

October 2018

First United Methodist Church  
264 North Main Street  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139  
www.fumcrutherfordton.org  
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# The First Word



47th Annual  
Logan Preaching Mission

presents

**Dr. Jody Seymour**

October 14, 2018 at 11:00am & 7:00pm

October 15, 2018 at 7:00pm

## THINGS TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME — A Pastoral Word from Sydnor

Last week, I attended Rick Furse's Sunday School class on "Growing Older and Growing Wiser." As Rick said about himself, I am much more adept with the former than the latter!

I remember when I was first starting out in ministry, a woman approached me after I had finished preaching a sermon one Sunday and said something like, "you surprised me; you are so young, I didn't think you would have anything significant to say." I guess the only thing that saved me that day was that I was preaching from Genesis. Though I may have been too inexperienced to offer much wisdom, the scripture at least was grounded in a deep reservoir of human wisdom and experience.

But her comment humbled me and has stayed with me, reminding me to honor the wisdom of my elders. There is indeed a wisdom that comes only out of a depth and wealth of life experience. In a modern culture where we idealize youth and the latest technology, such wisdom is sometimes hard to find—and where it is found, it is often devalued.

What is it about our experience that teaches wisdom? Wisdom comes, at least in part I believe, from our encounter with suffering. Our experience of suffering deepens our perspective and increases our understanding of life—or at least has the potential for doing so.

One of my mother's heroes, Albert Schweitzer, was one of those extraordinary people who made notable achievements in several fields—he was a renowned and accomplished concert organist; he studied theology and wrote a groundbreaking book entitled in English, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*; in his early thirties, he went back to University to become a doctor in order that he might spread the Gospel through the labor of healing in Christ's name. In his early forties, Schweitzer became ill and his future life became uncertain. After undergoing two surgeries, he recovered his health—but came out of the experience transformed. He wrote of his experience of illness as "an initiation into the Fellowship of Those Who Bear the Mark of Pain:"

"Those who have learned by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean, belong together all the world over; they are united by a secret bond. One and all they know the horrors of suffering to which man can be exposed, and one and all they know the longing to be free from pain. He who has been delivered from pain must not think he is now free again, and at liberty to take life up just as it was before, entirely forgetful of the past. He is now a 'man whose eyes are open' with regard to pain and anguish, and he must help to overcome those two enemies (so far as human power can control them) and to bring to others the deliverance which he has himself enjoyed. The man who, with a doctor's help, has been pulled through a severe illness must aid in providing a helper such as he had himself, for those who otherwise could not have one.... The mother who owes it to medical aid that her child still belongs to her, and not to the cold earth, must help, so that the poor mother who has never seen a doctor may be spared what she has been spared. Where a man's death agony might have been terrible, but could fortunately be made tolerable by a doctor's skill, those who stood around his deathbed must help, that others, too, may enjoy that same consolation when they lose their dear ones."

One of the marks of wisdom and the fruit of suffering in faith, I believe, is compassion, an ability to suffer with. When we understand that God suffers with us in Jesus, our suffering is transformed. We become conduits of God's compassion. Like Schweitzer, we become instruments of God's healing at work in a world of suffering and pain. It is God's presence with us that transforms the suffering, not only making it bearable but even the occasion for joy—the awareness that we are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

Blessings and peace,



## **NEWS FROM THE MUSIC LIBRARY/OFFICE "DOWN UNDER!"**

The Chancel Choir soon will begin preparations for the Christmas cantata, *Sing the Songs of Bethlehem, a Service of Lessons and Carols* by K. Lee Scott. The carols are either arranged or newly composed by one composer. Scott achieves great contrast through changing moods, texture and compositional effects. It is hoped the listener will experience "the special chemistry which is created when these settings are laced together with the scriptural passages which inspired them." (Scott, K. Lee. Copyright 2006 Birnamwood Publications (ASCAP). The cantata will be performed with string quartet and organ.

An announcement as to meeting times will be sent out for those desiring to sing with the choir. We expect to begin rehearsals within two weeks. Please come and help in this enjoyable time of preparation for the Christmas season.

The Handbell Choir will begin rehearsals on September 26 at 6:00pm.

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### **HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT STEPHEN MINISTRY?**

Stephen Ministry is a nationally-recognized Christian care ministry that began in 1975 and is today helping more than a million people in over 13,000 churches. Internationally there have been over 500,000 Stephen Ministers trained and over 75,000 Leaders commissioned since the program was started by Dr. Kenneth Haugk in St. Louis, MO.

Stephen Ministry equips lay people to provide confidential, one-on-one, Christ-centered care and support to people experiencing difficult times in their lives such as loss of a loved one, job loss, terminal illness and divorce. The ministry pairs individuals with a Stephen Minister who will come alongside them to provide emotional and spiritual care for as long as the need persists.

I have just returned from a week-long Stephen Leader's training course in Pittsburgh, PA. There were over 300 people from 200 churches and 7 countries. It was amazing to see God's hand at work in so many lives. It is still exciting to me to think about all those people returning to their congregations to be the hands and feet of Christ for people who need a caring resource.

Why is this important? Paul reminded the early church that we are to "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) Many people today are hurting, and they need someone who will listen to them through their pain or confusion. Many people don't have the support systems around them, family and friends, that used to exist in our society. Now they are hurting alone.

We are never going to be able to have enough professional counselors who can give care to all the individuals in need, and pastors wear many hats for many people in their congregations. Stephen Ministry equips and empowers lay caregivers — called Stephen Ministers — to provide high-quality, confidential, one-on one Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. Stephen Ministers are trained as caregivers, and we rely on God as the cure giver.

The Stephen Minister's care helps people in need to resolve the difficulty and achieve growth by listening, asking questions that help identify and deal with feelings, sharing distinctively Christian caring resources, praying and relying on God to achieve the results. Stephen Ministers understand that confidentiality is crucial in any caring relationship and they maintain that confidentiality.

At FUMC Rutherfordton, we have had a Stephen Ministry program for over 25 years. Our team is providing Christ-centered care for members of our church congregation and our community. If you or someone you know needs someone to walk alongside you while you face a difficult situation, please let Dr. Thompson or one of your Stephen Leaders know. Stephen Leaders are Susie King, Donna Harrison, Kim King and Rick Furse.

Blessings!

Rick

## STORIES OF CHRIST'S LIGHT SHINING

The idea was all hers.....and she worked diligently to make it happen!

**Angela Forney**, who is our church custodian, knows what it's like to be without. She also knows that when school starts, if a kid has a new backpack, he feels wonderful.

On Monday night, August 27th Christ Light was ablaze in the smiles and the excitement of some 49 happy recipients of **new school backpacks filled with supplies!** Angela's idea had become a reality. In fact, an even bigger reality than she had anticipated.

But we're getting ahead of the story. Every good thing starts with someone's good idea, but then how do you make it happen? Here's what Angela did.

She talked with **Bud Deck** about working with the children of the families who come to **Welcome Table and NETworX**. So, every Monday night for a month Angela manned a table in our Fellowship Center with her sign, "*Register Here for Free Backpacks*". (32 registered the first night!) She captured every child's name, age, school and grade. She asked our congregation for help with supplies, listing in our church bulletin each of the 4 weeks, what was still needed.

"Each school as well as each grade had different requirements," she said. The middle school and high school students got more because those grades required more. There were only 3 schools in the county that did not have someone registered for one of Angela's backpacks.

Church members donated some 800 school items and the Garmon-Yelton Sunday School class gave the money for 40 new backpacks and additional supplies. Angela meticulously managed every detail of this project. "I went to Walmart at 3:00am," she said, "so I could shop for the backpacks uninterrupted. I wanted to think about each child and what I thought would make them happy!!"

I saw, in the pictures taken, table after table laden with school supplies. Angela packed each backpack herself according to the requests of that school and grade. The packs were well stocked and personalized with the child's name, grade & school. Each had enough supplies for about 6 months of school work.

On the night of the distribution, Pastor Sydnor prayed a blessing on the students and their "school ready backpacks". There were a lot of hugs and a lot of tears. "Kids hugged me that I didn't even know," Angela added. She had one mother come up afterward to say that she missed the registration deadline. "Do you have anything left?" she asked. Angela responded that all she had was one girl bookbag. "She took that, hugged me, and started crying."

"What do you think gave you this idea to begin with?" I asked.

"I know what it feels like to have nothing," Angela replied. "You don't have to have a lot of money to help someone," she added.

But you have to have an idea; a vision.....and the determination to see it through. In this case, Christ Light also started the school year. Arriving with 49 happy children sporting brand new filled backpacks!

"I may shoot for even more kids next year!" Angela concluded.

(Do you have a Christ Story to share? Call or email Shirley Koone at email:shirleykoone@gmail.com or 828-287-3730)

Our **2018 CHARGE CONFERENCE** for the purpose of discussing and accepting Charge Conference materials, pastor's compensation, lay servant applications and approving our Church Officers has been scheduled for Sunday, October 21, 2018 in the Fellowship Center at 6pm.

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**THE FOLLOWING MONETARY GIFTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED:**

In memory of Lucy Daniel, by Jane Waters, Susan, Ann & Bill McBrayer, Alan & Sherry Henderson, designated for the General Fund; by David & Peggy Truscott, designated for Welcome Table.

In memory of S. G. Gabriel, by Ron & Dorothy Parker, designated for the Fellowship Center Roof Fund; by David & Peggy Truscott, Robert & Minnie Snead, Fletcher & Nancy Spillman, Betty Gabriel, Chris Gabriel, designated for the Audio Visual Fund.

In memory of Eric Gibson, by Ron & Dorothy Parker, designated for the Fellowship Center Roof Fund; by Larry Anderson, Alan & Sherry Henderson, Jim & Robin Van Jura, designated for the General Fund; by Susan G. Gilchrist, designated for Boy Scout Troop 132.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS**

Domestic Violence 3rd Annual Walk-A-Thon! This Walk is sponsored by the The Domestic Violence Education/Support Group, facilitated by Johnnie Martin and Sally Claroni, and will be held Saturday, October 13, 8:30 am. We will begin our Walk at Forest City Housing Authority Admin. Building, 147 E Spruce Street, Forest City, and it usually takes approximately two hours to complete. Water provided along the route.

PLEASE come walk in support of victims of DV and to focus attention on this major problem in our county. Wear a purple shirt - color representing Domestic Violence (Oct. is DV Awareness Month). Show your support and help heighten awareness. Thank you for caring.

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**WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 7, 2018**

***Together, we enable national and international graduate students to change the world.***

In gratitude and great joy, come to World Communion Sunday.

Your generous gifts make a difference. World Communion Sunday envelopes and other information will be in the October 7th bulletin.

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**HOMEBOUND COMMUNION:** One of the most important ways we celebrate our unity as the Body of Christ is by gathering for the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month. Over the years, a small group of dedicated volunteers have faithfully delivered communion to the members of our church who have requested it. We are currently in need of additional volunteers to participate in this important ministry. If you are interested in receiving monthly communion in your home or in participating in this highly rewarding ministry of our church, please contact the church office. Thank you!



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Sharing this article from Leith Tate, in our **UMW Blue Ridge District newsletter**:

Caroline Edwards Beam, UMW President

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Hello Everyone! I hope you have all weathered the torrential rains that most of us have had recently, and like me, now you're trying very hard not to complain about the heat! Thanks Lord, for sending both Your rain and Your sunshine!

At our Blue Ridge District Executive Board meeting last Saturday, June 9, I shared my review of the book *Without You There is No Us* by Suki Kim. Many of us saw the media reports of the summit meeting between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, the son of Kim Jong-il, the leader in Suki Kim's story.

I realized that my having read the book might bias my view of the summit events, but then--if I had read the book after the summit events, would I have a kinder view of Mr. Rocket Man? Highly unlikely. Suki Kim is an undercover American journalist who infiltrated North Korea as a school teacher. The title of her book comes from the chants of her North Korean school children and youth who line up three times a day and chant adorations and praises to the man they revere as the world's foremost expert on every subject. They believe that without their leader—at that time it was Kim Jung-il- there would be no North Korea; there would be no us; there would be no anything. And they have been told all their lives that westerners—especially Americans-- are stupid, backward, and primitive. The great photo-ops we saw this past week—e.g. four women accompanying Kim Jong-un, one of whom was his sister, were surely meant to be a convincing statement on women's equality in North Korea. And those cute little North Korean cheerleaders we saw perform at the Olympics? They are sex slaves. After all the smiles and pep rallies, those girls go to parties and receptions and service the men and athletes in attendance with whatever demands they make. Girls who resist just might have “disappear.”

Following the summit, our president described what he called a very interesting and positive meeting: “There is no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea. Kim Jong-un is very open and very honorable. North Korea has great potential for the future!” Indeed, we should certainly hope and pray that Trump's talk with Kim Jong-un at least decreases if not eliminates the risk of nuclear war. But really Mr. President, when you refer to Kim Jong-un as “very honorable” it makes me very, very uncomfortable.

This may sound more like a rant than a book review, but I highly recommend Suki Kim's book. While her story is more of an account of her school teaching experience with her young male students, the book attests to the despicable treatment of all North Koreans by a dictator who has no sense of what it means to be humane. It's an eye-opening account about conditions in a country that has never been known to tell the truth or keep its promises. Especially concerning women.

Well on that note, I remain confident that as United Methodist Women we will continue to stand up for the rights of women not just in North Korea, but all over the world. Blessings to all of you!

Leith Tate, Blue Ridge District Secretary of Program Resources

**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN NEWS:  
COMING UP!**

**OCTOBER 7th:** ALL Ladies are encourage to attend the UMW Luncheon Meeting on Sunday, October 7th in the Fellowship Center after the 11 am service. Lunch provided by the Agape Circle. Please bring your World Thank Offering and recommendations for mission giving of Yard Sale funds. If you are willing to serve as an officer for 2019 please contact Caroline at 289-0122.

**OCTOBER 9th: THE AGAPE CIRCLE** will meet at 6:30pm on Tuesday, October 9th, in the Fellowship Center. We will be making Baked Spaghetti for the Bazaar. Please remember that the Agape Circle is hosting the UMW Unit meeting on Sunday, October 7th. If you haven't signed up to bring a dish, please contact Brenda to let her know what you are bringing.

**OCTOBER 12-14:** The Power of Bold: Western NC Conference United Methodist Women's Annual Celebration is rescheduled for Oct. 12-14 at Lake Junaluska. Keynote Mission Speaker is Stell Wallace; Mission Speaker is Rev. Beth Crissman, BR District Superintendent; Musicians are Ginger Haselden, song leader and our own Glenda Fuhrmann, pianist. Register online (\$15) at [wnccumw.org](http://wnccumw.org). To book lodging call L.J. Reservations at 800-222-4930.

**NOVEMBER 10th:** It's Bazaar Time! Breakfast, Baked and frozen goods, silent auction, and a wonderful time working together for the betterment of our church's missions.

**OCTOBER WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

**Greeters (8:45)**

1st Sunday Eric & Terri Wells  
2nd Sunday Ken & Diane Sanford  
3rd Sunday John & Deb Vincent  
4th Sunday Rory & Jeannie Kiser

**Greeters (11:00)**

1st Sunday Wayne & Susan Keever  
2nd Sunday Lewis & Frances Hamrick  
3rd Sunday Ron & Dorothy Parker  
4th Sunday Charles & Becky Wright

**Sound System**

1st Sunday Don Suttles  
2nd Sunday Pete Pryor  
3rd Sunday Ed Bosgra  
4th Sunday Don Harris

**Ushers (8:45)**

Ken Sanford, Doug Melton

**Ushers (11:00)**

David Best,  
United Methodist Women

**Bread Makers**

1st Sunday Cheryl Waddingham  
2nd Sunday Jane Shuford  
3rd Sunday Brenda Gibson  
4th Sunday Bobbie Tedford

**Acolytes**

1st Sunday Dee Dee Majors  
2nd Sunday Campbell Powell  
3rd Sunday Johannah Deese  
4th Sunday Maris Rogers

**Communion Stewards**

1st Sunday Ken & Diane Sanford

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

October 16 at 12:00 noon

**SUNDAY BULLETIN DEADLINE**

Every Monday at Noon

Send information for Newsletter & Bulletin  
to [pcraft@fumcrutherfordton.org](mailto:pcraft@fumcrutherfordton.org)

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We're on the Web!  
[www.fumcrutherfordton.weebly.com](http://www.fumcrutherfordton.weebly.com)



Find us on Facebook!

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