

THE EPISTLE

July 14, 2023

Find Hope Here

Sedgefield United Methodist Church

*2830 Dorchester Place
Charlotte, NC 28209*

www.SedgefieldChurch.org

704-523-0077

Rev. Tom Stinson-Wesley, Pastor

Reflections From Pastor Tom



Dear Friends,
This Sunday, I will be preaching on Genesis 25:24-34 and my title will be "Sibling Rivalry."

This is a fun little family story from Genesis that made an impact on the entire narrative of the people of God. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers with nothing except being twin brothers in common. Jacob, apparently, was a natural con-man. He seized his opportunity to trick Esau out of his birthright - a big deal, especially in those days. The first born male received twice as much inheritance (money/property) as the other sons. Jacob had what Esau wanted, food. Esau was hungry and Jacob had cooked some stew. Jacob refused to give Esau any of the stew unless Esau gave Jacob his birthright. Esau consented and the deal took place. It's bad enough to be deceived by a total stranger, but this was a brother tricking a brother!

I look forward to seeing you at church. I will be returning late Saturday night from my Holy Land trip.

Blessings,
Pastor Tom

This Sunday In Worship

July 16, 2023
10:30 a.m.
Sibling Rivalry

Sunday School begins at
9:30am in the
Education Building

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers on Sunday,
July 16, 2023 are in celebration
of Jan Payne's Birthday from
her husband Larry.

Future Sermons

July 23 - This is The Place
July 30 - A Re-Arranged Marriage
Aug 6 - Music Sunday

Upcoming Events

- ▶ **Missions Meeting**
Sunday, July 16, 2023
11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

- ▶ **Serve At Rebound**
Sunday, July 16, 2023
4:30 p.m.
907 W. 1st Street

- ▶ **Vacation Bible Study**
Monday - Friday
July 17-July 21, 2023
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall & Courtyard

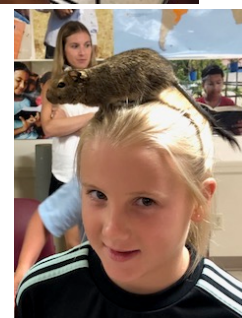
- ▶ **Summer Fun Day**
Wednesday, July 26, 2023
10:00 a.m. - 12Noon
Play Ground or Fellowship Hall



Summer Fun Wednesdays
What an exciting time we had this
week encountering Exotic Animals.



Blessings!
Mary Jo Bridges
Children's Program Director
704-617-4056



**Upcoming Activities at
2023 Summer Fun Wednesdays
at Sedgefield Church**

Ages - Preschool – Elementary Children

10:00 Playground Fun

10:30 – 11:45 Program in Fellowship Hall or Outside

**Summer Fun Wednesdays will not meet on
July 19th due to Vacation Bible School.
Will resume on Wednesday July 26th.**

July 26 - Scales (Snakes)

August 2 – Popcorn and a Movie

**August 9 – Back to School Bash with Jumping Jacks
Water Slide** (Come prepared to get WET! Parents may
want to bring a lawn chair and a towel.)

**11:45am – Optional - Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy
eating lunch with friends or more playground fun.**

Questions Call:

Mary Jo Bridges

Children's Program Director

704-617-4056

Sedgefield UMC Lay Delegate Report
on the Western North Carolina Conference of the UMC
June 16 – 18, 2023 at Lake Junaluska NC
Submitted By: Frank Fields

It was my privilege again this year to attend at Lake Junaluska the annual meeting of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. I was there as the lay delegate representing Sedgefield UMC, along with over 800 other lay delegates from throughout the conference. Additionally, there were over 900 clergy delegates attending, including our pastor Tom Stinson-Wesley. The Western North Carolina Conference is currently comprised of 761 churches and over 202,000 members. These numbers reflect about a 25% decline in churches, and a 15% decline in membership, as a result of the disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church by nearly 200 churches over the last two (2) years. Additionally another twenty-five (25) or so churches ceased operating during this period as a result of closure resolutions approved by the conference. Closure resolutions occur when congregations find they are unable to sustain normal operations and obligations because of declining membership and financial hardship. This year alone there were five (5) resolutions for closure, and again almost exclusively comprised of rural congregations. Resident Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, Jr. presided over the conference, and he chose “Grace, Connection, Holiness”, as our guiding theme for our time together beginning Friday morning and finishing Sunday at noon. The purposes of annual conference are many: including business sessions, teaching and development sessions, and worship.

The business sessions at annual conference are normally comprised of reports from a variety of foundations, boards, and committees; budget review; benefits review; and the consideration of resolutions and petitions. This year we were also tasked with electing three (3) lay delegates to the 2024 Jurisdictional Conference. This election was necessary to replace delegates previously chosen in 2019 as a part of a delegation of ten (10) for the 2020 Jurisdictional Conference, but who have resigned those positions since then.

Both the 2020 Jurisdictional and General Conferences of the United Methodist Church were cancelled due to Covid concerns and have been rescheduled for 2024. The lay and clergy delegations selected in 2019 remain intact with the exception of the few replacements made this year. Twenty (20) nominees vied for the positions, and fortunately the second ballot yielded three (3) successful candidates receiving the required 50% +1 of votes cast to be elected.

The budget, compensation, and benefits petitions all passed overwhelmingly with no discussion. Similarly, the approval of various boards and trustee groups were combined into one (1) consent agenda action item, and passed overwhelmingly without discussion. Petitions to: 1) encourage Creation Care environmental awareness teams in churches, 2) expand and clarify Parental Leave for Clergy, and 3) encourage church leaders intending to disaffiliate from the UMC to recuse themselves from positions of leadership, all passed with some discussion and ultimately large majority approvals. Two (2) of the more lively-debated petitions involved: 1) adding fossil fuel investments to the list of screened investment categories, and 2) establishing more closely defined criteria for membership voting eligibility in church and charge conferences. These petitions both elicited plenty of discussion both pro and con. Both were passed with small majorities. It's important to note that these petitions did not create new policy but are to be sent the 2024 General Conference as recommendations. Similarly we considered and approved, by approximately 90/10 pro vs con, petitions requesting of the General Conference: 1) the creation of a US Regional Conference in order to allow cultural and historical context to be considered in church doctrine; 2) removal of discriminatory language from The Book of Discipline; and 3) affirmation of full inclusivity of all people regardless sexual orientation or gender identity. Happily we finished the business sessions on time, but without rushing or stifling debate. Bishop Carter commended our work and composure, referring to us at the conclusion as, "mature Christians".

Interspersed with the business sessions were three (3) morning worship services, and one (1) late afternoon and one (1) evening service. The afternoon and evening services were respectively focused on honoring retiring clergy and installing new clergy. In all, 53 pastors retired, and 39 candidates were consecrated as deacons, licensed as local pastors, commissioned as provisional members, ordained as deacons, and ordained as elders. Friday morning at the opening worship service theme was Grace, and how God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace prepares us for change and new beginnings. The sermon, "ReUnited", was given by Rev. Dr. Candace Lewis, President-Dean, Gammon Theological Seminary. Dr. Gammon inspired and challenged us to face the challenges we share. Saturday morning service focused on Connection, and we were privileged to hear from Rev. Laura Auten. Her sermon, "In a Window, Dimly" reflected lost connections during Covid, and how we coped and ultimately grew even during a time of loss and loneliness. Sunday morning's closing worship tied together Grace, Connection, and Holiness. Bishop Carter offered the sermon, "Holiness and Mission" as a sending forth to do God's work, and a reminder that God's work is first and foremost to treat one another with holiness. Loving one another as God loves us is the central tenet of all we do.

I am deeply grateful to Sedgefield UMC for giving me the opportunity to attend Annual Conference as your lay delegate. This was my third "in-person" conference since Covid precautions required a virtual experience in 2020 and 2021. Once again it has proven to be a time of personal growth and spiritual renewal for me and it was an honor to be there. If you have questions or would like additional information about the events there, please reach out to me personally.

**For more information about the
conference please click on the
website below.**

<https://www.wnccumc.org>

Ways to Give Your Offerings to Sedgefield UMC



Online Through

sedgefieldchurch.org

Make a credit card
or electronic
contribution.



Bank Draft

Set up automatic



Church

Mail your check to:

Sedgefield UMC
2830 Dorchester Pl
Charlotte, NC 28209



Online Through

wnccumc.org

Make a credit card
or electronic
contribution.



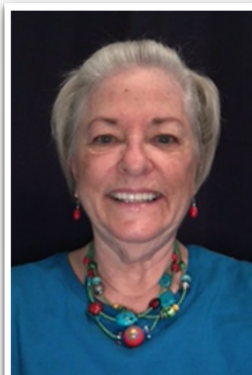
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