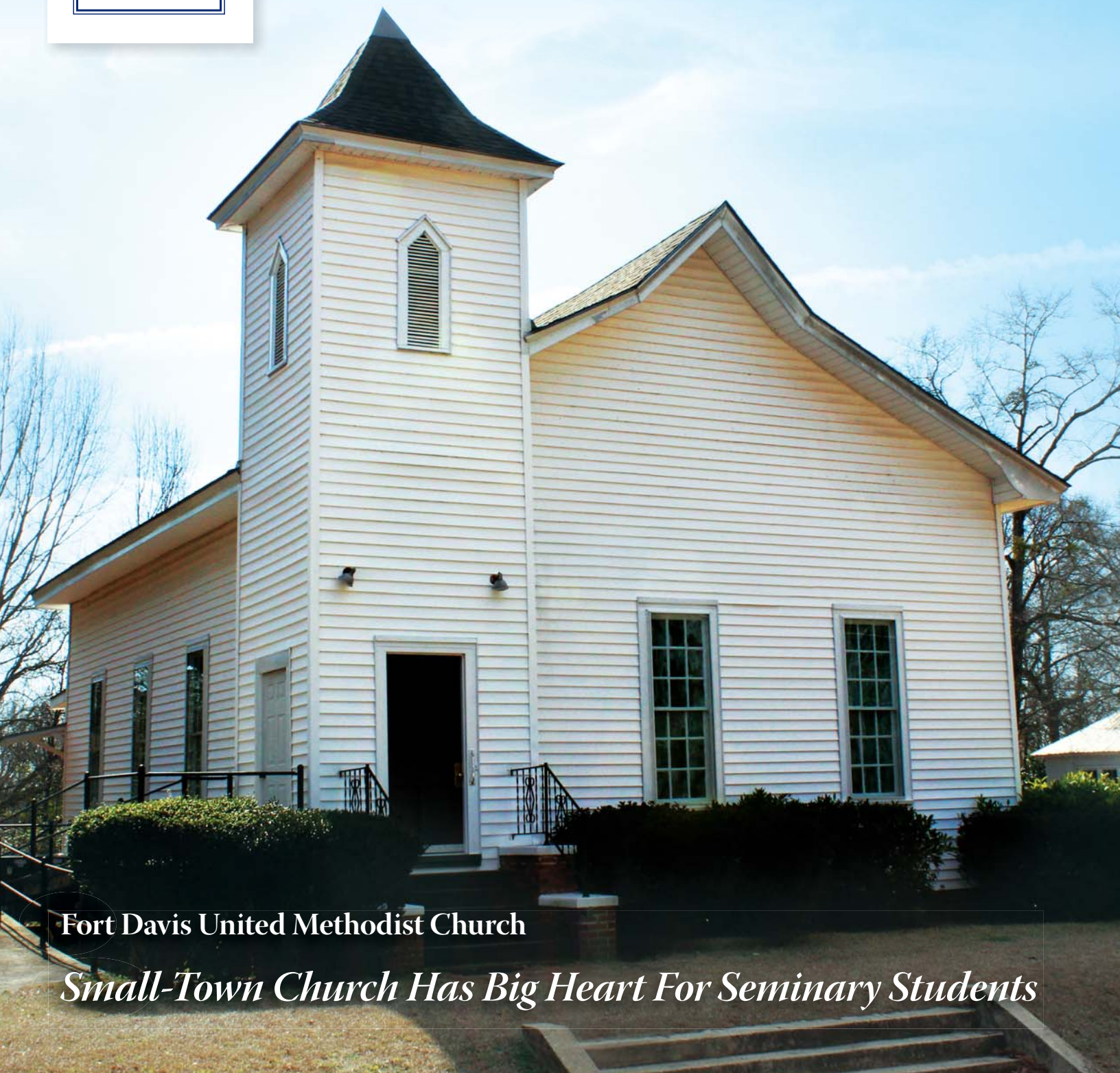


Spring 2014



STEGALL
SEMINARY
SCHOLARSHIP
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FOUNDATION



Fort Davis United Methodist Church

Small-Town Church Has Big Heart For Seminary Students

Fort Davis Ranks Number 3 Among 635 Churches in Support of Seminary Students!

One of the most beautiful small membership churches in the state of Alabama is the Fort Davis United Methodist Church, located just off Highway 29 on the southern border of Macon County. The church was built in 1902. The shellac on the paneling and altar rail was made personally by George Washington Carver, who at that time was a 38 year old soon-to-be world famous scientist at Tuskegee Institute.

For 112 years, the church has played a prominent part in the spiritual lives of individuals from Fort Davis and the nearby Seaboard Railroad communities of Armstrong, Roba, and Downs. However, like so many other small membership churches scattered across rural Alabama, the church suffered dramatically when, through the years, members followed their jobs to urban areas. As a result, the attendance at the morning worship service decreased to approximately 12 on any given Sunday. During those difficult years, it was not surprising that the leaders of the church made the decision to remove and store some of the pews, giving the congregation more room in the sanctuary.

However, under the pastoral leadership of Reverend Keith Turner, something almost miraculous began to happen within that church a couple of years ago. Faithful members began to take a more active interest in the church. These long-time members began to practice radical hospitality to those who moved into that area. Being located only 6 miles north of the famous Sedgefield Plantation where the National Championship Field Trials for bird dogs are held each year, people in other states began to hear about the great quail hunting in that area and chose to relocate near Fort Davis. Now the church is reaping the reward of having so many loyal, long-time members joining hands with energetic and enthusiastic newcomers, and the results are impressive. During the month of January, there was the wonderful sound of a hammer as a building contractor moved pews back into the sanctuary to make room for worshippers on Sunday morning. Now that they have enough pews to accommodate their increased attendance, there is a great sense of excitement and enthusiasm among all of the members. This small membership church that once struggled to survive now gives very generously to support various mission projects. It is amazing that the Fort Davis United Methodist Church ranks No. 3 among all of the 635 churches of the Alabama-West Florida Conference in their support of seminary students.

When asked, "What has brought about this change in the life of the Fort Davis church?" the church treasurer, Jimmy Bassett, was quick to give credit to their pastor, Keith Turner, and his wife, Rhonda. "They both have given great leadership."

Russell Evans Elebash, celebrating her first year as a member, not only gives credit to the wonderful pastoral leadership, but adds, "The church has a family atmosphere. Everybody cares about each other. I love everyone in the church!"

Frankie Davis Kenney, the church historian, speaks highly of the positive influence of newcomers like Charles and Heather Klinck, "Charles won't take 'No' for an answer. He meets people at various social events like the field trials and invites them to church. He is very persistent."

Rev. Turner is quick to give all of the credit to the members, "These good people got excited and started to carry out the Great Commission by inviting others from the community to the church. They believe in doing ministry the way Jesus did. They reach out to people where they are and minister to them. They are very loving, caring, non-judgmental, and accepting of others."

It is not unusual now, on any given Sunday morning, to see pick-ups pulling horse trailers lined up in front of the church (Highway 2), ready to go to the sedge fields of northern Bullock and southern Macon Counties as soon as the pastor pronounces the benediction.

The Stegall Seminary Scholarship Foundation is a 501(C)(3) non-profit foundation, and all gifts are tax deductible. Gifts for our Seminary students should be mailed to Dr. Karl K. Stegall, Seminary Scholarship Foundation, P. O. Box 241661, Montgomery, Alabama 36124-1661.

These students, and others, supported through your gifts!



Duke Divinity School Students with Bishop and Mrs. Paul Leeland Following his Speaking Engagement at Duke Chapel

Left to right: Ashley Douglas, *Lynn Haven*; Thomas Irby, *Lynn Haven*; Rhett Butler, *Eclectic*; Bishop Paul L. Leeland, Janet Leeland; Colby Leonard, *Coker*; Austin Rogers, *Lynn Haven*; Drew Willis, *Livingston*



Students at Candler School of Theology, Emory University

Left to right: Brandon Bures, *Dothan*; Woods Lisenby, *Dothan*; Brady Baird, *Jackson*; Levi Gardner, *Gulf Shores*; and Ryan Martin, *Wewahitchka*

Students from Asbury Theological Seminary



Mike Cobb
Montgomery



Teresa Gilland
Niceville



Faith Parry
Niceville

Meet one of our new students beginning Seminary Journey in August



Thom Dumas, a native of Grove Hill, will attend Asbury Theological Seminary. Currently serving as the Director

of Youth and Missions at FUMC Eufaula, Ala., Thom is a 2007 graduate of The University of Mobile with a B.S. degree in Theology.





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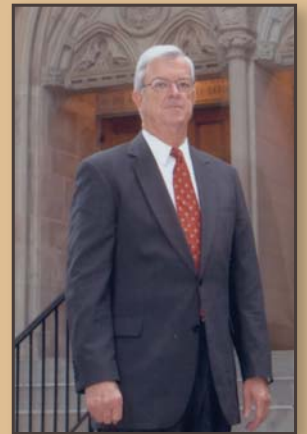
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“RED”

They called him “RED!” When he was born on August 25, 1909 in New Brockton, Ala., his parents gave him the name of “Charles Henry Hildreth,” but among Methodists of the Alabama-West Florida Conference for over half a century, he was affectionately known as “Red.” When “Red” was a teenage boy attending New Brockton High School, he fell in love with Jesus Christ and the church and became an ordained minister. With a heart aflame with the good news of Jesus Christ and a strong desire to serve wherever he was appointed, Red served churches all across this Conference--Bolling, Plantersville, Fort Deposit, Opp, Lafayette Street in Dothan, Gadsden Street in Pensacola, Capitol Heights in Montgomery, and Fort Walton, as well as serving as the Demopolis District Superintendent. While at Fort Walton, he was instrumental in starting the Navarre United Methodist Church.



In addition to his great effectiveness as a pastor, one thing that stood out about “Red” was the encouragement that he gave to teenagers and young adults to consider God’s call upon their lives to enter the ordained ministry. Both Asbury and Emory Theological Seminaries recognized him for leading over 40 individuals to serve as pastors within our Conference. He genuinely felt that the greatest “calling” for any individual was the call of God upon their lives to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the local churches that he served, as well as the summer camps that he directed, Red was very intentional in nudging teenagers to answer a “higher calling.”

As I reflect upon this great servant who died in 1986, I do not know of any greater need today within our denomination than for more “Red” Hildreths to appear upon our scene to encourage young adults within our churches to discern God’s “higher calling.” Red’s spirit lives on in the life of his daughter, Marjorie Ann, who is married to the Reverend Walter Ellisor, and his grandson, Charles Cummings, who serves as the associate pastor at the Auburn United Methodist Church. His spirit also lives on in over 40 aging pastors of this Conference that he encouraged along the way. I am so grateful that my license to preach has a signature written in a bright red ink, “Charles Henry ‘Red’ Hildreth.”

Karl K. Stegall