~The St. John's Post~

As we prepare for the upcoming Easter season, excitement is building at St. John's! There are so many ways to experience the resurrection. If you enjoyed Jingle Jam, you won't want to miss Easter Jam! We have two opportunities to join in. On April 6th, join us for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. We will begin with Easter Jam at 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This event is primarily for children and their families, but everyone is welcome. Then, on April 9th, our Community Meal and Worship service will feature the Easter Jam as the worship component for the evening. It's a great opportunity to invite a friend to experience the Easter story in a non-traditional way and connect with our community!



The preparation for the release of the butterflies on Easter Sunday morning has officially begun! The children have carefully transferred the larvae into small cups with a food supply, where they will stay until they form a chrysalis. Once the chrysalis are ready, they will be placed in the habitat until they are released on Easter morning. This marks the 11th year of this beautiful tradition. Even during the year of Covid, we still released the butterflies and people came to have their pictures taken at the Living Cross. It's a meaningful way to celebrate new life and the hope of Easter!

Recently, I've had the chance to reflect on some of the pictures our families have taken at the Living Cross, and it's amazing to see how we've all changed over the years. Each church I've served has had its own unique traditions, but one thing that has remained constant is the Living Cross.

For Easter this year, we're excited to have a professional photographer on hand to capture both church and family pictures. We've been working to enhance our social media presence, allowing us to share the beauty of St. John's and highlight the wonderful community we've built here.

As we near the end of our Lenten journey toward Easter this year, let's remember that we are Easter people every day. Easter is a powerful reminder that just as the caterpillar transforms into the beauty of the butterfly, God is continually at work in us, transforming our lives through the power of the cross. I look forward to celebrating this journey with you at St. John's, where God is always in the transformation business.

Shalom,



Karen

I invite you to take a moment to check out our new website, <u>www.stjohnsfm.org</u>. Many people recently have told me how informative, helpful, and easy it is to navigate the improvements to the website. Thank you, Mallory Capps, for your creativity and commitment to expanding our church walls into the greater community.



Please remember to bring fresh cut flowers for our Living Cross on Easter morning. We will release the butterflies at both the 8:30am & 11:00am worship services by the cross.

Mark your calendars: The Pumpkin Patch is coming back this fall!

More information to come as we get closer to the date!

2025 Season!



Our Summer Day Camps introduce young children to the mysteries of science through hands-on interactive make-and-take projects and experiments. Your child will be receiving a gift that will last a lifetime.





SUMMER SCIENCE DAY CAMPS

Please go to our website to see our complete selection!

Our Camps appeal to children who have a genuine interest in how things work, what things are made of and how science works in the real world. All of our lessons meet or exceed the National Science Standards.

Club SciKidz Charlotte South Summer Camp Themes Grades Pre-K through 7th (4 -Year-Old Half-Day Program)

FEATURED STEM CAMPS

Grades PreK-K

Mini Medical School

Little Chemist Little Engineer Little Maker Jurassic Little Space Explorer **Little Robot Engineer**

Grades 1-3

Beginning Minecraft Jr.Scientist **Jr. Robot Engineer American Doll** Pokemon Professors Marvel Movie Maker **Advanced Minecraft** 3D Creator Jr. Space Explorer Grossology

LEGO 2.0 Scratch

Grades 4-7

Advanced LEGO with SPIKE

> **Emergency Vet Robot Engineer Great Masters** Nintendo Lab





Please go to our website for prices and options. CharlotteSouth.ClubSciKidz.com

Camps Operate Monday - Friday 9am to 4pm

JUST THE FACTS!

803-970-8815

kanan@clubscikidz.com

Before & After Care Available Pre-Camp begins at 8am Post-Camp ends at 5:30pm

APRIL REMINDERS

8:30am & 11:00am - Worship Services 9:30am - Hospitality 10:00am - Sunday School

April 6: <u>Communion Sunday</u>
Kindness Week Offering
Easter Jam @ 3pm and Egg Hunt
Missions Comm. Mtg (MBC) @ 12:15pm

April 7: VBS Registration Opens for church members via Constant Contact Link

April 9: Easter Jam @ 6:30pm after dinner

April 13: Palm Sunday
Potluck Hospitality
(Bring a breakfast item to share)
New Member Luncheon @ 12:15pm-FC

April 14: VBS Registration Opens to the general public on our website

April 16: Easter Meal @ 5:45pm Worship @ 6:30pm

April 17: Maundy Thursday Service @ 7pm in the Sanctuary

April 19: Missions Team

Bethel Shelter Day @ 10am

April 20: Easter Sunday

Bring flowers for the Living Cross

(Butterfly Release-both services)

April 27: Finance Comm. Mtg (MBC) @ 12:15pm

Lunch Buddies

Have you heard? Nobody's grumpy at *Groucho's!* Lunch Buddies will be finding out in person as we get together on Tuesday, April 15 at 11:30. 1039 Charlotte Avenue in Rock Hill is our destination. Please sign up by Sunday, April 13 so we know you're coming.

For all other events, visit our website: www.stjohnsfm.org

<u>*If you have need of use of our facilities,</u> please contact the church office for a full list of availabilities

April 1: WEE School Spirit Night

Abbott's Frozen Custard Tega Cay (3pm-7pm)

April 11: WEE School
Spring Event
5:30pm - 7pm (FC)

April 7: Book Club @ 7pm (Meet in the handbell room)

Circle Meetings:

Clara Phillips Circle-April 14 5pm (FC)

Morning Glory Circle-April 8 10:30am (MBC)

Grief Support Group:

April 9 & April 23 @ 4:30pm (MBC)

Lent Bible Study:

Monday, April 7th & April 14th
1pm (Loft)
6:30pm (MBC)

Exercise With Avis:

Monday-Wed-Friday11:00am-11:30am (FC)



EASTER MONDAY

April 21 -Church Office Closed

DINNER 5:45PM WORSHIP 6:30PM REAL KIDS 6:30PM

APRIL PENU

APRIL 2
PANCAKES
BACON & SAUSAGE
FRUIT

APRIL 16 - EASTER MEAL

HAM

BEAN SALAD

HASH BROWN CASSEROLE

ROLLS & DESSERT

APRIL 9
TACO BAR
CORN SALAD
CHURROS

APRIL 30
CHICKEN ALFREDO
GARLIC BREAD
SALAD
DESSERT

Wednesday, April 23 (NO MEAL)

Costs:

age 13 & older (\$8 per person) age 12 & under (free) Family maximum (\$20)

*Sign up deadline is the Sunday before the meal.

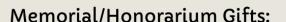
May 7 is our last Community Meal & Worship before summer. Our menu will be hamburgers with baked beans, coleslaw and dessert.



Our Deepest Condolences to the families who lost loved ones this past month:

- *Minda Siebert's grandmother, Gladys Lemley passed away on February 25, 2025.
- *Emily Kishbaugh's father, Daniel Kishbaugh passed away on March 2, 2025. Emily is the daughter-in-law of Shawne Heeren.
- *James & Joyce Kimbrell's nephew, John Kimbrell, Jr. passed away on March 9, 2025.
- *Nancy Lerch's mother, Dorothy Ostberg passed away on March 15, 2025. Mrs. Ostberg was 102 years old.
- *The family of Mary Ann Pinson who passed away March 21, 2025.

Special Donation to the Debi Edmondson Scholarship Fund In Honor of Debi Edmondson: by Karen Vinson



In Loving Memory of Kay Gibson:
by Karen Vinson, Julie Sweatt, Margaret Ervin, Bill & Ellie Davies
and Hallie Conrad

In Loving Memory of Betty P. Ervin: by Margaret Ervin

In Loving Memory of Beth Varner, Vicki Miller, Revé Richardson & Ray Dauer: by Karen Vinson

In Loving Memory of Juanita "Jay" Edmondson: by Bill & Ellie Davies and Karen Vinson

In Loving Memory of Gladys Lemley: by Phil & Cynthia Lewis

In Loving Memory of Dorothy Ostberg: by New Wesley Fellowship

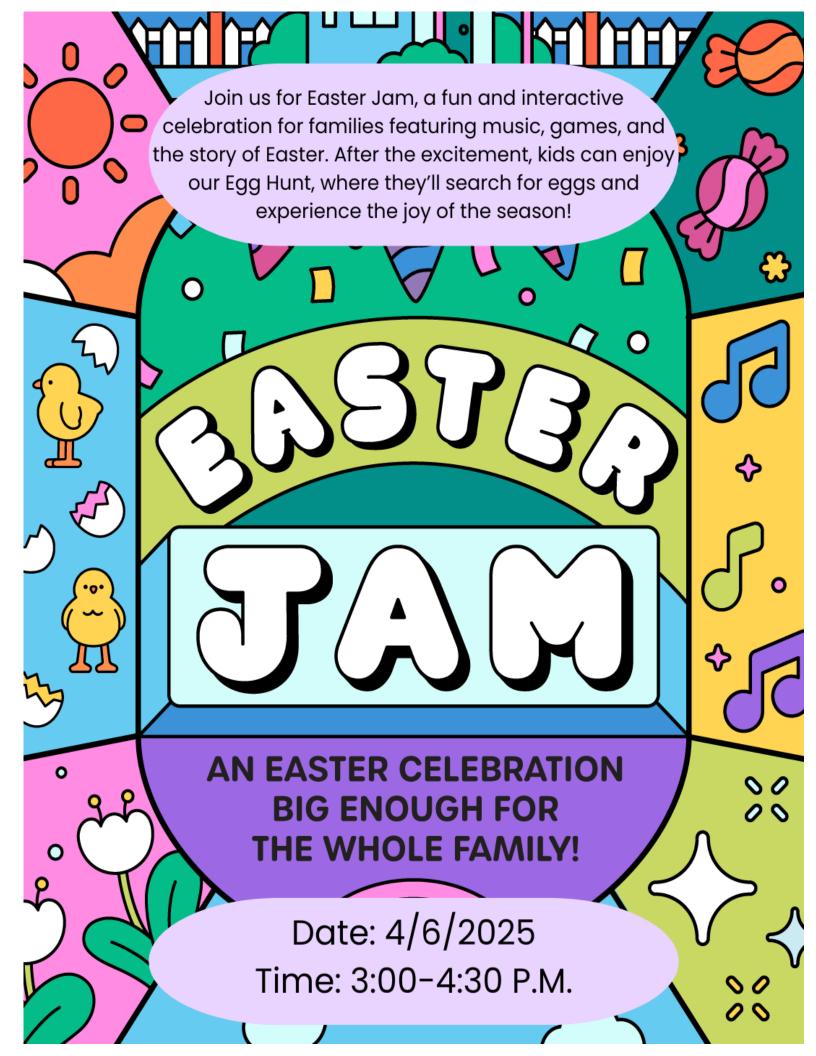
In Honor of Beth Meador and the St. John's WEE School Staff: by Karen Vinson

In Honor of Rev. Bob Romanello: by Benny & Joyce Patterson

Bible Quiz

For this month I have decided to ask you to help me tell a Bible story. It is taken from Genesis, chapters 24- 35; however we begin in chapter 29.

A young Hebrew named	_ who, with the help of his	
mother,, had deceived		
into thinking he was his older brother,		
receiving the family's spiritual blessing. He fled from the wrath of		
his brother to the land of his uncle, Lab	oan, his mother's brother.	
There he stopped at a well where he lea	arned that the beautiful	
young woman who was bringing her sheep to the well was his		
cousin,, Laban's d	laughter. He told her who	
he was, kissed her, helped her water her sheep, and fell in love.		
He agreed to work seven years for Laban and his wages would be		
the hand of in marri	iage. (Gen. 29:13-20).	
At the end of the seven years, Laban called for a feast and gave his		
daughter to in marria	ge. But, when	
awoke the next morning, he found himself with the		
older daughter, THE DECEI	VER, HIMSELF, HAD	
BEEN DECEIVED!! This story has a hay	ppy ending because Laban	
also gave his younger da	ughter in	
marriage. Each of the sisters, in seeking to give		
many sons, gave him their handmaidens as concubines and he		
ended up with twelve sons, one of which was Judah who was the		
ancestor of David and also Jesus Christ. You may use the following		
to fill in the blanks (Leah, Rachel, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau.)		
or search the scriptures.		



Welcome New Members!



Lizann Rex
102 Wellspring Dr
Fort Mill, SC 29715
*Joined March 23, 2025

Gloria Godinho

281 North Revere Cove
Apt 307
Tega Cay, SC 29708

*Joined March 23, 2025



Welcome Baby Girl!



Congratulations
to Jared & Taylor Best on the birth
of their daughter, Joy Carter Best
on February 24, 2025.
Congratulations to Joy's
big brother, Aaron;
grandparents
Kenny & Debbie Rouse and
great-grandmother, Phyllis Starnes!

The Debra Frye Edmondson Mission Scholarship Application

The Debi Edmondson scholarship has been established in memory of a lady who loved her relationship with the Lord and her involvement in missions through United Methodist Women at St. John's United Methodist Church. She encouraged others to join UMW and experience the life-long blessing that she did by helping others through mission work and outreach opportunities.

The \$1,000 scholarship, funded by her family and by donations of friends, will be given to a St. John's graduating senior who displays the heart and actions of involvement in missions. The scholarship may be used at the college, university, technical school, or trade school of the recipient's choice.

Applications are currently available to be picked up in the church office. The return deadline is Sunday, April 20 by noon. The scholarship committee will review the applications and the recipient will be awarded on Graduation Sunday, May 11, 2025 during the 11:00am worship service.

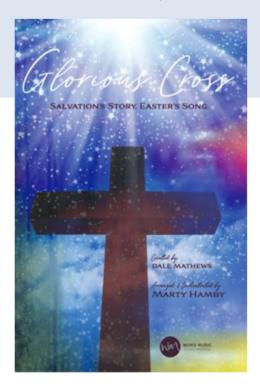
For questions, please reach out to the church office, Karen Rowe or Marilyn Turner (co-chairs of the scholarship committee).

Music Department News

Dr. Jonathan Hall, Music Director

Easter Cantata

The adult choir will present our Easter cantata, Glorious Cross: Salvation's Story, Easter's Song, on Sunday, April 13th, during both morning worship services. Glorious Cross, from arranger, Marty Hamby, embraces the passion of the Cross, proclaims the power of His mighty Resurrection, and rejoices in the testimony of those saved by the blood of Jesus.



MUSIC SCHOLAR FUND

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our music scholar fund. We appreciate your support for this program that thrives and enriches our worship services. With your donations, we are able to continue to have our Choral Scholars contribute their voices each week but also assist with rehearsals, helping us create a richer, more vibrant worship experience for all. For anyone who wishes to make a donation, please mark it as "Music Scholar Fund". Thank you for your support!

JOIN THE CHANCEL CHOIR!

If you would like to be a part of our Chancel Choir, please come to Sunday afternoon practice beginning at 2:00pm in the choir room. It is located on the 2nd floor of the Education Building, Room 201.

Music Makers Practice on Wednesdays beginning @ 5:15pm. Handbells Practice is Tuesday evenings beginning @ 6:30pm.

Stewardship Committee

Do I Pray about the Money I Spend?

"Gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." - John Wesley

When we think about stewardship, we often focus on how we manage our time, talents & treasures.

But, one question we may not ask ourselves enough is:

Do we pray about our money?

Once upon a first-time, intergenerational book study here at St. John's just two years ago, the topic of praying about the money we spend surfaced. If memory serves, I likely gave a poor but very real example of how my Amazon cart fills up & the "Proceed to checkout" button gets clicked many times without thinking about a want vs. a need, let alone praying about how it impacts the Kingdom. I admitted I discern(ish)

about how money gets spent, but that's where it ended. Now? I discern & pray more about money than I ever thought possible, especially given life circumstances like my own loss of employment three years in a row, Jon taking time off to heal from his three surgeries & preparing to pay college tuition this fall! But, I also pray about how to give back into our church when we experience salary increases and get tax returns - this is even more true after experiencing the generosity of St. John's throughout my husband's illness during which every offer to cook a meal or attend a band competition was given with abandon.

Money is a significant part of our lives; it pays for our basic needs, supports our families & enables generosity.

Yet, many of us make financial decisions - big and small - without seeking God's guidance.

Scripture reminds us, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...where your treasure is, there your heart will also be."

(Matthew 6:19-21).

Praying about our finances isn't just about asking for provision, it's about inviting God into our spending, saving & giving. When we pray, we align our hearts with His will, ensuring that we use money not just for personal gain but for Kingdom impact. Whether it's a major investment, a budget decision, or a giving opportunity, seeking God's wisdom can bring clarity & peace.

So, ask yourself: Do I pray about my money? If not, start today.

Trust that God cares about every dollar and desires for you to be a faithful steward of all He has given for you & all He has yet to give to you.

Respectfully Submitted by Lise Turner





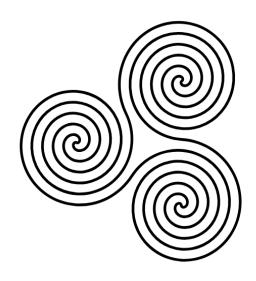
You may have heard that there is a loneliness epidemic in our country. Research has shown that one out of every two people feel socially disconnected. Loneliness isn't just about emotions, it also has physical consequences. It is associated with cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, and premature death. The impact is similar to that of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Some of the ways these people describe themselves are: "I have to shoulder all of life's burdens by myself" and "if I disappear tomorrow, no one will even notice." Being lonely and being alone aren't the same thing. A person can be surrounded by others and still feel lonely. Maybe you have felt that way. Can we make it our mission as members of St. Johns to reach out to someone today? If we each take the time to give just one person our attention, to ask how they are doing, or to see if there is something they need, it would have a huge impact on our community. A quote I heard was "the power of showing up creates ripple effects". Let's make showing up for others our super power!

Plans for Kindness Week are well underway. You will be seeing more about that soon. Please consider participating in one or more of the activities.

One of our missions that week will be serving a meal at the Bethel Men's Night Shelter. Our youth provided a meal for them on March 14. They served dinner for 64 men that night. The lady in charge of the program talked to them about the shelter and what it means to be homeless. She also discussed some of the misconceptions and causes of homelessness which gave them a better understanding of our world.

The Fort Mill Care Center has a new walk-in freezer! We can now donate family size frozen dinners. There is a shelf designated for them in the freezer in our kitchen if you would like to donate some. Please label them clearly for FMCC and they will be delivered. The Care Center is currently looking for donations of hams, mashed or scalloped potatoes, canned yams, gravy, cooking oil, fried onions, pie crust mix, and maxi pads.



Please join us for our next meeting on April 6 in the Men's Bible Classroom after the 11:00 service. Everyone is welcome to join us.

submitted by Amy Bartholomew, Committee Chair

Children and Youth News

Children and Youth Director: Mallory Capps- stjohnsumc.youthandchildren@gmail.com- (843)-504-5419

April is an exciting month in our Children and Youth Ministry! We kick things off with our **Children and Youth Service on March 30 at 11 AM**, where our young leaders will help lead worship. Then, on **April 6 at 3 PM**, join us for **Easter Jam and our Egg Hunt**, a funfilled celebration of Jesus' resurrection with music, games, and plenty of eggs to find! Throughout the month, we'll also be watching our **butterflies grow**, a beautiful reminder of new life in Christ, before we release them on **Easter Sunday**. It's a season of joy, growth, and celebration—come be a part of it!





REAL Kids will be April 2nd, April 16th & April 30th during the Community Meal and Worship. This is open for all children 3 years old-5th grade!

UMYF will be on April 13th & 27th at 4:00pm-5:30pm in the Zone for 6th-12th grade.

VBS registration opens to the church on April 7th for church members and April 14th for the community.

WEE SCHOOL NEWS!

Beth Meador - Director 80-548-6557 www.sjumcweeschool.org sjumcweeschool@gmail.com



"WEE" Make a Great Team

Please join us on April 11th from 5:30pm-7:00pm in the fellowship center for an evening of Sports Fun! This is a family event/fundraiser, we will have games for the kids and concessions, hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and more. Tickets for the games will be available at the door. Concessions are cash only. Come Support the future MVPs:

Helping our school, one Goal at a time!

Spirit/Fundraiser Event

April 1st 3pm-7pm Abbott's Custard Fort Mill. Please mention W.E.E. School when placing your order. This is our last spirit event for this school year, thank you to everyone who supported the W.E.E. School this year.

Summer Camp

Looking for some fun for your kids
this summer? We still have spots
available for summer camp. Camp is
open to children turning 3 by
September 1st through children
entering kindergarten this fall. For
more information or to register please
contact Beth Meador (803)548-6557 or
sjumcweeschool@gmail.com

Scholastic Book Fair

The W.E.E. School will be hosting a book fair May 5th-9th! The book fair will be open Monday–Thursday **
9:00am-1:00pm, **
Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm as well as Wednesday evening 5:30pm-7:00pm.
Come by and see us and as always thank you for your support of our W.E.E. School!

2025-2026 School Year

We still have a few spots available for the 2025-2026 school year. For more information or to register please contact Beth Meador (803)548-6557 or sjumcweeschool@gmail.com

CONNECTIONS TEAM NEWS!

HAPPY SPRING!!

EASTER JAM

The weather has been beautiful and big things are coming in April.

Make your plans for April 6th - the Easter Jam and egg hunt are coming. We can't wait to see what Mallory has in store for this!

The Connections Team will be helping out with this event. Be sure to bring your own Easter basket for the egg hunt and join in for Easter Jam beginning at 3pm.



COMMUNITY MEAL-MAY 7

Connections has big things planned for May and during the summer. The last Community Meal before summer will be May 7th. Plan for an outdoor meal with lots of games to be played. Also, we will plan a trip to Lansford Canal to view the Spider Lilies, so stay tuned.

LANSFORD CANAL

submitted by Joan Pate & Barri Helms Connections Team Co-Chairs



Are you graduating High School or College?

We need your information! Please email the church office with the following:

Your name, Biography (include name of school graduating from), Future plans,

Graduation photos, sports photos or Senior portrait. Please email photos as a jpeg file to the church email.

Deadline to send in information is April 13th.

Church email: stjohnsfm@comporium.net

S.I.S. (Sisters In Service)



Who? What? Where? When? Why? S.I.S. is here! Let me tell you about this group.

Who? The name S.I.S. stands for Sisters in Service.

What? A group of any age ladies (all are welcome) wanting to go out & work in the community, in our church, and in each other's lives.

Where? In our schools helping students to read, assisting those in need around our community, and adopting a family in Western North Carolina to assist with their needs. In our church, helping with Bereavement meals, reaching out to those not attending, reading a devotion over the phone to a shut in and in each other's life, not just the fun stuff, but for the hard times, too.

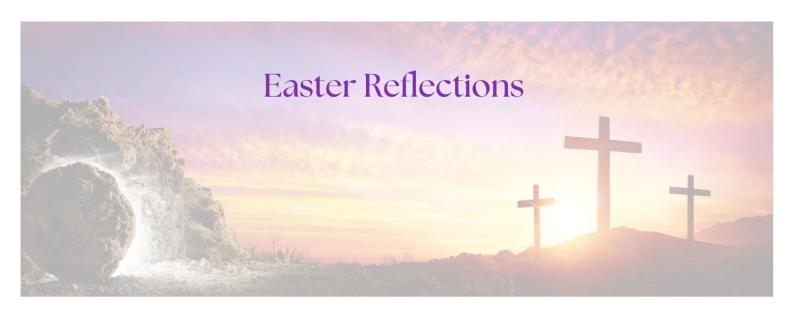
When? Right now! We are working on project organization. Choose where you are gifted to help, or want to help. Be a team member, leader of the project or a co-leader. You can choose one or all projects, it's up to you!

Why? Because we are the hands and feet of Christ. Because we are to go out and make disciples of all people. Because there are people outside the walls of this church that need us. Just because.

Please join us. Right now after our first get together we have over 20 ladies! There are no scheduled monthly meetings. Projects will be ongoing, new projects will come up, new ideas we welcome. We do hope to have one fun get together at least once a quarter. If you have any questions, want to know what projects are scheduled now, when is the fun event , just call a SIS!

submitted by Joan Pate 910-578-0602 & Barri Helms (704) 458-8425 SIS Leaders

United Women in Faith



Years ago, one of my grandsons was in the neighborhood pool with his dad; who has fielded incessant questions from his curious son. As they started to get out of the pool, Charlie said, "One more question, Dad. Just how did Jesus get down off of that cross?"

Charlie's question stirred up many emotions in me. I am proud that my grandson attends church regularly and ponders what he is taught. It is heartwarming to think that he trusts his dad to give him an honest answer, even if that answer is "I don't know, son" or "Let me think that through, and I'll get back to you." I was inspired to see what, if anything, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had to say about this topic.

Matthew describes passersby as scoffing Jesus as he hung on the cross: "Save yourself if you are God's son! Come on down from that cross." (27:40b) He also tells us of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and secret disciple of Jesus, who asked Pilate for Jesus' body and placed it in his own tomb. However, there is no mention of how Jesus' body was technically removed from the cross.

Mark, Luke and John all make reference to Christ's body being taken down from the cross with Luke's adding Nicodemus as assisting Joseph. But, once again, these details do not address Charlie's question of how, literally, did Jesus get down off of that cross?

Perhaps, to say that others took Him down is enough of an answer for a child. Others might want to consider 1) the goriness of the detailed removal of Jesus' body; 2) the importance of the removal of the body from the cross; 3) lack of this information; or 4) keeping the focus on the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

In Luke 18:17 Jesus warns his disciples, "Remember this! whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." This Easter, let us come and adorn the cross with flowers and release the butterflies with the wonderment and exuberance of children

submitted by Martha Sides Clara Phillips Circle

UNITED METHODIST MEN

May 2nd & May 3rd Fort Mill Strawberry Festival

St. John's United Methodist Men had their first meeting for 2025 on March 9th. After enjoying a delicious meal the men discussed various projects and events to sponsor in 2025.



The next upcoming event sponsored by UMM will be parking during the Strawberry Festival on May 2 & 3. This event has a potential to be a major fundraiser for the men and by extension for our church as a whole. More details will be provided later in April as information becomes available. Please be alert to announcements in the bulletin and from the pulpit during April as this is an event that will require the assistance of numerous members of our church and community.

If anyone has a suggestion for activities for the men to consider in 2025 please do not hesitate to contact me or any other member of UMM.

submitted by Steve Siebert - President, UMM

Epworth Children's Home

Fostering Family Ties: Kinship Care

Gina and Albert, a South Carolina couple in their mid-30s, invited Amelia, now 16, into their rural home in 2021. "Amelia was my cousin's child," Gina said. "Her mom died when she was very young, and her grandmother cared for her as long as she could. When it became too much for the grandmother, we offered to keep Amelia temporarily until something else could be worked out. But Amelia liked living with us and we liked having her here, so we ended up asking her to stay. She's doing great; she's a good kid."

Amelia's grades were all F's when she arrived at the couple's home, mainly because she had not been attending school regularly. Now she's making the honor roll. Gina and Albert express pride in her accomplishments and have since been granted legal custody of the teen. When Amelia graduates next year, she plans to attend cosmetology school, and once she has saved some money, she hopes to attend college to become a social worker.

"Kinship care has always been a labor of love," said Erinne Rodgers, Senior Director of Growth and Program Development, at Epworth. "It is family helping family by standing in for parents who cannot care for their own children for any number of reasons. Kin caregivers say yes to caring for their relatives without prior notice and oftentimes without additional support."

Rodgers oversees Epworth's newly launched Kinship Navigator program, which supports and locates resources for kinship caregivers in the Midlands and Pee Dee regions of the state. Epworth was one of three charities awarded a grant by the S.C. Department of Social Services to establish a Kinship Navigator program. Two other grant recipients launched similar services for kinship caregivers in the Lowcountry and Upstate.

These services are greatly needed. Many kinship caregivers are grandparents living on fixed incomes and dealing with health issues. The term kinship caregiver can refer to a relative by blood, marriage or adoption who is not the child's parent. It can also refer to a family friend, neighbor, a teacher, a pastor - the law classifies them as "fictive kin" - a non-relative who takes in a child when the child's parents cannot meet a child's basic needs for food, shelter, education, healthcare, or safety.

Gina and Albert fall into the first category. They were among the first kinship caregivers to contact Epworth's Kinship Navigator staff when the office opened in August of 2024. Although they are still raising 16-year-old Amelia, they had just stepped up to the plate for three additional children from their extended family - a 5-month-old, 4-year-old and 7-year-old.

Even though their finances were very tight on their \$40,000-a-year household budget, Gina and Albert were determined to find a way to care for the three children. They needed whatever help they could find. They needed clothing, equipment and supplies for the children. They also needed to modify their home from a duplex to a single-family home and make other improvements to accommodate the children. Albert was able to do the construction work himself.

When Gina first met with Epworth Kinship Navigator Family Advocate Allison Clapp, Allison gave her information on applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a federal program. Kinship families often may qualify for TANF assistance to help with expenses for the children in their care. Gina's TANF application was approved, and the family now receives just under \$400 a month. In addition, Gina shopped for clothing for the three children in Epworth's Katrina's Kloset, which is stocked with clothing and shoes, baby and child equipment, hygiene products, and much more. Kinship caregivers enrolled in Epworth's program can select any items they need from the shop and as often as they need them at no cost. The new and very lightly used items are either donated or purchased by generous Epworth supporters.

"Epworth's Kinship Navigation program exists to stand up for caregivers who are standing in the gap," Rodgers said. "Our program is young, but we are learning quickly from our caregivers about what their needs are and what affects them the most. Sometimes this is help with navigating systems, connecting to community partners, or providing tangible emergency resources like a child's bed. All the time it is about lending an ear and offering some emotional support to caregivers whose life drastically changed when they said "yes" to taking a child."

Epworth's program can guide kinship caregivers through a formal kinship foster care licensing application process if they qualify and want to go that route. But the program also helps kinship caregivers who either do not qualify for licensing or decide not to go through the process. Gina and Albert are thankful for the Epworth program. "Allison and Epworth have been so helpful," Gina said. "Allison either helps me get what the children need, or she points me in the direction to get help."

Gina is also deeply grateful to have the children safe in her care. She suffered five miscarriages in years past, and for her and Albert, the four children are a cherished gift. She is certain that taking the children in was the right thing to do. Should the children's parents decide to relinquish custody of the siblings, Gina and Albert have already decided they will apply to adopt them. The couple, and other kinship caregivers seeking Epworth's help are daily sources of inspiration for Epworth staff members. "Working with Gina has been a great experience," Allison Clapp said. "As I listened to her story, her courage and love for the children in her care was so evident. It is a blessing for us to be able to assist Gina in meeting her needs so that she and her family can thrive.

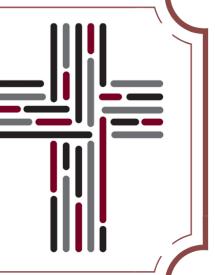


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Jemma Hardinger	Noteables Director
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