

The Main Stream

June 18, 2024 - Volume 2024, Issue 6



From Pastor Mike

On the first Sunday in June, as the passages from Isaiah were being read, I looked over at the altar, all beautifully prepared for the Eucharistic feast that we were about to partake, and I took note that this was the last Communion that I would preside over at Main Street. I was filled with both a sense of loss, and a wave of gratitude. I mentioned in the homily how I treasure this verse of Scripture: "How lovely, how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news."

In my message, I spoke about how we do not often think of our feet that way, but to truly be grabbed by this image it is helpful to go back in time, back in time before cell phones, text messaging, and Facebook Messenger. Way back in time even before landline phones that hung on kitchen walls taking up a good deal of space—back in time before telegrams, and even before Pony Express. Back in time, when the only way to get a message from Jerusalem to some far away outpost of the country was to send a messenger who ran the whole way. And one can imagine after running that far, the feet are calloused and injured. It is these feet, these dirty, tired, bloody feet of the messenger that are called beautiful.

The Scriptures tell us that all of those preaching good news, peace, and God's kingdom have beautiful, lovely feet. When Isaiah 52:7 is read in church—"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings of good things, who proclaim salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"—when that Scripture is read, I want to turn to Victoria, Phil, Wayne, Nancy, Al, Tina, Betsy, Kathryn, Clay, Jenny, Anthony, Theo, Cynthia, Kellie, and Willie, and say, "Mercy, you all got some beautiful feet!" And when we sing, "Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee." And when we sing those words, I want to say to all of you, "My goodness, you all got some beautiful feet."



What an absolute honor and privilege it is to be the Senior Pastor of Main Street United Methodist Church, a church that dares to care, a church committed to both knowing and sharing the life-changing love of Jesus Christ. In the last six years, we have built a beautiful Connections Building to strengthen and foster our fellowship and ministries. In the last six years, we navigated a once in a hundred-year global pandemic that paralyzed the nation and the world, but the work of the church continued as we navigated livestream, and later practiced social distancing and mask-wearing. In the last six years, there have been many political and social storms. In the last six years, there were also many ecclesiastical storms within the United Methodist Church, and there were numerous congregations that divided into opposing camps with open hostility among members.

Main Street, I am so proud of how you have navigated all the curve balls thrown, all the challenges, and how we have kept our eyes on Christ our Lord. As I preach my last sermon on June 30 and then move to retirement after thirty-six years of working in the fields of our Lord, I will do so with a tremendous sense of gratitude—grateful for all that we have shared—grateful that I will always carry you in my heart and remember you in prayer—and grateful that we serve Christ our Lord who is with us in this world and when time itself fades into eternity.

In God's grace we abide,

Pastor Mike



2024 High School Graduates

Katherine Hanks
Jackson Napier

Michael Pitts
Emma Saporito

Will Sharpe
Landon Vinay

Jenna Brooks
University of South Carolina
B.S. in Biological Science

Rachael Cronin
UNC Chapel Hill
B.S. in Environmental Science

Jacob Hanks
NC State University
B.S. in Mechanical Engineering

Maddie Lang
Appalachian State University
B.S. in Healthcare Management

Scout McKinley
Appalachian State University
B.S. in Child development

Amanda Moore
UNC Wilmington
B.A. in Middle grade education



Esther Mueller
Asbury Seminary
Master of Biblical and Theological Foundations

Ava Napier
NC State University
B.A. in International Studies

Addie Stamper
University of South Carolina
B.S. in Exercise Science

Rachel Tang
UNC Greensboro
Bachelor of Social Work

Connor Witt
NC State University
B.S. in Industrial & Systems Engineering

Ryan Witt
Appalachian State University
B.A. in Psychology with a Minor in Business

Farewell to Pastor Mike



**PASTOR MIKE'S
LAST SUNDAY WITH US
BEFORE HIS RETIREMENT
WILL BE JUNE 30**

We will have a combined worship service at 10:30am with lots of great music and after the service, we will have a "Farewell Reception" in the Commons so that everyone will have an opportunity to speak with Pastor Mike and Rhonda and thank them for the six years of ministry that they have shared with us. As a gift from our church, we would like to present the Gehrings with a love offering, so we will be accepting donations in the church office through June 30.



Western North Carolina Conference

The United Methodist Church

Annual Conference is scheduled for June 20-23 at Lake Junaluska.

Pastor Mike, Pastor Phil, and Pastor Wayne will be attending, in addition to our Lay Delegates Carol Purdy, Melissa Dreshfield, and Chris Thompson. Kimberly Thompson is also attending as a District Delegate.

Please pray for all of the delegates as they conduct the business of the Annual Conference.



Main Street's Heritage Club is a group of active adults who gather for fun activities.

Contact Debbie Smith for more information and to make reservations.

The Heritage Club would love to have new friends join them at the next event:

- **July 19** Burgers & BINGO Join us in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 for hamburgers & hotdogs. Cost will be \$5.00 to cover the food. Please bring a dessert to share. Reservations are required by July 14.



Join us for Praise and
Worship with our awesome
NOW Band
at 6:30pm on the
1st and 3rd Thursdays of
each month in the Chapel.

THE UPPER ROOM

The July/August issue
of The Upper Room
devotional booklets
are now available for pickup
in the Narthex and at the
Member Pickup Station at the
Main Entrance to the Commons.

We share in joy with:

- Mike & Kelly Thompson on the marriage of their son, Nathan, to Emily Koester.
- Mike & Ann Cronin on the marriage of their daughter, Sarah, to Evan Morris.
- Celia Leal upon the birth of her great-grandson, Riley Joseph Leal.
- Aubrey & Jenna Turner on the marriage of their son, Simon, to Amber Bennett.



Join us for Kids in Action (KIA) Summer Service Camp! This year KIA will run from Monday, July 29 to Wednesday, July 31 from 9 am - 3 pm. Kids in Action is an opportunity for our elementary students to go out and serve their community while sharing the love of Christ. Our kids have a service project in the morning and a fun activity in the afternoon! There are only 20 spots available so sign up soon! Registration is open to rising 2nd graders - rising 6th graders and the cost is \$80 per child.

Questions? Email our Children's Director, Victoria Smathers, at Victoria.smathers@mainstreetumc.org

CREATION CARE SUMMER TIPS

- Use compostable or reusable plates, cups, and utensils.
- Ask guests to bring their own water bottles.
- Provide containers for recyclables and trash.
- Serve more fruits and vegetables while cutting back on meat.
- Shop our local farmer's markets or grow your own.
- Examine your water usage.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothing. Use cold water for laundry and air dry for dishwasher.
- Catch water in a bucket when warming the shower or sink then use it for watering plants.
- Close blinds on hot, sunny days.
- Walk through your home and unplug electronics when not in use.
- Carry a bag while walking and pick up trash.

Genesis 2:15

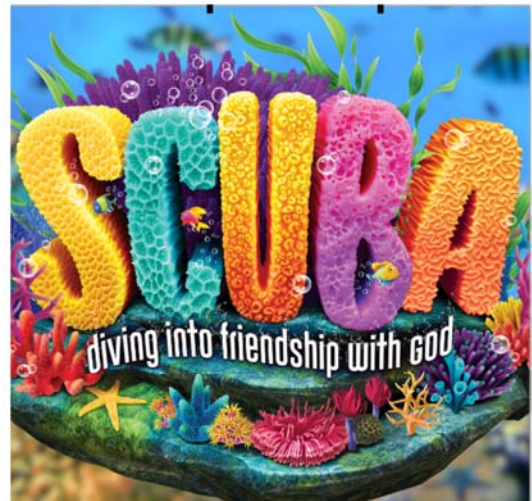
*The Lord God took the man and put him
in the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.*



CLEAR GLASS BUD VASES NEEDED

If you have any of the single-stem sized clear glass bud vases that you need to find a home for, please bring them to the church office. We use these on the altar when we have a red or white rosebud.

Thank you so much for your assistance!



Get excited about Vacation Bible School at Main Street UMC coming up on July 22-25

from 6:00pm to 8:15pm.

Register online at mainstreetumc.org under "signups"

More VBS info. on page 14

Welcome, New Members



Russ & Diane Parmele



Marissa Whitaker & husband,
Austin, with son Ryder who
was baptized on June 9



Christian & Tori Keoleian



Come be a part of our Prayer Shawl Ministry!

Whether you are an experienced knitter or crocheter or you want to learn, you are invited to come and join us! The next Prayer Shawl meetings will be in the Fellowship Hall on

**June 27, July 11 & 25
at 9:30am**

We extend our sympathies to:

- Jeannie Marcinkowski upon the death of her aunt, Marlene Johnson.
- Debbie Griffin upon the death of her cousin, Cherri Carroll.
- Mary Helen Lamberson upon the death of her husband, Ken Lamberson.
- Mark Kinlaw upon the death of his father, Charles Kinlaw.
- Bill & Patsy Pegg upon the death of their son, Gary.
- Mark Frazier upon the death of his mother, Laura Doby Frazier.
- Lisa Dodds upon the death of her mother, Ancha Pack.



For nearly two decades the Grose/Kirkman Sunday School Class has provided over \$20,000 of scholarships to Main Street Youth. Unfortunately, as age has taken its toll on our class, this is likely the last year the scholarships will be available. In order to build the fund to a reasonable level, I will have golf balls for purchase on Sunday between services. My good friend Curt Brown has provided the balls and I have cleaned each one by hand (over twenty gallons). We are asking for a minimum donation of \$6.00 per dozen, however additional donations will be greatly appreciated. All proceeds will go to the scholarship fund. There is an excellent variety and most in very good condition. Even if you aren't a golfer, this would be a great gift to a friend and it will

help fund our final year of these worthwhile scholarships. Checks can be made to the Grose/Kirkman Scholarship Fund.

Thank-you in advance for your support,
Darrell Davis



Here's a brief update of Main Street's financial status as of May 31. This month we have good news and bad news. Building fund contributions have sufficiently funded our first five monthly loan payments with \$5,877 remaining to apply to the June \$12,000 payment. Regular budget giving has fallen behind during the last couple of months. Through May 31, regular giving of \$389,997 was insufficient to fund required expenses. Expenses were \$432,991 which is nearly \$43,000 above giving to date. Unfortunately, we are operating at a deficit and have had to use our operating reserve to cover

expenses. We have also postponed a portion of our missions and connectional disbursements. God has blessed Main Street year after year with the resources to continue strong ministries on and off our church campus. Together we can make great things happen if we all step up and do our part. Let's remember our vows to faithfully participate in Main Street's ministries with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

Wes O'Brien, Chair of Finance Committee

Church Staff Openings

We would like to hire a
Church Organist/Pianist

The complete job description for this position can be found under "NEWS" at mainstreetumc.org. Resumes may be sent to Tina Crew in the church office (tina.crew@mainstreetumc.org).

HERE'S WHAT'S COMING UP AT MAIN STREET...

- June 19 — Church Office Closed for Juneteenth
- June 23-29 — High School Mission Trip
- June 30 — One Combined Worship service at 10:30 followed by Farewell Reception for Pastor Mike and Rhonda
- July 4 — Church Office Closed for Independence Day
- July 7-13 — Middle School Mission Trip
- July 14 — One Combined Worship service at 10:30 for Pastor Lanny's first service
- August 4 — Churchwide picnic at Triad Park—*more details coming soon!*
- September 14 — Hands Together Day of Service—*more details later this summer*

We are excited to be making plans for the start of

Kids Connect Choirs

Be on the lookout for dates and sign-up information coming soon!

CAROL CHOIR

Parents of kids in Kindergarten thru Fifth Grade are invited to a Parent Meeting and our first rehearsal on Wednesday, August 21 from 6:15 pm to 7:00pm in Room 412. We will hand out schedules, music binders, and sing through our new fall music.



ANGEL CHOIR

Our littlest singers are our children ages 3 and 4. Details regarding rehearsals will be provided later this summer.

Collection boxes are in the new main entrance for donations to Crisis Control's Item of the Month. The item for July is CANNED PASTAS (ravioli, etc); other non-perishable food items can be donated as well.



your name here

Let's focus on wearing our nametags to worship services throughout this summer as a way for our new pastor and other new MSUMC members to feel "at home". Contact the church office if you need a new nametag!

Take a Hike.

Our **Take a Hike Small Group** comes together to enjoy the great outdoors and enjoy God's splendid creation on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. Mark your calendars and make plans to join them on one or all of their next hikes. Meet at the church parking lot at 8:30am and we will carpool to our Triad hiking location on **June 18 and July 2 & 16**. For more information, contact Wade Hampton.

How General Conference 2024 Affects Main Street UMC

Earlier this month, the United Methodist Church concluded its 2024 General Conference.¹ This General Conference passed several pieces of consequential legislation. Main Street UMC's Church Council encourages all who read this document to refer to the "General Conference Legislative Recap," located in May's *Main Stream*, for a list of the major legislative changes passed at General Conference.

To express how these legislative changes affect MSUMC in its capacity as a local church, Church Council has approved this document.

Moving forward, MSUMC's Church Council encourages the congregation to honor the *Relational Covenant* passed by Church Council in 2008 and reaffirmed in 2024. By honoring the *Relational Covenant*, the congregation commits to, "loving, trusting and respecting one another by treating each other as we desire to be treated and by making allowances for one another's differences and shortcomings."

Please see the below summary of how General Conference 2024 affects Main Street UMC.

Disaffiliation

- MSUMC's position on disaffiliation ***prior to*** General Conference:
 - ◊ In its January 2023 meeting, Church Council unanimously approved the following motion: "to postpone and discontinue any discussions of disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church until after the 2024 General Conference." Church Council approved this motion for a few key reasons:
 - ◆ The cost to disaffiliate from the UMC in 2023 would have been over \$600K, an amount that hugely exceeded MSUMC's available cash.
 - ◆ General Conference had not yet occurred, and Church Council chose not to make rash choices based on decisions not yet made.
 - ◆ Because MSUMC has a diverse make-up of opinions about human sexuality and the church, Church Council felt participating in the disaffiliation process would risk a mass exodus of members. Dr. Mike Gehring shared with Church Council examples of multiple UMC congregations similar to MSUMC that have collapsed as a result of disaffiliation proceedings.
 - * Given that disaffiliation would have resulted in a drastic increase of financial liability and a massive decrease in membership, MSUMC would have faced a loss of staff, services, and missions.
 - * Disaffiliation would thus have left a depleted membership with the burden of \$1.3 million of debt.²
 - ◆ In the event of disaffiliation, MSUMC would have lost its entire pastoral staff and no future UM clergy appointments would be made to MSUMC.

Continued on next page

- MSUMC's current position on exiting the denomination, now that General Conference has concluded:
 - ◊ **MSUMC acknowledges that at this time it cannot exit the UMC for the following reasons:**
 - ◆ General Conference removed ¶ 2553 from *The Book of Discipline*, ending the disaffiliation policy that was added by the special 2019 General Conference.
 - * The process of "disaffiliation" no longer exists. Local churches who desire to exit the denomination would refer to pre-2019 procedures, described in ¶ 2549 of *The Book of Discipline*.
 - * In January 2023, Church Council had no way of knowing ¶ 2553 would be removed. Multiple bishops, including Bishop Ken Carter, expressed the belief that ¶ 2553 would be renewed.
 - * Even when ¶ 2553 was in place, as already mentioned, the cost for MSUMC to disaffiliate would have been upwards of \$600k. With the removal of ¶ 2553, the cost to exit the UMC surpasses multiple millions.³ In short, exiting the denomination would cause financial ruin.
 - ◆ Because MSUMC has a diverse make-up of opinions regarding human sexuality and the church, the exiting process would risk a mass exodus of members. Many UMC congregations similar to MSUMC have collapsed as a result of disaffiliation/exit proceedings. Collapse of membership is a serious risk regardless of the outcome of a vote.
 - * Given that exiting the denomination would result in a drastic increase of financial liability and a massive decrease in membership, MSUMC would face a loss of staff, services, and missions.
 - * Exiting the denomination would thus leave a depleted membership with the burden of \$1.3 million of debt.⁴
 - ◆ If MSUMC were to exit the UMC, MSUMC would lose its entire pastoral staff and would receive no future UM clergy appointments.
 - ◆ For all of these reasons, remaining in the UMC gives MSUMC the best opportunity to fulfill our mission, which is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

MSUMC's Marriage Policy

- General Conference passed legislation which allows, but does not require, local churches to hold same-sex marriage ceremonies on their campuses.
- Currently, MSUMC's *de facto* wedding policy permits no same sex weddings on campus.
- Currently, very few weddings occur on MSUMC's campus. In 2023, there were two weddings and both were small, attended mostly by family. None have occurred on campus in 2024.
- Trustees could potentially change the campus marriage policy to allow same-sex weddings, with approval of Church Council.
- If trustees were to consider making such a change, it would be under the guidance of MSUMC's new pastor, Rev. Lanny Lancaster.
- Such a decision would also account for the congregation's preferences. Trustees would likely conduct a church-wide poll or utilize a similar method to gather data on the congregation's preferred marriage policy.

Appointment of LGBTQI Clergy to MSUMC

- From Bishop Ken Carter's letter (5/21/24): "[C]hurches that are more traditional in conviction—*The Book of Discipline* identifies this, and our Cabinet practices this—will not receive appointed clergy or conduct services that do not align with their convictions.⁵

With a new senior pastor beginning his service in July, MSUMC faces transition within a denomination facing transition. Please pray for discernment and patience as we work together to do God's will amid these transitions. Let us remember who we are and Whose we are as God's Kingdom unfolds in Kernersville. Finally, please refer to the full *Relational Covenant*, which holds the tools necessary for us to live in unity as scripture calls us to do.

"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity."

--Psalm 133:1

In Christ,
MSUMC Church Council

*Relational Covenant and Footnotes
are on next page*

Main Street United Methodist Church Relational Covenant – 2024

As brothers and sisters in Christ at Main Street United Methodist Church, we proclaim that Jesus Christ is our Center to which our hearts, voices, and ministries are tuned as we seek to live in true harmony together. Therefore, to nurture and strengthen our relationships and ministries, I/We will:

- Love, trust and respect one another by treating each other as we desire to be treated and by making allowances for one another's differences and shortcomings.
- Honor and nurture our relationships together by speaking and listening for the truth in love, always building up, and never tearing down one another or the church.
- Forgive one another when we have been offended, and attempt to reconcile according to Matthew 18:15-20, always avoiding the sin of gossip.
- Open our hearts, minds, and doors to all God's children by welcoming, loving and discipling our neighbors.
- Worship God in reverence and joy as we prepare to go forth and serve our community, reflecting Jesus Christ as ministers of the Gospel.
- Abide and live by scriptural truths in all we say and do every day.
- Pray for one another and our church as we seek God's direction in all aspects of our life and ministry together.
- Follow God's leading by letting go of some "good things" and remaining open to the "God-things" that lead to joyful obedience.
- Serve God's Kingdom and one another in love, asking "what can we do to expand His fellowship known as the church?"
- Support the missions and ministries of our church by our prayers, presence, gifts and service.

Approved by the Church Council January 24, 2008
Reaffirmed by the Church Council January 25, 2024

Footnotes

¹ General Conference is the top lawmaking assembly of The United Methodist Church and the only entity that speaks for the denomination. It convenes every four years, with delegates from the denomination's regions around the world.

² This refers to the debt used to finance MSUMC's recent building project.

³ See ¶ 2549 and ¶2501 of *The Book of Discipline* for processes required for local churches to exit the UMC. All local church property is held in trust by the Annual Conference. Thus, the Annual Conference dictates all terms when a local church desires to exit the denomination. MSUMC's church building is valued at \$18 million.

⁴ This refers to the debt used to finance MSUMC's recent building project.

⁵ See ¶ 427.1b of *The Book of Discipline* (Appointment-Making)



What's NEW at VBS?

This Summer, Main Street's Vacation Bible School has some NEW and FUN stations and activities! While VBS will still be roughly 2 hours, we are adding TWO NEW STATIONS! Imagination Station, and Sticky Scripture!

Also, our 5th grade students will get to be JUNIOR CREW LEADERS! This means they will still get to enjoy all the fun of Vacation Bible School while simultaneously leading younger students in their group activities and helping the adult leaders while moving from station to station.

imagination station

At Imagination Station, kids don't just watch experiments—they participate in the science! Station Leaders will use the Daily Bible Point to help kids connect the Fun of the experiments to the Bible Truths. Kids will explore unseen things in the ocean to discover that God is a friend who's real, experiment with different modes of transportation and discover how God's love empowers us, discover how ocean currents and pressure create constant movement in the ocean—and learn to trust God as our lives keep moving and changing, and discover just how vast the oceans are...and how big God's love is for everyone.

sticky scripture™

At Sticky Scripture™, fresh and meaningful experiences help words in the Bible stick—to kids' hearts and minds and lives! Here, kids dive in and explore each day's Bible verse in a surprising way. Through an interactive video experience, kids are submerged into the undersea world on the SSCS—the Sticky Scripture Cyber Submarine. After interacting with the Bible verse virtually, kids open God's Word, find verses, and read words from Jesus found in the Gospel of John. Kids will receive and use their very own Gospel of John, an excerpt from the kid-friendly, eye-catching Hands-On Bible.

a Record of our Faithfulness				
OUR PRESENCE:	5-26-2024	6-2-2024	6-9-2024	6-16-2024
Sunday School	94	113	123	90
8:30am In-Person Worship	78	78	80	90
8:45 Jubilee In-Person Worship	53	68	67	59
10:55am In-Person Worship	115	190	103	101
In-Person Worship Totals	246	336	250	250
8:45am Jubilee Live Stream Worship <i>(Unique Views)</i>	27	20	15	37
10:55am Live Stream Worship <i>(Unique Views)</i>	73	69	41	85
Total Live Stream Unique Views	100	89	56	122
Live Streaming Totals <i>(unique views x 1.8)</i>	180	160	101	220
Attendance Totals	426	496	351	470
OUR GIFTS as of:	5-26-2024	6-2-2024	6-9-2024	6-16-2024
<i>Moving Forward Building Fund Weekly Contributions</i>	\$1981	\$1155	\$983	\$830
Weekly Contributions to Budget	\$22,551	\$13,858	\$8563	\$7583
Budget Contributions YTD	\$395,900	\$409,758	\$418,321	\$425,905

Main Street Ministries as of May 31

Regular Giving \$ 389,997
 Expenses \$ 432,991
 Over/(Under) (\$ 42,994)
 Budget \$ 458,333

Building Fund as of May 31

Building Fund Giving \$ 65,877
 Building Loan Payments \$ 60,000
 Over/(Under) \$ 5,877
 Loan Balance \$ 1,322,784

PUBLICATION DEADLINE:
 Newsletter Articles are due by noon on the FIRST Friday of every month
 for publication in the mid-month newsletter.

**Main Street
United Methodist Church**

336-993-3411

306 South Main Street
Kernersville, NC 27284

Let's Worship Together

There is no better way to worship our Lord than
Worshipping Together. Come and Worship with
us at one or all of our services:

- Less-Formal Traditional Worship Service*:
Sundays at 8:30am in the Sanctuary
- Jubilee Contemporary Worship Service*:
Sundays at 8:45am Jubilee Service in the
Chapel
- Traditional Worship Service*: Sundays at
10:55am in the Sanctuary
- Oasis Mid-Week Service of Meditation:
Wednesdays at 5:30pm (September-May)
- NOW: Night of Worship*: 1st & 3rd
Thursdays of each month at 6:30pm in the
Chapel

* *childcare is provided at these services*

Church Staff

Our Ministers: the congregation of Main Street

Mike Gehring, Senior Pastor
Phil Kuntz, Associate Pastor
Al Ward, Minister of Visitation
Wayne Purdy, Pastor of Youth/College Min.
Victoria Smathers, Dir. of Children's Min.
Nancy Blakemore, Dir. of Music Min.
Tina Crew, Business Manager
Betsy Tang, Administrative Assistant
Kathryn Jenkins, Administrative Assistant
Clay Howard, Jubilee Music Director
Kellie Vinay, Preschool Director
Jenny Lail, Alpha & Omega Youth Choir Dir.
Cynthia Barron, Kitchen Hostess
Anthony Simmonds, Theo Dunlap, and
Willie Craven, Custodians