IX. REFLECTIONS OF RETIRING CLERGY

2014 RETIREES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Joseph Black</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffery C. Callahan</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry E. Carroll</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archer I Coppedge</td>
<td>44.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger L. Crim</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Edward Donley</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James R. Fain</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth G. Fields</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy R. Harmon</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew L. Henry</td>
<td>42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leroy D. Henry</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary F. Hill</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Jackson, Jr.</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel L. Johnson</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Sue Karnes</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles M. Lindy</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth P. McCoy</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathilda Sue Merker</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry J. Ousley, Sr.</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Darrell Ray</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry K. Sarver</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William A. Schoeneman</td>
<td>21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth L. Scoggins</td>
<td>33.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty A. Shirley</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Edward Snodgrass, III</td>
<td>37.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura E. Trent</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve M. Tuck</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas J. Witten, Jr.</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TaeHun Yoon</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jeff Callahan
Spouse: Mickey
Favorite Hymn: *I Know a Man Who Can*
Favorite Scripture: *III John 2*

Praise God for my parents, J.C. and Margaret, for taking me and my sister Mattie to Fairview UMC, Wytheville, VA. I accepted Jesus as my Savior in a revival held there in a new sanctuary built after a fire destroyed our old one. Many thanks to Holston Conference and the churches that I had opportunity to serve. I am thankful for my teachers at Sunday School, Spiller Primary, George Wythe High School, Wytheville Community College, Tennessee Wesleyan, and The Methodist Theological Seminary in Ohio. Praise God for a great wife, Mickey, who is a super helper. My daughter, Stacia, and son-in-law, Nathan Houchins, are blessings also from the Lord.

Mickey and I will be living in the Piney area of Wythe County, VA.
Jesus has made us HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY!!!

Larry Edwin Carroll
Spouse: Brenda
Favorite Hymn: *It Is Well With My Soul*

Growing up, I truly had the best of both worlds. I was reared in Baltimore, MD, by parents who were reared in Sneedville, TN. I was blessed to receive the cultural offerings of a large city and learned the ways of farm life when I visited grandparents in Hancock County. I was a street savvy guy who also ate soup beans, cornbread, and grits. I knew the difference between a coconut pie and a cow pie (Thank goodness).

I graduated from Kenwood High School in 1965 with a very good academic foundation for entering the University of Tennessee School of Architecture. It was a very demanding five-year course of study so I was very thankful for the solid foundation that began in the 8th grade at Middle River Junior High in Baltimore.

Upon receiving a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1970, I worked for a private design firm in Orlando, FL, for about a year. I decided I liked the change of seasons more than the warm weather so I moved back to Knoxville and got hired by the Tennessee Valley Authority. I worked in the architectural branch for about a year and a half when I felt a call to the ministry. I quit my well-paying job at TVA, took a vow of poverty, and entered seminary at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology in the fall of 1972.

It was in the hallowed halls of Candler’s Bishop Hall that I met my best friend and the love of my life, Brenda. We graduated together in 1975 and began a true adventure as one of the first clergy couples in Holston Conference. Like every other couple, we have had our share of heartache and disappointment, but reflecting on the last 41 years of ministry and eight appointments, I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams (o.k., maybe not my wildest dreams, but close). I owe a debt of gratitude for mentors like James R. Green and Ben St. Clair, but more than anyone else, I owe my deepest love and gratitude to Brenda. Brenda has been the rock in our relationship. Her loving compassion, her astounding intuition and wisdom, and her calm and supportive presence in the midst of turmoil have made me one of
the most grateful men ever. God has blessed us with two beautiful children, Lauren and Travis, and a whole host of friendships that will last me until I take my final breath. Hopefully, that will not be anytime soon. In the meantime, I rest in the amazing grace of Almighty God. It is well with my soul (my favorite hymn)! Glory to God! Amen!

**Archer I Coppedge**

Spouse: Mary  
Favorite Hymn: *Nothing Between*  
Favorite Scripture: Romans 12:1

Theological basis for living: “There is no holiness but social holiness,” meaning that a person’s moral character means nothing if it has not been extended to the pursuit of just and righteous relationships. Or, in the words of a civil rights leader from the past: “Ain’t no such thing as I can hate anybody and hope to see God’s face.” Holiness harmonizes biblical teaching with both a personal and communal responsibility to grace. Holiness is expressed as wholeness. A person surrendered to God’s will is a whole person as body, soul, and spirit. The good news is that all the world can become whole, can become complete in Christ.

I grew up in Oklahoma and served the Lord in ministry as a local pastor within the Oklahoma Conference before going to seminary. From 1969 to 1972, I was challenged and blessed to grow in thought, word, and deed through my seminary training at Gammon Theological Seminary and The Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA. It was a great place to be and grow spiritually in understanding the theological basis stated above that has been my guide and course in ministry.

However, my having attended Gammon/ITC at that time did not meet with the approval of the leadership of the Oklahoma Conference, and no opportunity was available to return home as a UMC pastor. The Lord opened a door to ministry as Dr. Major J. Jones and Bishop L. Scott Allen invited me to come to the Holston Conference and be a leader for the Lord.

I have been blessed to have served the Lord in many churches and situations: from inner city churches, such as the inner city minister of First-Centenary UMC in Chattanooga and in many small congregations throughout the lower part of the conference. It has been a joyous time focusing my ministry in enabling churches to understand the strengths and joys of doing ministry together in parishes and clusters. The reality that we are stronger when we support and encourage each other has been proven over and over as parishes and clusters are still a vital part of the ministry of churches today. I believe it is the best way God’s people and churches can become complete in Christ.

I have been blessed to have been the Big Stone Gap District Superintendent for these last six years. The pastors, churches, and I have worked to strengthen the ministries and witness of the churches through good times and through hard times. The resilience and strength of the district is found in the idea that we never give up. This is indeed what the Lord expects of each of us who serve Him.

Whether I have been a pastor or a District Superintendent, my goal has always been to help all of us to understand that holiness harmonizes biblical teaching with both a personal and communal responsibility to grace.

I thank the Holston Conference for welcoming and enabling me to find a home where I could share the love and grace of Jesus with everyone. Because my calling to ministry is a call to share grace, it is a calling to a ministry that will continue to be my focus of life even in retirement.
**Roger L. Crim**

Spouse: Sue  
Favorite Hymn: *Amazing Grace*

The Lord took a West Virginia Hillbilly, called him into the ministry at the age of 21, molded, and shaped him for a journey that has thus far taken almost 43 years. When I was called into the ministry, little did I visualize the extent of that journey, the places in which I would provide ministry from West Virginia to the East Coast, Bermuda to the West Coast, the Mediterranean, Japan, and finally East Tennessee.

This journey had included student appointments, full time appointments, and ministry to the men and women of our Sea Services. I began in a rural area of West Virginia, continued in North Carolina, back to West Virginia, and then as a Chaplain in the United States Navy. I was privileged to provide ministry to the Marines at MCAS Beaufort, SC, Naval Air Station Bermuda, USS Virginia (CGN 38), Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Air Station Norfolk, Post Graduate Studies at Perkins, Navy Medical Center, Oakland, CA, and Submarine Community in Norfolk. Following retirement, the Lord led me into East Tennessee where I have pastored at Bradburn Hill/Mt. Pleasant for the past 14 years. A special thanks to my wife, Sue. It took a very special person to endure 11 different moves from one country into another and from one coast to another. I appreciate all the support she has given me throughout the journey. I also thank my children, Lee, John, and Michelle. Looking back over the years I can definitely say, “GOD IS GOOD!”

---

**Ed Donley**

I was born at an early age on a poor farm in southwestern Pennsylvania, into a family of one brother and two sisters. My mom was a devout follower of Jesus Christ, my father was anything but. Living in the country the closest church was a Methodist church, which my mom “made” us kids attend. I will never forget the night of revival when I was 15, made to attend, and the Lord got hold of this young boy’s heart and I gave it to Him. Two years later, even though I had made other plans, God called me to preach. As a recent high school graduate, I was appointed to three rural churches as their pastor. What an incredible journey this has been. To desire to know His will and to do it has been a life-long journey. Having served great people and great churches, wanting to quit on several occasions, Philippians 1:6 became my life-long verse: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you is going to finish it.”

After 54 years of pastoral ministry, hospital chaplaincy, community organizer, husband, and father, I reluctantly retire, although I will continue to preach His word of redeeming grace as long as I have physical and mental capacity. I want sung at my funeral, when the time comes, the song “I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus, How I found in Him a friend so kind and true … for He was the One who changed my life so totally.”
On the first Sunday in April 1966, I came forward in a church service and proclaimed Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. My wife and I received B.A. degrees in Christian Education from Appalachian Bible College in Bradley, WV.

Toni and I were married in 1970 and have always been involved in ministry. We have one son, Jonathan, daughter-in-law, Kathy and granddaughter Arianna.

Toni and I jointed St. Stephens UMC in Marietta, GA, in 1987. The Lord has blessed us with the opportunity to travel, visiting Biblical sites in Israel, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey.

The Lord called me into full time ministry and led me to attend Emory University in 1990 where I received an M.Div. degree, while being the pastor of a two-point charge in the North Georgia Conference.

We joined the Holston Conference in 1993. The Lord has enabled us to minister in some wonderful churches. I have been blessed to pastor the Bridle Creek Charge, Woodlawn and Shiloh UMC, Pikeville UMC, Pine Grove UMC, and Hartman’s Chapel UMC. It has been a blessing to see souls won to Jesus Christ and people grow in their walk with the Lord.

I have always believed that it is important to visit the elderly, sick, and people unable to attend our church services. Many would like to attend church but are not able. I believe that as pastors, we need to bring church to them through visitation. Visiting the nursing homes, hospitals, and homes where people are unable to attend church is important. God has laid it upon my heart to reach out to such people. In the visitation program, they receive the church bulletin, Home Touch page, Upper Room, newsletters, cards from the congregations, tapes of the service when requested, and any other material or items. I have a Monday visitation schedule and my visits are limited to around ten minutes. This visitation helps to keep the shut-ins and the church congregation connected.

Toni and I are thankful to God for His call upon our lives. God has blessed us in so many different ways. He has brought many wonderful people into our lives.

I have always loved the verse found in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” It is God that gives us the strength to do the things He has called us to do. It is an honor and a pleasure to be a United Methodist Pastor in the Holston Conference.

We have purchased a home in Greeneville, TN, where we plan to remain active in ministry. This will be a new chapter in our lives. I desire to be active in a church as long as the Lord gives me the ability. God has called me to preach the cross and the power of the blood of Jesus Christ as the way of salvation. The world is lost and in sin without Jesus. It is our job as ministers, as well as laity, to present the Good News of Jesus Christ in many different ways.
On a beautiful Sunday evening, August 23, 1977, I walked into a little country United Methodist Church and my life was changed forever. God’s amazing saving grace had made a different man out of me. I was a coal miner and always wanted to be nothing but that. But when I became involved in church, I soon realized I had work to do for the Lord. I wanted to be where God could use me. Isaiah 6:8: Here am I, Lord; send me.

It was in this little country church in 1983 that I answered the call to the ministry under my pastor, Ted Anders. Thank God for such a man of God. He was such an inspiration in my life. In 1984, I was sent to Dailey’s Chapel by District Superintendent Walter Smalley. Walter Smalley impacted my life so much with his leadership, prayers, and encouragement. In the latter part of my time at Dailey’s Chapel, Paul Marchbanks came to Tazewell District as Superintendent. I thank God for this man of God who helped me. He was such a leader. He knew how to treat his pastors with love and respect. During this time, Dailey’s Chapel was the leader in the Tazewell District with growth and precious souls saved. God gets all the glory for it.

I left Dailey’s Chapel after eight years to pursue my education, and during this time, I was asked to help out another church where the pastor had passed away. I stayed there four years. During this time, the coalmines closed down also.

In 1995 Don Scott, Tazewell District Superintendent, who was my mentor in the beginning, asked me to come to the Bishop Circuit to pastor. These are the same churches where I was saved and called into the ministry. I always had great respect for Don Scott as my District Superintendent and mentor. He always had respect for his pastors and encouraged me in everything I endeavored to do.

I also served under Gene Lovell and Don Nation. I will always be grateful for both of these men. They were always so kind and understanding during a time of illness in our family. They prayed with me and encouraged me through these difficult times. Great leaders always inspired me and these men were that. I’m retiring now under Tazewell District Superintendent, John David Tabor.

Last, and most important, I thank God for my family (wife, son, daughter, and their mates, and my precious grandson, Brayden). They have been my support team, never complaining about anywhere that my ministry has led me. They all have made many sacrifices, unselfishly encouraging me through this time in my life.

My 18 years at Bishop Charge will end with so many great memories. I don’t regret a mile I’ve traveled for the Lord. God has blessed in so many ways. Someone once said before I came here “Don’t send Kenny Fields here; he preaches too much like Ted Anders.” Someone in Tennessee once said, “Coal miners don’t make good United Methodist ministers.”

I know God called and saved me and that settles it for me. God blessed me with 26 years in the United Methodist churches – all in Tazewell District. I appreciate each of you who have allowed me to be your pastor during these years. I’m retiring from pastoring, but I still have a deep fire in my bones to do a ministry in some capacity.

I leave with one thing to The United Methodist Church: Get out of the Politics! Get back to preaching and then you can say, “It is Well With My Soul!” Grace to All!
ANDREW L. HENRY

Favorite Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen Today
Favorite Scripture: Galatians 5:22-25

Baptized in a Methodist Church in Oxford, MS, I grew up in the church: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, my first Bible in the third grade, Church camp, Jr. and Sr. UMYF, Wesley Foundation, College Ministry, UMYF counselor, Sunday School teacher, member of the Administrative Board. Then seminary, and forty-three years under appointment in the Church in four annual conferences. That is the story of my life–The United Methodist Church. I am grateful for that ministry. It formed me as a United Methodist Christian. It is forming me still.

My father was an engineer whose job required our family to move quite often. I thought that the church was like a school district. We never shopped for a church. We just got up on the first Sunday morning, went to the nearest Methodist Church, and joined. (Being under episcopal appointment really hasn’t been much different; one goes where sent.)

That is my ministry. A story of following where the Church led. Most times I followed willingly (I met my wife, Jane, at UMYF. I kissed her there.) Occasionally I was sure that there was a mistake (Church camp homesickness is a terrible disease.) Sometimes it has surprised me. Sometimes it has rescued me. Sometimes it has put me in uncomfortable places. And once in a while I saw God.

My ministry story is one of gratitude—gratitude to the Church. For whatever is decent in me, I owe to the Church. For whatever desire for justice, whatever capacity to feel compassion, whatever concern I have for others, to understand the power of forgiveness, I learned at Church. Not just any church … The United Methodist Church.

LEROY D. HENRY

Spouse: Jacinth
Favorite Hymn: They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

I was born in the Caribbean Island of Saint Kitts, located near the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. In 1969, I came to know Jesus as my Lord and Savior and in 1973 accepted the call to full time ministry during a mission event at the Methodist Church in my hometown. The speaker, Rev. Ephraim Alphonse, a missionary who worked among the Valiente Indians in Panama, Central America, helped me to see the need to serve “the least, the lost, and the last” for the sake of Christ.

I have served as a pastor for twenty years in the Methodist Church in the Caribbean in the following appointments – Aruba, Antigua, Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica, and St. Kitts – before coming to Holston Conference in 1995. In Holston Conference, God has used me during these years to offer Christ to John Wesley UMC, Abingdon; Slaughters Chapel and Randolph UMC, Wytheville District; and Trinity UMC, Abingdon District.

I’m grateful to God and Holston Conference for sending many pastors and lay people as Volunteers In Mission to Dominica. You helped build the only secondary school that exists in the rural section of that country. I remember people like Dr. Ed Eldridge, Ralph Kidd, Eldon Moore, and Charles Harrison who ministered to me while they served on VIM teams.
The Methodist Church is still necessary for the transformation of the world. People need the Church:
- To have fellowship with the crucified and risen Lord
- To be forgiven
- To hear the voice of God
- To grow in the knowledge of the Bible, God’s Word
- To feed their Soul
- To be prayed for
- To be loved and encouraged.

My 38 years as a pastor in The United Methodist Church have, for the most part, been rewarding. There have been days that were not, but such is life, I suppose.

**GARY HILL**

Spouse: Connie  
Favorite Hymn: *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*  
Favorite Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:9

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him.”

Looking Back: I thought well of myself 36 years ago when this venture in ministry began. The undergraduate school I attended was adequate. My seminary was noteworthy, so I thought I was educated enough to be a pretty good pastor.

Gifts and graces? I hoped I had them. I thought I could preach. (All we pastors think we can preach.) I was willing to work hard—visit, visit, and visit some more. As a counselor? Throw that in the ring with the other things I felt confident I could do well.

Was it arrogance, naiveté, or both? I’m not certain what it was, but after all these years, I look back at that young man with some amusement and not a little pity.

What I learned on this journey is what I suppose all ministers learn. Start out embarrassingly green and, along the way, if you’re patient enough, caring enough, you might stumble into being a pastor of some regard. The folks I served taught me how to do that. They taught me what a seminary education couldn’t. I didn’t need to be great at anything, but I did need to strive to be good at everything. As it turned out, I was not God’s gift to the ministry. The ministry was God’s gift to me.

I don’t mean to make this sound like I missed the boat completely, but there were times I was late getting onboard. So, the next time round I’ll think less of myself at the beginning so I can think more of myself at the end.
**MELANIE KARNES**

Spouse: Allen  
Favorite Hymn: *Great Is the Lord*  
Favorite Scripture: Psalm 150  

I have been so blessed by God through the time I served in ministry in the Holston Conference. I will cherish the many wonderful memories I have from the churches, communities, and people that I have been privileged to serve. One of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 150. I just want to praise God for “his mighty deeds” and “his exceeding greatness.” I have many favorite songs, but the first one that came to my mind as I read Psalm 150 was “Great Is the Lord” by Michael W. & Deborah D. Smith. As I adjust to the retirement phase of my life, I will continue to praise God and seek to find ways in which to serve him.

---

**CHARLES LINDY**

Favorite Scripture: Mark 8:34  

It has been my privilege to serve in the Holston Conference over the past 40 years. I have met a lot of good Christian people and had the opportunity to minister in many different churches. The Morristown District has been my base of ministry for all those years. My dad, John Lindy, was a source of inspiration for me, and through his ministry to this same conference, I was saved and called into ministry. In these years of ministry I have tried to follow the command Jesus gave in Mark 8:34 which says, “And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” My favorite gospel song is entitled, “Ain’t no grave gonna hold my body down,” because that song is true. I want to thank all of the people who have supported me and prayed for me in my ministry. May God continue to bless His church until that day He calls us home. God Bless!

---

**BETH MCCOY**

Spouse: Joe  
Favorite Hymn: *Make Me a Captive, Lord*  
Favorite Scripture: John 3:16  

I was born and raised Methodist in Chattanooga, TN, i.e., I am Methodist to the core! I grew up attending Wesley Memorial UMC and was active in the MYF program, which culminated in my serving as the pianist and composer for the Christian Witness Team that traveled across the conference in 1965-66. I graduated from Emory & Henry College as music major, continuing to George Peabody of Vanderbilt to receive my Master of Music Education. While working as a high school choral director, I felt called to work in church music. This was about the time the UMC developed Diaconal Ministry, which I pursued, studying at Scarritt-Bennett with the brother of Bishop Abel Tendekayi Muzorewa and other fine
professors, and working, during my diaconal classes, for Carlton R. “Sam” Young. One of my jobs was helping Sam compile the new biographies in the “Companion to the Hymnal.”

I was christened by Bishop Earl Hunt as a baby, as he was the minister at Wesley Memorial when I was a baby, and was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister in 1991, again by Bishop Hunt – what a double blessing!

I worked as the Director of Music Ministries at Pleasant View UMC, developing hand bell and hand chime choirs for all ages; children’s, youth and adult choirs; and directing seasonal orchestras and church plays/musicals. During this time, many of my compositions of utility music created for the choirs of Pleasant View UMC were published by Abingdon Press. Watching the music program grow was satisfying, but knowing that children were learning the music of our heritage and the Ten Commandments through a cantata, and knowing that, to quote one member, she was able to forgive someone because of singing an anthem I wrote, has confirmed my understanding that one can preach, minister, bless and be blessed through the music of the church. It was especially an honor to work for Rev. Chuck Starks for several years.

I was invited in 1993 to be the Artistic Director of the East Tennessee Children’s Choir, which eventually blossomed into the Mountain Empire Children’s Choral Academy (MECCA). Under my leadership, MECCA singers performed every Christmas at the Biltmore Estate as well as with area symphonies, traveled to NYC to sing in Carnegie Hall, and twice traveled to Hungary, first to compete and later to be honored guests of Pecs, the European Capital of Culture in 2010. I have always been grateful that the conference accepted MECCA—the best choral music program for children and youth in the Tri-Cities area—as a form of Extension Ministry. MECCA has helped to develop many children and youth into the singers and choral directors of today and tomorrow, many now working in their churches.

I retired from full-time choral directing in 2008 but still teach in my home studio some of the future pianists of our churches. It was a huge honor that Emory & Henry College awarded me its Distinguished Achievement Award in 2009. I realized that retiring from the MECCA program did not mean I had to retire as a diaconal minister, so I chose to serve Holston Conference as a Music Ministry Consultant. In this capacity, I have done hymn and singing workshops, helped churches start adult hand bell and children’s hand chime choirs, written job descriptions, and helped churches donate unwanted pianos to worthy piano students. Even in retirement, I am willing to continue as a Music Ministry Consultant.

My husband Joe and I live in Abingdon on 50 acres with gorgeous mountain views. We are active members of Abingdon UMC. We love our SS class, where I am the class pianist. I enjoy organic gardening, cooking our homegrown veggies, and doting on my husband and our two cats.
**Mat Merker**

I am a “one-church-wonder.” I answered my call late in life after eighteen years of Volunteers in Mission volunteering. I was 61 when I graduated from Candler and gratefully agreed to serve Benton United Methodist Church. In my polity class, I had slaved long and hard on a paper: “How to Build a Church.” As the congregation and I grew in faith and trust, a seed planted many years ago began to stir. A social hall with a professional kitchen would open so many doors to answer God’s call to service and mission needs. I had learned Methodist building procedures. The congregation knew all about building and finance. We invited VIM teams from Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee to help with construction. The outcome was a very useful social hall and an even more God-focused, mission-focused church under Rev. Betsy Switzer’s leadership. God is a long-term planner, and I am grateful to have been part of that plan.

---

**Larry Ousley**

Favorite Scripture: Matthew 5:48; John 1:14

“The glory of God is a human being fully alive!” St. Irenaeus uttered this in the second century. My calling is to help persons, including myself, live more fully alive. Life coaching has been the vehicle for me to carry out this calling to help others be the persons God has created us to be, living in the way of Jesus. Another way to say this is “Helping Humans Happen!” Let me share two favorite scripture passages. The first is Matthew 5:48: “Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” This passage came alive for me when I discovered that the Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios* meaning complete, whole, mature, or to the end—what we are created for—instead of the assumed meaning of being flawless. We are to be on the journey of maturing toward our calling.

The second passage is John 1:14: “And the Logos became flesh, and made his dwelling within us, and we have seen his radiance, as the radiance of the son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Once again, the original Greek is so helpful. We translate *charis* as grace. We tend to think of grace as what we receive or what others can receive. To be a follower of Jesus is to be an agent of grace. This charis is really about giving grace, which is beyond merit. It is to be an agent of the extravagant giving of God. “Truth” in the passage is from the Greek *aletheia*, which literally means, “unhidden.” Jesus is the unhidden or revealed one. To be a follower of Jesus is to be open, authentic, promoting consciousness and awareness. Through consciousness, we can become intentional about joining God’s extravagant giving of grace and peace.

My original calling came in the 1960’s. I believed that the way of Jesus and the church was the best way to address the crying human, social needs of the day related to the Vietnam War and civil rights. Early in my ministry, I had the opportunity to serve on the Holston Conference Council on Ministries. Ezra Earl Jones led a retreat in which he challenged us to measure our success as an annual conference by whether our region became more loving and just. He did not point us to improvements in church statistics, but to actual transformation of
the culture. Truly, it is “for the transformation of the world” that we are “making disciples of Jesus Christ.”

As I take the retired “status,” I’m not ending ministry. For now, I will continue serving as the Executive Director of the Intentional Growth Center, as a life coach, and a coach trainer. Being a person of God and seeking to live the calling of God as a follower of Jesus is a lifelong, even an eternal, adventure.

Thank you to the Holston Conference, my family, the churches I’ve had the privilege of serving, and to God for this fantastic opportunity. Let us continue on the Way.

**BARRY K. SARVER**

Spouse:   Glynda  
Favorite Hymn:   How Great Thou Art  
Favorite Scripture:   Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

When I was six- or seven-years-old, my sister said that I would stand in front of a full-length mirror with a Bible in my hands and preach. I am thankful for Joe Bachman, the first pastor who aroused that six- or seven-year-old boy’s spirit with the love of God, as well as my grandmother, Bertie Sarver Danley, who taught me the word of God and taught me to love Jesus. I am thankful for my mother, Edna Sarver Sisk, who taught me to love others and my last pastor, Ted Anders, who preached the Bible and taught me how much God loves me, which filled me with so much excitement that I had to say, “Yes, Lord, send me!” I am also thankful for the three Bishops and ten District Superintendents who have had a part in our ministry. I especially want to recognize Don Scott and Ann Blair, who listened to God and made it possible for our ministry to begin.

I have had the privilege to love and serve with many wonderful people in five districts of the Holston Conference, which I will cherish. Thank you to Albright/Greenwood UMC; Pikeville UMC; First UMC, Independence; First UMC, Copperhill; and Coeburn UMC for allowing me to be in ministry with you.

I also want to thank my wife, Glynda, who willingly served with me; she has been a vital part of this ministry. She loves our Lord so much; she was always ready to go whenever and wherever the Lord called us.

Most of all, I want to thank God for His great love and for giving me the opportunity to serve. As the Happy Goodman Family used to sing “I Wouldn’t Take Nothing For My Journey Now!” As I begin another phase of my journey, I’m certain that the Lord is not through with me and I am excited to see what He has in the future. “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow!”
I was called to ministry in church camp as a teenager. I finally answered God’s call as a second career. After going to Asbury Seminary and looking for a Conference, I heard about Holston as a good place to do God’s work. I contacted the Conference and then received a call from Bishop Clay Lee asking me if I was interested in an appointment. He was going into meetings at the time. Very soon thereafter, I was appointed to the Ceres Circuit, serving six churches.

Ministry at Ceres Circuit was filled with wonderful people, many blessings and one or two miracles. After five years there, my family and I traveled to the other end of the Conference to be at First Church, Copperhill. During the four years we were there, I experienced many good things, including the beginning of an after-school children’s program that resulted in a wedding and a complete family joining the church. After a brief appointment in Chattanooga, we returned to the other end of the Conference to Mt. View and Newbern churches. During those six years I had many wonderful experiences, such as blessing prayer shawls, feeding the unfortunate at a local soup kitchen, and making apple butter in copper kettles. Finally, we came to the East Marion Circuit. In a way it was like coming home, because we were ministering to the relatives of the people we started out with on Ceres Circuit. One of the highlights of this ministry has been my opportunity to baptize 23 people on a warm Sunday afternoon by the riverside. My ministry here at Holston has been a joy as I’ve been welcomed and embraced as an adopted son of Holston.
KENNETH L. SCOGGINS
Spouse: Mary Ann
Favorite Hymn: We've a Story to Tell to the Nations
Favorite Scripture: Isaiah 40:31; Ephesians 1:3-8

I am thankful for the Holston Conference of The United Methodist Church for giving me the opportunity to live out God’s call on my life for 35 years. I am thankful for all the people of the churches I have served in the Oak Ridge and Cleveland Districts.

I am thankful for my family who has supported me in my ministry. There are so many people who have been a blessing to me. I am thankful for Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, Rev. Mike Carter, Rev. Dale Gilbert, and Rev. Charles Lippse for their support and encouraging words during the time of my wife’s death.

The Lord has blessed me beyond measure with a wife of five years who has been a blessing to me and has been a partner in ministry at Soddy United Methodist Church. I am looking forward to retirement. The mind is willing but the body is weak. I will continue to proclaim the Good News of my Savior Jesus Christ as long as I live.

BETTY A. SHIRLEY
Spouse: Wayne
Favorite Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11
Favorite Hymn: Here I Am, Lord

Much like the children of Israel, I have been led through various ministries, all of which served His purpose at the time. As a daughter to John and Margaret Anderson, a wife to Wayne, a mother to George and Mary, a homemaker, scout leader, Sunday School teacher, youth leader, lay speaker, nursing home volunteer, foster mom, and the list goes on, and then much to my surprise, pastoral ministry.

At age 60, when “retirement age” was almost upon me, God began a new chapter in my life. After several months of tearful prayers … the call was clear and I fully understood that He was asking that I trust Him as He led me on a new, unknown adventure. This is a good example of God not calling the equipped, but equipping the called. It took almost two years of preparation before I received my first appointment at Fowler’s Grove UMC in Cocke County. After serving there two years, a most unusual opportunity came as the Bishop appointed me, and Rutledge Baptist Church “called” me to serve as their Associate Pastor, where I served just shy of two years. In June 2007, I was brought back into the Methodist system and was appointed to the Mary’s Chapel/Russellville Circuit. In January 2013, Russellville UMC was aligned with Liberty Hill UMC, and I continued to pastor Mary’s Chapel until February 1, 2014. Each of these churches is very much a part of who I am.

What a wonderful blessing this latest chapter of my life has been! Who would have ever dreamed that I would be granted some of my most satisfying experiences in the autumn years of my life? How grateful I am for a very supportive family who made many adjustments as I surrendered my life to God’s call.

I am more convinced than ever before that “ministry” is the work of all Christians and “God’s calling” is His designation of “how” He wants to work through us. How very blessed I have been to serve Him and be so lovingly supported by so many. Life has been an adventure, and I eagerly wait to see what God has in store for the next season of my life.
Edward Snodgrass
Spouse: Linda

Retirement is a time to celebrate. The reality for me has been that each day and each week and each year has been a time to celebrate. I have been so fortunate to be connected to The United Methodist Church for many generations prior to my birth. God has sent people my way who have inspired and encouraged me to find happiness and fulfillment through serving others. While in college at Vanderbilt, I changed from pre-law to seek admission to Duke Divinity School. Meeting my wife, Linda, on the steps of Duke Chapel that first week of school was God’s way of letting me know that like Moses and Aaron, I would have a helpmate to share in the celebrations and hard times. Bishop Finger and a host of mentors participated in my ordination in 1977. The members of churches I have served including six while at Duke, First-Centenary UMC, East Lake UMC, and Highland Plaza UMC, were always willing to meet me halfway and beyond to seek to serve Christ in the community. The opportunity arose to serve as a Campus Minister at McCallie School in Chattanooga. It was as a student there that my Christian faith and adult values found fruition. My work at McCallie has been a perfect match for my own values and for raising my family. I have told many people that my life has been a series of very positive choices. I will miss teaching and being involved in the life of the boys at McCallie. I look forward to seeing what doors will open as God reveals some exciting new opportunities to grow and serve.

Thank you, Holston Conference, and to all the wonderful men and women who inspire and supported my ministry efforts.

Laura Evelyn Trent

Favorite Hymn: whichever one I’m singing at the time – with a few exceptions…
Favorite Scripture: Luke 1:37

Mother to Evelyn and Trent, program worker at the Beth in Chattanooga, teacher, family-business-owner, glassblower, and fourth-generation Methodist pastor: that’s me, and Methodist to the marrow! So when, after 40+ years of life and active lay ministry, I finally recognized that clear voice in my ear as a long-unheard call to ordained ministry, some of my long-time friends said, “it’s about time!”

Candler – of course! – was a life-changing experience, and my first appointment was to Forrest Avenue UMC in Chattanooga, near the developing Riverfront and Walnut Street Bridge. During my 3 years there, we and 3 other nearby churches formed an urban, interracial cooperative ministry – Hands-Across-the-River, or HARP. For 5 years I served as both Program Director/Director of HARP and its 5 member churches and associate pastor at St. Luke UMC. A remarkable and unforgettable experience!

McFarland UMC in Rossville, GA – what warm and wonderful folks! - was where I spent my next year. Then, I was invited to take a position on staff at Hinton Rural Life Center, an SEJ agency. For two years I enjoyed a creative time of contacts and travel over much of the Southeastern Jurisdiction, helping smaller churches with visioning and planning and leading workshops and retreats.
At Hinton I found out I was not a rural person, so when I returned to the pastorate, I found myself saying ‘Thanks, but no thanks’ to an appointment on a Virginia mountaintop and turned instead to Mississippi, where I have family roots. There I found a special opportunity at an African-American church near Jackson. Greer Chapel was a joy and a challenge, and good preparation!

During that year I was selected to be pastor at the English-Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna, Austria, working in the Central Conference of Middle and Southern Europe. For the next 7 years I served a large and diverse congregation of mostly immigrants, ex-pats, students, and UN workers from nearly 40 different countries. It is a remarkable community and was for me an experience that called on and called out every gift and skill I’d ever had, plus a few new ones. It felt like the ministry I’d been created to do!

Since my return to the U.S. and to Holston, appointments have been challenging – Addilynn Memorial in Bristol and the Bethel/Vonore charge in East TN – but even in the difficulties there have been people whose response to me and to my ministry has blessed me and made the challenges worthwhile. God does provide!!

This has been wonderful ride, full of experiences, colleagues, and others who have helped God create me! And now my daughter, Evelyn Harris, has gone to seminary and followed me into the ministry – one more generation of Methodist pastors! As for her daughter, Avi, we’ll have to wait and see. Thanks be to God!

**STEVE TUCK**

Spouse: Sara
Favorite Hymn: *It is Well with My Soul*
Favorite Scripture: Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

In 1976, I felt a strong calling into the ministry in a revival in my home church, Carpenters Campground United Methodist. With a very young family and a job, I had no idea how this would ever come to be. I was very contented to be active in everything at Carpenters, and was often given the chance to preach by my pastor and good friend, Rev. Dan Moore. In 1978, I had a phone call from Rev. Walter Willis, the DS. He asked me if I would want to go preach at Meadow UMC in Greenback until they could find a permanent pastor. He said it would just be from week to week. We were very excited to get to go serve a church for a little while. The little while lasted eleven years.

My next opportunity came as a chance to serve the Sevierville Parish as an Associate Pastor. I had been there nine years and wasn’t thinking at all of leaving, but my plans were changed when Rev. Bob Bostick, the DS, asked if I was ready to go into the ministry full time. Since our children were now grown, this seemed like the perfect time. Sara and I left our jobs, sold our house, and moved to the parsonage at New Salem to serve eight years there. When it came time to move on, we went to serve in the Morristown District at Mt. Hebron. This too was an eight-year appointment.

Although health problems have caused me to retire earlier than I might have wanted, I know God will give me more chances to serve. I know he is not through with me yet. The adventures and relationships we have experienced have been priceless. We think of the wonderful people who will always be our friends, and know that if I had said, “no, I don’t think I can”, to Dr. Willis, these things would never have happened. Thanks be to God.
I also know I owe a great debt to others who have lovingly supported me through the years. Most of all is my loving wife Sara. We have been equally yoked in ministry and service for these thirty-six years. Without her love and continued support, it would have been impossible. Thank God for Christian spouses.

**THOMAS J. WITTEN, JR.**

Spouse: Barbara  
Favorite Hymn: *Whispering Hope*  
Favorite Verse: 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

I started attending the Methodist Church when I was five years old and attended from then until I went to college. In fact, I have a Sunday School attendance pin with fourteen years of perfect attendance. In college, I majored in mathematics and became a teacher and later an administrator. In my later career, I was college professor of mathematics at a community college. My walk with Jesus has always been close, teaching Sunday School, working with the UMYF, and later, lay speaking. My first lay speaking experience was in 1972 when I was asked to present the Father’s Day sermon at my home church in Gary, WV. I think I was asked because I had the most children in the congregation!

My lay-speaking assignments became more and more numerous after I moved to Richlands, VA. In fact, I spoke in almost every pulpit in Tazewell District from 1973 to 2006. And all this time, I suspected that God was training and preparing me for further and deeper service. In 2006, I was asked by the District Superintendent, Don Nation, if I would take the assignment of pastoring three churches in Buchanan County, VA. I had just officially retired from teaching and had the usual post-retirement plans. After much prayer and discussion, my wife and I agreed that this was God’s call on my life and not really my decision.

I have served the Buchanan Parish, first as a three-point charge and now a two-point charge, for the past eight years and have loved and relished every moment. As I officially “retire” from the Annual Conference, I am looking forward to serving God in the way that He sees fit. I have learned that you cannot and will not ever retire from serving your Lord and Savior.
TAEHUN YOON
Spouse: WanHee
Favorite Hymn: Who Shall be Like Him?
Favorite Scripture: Philippians 4:4; Micah 6:8b

I am so grateful for the Bishop and members who welcomed me from New York Annual Conference to share their yoke of connectional ministry of the Holston Annual Conference for the last 10 years.

In my heart, there is only one thought filled at the crossroad, “Thank you, Lord, and friends in churches where I have served.”

As I review my ministry, it has been proved that His Grace has always been sufficient all along on each step of my ministry daily for 40 years; 10 years in Korea prior to 30 years in the States. I founded three churches: one in the military base, another in Albany NY, and a third one in Queens Village, NY; served two Korean churches in NY; five English-speaking congregations; two Annual Conferences; and two mission projects: Integral Spirituality Clinic and Korean-American Women United Mission.

I preached over 2,000 times and included daily early dawn prayer services for His Victory and Glory. Because of His blessing, I did not need to pretend to be what I was/am not. I could/can be myself.

I have been so happy to serve the Lord and churches with my family. “… As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua) Without my lovely, dedicated helper and wife, WanHee, I could not carry the gracious Cross. My three precious supporters and children are Michelle in NY, a family and marriage therapist and the spouse of an ordained clergy, Rev. Sam Park; Erica in Roanoke, a photojournalist; and Jacob, the manager of a retail store in Knoxville.

As Bishop Taylor recalled someone said, “Life is a series of adjustments.” Now the Lord’s calling is to be a full time representative minister to my own family.