



THE ROCK



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Epworth UM Church

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Pastor Ben's Corner

I was approached by one of the leaders in the church and she asked me to clarify what I do for our denomination. This leader explained she is aware that I do things for the district and annual conference, but she was not sure what. So I want to take this opportunity to share what I do for our denomination outside of the walls of Epworth.

In 2014 our annual conference overhauled the candidacy process to become credentialed as clergy. Now, when a person feels called to ordained or licensed ministry, the person attends a candidacy retreat and is placed in mentoring groups. The mentoring groups meet at least four times after the candidacy retreat. Each group is assigned three mentors who lead the sessions and follow up with the candidates until they are withdrawn from the process, licensed, or enter into a residency group for ordination.

I had the privilege to serve as a mentor in the initial candidacy retreat and group mentoring. I was able to assist a group of candidates through our denomination's process to become certified. Due to the size of our denomination and the interest of uniformity/fairness, we have a very rigid candidacy process. Some of the steps can be frustrating or confusing. Since I just completed this process, I was able to give the candidates a different perspective on the process and help them through it.

I was fed by talking to the candidates. There are some prognosticators who might be spelling doom and gloom for mainline denominations. However, I am excited to see the next wave of passionate clergy coming up behind me. I believe it is heretical to espouse the Church is dying; the Bride of Christ will not die. However, she will change. We have great leaders waiting in the wings, ready to jump in and lead our congregations into a new future.

As a result of both the candidates and myself having a positive experience, I was asked to serve as a mentor again. As a mentor I attend the retreat in Greenville and also drive to a central location for the subsequent mentoring sessions. Last time we met in Walterboro; this time we will meet in Columbia. I will also work with the other mentors to write up an evaluation of each candidate we are assigned. The evaluations assist the candidates' DCOM in approving, continuing, or withdrawing the candidate from the process.

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EPCOMING

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Confirmation Class 5:00 PM

January 5
Trustees Meeting
7:00 PM

January 12
Charlotte Herbert 10:30 AM

January 18
Carrie Bull Circle 7:00PM

January 19
Finance Meeting 6:30 PM
Admin Council Meeting
7:30 PM



With Ben
Every
Tuesday
7:15 AM
@
Bagel
Nation

February 9, 2016
Shrove Tuesday Pancake
Supper

Editor's Page *Thelma Ford, Editor*

Life by the Numbers BY DAVID JEREMIAH

Got a second? Sure. We've got lots of them—60 per minute, 3,600 per hour, and 86,400 per day. Everyone has the same number, but not everybody uses them wisely.

How do you use yours?

The American Bureau of Labor Statistics published an extensive study on how adults use their time, out of which came a graphic showcasing a typical day in the life of an employed person, between 25 and 54 years old, with children. In an average day, we spend:

- 7.6 hours sleeping
- 8.6 hours working
- 2.6 hours in leisure
- 1.1 hours doing household chores and activities
- 1.1 hours eating and drinking
- 1.2 hours caring for children and family members

And 1.8 hours in "miscellaneous"¹

Put this in lifelong terms. Based on an average lifespan of 78.7 years, most of us spend:

- 26 years sleeping (one-third of life)
- 10.3 years working at our jobs (20 to 65)
- 9 years of watching television
- 3.6 years eating and drinking
- 4.3 years driving (beginning age 17 until 78.7)
- 3 years surfing the Internet
- 1.1 years cleaning.²

Another group of researchers compared current time usage with that of earlier generations. The website *Business Insider* found that people use their waking hours far differently now than 150 years ago. Both then and now, of course, everyone had 168 hours per week, and most people slept about 56 hours a week. But what of the remaining 112 hours?

"The average workweek in most countries has dropped by about 30 hours," said the article. "This remarkable drop in working hours has freed up a lot of extra time. So what do we humans do with all the extra hours our miraculous progress and productivity enhancements have allowed us to create for ourselves? We spend them watching television. According to recent figures, the average human spends about 4 hours a day, or 28 hours a week, watching television."³

Another website, TED.com, reported that the average young person plays 10,000 hours of video games by age 21—about the same amount of time spent in a classroom for all of middle school and high school.⁴

Using our resources wisely has always been a challenge. Moses lived an unusually long time—he was 120 when he died—yet even he was surprised at the brevity of life and by the challenge of using our resources wisely. He wrote, "We glide along the tides of time as swiftly as a racing river and vanish as quickly as a dream.... Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should" (Psalm 90:5, 12, *The Living Bible*).

Rejoice that God has given us another year to serve Him. I want to encourage you, going forward, to use every day and hour wisely for Christ and His kingdom. Take a moment to reflect over your life, think about your opportunities, and rededicate yourself to His glory. It's not just your time He wants, but *you*—all your resources. Your time. Your place. Your voice. Your mark of influence.

This is a leap year, so starting January 1, we have 366 days, each with 24 golden hours. Let's leap into the year as those determined to "live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). You might be surprised how much can be done for God with the assets, abilities, and opportunities you have.

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Pastor Ben's Corner Continued from Page 1

As of this year, I sit on the Charleston District Committee on Ordained Ministry (DCOM). This committee discerns if a candidate is qualified to be in the candidacy process, licensed to serve a congregation, and/or appear before the Board of Ordained Ministry. The DCOM is tasked with doing no harm to candidates and congregations. In other words, the DCOM seeks to help qualified candidates through the process, and at the same time, help people get out of the process if they are not called to licensed or ordained ministry. The DCOM seeks to outfit our congregations with the best possible clergy while at the same time protect congregations from receiving clergy who are not fit to serve.

Each year, every licensed local pastor must appear before his or her DCOM to be re-credentialed for the next year. Since licensed local pastors do not appear before the Board of Ordained Ministry, the DCOM is the body that decides if someone should receive his or her credentials. So back when Rich Robinson was serving Epworth he had to appear before the DCOM every year, and his credentials were awarded on a year-to-year basis through the Charleston DCOM. If you want more information about licensed local pastors, please read my August 2015 Rock article.

The DCOM meets eight to ten times a year for five hour meetings at the Charleston District office. Most of the time these meetings are a celebration of people's call to licensed or ordained ministry. However, some times these are very difficult and painful meetings. There are some candidates and licensed local clergy who need to be told not now. This verdict is never reach lightly, and the burden this verdict carries is borne by the members of the DCOM. We never want to hurt candidates, but we also have to protect all our local congregations. Each congregation deserves the best clergy possible.

Oh wait, there is more. I served on the district Advocacy committee for a year. While I enjoyed my time on Advocacy, I had to give it up to make time to be on DCOM. I still sit as a board member of the Faith and Food Justice committee. Faith and Food Justice is the organization that produced the workshops on gardening and gave us a grant for our garden. I am also a part of a clergy accountability group. We meet twice a month in North Charleston for an hour, and we hold each other accountable to be the best clergy we can be.

I love the ways I get to serve our conference and district. I find them to be life giving. I do not receive any additional compensation for the work I do in these positions. I do them as part of my job. In turn, the work I do helps Epworth. It was through my work in these committees that Epworth knew about the Faith and Food Justice workshops and we received the garden grant. I have also leaned on what I do to help people who are discerning a call to ministry. The accountability group pushes me to perform at the highest level I can as your pastor.

Please see me if you have questions about anything I do. I will even let you shadow me if you want to see what my job looks like. My brother loves to joke that I have the easiest job in the world. He tells me, "You only work one day a week, and when you work you read from a book with all the answers." I assure you, my job is far more demanding than that. I work hard every bit of my 40 plus hours a week, in addition to the calls, e-mails, and texts that roll in at all hours of the day. I use every part of my three-year masters degree to perform the tasks with which I am presented. I am proud of the work I do, and I would love to tell you more about it in person.

Peace, Pastor Ben

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Life by the Numbers BY DAVID JEREMIAH

The Lord is bound to give you lots of occasions for serving Him this year. Should He delay His coming, we've got work to do and all the needed time and resources to fulfill His good and perfect will for us. In the process, we know our labor in Him isn't in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58). This month, let's look at life by the numbers. We have but one life to make a difference for eternity. Let's count our days, and let's make every second count.

from Turning Points Magazine. January 2016 .6-7

***Save the date!
April 22-24, 2016***

Epworth Retreat

This year we will be heading to the Campground at James Island County Park where we will have two cottages for the weekend of April 22-24. This retreat is open to anyone who would like to attend. More information will become available as the date approaches. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Klauber or Sonja Kohser.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

- 1 Riese Butler**
- 3 Grace Griffin**
- 4 Audrey Healy**
- 6 Allen Benson**
- 6 Elizabeth Rumble**
- 11 Christopher Benson**
- 12 Pat Griffin**
- 14 Joanie Clute**
- 17 Sherry Ortiz**
- 22 Barbara Smith**
- 25 Shelley Pullen**
- 28 Bennett Majors**
- 30 Andy Lewis**
- 31 Margaret Romano**

*Whatever you ask, may you receive.
Whatever you seek, may you find.
Whatever you wish, may it be
fulfilled on your birthday and
always.*



AMEN AND AMEN

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders of the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God saying "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Revelations 7:11-12

The angels and elders in heaven call out, listing a bunch of things that belong to God. Take a look at the stuff we owe him.

Praise: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise" (Psalm 111:10)

Glory: "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another: (Isaiah 42:8)

Wisdom: "To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen" (Romans 16:27)

Thanks: You ... clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever" (Psalm 30:11-12)

Honor: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (Revelation 4:11)

Power: "His wisdom is profound, his power is vast: (Job 9:4)

Strength: "One thing God has spoken, two things I heard: 'Power belongs to you, God and with you, Lord, is unfailing love, (Psalm 62:11-12)

Eternity: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17)

You can echo heaven's song right here on earth. Praise, glory, thanks, honor-these can be your offerings too. Wisdom, power, strength, and eternity-these are His, but He shares them with His children. For ever and ever. World without end. "AMEN AND AMEN!"

JANUARY 2016

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3 Contemporary Worship 8:44 AM Sunday School 9:00 AM Traditional Worship 11:15 AM Disciple Bible Study 2:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:00 PM	4 Serenity AA Meeting 8:00 PM	5 Bagels with Ben 7:15 AM Visitation Team 10:00 AM Boy Scouts Meeting 7:00 PM Trustees Meeting 7:00 PM	6 Prayer Meeting 10:00 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	7 Contemporary Band 6:30 PM	8 Family and Friends Game Night 6:00 PM	9 Church Council Retreat 9:00 AM
10 Contemporary Worship 8:44 AM Sunday School 9:00 AM Traditional Worship 11:15 AM Disciple Bible Study 2:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:00 PM	11 Serenity AA Meeting 8:00 PM	12 Bagels with Ben 7:15 AM Visitation Team 10:00 AM Charlotte Herbert Circle 10:30 AM Boy Scouts Meeting 7:00 PM	13 Prayer Meeting 10:00 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	14 Contemporary Band 6:30 PM	15 Family and Friends Game Night 6:00 PM	16
17 Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM Contemporary Worship 8:44 AM Sunday School 9:00 AM Traditional Worship 11:15 AM Disciple Bible Study 2:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:00 PM	18 Carrie Bull Circle 7:30 PM Serenity AA Meeting 8:00 PM	19 Bagels with Ben 7:15 AM Visitation Team 10:00 AM Finance Meeting 6:30 PM Boy Scouts Meeting 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting 7:30 PM	20 Prayer Meeting 10:00 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	21 Contemporary Band 6:30 PM	22 Family and Friends Game Night 6:00 PM	23
24 Contemporary Worship 8:44 AM Sunday School 9:00 AM Traditional Worship 11:15 AM Disciple Bible Study 2:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:00 PM	25 Serenity AA Meeting 8:00 PM	26 Bagels with Ben 7:15 AM Visitation Team 10:00 AM Boy Scouts Meeting 7:00 PM	27 Prayer Meeting 10:00 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM NA Meeting 7:30 PM	28 Volunteers at JIO 9:30 AM Contemporary Band 6:30 PM	29 Family and Friends Game Night 6:00 PM	30
31 Contemporary Worship 8:44 AM Sunday School 9:00 AM Traditional Worship 11:15 AM Disciple Bible Study 2:00 PM Confirmation Class 5:00 PM	<p style="font-style: italic; font-size: 1.2em;"> For I know the plans¹ I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper² you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 </p>					