



Wesley Memorial Methodist Church

Missions and Community Impact Newsletter

The purpose of Wesley Memorial is to make and sustain spiritually healthy followers of Jesus Christ who live in ways that transform the world

2025 Mission Team Members

Charles Surles Chair
Ken Guldedge Vice-Chair

Lisa Cheek Member
Pat Colonna Member
Mary Drummond Member
Matt Heald Member
Brook Moore Member
April Maines Member
Becky Scholtz Member
Buddy Wilson Member

Brenda Coates At Large
Sydney Harris At Large

Rev. Ken Lyon ... Staff Liaison
David Adams Lay Leader

Upcoming Events

Community Impact Day
March 22nd

Rise Against Hunger Meal
Packaging - March 9th

Classic Car Show
TBD

Food Collection - 1st Sunday
March 2nd

Western North Carolina Update

Boots on the Ground with Fellow Missionaries

Ken Guldedge and Joe Lorber recently drove to Avery County in Western North Carolina to meet with a number of people who are heavily invested in and actively involved with the relief efforts happening in the county. Avery County is in the heart of the impacted area and is poor.

The first person that we met was Brandy Boone who is a resident of Elk Park. Brandy is an exceptional young lady with a “getter done” attitude that allows her to touch many people in her community. Her background, among others, is that before Helene she ran a local animal rescue center. After the storm subsided, she could be found driving around the town looking for lost or strayed animals. Avery County has no animal control enforcement so when people left sometimes they left their animals behind. As she visited homes to help the animals she noticed that a lot of the people needed help also. At that point she not only continued with animal rescue but started human rescue by bringing food, water and other supplies to people in need. At one point, Laura Trump found out about her efforts and had a bus loaded with supplies sent to Brandy.

We became aware of her through a contact and wanted to meet with her. What drew our attention was the fact that she was involved with propane distribution through **3 Nails Hardware** and **Blue Ridge Propane**.

A number of people have lost their homes due to washing away or tree damage, having water enter the heating system and ruining it, earlier loss of electricity (which is currently mostly on), etc. There are a large number of people who have found living quarters in campers. The issue is that with sub zero or very low temperatures and the campers not being well insulated, they go through a lot of propane. One 20 or 30 (think gas grill) pound tank may will only keep them warm for one to two days. Brandy has been instrumental in organizing “free propane fill ups” through 3 Nails Hardware and Blue Ridge Propane.

Both of these vendors have established funds to collect donations which will purchase a tank or two of propane. Social media is used to advise people of when to come

3 Nails Hardware added propane sales at their store a few years ago to generate income over the winter months when business is slow due to people leaving their summer homes to go south. They receive needy customers and offer free propane a couple of times per month.

Blue Ridge Propane has been a dealer in the local area serving their customers for numbers of years. Bottom line, they know the people they are dealing with and the situations they are facing.

The benefits of dealing with them is that they know who is truly needy, good price,
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WNC Update, continued

and home delivery. This is a blessing for the elderly, single women, etc. We will be funding both of these programs with at least \$2,000 each per month.

The next program that we are looking into is that of helping to provide basic mental health services/ counseling to residents of the area. Our contact in Elk Park related the story of delivering food and pet supplies to a resident and as she delivered the supplies the lady broke down and cried. She lost her house and most of her possessions and was obviously overwhelmed. Her situation is not uncommon.

Mental health services are scarce if not absent in many places in North Carolina and especially in areas recovering from disasters such as these. We are in the beginning stages of seeing what makes sense to do after exploring what the local and state governments can provide.

Recently, the Missions Committee held a ZOOM call with David Burke who is the president of the Seaboard Lions Club in Seaboard, NC (near Roanoke Rapids). Their club sent 200 volunteers to Elk Park at Thanksgiving (they called it "Operation Thanksgiving Blessings") and served 5,000 meals at a Thanksgiving dinner. They also sent volunteers out to visit the area rest homes and the elderly shut-ins with meals and shared their witnesses.

They are planning another event to which we have been invited to help. Using the Newland Agricultural Center they plan on providing counseling on Good Friday morning thru the evening. Then on Saturday morning there will be an Easter egg hunt followed by bands (bluegrass probably), comedians, a DJ and other things. Their plans will also be to reach out to all of Avery County assisted living facilities especially that weekend.

Plans for this event are being formulated and we will keep you updated as we get the information. There may be opportunities for us (congregation) to join with this club to help staff the event or other jobs as the planning progresses. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Missions Committee members.



Propane fill up at 3 Nails
Hardware in Newland



Free propane fill-up station

Upcoming Local, Hands-on Mission Event

Community Impact Day

The missions committee is excited to tell you about a unique upcoming mission event for the entire family.

The plan is to have volunteers arrive at church for a short kick off program, then leave in teams of 6-8 going to an assigned partner for a brief overview of what they do in the community. Then participate in a hands on, needed task in their facility which should last only about 2 1/2 - 3 hours.

The projects that they select will be age friendly for everyone from children to adults.

Most of service providers attending will be our "deep level partners" that we have worked with for many years They are:

Macedonia Family Resource Center Programs and services include HP Library Technology Access Point, Food Pantry, after school programs, girls dance teams, Community events, baseball teams, etc.

West End Ministries - Operates a women's shelter, thrift store, educational tutoring, emergency assistance, women's winter shelter, senior activities among others.

Open Door Ministries - Operates the men's shelter in High Point, provides meal service including lunch and dinner, emergency assistance, community food pantry, Cassell Transitional House.

Horsepower A therapeutic horse riding program that focuses on special needs children and veterans and others with PTSD. Please visit our horse Cassie when you go.

Fairview school - a local school in High Point that we have partnered with for many years.

Commander Peace Academy A local program that acts as a deterrent for children that might become influenced by local gangs. They operate a signature Boxing Program for boys and girls, after school tutoring, evening meals, outings, etc.

The event is currently scheduled for Saturday, March 22nd from 8am until about 12.

Watch the bulletin and other publications from the church for exact, up to the minute details regarding registration, partner selection, and other necessary details.

This should be a lot of fun!

Watch for sign up and more information

Update from Camp Linn-Haven

On the trip to the Newland and Elk Creek area of the mountains, we stopped by at Camp Linn Haven which was one of the recipients of the Christmas offering. This camp has been instrumental in the faith formation of Wesley youth for over 35 years and is the site of where many of the youth found and committed their lives to Christ. A number of the middle high alumni are still members of our congregation.

As you may remember, Hurricane Helene severely damaged all of the 16 cabins, the camp kitchen, dining hall, chapel and other buildings and residences.

Immediately after the storm subsided plans were

formulated to begin recovery. Calls went out to their supporters and, quite honestly, calls were answered from a number of alumni and the process of reclaiming the property began.

When we talked to the camp director we were told that there were work teams scheduled for every week through April. With the proceeds from insurance and gifts from churches like Wesley, they are beginning to feel very confident that the programs can begin in May. There may still be small projects to be completed but the property is safe, comfortable and staff will be available.



Paying It Forward

Recently, a friend gave me a most unusual cross. He knew that I was involved with the relief effort in Western North Carolina and that it would have special significance to me. He was right.

Wanting to know more about the artist I started to ask around and quickly discovered that it was crafted by one of our members - Tom Ullman. Turns out that Tom is an accomplished wood worker and has shown his work at our Christmas Bazaar a number of times.

I contacted him and he was very open about selling these crosses with part of the proceeds going to the Western North Carolina relief effort. He said that it was his way of "paying it forward" by using his skills and concern for our neighbors. Thank you, Tom and Carol.

If you are interested in these at objects or any of the other pieces that he has in his collection, Tom can be reached at 336-906-4273



Carol and Tom in the workshop



One of the many crosses crafted by Tom.
This one stands 6" with the exposed
wood lighter than shown



Although this tree was not spared by Hurricane Helene on September 27th, 2024 in the mountains of North Carolina, it can now live on with the memory of Good is good. The artist, Tom Ullman, is donating proceeds back to the High Country community.

“Thank you” letter from Weaverville UMC

Ken,

Please share this message with your mission committee and congregation. We are forever thankful for your leadership and the partnership with Wesley Memorial following Helene.

The lives and landscape of much of Western North Carolina were dramatically altered on the morning of Friday, September 27. Over the past four months, we have navigated the initial emergency response, stabilized the community in December, and begun the long-term recovery process that will continue for years to come.

When I lived in Charlotte, my family attended Matthews United Methodist Church, where Pastor Ken Lyon encouraged me to engage in the Global Missions committee and undergo Disaster Early Responder training. This training and experience in disaster relief became invaluable in the immediate days following Hurricane Helene. I had witnessed the devastation of hurricanes and tornadoes before, but nothing could have prepared me for what I saw in our community.

In the aftermath, our situation was dire. Entire communities were cut off. Power was out for weeks. Municipal water systems were decimated, and private wells were rendered useless without power, communication systems such as phones and internet failed. Fuel was scarce, grocery stores were closed, and outside emergency resources were nowhere in sight. Three major interstates leading into the mountains were impassable. We were isolated, left to fend for ourselves for nearly a week.

In desperation, I called Ken Lyon, pleading for help. And Wesley Memorial answered that call with speed, generosity, and an outpouring of love that moved me to tears. I will never forget the moment I saw Ken and Lydia pulling up in a truck packed with critical supplies, it was the first glimmer of hope we had seen in those dark days.

Wesley Memorial became one of our most crucial partners in the recovery efforts. Within the first week, you sent a truck loaded with lifesaving essential food, water, baby supplies—at a time when few stores were open, and those that were required cash that many did not have. Your church continued to send box trucks filled with heaters, propane, chainsaws, generators, and other desperately needed items, ensuring that families

could survive and begin the process of rebuilding.

At Weaverville UMC, while we were spared from flooding, our town suffered massive tree damage, making roads impassable. People streamed in from surrounding areas, searching for basic necessities. In those early days, we operated a drive-thru relief station, handing out food and water. But as the scope of need became clearer, we pivoted to an outreach model, delivering supplies directly to those who could not reach us. Your contributions allowed us to stock Community Centers and remote churches, ensuring aid reached the most isolated areas—Reems Creek, Barnardsville, Marshall, Burnsville, and Pensacola, a remote community devastated by flooding and landslides.

Through December, we continued distributing supplies, shifting focus to heaters and propane as bitter winter temperatures set in. The storm's devastation extended beyond the immediate destruction—it also resulted in lost jobs and wages, leaving families struggling long after the floodwaters receded. The demand for food and heat has only grown in the months since.

As we transitioned into the recovery phase, Wesley Memorial remained at our side, providing essential funding for rebuilding projects. These projects take time to coordinate, but your support along with others made them possible. Here are just a few examples of the lives you helped rebuild:

- Buncombe County School Employee: A staff member caring for a disabled spouse lost their driveway in the storm, leaving their home nearly inaccessible. Thanks to a generous paving company providing materials at cost, we restored their access.
- A Child in Crisis: A young child lost her home to flooding and, in the wake of the storm, also lost her mother, who had been ill. Your donations provided her with a new bed and a small sense of stability.
- Asheville Schools Bus Driver: After losing their rental home to flooding, this grandparent and grandchild spent weeks in a campground and then a church shelter. In December, they finally secured a new home but had nothing to furnish it. Thanks to you, they now have a dryer, bedding, and a mattress.

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Thank you letter from Weaverville UMC - cont'd

- Barnardsville Family: A couple with two small children lost their ability to earn a living—the mother, an artist, saw her studio ripped from its foundation; the father, a musician, lost work as tourism and events dried up. Your support is helping us rebuild the foundation of the art studio so they can rebuild and regain financial stability.

Wesley Memorial, you made a difference in the lives of people across Buncombe County, Madison County, and West Yancey County. Without the outside support we received, our church alone would not have had the resources to provide for our community. You stood in the gap, answering our cry for help and showing

up again and again. The monetary value of what you have given is beyond measure, but the impact you have made is even greater. I enjoyed meeting each of you that came to deliver supplies and send our thanks to all those that worked behind the scenes to help our community.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you. Your kindness, generosity, and unwavering support have changed lives, and we are forever grateful.

With deep gratitude,

Renee Weaver

Hurricane Helene Disaster Response Coordinator
Weaverville United Methodist Church

How About those Wesley Youth?

One of our partners, Fairview School, is a Title 1 school. This designation indicates that the federal government supplements state and local education funding for low-income students. This takes many forms but one of the most obvious is that students qualify for free or reduced cost lunches. Without this assistance many students would sit out lunch. The downside is that these children are still growing and their bodies need food. Without adequate nutrition their brains do not work as well which causes them to perform and learn at a reduced level. Following that, a number of other medical issues start to appear.

Long school breaks can be a real problem in that, for many, there is not enough food or food is of the wrong type at home while the guardian(s) are at work during

the day.

Wesley addresses this problem by providing take-home food in what has been termed “back packs”.

During two Sundays in December we gathered food to be used in these “back packs”. Wesley youth volunteered their time to put the food in the bags using an assembly line approach. These food kits were given to the recipient students before they went home for Christmas break. Over 120 bags were produced and were delivered to Fairview. If you know any of the students who worked on the project, please thank them, give them a pat on the back or just tell them that you appreciate their efforts.

They are certainly transforming the world of the students at Fairview Elementary!

