

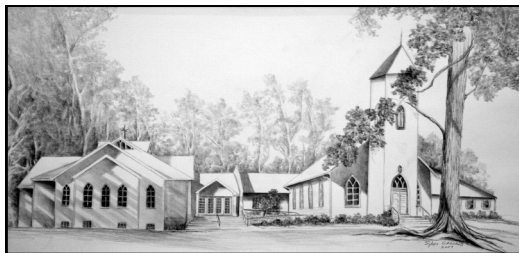


Pleasant Green
United Methodist Church

PleasantGreenUMC.org

Roots & Branches

June 2020



The Pastor's Top 5

I have a tiny book on my bookshelf – one of those books that falls into the category of “want to read but never got around to it.” We all have those books - you know- the ones on the “long list.” I bought it solely for the title. It’s called “Steal Like an Artist.” I can hear Professor Katie Cannon’s voice ringing in my head, “there is nothing new under the sun.” Every six months or so, I keep an eye out for President Brian Blount’s list of “Top 5” – to hear what’s new at Union Presbyterian Seminary, my beloved alma mater. I love reading that list, hearing what is going on at the school, knowing what is energizing President Blount and things that are worth celebrating there. In that spirit, I am going to “steal like an artist” and share with you this pastor’s list of 5 things for which I’m praising God, I’m celebrating, praying over, and that are worthy of naming (but in no particular order or rank) since the beginning of COVID. What would you add to this list?

Generosity

I’ll be honest and say I worry for many small churches, especially in rural areas, many in Eastern NC. Like small restaurants and businesses, some churches won’t survive this. At the end of every month when I glance at the financial report from Evelyn, my first response has been “thank you, Lord.” I don’t know what next month will hold, but for now – I am rejoicing in the faithful gifts and generosity of the people of PGUMC. I give thanks for the ways that Betsy Cassidy and Evelyn Morris have been conversation partners and have worked diligently to oversee our finances and for the assurance we have offered one another. Secondly, I rejoice in the generosity people have poured forth into the discretionary fund. People are struggling to put food on the table and pay bills. It is through this fund that we are able to at least offer a little bit of relief. Lastly, for the generosity of time, talents, and ongoing acts of service: the masks that have been made and shared, the items being donated to Families Moving Forward, the food and ongoing support given to OCIM, our re-commitment to Habitat for Humanity, the people I have seen showing up at our church pulling weeds, tending the garden, picking up sticks, and caring for our space even though it is currently unoccupied, and our ongoing commitment to providing meals for Food for All. I name all of these things not to pat ourselves on the back, but to remind ourselves that our church is alive and well, that God’s love is present in our community, and that even now, we have so much to give thanks for and to share with our neighbors.

The Orange Cooperative Parish

One of the foundational ideas of Methodist is **connection**. In the current situation we find ourselves in, we have had to reimagine what that looks like. Under normal circumstances, I would plan, organize, execute worship – alone. For the first time in 10 years, I found myself working with another group of pastors and sharing the responsibility of weekly worship and it has been such a gift. Each week, I have been able to engage in worship planning *with other people!* It has also given us all opportunities to hear other musicians, hear other voices, tend to other pastoral care needs and self-care. This group has also been reading together- having a bi-weekly book group. We have been able to share children and youth resources.

With the end of online worship as a OCP on May 31, we will shift our attention to how we can better engage in acts of service together. This has, without a doubt, strengthened the Methodist connection in Orange County and it has energized the pastors in a new way. What does it mean for the future? I'm not sure, but I can say with confidence – our connection matters and I do believe we are better together!

Welcoming two new staff members

It may not be the ideal time to shift staff and begin new positions, but I am delighted to welcome Kelly Lee and Carsten Bryant to Pleasant Green in new roles. While many of our church business has slowed down, it has given Kelly the time and space to learn her way into the administrative functions of the office, clean out and straighten, and onboard some of our church platforms into a consolidated system (something we had not done until now). I give thanks for what she is already bringing to our team! I also am very excited to have Carsten Bryant serving at our Cooperative Youth Director. He is working with Pleasant Green, Hillsborough, and Union Grove. While youth are unable to meet in person yet, he continues to host Zoom calls on Monday night and is looking forward to some yard visits in the coming days!

A Different Kind of a Holy Week and Easter season – but Holy, nonetheless

It certainly feels like that was a lifetime ago – mid-April. But, we have just wrapped up the “Easter season,” and I do not want it to pass by without giving it a moment of reflection. A typical Holy Week looks like preparing multiple services, rushing around, coordinating volunteers, preparing multiple bulletins, and getting ready for hundreds of people to be in and out of our building over the course of the week, for starters. There was none of that this year. I sat at my own kitchen table and participated in a Maundy Thursday liturgy over Tacos. I listened to songs of Lament on Good Friday. Sunday morning came and I went to the church like I always did. Anna LaBarre met me there, so I wouldn't be completely alone in the dark. A couple of women showing up on Easter Sunday morning, surrounded by silence, the singing of birds, dew on the grass, a few tears slipping down our cheeks, a little fire to keep warm. The Easter story was read and the good news was proclaimed. No instruments, just my shaky morning voice reminding all of us “because He lives, I can face tomorrow.” It was not normal. But, oh, was it holy. It was Easter.

The Dissolving of Division.

Online, the walls don't matter. There are Methodists tuning in to Baptist services, my cousin hundreds of miles away is all of a sudden worshipping with us at PG, I am watching my friends preach in different parts of the country, and nobody is “checking the sign out front” to see what name or denomination we are. Furthermore, Conferences and events that usually cost hundreds of dollars – have been free! I have tuned in to multiple speakers, webinars, concerts, and so on. In the span of one week, *things that used to be inaccessible became accessible* to the multitudes. There is no “my pastor” in this season – in a very literal sense, “the world is my parish” because things that were not available are now available – to anyone who clicks or signs in. In a way, this feels like grace. It feels like God's kingdom coming closer in a way it has never been before. Things that once kept our lives so neatly separated and compartmentalized have begun to dissolve. Tribes and our small groups are important, but, when we get too obsessed with who is on the inside, we slowly start to die. And right now, we all find ourselves on the outside. This season has brought with it the tearing down of walls that divide us. Maybe it is healing us in ways we don't even know or can't even recognize right now. What if our greatest limit is our own imagination right now? How do we carry this gift into the future?

Church, I miss you. I love you. And I'm praying for you. God's peace goes with you.

Pastor Laura

A letter from Bishop Hope Morgan Ward...

Dear United Methodist friends,
Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

This year, Ascension Day and Aldersgate Day converge meaningfully on our calendars this Sunday, May 24.



To a narrow question of limited hope, Jesus responded, announcing that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. With Christians near and far, we are humbled, connected and encouraged as we hear the promise of power and the privilege of witness.

On May 24, 1738, John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed as the weight of striving was displaced by the gift of faith. Methodists mark this as the day when a whole new world opened for ministry. Thank you for your creativity and perseverance in the new world in which we now find ourselves.

In the stillness of physical distancing, at this time of Ascension and Aldersgate, let us center our hearts, our lives, our plans calmly, graciously, confidently. God is with us. And so, as those who share hearts strangely warmed, as recipients of God's purpose and power, let us. .

Be confident that Christ's ministry is urgent in this time of anxiety, danger, uncertainty and grief. We lament with our communities the losses of this season: losses of safety and stability, of employment, of anticipated celebrations, of funerals, of time with beloved elders and little children. Let us share our grief faithfully, using the scriptural practice of lament, as we mourn with those who mourn. Jesus promises that those who mourn will be comforted. *And after we have suffered for a little time, the God of all grace. . . will restore, support, strengthen and establish you* - I Peter 5:10.

Be confident that our ministry is not about our buildings, as helpful as they can be to us. While we might gather in our facilities, it does not seem loving, wise or safe to do so. Our buildings have small foyers and classrooms, narrow doorways and hallways. Our facilities were created to draw people together, not to help them be socially distant. Giving thanks for your facilities, carefully evaluate them before welcoming people into them. Let us keep the health and safety of all people in the center of our decisions.

Be confident in God's vision for humankind and the whole creation. COVID-19 has laid bare the harsh realities of inequity, systemic injustice and racial prejudice in our communities, our state and our world. Let us do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God through reading, study, prayer, conversation, engagement, advocacy and witness. May all who identify as white own the reality of power and the urgency of dismantling white privilege and racism as we lament the disparities that COVID-19 and the recent racial murders of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor make painfully clear.

Be confident in the continued generosity of God's people. Boldly invite generosity as people continue to be constrained in their homes. While many experience personal economic impact from the pandemic, many others yearn to serve and give and are responding to invitations to share of their abundance. The hope of a higher offering is a misguided reason to resume face-to-face worship. We are learning that the willingness and eagerness to support financially God's mission is not tied as closely to physically gathering as we have thought it to be. It is tied to the confident and graceful invitation to give in order to share in God's ongoing mission in the world.

Be confident that God is calling us out into a new future. God is ever-onward, and we are a pilgrim people. There is no going back to pre-COVID-19. There is only going forward. Let us continue reaching out by telephone and internet, connecting virtually to pray and learn and worship, serving and planning in ways that are appropriate and safe for our neighbors. As the time comes to gather safely, we will continue our experiments as we connect virtually with new people in new places in new ways into the future.

We Methodists are Ascension and Aldersgate people, witnesses with warmed hearts. Your creativity, compassion and commitment inspire your churches and your communities. I give thanks for each of you today.

With thanksgiving to God for our partnership in Christ's ministry, *Hope Morgan Ward*

Grace and peace to you.

In this unprecedented time, the NC Conference Committee on the Episcopacy is delighted and reassured that [Bishop Hope Morgan Ward will remain our episcopal leader until after Jurisdictional Conference 2021.](#)

Given the global pandemic and the denominational refocusing that is anticipated at General Conference 2021, the Committee has repeatedly expressed a hope for continuity and constancy in our episcopal office and is grateful Bishop Ward will remain with us as we transition to a new future. Bishop Ward's continuing service allows us to press ahead with our work in launching and relaunching new faith communities, strengthening our anti-racism work, addressing the needs of children and the poor, increasing our missional presence in many places, and cultivating leaders, lay and clergy, across the Annual Conference.

Let us join together in praying for Bishop Ward and her family, as well as the whole of our world and our United Methodist connection.

In Christ, H. Gray Southern, Chair NCC Committee on the Episcopacy

from the Prayer Ministry...

House Blessing



2 Samuel 7: 29 Now, therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoke it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your Servant be blessed forever.

This verse is a prayer to God from David, as he was in the tent housing the Arc of the Covenant. God had promised David that his lineage, or "house" would continue; and, David trusted God's promises. We as Christians are the result of God's promise to David, for we follow Christ, of David's lineage. And our prayers and requests for blessings, flow from our following Christ.

Our House Blessing will take a different turn. Instead of focusing on lineage, let us focus on our actual homes and houses. Since, throughout the lock-down, many of us have spent time at home, it seems important to ask God to bless our houses and homes. We understand that not everyone has an actual "house." Some people do not even have a permanent home, such as an apartment or room in which to sleep. We lift them in prayer, that they may find shelter from the weather and a safe place to sleep. For those of us who do live in permanent residences, we will ask God to bless our houses. For us, we'll assume that houses mean homes, where-ever they may be. The author is unknown; and, the Prayer Ministry could not remember who in the church gave us this prayer.

Let us pray:

Bless the Front Door that opens to welcome guests.
Bless the Kitchen where we prepare nourishing foods.
Bless the Dining Room where our companions share bread.
Bless the Living Room where conversations deepen relationships.
Bless the Bedroom where sleep refreshes our spirit.
Bless the Windows that allow God's light to shine through.
Bless the Mirrors that remind us that we are reflections of God's grace.
Bless the Garden where we explore our growing edges.
Bless the Study where we organize and plan our work.
Bless the Back Door that leads us out to share our unique gifts in the world.
AMEN!

The Prayer Ministry meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm. If North Carolina and our United Methodist Church are still in a state of emergency due to COVID-19, we will meet by free conference call on June 17th. Otherwise, we will meet in the parlor (Clyde Walker Classroom). Look for more information through the bulletin or the PGUMC emailed weekly news as we get closer to that date. You may also contact Gail at pruettg4mh@gmail.com. Please join us! We would love to have you. The next meeting is Wednesday, June 17 at 6:30 pm.

Congratulations to our 2020 Graduates!

Orange High School :

Joey Berini, Abby Nichols, Parker Bourlon, Cassie Lipton, & Alyssa Braddy

College:

Jace Jordan-Cornell—UNC / Jacob Freeman—Campbell

Masters:

Wendy Martin—NCSU



Joey is planning to attend ECU this fall.



Abby plans to study Radiology this fall.



Cassie will be attending the University of Virginia where she plans to double major in Mathematics and Music Performance.



Alyssa plans on attending UNC this fall.



Parker plans to attend Richmond Community College's Lineman School in Jan 2021.



With his degree in Economics, Jace is planning to work in the financial area.



Wendy plans to work as a dental assistant before attending the UNC Adams School of Dentistry in the fall of 2021.



Jacob has a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering and is planning work in this field.



pleasant green youth group

Millie is learning / practicing cooking!



Asher is perfecting his NBA game with his Xbox



*We'd love to know what the youth are up to...
Please send pictures for the next newsletter!*

**Wayne Leonard and his Tiger car in the
Cameron Park Elementary School
Teachers parade on Tuesday, May 26th!**



Staying Connected During COVID-19:

- Worship on Sundays at 10:30 am with Pastor Laura leading. Each week, a link is sent out via email
- Weekly "Spiritual Care Package" via Email each Sunday afternoon
- Several Sunday school classes are meeting via Zoom on Sundays – contact your Sunday school teacher for information!
- Wednesdays at 10:30am: a book group/discussion/Bible study via Zoom
- Handwritten letters, phone calls, and emails
- The Prayer Team is continuing to pray diligently for those on our prayer list and to “meet” monthly to update each other
- Weekly meditations and music posted on our YouTube channel and Facebook page
- Weekly emails with announcements and helpful information

PGUMC Financial Update

2020 Unified Budget \$348,460.49

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Y-T-D Total Income to Operating Fund | \$112,860.24 |
| T-T-D Operating Expenses | \$125,456.68 |
| Y-T-D Operating Fund Balance | - \$ 12,596.44 |
| 2019 Operating Fund Balance Forward | \$ 17,640.33 |
| 2020 Current Actual Operating Fund Balance | \$ 5,043.89 |
| Current Building Mortgage Balance | \$262,165.16 |

Updated Schedule

Pleasant Green 2020 Summer Camp

Registration forms on church website

Week #1: July 13 - 17
at PGUMC



Week #2: July 20 - 24

VBS has been cancelled for this summer. ***Knights of North Castle*** will be rescheduled for next summer!



May - June Upper Rooms are available in the Church Narthex.

PG Summer Camp Scholarships Needed!

We are hopeful that the scheduled 2 weeks of Summer Camp in July will be possible.

All donations for scholarships are appreciated!

Make checks payable to PGUMC with Summer Camp on the memo line.

Thank you!



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Tish Bracey
- 4 Terry Fisher
- 4 Megan Stocking
- 4 Avery Vukmer
- 5 Daniel Bass
- 5 Ceil Matthews
- 6 Anna LaBarre
- 6 Janice Nicholson
- 8 Slade O'Briant
- 8 Jeff Witt
- 9 Richard Cassidy
- 9 Kyle Ward
- 9 Mitch Carter
- 11 D.J. Martin
- 11 Patsy Stranger
- 11 Bailey Anderson
- 12 Don Bennett
- 12 Niki McCay
- 13 Jane Booth
- 15 June Turner
- 16 Laura Rittenhouse
- 18 Evan Lang
- 18 Sheri Allison
- 18 Zoey Best
- 19 Gretchen Hutt
- 20 Lily Frank
- 20 Lisa Punt Carnago
- 21 Doug Bell
- 21 Victoria Harris
- 24 Mei Lynne Ray
- 25 Mike Allison
- 25 Alyssa Braddy
- 26 Frank Pruett
- 26 Hannah Bell
- 27 Jonathan Minor
- 29 Meredith McCarter
- 30 Russell Nichols

Support UMCOR's Coffee & Chocolate Project

Coffee - \$8 per bag ~Decaf & Regular ground
Chocolate Bars - \$2.50

Dark Chocolate with Almonds ~ Caramel Crunch
Mint ~ Orange ~ Dark Chocolate—65% and 80
Milk Chocolate ~ Milk Chocolate Caramel Crunch



This fair trade economic model provides opportunities for churches to support a system that nurtures rather than diminishes God's vision of abundant life. UMCOR's partner is the employee owned fair trade organization called Equal Exchange.

Donations Requested:

Families Moving Forward ~

Is in need of the following items:

- new bath towels
- new sheet sets & comforters (size full & twin)
- pine-sol, multipurpose spray, bleach, disinfecting wipes
- paper towels, hand soaps, hand sanitizer

OCIM ~

- Is in desperate need of food so please continue to drop off food items for the needy!

Please leave items in the Narthex. Thank you!



A THANK YOU to the Church Family for all the contributions to Families Moving Forward... All gifts are extremely appreciated.

Thank you,
Nancy Maloney

Habitat for Humanity in Hillsborough

Habitat remains hard at work for some of the most vulnerable people and communities in Orange County. Thanks to your support and contributions, we are able to continue working on Jonathan and Kimberly's house with walls going up and, hopefully, a roof soon. We are hoping to bring volunteers out to site in smaller groups soon, with our faith groups coming out later in the summer. Of course, we are planning hard to make this a safe experience through social distancing, sanitation of tools and outdoor projects. We have found too (and we are still collecting the data from our homeowners) that having a Habitat house made a difference during this COVID crisis. Jonathan and Kimberly are doing ok, but they continue to need a new stable and affordable home for their family. Habitat knows that you are supportive of us and this family, and we are hoping to get you out to site soon to help.

Matt Bridges, Orange County Habitat Area Director

***PGUMC hopes to fulfill our financial commitment to Orange County Habitat of \$2000.
Donations are welcome through the end of June.***



Our Rose Garden

We are blessed with a beautiful Rose Garden, a great resource to bring beauty and a remembrance of Pleasant Green to the sick, shut-ins or for yourself!

Feel free to cut roses but please remember the following:

- ~Take a container of water to the garden.
- ~Cut roses at a 45 degree angle just above a leaf on the stem that has five leaflets. It is important to cut roses correctly, as new growth forms at the place of cutting.
- ~Place any dead roses or leaves in the bucket beside the fence door
- ~Pull a few weeds while you're there ;)

Help is always welcome to keep our roses looking beautiful, please contact the church office if you would like to help.

Thank you!



Thank you to everyone who helped make our Church look beautiful this spring!

Still looking for something to do outside in this beautiful Spring weather? Let's use our last weeks of social distancing to spruce up our church grounds! If you are able and available to help out with the following please contact Van McCay: 919-259-2721 or vmccay@nc.rr.com.

- Trimming bushes
- Pulling weeds
- Picking up sticks
- Spreading mulch
- Cutting Trees
- Trail Work



All are invited to the The Read & Seed Patch -
a place where we grow in our love of books
R - relax, E - enjoy, A - attend, D - discuss & Seed

Join the Zoom meeting June 4th at 6.30pm for an "As you like it" discussion where you bring books you are reading/have read to discuss with the group.

Meeting ID: 251 251 2973
Password: 019043





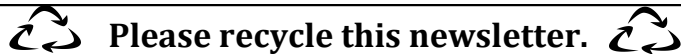
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Website: PleasantGreenUMC.org

Pastor - Rev. Laura Thompson (919) 383-2339
lthompson@nccumc.org

Church E-mail: pgumc@ncrrbiz.com

Carsten Bryant, Youth Parish Coordinator:
Carsten.bryant@duke.edu



Roots & Branches

*** NEWSLETTER NEWS ***

In a continued effort to be good stewards of our resources and finances, we want to reduce the number of paper newsletter mailings. If you would like to help with this please contact the church office with your email. ~Thank you



**American
Red Cross**

Blood Drive

Wednesday, June 24th 10am — 3pm

Call the Church office to Sign up to give the gift of life!

**Support Pleasant Green UMC
when you make Amazon purchases!**



What is it and how does it work? The AmazonSmile program offers Amazon customers the option of making a donation to your favorite charity. Amazon is able to provide this benefit to you when you choose to start your shopping at smile.amazon.com. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Now, you can choose "Pleasant Green United Methodist Church" as your organization. We hope you'll consider this as we continue to find creative and generous ways to share resources together.

For easy access please click Pleasant Green's unique charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1152936>

From Pastor Laura...

~We will worship with the Orange Cooperative Parish until May 31.

~Beginning on June 7, we will worship online as Pleasant Green UMC

& will be looking for people to help read scripture and participate in worship!

If you are willing and interested, please let me know!

Download the PGUMC app!

We are constantly finding new ways to stay connected and beginning in June, our hope is to also utilize this way of reaching out and sharing some good news with you each day. For people with a smartphone, here's how to get it: you can either **search "Pleasant Green UMC" and download it in the app store** (it's free!) OR you can **text "pleasantgreenapp" to 77977** and you'll receive a link to download. Once it is downloaded, feel free to look around. One of the features we're excited to share through the app is a "Daily Prayer" feature -- a place where you can click for a Bible verse, prayer, and thought of the day Monday-Friday. It will be right there at your fingertips if you find yourself at the breakfast table or sitting in line at the bank. We hope this will be a daily gift and inspiration for you and your family.

WAYS TO GIVE AT PLEASANT GREEN UMC

We know and believe that part of being a follower of Christ is also about 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. Listed below you will find three ways you may give to Pleasant Green UMC: the traditional gifts we receive in the offering plate on Sundays, online, or through text message. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



ONLINE

www.pleasantgreenumc.org



MOBILE

**Text: "PLEASANTGREEN"
To: 77977**



ENVELOPE

Check: mail or slip under