

Happy Friday, New South Family. Welcome to the 83rd edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending March 5, 2021.

-----**Announcements and Resources**-----

Announcements

- 1) **The Latest Issue of Light and Life Weekly Magazine** [is available by clicking here.](#)
- 2) **The Weekly Newsletter of the Free Methodist Foundation** [is available by clicking here.](#)
- 3) **Light and Life Online** Pastors, since the Light and Life Magazine went online only, we've saved lots of money, but we've also greatly diminished it's readership. If you would provide this link to your congregations, your people can subscribe: <https://us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=be2950225b51b17969c7ddf64&id=c5a288fb84> Both English and Spanish versions are available.
- 4) **Annual Conference News** AC for us is scheduled for May 21 – 22 and, unless something really wonky happens with our national health situation, annual conference will be an in-person event at Wilmore. Please note the May date on your calendar.
- 5) **Spring Conference Women's Retreat:** April 9-11, Murphy, North Carolina
Vickie Reynen, wife of Africa Area Director, Mike Reynen, speaker. Activities include worship, prayer, breakout sessions, silent auction, many sight-seeing and shopping options in the beautiful Carolina mountains and more!

Registration/Lodging Details: Free event, but you will be responsible for your own lodging on Friday and Saturday nights in an area hotel or B&B. The Murphy FMC will provide lunch and dinner on Saturday. Husbands are also welcome to all meals and worship times, should a couple wish to experience spring in the mountains together.

With questions or to confirm attendance, contact Lois Huff at 828.361.5568 or loismhuff@kih.net.

- 6) **Global Prayer and Praise Guide:** Thanks to Lois Huff, our March guide is attached / below.
- 7) **New South Conference Spring Youth Retreat** is scheduled for March 19-21 at Eagle Ridge Retreat Center. Group registrations for retreat are due to Andrea Tinsley (atinsley@wfmc.net) by March 15, 2021. Please note: All youth groups must have an adult leader with them the entirety of the retreat. Complete information is attached / below.
- 8) **A Great Reminder** from a devotional thought by Bob Goff today. The title sort of says it all:

God Makes People, and People Make Issues, But People Aren't Issues

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2-3

I've traveled to enough churches and conferences to hear plenty of Christian leaders refer to the "issues" their churches are facing. Sometimes they're real issues, like if a church lost their building in a fire and can't host two thousand people on Sundays. Or they don't have enough places to store all the food they want to give away. Those are issues.

But more often than not, issues mean that people who make us uncomfortable are coming to our churches and we don't know what to do about it. They're distracted by who they love or how they live or what they think or what they've done. We start thinking that the people are the issue because they are the ones telling us about the way we should vote or act or which gender gets to take the pulpit. Those aren't issues we're discussing; they're people. Remember this: God makes people, people make issues, but people aren't issues. The person with an "issue" of [fill in the blank] who wants to lead the church in worship . . . that person isn't an issue. He or she is a person who may well love Jesus more than I do and wants to use his or her gifts to serve the church.

If you want to know more about what these people are thinking, just ask. Will it be uncomfortable? Sure. Will you be misunderstood? Maybe. Do it anyway.

Is there scripture that speaks to the topics you're thinking about? Terrific. Go figure that out for yourself. You're not the sheriff and they're not the enemy. You are two messed-up people who desperately need Jesus. These "issues" we talk about are only masquerading as people. Do yourself and the rest of us a favor and separate the two rather than merging the person and the issue into one.

Does that mean everyone will agree with each other? Of course not, but that's the not the point. Don't separate the truth of the scriptures from the issue of the day, but do separate the person from the issue. It'll take some humility and even more guts, but if we do, we'll learn a lot about love, and we'll welcome people who have perhaps felt far away from God. (Goff, Bob. *Live in Grace, Walk in Love* (pp. 78-79). Thomas Nelson. 2019. Kindle Edition)

9) Guideposts Article: I've attached an article that features the church Bishop Cowart planted 20+ years ago in Columbus, GA, and the way they've handled being a mixed-race congregation. Check it out!

March Birthdays

Hale, Myrna – March 11

Fiskeaux, Charlie – March 14

Ray Start – March 19

Wittenberg, Christopher – March 21

Ryan, Roger – March 27

*I'd love to know your birthday, so the conference can send you an expensive present...or maybe just a "Happy Birthday" wish. If yours is not listed, [please e-mail it to me.](#)

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This Sunday, the second Sunday in Lent, I continue the series, "Jesus' Passion Places" by looking at Peter's denial of Jesus at the fire, as John reports it in chapter 18 of his gospel.

Quote: "I am of certain convinced that the greatest heroes are those who do their duty in the daily grind of domestic affairs while the world whirls as a maddening dreidel." ~ Florence Nightingale

Joke:



Blessings on your worship this weekend!

D-

March, 2021 Global Prayer & Praise Guide



Monday, March 1 - Hurricanes Eta and Iota greatly affected **Honduras**, a nation already in desperate need even before the pandemic. ICCM is looking for a coordinator and is forming a national committee to serve families in some of the poorest neighborhoods in the western hemisphere. Delivery of donations to families of Los Bajos de Baracoa included stoves and chimneys with LPG gas to those who lost everything, plus food, diapers, milk, clothing and especially water. Mission Leader Daisy Arzu expressed her deep appreciation to ICCM saying, “You have been a helping hand. We send you a big hug.”



Tuesday, March 2 - Students at the Good Samaritan Center in **Jordan** returned to a new building after the pandemic shutdown. FMC Pastor Rami writes how this challenge started with the establishment of the Good Samaritan Center in 2017 as a service of the Northern Renaissance of Holiness- Hashemi Church providing education, health, physical and psychological care to refugee children who have been denied education.



Wednesday, March 3 - Tim and Lily Kinkead, who serve in **Taiwan**, appreciate prayer for their new believers’ class on Sunday mornings before church. The Kinkeads encourage building a daily devotional time especially since sometimes Sunday work prevents the new believers from attending church.

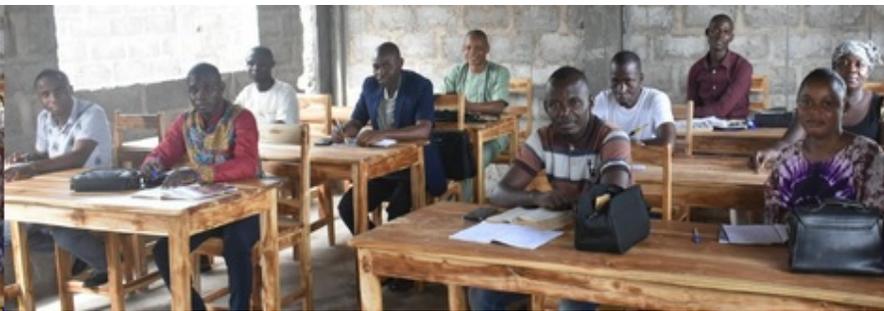
Thursday, March 4 -This from the associate **Asia** area director: Just like the early church, the faith of Asian Christians is vibrant, deep, and fully committed. One wonderful truth of the Christian life is that God gifts all believers in various ways, and we all benefit when we re-gift those blessings to others. The Asian church is strong in some amazing ways by the gracious gifts of God. Our Asian brothers and sisters teach us what it means to be faithful in the face of severe persecution from the “not yet friendly guys,” as one of our key leaders puts it. Asian Christians are generously hospitable sharing what they have with joy. They have a deep connection to group identity, which is crucial for understanding the Biblical world view. We have much to learn from Asian Christians, and much to share, too!



Friday, March 5 - Rich & Laurie Sheriff are in the last leg of their partnership building journey hoping to arrive in Concepción, **Chile** in late summer of 2021. After an initial short-term trip to Chile in 2013 and then leading teams back to Chile during the next 5 years, the Sheriffs have now accepted the invitation of the Chilean Conference to return full-time for church planting ministry. They look forward to forming relationships, starting home groups and helping develop local leaders that will impact the community. Please pray for the on-going commitments needed to keep the Sheriffs on the field and for God to prepare good soil for their future ministry.



Saturday, March 6 - Zsuzsa Mecseri-McNamara coordinates the Set Free Movement in **Hungary**, and the Budapest FMC, where Zsuzsa serves, coordinates monthly interdenominational prayer events for the vulnerable and the perpetrators of human trafficking. This also allows time for dialogue with different organizations to join together when possible. During the pandemic, Zsuzsa reports that they were able to give special attention to supporting two children's homes by donating a new printer and the needed supplies for the children to complete their school assignments.



Sunday, March 7 - Wesley Missionary Institute in **Togo** is open! Eleven students from six countries are enrolled with a call to serve the unreached in West Africa. Area Director Mike Reynen was able to travel from the US to Togo the end of February and spent some time at the school.



Monday, March 8 - Did you know Bishop Linda Adams, who oversees Latin America with Area Director Ricardo Gomez, is learning enough Spanish to preach in Spanish? Can you read the Spanish here and tell what country this is? The Peruvian annual conference used it as their theme: 'We Do More as a Team.' A Venezuelan immigrant has opened a house of peace for the deaf in **Peru** even though she had to learn a whole new set of signs. Her touching testimony at the conference included the good news that they had already celebrated their first baptism.

Tuesday, March 9 - Missionaries to **Portugal** Eduardo and Cindi Angelo are thankful for recovering from COVID and were joyfully looking forward to beginning 3 new cell groups this month. Although they still do not have face-to-face services, most of their members continue to be motivated, are developing the ministry, evangelizing and taking classes through the ZOOM App. In February, God gave Cindi the opportunity to represent Portugal in an online worldwide convocation for prayer at the Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Nations. It was a challenge she enjoyed as pastors and leaders from many nations joined. As they pray for their supporters every day, may we also pray for them.





Wednesday, March 10 - Gabe and Olivia Sevigny have arrived in **Rwanda** and shared this view from their host family's window where they planned to stay for one month to learn some of the Kinyarwandan language and Rwandan culture before going to work at the hospital in Kibogora.



Thursday, March 11 - A member of the majority religion in the **Middle East** saw a cross hanging in an Impact Middle East worker's car while they were both stopped at a gas station. He approached the driver and asked if he were Catholic or Protestant. The man's answer surprised him when he was told, "What really matters is that I follow Christ who died for my sins to give me salvation and eternal life." The man countered with what he believed to be true –that God is not like us to marry and have children so Jesus could not be the Son of God. However, when challenged to ask God to reveal Himself, the man did and was shown Jesus in a dream. After months of questions and struggle, he became a believer and now worships in a house church where he is being disciplined. Praise God!



Friday, March 12 - Helping our kids get involved with missions is made easy with the Missions Alive curriculum. The new updated curriculum is shown here and includes Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Ukraine and the UK. Since **Europe** has the smallest percentage of Evangelicals of any region on Earth – only 2.5% and as low as 0.1% in some countries, this edition is vital to understanding the FMC's global challenge. Kids love the facts, games, crafts, maps and even recipe ideas. Activities include memory verse activities and prayer challenges. And it's all free to download! Also, headquarters provides powerpoint slides on countries, world religions, problems children around the world face, songs and memory verses.



Saturday, March 13 - Thom and Sherry Cahill have recently returned to **Tanzania**, Africa, where they live on the campus of Evert Bible College. They were greeted by students and staff singing songs of praise. During this session, among other classes, students are studying the Gospels. The Cahills write, "God has given us great passion and love for the students and people in Tanzania. We desire to see them continue to grow spiritually and in biblical understanding." Thom sent this picture of their laundry day. (In many countries if you can afford to have others do your household tasks, you are shamed if you don't pay them to do so.)



Sunday, March 14 - An Impact Middle East leader in **Egypt** writes how he and his wife traveled by Toktok to a house church and asked their driver to return at 8pm, which he did. However, the meeting was not over; so the man decided to come in and wait. The Holy Spirit began to deal with him, and he began to cry as he recognized his sins and, in particular, his additions. He accepted Jesus, shared his testimony at the meeting and then called his wife as he drove the IME couple home saying, "I met with Jesus!"





Monday, March 15 - In August of 2019, Gene and Minori Hall began serving in **Japan** where the evangelical population is much less than even 1%. According to Wikipedia the majority of Japanese people are Shinto or Buddhist; however, typically, well over half of Japanese marriages are done with a Christian ceremony. Gene and Minori have a heart for developing faithful leaders who will develop other faithful leaders multiplying disciples and churches. Children are Mika and Iwao.

Tuesday, March 16 - Hany and Joanne are excited about the launching of the first social media ministry to the Yazidi, an unreached people group in the **Middle East**. The Bible has not yet been translated into their dialect and there is limited material available for Yazidi seekers in their heart language. Hany has spent extensive time attending training, talking with experienced peers, and meeting with people in the area who work in translation. Pray for the team of locals in the **Middle East** who are preparing this online platform and that their hope of reaching thousands for Christ through this ministry will happen.



Wednesday, March 17 - This **creative access** couple greets us with ‘Happy Year of the Ox!’ They celebrated their country’s New Year by sharing a meal with local friends as the new year officially started on February 12. Then they ended the week of festivities by inviting classmates to their son’s 14th birthday. The organization’s dream starting from over 20 years ago has been to develop an independent training system, and it is now happening. How exciting!



Thursday, March 18 - Having returned to **Bulgaria** last month, Missionaries Al & Diane Mellinger reported 10 inches of snow and freezing temperatures requiring only digital communication. Now they are getting ready for annual conference the end of this month which means not only prep, but also a lot of translation. They are excited to see their national leaders stepping up to take charge as the Mellingers’ role has now switched to coaching. They particularly ask prayer for the election of a new conference superintendent. Growth also means change. May they sense God’s leading as they move forward.



Friday, March 19 - At the end of January **Madrid** experienced its biggest snowfall in nearly a century! –over 18 inches paralyzed a city unprepared for any winter precipitation and then 6 days of below freezing temperatures caused over \$2 billion in damages. People in the Cañada Real slum that borders our Free Methodist outreach, Mosaico Cultural Center, had already been without electricity since October. May the church always be prepared to serve in any type of crisis!



Saturday, March 20 - Fifty pastors in *creative access country “I”* are teaching their churches to become self-sustainable, but they need financial help now. The FMC has created a 5-year sustainability plan to support them while they teach stewardship and tithing to their members. Each year the support will be reduced by approximately 20%.

Will you pray that they will become fully sustainable, mission-sending churches by that time? Would you be willing to pray for partners in this outreach and perhaps become a partner?



Sunday, March 21 - Mike and Maria Long are career missionaries in **Greece** where their multicultural and multilingual church is heavily involved in refugee crisis ministry. At a recent health checkup, Mike heard his doctor say, “You were lucky.” Having been healed many times in the past, Mike gives the credit to a wonderful, merciful God Who “sent out His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.” (Ps 107:20). Mike adds, “‘Destruction’ in modern Greek means ‘wear, decay, or deterioration.’ The minute the doctor explained that the cancer was mild and completely removed, I knew Jesus was taking care of things for me.”



Monday, March 22 - Phyllis Sortor writes about her visit to Bright Hope Christian Academy, one of the Schools for Africa in **Nigeria**. Her team repaired some buildings, brought meds for the clinic, and signed up 38 new Fulani children for school! Standing by the sign are the Head Master, Principal and their two deputies! Then they were off to Mogodi Camp School, a long two-days' drive to the south, to renovate an abandoned building into classrooms and build a big, communal bath house!



Tuesday, March 23 - New partnerships are forming in **Fiji** and New Zealand. May the whole gospel continue to take root through the FMC in new places. Fiji is an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean about 1,300 miles north of Auckland, New Zealand. Although many sources say Fiji is 65% Christian, Operation World notes that only 25% are evangelicals. Fiji Indians form the largest non-Christian community in the Pacific, and the minority of Indo-Fijians who are Christians are taking initiative in reaching their own people. May we come alongside with prayerful support.



Wednesday, March 24 - **Paraguay** Supt. Ceferino Ramierz asks prayer for the health and financial stability of the pastors under his care. Paraguay has 22 FM churches and a membership of over 1,000. May the Community Church Planting effort bring in new leaders who will then be sent out to start new churches that will transform their communities.



Thursday, March 25 - SEED desires to be an organic network where people in local communities across the US represent the ideals of passion for economic justice, sustainable livelihood, and the creation of new futures for people around the world. These Volunteers, called SEED champions, love SEED and want to connect that love with their communities.

Friday, March 26 - Continued prayer for **Creative Access Country-MR** especially for the young people who have never experienced violence in the streets. Pray their hearts will be released from fear. Pray the Light and Life Bible College and the ICCM schools will be able to resume classes.



Saturday, March 27 - Pastor Gabriel is passionate about reaching more people for Christ in **Guinea** and developing leaders. This church plant shows the strategy of reaching children and from them reaching out to their parents. With new outbreak of Ebola, they hope authorities take the necessary steps to quickly contain it.



Sunday, March 28 - Cida Matos is an ordained elder serving in **Portugal**. Regarding that country's lockdown, she writes, "Even with all of the restrictions, the church activities did not stop. On the contrary, we worked more than if the events had been on site. We praise God for each cell group that remained faithful and for each disciple that we made online. We thank God for every online course, prayer group and Bible school class. (Our online Bible school classes have more students than if they were on site.) We had baptisms, we conducted two wedding ceremonies, and we dedicated children to the Lord. We even had our annual Awakening Conference. Hallelujah!" Cida asks

prayer for a painful and undiagnosed problem in her ear. The doctors suspect Ménière's disease, but her faith is strong that God can heal her.



Monday, March 29 - Missionary from Ireland, Gerry McNamara, serves as the FMWM regional director for Central and Eastern Europe. He recently received an invitation to meet with a group of doctoral students in Veszprém about starting a Bible Study there. This is a city about 1½ hours south of Győr, **Hungary** where he helps lead the FMC. One of the students had started coming to the Sunday morning service in Győr at the end of January. May God's guiding hand lead Gerry!



Tuesday, March 30 - This from Hany in the **Middle East**: Would you be willing to adopt a member of our local team (4 Iraqis and 1 Egyptian) through prayer! hanyalah97@gmail.com Prayer is powerful and we know it is key to advancing God's Kingdom! It recently came to my attention that the locals on our team don't have strong prayer coverage or people regularly praying for them. Due to the nature of our work, spiritual warfare can be intense!



Wednesday, March 31 - The Rosados are packing for **Argentina** and have been to Missionary Training Intl. in Colorado, which is required pre-field training. The training even included a program for daughter Ellia's age to prepare her for cross-cultural ministry. Praise God for this family who are excited to get to the field!

new south conference fall youth retreat

-Details-

March 19-21, 2021
Youth Grades 7-12
\$30 per student

Registration Deadline: March 15
Eagle Ridge Retreat Center
Bowling Green KY

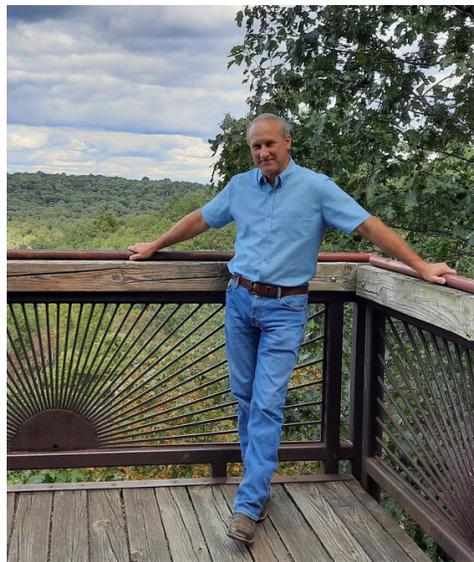


*All youth/groups must have an adult leader for entire event.

-Retreat Speaker: Pastor Dwight Winter-

Pastor Dwight has been serving at Wilmore Free Methodist Church since 2004. Pastor Dwight is no stranger to Eagle Ridge or to retreats, speaking at the NSC Fall Youth Retreat in 2006.

He is the husband of one wife and the father of 4 children. He likes to be outdoors, working on projects, and eating gummy bears.



-Packing List-

Bible, journal, pen, sleeping bag/bedding, toiletries, comfy clothes (layers), walking shoes, jacket/sweatshirt, cloth facemask

-Missions Offering-



This retreat, our offering will go to support Eagle Ridge Retreat Center. Much of Eagle Ridge's funding through the year comes from group /church rentals. This past year, the pandemic eliminated nearly all the rentals booked. Eagle Ridge is a special place to many of us, a home away from home.

Let's give sacrificially to see the ministry of Eagle Ridge continue on for years to come.

New South Conference Spring Retreat Information
March 19-21, 2021

Dear Pastors and Youth Workers,

Over the past decade, spring and fall retreats have given our conference teens and youth groups space to slow down, to reconnect with each other, and to meet with God. We have watched as young men and young women surrender their lives to Christ in new ways, pick up the mantle of leadership, and find freedom to live in victory with Christ.

I write to you, today, inviting you to consider bringing your teens to Eagle Ridge Retreat Center for a weekend retreat. Many of us need the time away more now than ever. I am making plans to help us stay healthy as we meet, and look for your support to make this weekend a good one.

Retreat Details in light of Covid-19:

- 1) Please complete the health check attached below before leaving (youth and leaders) for retreat.
- 2) Please ensure EVERYONE in your group has a mask. We will wear these in the dining hall, while singing, and in situations where we must be in close proximity with one another.
- 3) We will meet together for our sessions in the pavilion, allowing extra space to spread out by youth group. Please remind your group to pack layers, as it might be quite cold in the pavilion at night.
- 4) It is vital that each youth group be accompanied by a chaperone. Housing will be arranged according to youth group, so that groups will not be mixed together in the dorm rooms or cabins. If you do not have a chaperone to send with students, unfortunately you may not send students.
- 5) Meals will be served as “low touch” as possible and dining will be encouraged outside (at picnic tables, around the fire ring, etc). A few distanced tables will be available in the dining hall as well. If weather does not permit outside dining, a dining schedule will be instituted.
- 6) Outdoor low touch games and hiking will be encouraged during recreation.

Your willingness to agree to the above with a positive attitude will go a long way in making this a good weekend for everyone.

Retreat Offering:

Since 2006, together we have worked together to make a difference for the Kingdom of God. We have completed service projects at Eagle Ridge, packed boxes for Operation Christmas Child, served at local FM churches, planted trees with Eden Reforestation, supported two families in crisis, supported the Thursday meal ministry @ Fountain Square Church, collected funds for our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters after devastating storms, supported missions around the world, and even in our own backyard. Most recently, our offerings supported the good work of Eden’s Glory, a home that works to bring freedom and restoration to woman who are survivors of human trafficking. You can find out more about their ministry here: <http://edensglory.org/>

This retreat offering will go to support Eagle Ridge Retreat Center. We love Eagle Ridge and they need our support. Much of their funding through the year comes from group /church rentals. This past year, the pandemic eliminated nearly all the rentals Eagle Ridge had booked. Eagle Ridge is a special place to many of us, a home away from home. Let’s give sacrificially to see the ministry of Eagle Ridge continue on for years to come.

NEW SOUTH CONFERENCE SPRING YOUTH RETREAT

Now for the final details:

- ❖ Retreat Weekend: March 19-21, 2021 (Friday evening through Sunday noon)
- ❖ Pre-Registration deadline is Monday, March 15, 2021.
- ❖ Spring retreat is for students in 7th-12th grade.
- ❖ Cost for the retreat is \$30 per youth. Make checks payable to NSC, in memo: Youth Retreat.
- ❖ Please bring Individual Camper Forms as well as the Group Registration Form with the money to check-in on Friday, March 19th.
- ❖ Each church group must bring chaperones (no single youth). Please bring medical release forms for your students & keep those forms handy, just in case of emergency. Youth group leader/chaperone will be responsible for making decisions regarding emergency medical care.
- ❖ Don't forget that you and your students should bring your Bible, bedding, toiletries, comfy clothes (layers!), walking shoes, and a cloth face mask.

I can't wait to see you there! If you have questions or need anything, please contact me by email: atinsley@wfmc.net, or phone: 931-212-8083.

In His Service,



Pastor Andrea Tinsley, NSC Youth Director

Attachments:

- ❖ Medical Release Form (use as needed),
- ❖ Covid-19 Health Check (Youth & Leaders)
- ❖ Individual Registration Forms (Youth & Leaders),
- ❖ Group Registration Form for Each Church/Youth Group



Let's escape to the woods!



Medical History/Permission to Treat

Our commitment is to never misuse the information provided below or release it to unauthorized persons. It will never be used at Camp unless necessary, and then only with the greatest discretion.- Eagle Ridge, Inc and New South Conference of FMCNA-

NAME: _____ Male: ___ Female: ___ Birthdate: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON(S): _____ Phone: _____

_____ Phone: _____

Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Insurance Company: _____ Policy #: _____

IMMUNIZATIONS: (give dates if available) ___ Tetanus, ___ Polio Booster, ___ Measles, ___ Mumps, ___ DPT or TD, ___ Rubella, Others _____

PAST MEDICAL HISTORY: ___ Asthma, ___ Sinusitis, ___ Bronchitis, ___ Kidney Trouble, ___ Diabetes, ___ Dizziness, ___ Heart Trouble, ___ Stomach Upset, ___ Hay Fever, Other (be specific) _____

CHILDHOOD DISEASES: ___ Chicken Pox, ___ Measles, ___ Mumps, ___ Whooping Cough, Others (list) _____

ALLERGIES:

Food: _____ Penicillin or other medications: _____

Insect stings or bites: _____ Poison sumac, oak or ivy: _____

Other allergies: _____

PREVIOUS SURGERY OR SERIOUS ILLNESS: _____

CURRENT PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS (GIVE DOSAGE): _____

SPECIAL DIET: _____

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS: Does the camp staff have permission to give the camper the following over-the-counter medication or generic equivalent when it is appropriate? : ___ Tylenol (Acetaminophen), ___ Advil (Ibuprofen), ___ Milk of Magnesia/Tums/Antacid, ___ Benadryl or Cough Syrup

PERMISSION FOR TREATMENT: My permission is granted for the Camp Director, Camp Nurse, or an Adult Counselor to obtain necessary medical attention in case of sickness or injury to my child. I, the undersigned, do hereby verify that the above information is correct. Dated this _____ day of _____, _____ (month/year) in the State of _____, County (parish) _____.

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Relationship to Camper: _____

NOTARIZATION:

On this the _____ day of _____, 20____, _____ (the signer above), appeared before me _____, and in my presence executed the within and foregoing permission and release form.

Witness my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

My commission expires on _____. _____ Notary Public

Covid-19 Health Check

Name _____ Temperature _____

1. Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms over the last 14 days:

- Sore throat ____ **Yes** ____ **No**
- Fever (greater than 100.0). ____ **Yes** ____ **No**
- Body aches. ____ **Yes.** ____ **No**
- Loss of smell or taste ____ **Yes.** ____ **No**
- Shortness of breath (for unknown reasons) ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

2. Have you or anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days? ____ **Yes**
____ **No**

3. Have you or anyone in your household cared for anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

4. Have you or anyone in your household been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Covid-19 Health Check

Name _____ Temperature _____

1. Have you or anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms over the last 14 days:

- Sore throat ____ **Yes** ____ **No**
- Fever (greater than 100.0). ____ **Yes** ____ **No**
- Body aches. ____ **Yes.** ____ **No**
- Loss of smell or taste ____ **Yes.** ____ **No**
- Shortness of breath (for unknown reasons) ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

2. Have you or anyone in your household tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days? ____ **Yes**
____ **No**

3. Have you or anyone in your household cared for anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

4. Have you or anyone in your household been exposed to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Individual Youth Registration

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____ Gender: _____ M _____ F

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Home phone Cell/work phone

Email Address: _____

Youth and Parent Contract:

I agree to cooperate with the leadership in all planned activities.

Youth Signature Parent Signature Date

Parental Permission:

I give my permission for my child _____ to
Youth Name

participate in the Fall Youth Retreat sponsored by the New South Conference of the Free Methodist Church, and to ride Director-approved transportation during this event.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date



Youth Leader & Adult Chaperone Registration Form

Name: _____ Gender: ___M___F

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

Note: It is highly advised that you fill out the below information. In the event of an emergency, participating staff need to be aware of any special conditions you may have or medications you take.

Emergency Information:

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Relationship _____ Phone Number _____ / _____

Doctor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Insurance Co. _____ Insurance Policy #: _____

Please check if you suffer from:

Diabetes: ___ Asthma: ___ Heart problems: ___ Food Allergies: ___

Allergies: _____

Details:

Please list any routine medications taken:

Church & Youth Group Registration Form

Church Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Group Leader: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration:

Chaperones (names please): Please include registration forms for each adult.

Male:

Female:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Total Adults: _____

Youth (numbers only, please): Please include registration forms for each youth.

Male: _____

Female: _____

Total Youth: _____

Registration Fee: \$30 per teen

Total Fee: _____

Please bring this form to Eagle Ridge and submit with payment at Check-In (Dining Hall).

Please reserve your spots by March 15, 2021 by phone or email.

Phone: 931-212-8083

Email: atinsley@wfmc.net



Let's escape to the woods!





Grounded in Love

In the heart of the South, a church does the hard work of racial reconciliation **By DERRICK SHIELDS**, Columbus, Georgia

Three simple words that have divided our nation. *Black lives matter*.

Even at the church where I am lead pastor—a multiracial congregation founded more than two decades ago—there isn't universal agreement

about the meaning or significance of those words.

Yet our disagreement is not bitter. We don't all agree. We love each other anyway. We keep talking. We keep worshiping. We acknowledge our common bond in God.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL A. SCHWARZ

We don't pretend to have all the answers. I have preached about racial justice here at Christ Community Church, which was founded with an intention of bridging the racial divide in Columbus, Georgia. I have encouraged the formation of small groups to discuss this vital issue. Some members of our church joined peaceful protests in Columbus. Other members did not.

Here's one thing I know. Jesus commands us to love God and others—and no wiggle room in the word *others*. At Christ Community, we do that

by getting to know one another. We ground ourselves in the love of God and build trust through friendship with people of different backgrounds.

We are a rarity in America: a proudly multiracial church where differences are neither fought over nor swept under the rug.

How do we do it? In one sense, we don't. God does it. We see our job as trusting God and, with his help, learning to trust one another. Trust enables us to disagree and express our feelings about difficult issues without coming apart.

It's not a random choice. Jesus' ministry was founded on relationships. Jesus didn't grab the spotlight of his day and hobnob with people in power. He traveled around a remote corner of the Roman Empire, making friends with whoever crossed his path and speaking the truth about God. When he died, a handful of friends stuck by him.

And yet he changed the world.

The road to where we are at Christ Community was not easy. We made mistakes and learned. Above all, we learned how to experience God's love in the midst of—maybe even because of—our differences. I tell our story in hopes that it can help you do the same.

I am not the founder of Christ Community. I succeeded the founding pastor, Keith Cowart. Keith, who is white, grew up in a small segregated town in Georgia, where his friends' parents

IN UNISON Pastor Derrick Shields (right) leads prayer at Christ Community Church, founded as a multiracial church.

pulled their kids out of public schools following desegregation. Keith's parents believed in public education and kept their son there.

Keith was called to ministry early and became a Free Methodist pastor after college and seminary. At his first church, in another small Georgia town, members forced him to cancel an after-school program because they objected to Black children using the church basketball court.

Keith left that church and settled in Columbus, determined to make racial reconciliation the heart of his ministry. Together with a few friends, he and his wife started a new church in their living room and later located the sanctuary where railroad tracks once divided the white and Black neighborhoods of Columbus.

Despite extensive outreach to the Black community, the new church remained stubbornly white. Keith could not figure out why. At last he committed the congregation to a week of prayer. "We can't seem to crack this nut," he said to God. "Help us."

Black people began showing up at church. "God told us to check this place out," they said.

Keith listened to new members and learned that key to being a truly welcoming church is putting a diversity of people up front and playing a variety of music during worship. Newcomers know that they belong because they see people who look like them.

Keith invited Black members into leadership. He broadened the music

mix. He preached about racial justice and reconciliation.

And he began encouraging members to join small groups that met in people's homes for meals, Bible study and friendship.

It was the small groups that cemented the church's identity. The groups were designed to mix people from different backgrounds. It's one thing to open up in prayer with people just like you. It's a whole new level of trust to be vulnerable with someone whose life experiences are very different from yours.

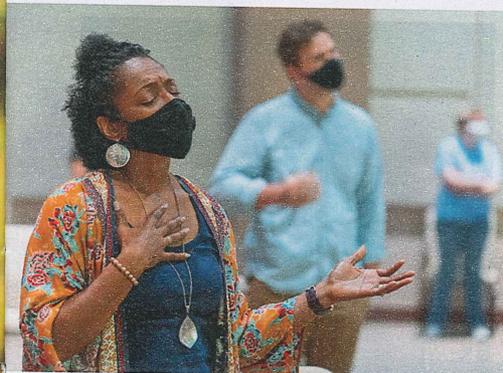
That's what brought me to Christ Community and to ministry.

I served in the Army for 20 years, then retired and went into real estate. I read Rick Warren's book *The Purpose-Driven Life* and felt a call to share Jesus with others. But I didn't know how.

I attended a weekend Methodist retreat called Walk to Emmaus. I was the only Black person participating, an unusual situation for someone who served in the military, which I found racially diverse.

Praying and sharing my feelings with this group of men who were so different from me was transformative. We connected on a deep level, finding our common bond in God. I wanted more of that.

My wife, Andrea, also participated in Walk to Emmaus. Keith happened to be the spiritual director of the cohort she was in. Andrea was struck by his friendliness and his commitment to racial justice. She suggested checking out his church.



ONE DIRECTION Pastor Derrick (above) says he and members of his church are called by God to welcome all people.

Stepping through the doors of Christ Community, we knew we'd found home. Keith helped us connect with the congregation and encouraged my interest in ministry by giving me leadership positions.

I attended seminary and was ordained a Free Methodist pastor. When Keith was called to be a bishop in 2018, Christ Community chose me to replace him.

Since the death of George Floyd last year and throughout the nationwide racial justice movement that followed, I have done my best to steer our congregation through a tumultuous time while also navigating the Covid-19 pandemic.

I have preached about God's commandment to Christians to love all people and be a force of healing in a nation with racial wounds. Christ Community has provided online resources about racial justice and connected members with online conversations in our denomination. I invited members to join me at peaceful protests.

The heart of our approach has been personal. We have 26 groups, mostly

of 12 to 14 members, in our 900-member congregation, plus groups devoted specifically to prayer. Each group has a different focus: fellowship, Bible study, jail ministry, healing.

I encouraged the formation of a new group focused specifically on racial reconciliation. Members of that group will go on to start their own groups on the topic. The idea is to gather different people together, get to know one another, pray, study God's Word and, with that foundation, talk through difficult questions about race.

For some members at Christ Community, the words *Black lives matter* are a rallying cry. Others hear a devaluing of other races. It can be a struggle to remain loving with people who disagree about fundamental issues. We think it's a struggle worth waging. God helps us persevere.

You'd be amazed how overcoming one barrier can help people overcome others. Brad and Amanda Newman

OUR COMMON GROUND

began attending Christ Community about six years ago after making the difficult decision to leave their previous church.

Brad and Amanda encountered a warm welcome at Christ Community, but they also encountered something more: our small groups, where people from different backgrounds open up to one another in a spirit of trust.

“When you know the details of people’s lives and what their hurt was, it opens up your heart in new ways,” Amanda says. “It becomes safe to ask questions. Where we are weak, God is strong.”

One of my favorite stories in the Gospels is Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. The story takes place in a region called Samaria. Jews and Samaritans regarded one another as enemies. They disagreed about fundamental theological issues. To Jews, Samaritans were unclean.

If you want to feel the full impact of this story, picture a person with whom you disagree profoundly. Now picture an entire neighborhood full of people like that.

On his way home from a preaching tour, Jesus says to his disciples, we’re going to travel through *that* neighborhood, the one with all those people you don’t like. And we’re going to hang out there for a while.

To top it off, Jesus strikes up a conversation with a Samaritan woman, something no self-respecting rabbi would do. He offers her the water of life. She recognizes him as the Mes-



PASSING THE TORCH Founding Pastor Keith Cowart (center) hands over leadership of the church to Pastor Derrick in 2018.

siah and runs off to tell everyone she knows. The disciples are shocked.

“A new command I give you: Love one another,” Jesus says to his disciples shortly before his death. He means it.

Like the rest of America, we at Christ Community are feeling our way forward in an uncertain and difficult time. We are not blind to the injustice in our nation. We are aware that we don’t agree about everything.

We also are grounded in the love of God. And we are committed to serving and worshipping together with a common purpose.

That foundation has served us well. We believe that it could also help our nation. We pray that you too can be inspired to reach out to someone different and take a small step toward the healing so many of us seek. ◀

For more on this story, see FAMILY ROOM