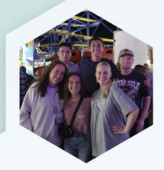


CONNECTION



UM
COMMISSION

STUDENTS
MATTER

W

2024



*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can, in all the places you can,
at all the times you can, to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.*

John Wesley

As Chair of the UM Commission on Higher Education, I remain inspired by the connection between our work and the United Methodist Church. We embody a tradition that prioritizes education as a pathway to transformation – both personally and societally, and our mission reflects the Church’s mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We know that education is an endeavor that is both academic and spiritual. Our Wesley ministries equip students to think critically, grow spiritually, serve compassionately, and lead with integrity, and we honor the Wesleyan belief to nurture both mind and spirit. Higher education is a ministry - where meaningful connections among students, faculty, and staff lead to more meaningful connections with God.

Our work as a commission is a reflection of these connections. We continually strive to strengthen and support United Methodist-affiliated colleges and universities. Students often choose to attend these institutions because of both the high-quality educational experience and the sense of common purpose in the campus community. Our chaplains create spaces where faith and reason coexist and where students find their place to connect to one another.

This year, the theme of **CONNECTION** feels particularly important. In the midst of division in our world, we are called to rise above and seek unity. Like education, connection can be transformative, especially when grounded in a shared faith.

My prayer is we will continue to honor the United Methodist Church’s legacy by fostering connections that promote learning and deepen students’ faith across our state.

PRESIDENT
of
UM Commission

Dr. Beau Seagraves



EVERYTHING CHANGES, BUT CONNECTION REMAINS

In April 2024, futurist Amy Webb coined the phrase “Generation Transition.” While she primarily focuses on emerging generations, her bigger idea is that every one of us alive today is experiencing the most rapid and significant technological and cultural changes in human history.

Whew! That feels overwhelming — and also far too true in many moments. Leaders today are often asked to do more with less, face completely unpredictable circumstances, and must move at the blistering pace of communication set by social media.

The last few years of life in the United Methodist Church have reflected the incredible realities of transition that surround us. UM colleges and Wesley Foundations across the state, country, and globe are seeking to understand these changes, anticipate the future, and respond in effective ways.

We can easily dwell on the challenges and struggles. Humans are gifted at spotting danger and living in anxiety. We know that we are not what we used to be. The old ways of working that served us well for so long may now need to be reconsidered. New ways are emerging all around us, but it takes faith to believe in what we cannot fully see just yet. We can choose to dwell on the exhilarating possibilities instead!

STUDENTS CHURCHES COMMUNITY

Our faith is rooted in scripture — timeless truth that remains relevant today, just as it did thousands of years ago. As everything changes, God’s love and the human heart remain the same. Our UM educational tradition is rooted in a commitment to the holiness of heart and mind, united with excellent scholarship and the pursuit of truth. Now, more than ever, the world needs what the UM Commission and its many ministries and institutions offer:

- Unconditional Christian love in the context of connection and community.
- Shared experiences of heartwarming faith that can overcome division and hate.
- We know that where painful pruning has happened, the flush of new green growth will surely follow.
- We even believe that change is the very vehicle by which God can make all things new in Jesus Christ.

Our students need connection to God and one another. Now more than ever, students matter, and your connection to them and the UM Commission will make all the difference!

Looking forward,
Adam



**Rev. Dr. Adam
Roberts**
Executive
Director



**BLESSED TO HAVE SERVED THESE CAMPUSES IN 2024
AND IN 2025 WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING EVEN MORE**



● **Andrew College**

● **Augusta University**

● **Clark Atlanta University**

● **Columbus State University**

● **Emory University**

● **Georgia Gwinnett College**

● **Kennesaw State University**

● **LaGrange College**

● **Mercer University**

● **Georgia Institute of Technology**

● **Georgia Southern University**

● **Middle Georgia State University**

● **Oxford College**

● **Paine College**

● **Reinhardt University**

● **University of Georgia**

● **University of West Georgia**

● **Wesleyan College**

● **Young Harris College**

Higher Education Ministry in Georgia

The United Methodist Church has a long-standing commitment to serving students on college and university campuses of the world. Through the UMC Commission, the North and South Georgia Annual Conferences support many UM-related campuses and Wesley Foundations across the state.



ANDREW COLLEGE

As part of the ministry at Andrew College, we organize a program called "My Journey" in the chapel every two weeks. During these sessions, a student shares their personal journey to Andrew College, reflecting on how they have experienced the guidance and wisdom of God along the way.

This semester, we introduced a young pastor and motivational speaker leading a worship service once a month on Sunday. This initiative is supported by our Volleyball coach, who introduced Dustin Riverbank to the Dean of Students, as well as the Football coach.

At our first worship night, we welcomed approximately 58 attendees, while the second service brought in around 46 to 49 participants.

**Ivelisse
Quinones**
Chaplain



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

Tonya Miles
Dean Spiritual
life &
Engagement

The Office of Spiritual Life and Engagement at Clark Atlanta University continues to offer ministry to its community, which includes Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, and the local community. Recognizing that the spiritual needs vary within the community, this office offers a broad range of ways to engage the various constituent groups. While worship, study, teaching, and community service are primary and ongoing, counseling, facilitating, and pastoral leadership in matters of loss and grief are offered as necessary. Building on the school's motto, "Culture for Service", and the interest of our young adults in regularly making a difference in the world, this office believes that community service is a low commitment way to build relationships with students that eventually extend other aspects of the ministry. This report for the 2023-2024 Academic Year, highlights accomplishments in this area.

Campus, and Congregations in Community – this special initiative was launched in January 2024 as a means of encouraging a group of 25 students to partner with a local UMC congregation to serve in community, reflect upon their shared experiences outside the "walls of the church" and to build relationships. Funding was provided by the Fund for Theological Education as a means of incentivizing the students to remain committed and engaged.

Bonner Servant Leader Program – national program providing students the opportunity to develop leadership skills and serve within the community. Students are chosen for involvement and value the program because it provides belonging, and an opportunity to make a difference.

In addition to service, we travel with students for co-curricular experiential learning, provide opportunities for students to gather and to express themselves in our SOUL Space/prayer room. We host an end of semester study retreat at Camp Glisson, host visitors who seek opportunities to engage with and empower students to live with purpose.

MLK Day Community Service – over the past 5 years, this event has grown to become an activity in which students look forward to participating. Annually, we partner with the Westside Future Fund to serve at the Truly Living Well Urban Garden to prepare their farm for it's spring/summer harvest of fresh produce that feeds the local community.



COASTAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA WESLEY FOUNDATION

Tori Sanchez
Senior
Testimony

"Wesley isn't just a Wednesday thing; it's a place where fellowship, belonging, and love for Christ intertwine. It's where I've found a second family where I can be myself and have friends that support me through life's ups and downs. It is refreshing to have a community that is there for each other so no one is alone in this journey of life."



John Mitchell
CSU Wesley
President

COLUMBUS STATE WESLEY FOUNDATION

are unable to do anything, but with Him we are capable of more than we can ever imagine. We have been tremendously blessed this 2024 Fall semester, by having a strong core of leaders and faithful members that are dedicated to the goal of spreading the love of Jesus. Revealing Jesus' love to Columbus State University and Columbus Tech starts in our Monday night large groups, Wednesday afternoon small groups, and Friday social events. In these settings, we are learning about the Word of God and how to be disciples of Jesus Christ. As we've learned through our leader Pastor Andy Ginn, nothing establishes a stronger connection amongst people than the love of God.

*"Yes, I am the vine;
you are the branches.
Those who remain in me,
and I in them,
will produce much fruit.
For apart from me
you can do nothing"*

John 15:5



Our goal at Columbus State University Wesley is getting as many people as possible connected to the love of Jesus. We know that apart from Him we are unable to do anything, but with Him we are capable of more than we can ever imagine. We have been tremendously blessed this 2024 Fall semester, by having a strong core of leaders and faithful members that are dedicated to the goal of spreading the love of Jesus. Revealing Jesus' love to Columbus State University and Columbus Tech starts in our Monday night large groups, Wednesday afternoon small groups, and Friday social events. In these settings, we are learning about the Word of God and how to be disciples of Jesus Christ. As we've learned through our leader Pastor Andy Ginn, nothing establishes a stronger connection amongst people than the love of God. Earlier in 2024, we were blessed to have five beautiful baptisms. Numerous students also gave and rededicated their lives to Christ. Even faculty and students who may not regularly attend our meetings are aware of the godly impact we are having on campus. Each soul aware of CSU Wesley is a seed planted to be a branch connected to Jesus Christ.

EMORY UNIVERSITY

The Emory University Office of Spiritual and Religious Life continues to build connections across faith traditions, Christian denominations, and the Beloved Community worshiping community on campus.



The fall semester launched with OSRL's fourth annual WISE (Welcoming Interfaith and Spiritual Exploration) pre-orientation program. Glenn Memorial UMC hosted the group for a tour of the sanctuary and little chapel as well as a dinner with Emory's Christian Religious Life Affiliates. This evening exposes students to the various Christian ministries on campus. Student representatives serve on the Inter-religious Council (IRC) and build connections with students of other faiths.

Ecumenical connections remain strong as well. Students plan a Christian Life Christmas Party for the campus, and student organizations are partnering for worship nights and Bible studies. Christian students plan a presentation to the IRC to teach others about Christianity in the Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic traditions.

Beloved Community Protestant Worship continues to be an essential connection point for students. Students participate in all parts of worship, including planning, readings, prayers, and music. Students of diverse backgrounds and identities find a home at Beloved on Sunday mornings, in Bible study, and in fellowship. I think of two first year students who met at Beloved Community who have become best friends. Seeing them sit with their parents at Homecoming and Family Weekend exemplifies the bonds built through Beloved Community.

The Beloved Community fall retreat deepened connections. We spent time outdoors in Lullwater Park, shared meals together, worshiped together, and closed the night with s'mores. This day-long retreat has become a student favorite and is a reminder to them of the importance of Sabbath.



Maddie Herlong
Christian Chaplain
Office Spiritual Life



GEORGIA COLLEGE WESLEY FOUNDATION



We host a free coffee house twice a week from 11-2 at Georgia College Wesley. We serve 100 to 150 students each time we host the event. Twice a semester we take our coffee house on to the campus. Every time it is a hit!



We encounter many students who never go to Wesley, and we engage for 3 hours with our campus. Looking around at these on-campus coffee house events you will see students studying, playing cornhole, having discipleship meetings, and laughing. It's life giving for our campus, and it is life giving for our ministry. It takes a lot of work to pull it off twice a semester because we are certainly not professional baristas, but we have a heart for the Georgia College campus and consider it a joy to serve the students in this way.

Our student LEAD team rallies around our staff at these events, helping us to set up and also helping us to engage with the students. They take orders, make drinks, and invite people to our weekly services. One of our biggest wins lately with coffee house has been the basketball team. Several members of both the men's and women's basketball teams have started coming. They circle up with some of our staff and students and play card games for an hour or two. They have become a part of our community, and they are taking the love of Jesus to their teammates. The moments are powerful and spirit-filled and make coffee house one of our favorite ways.



GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE WESLEY FOUNDATION

As a community college, where most students are commuters, it has challenged our team to seek creative ways to build connections both on and off campus. This year, we hosted events and provided chances for students to bond with each other and engage with nearby UMC churches. From this, we have seen the Lord moving and encountering students through these relationships. On campus, we've partnered with Student Housing and other GGC Christian ministries to host events like "Paint & Worship" and "Collegiate Day of Prayer". Students have been able to cultivate relationships and a sense of unity through this. It has also helped students connect with the Lord in the midst of their busy school schedules.

During our fall semester, we studied Ephesians, emphasizing the importance of being one in the Spirit and applying that to our lives. Partnering with local UM Churches, such as LVFIRST UMC, McKendree UMC, and The Nett Church, is a beautiful way we have put this practice into action. From this, we have seen an intergenerational connection between our students and church members. Church staff have been guest speakers on campus, and church ministries have been involved in sponsoring and leading our Prayer Breakfast Meetings. It has ignited meaningful discussions and motivated students to seek out a church. Off campus, we have also been involved in different churches' volunteer events, which has been an amazing experience serving alongside one another.

We desire to see these connections flourish and for students to continue experiencing God's presence through them.

Daphne Nateras
Director



For almost 70 years, the Georgia Southern Wesley Foundation has ministered to college students and empowered them to become faithful disciples who impact their peers, community, and world. This year was no different. We leaned into our Wesleyan connection and heritage. This year, we have had the opportunity to be part of multiple retreats with fellow Wesley Foundations: **Sunbelt Wesley Winter Retreat** (South Alabama & Southern Miss Wesley Foundations), **Student Leadership Retreat** (UMCommission Wesley Foundations), & **Fall Retreat** (Macon of Wesley Foundation)



In these spaces, I have seen students connect, learn, worship, and serve alongside students from other campuses. What I love most from the interactions with fellow Wesley foundations is that they look forward to our next retreat or meeting with them. They realize each other's uniqueness of different campuses and have a better understanding that allows them to serve back in their context. Furthermore, it has raised questions on how they can be connected to the local church.



This past year, I have had the privilege to speak at the following churches that students have come from or currently attend:

- **Pittman Park UMC**
- **Christ UMC-Warner Robbins**
- **Church of the Hill - Richmond Hill**
- **Brooklet Community Church**
- **Statesboro FUMC**
- **Asbury UMC-Waynesboro**
- **Sylvania Community Church**
- **Jessup FUMC**

We recognize that our students are not with us forever and want to encourage them to find their church homes when they leave. However, while they are with us, we want to teach them to lean into their vow of baptism, which we Methodists call our "baptismal we." Our goal at Wesley is to instruct students to live into and out of their baptism. At Wesley, we gather for worship each week and frequently participate in the Eucharist meal. During this service, I typically pour water into the cup alongside the grape juice and remind everyone to reflect on their baptism. John Wesley's words resonated with me during my college years and continue to be relevant today. During one worship service after communion, a student walked towards me and said, "Thank you for helping me remember my baptism. I know I have already given Jesus my body to work, but now I want to give him my heart."

GS Wesley aims to equip students with the tools they need to become faithful disciples of Jesus. We want them not only to understand intellectually that Jesus loves them but also to be able to express what He has done for them from the heart. We look forward to seeing how our connection and heritage will impact our students.

Albert Williams, III
Director

GEORGIA TECH WESLEY FOUNDATION

During the 2024 Fall Semester the students at Tech Wesley have been very intentional in connecting more with our local United Methodist Churches.

Every Sunday morning our students gather at 9am for breakfast and worship. After we finish, we carpool to one of our partner churches to worship and fellowship with supporters and alumni.

These trips have been such a blessing as they connect our current students with those that came before and invite them into a larger community of faith while at Tech and then after they graduate.

These local church visits have also opened doors for us to get involved with well-established mission work that our partner churches organize. On the first Saturday of every month Tech Wesley students volunteer their time to serve meals at St. Mark UMC's, "Breakfast Club." This opportunity allows for students to actively participate in the work of the church and teaches them a pattern of generosity that will remain with them throughout their life.



Sam Hopson
Director

KENNESAW STATE WESLEY FOUNDATION



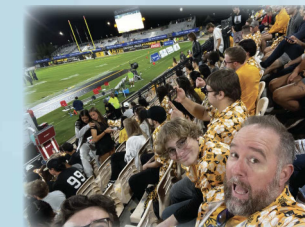
Brian Hammond
Director



The story of KSU Wesley since July is one of rebuilding. That is not to say that the program was in any disrepair, but the change in directors shocked the system. However, we have a strong and active Board of Directors committed to our success. Moreover, we have a fantastic team of student leaders committed to the KSU Wesley community. That is what they said is of utmost importance to them. Thus, we have focused on building the strength of that community. Our students have taken it upon themselves to maintain a schedule of well-attended activities throughout the week.

The second part of our story is a change of "homebase." Disaffiliation forced an unexpected move of office and meeting space. St. Paul UMC in Marietta has stepped up in amazing ways to provide us with a space where our students feel comfortable, and excited to be there. This new location also brings opportunities for mission partnerships that we will explore in the coming months.

Pastorally, I have been focused on building relationships with our students. I have been meeting with them in small groups and individually and have seen those relationships grow. As we continue to walk through life together, we will build trust and work towards discipleship. Our process has been to try whatever we can think of and see what works best for our context. As long as community is built, then we know that it is working. We have been bowling, to the biggest football game of the year (KSU VICTORY, of we course rushed the field).



Our primary goals from the Board of Directors are to explore a Capital Campaign to build a facility on the land we own adjacent to campus, and to solidify a working budget and fundraising system. Having our own facility is a must for KSU Wesley as it will give us a solid advantage in reaching the 48,000 students that attend the two campuses.

LAGRANGE COLLEGE

Our connection to the United Methodist Church and our local UMC congregations is a deep and long sustaining connection. The start of our mission statement says - **"LaGrange College challenges the minds and inspires the souls of its students. Founded in 1831 and committed to its relationship with the United Methodist Church."**

As part of our deep connection to the UMC, we partner with LaGrange UMC and Warren Temple UMC. Shared ministry includes meals, worship, conversation, mentorship, preaching, and fun.

"We are connected to LaGrange College in many ways. We participate in providing meals and devotions to college students. We have a program that offers students the chance to engage in leadership in worship in singing, video production, and music. Additionally, once a year in the fall, as close to parents' weekend as we can, we have LaGrange College Sunday in which Rev. Ashley Jenkins, the college Chaplain, preaches the service, students lead worship, and offer to serve as liturgists. We are grateful for the continued connection."

Rev. Thomas Martin - Pastor of LaGrange UMC

"LaGrange College has played a vital role in this community's Racial Trust Building Initiative which is designed to bring the residents together in love. Also, we have collaborated to allow LaGrange College students to serve at a local youth clubhouse for at-risk youth by assisting with homework and other needed areas. We even have the privilege of having a work study student available to provide consistent, much needed support for these youth."

Rev. Carl Von Epps - Pastor of Warren Temple UMC

One student says - *"This summer I led worship for Church on the Hooch, an outdoor service on the Chattahoochee through LaGrange FUMC. It was an extremely unique and rewarding experience to worship God in nature each Sunday."*

Ashley Jenkins
Chaplain &
Director of
Spiritual Life



MACON AREA WESLEY FOUNDATION



Brandon Tolle
Director



As an extension ministry of the United Methodist Church, connection is in our DNA. Highlights of the year include:

- Scores of students have found safety and refuge here this year as they ask hard questions and grow into their faith with fellow students from the campuses we serve.
- Many of them become deeply involved here and reach out together in love and service to their campus.
- Some, like Daisy and Madison, have connected with local congregations where they can serve.
- Others still have met believers and formed deep relationships from other Wesley Foundations across the state at Student Leadership Conference or retreats that we hosted in partnership with CSU Wesley and Georgia Southern Wesley.
- Thanksgiving Potluck with Trinity UMC as our sponsor church and representation from Mulberry Street UMC, Vineville UMC, Wesley UMC, Martha Bowman Church, Forest Hills Church, and New Haven Baptist Church participating as well.
- Local missions and our spring break trip to Brunswick to work with underserved communities there.

"I have loved Wesley because it has given me a sense of community not just on our campus but with other Wesleys. This year we have partnered with both CSU Wesley and Southern Wesley. Through these partnerships I have made new friends that I still keep up with. Outside of these partnerships I have gotten to know more people at Wesley of Macon through different events but especially my fam group. I don't know where I would be without Wesley in my life." - Rebecca, Mercer University, c/o 2027

"If I had to describe my experience at Wesley in one word it would be family. From the moment I stepped into the worship space on my first Tuesday night at college, I felt like I was being welcomed home." - Catherine, Mercer University, c/o 2027

"One thing I have always loved about Wesley of Macon is how easy it is to become connected not only to the people who come to events regularly, but to each individual's network of believers. Through Wesley I have been able to connect with other students' families and their home churches. I have also found a deeper connection with the community around us as we help minister to the homeless community around us. Macon didn't feel like home before Wesley, but Wesley helped me make a network of believers who changed my perspective on this city."

- Ashley, Mercer University, c/o 2025

"There is not a place on Campus that is as good at connecting fellow believers from extremely varied walks of life than Wesley. Wesley allows us to love our neighbors and fellow believers extremely well, even if we believe very different things!" - Dalton, Mercer University, c/o 2025



OXFORD COLLEGE

We recognize that religious and spiritual diversity is an integral part of our campus community. Our approach to religious life, particularly in the face of global events that can create tensions on campus, demonstrates our commitment to fostering understanding, dialogue, and mutual respect among students of different faiths and worldviews.

The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL) plays a crucial role in this effort, particularly through its work with student religious groups. A cornerstone of this work is the annual two-day retreat for student religious leaders, held before classes begin in August. This retreat goes beyond mere logistical training; it serves as a foundation for building relationships across different faith traditions. Through identity-related activities, team-based exercises, and reflection sessions, students not only deepen their understanding of their own religious identity but also gain insights into the beliefs and practices of others.

"We do identity related activities, team-based activities, and reflection activities that help humanize each of us while we learn even more about our own religious identity and especially the identity of others," Chaplain Rev. Dr. Lyn Pace explains.

This initial retreat is just the beginning. Throughout the academic year, these student leaders continue to meet monthly as a group, furthering the connections and understanding established during the retreat. Additionally, each religious group and its leader(s) are assigned a staff member from ORSL who meets with them at least bi-weekly. These one-on-one meetings provide individualized support, helping students navigate both their personal faith journeys and the practical aspects of leading their religious organizations on campus. The importance of this ongoing support and dialogue became particularly evident following the events of October 7, 2023, which led to increased tensions on campuses nationwide. Our established framework for inter-religious communication and understanding proved invaluable in navigating these challenging times.

Looking ahead, ORSL plans to strengthen its relationships with religious life affiliates and advisors, creating an even more robust support network for student religious leaders. As Pace emphasizes, "We are especially proud of this work and encouraged that it will continue to be what we need as we engage the ongoing tensions in the coming academic year." This proactive approach to religious life on campus exemplifies Oxford College's commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all students can explore and express their identities freely. By fostering open communication and understanding between different religious groups, we not only enrich the college experience for our students but also equip them with the skills to navigate a diverse and complex world beyond our campus.

**Rev. Dr.
Lyn Pace**
Chaplain



PAINE COLLEGE WESLEY FELLOWSHIP

The fall semester at Paine College has found the Wesley Fellowship in full throttle. From helping the Religious Life Office with the "Rites of Passage" ceremonies for new students, and sponsoring our first worship service, we hit the ground running with activities at the Wesley House (a college owned house where Wesley activities take place). This year as in last year, standing room only bible study sessions have been a regular part of our Wednesday night activities.

Prayer and fellowship have been key components of our weekly activities. That has been especially true since Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc on our campus. The college reports that: The 48,000 square ft. Gilbert-Lambuth Memorial Chapel roof was badly damaged with chunks of wood blown from the steeple and numerous shingles dislodged. Stained glass windows were dislodged from their frames, carpet and flooring were badly soaked during the blowing wind and rain. For each building that received extensive roof damage, interior rooms, equipment, and furniture were also compromised. Eight (8) buildings will need new roofs, ten (10) residential rental properties owned by Paine will need extensive repairs and new roofs, over 75% of the large trees on campus were destroyed and/or uprooted, and perimeter fences were destroyed in large sections by falling trees. Sadly, the Baseball Field was destroyed. (For more information go to www.paine.edu)



Fortunately, the Wesley House was not damaged, although several trees came down on the street, one hitting the house next door. The physical damage was truly difficult to witness from the unexpected storm. The emotional challenges among students, faculty and staff have required that we offer worship services, prayer circles, and other spiritually uplifting activities to help to invoke God's presence in these difficult times.

**Luther
Felder**
Chaplain



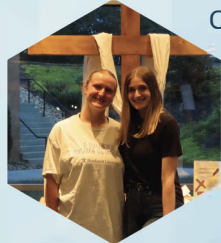
Our prayer circles on the veranda of the Peters Campus Center have brought together students and staff to offer thanksgiving to Almighty God for the gift of God's covering during the storm and its aftermath.



REINHARDT UNIVERSITY

Reinhardt University is dedicated to educating the whole person—*academically, socially, and spiritually*—by providing both challenge and care. The Reinhardt Campus Ministry is vital to our students' spiritual formation. It offers worship services, spiritual retreats, service projects, and opportunities for students to lead and create new events that shape their faith journey.

This year, we welcomed a new Chaplain, Grant Perry, on September 3rd. In addition to his campus ministry role, Grant serves in the U.S. Army Reserves and is honored to have been appointed to Reinhardt. His passion lies in fostering a Christian community on campus, helping students deepen their connection with God and equipping them to carry their faith out into the world.



Our worship services are student-driven, from planning to execution. Each Tuesday before a worship service, students gather to collaborate and workshop the sermon, ensuring it reflects their voices and resonates within the campus context. This approach empowers the students and keeps the worship experience grounded in relevance and authenticity.

In partnership with the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, we organize spiritual retreats and service projects through our established relationships. This year, we will attend the winter retreat at Camp Sumatanga in Alabama and have already completed a beautification project at Camp Hamby in Georgia. Additionally, we are preparing to assist with Hurricane Helene's recovery through UMCOR, engage in international service with UVMIM, and collaborate with local churches on various projects.



This year, we also hosted our first visioning dinner, where students participated in Christian conferencing and scripture study to discern the future of our ministry. Each student developed a one-sentence guiding statement for Reinhardt Campus Ministry. Through continued discernment, we will finalize a mission statement in the spring of 2025 that will lead our ministry for years.



Grant Perry
Chaplain

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA WESLEY FOUNDATION

Bob Beckwith
Director



Our mission at the UGA Wesley Foundation is to connect with students to enable them to encounter God and become disciples of Jesus Christ. Our primary weekly connection opportunities are our worship services, small groups and discipleship meetings. Our goal is to worship as a corporate body, build friendships and community in small groups, and meet in discipleship settings where in depth discussions about life and faith can happen. Together, these connections play a vital role in the spiritual growth and transformation of our students.

Additionally, we work to lead our students into being connected in mission to the people in the Athens area. Each month we partner with a local ministry, called I-Serve, to provide and distribute 30,000 pounds of food to 250 - 300 households in need. Each household served is an opportunity for our students to meet and pray with our neighbors. Along with that, a couple dozen of our students volunteer each week to mentor and lead small groups to 60 children and youth from a nearby public housing community.



But all of that happens in the context of encouraging our students to pursue their own personal connections to the local church. As formative as we want their time with us to be, the reality is all too soon our students will leave us. Teaching them to make worship and serving in the local church a priority is a vital part of our mission. To that end, several of our students volunteer to give leadership each week in the youth group of a local United Methodist congregation and others help lead worship in churches throughout our area.



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA WESLEY FOUNDATION



At West Georgia Wesley, our focus this semester has been on community. This semester we have a new director and a lot of new students, so we decided that we wanted to emphasize community. We have done this through prayers, purpose, and perseverance. We began the semester with a focus on prayer. This helped us to see what it meant to be connected to God and to each other. During that month, our students made a promise to stay connected to each other through prayer. To help fulfill this promise we made a prayer board and promised to read it to pray for others and to place our prayer request on it to allow others to pray for us.

Probably the most common way for our college students to feel connected is through our Monday Night dinners. Marissa, a senior at West Georgia, exclaimed, *"I love the food and fellowship at Wesley where we can openly talk about our highs and lows for the week over some good ole home cooking."* Needless to say, that is one of the activities our students enjoy the most.

Our connection to each other and to God is best exemplified in the way in which we love each other. A quote that a few of our students have latched onto is, *"I would rather love you into heaven than scare you out of hell."* This is a quote that our director, Josh, said. Our students said they wanted to get this quote on a shirt because it exemplifies what we are trying to do at West Georgia Wesley. We are representatives of Christ on Earth and the best way we can show that is through the way in which we love each other.



Josh
Swanson
Director



VALDOSTA STATE WESLEY FOUNDATION



Greetings from the Wesley Foundation at Valdosta State University! It brings us great joy to be able to share with you some of the exciting things happening in the Wesley ministry. Our mission remains creating a culture of discipleship - **helping students come to know Jesus and walk like Jesus in the world.**

Thanks to the efforts of our Lead Team, we had an incredible school year seeing significant growth in the lives of our students. There are several areas where students can serve on Lead including: Worship Production, Prayer, Connect & Media, Fellowship, Bless the Blazers & Discipleship. Collectively, our Lead team is what creates and sustains the culture that allows students to grow as disciples of Jesus.

Our Worship Production team area is responsible for creating and offering a weekly worship service (Wesley Wednesday). A prayer and communion service is offered at 7:15 and a worship service at 8pm. This gathering is greatly used of God to encourage the souls of college students and help them grow as Christian disciples.

Our Bless the Blazers team area helps plan opportunities for our Wesley community to be a blessing to other organizations on campus. We have learned to ask the question, "What's your greatest need and how can we help?" Often times, it is a matter of showing support to the other organizations and their leaders. For instance, this team will often make encouragement bags and give to RA's on campus, thespians after a performance, or pregame bags for the basketball teams.



WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Under President Blight's leadership, Wesleyan College has forged meaningful connections with the local Macon community and international community by initiating new partnerships. In this season of growth for Wesleyan, the United Methodist connection is crucial in providing Christian love and hospitality to young adults.

In Macon, Wesleyan is proud to partner with local United Methodist congregations. In April, Wesleyan students volunteered with Centenary UMC for a day of service. In August, Vineville UMC gifted the incoming international students with basic dorm necessities (toiletries, linens, etc.).

Community connections continue to grow through Wesleyan's presence at the Mayor's Clergy Council, partnership with local nonprofit organizations, and through TheoEd. Working with Candler School of Theology, Centenary UMC, and Mulberry Street UMC, TheoEd provided premiere theological content for students through this unique United Methodist partnership.

On campus, students are invited to connect with the Christian community through Wesleyan Disciples, a ministry of the Chaplain's office, or the four campus ministries, including Wesley of Macon.

In September, an unexpected student death demonstrated the importance of these connections. In a time of campus-wide grief - pastors, church leaders, community members, chaplains, and campus ministers, from Macon and beyond, supported Wesleyan through prayer, service, and care. The nurturing support from these connections was instrumental in helping the College navigate through a particularly challenging season.

The connections formed at, and by Wesleyan College, can be life-changing for young women. Therefore, these vital connections to the Macon community, the United Methodist Church and other ministers within higher education institutions remain integral to the success of Wesleyan College students and the institution as a whole.



"I have made so many friends here... Christ knew that these people would be good for me... [and] that it would make such a positive impact on my life."

- Wesleyan Disciple Student



**Rachel
Hartman**
Chaplain



YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE



This year at Young Harris College we implemented a program through Religious Life that grew connection between students in surprising ways. This program is called "The Big Meal" and uses an event where students package meals for those in need around the world through Rise Against Hunger. However, the real thrust of the event is to get students who would never serve together to do so and then share a meal together after the other meals are packaged.

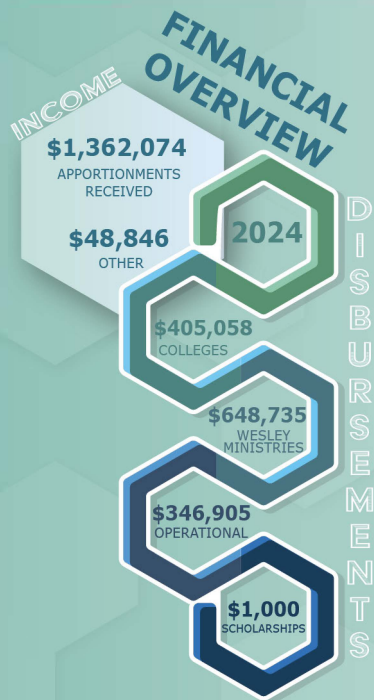
We have done this event two times this year and packed over 22,000 meals for those in need but it's the connections between students that normally wouldn't connect that has been amazing to watch. This is intentional. We limit the number of students that can volunteer (140 across two events so far) and invite specific groups from across the campus to participate, trying to create a cross section of all the groups on campus. So, students from the baseball team end up packaging meals with students from the anime club, students from the theater program end up packaging meals with students from Greek Life, and yes, students from the humanist society end up packaging meals with students from Christian clubs.

Then, when they eat together, they are encouraged to sit with those they did not come with and are given prompts for conversation like *"tell us about a time you couldn't believe your eyes"* or *"tell us about a time music soothed your soul"*. At almost every table, these simple prompts caused many students to break down crying when sharing their story. Again, with people they normally wouldn't even be talking to. Perhaps its simpler than we think, this kingdom thing. Serve together, share your lives, listen. And we might just find the Kingdom was already **"in our midst"**. (Luke 17:21)

**Adam
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Chaplain



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I look upon the whole world as my parish.

John Wesley

