



## Trust Me by Pastor Alan Felton

I was responsible for field offices across North Carolina when I was a leader in state government. I set a goal to visit each field office at least once a quarter. Taking into consideration that I had 44 offices to visit, it was quite an undertaking. I would start in the mountains during one cycle and work eastward, and then start at the coast another cycle and move west.

I enjoyed traveling to these places across the state. I got to know the best out-of-the-way joints to eat. I liked meeting the people who served North Carolina so well in our field offices. I benefited from hearing about their challenges and successes and how some of the

things that sounded brilliant in a conference room in Raleigh just wouldn't work in places like Murphy and Manteo.

There was one fellow I recall well because he always listened to everything I said when I was addressing the staff in the office in which he worked. He wrote it down word for word! If I ever said something on an ensuing visit that even hinted at being contradictory to what I had said before, this man would stand up and say, "Excuse me. You said on March 15 last year that... but now you are saying something different."

I certainly tried not to contradict myself and I was always careful to tell the truth as far as I knew it. Sometimes, however, things had changed, and I needed to communicate whatever it was. Most of the people listening to me understood, but not this gentleman.

The problem was not what I was saying or even that this man wrote down every word verbatim. The challenge was that he just didn't trust many people, especially a guy not even 35 years old from Raleigh! We worked on building trust over the years. It got better, but not enough that he ever stopped taking notes on me.

Trust is critical for the church to survive and thrive. We need to trust Jesus more, and we also must learn to trust one another. The United Methodist Church has been racked recently by what results when we do not trust well. But the future can be different. "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord... they shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green... it does not cease to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:8).



Benson Memorial United Methodist Church, 4706 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, NC 27612  
Open office hours: M–Th 9AM–1PM | Available by appointment: M–Th 9AM–4PM / F 9AM–1PM  
Church office: (919) 787-0789

[office@bensonmemorialumc.org](mailto:office@bensonmemorialumc.org) | [bensonmemorialumc.org](http://bensonmemorialumc.org)  
[facebook.com/bensonmemorialumc/](https://facebook.com/bensonmemorialumc/) | [instagram.com/bensonmemorialumc/](https://instagram.com/bensonmemorialumc/)

## Christmas in July

### Our Annual Donation Drive for the Methodist Home for Children

Sunday, July 21

8:45 & 11:00 Worship Services

It's hard to think of Christmas when we are experiencing temperatures in the 90s, but our Christmas in July celebration is quickly approaching on Sunday, July 21. To participate in this outreach event, please purchase items on the wish list below and take them to Sunday services (place them in wagons in the narthex), or take them to the church office during open

office hours (Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). You can also donate monetarily to Benson Memorial by check (note "Christmas in July" in the memo line) or online at [bensonmemorialumc.org/give/](http://bensonmemorialumc.org/give/). Your monetary donations will be used by the Susanna Wesley group to provide a more complete coverage of the requested donations.

Each year, Benson Memorial has adopted the general teen wish list since teens are a group of Methodist Home residents who receive the fewest number of donations from other events and who most need the incentive derived from receiving these gifts. Please select from the list of items below when shopping. A full wish list is also available on the welcome table in the narthex.

Please join us on Sunday, July 21, to celebrate this outreach with our donations, Christmas decorations, and carols.

### Christmas in July Wish List

- DVD player
- DVDs (PG-13 and lower ratings)
- CDs (all genres)
- CD players
- watches
- MP3 player
- sunglasses
- electronic games
- alarm clocks
- gift cards (Wal-Mart, Target, Old Navy)
- journals
- drinking cups/glasses
- jewelry: necklaces, rings, earrings, bracelets
- makeup
- shirts
- spa night materials (nail files, foot soak, nail clippers, foot scrub, and fake nails)
- hair bows, head bands, ponytail holders
- lotions and body wash
- tampons, pads, panty liners
- shampoo, conditioner, hairspray, styling products
- razors and shaving cream
- deodorant
- soap
- Carmex, Chap Stick, and lip gloss
- bicycle
- games for Wii
- board games
- puzzle books
- wave caps/durags
- hair brushes, combs, and picks
- women's and men's body wash/spray
- nail art
- tank tops (S, M, L, XL, 2XL)
- basketball shorts (S - 2XL, different colors)
- black and white t-shirts (S - 2XL)
- back-of-door basketball goals (Nerf type)
- playing cards
- water bottles
- XL shirts (avoid the colors red and blue)
- men's and women's white socks
- shoes/sandals
- wash cloths and towels
- sheets
- comforters
- plastic pillows
- hygiene products
- extra clothes (M, L, XL) for kids who don't come in with anything
- t-shirts (male and female, L and XL)
- pajamas (L and XL)
- basketballs
- footballs
- activity books
- journals



## Stay Informed: Explore the Latest Finance Report and More on Church Center!

The Benson Memorial Finance Committee has just released its latest report, now available for viewing in our Church Center app. Simply click on the “church reports” link within the app to access the latest Finance Report.

While you’re there, please take a moment to explore the other reports provided by our committees. These documents offer valuable updates on the business side of our church from our leadership.

Additionally, we have a church directory of our members. Each member is responsible for updating their own contact information, providing photos, and opting in to share this information with others in our church. We encourage everyone to participate, enabling your church family to contact you as needed through this private online directory.

If you need assistance with using or setting up Church Center, please refer to our resources and tutorials in the FAQ section at [bensonmemorialumc.org/church-center/](http://bensonmemorialumc.org/church-center/), or contact Martha Johnston, at [office@bensonmemorialumc.org](mailto:office@bensonmemorialumc.org).



## July Summer Book Club

Join Us for the discussion!  
Wednesday, July 31,  
6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

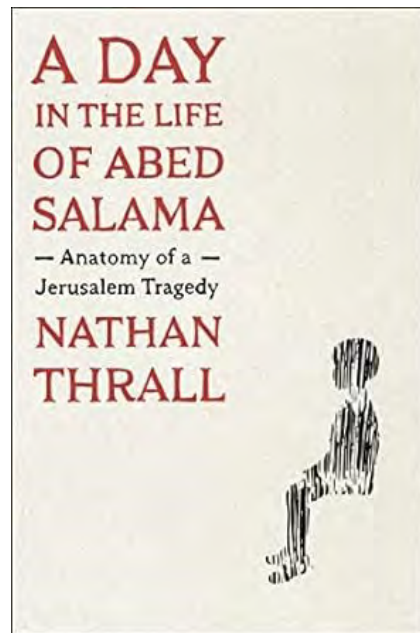
### **A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy**

Immersive and gripping, an intimate story of a deadly accident outside Jerusalem that unravels a tangle of lives, loves, enmities, and histories over the course of one revealing, heartbreaking day.

Five-year-old Milad Salama is excited for a school trip to a theme park on the outskirts of Jerusalem. On the way, his bus collides with a semitrailer. His father, Abed, gets word of the crash and rushes to the site.

The scene is chaos—the children have been taken to different hospitals in Jerusalem and the West Bank; some are missing, others cannot be identified. Abed sets off on an odyssey to learn Milad’s fate. It is every parent’s worst nightmare, but for Abed it is compounded by the maze of physical, emotional, and bureaucratic obstacles he must navigate because he is Palestinian. He is on the wrong side of the separation wall, holds the wrong ID to pass the military checkpoints, and has the wrong papers to enter the city of Jerusalem. Abed’s quest to find Milad is interwoven with the stories of a cast of Jewish and Palestinian characters whose lives and histories unexpectedly converge.

Buy it on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or at [Barnes and Noble](https://www.barnesandnoble.com). Start reading today!



## Bless Our School Sunday

Join us on Sunday, August 25, for one special service at 10 a.m. as we prepare for another school year. This is always such a meaningful service, and you won’t want to miss it! We’ll be blessing backpacks for teachers and students, blessing school supplies donations, and we’ll get to look back on the 2023–24 school year and celebrate ten years in partnership with our Jeffreys Grove Elementary School family. We’re thrilled to welcome Principal Ventura and others from JG as we hear testimony about the impact that Benson Memorial has had on their community. Mark your calendars!





## We're Doing it Again! 2nd Annual Neighborhood Block Party in August

We are extremely excited to announce Benson Memorial's 2nd Annual Neighborhood Block Party on Sunday, August 25 at 11:30 a.m.! Last year was a huge success, and we are thrilled to do it again!

You'll remember that the idea for this event was born out of a desire to reach out and foster a relationship with people in our community—our immediate neighbors, preschool families, Scout families, as well as teachers and staff at Jeffreys Grove Elementary School. Since last year's block party, we've had multiple neighborhood families come and join us for worship and several family gatherings. In fostering these relationships, we are learning the needs of our neighbors and community and becoming better equipped for meaningful outreach.

There are many specific tasks to do, but apart from those, each of us is tasked with being present for our neighbors. We can do this by coming

to the block party and meeting and getting to know as many neighbors as we can! Here is an opportunity to get to know our neighbors by offering warm Christian hospitality to strangers who may one day become friends.

Admission is free for all, including a hot dog lunch with a vegetarian option available. There will be something for everyone: live music and a DJ, a bouncy house/slide, cornhole, giant Jenga, giant Connect Four, bubble machines, sno-cones, popcorn, a photo opportunity, face painting, the chance to sit in a fire truck, a drawing for a night out, and more!

What can you do? This is a big event, and we'll need everyone's help! Contact Cortney Babajtis at [outreach@bensonmemorialumc.org](mailto:outreach@bensonmemorialumc.org) if you'd like to volunteer for one of the following jobs: griller, help with set-up (on Saturday), help with clean-up, parking lot attendant, welcome table host, face painter,

photo opportunity host, game attendant, or bouncy house attendant. If you don't end up signing up for one of these jobs, we still need your help! Please plan to come and get to know our neighbors. We can't do this without you!

Our planning meetings will be Sunday, June 30, and Sunday, July 28 at 9:45 a.m. (immediately following Coffee & Fellowship), in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend.

If you'd like to contribute toward the cost of this event, you can do so online or by putting a check in the offering plate. Please make sure to put "block party" in the memo. Thank you!

Peace,

Cortney Babajtis  
Minister of Families & Outreach

## Leadership Nominations Form

Every church needs effective and healthy leaders in order to carry out its mission. Christian leaders are humble, mature, empathetic, have the mind of Christ, and also hearts shaped by the Holy Spirit. Christ calls leaders to serve the church in a variety of ways. No one person has the skills or even the interest in serving in every capacity. A diversity of leaders using their unique gifts as individuals to serve the whole creates the right environment from which the church might bear good fruit. We want to hear from you about your interest in serving the church.

[Click here to tell us how you will serve at Benson Memorial UMC.](#)

## Donate Your Summer Travel Toiletries

Traveling this summer? If you stay in lodging that still distributes small toiletry items, please save and donate them to our Women's Prison Ministry. We have a collection basket in credenza just inside the church office. Our ministry team will take your donations and package them as gifts to the moms-to-be we serve in the prison. Thank you for your support!

## Join the Postcard Party: A GOTV Event

Want to participate in a fun get-out-the-vote (GOTV) event? If so, there is going to be another nonpartisan postcard party at the church on Sunday, July 14, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. This time, through an organization called the [Environmental Voter Project](#) (EVP), we will be filling out and sending postcards to low-propensity voters in Florida who have identified the environment as their top priority. Contact Susan Brooks at [sebrks@bellsouth.net](mailto:sebrks@bellsouth.net) for more information.



**LIVING OUR FAITH**  
Faith and Democracy  
presented by Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland



## Faith and Democracy

July 24 | 7:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Gain and understanding of the Christian imperative for democracy and voting from Rev. Dr. Jennifer Copeland, Executive Director of the NC Council of Churches. Jennifer will explain how faith communities are uniquely positioned to staunch the wound of the unraveling of democracy and the disintegration of our shared covenant as members of society.

Join us for the discussion. Everyone is welcome!



[\(complete church calendar is here\)](#)

### Sunday, July 14

8:45 a.m., Worship Service  
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes  
11:00 a.m., Worship Service  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir  
12:15 p.m., Justice Choir

### Monday, July 15

7:00 p.m., Trustees Meeting  
7:00 p.m., SPRC Meeting

### Tuesday, July 16

2:00 p.m., Prayer Shawl Group

### Wednesday, July 17

7:00 a.m., Coffee and Prayer

### Sunday, July 21

#### Christmas in July

8:45 a.m., Worship Service  
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes  
11:00 a.m., Worship Service  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir  
12:15 p.m., Justice Choir

### Wednesday, July 24

7:00 p.m., Living Our Faith

### Sunday, July 28

8:45 a.m., Worship Service  
9:30 a.m., Coffee Fellowship  
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes  
11:00 a.m., Worship Service  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir  
12:15 p.m., Justice Choir

### Tuesday, July 30

10:00 a.m., Youth Summer  
Hangout at Drive Shack

### Wednesday, July 31

6:30 p.m., Summer Book Club

### Sunday, August 4

8:45 a.m., Worship Service  
9:45 a.m., Sunday School Classes  
11:00 a.m., Worship Service  
12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir  
12:15 p.m., Justice Choir