

THE CONNECTION

July 8, 2021

Getting to Know the Rev. Becky Shirley

By Fran Zupan

The Rev. Becky Shirley's path – from a public affairs degree from Columbia College in 1984 to full ordination as a United Methodist elder in 2008 – was not straight.

Along the way, she made a number of detours – a semester of law school, an MBA, jobs at the American Heart Association, and the United Way of the Midlands.

But her heart kept getting pulled toward the helping professions.

"God was saying, 'You really need to be in the people-helping business,'" Becky said.

A turning point came in 1995, when Becky, who had been working as the part-time volunteer coordinator at Trenholm Road UMC in Columbia, took a two-week training course to become a leader of the Stephen Ministry at that church. The Stephen Ministry trains lay caregivers to meet weekly, one-on-one with care receivers, people experiencing life difficulties. The program's motto is, "Christ caring for people through people."

Through her work with the Stephen Ministry, Becky received an internal sense that God was calling her to pursue ordination. Members of the congregation and the two ministers she worked with – the Rev. Regi Thackston and the Rev. John Holler – affirmed what she was sensing and encouraged her to attend seminary.

Becky was a part-time student at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary for 10 years, taking one or two courses a

semester, while she continued to work at Trenholm Road.

In 2006, she was granted a license to preach, and the bishop appointed her to the Johnston/Harmony charge in Edgefield County.

Appointments at Platt Springs UMC in West Columbia and Philadelphia UMC in Fort Mill followed. Now Becky has come to Washington Street. She said she and her husband Richard are excited about the appointment and are looking forward to meeting and working with the people of WSUMC.

"It is an honor to be appointed to such a prestigious and welcoming congregation," she said.

Becky grew up in Columbia where she and her two sisters worked in their parents' household goods moving-and-storage company. They had a lot of business from Fort Jackson, and all three of the girls did billing and stenciled the client's name on the outside of their shipping crate with black ink, it was messy. Becky said the job laid the groundwork for a strong work ethic.

The family was lifelong Methodists, and as they moved around the city, her parents would pick a neighborhood church. Brookland UMC in West Columbia, College Place, Asbury Memorial, Virginia Wingard.

When Becky was in college, she and her family transferred to Trenholm Road, which had an active College and Career Sunday school class.

Becky met her husband Richard at the Columbia Christian Singles Dance,



held at Eastminster Presbyterian Church. He doesn't dance, but he came to meet people, she said. He walked across the room and complimented her on her earrings, saying they look like the ones worn by the main character in "Flashdance." She said she hadn't seen "Flashdance" or any of the other movies he mentioned.

Becky invited everyone at the dance to come to her Sunday school class the next day when she would be teaching. Richard was the only person from the dance who came. However, he brought two friends with him.

In church, he wrote on his bulletin: "I'm going to a movie this afternoon. Would you like to go?"

They married five years later, in December 1988, at Trenholm Road. Music from a favorite movie, "Somewhere in Time," the time-travel romance starring Christopher Reeve, was part of the ceremony. The music was Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini."

Becky and Richard had been married less than a year when they adopted their daughter Michelle from foster care. Michelle was almost 5, and her biological father was Becky's cousin.

Becky then began working at Trenholm Road, and Michelle was

accepted into the 4-year-old room at the church's preschool. They went to the church together almost every day. When Becky visited the homebound, she took Michelle with her, and Michelle would give one of her drawings to the person they were visiting.

Becky said the most meaningful thing about ministry to her is "being able to see the way the Spirit works in people's lives."

The pandemic has given churches "the opportunity for a fresh start," Becky said. Church membership in mainline churches has been decreasing, so "we weren't effectively making disciples of Christ before the pandemic."

"What really does make disciples of Christ? A lot of it is relationships. What we've learned through the pandemic is that relationships are really what make disciples of Christ. It's time for good creativity. It's almost like the very beginning of the church."

Becky uses drama to help people hear a story that they've heard a thousand times differently. She has portrayed the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, the innkeeper's wife, and the woman at the tomb, among others.

At Becky's last church, members of the congregation did a slow read of Acts.

"It's an opportunity to spend the first 15 minutes of your day with God," she said. "A lot of people go to church, but they don't really read the Bible." She gave the participants a list of readings, and they sent her comments and questions which she posted on Instagram. The use of social media was an attempt to attract younger people, she said, adding, "You have to allow the Holy Spirit to touch people's lives, and not preach to people."

Becky and Richard bought a house in Spring Valley. Her father died when she was in college, but her mother, Ann Joyner, is 90 and lives with them.

Michelle and her husband, Joseph Graham, live in Forest Acres and are expecting a baby in October. Both teach at Fairfield Central High School; she teaches English and he teaches science.

Richard is retired from his business, Laser Experience, where he sold home movie projection systems. He also was a tennis instructor, but he has stopped doing that, as well.

But more than 35 years after that Sunday-afternoon first date, Becky and Richard are still watching movies. They have a movie room over the garage that seats six. Its screen is 110 inches wide.

Join in on the Fun—Online Small Groups



Join Ann Jessup as she leads a small group centered around the book *Love Like That: 5 Relationship Secrets from Jesus* by Dr. Les Parrott. The 6-week series started on June 23, but will **continue through August 11**. The book blends biblical teaching with findings from psychology and sociology to reveal five ways of relating to people demonstrated by Jesus: being mindful, approachable, grace-filled, bold, and self-giving. For the Zoom link, please contact Ann Jessup at jessup.ann@gmail.com.



©Disney

On Tuesday **July 13, from 7:00-8:00 pm**, Rev. Alston will lead a discussion of the Disney/Pixar movie *Soul*. Please watch the movie prior to the discussion and make note of any spiritual themes you see or anything that you think is interesting about the movie. It's available on Disney+ or for rent from Amazon prime. Please email Alston Lippert for the Zoom link to participate at alflippert@umcsc.org.

New Prayer Chain Information

Licia Jackson has taken over duties as our Prayer Chain Coordinator. Please take note of the new email address for prayer requests: wsumcprayers@gmail.com. The email box will be monitored daily. When sending requests please follow this important guideline: ***Please make sure that the person whose information you are sharing is OK with it being sent out.*** We do not want to make anyone uncomfortable. It is all right to ask for prayers for someone without naming them.

Prayer List

Pete Bailey
Thom Berry
Martha Brooker
Sally Christian
Mickey Epting
Charles Garren
Bud Harrelson
Karen Horne
Geneva Hutchinson
Lisa Johnson

Rev. Judy King
Alisa Liggett
Beverly McClanahan
Lauren, Greg and Nora Blair
Middleton and family
Rick Rowe
Boyd Saunders
Stephanie Saunders
Sarah Threatt
Our homebound

Sunday School

- **Aldersgate Class** is continuing a 6-week program on *Simon Peter: Flawed but Faithful Disciple* by Adam Hamilton. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information contact David Anderson at danderson@richardsonplowden.com.
- **The Dawsey Class:** continues its study of *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* by Jim Wallis. This Sunday, July 11, Rick Hepfer will teach Chapter 5, "Dying to Whiteness." On July 18, John Evans will lead a discussion of Chapter 6, "A Segregated Church or a Beloved Community?" The class will meet by FreeConferenceCall.com. Class members should call in before 9:15 a.m., but not before 9:05 a.m. **The call-in number is (701) 802-5115. The access code is 7252934.**
- **The Grace Class:** is taking a relaxed approach to Summer Sundays by simultaneously gathering in person and via Zoom during the regular Sunday School hour to share a devotional led by a class member or guest. Join in person or contact Jim Lane at jlane@columbiasc.edu for the Zoom link to gather at 9:45 am for fellowship, and at 10:00 am for spiritual reflection. Also, check out the Grace Class Summer Calendar for extra opportunities to meet up outside of class at <https://wsmethodist.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Grace-Class-Summer-Calendar-2021.docx.pdf>
- **The Joy Class:** is meeting in-person at 10:00 am in our 3rd-floor classroom and we invite everyone to join us! If you are interested, please contact Lee Haynes at lelandhaynesjr@gmail.com or Sylvia Stevens at sylviasaundersstevens@gmail.com for an invitation.
- **Open Door Class** is studying a new book, *Courage: Jesus and the Call to Brave Faith* by Tom Berlin. We continue to meet in person as well as via Zoom each week. For more information about our class or the book, contact jessup.ann@gmail.com.
- **The Paul Harmon Class** will be meeting at 10:00 am in the Traxler Class which is located on the 2nd floor. Rev. Don Britt is continuing to lead our study and discussion of how the scriptures are relevant to our time. All are welcome. For more information contact Suzanne Joye at sjoye@sc.rr.com.
- **John Harper Class:** Beginning this Sunday, the John Harper class will resume meeting in their classroom. The class will be led by Tracy Powers. All are welcome. Contact Tracy for more information at tjpowers65@gmail.com.
- **YASS** will be taking a break for the summer. We encourage you to join in with the any of our other adult classes which are now meeting at the church. Please contact Rev. Alston at alflippert@umcsc.org for more information.
- **WSUMC Youth Class:** July 11th—Character: Romans 5: 3-5; July 18th—Identity: 1 Peter 2: 9-10; July 25th—Choices: Romans 12. To participate, please email Mackin Wall at mackin@wsmethodist.org.

A message from Alisa Liggett

How grateful I feel to have you all as my church family, and more so than ever over the past month. Each card lifted my spirit, and I have kept every one. Some even came with us to the surgical waiting room so that your words of comfort would be with me when I needed them most. Yours and our clergy's generosity of spirit and prayer formed a space of love and reassurance in my heart that will never fade. Thank you!

Alisa Liggett

The graphic features a red background with white and grey icons representing a city skyline, a car, and a house. A red location pin is positioned at the top left, and another is at the bottom right. A white line with a car icon connects the two pins. The text 'AARP' is in the top left, 'Hosted by the Reconciling Next Team' is in the top right, and 'RIDE@50+ PROGRAM' is in the bottom left.

AARP Hosted by the Reconciling Next Team

RIDE@50+ PROGRAM

The AARP Ride@50+ Program is your one-stop shop for access to transportation options in the area for you or your loved one! Learn more and book an essential ride today!

LEARN MORE! JOIN US FOR AN INFORMATIVE LUNCHTIME SESSION ON THIS PROGRAM!

JULY 28 | 11:00-12:00 PM | CHAPEL

BRING A LUNCH & JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP IN THREATT HALL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING!

REGISTER ONLINE @

WSMETHODIST.ORG/EVENTS

Gifts



IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Martha S. King

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Virginia Vaughan

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to WSUMC
Given by Virginia Vaughan

IN HONOR OF FRAN ZUPAN
& **THE CONNECTION**
to WSUMC
Given by Anonymous

IN HONOR OF MIKE HUTTO
to the Soup Cellar
Given by Anonymous

IN HONOR OF JERRY SUMPTER
to the Soup Cellar
Given by Anonymous

IN HONOR OF
REV. PATRICIA PARRISH
to the Soup Cellar
Given by Dee Gullede

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Foundation
Given by Robin &
David Anderson

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Kathy
& Rufus Rogers

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to the Music Ministries
Given by Kathy
& Rufus Rogers

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Jamie Gerald

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to the Music Ministries
Given by Ron
& Lane Bowden

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Music Ministries
Given by Ron
& Lane Bowden

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Youth Ministries
Given by Deborah
& Rick Rowe

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to the Music Ministries
Given by Deborah
& Rick Rowe

IN HONOR OF
REV. PATRICIA PARRISH
to Active Faith Ministries
Given by Deborah
& Rick Rowe

IN HONOR OF SARA MIDDLETON
UPON HER MARRIAGE
to WSUMC
Given by David
& Donna Surret

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Joe
& Carol Anderson

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Children's Ministries
Given by Elizabeth
& Mark Ouzts

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Martha Fridy &
Dick Thompson

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Sam Waldrep

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Foundation
Given by Sara & Ed Fisher

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to the Music Ministries
Given by Sara & Ed Fisher

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Soup Cellar
Given by David Byrum

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to the Soup Cellar & CDC
Given by Gwen
& Mike Harmon

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Robert Freeman

IN MEMORY OF NAN SELF
to WSUMC
Given by Ed McClain

IN MEMORY OF ANGELA POWERS
to WSUMC
Given by Ed McClain

IN HONOR OF
REV. PATRICIA PARRISH
to WSUMC
Given by Ed McClain

Sunday Dinner On the Grounds Ends With an Indoor Event!

Sunday Dinner on the Grounds held on Sunday, June 27 in Threath Hall was the last Sunday Dinner until early fall. Thanks to a grant that was received from Richland County, the team was able to hold three food truck events for those suffering from food insecurity. The first event, held in November of 2020 included barbecue and ice cream trucks. The following one planned for March had to be canceled due to inclement weather. We partnered the remainder of the events with Denean the Coffee Queen

and her Mobile Cafe. Owner Denean Ambersely was a great partner and served our guests with dignity and her usual gracious manner.

Due to the COVID restrictions on indoor events, the events were held outside in the parking lot. Thankfully, we were able to have this last event in Threath Hall of the church until this past with limited seating. The Sunday Dinner team will be meeting again soon to plan for another dinner early in the fall.



Upcoming dates of interest

Friday, July 9

6:30-8:00 pm
Youth Movie & Game Night
Youth Room

Saturday, July 10

2:00 pm
Memorial Service
for Nan Self | Sanctuary

Monday, July 12

8:00 am-5:00 pm
CDC In-Service
Threath Hall

Tuesday, July 13

7:00-8:00 pm
Online Film Study-Soul w/
Rev. Alston | Zoom
Email: aflipper@umcsc.edu

Wednesday, July 14, July 21, July 28

7:00 pm-8:00 pm
Online Small Group w/Ann
Jessup | *Love Like That: 5
Relationship Secrets from
Jesus* | Email:
jessup.ann@gmail.com

Wednesday, July 21

7:00 pm-8:00 pm
Online Small Group w/Ann
Jessup | *Love Like That: 5
Relationship Secrets from Jesus*
| Email: jessup.ann@gmail.com

Thursday, July 22

6:00-7:30 pm
Youth Group | Pathways to
Social Justice: LGBTQIA+
& Christianity with guest
speaker | Youth Room

Wednesday, July 28

11:00 am | AARP Ride@50+
Presentation | Chapel
(followed by a bag lunch
(BYOB) Threath Hall

7:00 pm-8:00 pm | Online
Small Group w/Ann Jessup |
*Love Like That: 5 Relationship
Secrets from Jesus* | Email:
jessup.ann@gmail.com



Washington Street hosted a reception for Rev. Shirley on July 7. Members welcomed her into our WSUMC family.

Rev. Shirley joins the entire staff and Washington Street Church family in expressing our deepest sympathy and Christian love to Mary Slade and family in the passing of her brother, Pat.



Rev. Shirley joins the entire staff and Washington Street Church family in expressing our deepest sympathy and Christian love to Neal Foster and family in the passing of his brother, Wayne



The Grace Class gathered together at Vickie and Lisa Voegeli's home recently. One of the many gatherings the class has planned for this summer!



**WSUMC
BICENTENNIAL
COOKBOOKS
ONLY \$20!**

DOUBLE BOUND!

Contact jane@wsmethodist.org

WSUMC GIVING

(from 6/23 to 7/6)

Church: \$18,490; Soup Cellar: \$760

Foundation: \$150

IN-PERSON/INDOOR ATTENDANCE:

5/2: 75; 5/9: 51; 5/16: 53; 5/23: 44; 5/30: 67;
6/6: 70; 6/13: 76; 6/20: 76; 6/27: 70; 7/4: 75 (est.)

OUTDOOR ATTENDANCE:

4/18: 57; 5/2: 38; 5/16: 16; 6/6: 25; 6/27: 18

A letter from our friends in Ecuador

Washington Street United Methodist Church
Mr. Chip Williams
Mission Committee Chair

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Evangelical United Methodist Church of Ecuador (IEMUE) sends special greetings to your entire congregation. We thank God for the presence of your Church in accompaniment of the mission of the Church in Ecuador. With your support we can share the good news that Jesus Christ taught us, and we can witness transformation in the lives of children, families, and communities.

Knowing that Rev. Patricia Parrish fulfills her ministry this month and begins deserved retirement; today, through WSUMC we want to thank God for her life and ministry.

We want to express our special gratitude for her ministry with Ecuador.

Over the years, as Superintendent in the Charleston District and as your Pastor, she has been more than a promoter and leader for the Volunteer in Mission Teams; she was and is a Pastor to us. And we want to thank her deeply.

Only God can reward her faithfulness, we will keep her in our hearts and prayers, and we will wait for her visit soon.

In appreciation, we are sending this letter honoring her ministry and retirement.

WSUMC is part of God's mission in Ecuador, for all this we give Glory to God. May the Lord bless you.

Sincerely,

Rev. Alfredo Pilatuña, Bishop of the IEMUE
Sara Flores & Dakin Cook
GBGM UMC Missionaries in Ecuador



UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

July 4th from 6:30-8:00 pm - movie & game night with service activity
July 22nd from 6:00 - 7:30 pm - Pathways to Social Justice: LGBTQIA+ & Christianity with Guest Speaker Rev. Sarah-Kate from Virginia Wingard UMC!
July 30th - 31st - Mini Retreat: Camping at Congaree National Park. Food, games, campfires, music, devotions, and more!



YOUTH

macklin@wsmethodist.org