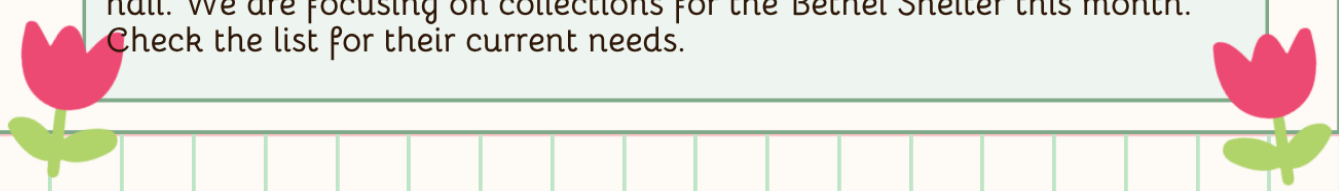
We will be painting stones to honor and support all mothers in our congregation. We will pray over the stones and then share them on Mother's Day. We will meet in the fellowship hall from 11:00am - 12:00pm. This would be a perfect opportunity for children to participate.

Bethel Day Shelter:

This is our monthly visit to clean and restock the donation closets. You can meet Shawne Heeren in the church parking lot at 9:30am to carpool or meet her at the shelter: 546 S. Cherry Road, Suite S, Rock Hill. Please let Shawne know if you plan to attend. Everyone is welcome and it can be a good experience for families.

Shelter Donations:

Please check the lists of donation requests on the bulletin board in the donation center next to the portico side of the church in the fellowship hall. We are focusing on collections for the Bethel Shelter this month. Check the list for their current needs.





APRIL MISSION SPOTLIGHT: BETHEL SHELTERS

Bethel started in 2007 as a seasonal warming center for homeless men to find a warm meal and a safe place to sleep each night. Originally established through a partnership with the Salvation Army, United Way of York County, and the City of Rock Hill, the Men's Overnight Shelter gained a permanent home in 2009 at Bethel United Methodist Church.

The Warming Center would close the shelter when the weather started to warm. In April 2019, the doors remained open and officially became the Bethel Men's Shelter.

In 2021, Bethel Men's Shelter expanded its mission and began operations at the Bethel Day shelter. This would be a daytime shelter for men and women located at Pathways Community Center in Rock Hill. This Shelter provides laundry services, showers and restroom facilities, lockers and respite.

With the addition of this new program, Bethel Men's Shelter officially changed its name to Bethel Shelters in 2022. Through all the years, Bethel has been committed to helping the homeless get off the street, find homes, and jobs. They work to prevent homelessness from reoccurring. In July 2022, Bethel expanded services by offering the Bethel Shelters Workforce Development Program. Bethel's MISSION; is to provide a safe place to sleep, a hot meal to eat, and a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless individuals year-round. Their VISION is to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

In 2025, Bethel announced 55 men had graduated from being homeless. Kudos to Bethel, surrounding agencies and our community





WEE School News

Beth Meador, Director

SPIRIT/FUNDRAISER EVENT

April 14th (4pm-9pm) Brixx Kingsley.

Please mention W.E.E. School when placing your order. This is our last spirit event for this school year, thank you to everyone who supported the W.E.E. School this year.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

The W.E.E. School will be hosting a book fair May 4th-6th !

The book fair will be open Monday–Wednesday from 9:00am-1:00pm as well as Wednesday evening from 5:30pm-7:00pm. Come by and see us and as always thank you for your support of our W.E.E. School!

SUMMER CAMP

Looking for some fun for your kids this summer? We still have spots available for summer camp. Camp is open to children turning 3 by September 1st through children entering kindergarten this fall. For more information or to register please contact Beth Meador (803)548-6557 or sjumcweeschool@gmail.com

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

We still have a few spots available for the 2026-2027 school year. For more information or to register please contact Beth Meador (803)548-6557 or

sjumcweeschool@gmail.com



April 2026

Children and Youth News

Children and Youth Director: Mallory Capps- stjohnsumc.youthandchildren@gmail.com- (843)-504-5419

March was such a good month with our Easter Egg Hunt and lots of other spring activities. April is going to be fun and full of excitement! First, we will start by celebrating the resurrection with our Easter services and the release of our butterflies!! Then we will have Children and Youth Sunday on April 26th at the 11:00am service where our children and youth will be in charge of the service. Please plan to attend and be a part of this wonderful time.



UPCOMING EVENTS

COME JOIN US!

REAL Kids will be April 1st, April 15th, April 22nd, & April 29th from 5:30pm-6:30pm along with Music Makers.

This is open for all children 3 years old- 5th grade!

We will also be going to play putt-putt on April 12th after church if anyone is interested.

UMYF will be on April 12th, 19th, & 26th from 4:00pm-5:30pm in the Zone for 6th-12th grade.

VBS registration opens on April 13th for church members and April 20th for the community.

Connections

Barri Helms & Denise Holland (Co-Chairs)



The Gathering Table

The first meetings of The Gathering Table have been very successful. We meet every other month for dinner and we encourage everyone to sign up for a group.

We currently have three groups meeting with some vacancies. If we have enough new interest we will form more groups! It's never too late to join!

The sign up sheet is on the sign up board. Please join in on this wonderful new ministry!



Painting Class

In May, we have an incredible opportunity to create a **MASTERPIECE!!**

Our own Ruth Orwig has agreed to lead a two hour painting class on May 16 at 10am where we'll paint a patriotic piece perfect for holidays or display year-round.

Sign up begins in April and the class is open to all ages and genders.

Let's come together for a fun and creative paint party!!





UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



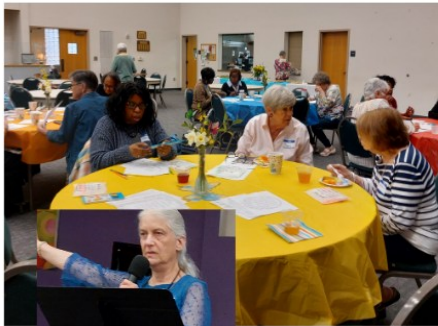
ELAINE CRYDERMAN, PRESIDENT

MINI MISSION U

St. John's UWF was happy to host 33 women from the District on March 7th for the Mini-Mission-u with Nancy Rivers leading the program of "Practicing Hope."

The ladies were treated to a wonderful breakfast and lunch provided by our women. And we ended with Communion offered by Pastor Karen.

MISSION U PHOTOS



IMPORTANT EVENTS

On March 15, thirteen members from St. John's United Women of Faith attended the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial Service held at Philadelphia United Methodist Church, where they enjoyed a hospitality time with delicious refreshments.



The program, led by Nancy Rivers, focused on income inequality in SC and the difficulty for some families to meet the basic needs of children and youth. The Bethlehem Center in Spartanburg was highlighted for offering the following programs: Afterschool Care, Food Pantry, Thrift Store.



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

submitted by Nancy Rivers, Committee Chair



Wanting to Feel Connected with Your Church Family?

As with any relationship, time together is required to form real connections. Looking for something more than just a Sunday time together? Let's build opportunities for connection. Small groups were started with this purpose in mind. We need more small groups!

Yes, we need more small groups! Do you have an interest that others might share? Perhaps you enjoy crocheting or knitting. Are you someone who loves to play games? Would time with people at the same stage in life be helpful (parents of children, parents of teenagers, young adults, seniors, singles, whatever)? An evening exercise group might be fun. Anyone want to just walk together?



If you think you might like a small group focused on one of your interests, but you're not sure, consider this — any small group started now would only have a few meetings before the fellowship meals end for the summer.

If your group is a success, you can certainly start up again with the meals in the fall! There are 4 Wed. night dinners in April and 1 in May. Small groups meet on Wednesday evenings, anytime between 5:00 and 8:00 — the exact times (start and end) are up to the group "leaders". Remember, small groups can form and disband at any time



If you have a desire to start a small group, please, reach out to me and we can explore your idea. Catch me at church, call me at 919-618-1156, or email me at nriversnc@gmail.com.



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Melissa Morse, Committee Chair

As we have all learned by now there are “Three T’s of Stewardship.”

Time: Dedicating hours to prayer, worship, and serving the community.

Talent: Using unique skills, such as teaching, administration, or music, to build up the church.

Treasure: Financially supporting ministry through tithing and also other non-financial offerings. Strong stewardship can also help create a culture of gratitude

I'd like to discuss "**Talent**" this month. Stewardship of talent in the Bible, Matthew 25:14-30, teaches that God entrusts believers with abilities, resources, and gifts to be used for His kingdom. It is an act of proactive, accountable management where talents are cultivated and invested to glorify God, rather than hidden or wasted.

This refers to the unique, God-given skills, abilities, and natural gifts each person possesses.

Like stewardship of time, the stewardship of talent is similarly about recognizing that our abilities, both big and small, are not our own; they are on loan from God to be increased and used to serve Him and our neighbors.

Stewardship of Talent involves:

- **Active Involvement:** Using specific skills (e.g., teaching, mechanical work, cooking, or leadership) to support parish ministries or community organizations.
- **Sharing Gifts:** Every individual possesses unique abilities and talents meant for the common good and shared lovingly with others.
- **Developing and Honing Talents:** A key aspect is the ongoing work of developing and improving one's talents. This involves actively practicing, learning, and seeking to refine one's skills.

We held our first meeting of 2026 on Sunday, March 22 at 12:15 in the Loft. Our next meeting will be July 26 at 12:15 in the Loft. I hope you will join me! All are welcome!

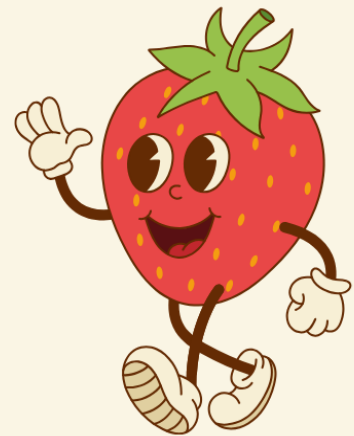
submitted by Melissa Morse

melissa.kay.morse@gmail.com

United Methodist Men

The St. John's UMM will once again coordinate parking for this year's Strawberry Festival, May 1-2. Lunch and refreshments will be provided for all volunteers. We will need volunteers for a variety of positions and shift times. Please consider volunteering your time for this event.

This event has a potential to be a major fundraiser for the men and by extension for our church as a whole.

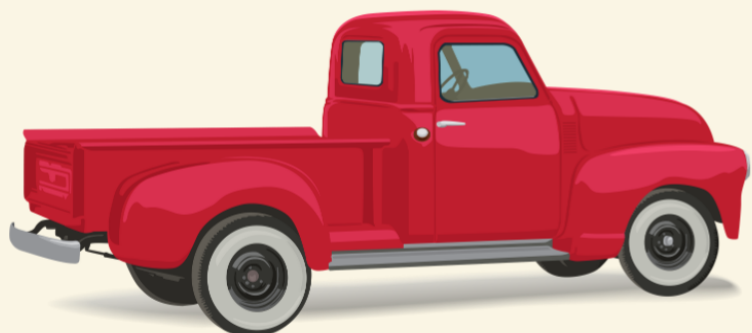


Below is the April Calendar of Events for UMM:

4/7 - Pints & Padres at The Print Shop @ 7pm

4/18 - Red Truck Men @ 7am
(Kimbrell's parking lot)

4/26 - UMM Breakfast @ 7am
Fellowship Center



submitted by Tevis Vandergriff, UMM President

It's Time to Grow

submitted by Nancy Rivers, Committee Chair

We have a wonderful opportunity for growth coming up. The Rock Hill District is offering face-to-face Lay Servant Ministry classes on April 25 - 26, and an online class that will meet April, 20, 23, 27, and 30. These classes are open to everyone!

Important to know - Lay Servant Ministry is about equipping people to be servants of Christ, working to bring God's Kingdom into reality on this earth. There was a time when classes were offered to prepare people to become lay speakers. Things have changed!!!! While that is still a possible track through the Lay Servant Ministry Program, there are many other options. You can take classes simply to be better equipped to serve - in whatever situation you feel called or desire. You should take the BASIC (Becoming a Servant of Christ) class first. Then, you can take any class you want!



Now for class details. The face-to-face classes will be offered April 25 - 26 at St. John's UMC, Rock Hill. Classes will meet Sat., April 25 from 8:30 to 4:30 and Sun., April 26 from 2:00 - 5:00. Ten hours of class participation is required for certification of completion of a course. Light Saturday morning refreshments and lunch on Saturday are included. The classes offered will be:

- *BASIC Course (Youth and Adults) - FREE
- *Fear of the Others - \$35 + book
- *Teaching Biblical Faith - \$35 + book

The online class will be "Spiritual Growth in an Online Community", This class is FREE. The "Spiritual Growth" course is for clergy and laity to learn how to facilitate online classes that will increase engagement, develop trust, provide a safe space for learning and grow spiritually through the Word and connections with self and others. This course will be taught in four 90-minute sessions by Zoom. (10 hours of class time including homework). There is no book to purchase for this class.

Registration link: <https://www.umcsc.org/rockhillonlineregistration/>

Questions? Contact me at nriversnc@gmail.com by cell (919) 618-1156, or at church.

Music Department News



Join the Chancel Choir!

As we reflect on the joy of our recent cantata, we invite all who love music and worship to join our Chancel Choir!

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday at 7:10 PM, and you don't need to be a professional singer to participate.

Whether you're a seasoned singer or new to the experience, your presence and passion is what matters the most!



Summer Performers

We are looking for some musicians who would be interested in providing music in worship during the summer services in June and July. If you are interested, please reach out to Sarah Ochoa-Hughey at sarahochoamusic@gmail.com

submitted by Sarah Ochoa-Hughey, Interim Music Director

NAVIGATING UNPLANNED DETOURS

Katherine Burns, Epworth Representative



Susan, a 64-year-old grandmother in South Carolina, once expected to be approaching retirement after years of working and saving. Instead, she is now raising her three grandsons full-time due to her daughter's ongoing struggles with addiction, mental illness, and unstable living conditions. Taking custody of the boys required Susan to deplete her retirement savings on legal fees and daily expenses, and she now plans to work many more years to support them, including helping them pursue college if they choose.

Her journey has been emotionally and physically demanding. In addition to financial strain and reduced energy, Susan has faced isolation as her life diverged from friends who are entering retirement. She also carries the emotional burden of watching her daughter's continued decline while trying to provide stability for her grandsons, who previously experienced trauma, instability, and academic struggles.

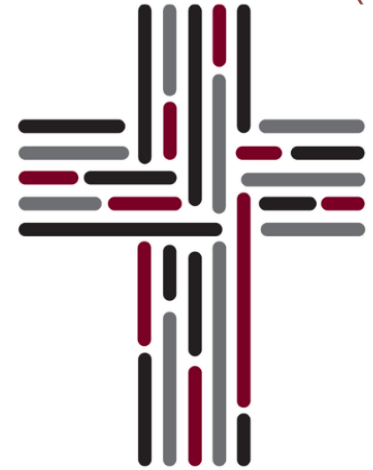
Susan's experience is shared by many kinship caregivers—grandparents and relatives raising children when parents are unable to do so. To support these families, Epworth launched the Kinship Navigator program, which provides free services such as case management, legal and financial guidance, essential supplies, caregiver training, and support groups.

After being encouraged by a co-worker, Susan reached out to the program and was deeply moved by the immediate support she received. Through Epworth, she now has access to resources and a caseworker who helps her navigate financial aid and provides emotional support. The program has also connected her with other kinship families, helping reduce her sense of loneliness.

Despite the many sacrifices and challenges, Susan finds strength in her faith, the support of the program, and her love for her grandsons. Today, the boys are thriving in school and extracurricular activities. Susan remains committed to giving them a stable, nurturing home, believing that one day they will fully understand how deeply they are loved.

To read the full article visit: <https://www.epworthchildrenshome.org/carestories/navigating-unplanned-detours/>

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Robert E. (Bob) Romanello Pastor Emeritus
Lisa Henley Administrative Coordinator
Mallory Capps Director of Church Ministries
Beth Meador W.E.E. School Director
Minda Siebert Finance Coordinator
Terry Helms Building Administrator
Sarah Ochoa Hughey..... Interim Director of Music
Lauren Harris Accompanist
Nancy Rivers Handbell Director
Suzanne Fisher Kitchen Coordinator
Maggie Helms Custodian
Katherine Burns Music Makers Director
Amber Boan Golden Ringers Director
Oriana Gilmore Nursery Worker
Jenna Barino Nursery Worker

*...TO BE CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLE BY LIVING OUT GOD'S CALL
TO LOVE, SERVE, AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD.*