

# ROOTS & BRANCHES

## AUGUST 2023

Dear church,

Well, the appointed time is finally here. My fall Sabbatical has arrived (beginning July 31) and some of you may be wondering, what does that mean for us? And it's a great question! I've compiled a list of 10 ways you can engage and support the well-being of Pleasant Green over the next three months until we meet again. Here they are!

### 1. Help pay off our building loan debt

This is our #1 goal this month! Relieving this monthly expense (\$4,200/mo) will bring great relief to our finances and help move us into a new season of life together – and will enable us to free up money and energy from buildings to community. We need your help!

### 2. Worship

Make a commitment to be a regular worshipper on Sunday mornings. Worship not only glorifies God but it helps us keep God at the center of our lives and work. Worship is the proper place through which all of our lives flow. This is the context in which we immerse ourselves in the splendor of God for the sole purpose of honoring God.

### 3. Connect

So many ways to connect to others – Sunday school classes, coffee time on Sunday mornings, UWF circles, UMM, choir and Praise Band (if you are musical), Read & Seed, and Common Thread – to name a few!

### 4. Serve

There are various ways to serve: Volunteer to be in Children's Church on Sunday mornings; help Nancy plan/prepare for our Fall Mission project (Rise Against Hunger); take 30 minutes a day/week and volunteer with Afterschool; help us collect food for OCIM; Check with Van (Trustee Chair) and help us keep our space tidy and clean; sign up to be an Usher/Greeter on Sunday mornings; visit a shut-in.

### 5. Give

Fall is a good time to evaluate giving. Our bank statements, in many ways, are reflections of our hearts. As a new season approaches, perhaps we could all reflect on our faithfulness in giving and re-commit to tithing.

### 6. Pray

I'd love for you to be intentional about praying for 3 things this fall: Our finances, our church as a whole (and how we are being led by God in this season), and how/where God might be calling you to be more intentional in your spiritual life and the life of the church.

## SUNDAYS

### Worship Service

10:30 am, *In Person*  
or [LIVE STREAM](#)

### Children's Church

*During Worship, Chapel*

### Clyde Walker Class

9:15 am, *The Parlor* or [ZOOM](#)

### Hearts & Hands Class

9:30 am, *Fellowship Hall*

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

<i>2023 Unified Budget</i>	<b>350,139.70</b>
<i>YTD Total Income to Operating Fund</i>	<b>166,196.61</b>
<i>TTD Operating Expenses</i>	<b>193,777.25</b>
<i>YTD Operating Fund Balance</i>	<b>-27,580.64</b>
<i>2022 Operating Fund Balance Forward</i>	<b>14,533.53</b>
<i>2023 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance</i>	<b>-45,842.97</b>



## 7. Establish a regular practice of Sabbath

I (Laura) have preached about this a couple times in the past year. What role does Sabbath play in your life? How easy is it to honor? What is one thing you can do that would help you and your family observe the Sabbath together?

## 8. Learn

When we stop learning, we stop growing. Make it a continual practice to reflect on these questions: What am I learning about myself? About God? What resources are available to guide and direct my heart and mind?

## 9. Invite

Did you know the #1 reason people come to church is because a friend or acquaintance invited them? In fact, 86% say they come because a friend invited them (only 6% come because of an organized invitation or a pastor invited them). When is the last time you invited a friend to church? With all the marketing and social media tools we have, some tried and true things – like simple invitations – continue to be the most effective.

## 10. Practice the Priesthood of all Believers

1 Peter 2:9-10 says that “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the one who called you out of darkness into his amazing light. Once you weren’t a people, now you are God’s people.” The “Priesthood of All Believers” affirms that God calls every Christian into ministry. This is a time when we can lean into this doctrine knowing that it is not necessary for a “professional” to conduct all activities of God. Each of us are called to the work of pastoral care, visitation, evangelism, and church leadership. After all, we are the body of Christ.

I am deeply grateful for your support, your love, and your graciousness as I follow through with a Sabbatical I’ve been working toward for over a year now. I give great thanks to AC for being our interim pastor during this time and our United Methodist connection that makes it possible. Know that I will be praying for you these three months. And it will be a joyous celebration when I return. God bless you and keep you.

Laura



## WE’LL MISS YOU, LAURA!

## NEWS & EVENTS

Check the PG Online calendar for a full list of events!

<http://www.pleasantgreenumc.org/calendar.html>

### YOUTH GROUP

*This Fall:* We are continuing to meet with Orange Cooperative Parish churches once a month for youth group at Eno House in Hillsborough. As many of you know, our Confirmation class met together once a month as a group and we have decided to continue that tradition throughout the Fall. Gatherings will be on 3rd Sundays from 5-7. Dinner will be included. If you have specific questions, please contact Monica at [mbeacham@nccumc.org](mailto:mbeacham@nccumc.org)

### PG MUSIC: A COUPLE NOTES

#### 1. Singers Wanted!

Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm in the Choir Room

#### 2. Celtic Bagpipes Sunday Music!

One of our church family has requested to hear bagpipes at a worship service and has graciously made a contribution to cover the cost.

Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup> J. V. Hudson will be playing and accompanying our hymns on the Celtic Bagpipes. He began his musical journey at the age of six. In 1963 his father took him to a performance by The Black Watch Pipes and Drums at Duke University. His love of the Great Highland Bagpipe was born. He bought his first set of bagpipes at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games several years later. J.V also plays Scottish small pipes, tin whistle, accordion, keyboards and the dumbec (Goblet Drum). He has also composed 4 pipe tunes to date. J.V. is a member of the Eastern United States Pipe Band Association , The Piobaireachd Society of Glasgow , Scotland and The Eagle Piper's Society of Edinburgh , Scotland. J.V is also the official piper for The Triangle Curling Center and received national exposure playing at the opening ceremonies of the 2009 Coca-Cola 600 along with three of his friends. Other venues include but are not limited to J.V. The Circular Church, Little River Presbyterian Church (250 anniversary ) Duke Chapel , The O Henry Hotel, McGregor Downs , The Graylyn Estate, The Greenbrier Hotel and The Biltmore Estate. J.V. is also working on a project called J.V. Hudson The Show that includes piping, keyboards, whistle, vocals and backing tracks.

\*There are differences between Scottish Bagpipes and Celtic Bagpipes. Scottish Bagpipes (played standing) are much, much louder than Celtic Bagpipes (played sitting). If you would like more information on the differences, please go to <https://www.musicianwave.com/irish-bagpipes-vs-scottish-bagpipes/>

**COMMON THREAD News:** On June 29, Kathy DuLaney delivered 26 pillowcases and 12 teddy bears to Liberty Home Care and Hospice Services in Durham.

### AUG 6, SUNDAY: DUKE INTERN RECEPTION

In the Fellowship Hall following Worship Service

### AUG 20, SUNDAY: ST. MARY’S HOMECOMING

Join us for the 71<sup>st</sup> Homecoming at St. Mary’s Chapel!

4:45 pm – Pump Organ Music  
5:00 pm – Evensong Service  
*Covered Dish Dinner to follow at PGUMC (BBQ provided)*

### SEPT 19: BLOOD DRIVE

At PGUMC, 10 am-3 pm. To sign up, go to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) (Sponsor code: Pleasant Green), email [pgumc@ncrrbiz.com](mailto:pgumc@ncrrbiz.com) or call 919-383-5764.

### CHRISTMAS IN JULY

The Circle of Faith’s “Christmas in July” Mission Project will be collecting items that teachers and students will need to start school this fall. These supplies will be donated to the Orange County Elementary, Middle & High Schools. Take an ornament from the Christmas Tree in the Narthex and purchase the items needed. Please return them to Church by August 20th. Thank you in advance for your support!



VBS 2023

OH JONAH



### SUMMER CAMP

We would like to thank you again for sharing your children with us this past school year and during the summer. We had an amazing 4 action-filled weeks of summer camp and loved getting to know each and every child better. We were constantly told that we had some of the best kids during our field trips. Something we always like to hear 😊

*\*\*Thank you to Wendy & JoAnna and everyone who helped make this summer so special for these kids!!*



### EL SALVADOR MISSION TRIP

The Mission Team is working hard!

*Christopher Best, Brian Wingo, Pamela Sands, Neo Best, Bryan Faggart*



### Congrats to Jack Frank for completing the LIT Program at Camp Don Lee!

Leader In Training (LIT) is a four-week, intensive leadership program for high school aged youth who are ready for a highly challenging and deeply rewarding experience. Objectives of the program include personal faith development, leadership growth and experience, and a deeper knowledge of outdoor skills. These skills include Leave No Trace programs, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, archery, challenge course and outdoor camping facilitation. In addition, LITs will develop a greater understanding of worship, leading creative arts and childhood development.

### PGUMC'S LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

The Read and Seed Book group donated this little free library to the church! Cindy Stubbs ordered the library in the shape of a church and Dennis Nicholson painted it and added windows, shingles and a cross. Van McCay dug the hole and attached the library to a post and added mulch around the area. Thanks to everyone who helped with this project! ENJOY!

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023 FINAL WRAP-UP

The North Carolina Annual Conference met in Greenville, NC on June 15-17, 2023. 1,183 persons attended the conference, which worshiped around the theme of Graceful Hospitality. Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton presided over her first NC Annual Conference as the episcopal leader.

The conference began with executive sessions for the clergy and laity. In the laity session, members heard from several presenters about how the churches of the NC Conference are making disciples and extending Graceful Hospitality in their communities. From clothing drives to pop-up picnics, the work of the laity was celebrated. In the clergy session, members approved the ordination of 8 persons (2 deacons and 6 elders) and the commissioning of 11 persons.

Following executive sessions, Bishop Shelton officially convened the annual conference. Worship and work were woven together throughout the opening session, with the business of the conference punctuated and enlivened by music led by a conference choir of eighty! Opening worship wrapped with a duet by Bishop Shelton and rising seventh grader, Josiah Curry, singing “I Just Want to be Where You Are!” An attitude of prayer and discernment permeated holy conferencing.

The Thursday afternoon session provided an opportunity for the North Carolina Conference to officially welcome Bishop Shelton and her husband, the Rev. Dr. Joey Shelton. Reports and presentations included a celebration of Laity and Connectional Ministries. Rev. Wes Neal (clergy), Daewon Goldenbaum-Yang (laity), and Gabi Loaiza (youth) were honored as the recipients of the Harry Denman Evangelism Award. Business concluded with Holy Communion with an offering for Congregations for Children (C4C). Thursday evening was an opportunity for gathering and fellowship with ice cream, a welcome treat as the first day ended.

On Friday, Home Missioner Steve Taylor, Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, and Rev. Laura Wittman invited the Annual Conference to enter into a time of using our imaginations to enter into the

world of Scripture. They modeled Steve’s creative, dynamic, and interactive way of engaging biblical texts by walking the gathered body through Luke 7:36-50. A diverse group of clergy and laity reenacted this passage from Scripture, interspersed with questions and responses that Taylor and Wittman exchanged with the gathered body using Mentimeter.

We remembered 21 clergy and 33 spouses at the All Saints Celebration and Memorial Service. In his sermon based on John 14, Rev. Dr. Edgardo Colón-Emeric, Dean of Duke Divinity School, shared that “Each person named today has a story, and those stories are connected in ways obvious and hidden, to the stories of those who came before us, the stories of those who will come after, and the stories of all us who are here today...The saints we celebrate constitute a declaration that the Methodist connection is stronger than death and if so, much stronger than divisions and disaffiliations. This celebration does not move me to optimism about the future of our church, because it moves me to something much better – hope.”

The Friday afternoon session began with the celebration of 22 clergy retirees, followed by the Order of the Day with Rev. Adam Hamilton, author and pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas. As he shared his thoughts on the future of The United Methodist Church, Rev. Hamilton discussed creating vital, vibrant congregations and called us to a Jesus revolution. Even in the midst of disaffiliation, our mandate remains the same: to preach the gospel and to live the gospel in our churches and our communities. Hamilton concluded with a prayer where we offered ourselves to Jesus, praying that he will work in and through us as we seek to incarnate his presence, to be the body of Christ, for our world today.

During the presentation of the financial reports, the 2025 budget proposal was approved as amended on Saturday. It was also announced that the North Carolina Conference would be receiving over 5 million dollars from The Duke Endowment over the next five years. The grant, totalling 10.5 million dollars, will be divided evenly between the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Conferences to support the creation of new faith communities in both annual conferences.

Annual Conference ended with the Ordering of Ministry worship service, where 40 persons publicly proclaimed their calling to ministry. In the sermon, Bishop Shelton focused on the story in the Gospel of John where Jesus asks a Samaritan woman to give him a drink. The Bishop reminded us that this is a beautiful story about a woman going to the well in the middle of the day to draw water because she was tired of “The Look.” Bishop Shelton asked everyone, “How will you create a culture of welcome, and graceful hospitality, and compassion for people who get ‘the look’? Each of us belongs to God and one another.”

The Conference offered many mindful health opportunities, including a masked seating area, Blueprint for Wellness Screenings, and free, confidential talk sessions with a therapist. The Glow in Greenville 5K Run/Walk drew 75 participants early on Friday morning.

Two special offerings were received: \$6,060 for Congregations for Children (C4C) and \$7,543.23 for Professors in Methodism.

### Data and Statistics:

- Membership for 2022 was 162,625, down 5,353 from 2021, not including disaffiliations.
- The Conference approved a budget of \$12,201,923 for 2025, a 22.45% decrease from what was approved for 2024. The 2025 budget is also a reduction from the 2023 and 2022 budgets (20.73% and 21.13%, respectively).
- The Annual Conference voted to formally close 12 churches. 6 new faith communities began this year. As of the Annual Conference gathering, 99 churches had voted to be Lighthouse Congregations. A motion was passed to ratify the disaffiliation agreements of 59 churches listed in the addendum of the Trustees’ report in the Conference Workbook.
- 22 clergy entered retired status.
- 6 elders and 2 deacons were ordained, with an average age of 38; 11 provisional members were commissioned, with an average age of 35; 13 local pastors were licensed, with an average age of 40; and 7 lay ministers were certified.
- 89 churches will receive new pastors this year.

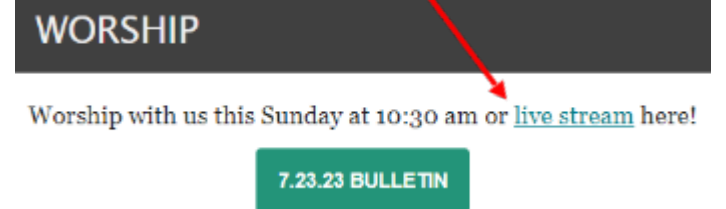
- A special called virtual annual conference session will convene on October 7, 2023, to ratify disaffiliation agreements for churches that have met the requirements to disaffiliate under the Disaffiliation Agreement approved and adopted by the Conference Board of Trustees.
- Annual Conference 2024 will be June 12-15 in Greenville, NC.

### Accessing Our Live Stream Church Services

*Having trouble getting to the live church services on Sunday mornings?*

*Follow these steps:*

- \*Open the Friday PG Notes email
- \*Click on live stream
- \*Click on the service you want to watch



*OR want to watch past services?*

- \*Go to YouTube!  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=Pleasant+Green+UMC+Durham+NC+services](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Pleasant+Green+UMC+Durham+NC+services)



# Who Are You? Where Are You?

## “Seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

*Matthew 6:33 from the Sermon on the Mount*

This summer, members of the Wednesday morning Bible Group have been studying the book *The Good and Beautiful Life: Putting on the Character of Christ* by James Bryan Smith. It has been a challenging series in our walk with Christ, helping us to grow closer to Him. Chapter 10, *Learning to Live Without Worry* (pages 171-184) has been particularly exciting for me. Exciting because I think of myself as a calm and peaceful person. This chapter opened my eyes to how much more so I can be, as the world is swirling around me, and I have experienced illnesses and a series of car problems within a brief period.

In Chapter 10, Smith focuses on Jesus’ teachings about anxiety and worry (Matthew 6: 25-34.). You know, the part that says, “Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on...Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.’ We may be familiar with these verses and think we know what the solution to worry is. Part of the solution is written in Matthew 6:33; ‘Seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness.’ What is beautiful and masterful is Smith’s elaboration of the solution, to help us understand its meaning and live it more fully.

*\*Join the Prayer Ministry on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in person at the church or by free conference call. Raise your voice with others, or pray silently, to ask God for peace, healing and love while giving thanks for his abundant blessings. The next Prayer Ministry meeting is on Wednesday, August 16th at 6:30 pm. For more information, contact Gail at pruettg4mh@gmail.com or text at 919-696-7283.*

Enter, **Who Are You? Where Are You?** Smith asks these questions frequently of the people going through his apprentice series (people studying his 3-part book series). The expected answer to **Who Are You?** is, “I am a child of God, one in whom Christ dwells.” That is comforting, because God will provide us with all that we need as His Child. The expected answer to **Where Are You?** is, “I am living in the unshakable kingdom of God. (p. 181)” “As long as we live in fellowship with our good and beautiful God in his mighty kingdom [on earth], we have nothing to fear. Not even fear itself. (p.182).” Paul tells us that in Romans 8: 38-39, too: “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, ...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We know that Paul went through much as do we. A journey takes a while, so settling in to being God’s child, Christ living in us, and believing that we are living in your kingdom on earth may not seem real at first. Trust that God will show you the way and provide what you need in doses you are able to tolerate.

*Let us pray...*

*Heavenly Father, help us to progress from where we are now on our journey, closer to you and your Son. Help us trust you. Help us live in faith that you are our benevolent Father. Whether in baby steps or giant strides, as you know we can manage, help us honestly believe that we are your child, that Christ really does live in us, and that we are living on earth in your unshakable kingdom. Amen.*

## MENTAL HEALTH CORNER: SPRING, SUMMER, AND SUICIDE

During these warm summer days, many people tend to relax and slow down, enjoying the outdoors and a more leisurely life pace. However, Spring and Summer hold a secret. Suicide rates spike during these seasons. Sadly, our Western Society still carries much stigma about suicide. Thoughts of suicide are held in shame. We are afraid to talk about it. We feel alone as if there is no help. We are in despair and do not see any options other than ending our life. As family and friends, we believe we do not know how to deal with it if someone tells us they are suicidal. We do not know what to say or how to help. However, there are evidence-based ways to help someone find hope and support if they are having suicidal thoughts.

### How to get help if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts:

- Know that you are not alone. There are people to help. And it is possible to deal with the issues that are causing you such pain.
- Reach out to a trusted friend or relative and say, “I need help. I am in a bad place and am having thoughts of hurting myself. Can you come stay with me?”
- If no one is available, reach out to one of the services below, under Resources for Someone in Crisis.

### How to Help Someone Else: Remember! Keeping the person safe and making sure they are not alone are important priorities.

- If someone asks you to help if he or she is experiencing suicidal thoughts or is in crisis:
- Go! Or, if you cannot, arrange for someone else to go and stay with your loved one.
- Remain calm and put your focus on that person. This is not the time to think about your own values about suicide or your past experiences. Focus on the hurting person who asked you for help.
- If you notice changes in a friend or relative that suggest they are in despair, are very depressed, or are feeling hopeless, speak to them. The opposite may also be true. Notice if the person changes from feeling depressed to now is suddenly expressing happiness or relief.
- What to say? Something like, “I noticed that you are looking more depressed and are staying away from people. How are you doing?” Or “I noticed you were very depressed for awhile and are happy now. What changed?” Wait for answers. Ask your loved one to tell you more about what they are thinking and how they are feeling.

• Ask if the person is having suicidal thoughts: “Have you thought of hurting yourself?” “Do you ever think of killing yourself?” It is often a relief for this person to hear the word suicide so it can be talked about.

• If your loved one says, “Yes,” ask follow-up questions, such as: “Have you ever tried to harm yourself before?” “Have you ever tried to kill yourself before?” “Have you ever thought of how you would do it?” “Do you have a plan in place?” The answers may indicate an increased risk of suicide.

• If the answer to any of these questions is, “Yes,” you may say, “I am concerned about you. I want to take you to the emergency department so you can get the help you need.” Or “I want to contact 911 so someone can come and help you get the help you need.”

• If the answer to these questions is, “No,” you may say, “I am concerned about you. It sounds like you are feeling desperate. I will stay with you and together we can figure out how to get the help you need.”

• Use the Resources for Someone in Crisis for help and support.

*Just as you would help someone in a crisis with diabetes, a heart attack, or an injury; there are resources to help you help someone in a crisis with suicidal thoughts and depression.*

### Resources for Someone in a Crisis:

- NAMI North Carolina Hotline: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm: Call 800-451-9682. Text 919-999-6527. Email: [helpline@naminc.org](mailto:helpline@naminc.org)
- Call 988 night or day; whether you are the person who needs help or the person who is trying to help someone else.
- If you need immediate help, ask for someone to take you to the emergency department of a hospital. Or dial 911 and ask for a Crisis Intervention (CIT) Trained Officer to come. Explain what your situation is and what you need.
- NC DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services Crisis Units). There is a crisis unit, often with one that will come to you, in every county: <https://crisissolutionsnc.org/>

### For lay training to help someone who is suicidal:

- Mental Health First Aid Training (for adults or youth): <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Institute: <https://crisissolutionsnc.org/>



# Pleasant Green

*United Methodist Church*

3005 Pleasant Green Road, Durham, NC 27705

PleasantGreenUMC.org  
pgumc@ncrrbiz.com  
919.383.5764

## PASTOR

*Rev. Laura Thompson*  
lthompson@nccumc.org

## INTERIM PASTOR

*Rev. A C Brock*

## WAYS TO GIVE

We know and believe that part of being a follower of Christ is being generous with our money. We also recognize that the world is changing, the church is changing, and giving trends are changing with new generations. Thank you for your generosity!

**Online** [www.PleasantGreenUMC.org](http://www.PleasantGreenUMC.org)

**Smartphone** Text "PleasantGreen" To: 77977

**Envelope** Mail or slip under office door

## 2023-2024 PLEASANT GREEN AFTERSCHOOL

If your children attend River Park, Pathways, or Orange Middle, **we invite you to join our Afterschool Program!**

Applications, Afterschool Manual, 2023-2024 Calendar, Registration and Tuition Fees Schedule are on our website here: <http://www.pleasantgreenumc.org/afterschool--summer-camp.html>. Applications are due by Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>!

Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Wendy Anderson, Director  
919-630-1939  
Pleasant Green Afterschool & Summer Camp  
[pleasantgreenafterschool@gmail.com](mailto:pleasantgreenafterschool@gmail.com)



## SEPT 19: BLOOD DRIVE

At PGUMC, 10 am-3 pm. To sign up, go to [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) (Sponsor code: Pleasant Green) or email [pgumc@ncrrbiz.com](mailto:pgumc@ncrrbiz.com).