

# the Messenger



Quarterly Newsletter of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church in Gastonia, NC

Volume 27 Issue 1 Spring 2025

## 2025 MINISTRY WORD: COMMIT

Commit is a verb meaning to pledge or promise to do something. In Hebrew, *galal*, to roll, transfer onto something. *Commit your way to the Lord! Trust God. God will act.* Psalm 37:5 CEB.

What do you commit to in 2025? In 2025 the clergy of Myers Memorial UMC invite you to commit to the mission of Myers Memorial UMC. *The Mission of Myers Memorial UMC is to cultivate a Christ-centered community that welcomes, loves, and serves one another and the world.* We invite you to commit personally to this mission and to commit as a church to this mission. To commit personally to the mission means that each of us commit to cultivate our personal relationship with Christ.

As a vital part of our spiritual journey, we practice the means of grace, which include Bible study, prayer, fasting, healthy living, celebrating Communion, visiting the sick and those in prison, feeding the hungry, seeking justice, working to end oppression, and more. In these practices, God works in and through us. The goal of participating in the means of grace is to allow the Holy Spirit to grow in us, so that we become more like God and closer in our relationship with Christ.

Your clergy also invite you to commit to be a Christ-Centered community that welcomes loves and serves one another and the world. In particular, one area that we invite you to commit to is that of our children, youth, young adults, families with young children and our friends with special needs. In worship and via eNews, a list of opportunities was shared of the various ways you can do this at Myers Memorial UMC. You can pick one up in the Narthex on Sunday or contact Judy Seay in the church office for this list ([welcome@myersmemorialumc.org](mailto:welcome@myersmemorialumc.org))

## OUR MISSION

*The Mission of Myers Memorial United Methodist Church is to cultivate a Christ-centered community that welcomes, loves, and serves one another & the world.*



## OUR VISION

*Together God's life grows in us, so that we can share that life with others.*

## Cultivating

A CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Worship on Sundays at 9a and 11a  
On-site and Live-Stream  
via Facebook, YouTube & Church Website

Don't miss out on our Weekley eNews sent each Wednesday. It contains further details, as well as more opportunities to cultivate, welcome, love and serve at Myers Memorial UMC. If you don't get it, please email Judy Seay requesting you be added to the list. [welcome@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:welcome@MyersMemorialUMC.org)

## MODERN WESLEYAN COVENANT PRAYER

*modern adaptation from Rev. Jeremy Smith*

I am not my own self-made, self-reliant human being. In truth, O God, I am Yours. Make me into what You will. Make me a neighbor with those whom You will. Guide me on the easy path for You. Guide me on the rocky road for You. Whether I am to step up for You or step aside for You; Whether I am to be lifted high for You or brought low for You; Whether I become full or empty, with all things or with nothing; I give all that I have and all that I am for You. So be it. And may I always remember that you, O God, and I belong to each other. Amen.

## SUNDAY WORSHIP & SPECIAL SERVICES

Join us for Worship Each Sunday at 9a and 11a in the Sanctuary and via live stream on Facebook, YouTube, and our Church Website. We hope you will worship in the upcoming sermon series this spring.

### **Life Before Death: Jesus' Vision for Our Life**

*Jesus didn't come to die. He came to live, and for the way he lived, he was put to death. M. Graves, Your One Wild and Precious Life* Join us in worship as we explore Jesus' vision for our life by exploring the words he spoke to us while he lived.

Feb. 2: "Good News to the Poor"

Feb. 9: "You Give Them Something to Eat"

Feb. 16: "Your Faith Has Made You Well"

Feb. 23: "The Kingdom of God is Like..."

March 3: "Love of God & Neighbor"

### **Our Lenten Prayer: The Lord's Prayer**

As we embrace our 2025 ministry word, *commit*, we are reminded that true commitment requires deep trust. This Lenten season, we will lean into that trust through one of the most cherished prayers of our faith, **The Lord's Prayer** (Matthew 6:9-13). Together, let us allow these timeless words to guide our hearts and strengthen our faith. We will begin this series on Ash Wednesday, March 5 at 6p.

## PASTOR APPRECIATION CORNER

*'And [Jesus] said to them, "The Sabbath was created for humans, humans weren't created for the Sabbath" ~ Mark 2:27.* As part of caring for and appreciating our pastors, the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) wanted to kindly remind the congregation that our pastors' usual workdays are Sunday through Thursdays. The SPRC would like to request that all church related matters relayed by text, email or calls be handled Sunday through Thursdays. Your pastors are certainly accessible for urgent pastoral care needs outside of those times. We want to protect their time of rest so that they are refreshed and ready to serve us. ~ Allison Evanoff, Chair of SPRC

## WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT HOMELESSNESS?

Do you ever wonder how to make a difference in homelessness in our community? On Sunday, February 16 from 2p-4p, gather for a learning seminar about homelessness in Gaston County. Rev. Dwayne Burks (Gateway Gaston & First Baptist Church) and Rev. Dr. Shawn Griffith (St. Mark's Episcopal Church) will be at Myers Memorial UMC sharing their experience ministering with the unhoused. We will learn more about the different types of homelessness, the root causes of it, and how we as a church can effectively minister with that population. This event is open to all who wish to learn and Myers Memorial members are especially encouraged to take part as we begin a new ministry with our unhoused neighbors. Childcare will be offered. Snacks and coffee will be provided. Pastor Drew can answer questions you may have about this event.

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Myers Memorial UMC has a long history of phenomenal Christian Education for all God's children. We are proud to offer Sunday school classes and other small groups for all who desire to learn and grow together. On Sunday mornings, adults can find their place in one of these rooms:

- Open Minds in Room E104 is coordinated by Mike & Jennifer Rhodes (jsmrhodes@gmail.com).
- Faith Meets Reason meets in Room E105 and is coordinated by Mark Hanna and David Elzey.
- The Contemporary Class meets in Room E106 is coordinated by Angie Flake (angieflake20@gmail.com).
- The Embrace Class meets in the CFC Classroom and is coordinated by Victoria Herndon (victoria.flake23@gmail.com) or Matt McCullen (mrmccullen@gaston.k12.nc.us).

Should you like to form a Sunday morning class or a small group meeting at another time, Heather Steffey, Ministry Coordinator, is equipped to help you get started!

## OUTREACH MINISTRY FAIR

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23 | 10A | CFC

Get ready to be inspired and involved! Myers Mission & Outreach is showcasing the incredible ministry opportunities in and through our **community**. You won't want to miss it. Community members and Myers leaders are uniting to help us envision where God is leading us to love and serve one another and the world in 2025 and beyond. Come be part of this exciting journey and learn more about Little Red Schoolhouse, The Little Free

Pantry in the Patch, Cloninger Women's Shelter Meals, Cancer Services, Weekend Back Pack, Trinity Memories Café, Mission Possible, Loray Girls Home, The Gateway Gaston, Myers Makers Market, DYEP, Local Schools, Boys & Girls Club Meals, The Rotary Community Garden, Bunny Blessings, Cloninger Shelter, Shower & Laundry Center, Menstruation Matters, Crisis Assistance Ministry, and others!!!

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### FAITH MEETS REASON: NEW ADULT CLASS

Looking for a group open to discussing topics of faith and scripture with fresh reflection on the ancient ideas that shape religious understanding? In the *Faith Meets Reason* setting, we will examine contemporary faith by considering current thinking in biblical studies, theology, philosophy, and social sciences, along with the hard sciences of biology, physics, and astronomy. The *Faith Meets Reason* class is a gathering of adults who question, discuss, and ponder religious matters as a thinking person in a church setting that is committed to Wesleyan theology. Beginning February 9, join us on Sunday mornings at 10a in Room 105. Contact Mark Hanna or David Elzey with any questions.

### YOUNG ADULT EMBRACE COHORT

Young Adults at Myers Memorial are invited to take part in the Myers Embrace Cohort. The cohort is made up of millennials, gen-z, and people who might be a little older but are young-at-heart who are all committed to sharing spiritual life together. The cohort meets for bi-weekly small group, monthly social events, Sunday School, and service projects. The Embrace Small Group meets bi-weekly in CFC106 from 6p-7p to share highs and lows of the week, and then put relevant topics in conversation with faith (topics on the website). Afterwards, the group has plans to go out to dinner together. Learn more at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/young-adults](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/young-adults).

### EASTER LILIES

You're invited to decorate the Sanctuary with beautiful Easter Lillies on April 20th. The cost is \$15 per lily. The flower pot base will be wrapped, including a bow, and delivered to the church for us to enjoy! Lillies can be given in honor or in memory of loved ones and acknowledgments will be printed as well as shared on the Sanctuary screens. You may take your lilies home following Easter Sunday worship or pick them up on Tuesday following. Online orders and payments are accepted, checks may be written to MMUMC memo: *Easter Lilly*. The online order form can be found at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/worship](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/worship). Please complete your order between March 1 and March 30th.

### SEEKERS IN SNEAKERS: VBS 2025

It's not just about the game, it's about the players! Our players will be all ages and we're set to play, July 14-16, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, from 6p to 7:30p. Please note dates and times for VBS as they differ from previous years. Grab your sneakers and your investigative skills to discover Jesus. Geocaching activities will challenge children to dig into the Bible to find the way to Jesus. This journey of discovery has many twists and turns, so we will learn to ask questions, work with others, shine their light in the world, follow Jesus' example of serving others, and trust Jesus when things go wrong. *John 13:13-15*.

## MUSIC HOSPITALITY

On February 24-25, Myers Memorial UMC will be hosting the NC Music Educators Association Solo/Small Ensemble Festival in our Sanctuary. If you are available to serve as a greeter or providing snack/lunch for the judges between the hours of 9a and 3p, please contact Laura Beatty to volunteer [Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

## MUSIC NOTES

- Do you love to sing the songs of the season yet **can't commit to every week rehearsals right now? You're invited to sing on Easter Sunday with rehearsals on Wednesdays March 9 and 16 at 7p.**
- Do you play an instrument? Do you love to make beautiful music? Do you hold a hidden talent you would like to share in worship? Our directors of music, Logan McGuire and Laura Beatty, are interested in knowing what gifts you possess! Please reach out to them after worship or via email at [Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Music@MyersMemorialUMC.org).
- Music & Worship Arts Week (MWAW) is a multi-generational event Lake Junaluska June 23-27. This annual event is designed for worship leaders, musicians, artists, dancers, actors, of all ages, abilities and talents. At the MWAW, you can be part of a choir, play handbells, and explore other **ways of expressing God's love through the arts.** If you have an interest in attending the week with a group from Myers, please contact Laura Beatty.

## EGG-CITING TIMES!

We're looking forward to an egg-citing time celebrating the surprises of Easter at the annual **children's egg hunt.** We need your help in providing the hundreds of eggs that will be filled with individually wrapped candy or small treats. We also welcome empty eggs too! All donations will be greatly appreciated and can be left in the Narthex or the Church Office area during the month of March.

## BUTTERFLIES TO CELEBRATE

The butterfly is a mesmerizing creation that captures **the beauty of God's creative power to transform even the tiniest creatures.** You are invited see for your own eyes this transformative power through purchasing caterpillars and raising them to butterflies for an **Easter morning release! Don't worry! It's simple and plenty of instructions will be provided!** You can order a starter kit (caterpillars and cage), individual caterpillars (if you need a few more or already have a cage). Ordering will be available in February online and at church. Orders are due to the Church Office by March 9th. All details can be found online at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/children](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/children)

Caterpillars will arrive to the church at the end of March. You will be notified when they are ready for pick up and your prompt response to pick up is necessary so that they are in the proper stage for an Easter release (April 20) no matter where you are to celebrate the Risen Savior in 2025!

## SOUL SNEAKERS

**We're still walking so lace up your shoes and join us!** The Myers Health Cabinet continues to host group walks on the first Saturday of each month at 9a. Please express your interested in participating by contacting Tracey Farris ([tracey.farris00@gmail.com](mailto:tracey.farris00@gmail.com) or 704-853-9786). She will be able to contact you with any last minute details and any weather changes! We will meet together for a devotion followed by walking and fellowship. A majority of the trails will be local, with an occasional challenging hike twice a year.

- February 1: Avon Creek Greenway. Meet at Lineberger Park - Fern Forest entrance.
- March 1: Pharr Yarns Family Trail. Meet at The Boathouse in McAdenville.
- April 5: Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. Meet at The Trailhead Store.
- May 3: Kings Mountain Battleground Trail. Meet at the Visitor Center or carpool.
- June 7: Rankin Lake Loop.

**Mark Your Calendars!** Pumpkin Sunday, September 28, One Worship Service at 10a

## LENT 2025 | MARCH 5-APRIL 20

Lent is the season of 40 days preceding Easter (not counting Sundays). We hope you will commit to a season of Lenten disciplines that will help you grow closer to Christ.

Lenten Sermon Series: *Our Lenten Prayer: Reflections and Observations from The Lord's Prayer*

March 5: Ash Wednesday Worship at 6p, onsite & online.

April 13: Palm Sunday Worship & procession of Palms, 9a & 11a; Children's Easter Egg Hunt, 10a

April 17: Maundy Thursday, 6p, Sanctuary

April 18: Children's Good Friday Celebration, 9:30a-12:30p; Service of Darkness (Tenebrae), 6p, Sanctuary.

April 20: Easter Sunday Worship, 7a, 9a, 11a; Sunday School, 10a; Bring fresh flowers to decorate the 'old rugged cross'. Butterfly Release at 9:45ish at the Cross.

## CELEBRATING 100% IN 2024

Paying 100% of apportionments in the UMC means that a local congregation has given the full amount of money requested by the Annual Conference. Apportionments are funds that go to support the work of the district, the annual conference, the jurisdiction and the general church. Apportionments allow *the* church to support higher education, develop resources, produce goods and services that we, at the local church level, from which we can benefit. Because of your generosity, Myers Memorial UMC has paid 100% of their apportionment for another year. Thank you!

## CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG HUNT | APRIL 13

Sunday, April 13 at 10a, you'd better bring a big basket because there will be a lot of eggs! Some will be empty (surprise ~ so was the Tomb) some will be filled with treats and some will be filled with Myers Mission Money! When you find the Myers Mission Money you're invited to donate it to one of three designated local helping agencies.

## WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT THAT FRIDAY?

On Friday, April 18th, from 9:30a to 12:30p our preschool through 5th graders are invited for a fun morning learning about the goodness of Good Friday. In conjunction with Recess with Hannah, our children will explore in a variety of age appropriate experiences that will help us better understand what was so good about 'that' Friday.

## CLUB345

Club 345 is a small group designed for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders that meets several times each month, mostly on Sunday nights. You can see our full calendar on the children's webpage.

- February 2: Club Meeting at church, 5p-7p that will include food, fun, fellowship and making more plans!
- February 16: Bonfire with the Boggesses, 5p-7p. Gather around the bonfire for conversations of the heart with Gary & Jerri Lynn. Meet & Pick up at the church.

## MYERS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Sunday Mornings are filled with age level opportunities for all the children! From loving caregivers in the nursery to dedicated and passionate teachers ready for Sunday School, there is a place for learning and fun and faith development at Myers Memorial UMC between the hours of 9a and 12p.

## CHILDREN'S MARDI GRAS PARTY

Mardi Gras is a festive celebration that takes place before Lent begins. What is Lent? It's a season where we consider more about what Jesus did for us on Good Friday and what's the big deal about Easter Sunday! Come ready to party and prepare our hearts for Lent. This fun event is for all children, preschool-5th graders on March 2 from 4p-6p for a time of yummy foods, games and hands on learning about the season. Beloved Grownups: You are invited to a time of learning and conversation with Pastor Sally during this time.



## ONGOING/WEEKLY GROUPS

SUN: Worship 9a & 11a; Sunday School for all ages 10a; Praise Team 4p; Myers Youth, 5p; Disciple FT 6p; **Women's Small Group 7p**  
1st SUN: UMM, Communion  
MON: DYEP; Embrace Cohort 6p (bi-weekly)  
1st MON: Sandwich Brigade, 2p  
TUES: Grief Support Group 10a; AIAnon 11a; DYEP; Girl Scouts  
2nd TUES: Weekend Backpack **Packing 2:30p; Alzheimer's Support Group 3:30p**  
WED: DYEP; Music Rehearsals 6p  
1st & 3rd WED: Myers Youth, 6:30p  
2nd WED: Memories Café, 11a  
THURS: Thursday Study 10a & 6:30p; Narcotics Anonymous  
1st SAT: Soul Sneakers 9a

## SPECIAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

March 5: Ash Wednesday, 6p  
April 13: Palm Sunday, 9a & 11a  
April 17: Maundy Thursday, 6p  
April 18: Good Friday Tenebrae, 6p  
April 20: Easter Sunday, 7a, 9a, 11a  
May 4: Confirmation Sunday, 10a  
May 18: Graduation Recognition Sunday, 9a & 11a  
June 8: Pentecost Sunday, 9a & 11a  
September 28: Pumpkin Sunday, 10a

FIND IT ON OUR WEBSITE  
[www.MyersMemorialUMC.org](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org)

/Give /Youth /Children  
/Worship /Commit2025 /Serve  
/TMC /TheStainedGlassWindows

## THE METHODIST BOOK OF DAILY PRAYER

You are invited to join with others in a commitment to daily prayer in 2025. The importance of this book is in the daily habit that it seeks to form, not the amount of time you spend doing it each day. The book is undated and everyone is in on a different day. If at first the practice feels forced, persist. Habits are powerful once they are formed, but the formation takes time. As you build this habit, prayer will become easier, richer and more natural. The Methodist Book of Daily prayer can be purchased through your preferred book seller. Pick up a habit tracker card found around church to help track your commitment!

## NEW GRIEF CARE SMALL GROUP

A new grief support group is forming designed for those with fresh grief/recent loss. Consider this group where you can talk about the thoughts and feelings and learn healthy ways to cope after a loved one has died. This group will meet in the evenings at a time agreeable to participants. Please express your interest to Heather Steffey, our Myers Ministry Coordinator, [Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org](mailto:Heather@MyersMemorialUMC.org).

## ADULT SMALL GROUPS AND STUDIES

60+ Fellowship gathers on the 3rd Thursday of each month.  
60+ Fellowship invites anyone to gather for fellowship, adventure and always food. Make sure Heather Steffey has your email so **you don't miss out on the latest activity!**

Thursday Studies One study, two opportunities! Join Rev. Ev Stoddard, Thursdays at 10a or 6:30p in the CFC Classroom. Currently the group is exploring the life and ministry of the Messiah.

On Sunday nights the Disciple Bible Study Fast Track meets from 6p to 7p in the CFC Classroom. They are making their way through the New Testament. Allison Evanoff and Tonda Coonce are the facilitators for this group.

The **Women's Small Group** meets from 7p to 8p in the Choir Room for support and a book discussion. Currently they are reading through *Mostly What God Does* by Savannah Guthrie. Laura Beatty is the facilitator of this small group.

Looking for a good book for personal or group study? Heather Steffey, Ministry Coordinator has current studies outside her office, check out our Resource Library located on the CFC hallway, or ask one of your staff members for a recommendation!

## SUMMER YOUTH MISSION TRIPS

Youth, mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more information about the cost, scholarship opportunities, informational meeting dates, and how to register!

High Schoolers, mark your calendars for July 20-26. Our summer mission trip will be with Appalachia Service Project (ASP). Since 1969, ASP has worked in central Appalachia to make homes warmer, safer, and drier. Each summer over 15,000 high school students serve with ASP. Pastor Drew volunteered with ASP in Union County, Kentucky while in high school and then worked on summer staff in college in Fentress County, Tennessee, where he met Kylie.

Middle Schoolers, mark your calendars for July 27-August 1! Our summer mission trip, we will be returning to Christmount Christian Assembly in Black Mountain, NC with an organization called *Be the Neighbor*. We will learn about environmental justice and will do disaster relief work in Western North Carolina.

## MYERS YOUTH MINISTRY

For all the latest details please make sure you're receiving all the news from Pastor Drew via email & text. You can also find details in weekly church eNews, the weekly Youth email from Pastor Drew, Instagram and [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth). You do not have to be a member of Myers Memorial UMC to participate in the youth ministries of Myers! We want you to be a part of Myers Youth! In addition to Sunday Mornings at 10a, Myers Youth meet on Sunday nights and the occasional Wednesdays.

### Wednesday Night Youth | 6:30p-7:30p

On the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, youth are invited to gather for food and fellowship at a local restaurant from 6:30-7:30p. Bring money for whatever you want to eat and don't forget to invite your friends.

### Sunday Night Youth | 5p-7p

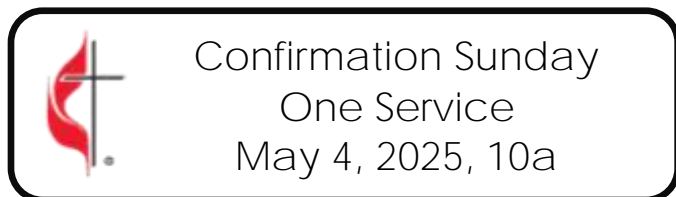
Sunday Night Youth gatherings are filled with delicious food, fellowship, service opportunities, Bible study, special guests, 5th Sunday surprises and food!

- February 2: Special Guest Sunday: Hop on the bus, we're going to Belmont to be the guests at Park Street UMC Youth where we'll do great youth things together ~ faith, food & fellowship!
- February 16: Study Sunday: How is Sabbath Freedom? After time of food and fellowship, we'll continue our study of sabbath and discuss digital addition.

We are seeking adults to provide meals (either prepared or purchased) as well as extra hands to shop and serve each Sunday night. If you have availability, the online sign up link can be found at [www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/youth).

### Sunday Morning Sunday School at 10a

- 6th-9th Graders/Confirmation Class: Meet in the Youth Classroom off the Youth Lounge. This is open to all with a focus on what it means to claim the name Christian and United Methodist. This spring they'll be digging deeper into United Methodist theological understandings. A number of students will participate in a retreat at Mt. Sheperd Retreat Center in Ashboro, NC on February 28-March 2. Confirmation Sunday will be held on May 4th when we will affirm their commitment to learning and welcome them as members of Myers Memorial UMC.
- 10th-12th Graders gather in the Youth Lounge for a variety of topics related to faith, Biblical knowledge and what it means to live as a Christian teenager. Ella Queen leads this group with adult support and encouragement.





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*Myers Memorial*  
United Methodist Church



Commit your  
way to the Lord!  
Trust God!  
God will act.

Psalm 37:5 CEB

[www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/commit2025](http://www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/commit2025)