

\$10 Club | NEW ROOM SOCIETY



New Faith Communities

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Newsletter / October 2023

Co-Creation in the beginning, God BEGAN TO CREATE



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PLANTERS

with your prayers for communion to be celebrated
in new ways in their lives and in their communities.

Dorrell Briscoe
Six:Eight Church, Durham

Daniel Childs
Kindred Church, Durham

Randy Evans
The Feast Gathering, Wilmington

Kelly Finch
Wilmington NFC, Wilmington

Jason Gaskin
Storied Church, Mebane

Elaine Heath
The Church at Spring Forest,
Hillsborough

Meg McBride
Hope Recovery Church, Wilmington

Gayle Tabor
St Paul UMC, Carolina Beach

Jamie Thompson
The Anchor, Wilmington

Edgar Vergara Millan
La Semilla, Durham

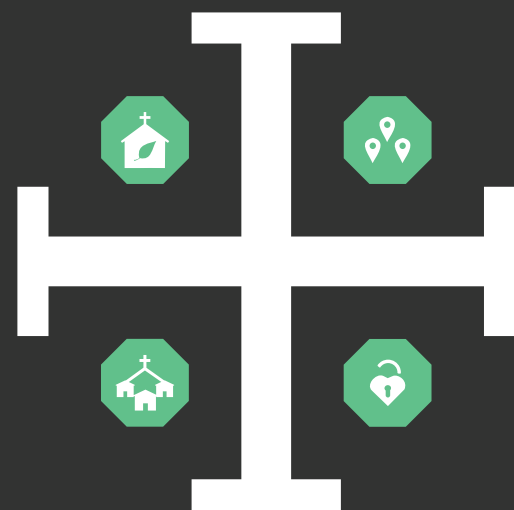
Laura Wittman and
Renee Edwards
The Mills Church, Rocky Mount

Seyun Hwang
Genesis, Cary

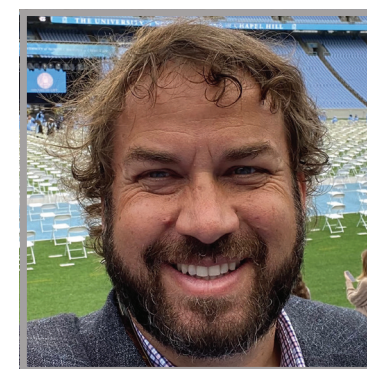
Saul Gastelum
Jonesboro, Sanford and
Fiesta Cristiana, Apex

Amanda Rigby
Edenton St UMC, Raleigh

Schylar Ferguson
Asbury UMC, Durham



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



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

In many translations of Genesis 1:1, the text reads something like, “In the beginning, when God created[a] the heavens and the earth.” However, the first verse of the English Bible also gives us our first footnote. The word “created” is likely more accurately translated as “began to create.” English majors and Hebrew scholars can let us know the verb tenses which lead to that foot-noted translation. However, the implication for changing the verb tense is that we are reminded that God’s creative engagement with the heavens and the earth is not simply a past event. God is an active creator who began to create in the beginning AND continues to engage in acts of creativity in the heavens and on the earth today. The good news is that God also invites God’s people to participate alongside God in these ongoing acts of creation. On our team, we name creatively participating alongside God as, “co-creation.”

Many of our congregations, including our new faith communities, are actively engaged in acts of co-creation. At our best, we are able to see the world as it is, long for a world which more fully reflects God’s kingdom, and then we creatively generate solutions

which might help to close the gap between these two realities (“on earth, as it is in heaven”).

One way this is happening is through investment in creative communities and leaders who are striving to co-create new places for new people to gather in communion with Jesus Christ. Sometimes this happens with the co-creation of a brand new church. Other times this happens when existing churches extend their ministries to open new doors and new access points for people to gather to experience the love of God and the love of God’s people.

In this newsletter, we will be sharing two stories of passionate leaders who saw a need in their community, prayerfully sought God’s wisdom and vision, and who are now experimenting with new ways to co-create new places for new people to gather in communion with Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your ongoing support and the ways your prayers, financial gifts, and other support make these new kinds of creative new faith communities possible. ✚

GIVE OR JOIN TODAY!
VISIT WWW.NEWROOMSOCIETY.COM



Airo COMMUNITY

By Rev. Schylar Ferguson

Waking up in “The City of Medicine”, casual conversations with strangers in the grocery store, at school pick-up, on the bus, and while getting my oil changed often turn to “The Medical System.” Listening to my neighbors illuminates the daily challenges healthcare workers face; the cost that the training & practice of medicine takes financial and personally; the barriers and challenges that everyday people face receiving timely, appropriate, and inexpensive care. I hear the exhaustion of navigating life in a body in constant search of “health” alongside a deep, often whispered question: how can we faithfully care for one another?

Just over a year ago, I came to my pastor, Wes Neal at Asbury UMC, to start a small group for healthcare workers in our community. God provided (and continues to provide) discernment partners who listened for what God might be ready to do here beyond that group, and from that Airo Community began.

Centering this community is a story of healing from Mark’s gospel. The Greek verb “Airo” (pronounced: “eye-Row”) means “to bring, to carry.” Airo is what friends do; they carry their loved-one to Jesus. Guided by the example of these friends, Airo Community gathers to carry one another in seasons of lament, hope, and healing. We intentionally

engage people doing the vocational work of healing, as well as people seeking mental and physical well-being in communion with a faithful community through Christ.

Currently, we gather in three ways: weekly gatherings of students, parishioners, and retirees in healthcare professions actively seeking repair and restoration for patient care providers; monthly & seasonal contemplative prayer services; and monthly in-person and online book discussions on faith & health.

Reimagining what health looks like both individually & communally is not unique to Durham. I invite you to experience this community. Can’t make it to Durham? Come to a faith and health book club online; no reading required – just your lived experience!

Airo Community Vocational Group: Mondays, 7PM Asbury UMC Durham
Illumine Service: 2nd Sundays of the month, Advent, & Lent at 7:30PM
Faith & Health Book Club: 2nd Thursdays, 7PM in-person (Namu - Durham) & 3rd Thursdays, 7PM Zoom (Link and Updates: <https://tinyurl.com/yckcrjzt>)

Keep up to date with opportunities by following Airo Community on Instagram or Facebook. ➕

The Well

By Rev. Amanda Rigby

One of the lessons God is continually pointing me back to is that the best things in life are always born out of friendship... friendship with God, friendship with our truest selves, and of course friendship with those we love.

That lesson has taken shape for me in a new way over the last several years. In the spring of 2021, I’d had countless conversations with church folks and

friends in which it had become clear that mental and spiritual care was a growing need with an incredibly limited number of accessible resources available. One late night that spring, I suddenly had incredible clarity around a vision for creating a practice of spiritual direction and therapy in Raleigh. Being neither a therapist nor a spiritual director at the time, I knew I would need help if this vision was meant to become a reality.

Naturally, I called my best friend - a trained therapist - and explained the vision. Elizabeth was immediately “in”, and the vision for The Well Mental and Spiritual Care was born that night. Two and a half years later, this vision is taking shape in new and exciting ways in the context of the local church. In May, I graduated from the North Carolina Institute for Spiritual Direction and Formation as a trained spiritual director. And as of July, through the generous partnership of Edenton Street UMC and New Faith Communities, The Well is on its way to launching as a nonprofit practice in downtown Raleigh.

The mission of The Well is to create pathways toward healing and wholeness in the community by offering accessible and affordable mental and spiritual care. Our team of practitioners is working hard ahead of the official launch of The Well at the beginning of 2024. We hope you’ll join us in praying for The Well as we seek to faithfully live out this mission in partnership with the community and with the church.

If you’d like to learn more about The Well or donate to support our work, please visit our website at www.thewellmentalandspiritualcare.org. ➕

