

THE BEACON

A Newsletter for Benson Memorial United Methodist Church

May 31, 2026

What Now?

by Pastor Alan Felton

The celebration of Easter is over. The excitement of Pentecost has passed. What now?

We are entering Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time is the span of Sundays that fall outside the high liturgical seasons of the Christian year. We have already experienced one span of Ordinary Time following the Baptism of the Lord and ending on Ash Wednesday. Now we are entering a second span that will last until Advent arrives.

Ordinary Time is not so designated because nothing happens during it. The “ordinary” simply refers to ordinal numbers that order the Sundays during this season—the First Sunday after Pentecost, the Second Sunday after Pentecost, etc. While we might experience a different pace of activity in Ordinary Time, this season is one in which we live the faith we believe.

So, what now? Where should our attention be placed during these next few months? How should we exercise

our faith and continue to follow Jesus? Let me offer three suggestions.

Wonder—The early days of the church following Pentecost were a time of awe as the Spirit filled the believers and miraculous works unfolded. Peter preached with great power. Many converts were made. The Spirit began to lead the first believers out of Jerusalem and into Judea and Samaria and eventually to the ends of the earth.

Be on the lookout now for what God is doing in this community today. What wonders and signs are taking place? How are you being changed as you deepen your relationship with Jesus?

Witness—Early Christians stood out in their communities because they lived differently from those in the surrounding culture. They not only said they believed in Jesus, but they demonstrated this belief by what they said and did. Paul taught the Philippians to “do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent,



children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world” (Philippians 2:14).

Pay attention to how you conduct yourself in worship on Sunday and how you live life the rest of the week. Are you letting the light of Jesus shine through you so others can see it, or are you allowing the world’s darkness to overwhelm and worry you?

Work—The work of the early church was focused on evangelism. The first believers were on fire for the Lord! They

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Welcome New Members

On March 17, we welcomed Steve Ramirez, Joseph Gakpo, and Isabella Gyimah in membership, and Joseph and Isabella's children, Joey and Jesilyn, in baptism to Christ's holy church.



Celebrating Our Preschool Teachers and Staff

by Cortney Babajtis

Last week, the Preschool Board had the joy of hosting our End-of-Year Preschool Lunch in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate and honor our incredible preschool teachers and staff. Each teacher and staff member was invited to enjoy a delicious lunch prepared and served by members of the Preschool Board as a small way of showing our deep love and appreciation for all they have poured into our children throughout this school year.

It was also a special time to celebrate Shannon Luxford and her retirement after twenty-six years of faithful service to the preschool ministry. Shannon's dedication, love, and care have touched countless children and families over the years, and we are so thankful for the lasting impact she has made.

We are truly blessed to have such an amazing preschool ministry filled with teachers and staff who genuinely care for each child. They take the time to nurture every child's unique gifts, interests, and needs, creating a safe and loving environment where children can grow and thrive. Their work is far more than a job—it is a ministry—and the love of God shines through all that they do. We give thanks for each of them and for the many ways they share Christ's love with our preschool families every single day.



BENSON MEMORIAL UMC'S

LIVING OUR FAITH

2026 LECTURE SERIES

Welcome to our Living Our Faith 2026 series! This summer, we're tackling tough questions and real-world issues through the lens of faith, compassion, and community action.

All events are open to the public. Each Living Our Faith event takes place from **7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall** at Benson Memorial UMC in Raleigh, NC.



10/
JUNE

WAR AND WITNESS

Biblical Perspective on Violence and Peace

Can war ever be a moral pursuit? What does the Bible teach us? Why do Christians have different opinions about violence and pacifism? How might Christians face the conflict in Iran?



24/
JUNE

NEVER INCOMPATIBLE

A History (and Future) of LGBTQ+ People in the UMC

A brief history of LGBTQ+ people in the United Methodist Church and the North Carolina Annual Conference and how things have changed in recent years—and where we need to go from here.



08/
JULY

THE LUMBEE FAIRNESS ACT

Are We Living in Canaan, or Seeing a Mirage in the Desert?

Come learn what the Lumbee tribe has not been given under federal recognition and, without land the federal government wants, what it has to offer to gain the rights that other tribes have.



22/
JULY

BUILDING A FAIRER NORTH CAROLINA

Environmental Justice in Action

How has North Carolina's recent data center boom directly impacted communities across the State, and what can community members can do to get involved? Find out at this session.



12/
AUGUST

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Exploring Cultures, Uniting Communities, Breaking Stereotypes

Dive into the rich cultures of various Latino countries, debunk stereotypes, and build stronger community bonds.

BENSON MEMORIAL UMC
4706 Creedmoor Road
Raleigh, NC 27612

FOR MORE INFO:

Scan the QR code or visit

BensonMemorialUMC.org/living-our-faith/





Our Summer Book Club starts soon so it's time to get reading and prepare to enjoy discussions of three great books.

Monday, June 29, 6:00 p.m., Youth Center
***Theo of Golden: A Novel* by Allen Levi**

This best-selling novel explores themes of generosity, community, and relationships as it follows a stranger named Theo who becomes fascinated with the pencil-drawn portraits of people he has never met hanging in a coffee shop in the small Southern town of Golden. Theo purchases the portraits with the intent to give each person depicted their portrait and learn the stories of their lives.

Wednesday, July 15, 6:00 p.m., Youth Center
***Marsha: The Joy and Defiance of Marsha P. Johnson* by Tourmaline**

This joyful biography of a legendary activist, artist, and music doesn't shy away from the difficulties faced by its pioneer of a subject, Marsha P. Johnson.

There at the beginning of the LGBTQ rights movement in 1969, Marsha chronicles Johnson's upbringing in New Jersey, her life on the streets of New York, her powerful work as an activist and inspiration to those around her—and how her faith in Jesus shaped her from the very beginning.

Wednesday, August 19, 6:00 p.m., Youth Center
***Mother Emanuel: Two Centuries of Race, Resistance, and Forgiveness in One Charleston Church* by Kevin Sack**

This startling work of nonfiction traces the history of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston as part of a study of Black life in Charleston through the Civil War and Civil Rights as well as the horror that unfolded at Mother Emanuel in June 2015 when the church was the site of an awful act of racially inspired violence during a Bible study where nine were killed.

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were not shy about telling everyone they could about Jesus. Even though doing this work put them in danger, the believers would not be silent. Persecution, violence, jail, even martyrdom could not slow down their work of evangelism.

Find at least one time over the summer to talk to someone about Jesus. You need not focus on trying to convert anyone. Simply tell what Jesus means to you. Talk about what difference he has made in your life. Do not be afraid, but simply speak the truth as you know it.

What now? In Ordinary Time, find ways to live your faith in a posture of wonder, faithful witness, and diligent work.

Campus Update

by Jerry Crenshaw

We had six volunteers at the May 16, 2026, campus cleanup session. We focused on the appearance of the Fellowship Hall and the front of the Sanctuary from Creedmoor Road. We removed weeds and vines from the chain-link fence at the top of the hill out front and from the banner sign panels down at street level. This improves the visibility of the church campus from the intersection of Creedmoor and Glenwood Avenue.

In addition, we vacuumed the leaves that had built up around the HVAC units that serve the office area of the Admin. Bldg. This improved air circulation around the units as we enter the summer heat.

The next campus cleanup is scheduled for June 20. This will be the last campus cleanup before the summer break. We will be removing many of the holly shrubs in the courtyard due to a scale infestation and will need many more volunteers to help with this effort.

Please mark your calendars and join us on June 20 from 9:00 a.m. to noon for meaningful fellowship while working on the appearance of our church and courtyard.

COMMUNITY GAME NIGHTS!

BENSON MEMORIAL UMC

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Looking for some midweek fun this summer?
Join us for our Community Nights in the Fellowship Hall
at 5:45 p.m. every first Wednesday. Enjoy a free dinner, laughter,
and connection for all ages at Community Game Night!
Whether you come with family, friends, or on your own,
there's something for everyone!



MUSIC BINGO

Each round of music bingo features a different music genre, fun prizes, lots of laughs, and something for every age.



Hotdogs (Vegetarian Option)



5:45pm - 8:00pm



CRAFTING

Come and get creative! We'll provide the supplies, you bring you creative juices and come ready for a fun and relaxing evening!



Pizza



5:45pm - 8:00pm



SPEED PUZZLING

Come for a fun challenge where teams will race to complete their puzzle first! No puzzle skill required - it's all just fun and games!



Lasagna and Salad



5:45pm - 8:00pm

For more information, contact Cortney Babajtis • outreach@bensonmemorialumc.org

Help Us Welcome Guests—Become an Outside Greeter!

Benson Memorial UMC is excited to bring back our outside greeter program for the summer. Our ushers do a wonderful job guiding people once they enter the church, but we believe that a warm welcome should start before guests even step inside. That's where our outside greeters come in—offering a friendly face, assistance, and hospitality right at the sidewalk.

If you're interested in serving as an outside greeter, please [sign up here](#). The head ushers for each Sunday will serve as coordinators, and if you have any questions, reach out to Tony Lockerman. Come be part of creating a welcoming first impression!

Save the Dates! Opportunities for Outreach

Block Party Planning Meeting

Sunday, June 28, 9:20–9:50 a.m. Fellowship Hall Room 101

Block Party Planning Meeting

Sunday, July 26, 9:20–9:50 a.m. Fellowship Hall Room 101

Block Party Setup

Saturday, August 22, 9:00 a.m., Courtyard



Join the Justice Choir this Summer

by Annie Roncolato

As our beloved Chancel Choir hangs up their robes for the summer, our Justice Choir will pick up the baton—and we need your voice (no robe required)!

You don't need any musical training or experience, and you don't have to commit to singing every week. The Justice Choir needs people who have a desire to raise their voice for justice, to advocate for the full inclusion of all God's children, to work for racial and economic equity, and to protect the earth. Talented musicians and beautiful voices are not needed, but rather people of faith who want to show God's love to the world as Jesus showed us.

To join the choir, all you have to do is show up early to the 10 a.m. service. We will learn an easy song at 9:15 a.m. and then sing it during the worship service. If you can't make it until after Sunday School but still want to sing, just show up when you can. All music will be provided. The choir will sing each week during the summer beginning on Sunday, June 14.

Come raise your voice, however loud, soft, low, high, on-key, or off-key it is! Contact Director of Music Ministries Annie Roncolato (musicdirector@bensonmemorialumc.org) with questions. I look forward to seeing you there!



[Full calendar is here.](#)

Sunday, May 31

8:45 a.m., Children's Sunday School
8:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class
9 a.m., Coffee Fellowship
10 a.m., Worship Service
11:15 a.m., Benson Discussion Class
11:15 a.m., Bright Siders Class

Wednesday, June 3

7:15 a.m., Coffee and Prayer
11 a.m., Lay Pastors Meeting
5:45 p.m., Community
Dinner & Bingo Night

Sunday, June 7

8:45 a.m., Children's Sunday School
8:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class
10 a.m., Worship Service
11:15 a.m., Benson Discussion Class
11:15 a.m., Bright Siders Class
11:15 a.m., Justice Choir Rehearsal
3 p.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry

Monday, June 8

7 p.m., SPRC Meeting

Tuesday, June 9

5:15 p.m., Women's Prison Visit

Wednesday, June 10

1:30 p.m., Preschool Board Meeting
7 p.m., Living Our Faith Talk
*(War and Witness: Biblical
Perspective on Violence and Peace)*

Sunday, June 14

8:45 a.m., Children's Sunday School
8:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class
10 a.m., Worship Service
11:15 a.m., Benson Discussion Class
11:15 a.m., Bright Siders Class
11:15 a.m., Justice Choir Rehearsal

Monday, June 15

1:30 p.m., Susanna Wesley Group
7 p.m., Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, June 16

2 p.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry
7 p.m., Finance Committee

Wednesday, June 17

7:15 a.m., Morning Coffee
and Prayer (Zoom)



Father's Day Carnations

**The Susanna Wesley Group will be taking orders
for Father's Day carnations through Sunday, June 14.**

Carnations may be ordered for \$5 each, in memory (white) or in honor (red) of a member's father.

The ordered carnations will be used for the altar arrangement on Father's Day, June 21.

After the service, the arrangement will be shared with a senior living location. Proceeds from the sale of the carnations will go toward the Susanna Wesley Scholarship Fund or one of their mission projects.

Name of person placing order: _____

In memory of (white): _____

In honor of (red): _____

Number of carnations: red: _____ white: _____

Cost: \$5.00 each Total enclosed: _____

Please place in the offering plate or mail to
Benson Memorial UMC, 4706 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, NC 27612.
Make checks (marked "Father's Day carnations") payable to Benson Memorial United Methodist Church.
Indicate on envelope of cash payments that it is for Father's Day carnation orders.

