



Quarterly Newsletter of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church in Gastonia, NC

Volume 27 Issue 3 Fall 2025

## FROM PASTOR ANDY ~ LESSONS FROM COKIE

Let me be clear from the get-go. Cokie is Mark's dog. Through and through. I inherited her. After all, if I wanted to be with him, I had to accept that he came with four kids and...Cokie. The four kids are awesome.

Cokie is awesome too, especially when she's asleep. Seriously, I am now her mama, and I love her, but that dog is the most stubborn, untrained, smart, headstrong, untrained, stubborn, sweetheart of I've ever known.

Now before you come after me, I'll just tell you - I love dogs and cats. I have owned dogs and cats through the years - spoiled ones too. But y'all this dog is a pistol, let me tell you.

The other day she got out of the house, the front of the house - where there is no fence to contain our sweet menace. Mark opened the front door to put something in the back of my car and she sacheted right out the front door like she owned the world. Mark called for her to return inside. We both knew what was about to happen. She looked at him, lifted her Aire Doodle snout and as arrogantly as all get out, she decided she was NOT coming back to her daddy when asked. Instead, she ran around the neighborhood. Not in a full sprint like she wanted to get away, oh no, she pranced like she owned the world. Mark ran back in the house to get her leash and that Cokie girl hung out in the neighbor's yard waiting for Mark. It was clear because as soon as Mark walked, I mean, as Mark ran, out of the house with her leash - the dance was on. Up the street she went, with him running behind her. She goes around the block and then heads down the street to the backyards of the other neighbors' homes.

Mind you, we have only met three neighbors so far and most people don't exactly like strange men wandering in their back yards but here we were.

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## Cultivating

A CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Worship on Sundays at 9a and 11a

On-site and Live-Stream

via Facebook, YouTube & Church Website

## THE PUMPKINS ARE COMING

Pumpkin Sunday is set for Sunday, September 28! We'll kick off the pumpkin season with one worship service at 10a, followed by a potluck lunch and the much-anticipated pumpkin unload! Wear your pumpkin clothes to worship. It's a wonderful day of fun, fellowship, and hard work, and we hope your whole family will join in. Sign-up links for the potluck and volunteer shifts in the patch will be shared soon. Be on the lookout for a creative incentive! If we can fill 100% of our volunteer slots before the last pumpkin comes off the truck, there's a fun surprise in store!

We also need your help bringing people into the patch. If you have a connection to a group that might enjoy time in The Patch, please contact Pastor Drew at [Drew@myersmemorialumc.org](mailto:Drew@myersmemorialumc.org). Let's work together to make this the best pumpkin season yet!

## OUR MISSION

*The Mission of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church is to cultivate a Christ-centered community that welcomes, loves, and serves one another & the world.*



## SUNDAY WORSHIP & SPECIAL SERVICES

Join us for Worship Each Sunday at 9a and 11a in the Sanctuary and via live stream on Facebook, YouTube, and our Church Website. We hope you will make space for worship at Myers.

### *Upcoming Sermon Series*

Sundays, August 3 to August 24: *Turning Point: How God Works on Our Journey* where we'll explore how lives are transformed through encounters with Jesus. Join us as we journey together through these turning points of faith.

Sundays, August 31 to September 21: In this series, *God is On the Move* we'll examine the marks of a Christian life, reflecting the movement of the Holy Spirit ~ how God has worked in us, changed us, shaped our faith stories, given us hope, and even met us in our brokenness. We will hear from Myers Members as well as Pastor Andy & Pastor Drew.

Sunday, September 28: Pumpkin Sunday! We'll gather for one worship service at 10a followed by a potluck lunch and unloading the pumpkin truck!

Sundays, October 5 to November 23: We're going *Where Christ Takes Us: A Journey with Paul*. Paul wasn't the only one who traveled to Greece, Pastor Andy and Pastor Drew did too! Join us as we reflect on Paul's journey as Christ's disciple, exploring where it took him and where Christ is leading us today.

### Mark Your Calendars:

- Advent: Sundays, Nov. 30-Dec.23
- LoveFeast: Sunday, Dec. 7, 5p
- Lessons & Carols: Sunday, Dec. 14, 5p
- Christmas Eve Service: Wed. Dec. 24, 5p
- Online Worship: Sunday, Dec. 28



Facebook.com/myersmemorial  
YouTube.com/c/MyersMemorialUMCGastonia  
Instagram.com/myersmemorialumc

## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Are you a student, teacher, educator, para-professional, administrator, behind the scenes school employee? Bring your school/diaper/work bag to worship with you on Sunday, August 10. As we enter into a new school year, we want to pray with you and bless the item you're most likely to carry every day. We will pray for all at each worship service that day.

## GOT PLANS?

Church life is busier now than it was even before the spring of 2020! As you plan programs, events, meetings, or small groups, please remember to contact Heather Steffey to reserve rooms and resources. Heather is a great resource and can help you avoid scheduling conflicts on the church calendar as well as logistics for using the church building ~ she knows the codes and has the keys. You can reach Heather at Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org or 704-864-3222 ext. 105.

## WEEKEND BACKPACK MINISTRY

*"My student used to always complain about being hungry. Now, he rarely does. I think the food motivates him to come to school and do his best while he is at school. I am so grateful for this program."* from a Sherwood Educator

You're invited to lend a hand with the Backpack Ministry, packing food bags for students at Sherwood Elementary School, where many students face food insecurity. We meet once a month, September through April, usually on a Tuesday afternoon at 2p in the Christian Fellowship Center (CFC). Packing typically takes less than 90 minutes. There's no need to commit every month, please come when you can! Myers has partnered in this vital community-wide effort for many years, and we'd love to have your helping hands and happy hearts. For more information or to be added to our reminder list, please contact Carol Hauer at carolhauer89@gmail.com.

## SING ~ PLAY ~ PRAISE

For information related to Myers Music Ministries, Contact Co-Directors of Music, Laura Beatty (Chancel Choir & Handbells) or Logan McGuire (Praise Team & Children's Music) at [Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

All are welcome to join our music ministry! Come sing in the choir, play handbells, help lead our children, or play an instrument! All are welcome to join the music ministry at Myers Memorial! Whether you enjoy singing, ringing handbells, playing an instrument, or **helping lead children in worship**, there's a place for you to share your gifts. Musicians and spouses are invited to a Fall Kick Off Dinner on September 3 at 6:30p in the CFC.

Chancel Choir sings at 11a worship service and rehearses Wednesday at 7p resumes August 7 at 7p. Choir Retreat at Myers on October 24-25.

Chancel Handbells play at 11a worship service and the Love Feast. They resume rehearsals on September 3 at 6p and practice weekly.

Praise Team plays at the 9a worship service and typically rehearses Sundays at 4p.

## WALK TO EMMAUS

*While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and walked with them. - Luke 24:15*

The Walk to Emmaus is a three-day spiritual retreat that offers a fresh encounter with Christ through prayer, teaching, and Christian community. Designed to inspire and equip believers, it renews faith and encourages action in our homes, churches, and **communities so God's grace can be lived and shared**. Upcoming Walks are scheduled for Men Oct. 16-19 and for Women Oct. 23-26. If you would be interested in participating in a Walk, or have questions, please contact Tanya Lunsford, [TLMartinTM@gmail.com](mailto:TLMartinTM@gmail.com).

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Mark is faithfully trotting along with her leash and treats. Calling to his beloved Cokie, *"Cokie, come here."* Cokie would stop to turn back to ensure her sweet daddy was within eye shot and then dart off again.

*"Stop, Cokie,"* he proclaimed. *"Get back here," "Cokie, get over here."* The exacerbation was real. The he switched to sweet begging voice... *"Come here sweetheart" "Here's a treat for my sweet girl."* Y'all, this is on the daily. Whether she's in the street or the fenced back yard we go through this type of routine every single time. But on this day, she finally decided she would return to her own yard and easily and willingly go back inside. A sigh of relief and then all was back to normal.

**I do akin our sweet Cokie's actions to our own human condition.** We are stubborn, arrogant, head strong, willful and more. It is difficult for us to hear God calling us to return to the safety of our Savior because, at times, we can have our own agenda and our own plan and our own goals, and own thoughts. This is one of the reasons why a healthy and strong church community is so important. The healthy church community helps each other stay connected to God. The church helps us discover the various ways we can hear God speaking directly to us. **The church helps us to listen for God's voice. The church gives us strength and energy as we are renewed, and we are able to ready ourselves for a world that needs Jesus.** When we are connected to God, it only makes sense that we will **know God on a deeper level. We will know God's voice.** The voice who calls out to us when we begin the trek of getting off track. And even when we find ourselves so far off the path that we are lost and certain we will not find our way home, it is God that shows up to lead us back to where we belong.

So much will be happening in the coming months. It will be easy to get off track, even in the church. Sometimes we can be so busy doing that we forget to listen for God's voice speaking to us. **Let's be sure to carve out time to worship and pray. Time to be quiet and time to simply breathe in the Spirit of God.** I can promise there will always be a "treat" awaiting when we do.

Pastor Andy

## CAM DAY OF SERVICE ~ AUGUST 7

For all of July we've been in a friendly Rivalry for a reason! By the time you read this it'll be over yet the Narthex is full of food! On Thursday, August 7, we're moving all the food to CAM and you're invited to join in, no matter your age!

9a: Meet at Myers Memorial UMC to load up food into vehicles

10a: Meet at CAM to unload and restock shelves (805 W. Airline Ave)

12p: Optional group lunch at Firestone Grill on W. Franklin Blvd. Great food, even better company!

Come ready to lift, sort, laugh, and share God's love—no rivalry here, just friends of all ages working together! No sign-up needed, just show up in your Rivalry colors. Questions? Contact Pastor Drew, [Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

At Myers Memorial UMC, we offer meaningful Christian education for adults at every stage of life. Sunday morning classes meet at 10 a.m., welcome newcomers, rotate leadership, and explore a variety of studies. Visit a class, find a group, or ask for resources—we're here to help! Contact Heather Steffey at [Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org). Current studies are in the eNews or at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/adult](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/adult).

Open Minds (Room E104) Mike & Jennifer Rhodes, [jmrhodes@gmail.com](mailto:jmrhodes@gmail.com)

Faith Meets Reason (Room E105) Mark Hanna, [markeddeck@gmail.com](mailto:markeddeck@gmail.com) & David Elzey

Contemporary Class (Room E106) Angie Flake, [angieflake20@gmail.com](mailto:angieflake20@gmail.com)

Embrace Class (Room E207) Matt McCullen, [mrmccullen@gaston.k12.nc.us](mailto:mrmccullen@gaston.k12.nc.us)

Special Friends (CFC Classroom) Multi-age/ability adult class, coordinated by Abby Curfman, [curfman\\_abby@yahoo.com](mailto:curfman_abby@yahoo.com).

## THE WASH HUT @ MYERS MEMORIAL UMC

We're excited to share that our newest ministry, The Wash Hut, is off to a beautiful start - welcoming between 7 and 13 guests each Monday throughout June and July. This ministry is rooted in hospitality, dignity, and care for our neighbors, and we're so grateful to everyone who has helped us extend Christ's love in such a practical and compassionate way.

There are now four meaningful ways you can serve during a Wash Hut shift:

- Outside Greeter: Offer a friendly welcome and help guests know where to go.
- Inside Host: Check in visitors and guide them through the available services.
- Facilities Assistant: Assist with using the washers, dryers, and showers.
- Nourishment Navigator: Provide a simple casserole, crockpot meal, or charcuterie tray - *a new opportunity to serve with food and share a little extra love.*

Visit [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/TWH](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/TWH) to sign up for a shift and be part of this growing ministry. Before volunteering, please read the handbook (available at the Receptionist Desk or online) for role descriptions and expectations.

Our goal is simple: to make every guest feel seen, safe, and valued. If you have any questions, please reach out to Judy Seay. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus through this beautiful work! For more information or to volunteer, reach out to Judy Seay, [Welcome@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Welcome@MyersMemorialUMC.org) or Pastor Drew, [Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

## 2025 Walk for Wellness and Health Fair

**October 18**

beginning at 9am

Hosted by the Myers Health Cabinet  
benefiting Cancer Services of Gaston  
County and the community!



## MYERS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

*For information related to Myers Children's Ministries, birth to 5th grades, please contact Pastor Sarah Davis, sarah@myersmemorialumc.org, 704-864-3222, ext. 111.*

Faith at Home As parents and grandparents caring for young children, we're always looking for meaningful ways to nurture their faith. Pastor Sarah is forming a small group of caregivers that will meet for eight 90-minute sessions beginning in September and continuing throughout the school year. Together, we'll explore simple, practical ways to bring spiritual depth into everyday life. Each participant will use a workbook and a resource book by Rev. Traci Smith, filled with easy, do-it-yourself ideas for creating sacred moments at home. These tools are designed to help you build faith-filled habits, all without adding stress or extra to-do lists. This group will be a place of encouragement, creativity, and connection as we grow together in faith. Interested in joining or learning more? Child care can be provided. Please contact Pastor Sarah at sarah@myersmemorialumc.org.

Club 345 Calling all 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders! It's time for Club345! This small group is all about fun, fellowship, service, and study. We'll meet this fall on the second Sunday of each month from 5p-7p. Our first gathering will be on Sunday, August 10 at 5p, where the students will help design the schedule for the year. We can't wait to see where Jesus leads!

Sunday Mornings are filled with age level opportunities for all the children! From loving caregivers in the nursery to dedicated and passionate teachers ready for Sunday School, there is a place for learning and fun and faith development at Myers Memorial UMC between the hours of 9a and 12p.

**Growing Children's Ministry Opportunities** Our Nursery and Preschool Ministry is outgrowing our rooms! This fall we hope to add a dedicated Preschool Sunday School Class as well as dividing the 9a Worship Nursery to properly care for all the children! You are vital to this ministry! Please prayerfully consider your ability to serve the youngest among us! We'd love to have committed caregivers each Sunday!

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## A LEGACY OF CARING FOR STUDENTS

The Little Red Schoolhouse program began in 1981 when Harry Mims, a member of the Builders' Sunday School Class at Myers Memorial UMC, felt called to help local students in need. After learning that school lunch funding had been cut, he encouraged his class to collect spare change to help children who couldn't afford lunch. When the lunch program was reinstated, the focus shifted to providing critical healthcare for students in Gaston County.

Today, the Little Red Schoolhouse continues to assist schoolchildren who have no other way to access necessary medical, dental, vision, hearing, or prescription care. Requests come from school nurses only after all other options have been exhausted.

Now overseen by the Myers Health Cabinet, the program works closely with the Director of Health Services and school nurses across the county. Every dollar donated goes directly to healthcare for students—none is used for administrative costs or other church needs.

To donate: Give online via the church online giving portal or make checks payable to Myers Memorial UMC with LRS in the memo line.

From pocket change to life-changing impact, the Little Red Schoolhouse continues to be a blessing for children in our community.



## MYERS YOUTH MINISTRY ~ FALL 2025

We're excited about everything God has in store for our youth this fall at Myers Memorial UMC! Here's a quick look at what's ahead. Full details will come directly to Youth Families!

Sunday Nights with Myers Youth group will continue to meet on Sundays from 5p to 7p, and dinner will be provided! Keep an eye out for your paper calendar as some weeks we'll meet on a Saturday or at an alternate time as we serve, learn and have fun together!

- August 10: Pool Party @ Giana's House
- August 17: GTKPA! Get to Know Pastor Andy!
- August 24: Myers Youth Fall Kick Off, CFC

*No Youth August 31, Labor Day Weekend*

Bi-Weekly Youth Bible Study at Goat Island Park **Starting Wednesday, October 1**, we'll gather every other week at Goat Island Park from 6:30p to 7:30p for a study of the Book of Acts. Bring your own dinner and enjoy time in Scripture and community.

Pumpkin Sunday Myers Youth will be leading worship on Sunday, September 28! There will be one service at 10a with opportunities for youth to share your gifts. After a potluck lunch, it's pumpkin season! We'll work together with others at the church to host the pumpkin patch. The pumpkin sales benefit the youth ministries at Myers and helps us build community both within the church and with the community. Be sure to sign up early and often...we can't wait to see what happens to Pastor Drew when we fill all the volunteer slots prior to the last pumpkin leaving the truck!

Youth Communication Get updates about upcoming opportunities for service, learning, fun and fellowship through monthly emails, WhatsApp Messaging, weekly eNews, Instagram, and our webpage at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth). Join us Sundays at 10a for Sunday School and 5p for Youth Group and other times for special gatherings throughout the year. Questions? Contact Pastor Drew at [Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

## YOUTH WINTER RETREAT | JANUARY 16-19

Save the date! We're taking advantage of the long weekend to attend Winter Retreat at Lake Junaluska with Chris Singleton! A young MLB recruit who encountered horrible tragedy in his life. Instead of responding with anger, Chris chose forgiveness and embarked on a mission centered in faith and reconciliation, guiding others to embrace healing and build bridges across divides. It'll be a great weekend of music, fellowship, service, skiing, worship and motivation.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

*For information related to service opportunities, please contact Pastor Drew Nix, [Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Drew@MyersMemorialUMC.org).*

DYEP: Distinguished Youth Enrichment Program resumes September 8th on the 1st floor of the education. An evening program that offers educational support and enrichment to students in our community is always looking for more adults to assist with homework, mentoring or providing a homecooked meal.

The Sandwich Brigade meets monthly on the first Monday of the month to prepare sandwiches for the West Gastonia Boys & Girls Club. From October to May, thousands of sandwiches are made! You're welcome to participate!

Mission Possible meets as needed to construct and assemble ramps at homes in the community. No construction skills necessary! The need continues to be great and while we have a core group, we want more! We want more folks to build as well as to help provide lunch on the day of the build. Please consider being a part of this ministry!

Thirsty Third Sundays The Choir leads us in an ongoing collection for Cancer Services of Gaston County. Mark the 3rd Sunday of the month on your calendar as a reminder to bring Gatorade and Chicken Noodle Soup. A collection basket is at the front of the Sanctuary nearest the choir loft.

**OUR VISION** *Together God's life grows in us, so that we can share that life with others.*

## ADULT SMALL GROUPS AND STUDIES

Searching for a good book, study, or group to join? Explore current favorites outside Heather Steffey's office, browse the Resource Library in the CFC hallway, or ask a staff member for a recommendation!

60+ Fellowship gathers on the third Thursday of each month and welcomes anyone looking for fellowship, adventure, and—of course—food! To stay in the loop about upcoming events, be sure Heather Steffey has your email address (hers is [Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org))

August 21 ~ 11:30a ~ CFC Scriptures & Art. Gather for a time of fellowship, scripture reading and art! No experience necessary, be open to new adventures in a low-key way.

Friday Adventure ~ October 10 ~ 9a-5p Day trip to Blowing Rock. RSVP to reserve your spot on the bus!

October 16 ~ 11:30a ~ CFC Considering Retirement with Michael from Sheffield Insurance. RSVP by Oct. 14.

**Embrace Cohort** Did you know we're one of the few Gastonia churches with an *active* young adults ministry? The Embrace Cohort at Myers brings together millennials, gen-z, and the young-at-heart for faith, fun, and service. They meet bi-weekly on Mondays, plus monthly social events, Sunday School class, and service projects. Learn more at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/young-adults](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/young-adults).

**Thursday Studies:** Join Rev. Ev Stoddard for a weekly study offered at two different times on Thursdays: 10a or 6:30p in the CFC Classroom. Resuming September 4th with a new study on the Early Church by Ray VanderLaan.

**Sunday Night Study:** meets on Sunday nights from 6p to 7p in the CFC Classroom. Led by facilitators Allison Evanoff and Tonda Coonce. On September 7 they will begin a 30-week Disciple Bible Study: Jesus in the Gospels.

The **Women's Small Group** meets Sundays from 7 - 8p in the Choir Room. Laura Beatty serves as the group's facilitator of this group of seekers and sisters with varied book studies guiding the conversation.

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FIND IT ON OUR WEBSITE  
[www.MyersMemorialUMC.org](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org)

/Give /TWH /Serve /TMC /Youth /Children  
 /Worship /Young-Adults /TheStainedGlassWindows

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## BEYOND A CONFERENCE

The Western North Carolina Conference is excited to host *BEYOND a Conference* October 3-4 at University City UMC in Charlotte. This is an opportunity for clergy and laity to be inspired, educated, and motivated to move beyond the division, the despair, and the uncertainty TO a future where the Church is reclaiming and renewing its origins as a vibrant and compelling community that is for all people. The conference will train leaders to look beyond to a church full of revival, innovation, and passion for a strategy that is both deeply evangelical and unapologetically inclusive.

The WNC Leadership Development Team is investing in this event (thanks to your apportionment dollars) and WNC leaders (laity and clergy) can attend both days (2 meals included) for \$99! Register for the early-bird rate and use the code **WNCC**. Don't delay because the event is open to anyone! More information can be found at [www.wnccumc.org/beyond-2025](http://www.wnccumc.org/beyond-2025). If you have a passion for sharing God's Good News, please let Pastor Andy know you are interested and register today!

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## HOW TO CONTACT PASTOR ANDY

**Rev. Andy (Andrea) Curtis**  
[Andy@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Andy@MyersMemorialUMC.org)  
 704-864-3222 ext. 106

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*You are Welcome Here*

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