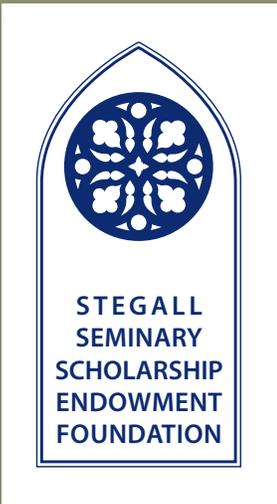


Fall 2016



A Model of Generative Leadership:

SKIPPERVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Skipperville United Methodist Church

“A Legacy of Producing Outstanding Methodist Ministers!”

The Skipperville United Methodist Church, located in Dale County 10 miles north of Ozark, was founded in 1882. Over the past 134 years, this church has been known as the ancestral home for many outstanding Methodist ministers. Ministers with family roots in the Skipperville United Methodist Church have included Dr. Charles Mathison, Dr. George Mathison, Dr. John Ed Mathison, Dr. Ovie Mathison, Dr. Paul Mathison, Dr. Si Mathison, Rev. Herbert Whatley, Rev. Bryant Wilson, Rev. Cullen Wilson, Rev. Gloria Wilson, Rev. Robert Wilson, and Bishop Mike Watson. In addition, the late Dr. Jerrell Mathison and his wife, Dr. Joyce Mathison, served as medical missionaries to Ethiopia. Dr. Hubert Searcy, President of Huntingdon College from 1938 to 1968 was reared in the Skipperville United Methodist Church.



Administrative Council: Active and Honorary Members

Through its rich history, the church has been defined by its emphasis on education and spiritual growth.

Located next to G. W. Long High School, the Skipperville United Methodist for many years has taken pride in partnering with the school to meet the educational and spiritual needs of thousands of children and youth in that area. Through its rich history, the church has been defined by its emphasis on education and spiritual growth. It is not surprising that a large percentage of the church members have graduated from colleges, universities, and seminaries and returned to the Skipperville area to create a contagious climate of Wesley's emphasis on a keen mind and warm heart.

The Reverend Freddie McCain was appointed minister in Skipperville in 2007. He and his wife, Inez, could never

have dreamed of the nurturing influence that the church would have upon the life of their son, Chris. The church invited him to speak on Children's Sabbath, serve as a Youth Bible Study Teacher, and provided for him so many other opportunities to develop his leadership skills. As a direct result of the nurturing Skipperville congregation, Chris is now serving as the Youth Director at the First United Methodist Church of Ozark while completing his degree at Huntingdon. He has been recommended by the Skipperville church as a candidate for the ordained ministry. It is significant that Chris is embarking upon this journey into the ordained ministry the very same year that Dr. George Mathison retired as the last minister in the Alabama-West Florida Conference with family roots in the Skipperville church.

When you think of the powerful influences of both clergy and laity that claim Skipperville United Methodist Church as their ancestral home, you realize how well the church has fulfilled its mission, "To share God's love in word and deed to make disciples of Jesus Christ to change individuals, families, communities, and the world."

Pictured on the front cover are Reverend Freddie and Inez McCain with their son Chris.

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.

Cause for Celebration

Hundreds gather for Foundation's annual banquet

On Thursday, August 11, 2016, the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Endowment Foundation held its annual *Dinner of Celebration*. A record crowd of over 475 students and supporters gathered to hear words of thanksgiving from representatives of the 47 seminary students that are being supported by the Foundation during the 2016-2017 school year.

Each year, two extravagantly generous Foundation donors underwrite the entire cost of the banquet, ensuring that donations made to the Foundation only go directly to student scholarships. Rev. Dr. David Saliba, Senior Pastor of Perdido Bay United Methodist Church, served as the evening's Master of Ceremonies. The invocation was given by Miss Kathryn Beck, a first-year seminary student.

A highlight of the annual banquet is the ability for donors to hear firsthand from current and past seminary students. This year, three current students and one recent graduate shared their stories of hope and thankfulness with those in attendance.

Lucas Tribble, a first-year student at Candler School of Theology, spoke to the importance the local church had on the development of his call to ministry. "Regardless of the impact made by all of the other varied ministry opportunities I was involved in, they pale in comparison to the impact the local church has had on my life," said Tribble. "The pastoral impact that clergy have had in and around my life has been the cornerstone to me accepting and pursuing my call to be an ordained elder in the AWF Conference."

Mentioning the financial realities associated with a seminary education, Tribble reflected on years of family discussion surrounding his call into vocational ministry and the debt that could accompany such a decision. "I dream of a day where people called to ministry no longer have their call questioned or challenged by the threat of financial instability – the threat of a perpetual circle of debt," he said. "Let us now

work together to make an even bigger impact for the people after me, thus impacting the United Methodist Church in the AWF Conference for decades and decades to come."

Rev. Tony McCullough, on behalf of the Stegall Foundation Board of Directors, presented the seventh annual *Donor Appreciation Award* to Dr. Paulette Thompson. In presenting the award, McCullough said, "Tonight's recipient embodies exceptional and incarnational leadership qualities and the compassion necessary to forward the cause of our foundation. She has an unrelenting affection for seminary students, ministers, and the church."

Upon receiving the award, Dr. Thompson said: "It has been my gift to be a part of all of this. Together, a really remarkable thing has happened. People have stepped forward – you have stepped forward – and in doing that, together we have enabled an amazing thing to happen. We are experiencing a renewal."

Bishop Paul L. Leeland, resident bishop of the AWF Conference, expressed a word of appreciation to the seminary students, and encouraged them as they continue to prepare for

ministry. Leeland also thanked Mrs. Brenda and Dr. Karl Stegall for their vision and dedication. "This foundation serves as a model for the larger church," he said. "We would be hard pressed if we looked throughout the entire denomination to find another that is more dedicated, visionary and passionate about the next generation of leaders than you and Brenda."

Recognizing the role the foundation has in dealing with the denomination-wide clergy debt crisis, Leeland expressed thanksgiving for the relief it is offering the students from the AWF Conference. "We don't want the gifts from the Stegall Foundation to be a band-aid; we want this to be a cure," said Leeland. "We want this to be a cure for the overwhelming worry and anxiety too many students experience as they take on indebtedness to simply prepare them for ministry."

Personally thanking donors present, Dr. Karl K. Stegall spoke about the dedication of each donor to the cause of our seminary students. He also expressed appreciation for the leadership of Bishop Leeland and Mrs. Janet Leeland and presented them with a plaque on behalf of the Board of Directors.

"With Bishop Leeland's episcopal voice and support, over the past eight years we have grown from giving \$1,000 per year to each full-time student to a minimum of \$10,000 per year to each full-time, on campus student," said Stegall. "That would never have happened without their leadership."



**Dr. Paulette Thompson,
2016 Donor Appreciation
Award recipient**





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MINISTRY IN THE WIREGRASS – OUR LIVING HERITAGE

When I think about Methodists in the Wiregrass, I can't help but think about the importance of family. Our family has Methodist roots going back to 1904 at the Pleasant Ridge Church in southern Coffee County, Alabama and to Williams Chapel Church, which our ancestors, the Williams brothers, founded near Brundidge in the 19th century. When I felt God's call to the ministry, I was given the humbling honor by three congregations in my family's heritage to stand in their pulpits and preach the Word. The Elba, Ham, and Pleasant Ridge United Methodist Churches gave me opportunities to discern God's call in my life with hands-on ministry. It is a grace indescribable to minister in the houses of worship where my great-great-grandmother and great-great-grandfather worshiped more than a century ago.

As my wife Meghan and I were finishing up with seminary in North Carolina, we were overjoyed to learn that we would be sent by Bishop Leeland to serve United Methodist congregations in the Wiregrass—that cozy little corner of Alabama that our family has called home for longer than any of us can remember. In seven years we have served churches in Slocomb, Hartford, Enterprise, Ozark, and Dothan. We know our way around every blade of grass in the Wiregrass!

Every day, Meghan and I remain grateful for the Stegall Seminary Scholarship. When we were far away from home at seminary, we were encouraged by the correspondence we shared with the Methodist families back home who were contributing to our scholarships. Those homeward connections transformed our first days in ministry into a homecoming! We knew we would be received with open arms by Christians who had never forgotten about us—who prayed for us during our season of preparation.

Now it is our turn to *pay it forward!* Our family gives regularly to the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Foundation, because we know the difference God has worked in our lives through this incredible fellowship of support. Please join us in continuing this important ministry that touches every church and every community in the Alabama-West Florida Conference.



Wes Kelley
Associate Pastor
First United Methodist Church
of Dothan

