

the Messenger

The Monthly Newsletter of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church in Gastonia, NC

Upcoming Church Events

- February 2: Transformation Journey Town Hall, Zoom, 6:30p
- February 7: Drive In Communion Service, 11a
- February 7: Reverse Chili Bowl
- February 14: Valentine Drive Thru, 10:15a to 10:45a, pick up Lenten Devotionals
- February 14: Game Time, 2p
- February 17: Ash Wednesday 12:30p Lenten Lunch, 2p & 4p Sanctuary Prayer, 6p Online Worship
- February 24: Lenten Lunch, 12:30p,
- February 24: Butterfly Orders Due

ONGOING

Wednesdays in Lent: Lenten Lunches, 12:30p
 Sundays & Wednesdays: Children, Youth, Sunday School Classes & Bible Studies
 Tuesdays: Grief Share & Divorce Care
 Wednesdays: Morning Bible Study, Choir Ensembles, Youth Small Group
 Thursdays: Soul Purpose
 Fridays: Morning Prayer

Lent 2021: Cultivate

Article to come before publishing

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. You are invited to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23. The Church will host an Ash Wednesday drive-in service at 12:30pm on February 17th in the church parking lot located behind Bank of America. We will utilize our FM transmitter so you may listen in the comfort of your vehicle. We will also make available the Sanctuary for prayer and reflection at 2p and 4p. That evening a service will premier at 6p on Facebook and YouTube. Please make the time on Ash Wednesday to recall God's words to Adam in Genesis 3:19 "remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return".

Reverse Chili Bowl

Our annual Chili Bowl will be a little backwards this year but we'll still be enjoying the festivities and making a contribution to CAM! This year we will be collecting all the makings for a delicious pot of chili and the recipe! The idea is for you to take a favorite (or generic) chili recipe, purchase all the ingredients - down to the spices, hot peppers and cloves of garlic - but don't cook it! Freeze the meats, and bring all the ingredients to church before Super Bowl Sunday (February 7). We'll donate the complete makings for multiple pots of chili to Crisis Assistance Ministry (yes, they welcome fresh vegetables and meats!). We will collect food donations on February 7 at the 11a communion service and a chili pot will be available for any financial contributions to CAM!

February Communion

February's Communion Celebration will a little different! On February 7 at 11am we will celebrate communion in the parking lot behind Bank of America. We will utilize a new FM radio broadcast system. We appreciate your patience as we continue to utilize this new technology. All you need to do is drive in and park in the parking area behind Bank of America (you can be in our lot or theirs). Tune your radio to 87.5FM and set the volume to a comfortable level. Communion elements will be blessed and distributed as we celebrate this gift of grace together! This gathering will replace our usual first Sunday drive thru.

For the Love Of God

We're holding a special Valentine's drive thru on Sunday, February 14th between 10:15a and 10:45a to celebrate the Love of God! We celebrate God's love for us and for all of creation! Drive thru to receive your Lenten Devotional and a special treat from your church staff. The Lenten devotional has been created to include spiritual disciplines that follow our Lenten Sermon Series, Cultivate.

Lenten Lunch Series

Beginning February 17 at 12:30p, we will begin a Lenten Lunch Series. Each Wednesday through Mark 31, you are invited to pick up lunch, drive-in to the church parking lot behind Bank of America, park and tune in to 87.5FM for a brief service of prayer, scripture, meditation and music. Encourage others to join you in the parking spaces as we seek to cultivate our faith.

Town Hall Meeting

Join us on Zoom for the second Town Hall Meeting to discuss the 2020 Transformation Journey Report. This opportunity for you to learn more and answer questions about this report. Chris McCullen and Marty Brown will facilitate the conversation. Zoom links available in the weekly emails prior.

cultivate THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There is no law against such things.

Galatians 5:22-23

Sunday Sermon Series

February 14: Love

February 21: Joy & Peace

February 28: Patience & Gentleness

March 7: Kindness

March 14: Generosity

March 21: Faithful

March 28: Self Control

Wednesday Lenten Lunches

February 17-March 31 @ 12:30p

Brief Lunchtime Service in the church parking lot behind Bank of America.

Lenten Dates:

Ash Wednesday: February 17

Palm Sunday: March 28

Maundy Thursday: April 1

Good Friday, April 2

Easter Sunday: April 4

February 2 at 6:30p

Thank You

Dear Myers Memorial United Methodist Church Community, Thank you so much for the wonderful hospitality you have shown in allowing me to work in partnership with you by offering space in your building for pastoral counseling. As many of you remember, it was about a year ago when you offered temporary space for me to continue doing pastoral psychotherapy while First UMC was under renovation. Now I am here permanently and I could not be more excited!

My new counseling organization is Spirit Song Counseling, as I work in partnership with Dr. Stacey Watkins-Griffith, a United Methodist Clergy and Pastoral Counselor who is serving in Shelby. I deeply believe in the vision and leadership Rev. Sally, as well as the entire ministry and program staff of the church, provides during an unprecedented time in our church and world. I know God is doing great things in and through you.

In the year 2021, we are all aware of the pain and suffering many people are experiencing, and I want to work with you to be a part of helping. I make a commitment to use the gifts and graces God has given me to work in partnership with you as we together seek to fulfill the mission of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church and the call to **love and serve the world in Jesus' name**. I provide counseling services for individuals and families who are experiencing a variety of mental and emotional health issues, such as depression, anxiety, trauma and grief, among others. If you or anyone you know is in need of this type of service, **please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 704 810-4242 or eddie@spiritsongcounseling.com.**

Blessings,

Rev. Eddie Ingram, MDiv, MSW, LCSW
Spirit Song Counseling Group

Youth Ministry

Tresca McSwain, thmcswain@gmail.com

February Youth Events will continue to be virtual on Sundays and Wednesdays.

SUNDAY NIGHT CONNECT

February 7: Checkmate! What games have you been playing? Join us for a night of games and devotion.

February 14: Valentine's Party! Let's talk about agape love!

February 21: Joey Tribbiani always wants to know, "How You Doin'?" and so do we! Checking in with you with a weekly check in and devotion.

February 28: Bob Ross Paint Night Happy Little Trees are just what we need for a discussion on what it means to Thrive!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDIES FOR YOUTH

The Wesley challenge continues through February 10th. Beginning February 17th at 7p, any youth are invited to join in our Lenten study Simon Peter: Flawed but Faithful Disciple. Peter was just an ordinary guy who heard and followed God's extraordinary call. You, too, have special gifts and talents and abilities to make a difference today! The group gathers weekly via zoom.

College Students

Tresca McSwain, thmcswain@gmail.com

College Student Sunday School is gearing back up with the new semester. Please make sure Tresca has your current email so we can connect with you each week!

60+ Fellowship

Connie Elzey, dce@myersmemorialumc.com

Let's get together via Zoom to see one another, share a devotion and discuss some spring plans! See you on the 3rd Thursday, February 18 at 1 pm. We've missed our 60+ Gatherings! Can't wait to see you on Zoom.

From Heather's Desk

Heather Steffey, *Administrative Assistant*

When I accepted the position as Administrative Assistant here at Myers, one of the things that were stressed as an important part of my job was the card ministry. Did you know that Myers Memorial has a card ministry? Have you received a card from the church? Over the last few years it has been my responsibility and honor to send cards to folks who may need some cheer, are sick, have lost someone, need encouragement, deserve a thank you and so many more reasons. Before working here I didn't know how much a card can mean to someone. I personally would just send the card and said a prayer for the person who receives it and move on. Life gets busy and it was hard to have time to stop and send a card. Looking back growing up it was only really at birthdays that we would receive a card in the mail. Not here at Myers Memorial! Cards are an important part and help us stay connected. It helps us remember we are loved by our family here at Myers Memorial UMC.

When Covid hit we had to totally rethink how we do things. So many changes had to be made with the way we worship, fellowship, and how we did our daily job task. One thing did not change though. We were still able to send some love through the mail. We wanted to stay connected. We wanted to remind people they are loved even if we can't see each other right now.

Each week I work hard to reach out to shut-ins in the church, the lost, the lonely, the sick, and even residents in several assisted living centers in our area. I send them notes of love and it includes devotions and activities for them to work on during the week. Some of those cards go as far as Ohio and Winston Salem.



We have been blessed to receive so many calls and cards back expressing how the card ministry has meant so much to them. I've been given many words of appreciation. Some that stood out to me were statements like: *"I don't understand how you all can care so much for someone you have never met but that it has meant the world to me and I have felt loved."* or *"I love the cards each week and that not one is the same, each one being different and unique"*, *"You should write for a card company because you always send the best written cards."* *"Thank you for the cards, I display them in my room and reread them when I need some encouragement."* *"Your card this week really touched me, thank you for the kind words."* Although these words aren't necessary they remind me of why this ministry is so important and why I take great joy in doing it each week.

There are so many people out there who have no one to check in on them or send them a reminder they aren't alone in this world. Many who are battling silently and are depressed and lonely. What a simply meaningful way to show you care. We should be proud of the card ministry we have here at Myers.

Would you be interested in being a part of the card ministry? If so we would love to have you. Please contact the church office at 704-864-3222 or email me at heather@myersmemorialumc.com to find out how simple it is for you can be a part of this wonder ministry. Do you know someone who may benefit from receiving a card? Maybe you know a family member, friend, neighbor that could benefit. Please contact me with their information.

Corinthians 13:13 - And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

January Blessings at Myers Memorial UMC

While we continue to worship through a digital platform, there are many ways that Myers Memorial UMC continues to be the church in the world. Thank you for sharing your prayers, presence, gifts, talents and witness!

- Celebrated Epiphany
- Reaffirmed our Baptism
- 2021 Leadership Summit
- Began conversations to learn more about Human Trafficking
- Town Hall Meeting re: Transformation Journey
- Made plans for the Lenten Season
- Continued Outdoor Gatherings
- Daily restocking of the Food Pantry in the Patch
- Staff Participating in ongoing Continuing Education
- Making 125 Sandwiches for W. Gastonia Boys & Girls Club
- Friday Morning Prayer Group, 7:15a
- Broadcast Weekly Live Worship simultaneously on YouTube and Facebook
- Delivered Communion to Shut Ins
- Praise Band rehearsals
- 20+ Youth & Adults participating in The Wesley Challenge
- Wedding Shower celebrating Matthew McCullen and Jeanna Martin
- Celebrated the life of Ruth King
- Abundant & Faithful Giving
- Shared the Peace of Christ through cards & phone calls
- Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts continue to meet at the Church
- NarAnon and Alanon meet at the church
- Wooded lot mulched to create more outdoor gathering space.
- GriefShare and DivorceCare meet weekly
- Welcomed Eddie Ingram, Pastoral Counselor, to our building
- CAM food collections
- Communion Pick Up
- Choir Gathering in Person and on Zoom
- **Women's Bible Study**
- Packing meals for Weekend Backpack Ministry
- Gathered for prayer and scripture reading
- Weekly phone calls and cards
- Committees meeting on Zoom and in person
- Collected thousands of items for our Homeless Neighbors
- Participated in the 2021 Point in Time Homeless Count
- Made dreams for Thriving in 2021
- Provided a meal for the Battered **Women's Shelter**
- Sunday School classes gather in-person & online
- Cared for members with Covid
- Mission Possible Work Day
- Serve as substitute Meals on Wheels Delivery volunteers
- Serve as Crisis Assistance Ministry Volunteers
- Ongoing discussions with meeting the needs of our Homeless Neighbors
- Continue to collect food and supplies for our neighbors with need
- Sending cards to members, visitors, and community members
- Engaged in Worship together through various opportunities to connect.

The More You Know...

What do you know about Human Trafficking? Do you know it happens right here in our city? Do you know educating yourself to understand the signs, threats and actions you may take could make a **difference in another person's life?** **Human trafficking** is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some

type of labor or commercial sex act. Yes. It's not a happy topic but one we must be made aware of as we **seek to care for all God's Children.** You are invited to an information session with community leaders on February 28 at 2p via zoom. Please contact Jaime Friday, jaime.hawkins.friday@gmail.com with any questions or for more information.

Musical Mediations

Take time each Monday in Lent to reflect on the music of the season. Join Tony Sane, Director of Music, on Facebook and YouTube beginning February 15 through March 29 to learn more about the music of the Lenten Season.

Children's Ministry

Connie Elzey, dce@myersmemorialumc.com

FEBRUARY'S SUNDAY SCHOOL PACKETS will be ready by Thursday, February 4. If you signed up to get January's packet, we will have one ready for you in February! Please stop by the church office on February 4 (10a-4p) or come to our Parking Lot Communion Service on February 7 (11a) to get your packet of materials. Remember, we email Preschool and Elementary video lesson each week and post in our private Facebook page. These lessons include a Bible story, activity and music. Many thanks to Tony Sane for editing our videos each week for our children.

In February we will focus on the word "GUIDE" We will focus on these Bible stories: "The Lord's Prayer", "Jesus Calms the Storm", "Mary and Martha" and "Zacchaeus".

Our leaders for Sunday School and Music for February will be Jerri Lynn and Gary Boggess, Paige and Hadrian Horn, Melinda Brown, Jaclyn Tant, Justine Snyder and Tony Sane. Please thank these leaders for being faithful to our children each week!

CHILDREN'S STORY TIME AND GATHERING
beginning Sunday, February 7

Until we can meet in person again, let's gather briefly on our "Children at Myers Memorial UMC" Private Facebook page each Sunday @ 1:30p. We'll be able to see each other, meet new and old friends from church, share the highs and lows of our week, enjoy a story and pray for each other and others as we begin a new week!

Adult Ministry

Connie Elzey, dce@myersmemorialumc.com

Feeling Isolated? Need to talk and share with others about your faith and life? Get Connected in 2021! We can help you find a small group to connect with in 2021! Even though we are not meeting as large groups together, don't forget we have many small group opportunities for YOU....some meeting in person and some via Zoom! Connie Elzey can help you get connected with some of these groups: Bible Study Discussion Groups, Adult Sunday School Classes, Prayer Group, Outreach Ministry Projects, Mission Possible Outreach Projects, Support Groups: DivorceCare, Griefshare, AlaNon

Love for the Children

Connie Elzey, dce@myersmemorialumc.com

We have about 80 children on our church rolls that love to get mail and hear from Myers Memorial UMC. Some are out of town, many we haven't seen in long time due to Covid restrictions, etc. We miss seeing our children in the hallways, Sanctuary and at Children's Time and they are sure to miss us! Let us help them all know how much God and their church family loves them! Would you be willing to prepare Valentine Cards for our children? If so, the church office will be happy to mail your cards if you will prepare them. Contact Connie Elzey, Christian Educator, if you would like a list of our children!

Lenten Bible Study

Cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit
You are invited to join in a Lenten Bible Study on Tuesdays at 7p, during Lent, February 16 through March 30. Written and facilitated by David Elzey, the study focuses on the many aspects of the Fruit of the Spirit found in just 2 verses of the Bible: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 CEB).*

New Bookkeeping Practices at Myers Memorial

On February 1, Myers Memorial UMC will move the bookkeeping in-house as we welcome Amelia Bumgarner to our staff. Amelia will be handling all financial information for our church moving forward. She handles books for multiple clients, including another United Methodist church very similar in membership and budget. She came to us very highly recommended. Her efficiency and ability for cost management savings were noted by her clients.

We are grateful for the years of partnership with Cherry Bekaert. As we transition to Amelia, we will find about a \$10,000 savings to our church budget for bookkeeping services.

Amelia will be in the office on Tuesday afternoons and at other times working remotely very similar to our arrangement with Cherry Bekaert. Angie Rutlege at Cherry Bekaert and Amelia will be working over the next few weeks to create a seamless transition. Amelia will continue to maintain the confidentiality we are accustomed to with our finances and individual contributions.

We anticipate this transition to be easy for everyone. There will be no changes to online giving through Vanco services. What will change is the address where you need to send your financial contributions. Please mail all contributions to Myers Memorial UMC, 301 S. New Hope Rd. Gastonia, NC 28054. To maintain confidentiality please mark your envelope as “contribution” or “finance.” You are also encouraged to check your online giving through your bank or other financial institution to ensure that the address is correct and will be sent directly to Myers Memorial.

If you have any questions about this transition, please feel free to contact Finance Chair Wendy Wade, Staff Parish Chair Marty Brown, or Pastor Sally Queen.

You are invited to welcome Amelia to our staff at Myers Memorial UMC. You can reach her after February 1st. at 704-864-3222 ext. 109 or finance@myersmemorialumc.com or send her a card via 301 S. New Hope Rd. Gastonia, NC 28054

Butterflies to Celebrate

The butterfly is a mesmerizing creation that captures the beauty of God’s creative power to transform even the tiniest creatures. You are invited see for your own eyes this transformative power through purchasing caterpillars and raising them to butterflies for an Easter morning release! **Don’t worry! It’s simple and plenty of instructions will be provided!** *Orders are Due to the Church Office by Wednesday, February 26.*

You may place your order by visiting www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/children. You may also send in your order via mail or dropping it by the church. Please remember to include a phone or email address where we can contact you when the caterpillars arrive.

Starter Bundle: \$14 each

includes 1 Small Cage and 2 Caterpillars

Additional Caterpillars: \$2 each

Additional Small Cage: \$12 each (8” tall, collapsible for storage and holds up to 4 butterflies)

These are live animals and we cannot guarantee that each one will become a butterfly. It is advised to purchase more than you may need. Caterpillars will arrive to the church around mid-March. You will be notified when they are ready for pick up and your prompt response to pick up is necessary so that they are in the proper stage for an Easter release (April 4) no matter where you are to celebrate the Risen Savior in 2021.

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

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www.MyersMemorialUMC.org

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Lent 2021: Cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit



Worship with Us : Sundays at 9am on Facebook & YouTube
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