

\$10 Club | NEW ROOM SOCIETY



New Faith Communities

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

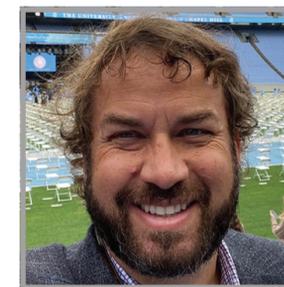
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NEW ROOM SOCIETY

Newsletter / February 2023

UM Collective

by Rev. Dr. Tim Catlett, Executive Director, Office of New Faith Communities



Late last year, many people were finding themselves displaced or disconnected from their church families due to the disaffiliation decisions made by members of their local church. However, United Methodist people in North Carolina were committed to continuing to care and stay connected.

Methodist movement. Within the first three months, over 600 people transferred their membership from a disaffiliating church to the UM Collective, as an in-between place while they looked for a new church home.

The UM Collective was co-created by the NCCUMC, the Office of New Faith Communities, and local church pastors and leaders to extend our collective graceful hospitality to anyone who desires to continue following Jesus consistent with the ways and practices of the United

This initial work began with UM Collective Chaplains, but it now continues with local United Methodist churches who are choosing to be Lighthouse Congregations, beacons of hospitality for their neighbors. We celebrate this unconventional new faith community and how, together, we are extending graceful hospitality to all. +

Graceful Hospitality

By Rev. Tracy Clatyon Sexton



In the Corridor District, First UMC Graham is a congregation intentionally reaching out to welcome fellow United Methodists in their area whose former churches have disaffiliated. In January the congregation unanimously answered the call to become a Lighthouse church—a place where people can come and know that disaffiliation is not being pursued.

Offering hospitality CANNOT just be a church staff responsibility. Bishop Connie Shelton is inviting us to Graceful Hospitality. That will mean each of us making the effort: Wear a name tag. Take someone out to lunch. Ask them what they need. Invite them to your small group. Listen to them and reflect back to them what you heard them say. This decade has started out as a doozy and we need to hold space for one another as we all heal. +



An order of laity and clergy dedicated to embodying apostolic hospitality for new people to be gathered into communion with Jesus Christ.

Life Groups

By Rev. Clay Parker



Since I began serving in my new role as Pastor to the Remnant Congregation of the Capital District, I have had the privilege and the honor to speak with many people who feel as though they have lost their sense of Connection since their church disaffiliated. I have listened as folks express grief over the loss of a church that, in many cases, has been a part of their lives for decades.

disaffiliated, he and close to 20 of his friends have continued meeting as a part of a Life Group at each other's houses. They meet for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer as they seek to stay connected to God and each other. I celebrate these and other examples of the way God is moving in the Capital District!

But I have also heard the stories from folks like James Bernstein. James is a Certified Lay Speaker in the NC Annual Conference, and since his church

For the latest on events and other information about the United Methodist Collective, I encourage you to check out the website at <https://nccumc.org/umcollective/>. +

GIVE OR JOIN TODAY! VISIT WWW.NEWROOMSOCIETY.COM



Happiness Can Be Found

By Rev. Laura Wittman



“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.” This line from Dumbledore is one that sticks with me, as a reminder that light always prevails.

It’s hard to believe that just a few short months ago the United Methodist Collective didn’t even exist, and we were dwelling in a place where we were completely unsure about the future of our beloved denomination. And yet, with prayer, collaborative work, even across conferences, and a lot of faith, the Collective was born with the hope of reminding people that even in the midst of disaffiliation and loss, there is always a place for them here.

One of the biggest concerns that we heard through our listening sessions and gatherings was that people wanted to remain United Methodist, but they didn’t want to have to go through the pain of disaffiliation conversations again. Thus, the Lighthouse Congregation movement was born. We realized that not only was there a

strong desire for our people to find places committed to being United Methodist, but there was also a deep need for our pastors and congregations to be able to say that they were committed to staying.

While it may feel like we are people who have been walking in darkness these Lighthouse congregations remind us that there is light, shelter, safety, and a bright future for The United Methodist Church.

We hope you’ll consider joining us and becoming a Lighthouse Congregation. +



You can find out more through our website, www.nccumc.org/umcollective

Beer, Hymns, & Other Songs

By Rev. Renee Edwards



In the six months leading up to my week of down time on beautiful Lake Gaston, it became clear one of my two churches was headed toward disaffiliation. Nonetheless, in the midst of this unsettling time, God was about to do a new thing. A Fresh Expression of ministry within the Beacon District was on the horizon and God was inviting me to partner with folks I had not yet met in an effort to get this new way of being in ministry off the ground.

City) and the date and time for our first gathering.

What we can attest to is that over 100 folks, from all walks of life, joined us in singing a host of carols and other songs. Perhaps, though, the proof in the pudding came when I made the statement, “Who knew that such a gathering would draw so many people.” A fellow colleague responded, “God did.”



By the end of October 2022, we (and I do mean we – all those with whom I had shared conversation and coffee) had secured our musicians (Butch and the Hot Flashes), a place to call home (Seven Sounds Brewing Company, Elizabeth

As the Coordinator of the Elizabeth City Beer, Hymns and Other Songs Gatherings, if I could offer a word of encouragement when it comes to exploring something new, don’t wait for someone to give you permission to do it. Trust in the dream, the vision, God has given you and go with it. +

Signs of Hope

By Rev. Mark Gustafson



The UM Collective is a place where stories of heartbreak and loss can be shared within a safe place. I have encouraged those within the Harbor and Sound Districts, as they feel led, to share those stories with me. I know that God specializes in rainbows, especially through the darkest of clouds. There are groups in our area, especially from some of the larger churches, that are banding together to worship in special and unique ways.

One such group is in Elizabethtown, NC. When their church disaffiliated, they were determined to remain United Methodist and start a new expression of worship. I feel honored to be in the unique situation of being able to lead this new expression. We started worshiping at the beginning of January and not even the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the Episcopal church’s HVAC system going out has cooled our Spirit. We look forward to seeing all that God will do, here in Elizabethtown, and throughout our districts! +