



**SCHOLARSHIP ALUMNI FAITHFULLY SERVE OTHERS  
FOLLOWING THE DEVASTATION OF HURRICANE MICHAEL**

# To Serve the Present Age



STEGALL  
SEMINARY  
SCHOLARSHIP  
ENDOWMENT  
FOUNDATION

# TO SERVE THE PRESENT AGE



*The parsonage of Port St. Joe UMC, where Dr. Geoffrey Lentz and his family lived. They have been able to find another home in Port St. Joe. Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Lentz.*



*Rev. Craig Carter, pastor of Lynn Haven UMC, shows Bishop David Graves some of the damage his church suffered during Hurricane Michael. Photo courtesy of Luke Lucas.*

On Wednesday, October 10, Hurricane Michael made landfall. Many areas within the bounds of the Alabama-West Florida Conference were impacted significantly by this category 4 storm.

Many of the ministers and churches that experienced the most significant damage were all at one time recipients of gifts through either the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Endowment Foundation, or of the foundation's predecessor "Faith Promise" program that was channeled through Montgomery First United Methodist Church. These ministers have been some of the most faithful supporters of the Stegall Foundation in both word and deed, including: Nathan Attwood, John Blount, Craig Carter, Geoffrey Lentz, Doug Pennington, Jack Stanley, and the late Steve Rascoe.

One of the communities severely impacted was Marianna, Fla. Nothing could prepare Marianna, Fla. for Hurricane Michael's fury. But the clergy team at Marianna First United Methodist Church, made up of Stegall Foundation alumni Nathan Attwood and Matthew Montgomery, has been able to provide faithful leadership and healing to a hurting community.

Michael's eye went right over Marianna, still a category 3 storm 45 miles inland. Homes were destroyed and streets were full of debris. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, the community was without power, gasoline for generators, stores to purchase food, banks, and other vital resources. Yet, despite the devastation, the church was ready to serve.

"Our church had to get creative to meet the ever-changing needs in each phase of the recovery process," said Rev. Dr. Nathan Attwood, senior pastor of Marianna FUMC. Attwood received scholarship support through the "Faith

Promise" program while attending Candler School of Theology from 1999-2002, and has supported the Stegall Foundation through his own gifts ever since. "Early on, our church was one of the only distribution points for supplies on our side of town," said Attwood. "We served thousands of people, distributed cleaning kits, food, diapers, and other needed supplies. Everything was accomplished by church volunteers and staff in a room without electricity. We also housed a group from Orlando who brought a 24-foot mobile kitchen. The group served hundreds of meals each day and slept

in our church's youth room each night.

"All along, we've been deploying volunteer teams into the city of Marianna," he said. "These teams, which have arrived from all over the Southeast, are cutting and moving trees from people's homes. We've had dozens of teams and completed projects at over 100 homes and churches."

Rev. Matthew Montgomery was appointed to serve at Marianna FUMC after he graduated from Duke Divinity School this past spring. Dr. Attwood shared how grateful he was to have Rev.

Montgomery as a fellow pastoral leader during this time of crisis: "I don't know what we would have done if Matthew hadn't been here. Matthew has shown incredible leadership, tremendous pastoral sensitivity, and boundless energy. We've worked really well as a team and been able to give each other a break when needed."

Dr. Attwood expressed his gratitude for the personal support both he and Matthew have received from Dr. Karl Stegall and Foundation supporters. "Dr. Stegall was in Marianna just days after the storm," said Attwood. "Matthew

*Continued on page 3*

*To serve the present age,  
My calling to fulfill:  
Oh, may it all my pow'rs  
engage  
To do my Master's will!*

*-A Charge to Keep I Have,  
Charles Wesley*

Cover Photo: Rev. John Blount, pastor of St. Andrew UMC in Panama City, stands inside the shell of the church's sanctuary with Bishop David Graves and Rev. Ashley Davis. Photo courtesy of Luke Lucas.

**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.**

## Norma Jean Prater, Beloved First Grade Teacher, Remembers Seminary Students in Her Will

Norma Jean Prater, a beloved first grade teacher at Maxwell Air Force Base and Montgomery Public Schools, remembered our Scholarship Foundation in her will, just as she had faithfully remembered our Foundation during her earthly life. A native of Atlanta, Norma was a graduate of Westminster High School, the University of Alabama, and Florida State University. Norma chose to make Montgomery her home for her entire teaching career. Following decades of teaching first grade, Norma completed her career as a professor of reading and language arts at both the undergraduate and graduate level within the College of Education on the campus of Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM). Dean Janet Warren at AUM said, "She was an expert in children's literature. She had a depth of knowledge that was very rare." Dean Warren added, "She was the most ethical person that I have ever known." It is not surprising that one of Norma's most popular course offerings for all AUM students was Children's Literature.

Following her long and distinguished career as a first grade teacher, there was rarely any public gathering within Montgomery where Norma was present when one of her for-

mer first graders did not seek her out and thank her for what she had meant in their lives. Norma possessed a warm and caring spirit, a pleasing personality, and a joy that filled the room. She was dearly loved by those around her and served as a beacon of light to all who were seeking a brighter way.

Norma was a faithful member and leader at Whitfield Memorial United Methodist Church where she taught Sunday School and served on the Board of Directors of the Whitfield Kindergarten. As an educator, Norma clearly understood that the United Methodist Church emphasized the importance of an educated clergy. She gave generously to our Scholarship Foundation on a regular basis. Therefore, it was not surprising that Norma made specific financial plans at the time of her death to leave a significant gift to assist our seminary students.

The words that Jesus spoke to the woman who anointed Him with perfume 2,000 years ago could also be spoken of Norma Jean Prater, "Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."



*Norma Jean Prater*

*Continued from page 2*

and I have often talked about how he called us, checked on us, and, really, pastored us while we were seminary students. And then, during such a rough time, it was really encouraging to look up and see him standing there. It is so consistent with how he has supported us for years. Since then, many



*Members of Montgomery FUMC work at the home of a Marianna FUMC member. Photo courtesy of Nathan Attwood.*

Stegall Foundation supporters have come to Marianna with work teams, called, even visited. Just like the Foundation helps seminarians know they aren't alone, we've felt the long-term support of this wonderful community through this storm."

Your gifts to the Stegall Foundation are preparing clergy to be ready to serve their churches and communities during such a time as this. These clergy will lead their congregations in sharing the love of Jesus Christ. Their time in seminary will prepare them to know how to lead others in becoming the hands and feet of Christ. Thank you for your faithful gifts, which continue to produce fruit long after the days of seminary come to an end.



*Thank you to Rev. Darren McClellan, Baypines District Superintendent, and Rev. Ed Glaize, pastor of Fairhope UMC, for hosting a regional banquet on September 6. Approximately 55 people were in attendance to learn more about the Stegall Foundation. We look forward to more regional banquets in 2019.*





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## Your Year-End Gifts Make a Huge Difference!

One of the most familiar verses in all of the Bible is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He GAVE his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." That simple verse lies at the heart of the Christmas story! We love because He first loved us! The knowledge of God's great gift to us motivates us to be generous givers in response. In light of this, I would encourage each of you to consider a special gift to our seminary students that will make a huge difference this Christmas season. Why is a year-end gift such an attractive option?

1. We now support 51 students enrolled in seminary this December. Many of these students, especially those with children, face great financial strain during this time of the year.

2. We are also supporting 10 additional full time local pastors in the Advanced Course of Study who attend seminary on campus during the month of July.

3. It was recently announced that all seminary students from our Alabama-West Florida Conference receiving Ministerial Education Funds in the fall of 2019 will have their grants reduced \$500 a semester. Upon hearing this news, our Scholarship Committee stepped forward and said, "We do not want to see that happen. We will 'stand in the gap' and assume that additional \$1,000 annual grant for each student so that they will not experience any reduction in their individual grants from the Ministerial Education Fund."

4. Every penny of your gift will be directed to a student where he or she will feel the full impact of your generosity.

5. The more you give, the more our seminary students receive. When our Seminary Scholarship Foundation began in 2007, we were giving \$1200 a year to each student. Because of your great generosity, we are now giving a minimum of \$10,000 a year to each of our full-time students. Since it costs approximately \$42,000 a year to attend seminary, we would love to be able to increase our cash scholarships to each student next year.

6. In a world that is longing to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, I can think of no greater investment that you could make than an investment in the lives of these seminary students who are seeking to become more effective communicators of the gospel in both word and deed.

Brenda and I wish for each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Karl K. Stegall*



**BRENDA AND KARL STEGALL**