



R. Lawson Bryan – Resident Bishop

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August 2021

Alive Together At The Table

When Covid Threatens, What do I do?

What a time to live in. I cannot remember a more confusing and difficult time I have experienced in ministry. Pastors, if you feel this way you are not alone. Lay people, please know that we pastors are feeling as much frustration, if not more, than are you. It is a tough time in which to live and do ministry.

This has been a very challenging time to be in leadership in a church. Technology has helped, somewhat, to reduce the sense of isolation, but not completely. Not being able to be with and to hug our grandson, to be present in his little life from 9 months to 19 months was a harsh thing for us. We talked on the phone, but it is not the same. Sheri's mother died because of a COVID infection. This brought another set of emotional issues.

We as United Methodists are bound to Wesley's Three General Rules: 1. Do no Harm. 2. Do Good. And 3. Stay in love with God. Many modern-day Methodists do not realize Wesley taught us an ethical path to follow. This is it.

When it comes to COVID 19, I offer to you some advice in managing your churches:

One, pastors are shepherds of the flock. It is their job to make sure the flock is protected and well. This is their calling and the vows behind their Ordination.

Two, pastor's, study this problem in your ministry setting and work with your Lay People to develop a plan that protects the health of your congregation. I cannot dictate, nor do I want to, a plan for you. You all must develop a plan that makes

sense for you and work with the plan constantly, monitoring its effectiveness. Modify the plan when it is not working well.

Three, use the technology you have to protect your people, to keep them engaged and to keep the community of faith close and supportive of one another.

Four, mask wearing is not fun, but it is effective as helping reduce COVID 19. It was an infected health care worker who infected my mother-in-law. She did not think it necessary to wear her mask even though she was working with another patient who was positive and died of the illness.

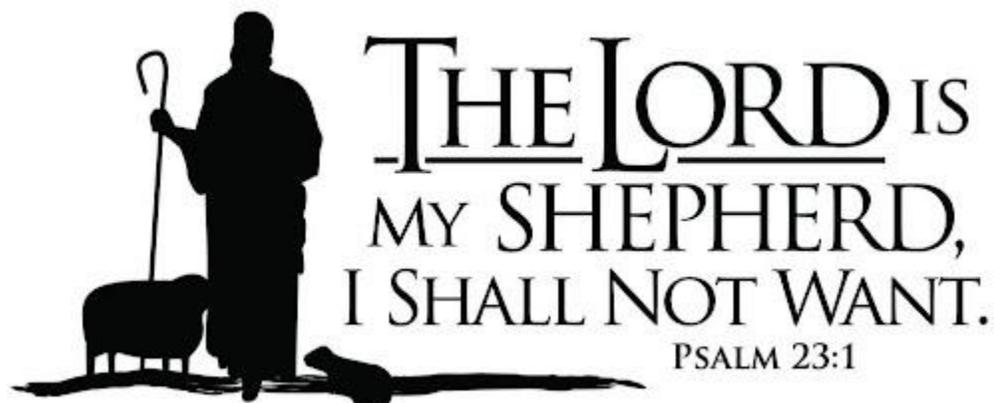
Five, take several weeks off from in person worship and go back to Virtual if there is an outbreak in your area. Worship out of doors if that is possible for you. Work with your local health department to determine the level of infections in your area. Some populations do not move around much and there is less infection. Others have many people coming in from other places and they are more likely to get the viral strains.

Six, please consider getting vaccinated. Sheri and I were vaccinated in February. This makes us *less* vulnerable to a killer infection. We still wear masks in some places and wash our hands constantly. Beating this virus is about reducing the risks of getting it which can allow it to mutate into a less treatable virus. Strain D is killing many unvaccinated persons.

Seven, stay in touch with one another, by phone, by visits at the door, by cards and letters, by email, by text messages, by Facebook. Reduce the anxiety and sense of isolation by caring in ways that are appropriate.

I want the best for all of you. I am praying for all of you. I will listen to any of you. Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God and one another.

Stephen



Covid-19 Update - August 2, 2021

Like you, the Cabinet and I are carefully watching the rise in COVID infection rates that are occurring in Georgia and around the nation. Hospitals in some areas are once again seeing higher admissions due to COVID. Schools and other public venues are having to re-consider what practices will be best for the safety of the community. Local churches are also impacted by these rising infection rates.

We commend the laity and clergy of South Georgia for the way you responded to the global pandemic over the past year. You acted quickly to fight this deadly virus through social distancing, increased hand washing, wearing a protective facial covering, checking on community and church neighbors, and adapting to do worship, Bible study, prayer, and mission outreach in fresh ways.

Once a vaccine became available many of you have led the charge in your church and community to encourage vaccinations for the purpose of saving lives and to enable us to move forward in overcoming the virus. In recent months, our local churches have demonstrated great care in determining when and what in-person gatherings could safely be resumed.

We cannot predict how COVID infection rates may increase or decrease in different parts of South Georgia. We recognize that decision making is best done at the local level and know you will make the very best decisions for your local congregation in your context. We ask pastors and church leaders to pay close attention to the infection rate in your own area. Monitor the health of your church members. Remember that social distancing, facial coverings, and a temporary return to virtual services are not steps backward. Rather, they are important resources to be used for the long term good of the church and community.

So let us not forget the practices we have adopted over the past year. Let us use the lessons we have learned to act responsibly as we continue to battle the COVID virus and the variants that are cropping up among us these days.

Flexibility is a key to moving forward. Over the past year you have demonstrated your ability to be flexible in order to remain faithful to the mission of Christ. Please stay in touch with your District Superintendent as you make these important decisions. This will enable us to be alert to the resources and actions needed in order to support our local churches.

Alive Together in Christ,
R. Lawson Bryan

Farewell Reception for Bishop and Mrs. Bryan

We have been very blessed to have the Episcopal leadership of Bishop Lawson Bryan since September 2016. We are very grateful for his service to our Annual Conference. He will be retiring effective September 1, 2021.

On Sunday, August 15, 2021, the South Georgia Conference will host a farewell reception for Bishop Lawson Bryan and Mrs. Sherrill Bryan. The drop-in reception will be held from 3 – 5 pm at Vineville UMC in Macon. The reception is a time for the Annual Conference to gather together to thank the Byran's for their five years of service to the South Georgia Conference.



The Conference Committee on Episcopacy has asked the Administrative Services Office to handle any donations given as a part of a love offering for Bishop and Mrs. Bryan. Donations can be sent to: **Administrative Services of The South Georgia Annual Conference at P O Box 7227, Macon, GA 31209-7227.**

Click [Donate](#) here to make an online donation.

"Every experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for a future that only He can see."

Corrie ten Boom

www.godsfaith.com

Bishop Graves to Provide Interim Episcopal Leadership for South Georgia Beginning September 1st

The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) and the respective Annual Conference Committees on Episcopacy, on May 14 announced projected episcopal assignments. [Click here to read the published assignments.](#)

Upon Bishop Lawson Bryan's retirement and during the interim – from September 1, 2021, until new bishops can be elected at the next Jurisdictional Conference, projected to be held fall 2022 – Bishop David Graves, current episcopal leader of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, will provide episcopal leadership to both the South Georgia and the Alabama-West Florida Conferences.

“Because I love both South Georgia and Alabama-West Florida, I am excited about this coverage plan,” Bishop Bryan said. “Bishop Graves is a colleague whom I respect and appreciate.” [Read more](#)



Important Dates to Remember

August 3 rd	Crossroads Cluster @ Swainsboro UMC @ 11:00 am
August 3 rd	Statesboro Cluster @ PPUMC Parlor @ 10:00 am
August 5 th	Pointer Cluster @ Midville UMC @ 10:00 am
August 15 th	Reception for Bishop & Mrs. Sherrill Bryan @ Vineville UMC From 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
September 2 nd	Sweet Onion Cluster @ Vidalia FUMC @ 11:00 am
September 6 th	Labor Day – District Office Closed
September 7 th	District Office Closed
October 9 th	Conference Rally in Tifton, GA
November 15 th & 16 th	Bishop Graves will meet with the Northeast District
December 11 th	District Christmas Party

Charge Conference Forms

The 2021 Charge Conference Forms are now live and may be found at www.sgaumc.org/onlineforms. In addition, the Extension Ministry dashboard is updated and ready as well at www.sgaumc.org/emdashboard.

Section 1 requires the use of the church dashboard (Clergy Compensation Form for clergy serving a local church or extension ministry and the Local Church Leadership List). Please contact the district office if you need help with your username and password.

Sections 2-4 contain fillable .pdf or Word documents, and Section 5 contains links provided by agencies/ministries of our Conference.

If you have never completed charge conference forms or need a refresher, Dr. Derek McAleer has provided a [Charge Conference Overview Webinar](#) to assist you.

There are several reminders and updates to note:

Lay Leadership List

As a reminder, the district and conference offices communicate with those persons holding various leadership positions of the local church throughout the year. This includes delegates to the Annual Conference session. It is vitally important that each required leadership position includes name AND email address.

Clergy Compensation Form

For clergy serving a local church the Compensation Form is accessed through the Church dashboard. For clergy serving in an extension ministry position the Compensation Form is accessed through the Extension Ministry dashboard.

This year, the Compensation Form will be only one section. *No need to go back later and do a second part anymore!* Clergy will **not** be reporting their health insurance elections on the compensation form. Clergy will go ahead and complete their Compensation Form - including their pension elections - online and turn it in through the Charge Conference. After Open Enrollment has concluded, clergy will print out their health insurance/benefits elections confirmation form and give a copy to his or her Treasurer so that the Treasurer will know what to withhold from their paycheck beginning Jan 1.

PLEASE NOTE: No one from the District or Conference offices will communicate your health elections to your local church treasurer. This is the responsibility of the clergy person.

2021 Charge Conference Form Timeline

August 2	Charge Conference Forms Open Online (including compensation)
November 3-18	HealthFlex Open Enrollment
November 19	Completed Equitable Compensation applications due to District Offices
December 3	Clergy Compensation Forms Close Online

Pastors Due for Sexual Ethics Workshop Before Annual Conference 2022

Bill Bagwell	David Boggs	Steve Brown
Faye Burgamy	Allen Cason	David Donnan
George Durham	Rene' Enlund	Tammy Fincher
Carroll Gay	Chris Holt	Bill Lee
Clay Loadman	Perry Medley	Mark Miller
Ros Parker	Steve Posey	Uley Robbins
Isaac Salgado	Jerry Sharpe	Steve Sirmons
Stephanie Smith	Chip Strickland	Jeane Sturdivant
Ricky Varnell	Tommy Veal	

Everyone on the lists will get emails from the Conference in July and August with the pre-video dates and the dates and locations for the 2.5-hour discussions. This information is still being scheduled.

Georgia United Methodist Foundation Newsletter

Check out the latest edition.

Sign up at www.gumf.org/stay-connected to have Growing Generosity delivered right to your inbox.

For more information, please contact GUMF at 770-449-6726, 877-220-5664 or info@gumf.org



SGA CONFERENCE GATHERING | October 9, 2021

Annual Conference clergy and lay delegates will meet in Tifton for a Conference rally with Bishop Graves, out General Conference Delegation, and other Conference leadership for information and updates on General Conference 2022.



2021 Dates for Lay Ministries (LSM and CLM)

The 2021 dates for Lay Ministries - [Lay Servant Training](#) and [Certified Lay Ministry](#) - have been posted on the [conference website](#). The time is right for churches to take advantage of these leadership development opportunities. More than ever, we need well trained leaders in our local churches. For more information, contact Anne Bosarge, Associate Director, Office of Congregational Development, at anne@thechapelministries.com or 912-262-1331.

Epworth By The Sea will reopen to the public this fall.

Epworth By The Sea, which has been closed to the public since Sept. 22, 2020, plans to reopen to the public in late fall 2021.

When Epworth By The Sea reopens, guests are invited to experience Epworth's peace, connection, and beauty, said Executive Vice President Rev. Wayne Racz. The campus has undergone significant improvements including cabins enlarged and upgraded with central heat and air, larger bathrooms, and tankless gas water heaters; lodge room interiors remodeled and updated; and construction of a picnic pavilion and amphitheater under the oaks will begin this fall. Food service has also expanded and improved.

"Epworth is eager to resume normal activities and welcome guests back," Rev. Racz said. "You have been missed along with the ministry that happens. We have missed our churches, children and youth groups, camps, law enforcement, military, families, and individual guests. We yearn to see our campus full of guests and activities once again."

[Video about Epworth reopening](#)



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|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 nd | Rus Black | 4 th | Mark & Elise Miller |
| 5 th | Ella Cawthon | 5 th | Joyce Poston |
| 6 th | David & Susan Unkles | 7 th | Ricky Varnell |
| 8 th | Vicky Riggins | 9 th | Bill & Sue Bagwell |
| 10 th | Shareon Womack | 11 th | Chad & Delona Watkins |
| 14 th | Patrick Brannen | 15 th | Diane Smith |
| 16 th | Richard Diebolt | 18 th | Sandra Smith |
| 20 th | Jim & Diane Smith | 22 nd | Jesse France |
| 22 nd | Mark Hardin | 22 nd | John Powell |
| 22 nd | William & Michelle Reaves | 25 th | Chad Watkins |
| 28 th | Hugh & Donna Baxter | 30 th | Patsy Deloach |



Cares and Concerns

Please be in prayer for the family of Rev. Steve Peavey and the congregation of Bethel Brick UMC.

Please be in prayer for Mrs. Pat Maddox (Rev. Fred Maddox) as she recovers from a broken hip.

Grants Available for Local Church

Apply today for Renfro Trust Grant

Connectional Ministries is accepting applications for the Southeastern Jurisdiction Renfro Trust Grant. This grant is a brick and mortar grant specifically for small, rural churches. Guidelines, requirements and applications can be found [here](#). Completed applications must be submitted to Outreach Chair Susan Hughes at susanjhughes17@gmail.com. The deadline for completed applications to be submitted is Sunday, August 22, 2021.

Racial/Ethnic Ministries

Grants up to \$10,000 will be available this fall from Discipleship Ministries to strengthen leadership training, small groups, worship, stewardship, and spiritual formation in ethnic local United Methodist churches.

The application deadline for Racial Ethnic Local Church Concerns (RELCC) grants is Sept. 1.

For more information, go to <https://bit.ly/3vSgb5G> or contact Annandale by phone at 615-340-1743 or by email at nannandale@umcdiscipleship.org.

Applicants must apply online at <https://ypm-umc.smapply.io/> and are encouraged to consult with Discipleship Ministries staff for guidance in preparing the application.

Applications must be for a ministry or project of a local United Methodist church or of the United Methodist connectional system.



DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

The United Methodist Church

The Methodist Home for Children and Youth

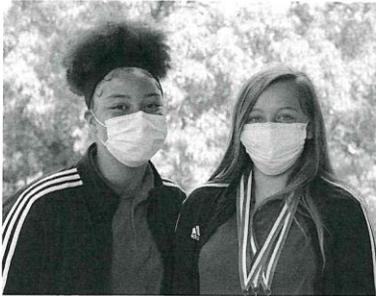


The Methodist Home
for Children & Youth

SUNDAY OFFERING

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021

PARTNER WITH US IN OUR MISSION TO
RESTORE CHILDHOODS AND STRENGTHEN FAMILIES!



Sunday, September 19, 2021, is Workday/The Methodist Home Offering Sunday. Your support to The Methodist Home is a blessing and makes our mission of restoring childhoods and strengthening families possible.



The Methodist Home
for Children & Youth