

The Scroll

FALL 2023

St. Stephen's 

United Methodist Church
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Waypoints:

GETTING FROM "HERE" TO "THERE"

National Geographic defines waypoints as “reference points that help us know where we are and where we’re going.” These guiding stars, whether used on a map or metaphorically in our lives, illuminate our paths. They allow us to reflect on where we’ve been, recognize where we are, and direct us on the next leg of our journey. This is true for us as individuals and collectively as the church.

Earlier this year, the combined leadership of both the Church and Ministry Councils gathered to reflect on previous years and prioritize our next steps. We struggled to find a collective name for our four priorities until I found inspiration from Isaiah 43:19: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert.” If God is paving “the way” for us, then we follow by establishing “waypoints” to guide our journey.

A waypoint isn’t solely about looking forward; it’s about absorbing our surroundings, learning from our past experiences, and understanding our current circumstances to chart the best possible course toward our goal. Our goal as a church remains “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (UMC Book of Discipline). As individual believers, our goal continues to be to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40).

You may recall the four Waypoints from our leadership retreat, focusing on:

1. Improving communication within the church and the community
2. Creating an intentional discipleship “pathway”
3. Exploring ways to enhance and expand our ministry with youth
4. Considering the “Not Yets”: future ministry, unreached people or groups, and more

Just as the church needs waypoints, so do the lives of every follower of Jesus Christ. What are our individual “waypoints”? How can we assess our past discipleship, understand our current circumstances, and look toward future growth as followers of Jesus? There are many “marks” of being a follower of Jesus, but four “waypoints” remain prominent:

1. Worship
2. Study
3. Serve
4. Pray

As Jesus’ followers, we are called to embrace all four of these facets of living as his disciples. They help us reflect on our past, understand our present, and provide insight into how we can continue to grow in likeness to Jesus Christ.

May we continue to follow God, who is the Waymaker, in our shared journey of faith.

Pastor Spencer

Church and Society Committee

*invites you to several
great opportunities for learning and fellowship!*

LEARN ABOUT “THE WAY”, THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO!

August 26, Movie night at 6 p.m. In addition to the family-friendly movie, we will be showing *The Way* (2010), a drama/comedy drama rated 4.5/5 stars. The movie stars Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez. A father heads overseas to recover the body of his estranged son who died while traveling the “El Camino de Santiago” and decides to take the pilgrimage himself.

Ed Baird will share about his walk on *The Way* this past spring. Come join us after church on Sunday, August 27 at 12:30 p.m., to see this presentation, which is sure to be a wonderful time to learn about this special experience. A light lunch will be served before we start. Please email Ed at EdmundBaird7@gmail.com with any questions.

ONLINE CLASS “WHY WE CAN’T WAIT: THE LEGACY OF 1963 FOR 2023” FROM BELMONT UMC

The Race and Reconciliation project from Belmont UMC in Richmond, VA is hosting a 5-week online class this fall and invites other congregations in Virginia to join them. They are excited to be offering a five-week online class, 7:00-8:30 p.m. on Thursdays, starting September 7, entitled “Why We Can’t Wait: The Legacy of 1963 for 2023”. The Rev. Dr. Jim Melson, Director of the Cornelius Corps, will be facilitating the class and will focus on the

significant events that took place in the Civil Rights movement in 1963. Using a variety of resources, we will look at and discuss the Letter from the Birmingham City Jail, the Medgar Evers assassination, the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, the assassination of President Kennedy, as well as other 1963 events. Please find attached a flyer that you can use to register for the class or register here. Feel free to contact Lorac Lawton at Lawton1989@verizon.net or Cathy Liverman at Cathyliverman@gmail.com with any questions.

VIRGINIA ROOTS, RACE, AND DISCIPLESHIP VIDEO STUDY

Over the past two years, several groups have met to watch and discuss these videos produced by the Virginia Conference of the UMC. We plan to gather again this October for 2 or 3 sessions to finish the last 3 videos. Please contact Cathy Liverman or Lorac Lawton if you want to join us, and we will coordinate a few times that will work for those interested.

SAVE THE DATE:

CROP Walk this year will be Sunday, November 5 in Burke, VA. What is CROP walk? The CROP Hunger Walk is a nationwide and interfaith movement sponsored by Church World Service to raise funds to end hunger and poverty in the US and around the world. Watch the weekly emails and bulletins for more details later this fall.

UPCOMING UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH EVENTS

Whitehurst/Allen Circle: This circle meets monthly on Zoom for a devotion and speaker. It's a friendly and encouraging meeting where we catch up with one another. POC: Nancy Hoyler or Nancy Collier.

Faithful Friends: Join us bi-monthly at someone's home for a program, snacks, and laughter. POC: Valerie Bates.

Teen Circle: Our Teen Circle meets bimonthly on Sundays and offers an encouraging and real-life program. We strive to create a welcoming environment. POC: Betty Baumgartner and Lin Hoffman.

Maranatha Choir: Join us on Tuesday mornings for a lovely time practicing songs with friends. We perform a song bi-monthly and have special events for Spring and Christmas. We also perform for a seniors community three

times a year. For more information about the songs and performances, please contact Music Director Tammy Lydon and Kay Burrier.

New Dimension eCircle: Receive a monthly devotional encouraging email. POC: Ann Platenkamp.

Reading Program: Join us in reading from the recommended list of UWF alongside other committed readers. We're ready for discussion. POC: Suzanne Winnard.

Prayer Shawl Group (Creative Hearts, Creative Hands): Share your handiwork with the group as we wrap those in crisis or great need with a "hug" and a loving visit. POC: Judy Ryan.

Service4Others: This hands-on group completes a mission project each month. Sign-up Genius helps us collect all the supplies. POC: Cindy Sbrocco and Kathy Hennemuth.

Wow! Bible Study: Join our supportive and friendly group as we learn from shared teaching of scripturally-based books. We meet weekly on Wednesday mornings and have regular social events. You can start anytime, as we understand that each of us was a beginner once. There's no pressure to "know" your Bible. POC: Vicki Mazzocco or Patti Keppler.

JUBILEE PROJECT

Did you know:

Jeanette and Ed Parham are still keeping the Sneedville, TN/Jubilee Project and Clothing Center Mission ongoing?

They are still collecting new/gently used clean items of clothing, children's shoes, household products, hygiene supplies, diapers, children's books, toys, games, complete puzzles, etc.... Tim Anderson will drive a U-Haul to Sneedville in the fall to deliver the supplies.

Please contact Jeanette and Ed Parham at 571-383-1775 or jparham713@aol.com for more information.



Project Renew

Have you noticed the recent improvements in our church home? Many individuals have come together to clean, organize, and renovate various rooms, resulting in better ministries and a more welcoming environment for all. We have already dedicated hundreds of hours to this project, and the results are starting to show! Here are some of the rooms that you should check out soon: Rob Forest Room C40, Church Nursery, Choir Room and Music Library, Large Kitchen, Parlor, Outreach Closet, Fellowship Closet, Courtyard, and more!

Let's express our gratitude to the representatives of each small group and

council, as well as the individuals who have put in their time and effort to transform these rooms. This project is far from over, as we recognize the importance of the next 60 years in God's story here at St. Stephen's!

You can get involved in the work-in-progress for the following rooms: Junior High Room, Narthex Area, Library Sitting Area and Legacy Area, M18 Room attached to Large Kitchen, Small Kitchen, Fellowship Entry, Fellowship Hall, Welcome Center, Props Closet, and various storage areas. How can you help? Contact the Renew Team: Patti Keppler, Jaraby Camargo, and Allyn Hammel.





Youth Ministry Report

YOUTH MINISTRY: SERVICE, FUN, FELLOWSHIP, AND GAMES!

The warmth of summer brought energy and excitement to our youth ministry, making our summer events a huge success. Our youth came together for memorable moments of fun, friendship, and faith, leaving a positive impact on all who participated.

MISSION TRIP: JEREMIAH PROJECT IN ROMNEY, WEST VIRGINIA

Our mission trip to Romney, West Virginia, from June 25 to July 1, was a resounding success! Four brave adults and eight kindhearted youth joyfully served others, bonded with fellow churches, and had a memorable day at the state park. Their dedication and compassion left a positive impact on the community and each other. We can't wait to go back next year!

BIBLE STUDY: NURTURING FAITH

We started a new youth-based Sunday Bible study this summer, exploring the wisdom of scripture. Under the guidance of dedicated leaders, these sessions enriched our understanding of faith, encouraging us to live with purpose and love. The discussions ignited a spark in each participant's heart, empowering them to shine the light of God's love in their daily lives.

POOL PARTY THAT MADE A SPLASH

Our summer events kicked off with a splash at the much-anticipated pool party. Unfortunately, unexpected weather conditions forced us to postpone the event. Undeterred, our enthusiastic youth showed up the next day, ready to make up for lost time. Laughter echoed across the poolside as they engaged in water games, relished delicious snacks, and relaxed for a night-time pool-side movie event.

MOVIE NIGHT: LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

There's nothing quite like the magic of a movie night, and ours was no exception. Outside of the fellowship hall, the lawn was transformed into a cozy cinema, complete with a grassy cushion and the enticing aroma of fresh popcorn. And of course, the movie was awesome! Ask a youth about it!

GAMING NIGHT SHOWDOWN: MIKE THE MARIO KART CHAMPION

Our newly semi-annual gaming night brought out the competitive spirit among our talented youth. Thanks to your generosity from our first one, we have a wide range of games for our youth to choose from, and will host these nights to give back! From classic board games to thrilling video game tournaments, the



Youth Ministry Report (continued)

atmosphere was charged with excitement. Amidst the players, unfair as it may be given his extra time to practice, Mike emerged as the reigning champion of Mario Kart. Come back next time for a chance at the title!

LOOKING AHEAD: YOUTH GROUP RESUMES ON SEPTEMBER 10

As summer draws to a close, we eagerly anticipate the next chapter of our youth ministry. Starting September 10, we are thrilled to announce that the youth group will resume its regular sessions, but with a new time: from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. This change aims to accommodate more of our youth's schedules

while also giving us the opportunity to begin eating dinner together once more!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the dedicated leaders, volunteers, and parents who supported our summer events, making them the successes they were. The thriving spirit of our youth ministry would not be possible without your continuous encouragement and participation.

As we move forward, let us continue to foster an atmosphere of love, understanding, and spiritual growth within our youth ministry. Together, we have created a nurturing environment where our young members can strengthen their relationship with God and one another.

Blessings and joy,
SSUMC Youth Ministries

60TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

As our 60th anniversary approaches, Dana Richards will assemble a booklet for the event. This will supplement the history he wrote for the 50th.

He would appreciate if any and all groups would send a couple of paragraphs about what has been accomplished in the last ten years and what is upcoming (richards@gmu.edu). Nothing polished is expected, as it will be edited for consistency. Please send your writing to richards@gmu.edu.

UPDATE ON EVENTS IN THE LARGER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

There have been several reports in the news about churches leaving the United Methodist Church denomination and questions about what might happen at next year's General Conference. Lay Leader Lesley Hatch and Church Council Chair Ed Baird will give a presentation on these topics at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 10 in the main sanctuary. All are welcome!



Children's Ministries started the summer off with a bang by celebrating the end of the school year with a pizza and bounce house party. The event was well-attended, loads of fun, and provided an opportunity for fellowship before summer travels took everyone out of the area. Even though Sunday School is on pause for the summer, there are still things happening. Mini VBS hosted 10 campers, and our traditional 5-day VBS had 34 participants. Together, SSUMC provided 24 volunteers to welcome and share the love of Jesus with children from our church and the community.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Blessings of the Backpacks service will take place on Sunday, August 20th at 4 PM at the Chapel in the Glenn. The service will be an age-appropriate length for younger children. After the service, roast a marshmallow and build a s'more for a sweet end-of-summer treat. Everyone is invited to an outdoor movie night on August 26th at 6 PM (movie to be

determined, but it will be family-friendly). Snacks and drinks will be provided.

Ready, Set, Serve SHINE (1st and 2nd Graders) and MPK (3rd-6th Graders) kick off on Friday, September 8th at 6 PM! Both groups meet monthly (2nd Friday of the month) to complete a service project. They also get to enjoy pizza and play games with their friends. Sunday School will begin on September 10th!

Please note a few changes:

- Sunday School will start after Labor Day. This is a later start than usual but will allow our Sunday School leaders to have an opportunity to travel over the Labor Day weekend.
- Check-in will begin at 10 AM (instead of 9:50). 1st-6th graders will go directly to the Fireside Room for Children's Church. Preschoolers and Kindergarteners will go to Cherub Choir with Miss Teryl, same as last school year.



SAVE THE DATE:

- October 8 at noon: Acolyte Training (2nd Grade and Up)
- October 8 at 11:00 a.m.: Cherub Choir sings
- October 15: 3rd Grade Bible Dedication (9:00 and 11:00 Service). Registration will open in September.
- October 15 at 11:00 a.m.: Christ's Choir sings in Worship
- October 21 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.: Trunk or Treat

Summer Journeys



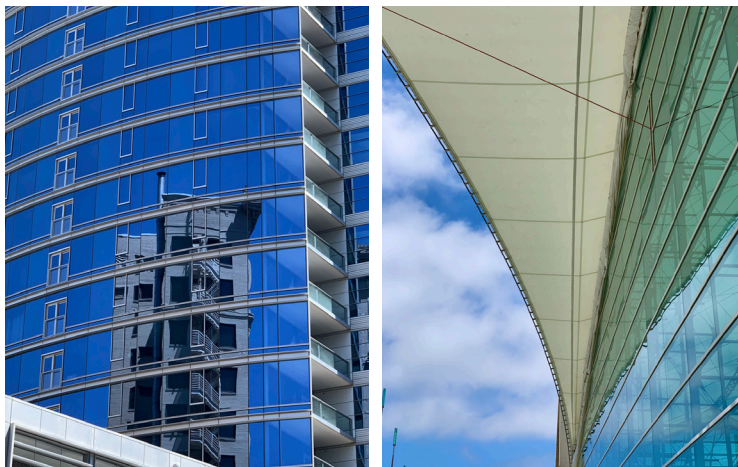
Roger Hartman joins his son John, daughter Ellen, grandson Connor, and Mary on the train at Burke Lake Park in July.

Rebeca and Eric Ervin journeyed to Santa Fe, New Mexico via Amtrak during the summer. The capital city of New Mexico provides a wealth of offerings, including remarkable museums, stunning architecture, and historical treasures such as the San



Miguel Chapel. Built in the early 1600s, it is frequently hailed as the oldest church in the United States.

Joe Willmore's travels are reflected in his photos: "The building reflected in the high-rise is Salt Lake City, Utah. The abstract one with the clouds is San Diego.





THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF HOSPITALITY

I remember when I first joined our church, I took a class on Discipleship. The topic of spiritual gifts stayed with me. I remember thinking during class, “What are my spiritual gifts anyway? God must have given me one.”

I have served as a volunteer in many roles in the church for 13 years. I remember the day Pastor Abi and Scott asked me to serve and lead the First Impressions Team (FIT). I thought they were crazy. Six years later, I can't imagine not serving FIT.

Did you know we have a welcoming team committed to greeting guests, newcomers, frequent attendees, and long-time members? It's called the First Impressions Team or FIT.

We are usually at the Welcome Desk, but we serve all over the church.

I was recently approached for a possible leadership role at our church. I began to think about what it would be like to serve in another area outside of the First Impressions Team. It finally dawned on me, “I can't stop serving FIT.” It would steal my joy. I finally discovered my spiritual gift!

So, if you're wondering about your spiritual gifts, don't worry. Just say yes to serving your church at various events, teams, and small groups. Your spiritual gifts are waiting to be discovered.

Jaraby Camargo

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