



JUNE-JULY-AUGUST 2026

From the Pastor



The Rev. Richard Moeller

One of the things I like about living in the country is the number of animals that call our back yard “home.” There are birds of all kinds. There are deer and fox and raccoons and skunks and possums and bunnies and squirrels and chipmunks and even the occasional bear. There was even a fisher that wandered through one day.

Just the other day there were two black birds, a cardinal, two sparrows, two chipmunks, two squirrels, a crow, and two doves in the back yard at the same time. It was interesting to watch them as they picked at some of the things we threw out into the back yard and the birds visiting the feeders. The amazing thing about this scene was not one of them was complaining about their feathers, or their fur, or the food in the feeders, or which tree they were going to perch in.

It reminded me of the text from Matthew 6:26 where Jesus says He will take care of all those critters just like He takes care of you and me.

There was a blackbird and a dove on the same feeder at the same time. As I watched, they never once argued about whose bird seed it was. They never once tried to run the other away. As a matter of fact, they were eating side-by-side for a little while. They were sharing the table, as it were. And the squirrel underneath the feeder was enjoying the seeds the two birds kicked over the side.

It was truly a wonder to watch all this going on. On the other hand, it made me a little sad.

Please see Moeller, page 3

Growing Together in Faith and Community

Spring has brought new life to **The Lord’s Garden**, and we are grateful for everyone who came out to help with this year’s planting. This ministry continues to bless our community by providing fresh produce throughout the season, and your hands and hearts make it possible. As the garden grows, so does our shared commitment to serving others in Christ’s name.

If you haven’t visited our church website lately, now is a great time to explore the



Sermons page. Each week’s message is posted with a clear outline to help you reflect, study, and stay connected—even when you can’t be in worship. It’s a simple way to revisit the Scripture, follow the themes, and carry the week’s teaching into your daily life. Contact the office if you would like to have a red hymnal to use at home.

As we look ahead, we invite

you to stay connected, stay prayerful, and stay engaged. God is moving in our congregation — shaping us, guiding us, and calling us to shine His light in all we do. Concord is more than a church building; it is a family of believers growing together in grace.

May we continue to follow Christ with open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

Africa University Restarts Lifesaving Malaria Program with Help from Global Ministries

Africa University has reopened its vital malaria research program after an unexpected loss of federal funding forced operations to shut down earlier this year. Thanks to an emergency support grant from the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the Zimbabwe Entomological Support Program in Malaria

(ZENTO) is once again fully active and serving communities across eastern Zimbabwe.

ZENTO plays a crucial role in Zimbabwe’s fight against falciparum malaria, a disease that threatens nearly 70% of the nation’s population. Working in partnership with the Ministry of Health’s National Malaria Control Program, the team

provides data-driven strategies that guide mosquito-control efforts, track insecticide resistance, and support outbreak response. Their work has been especially important in high-burden districts like Mutasa, where Africa University is located.

Continued on Page 3

Financial Update

Financial Update

The checking account reconciliation for the end of April showed an unencumbered operating balance of \$17,673.

On UMCOR Sunday, we collected \$275 to send to UMF of WV to be used for UMCOR Administration costs.

Our 2026 apportionment is \$19,341, and we have paid to date \$8,336, leaving us a total of \$11,005 to pay. Thank you to all who have contributed this year. We are really in good shape for this year.

The 2026 District Fund of \$725 has been fully paid.

A \$21,000 deposit was made to the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia for our Endowment Fund. This leaves \$39,500 remaining to repay the funds used for the roof replacement.

The church's assets include trust funds and endowments managed by the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia. The 1Q2026 statement reflected an ending balance of \$262,671. The Joseph F. Marsh, Jr. TUW FBO account was valued at \$498,910 at the end of the first quarter. Each trust fund has specific designated purposes for how its resources may be used.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Church Committee and Council meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 19. Council and Committee members, please save the date.

Young Writer's Contest 2026

Athens Elementary Facebook

Amelia McKenna won 1st place for the 5th - 6th division in the Mercer County Young Writer's Contest, and she was able to attend the state Young Writers Ceremony.

She enjoyed a wonderful Young Writers Day at the University of Charleston. West Virginia author and illustrator Rosalie Haizlett opened the event with an inspiring keynote, followed by engaging writing workshops throughout the day. We are so proud of Amelia! 🌟



The Season of Pentecost: Growing in the Spirit



Each year, the Church enters the long and vibrant Season of Pentecost—a time when we remember that the Holy Spirit not only came *once* in wind and flame, but continues to breathe life into the Church today. Pentecost begins with the dramatic story from Acts 2, when the Spirit Many call this moment the “birthday of the Church,” because from that day forward, the followers of Jesus became a Spirit-filled community on mission.

After Pentecost Sunday, the Church moves into the longest season of the Christian year. Marked by the color **green**, this season symbolizes growth, life, and the steady work of discipleship. While Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter focus on the major events of Jesus' life, the Season of Pentecost focuses on **our life**—how we live out Christ's teachings in our daily routines, our relationships,

Throughout these months, we are invited to pay attention to the quiet, persistent work of the Spirit: shaping our character, deepening our faith, and nudging us toward compassion, justice, and mercy. It is a season that reminds us that the Church's mission is not confined to a single day or celebration. Instead, it unfolds in the ordinary moments where we choose kindness, offer help, speak hope, and share God's love.

As we journey through this season together, may we remain open to the Spirit's leading. May our lives bear the fruit of God's grace, and may our congregation continue to grow—rooted in Christ, strengthened by the Spirit, and reaching out in love to our community.

Themes:

Growing in grace;
Learning the teachings of Jesus;
Practicing compassion, justice and service; and
Supporting new disciples in their faith journey.

Southern District Gathers for Chaplain's Deployment

By Audrey Stanton-Smith

May 13, 2026

Church members from throughout the Southern District gathered on the afternoon of May 3 to pray for the safe deployment and return of Chaplain (Maj) Christopher W. "Chip" Bennett. Bennett has served as the Southern District superintendent for five years and is being deployed to the Middle East in early July.

The "Hail and Godspeed" celebration of ministry — hosted by United Methodist Temple, Beckley, and organized and led by district lay leaders, servants, ministers, and speakers — also welcomed retired Rev. Dr. Ellis Conley, who is slated to serve as interim district superintendent for the year Bennett will be away.

"Both of these gentlemen and their families have lots of courage," said Bishop Debra Wallace-Padget, who used Mark 1:16-20 as the basis for her meditation on "Courage



for the Unknown."

We can take courage from the reality that Jesus goes with us," Wallace-Padget said. "In addition to the family and friends around you, Christ is with you. We can face the unknown with courage because Jesus is with us."

Retired Col. Randall Isom, a CLM from United Methodist Temple, spoke about his personal experience with Army chaplains and the critical importance of Bennett's job.

"He is like a stethoscope listening to the health of the organization," Isom said, emphasizing the importance of spiritual issues and the human condition of soldiers, especially during a time of war.

Other certified lay ministers, servants and speakers from churches throughout the Southern District led the congregation in prayer, Scripture readings and singing. A reception followed.

ZENTO: Fighting Against Malaria

(Africa, from page 1)

Earlier this year, the program lost more than \$900,000 in support when U.S. foreign-aid infrastructure was dismantled, forcing staff reductions and the temporary closure of the university's research lab. The timing could not have been worse: heavy rains created ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes, causing malaria cases to surge.

Global Ministries' emergency grant has allowed the university to reopen the lab, restore staffing, and resume field operations across seven districts. Program director Dr. Sungano Mharukurwa described the renewed support as "the return of hope to millions in Zimbabwe," restoring the

possibility of turning the tide against a disease that still claims nearly 600,000 lives worldwide each year, most of them African children.

This renewed partnership also strengthens Africa University's mission as a pan-African institution of excellence, training the next generation of scientists and public-health leaders. The story is a powerful reminder of how United Methodist giving—especially through the Africa University Fund apportionment—helps equip students and sustain ministries that save lives and transform communities across the continent.

(Moeller, from page 1)

I wonder why all these different critters can get along, and eat together, and co-exist, and be together and sometimes humans have a hard time doing that?

I wonder why we have a hard time sharing the things we have and sharing the table with others. In the back yard there were critters of all sizes and shapes. In our lives there are all kinds of people.

Maybe we should look in our backyards a little more often and learn something from the critters!!

Yours in Christ,



Calendar



Recurring Dates
June-July-August

Sunday Worship
11 AM – Worship

Roots & Wings Children's Church
2nd and 4th Sundays of each month
11 AM – Worship

Thursday Night Yoga
6 PM — Anderson Hall

Special Dates
June-July-August

Saturday, June 6
8 AM — Men's Breakfast
Anderson Hall

Saturday, July 3
8 AM — Men's Breakfast
Anderson Hall

JULY 4TH – 250 Birthday!

Sunday, July 19
Church Council Meetings
2 PM — Trustees
3 PM — Finance Committee
4 PM — Administrative Council

Saturday, July 25
1 – 6 PM — New Vision Depot
Team scheduled to work

Saturday, August 1
8 AM — Men's Breakfast
Anderson Hall

Princeton Parish Project Collection
June – canned vegetables
July – canned meat: tuna, chicken, etc.
August – dry cereal, instant oatmeal, canned milk
September – boxed macaroni and cheese



Church staff

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Richard Moeller

Church Secretary:

Jayne Ford Jones

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Athens-Concord Town Social

The Athens-Concord Town Social is back this August, celebrating the strong partnership between Concord University and the Town of Athens, West Virginia. This beloved annual event brings together students, residents, and local organizations for an afternoon of fellowship, food, and fun in the heart of the community.

Hosted on the Concord campus and surrounding town spaces, the Town Social highlights the shared spirit that makes Athens a welcoming home for both lifelong residents and the Mountain Lions who study and serve here. Visitors can enjoy live music, local vendors, games, and opportunities to connect with campus and civic leaders.

Sponsored by Concord University and the Town of Athens, the event continues a tradition of unity and celebration that reflects the best of small-town West Virginia life.



SAVE THE DATE – SUNDAY, AUGUST 23



CONCORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

109 Vermillion Street
 P.O. Box 746
 Athens, WV 24712-0746

Roots & Wings



Children's Church
 2nd & 4th Sundays