

Aldersgate Day and Heritage Sunday coincide

Heritage Sunday shall be observed on Aldersgate Day (May 24), or the Sunday preceding that date (this year it is May 22). The day provides an opportunity for reflection on heritage, celebration of where the Church has been, how it understands itself as it shapes us today, and the meaning of Christian conferencing. Heritage Sunday calls the Church to remember the past by committing itself to the continuing call of God.

From 264.1, *The Book of Discipline*.

The theme for Heritage Sunday 2022 is “Splits, Separations, and Reconciliations.” From now through the remainder of the year, the UMC General Commission of Archives and History (GCAH) will be producing and releasing a number of resources to help the denomination better understand the multifaceted and multi-faced history of the Methodist movement in a global context. From the original split from the Church of England in 1784 to smaller splits over the last 250 years, GCAH will examine how and why various

schisms happened. They’ll also look at different mergers and attempts at reconciliation to learn how Methodists come (back) together. And they’ll do all of this with Wesley’s words as a guide:

“If there be any word in the English tongue as ambiguous and indeterminate in its meaning as the word Church, it is one that is nearly allied to it -- the word Schism.” -- John Wesley, ‘On Schism’

Resources you can look forward to are:

1. an interactive timeline of the history of Methodism in America.
2. an online course entitled “Splits, Separations, and Reconciliations.”
3. episodes from our *Un-Tied Methodism* podcast.
4. interviews with key Methodist scholars and leaders.
5. digital images from the repository at GCAH.

To learn more about the UMC GCAH, visit: gcah.org.



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The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit: www.unyumc.org



Skaneateles UMC's unique ministry to help Ukrainians



By Shannon Hodson

If you would have told Justin Hood, pastor of Skaneateles UMC, that he would one day spend several hours making pierogies, he would have looked at you as though you were crazy. But when there is a need, Justin and his congregation do whatever it takes to meet that need.

When Russia first invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the members of Skaneateles UMC felt driven to help the Ukrainians as the war escalated each day since. They were aware of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) advances that could provide direct assistance to those in Ukraine as well as assistance to Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries. They immediately pulled their minds together to determine how they could fundraise for these advances.

Marty, a member of Skaneateles UMC, told the congregation about his Ukrainian co-worker, Natalia, whose mother was forced to flee Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city that has been devastated by striking missiles.

Natalia agreed to teach Justin and members of the Skaneateles UMC how to cook Ukrainian food so

that the church could sell authentic Ukrainian meals to raise funds to help Ukrainians.

Natalia taught Justin and Skaneateles UMC members how to cook chicken kiev, pierogies, vegetarian cabbage rolls, and cottage cheese doughnuts with raspberry.

Justin and his planning team decided to sell Ukrainian take-out meals to members of the community for \$12 a meal on Saturday March 26. They started spreading the word on social media and the response was astounding!

The church sold 300 pre-sale tickets.

Justin said, "It's amazing how the congregation and community came together. We felt really blessed to have this. We only advertised this by word of mouth and social media. We had 12,000 views of our Facebook advertisement of this fundraiser and 110 shares!"

Justin encouraged all churches to take advantage of social media.

Genelle Peebles, a member of Skaneateles UMC, helped Justin plan this event. Together, they calculated the quantities of ingredients they needed and did the shopping, in addition to helping with cooking and serving.

Genelle said, "Many hands were involved. Our church members really stepped up to this event. It was so heartwarming; because of COVID, we hadn't done an event like this in a long time."

Church member, Rob Searles, added, "This project was so inspiring,

members and strangers working side-by-side with new friendships forming."

All church members expressed gratitude about the community support that was involved.

Genelle said, "We couldn't have done this without the community support. The community was amazing. Ed Moro allowed us to use his kitchen (Moro's is an Italian restaurant next to the church); Doug's Fish Fry provided us with steamers. I can't emphasize how instrumental this community was. This event couldn't have worked out any better. Clearly, God was involved."

Justin's goal was to sell 400 Ukrainian meals.

Rob said, "Justin is the definition of an optimist. He thought our goal of 400 meals was very attainable. I must confess, I raised my eyebrows in doubt at one point."

Skaneateles UMC's Ukrainian meals sold out in two hours, with 425 total meals sold. Because of generous added donations, the church raised \$8,000 to go directly to Ukrainians.

Justin said, "Our church's missions team donated all of the food costs, so 100% of this money will bring food, medicine, and shelter to Ukrainians still facing hardship in Ukraine and Ukrainian Refugees in Poland."

The added benefit of this ministry was the opportunity for Justin to connect with his neighbors and community.

Justin was appointed to Skaneateles UMC at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in July of 2020, a hard time to get acquainted with the community.

He was recently dining out with his wife, Emma, at a local restaurant, Good Eats, and the owner approached them and said, "Everybody is talking about you guys!"

Genelle said, "This was such a great way for Justin to meet the community. He works harder than anyone I know. This ministry reminds me of the loaves and fish story in the Bible. I can't give Justin enough kudos. He is such a breath of fresh air!"

How is your church helping Ukraine?

If your church is helping Ukrainians, we'd love to know about it! Email your stories to news@unyumc.org.



How do you help your pastor prioritize wellness?

Pastors have a lot of responsibilities that go far beyond preparing for worship. They are on call to congregants who need support; they perform weddings and funerals; they have meetings throughout the week with different ministry teams at their church.

The COVID-19 pandemic placed more demands on these pastors—for many, they had to recreate the way they did worship to digital platforms.

We want to know how congregants are helping their pastors renew and replenish their souls and we'd like to share these stories with the entire Upper New York Conference.

By sharing these stories, our hope is that others throughout the Conference will be inspired to help their pastors prioritize wellness during these difficult times.

Email your stories to: news@unyumc.org by June 15, 2022.