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 Gulledge	**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

Avery County Relief Efforts: A Community Coming Together

Recently, Ken Gulledge and Joe Lorber made the trip to Avery County, nestled in Western North Carolina, to meet some of the dedicated people working tirelessly to support relief efforts in the area. Avery County, one of the hardest-hit regions, is also one of the poorest, making these efforts even more crucial.

One of the first people we had the pleasure of meeting was Brandy Boone, a resident of Elk Park. Brandy is an inspiring force in her community, known for her "getter done" attitude. Before the storm, she ran a local animal rescue center, but in the aftermath, her mission expanded. She immediately took to the streets, searching for lost and abandoned animals—Avery County has no formal animal control, and many pets were left behind when their owners were forced to evacuate.

As she helped animals, she quickly realized that many people needed aid too. Without hesitation, she began delivering food, water, and essential supplies to those in need. Her efforts even caught the attention of Lara Trump, who arranged for a partial busload of supplies to be sent her way.

What really brought Brandy to our attention was her work with propane distribution through 3 Nails Hardware and Blue Ridge Propane. Many residents lost their homes due to floodwaters, fallen trees, or heating system damage. Others, displaced by power outages, found shelter in campers—but with freezing temperatures and poor insulation, staying warm became a struggle. A single 20- or 30-pound propane tank (like the ones used for gas grills) lasts only a day or two in such conditions.

Brandy helped organize "free propane fill-ups" through 3 Nails Hardware and Blue Ridge Propane, two local businesses that have stepped up in a big way. Both have created donation funds to cover the cost of propane for those in need, using social media to let people know when to come.

3 Nails Hardware, which started selling propane a few years ago to supplement income during the slow winter months, now offers free refills a couple of times a month for struggling families. **Blue Ridge Propane**, a long-time supplier in the area, not only provides great prices but also knows the community well, ensuring that the truly needy receive help. They even offer home delivery, a huge blessing for the elderly, single parents, and those with mobility issues.

To support these vital programs, we'll be contributing at least $2,000 per month to each of these businesses to help keep people warm. *continued on next page*

Western North Carolina - *continued*

Addressing Mental Health Needs

Another urgent need in Avery County is access to mental health services. One of our contacts in Elk Park shared a story about delivering food and pet supplies to a woman who had lost her home and most of her belongings. As she received the supplies, she broke down in tears, overwhelmed by the weight of her situation. Unfortunately, her story is not unique.

Mental health services are scarce in North Carolina, especially in rural and disaster-affected areas. We are in the early stages of exploring how we can help, working to understand what local and state resources may already be available before determining the best course of action.

Partnering with the Seaboard Lions Club

Recently, our Missions Committee held a Zoom call with David Burke, the president of the Seaboard Lions Club in Seaboard, NC. This incredible group sent 200 volunteers to Elk Park at Thanksgiving for "Operation Thanksgiving Blessings," serving 5,000 meals to those in need. They also visited local nursing homes and shut-ins, delivering meals and sharing messages of hope.

Now, they're planning another event, and we've been invited to help! Over Good Friday weekend, they will host a series of community events at the Newland Agricultural Center. Good Friday will be dedicated to providing counseling services, and Saturday will feature an Easter egg hunt, live bluegrass music, comedians, a DJ, and other family-friendly activities. They also plan to reach out to assisted living facilities across Avery County that weekend.

As plans come together, we'll keep you updated on opportunities to get involved. Whether through staffing the event or assisting in other ways, this is a chance for our congregation to lend a helping hand.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please reach out to a member of the Missions Committee—we'd love to hear from you!



Propane fill up at 3 Nails Hardware in Newland



Free propane fill-up station

Upcoming Local, Hands-on Mission Event

Community Impact Day

Hey everyone! The Missions Committee is thrilled to invite you to a special mission event designed for the whole family!

Here's the plan: We'll start at church with a short kickoff program before splitting into teams of 6-8. Each team will head out to visit one of our trusted community partners, where you'll get a quick introduction to their work and then jump into a hands-on project that makes a real impact. Don't worry—each project is designed to be family-friendly, so everyone from kids to adults can participate!

Most of the organizations we'll be serving alongside are our long-time, deeply connected partners, making this a great opportunity to give back while strengthening those relationships. The service projects will last about 2.5 to 3 hours, so it's a manageable but meaningful way to spend your day.

We can't wait to serve together—hope to see you there! The partners 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.

Mark your calendars! The event is set for Saturday, March 22nd, from 8 AM to around noon. Keep an eye on the bulletin and other church publications for all the details on registration, partner selection, and everything else you need to know!

This should be a lot of fun!

Update from Camp Linn-Haven

On our trip to the beautiful Newland and Elk Creek area in the mountains, we made a special stop at Camp Linn Haven, one of the recipients of our Christmas offering. For over 35 years, this camp has played a huge role in shaping the faith of Wesley youth, serving as the place where many found and committed their lives to Christ. In fact, several of our middle school alumni are still active members of our congregation today!

As you may recall, Hurricane Helene caused severe damage to the camp, impacting all 16 cabins, the kitchen, dining hall, chapel, and other buildings. But as soon as the storm passed, recovery efforts were set in motion. Calls for help went out, and many alumni and supporters quickly stepped up to begin restoring the property.

When we spoke with the camp director, we learned that work teams are scheduled every week through April. Thanks to insurance proceeds and generous gifts from churches like Wesley, there's growing confidence that camp programs will resume in May. While there may still be a few finishing touches needed, the property will be safe, comfortable, and ready for staff to welcome campers once again.









Paying It Forward

Recently, a friend gave me a truly unique cross. Knowing about my involvement with the relief effort in Western North Carolina, he thought it would hold special meaning for me—and he was absolutely right.

Curious about the artist, I started asking around and quickly learned that the cross was crafted by one of our very own members, Tom Ullman. As it turns out, Tom is a talented woodworker who has displayed his creations at our Christmas Bazaar multiple times.



When I reached out to him, he warmly shared that he sells these beautiful crosses and donates a portion of the proceeds to support the Western North Carolina relief effort. For Tom, it's a way of "paying it forward," using his skills to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

A heartfelt thank you to Tom and Carol for their generosity! If you're interested in one of these meaningful pieces or any of Tom's other work, you can reach him 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?

Did you know that one of our partners, Fairview School, is a Title 1 school? This means they receive additional federal funding to support students from low-income families. One of the most visible ways this helps is by providing free or reduced-cost lunches—without it, many students might go without a meal. And since growing kids need proper nutrition to focus and learn, missing meals can have a big impact on their education and overall health.

Long school breaks can be especially tough, as some students may not have enough food at home while their guardians are at work. That's where Wesley steps in! To help, we put together special food packs—often called "backpacks"—to ensure these students have something to eat over the break.

This past December, during two Sundays, our congregation gathered food for thte backpacks. The youth set up an assembly line, and packed over 120 food bags for Fairview students to take home for Christmas break. Their hard work made a real difference!

If you know any of the amazing students who helped with this project, take a moment to thank them—a high five, a kind word, or a simple "great job" can go a long way in showing appreciation for their efforts!

They are certainly transforming the world of the students at Fairview Elementary and we are proud of them for their efforts and caring!




