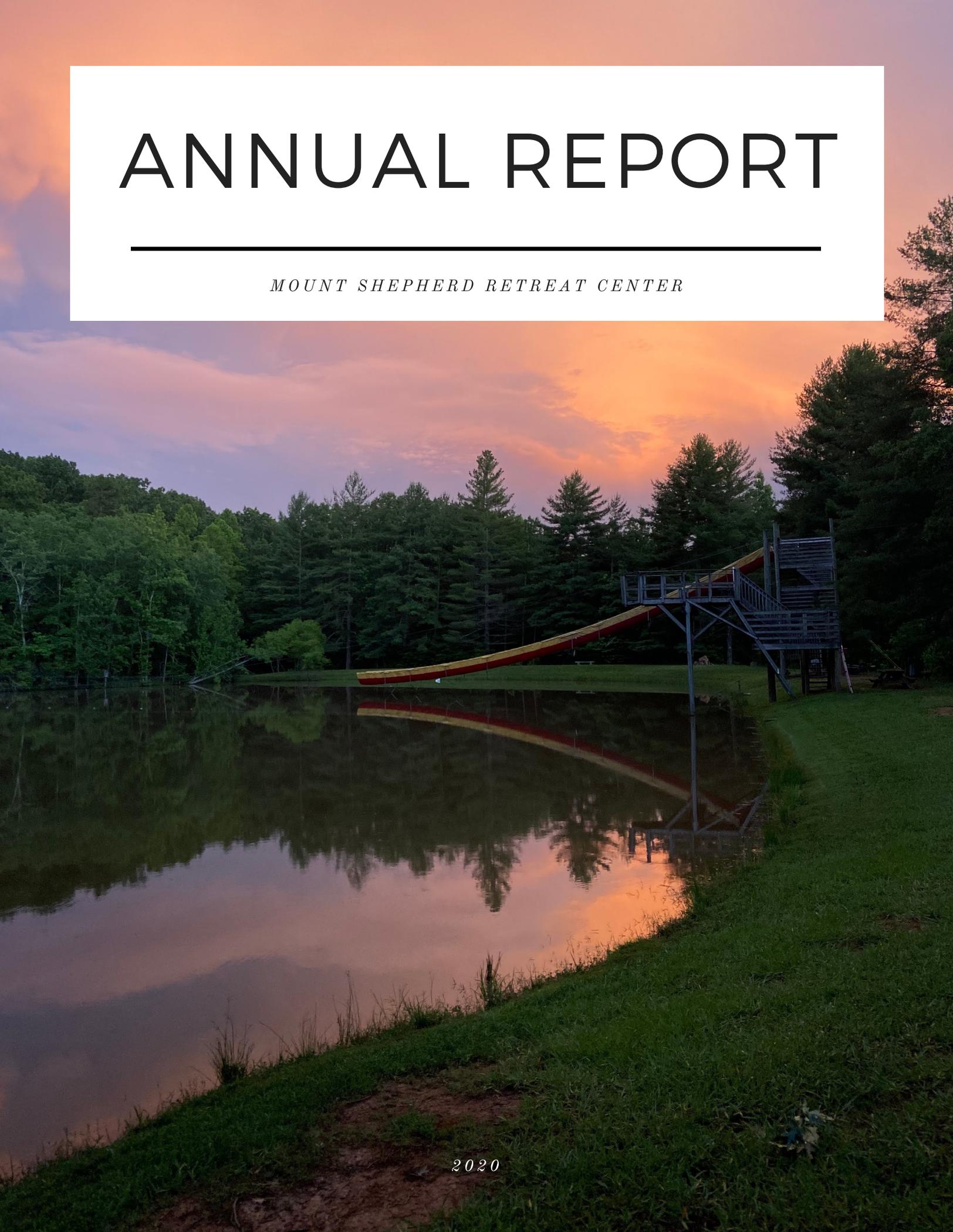


ANNUAL REPORT

MOUNT SHEPHERD RETREAT CENTER



2020

C O N T E N T S

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YEAR IN REVIEW

A message from Mount Shepherd's Executive Director on the previous year and God's abundant mercies

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SPECIAL GROUPS & EXCEPTIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

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A recognition and thank you to those who have helped make Mount Shepherd Retreat Center possible

YEAR IN REVIEW

BY JOSH BRITTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends of Mount Shepherd,

What a year it has been! We had prayed for a 2020 that we would always remember, and our prayers did not go unanswered. We rang in the new year with our inaugural Winter Camp. Children got a camp experience during winter break, and parents enjoyed a New Year's holiday kid-free. We had a sacred campfire worship service as we closed out one decade and began a new one.

Our January and February saw some of the most fruitful ministry in recent memory. Mount Shepherd was operating at an all-time high. We were meeting and exceeding every goal we had set for ourselves-- both financially and programatically. We cherish our identity as a non-profit organization, but we were proud to be comfortably financially sustainable.

In March, we were on pace for 2020 to be a record setting year. Our organization had an all time high in momentum, sustainability and energy.

But then came COVID-19 and the ensuing international response. Stop me if you've heard this one before. Our operations screeched to a halt. For the first time in several years, we had no guests on our site for weeks on end, and we seriously doubted that our summer ministry could even happen. Thanks to the grace of God, the exceptional leadership of our board of directors, and the hard work of our staff, we found a way through the chaos. We were able to retain all our employees at their pay level, and we were able to provide on-site programming for children from June until October.

I'm especially proud to say that our staff has intentionally worked with our local health department to ensure the safety of our staff and guests. Further, we were grateful to receive a generous donation of PPE from DART Displays.

In fact, our organization is in its strongest financial position in more than a decade. Truly, God has provided for us. We have been faithfully supported by the Western NC Conference of the UMC. Our donors have been wonderfully generous and our staff have worked very hard to steward our great resources. For the first time in a decade, our organization is debt free.

More importantly, in spite of all the challenges, we have maintained our vital ministry. We are reaching young people with the gracious love of God offered through Jesus Christ. Our guests are encountering God on our beautiful piece of creation. Our college-aged staffers are growing in their disciplines and leadership. Because of your faithfulness and support, Mount Shepherd is living into its mission of transforming lives through our programs. We are so grateful for your ongoing support, and we are excited about what's ahead.

To God be the glory.

Josh Britton,
Executive Director
Mount Shepherd
Retreat Center





MOVING MOUNTAINS

*HOW THE LORD'S
FAITHFULNESS HAS PREVAILED*

...SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN "MOVE" AND IT WILL MOVE. - MATTHEW 17:20

We have often heard the phrase, "Build it and they will come," but did we ever think it would apply to camp at Mount Shepherd? Over the past few months, we have built, torn down and rebuilt, yet every time, they come.

Mount Shepherd has enjoyed the opportunity to host Summer Day Camps 2020 and Fall Camp in the wake of the pandemic. While many other camps were sadly left idle through the summer and fall months, Mount Shepherd was serving our community in ways never seen before. Our shortened Summer Day Camps hosted 126 kids, allowing them to have many of the same summer camp experiences everyone has come to love. Our Summer Day Camp campers enjoyed water activities, the high ropes course and hiking around property, all while getting the connection and community with other campers they yearned for. On site, we gratefully had the assistance of 11 young adult Summer Staffers.

With the fall months sending kids back to school in an unfamiliar setting, Mount Shepherd dove at the opportunity to bring kids back to camp. Many parents in our area still have regular 9-5s, making it difficult for their kids to complete virtual learning. Fall Camp gave many families in the area the opportunity to send their kids back to school without actually going. Our Fall Camp kids had designated times for virtual learning, while still getting hands-on experiences and experiential learning. They were able to enjoy the outdoors, learn in a nontraditional setting, and be connected to others.

Top: Fall Camp camper enjoys a board game
Bottom: Summer Staff sporting their masks



A VIEW FROM THE TOP

WHY KIDS NEED CAMP DURING
COVID-19

Since COVID-19 began spreading in the early spring, our news cycles have primarily been concerned with public health, economic impact and the government's response to the crisis. Meanwhile, our children have gone largely ignored. With reduced or canceled time in in-person education, church and public spaces, children are missing vital opportunities to connect with their peers. Tragically, many have been subject to increased rates of domestic violence and neglect. When we started hosting programs in early July, it was the first time in *months* that most of our campers had been around other kids their age. Think of the developmental milestones that were put on hold as children exchanged the homeroom for TikTok, slumber parties for Instagram, and dances for Snapchat. Face-to-face connections were replaced with increased screen time. Prior to the summer, a considerable segment of our campers had spent upwards of 50-70 hours a week on screens. As I heard recently from a radio personality, "we are getting the data on young people and screen time, and none of it is good."* During the early months of the pandemic "a nationwide study found that 78% of fifth- through eight-grade **girls feel more lonely and isolated** since the pandemic began. The same is true of older teens."** We believe wholeheartedly that camp is needed now more than ever. Physiologically, sociologically, and theologically we're convinced that humankind was made for relationships. Camp offered a relatively safe means of children engaging in outdoor play and socialization. And what a joy it was to watch children reconnect with peers. What a privilege to witness relationship-starved children make new friends and belong to a group.

*Dave Ramsey Show 11/17/2020

**WSJ 7/28/2020



MAKING AN IMPACT

A HIGHLIGHT OF FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH YOUTH, BOARD MEMBER, DR. CHERYL FREEMAN AND VOLUNTEERS

Faith Baptist Youth

Working in the camp and retreat space affords our staff the great opportunity to interact with hundreds of school groups, church groups, scout groups, teams and other organizations. It is wonderful to connect with pastors, youth pastors, volunteers and coaches through this work, particularly when they come back!

One group we can't wait to see again is the Faith Baptist Church youth group. The leadership team of this church is a pleasure to work with. David Walker is among the most organized youth leaders we know. Their groups arrive to each event not just logistically prepared, but spiritually prepared for a holy time. David and his team of adult leaders are inspiring in their care and concern for their small groups. We love working with them.



Left: Group photo at Mount Shepherd
Right: Pastor David Walker



Dr. Cheryl Freeman

The board of directors at Mount Shepherd is losing a mainstay, as Dr. Cheryl Freeman concludes her term as immediate past chair this winter. In her multi-term tenure, Cheryl has led with distinction. As a board member, she has stewarded Mount Shepherd through eventful seasons of transition, vibrancy, and— at times— anxiety. Through it all, she's been a steady force of good.

Some of her impact includes steering our organization through strategic planning, redefining the committees and work of the board, and navigating significant staff changes.

Following the retirement of Kent Shrader after 28 years of faithful service, Cheryl was a key member

of the hiring committee that hired Josh Britton. Throughout her tenure, Mount Shepherd has been indebted to her servant leadership. She has been faithful with her time, energy and resources. As needs have arisen, Cheryl has dependably offered herself. When the board needed a new chair, Cheryl graciously accepted the position. She had plenty of reasons to not step up, but Cheryl said "yes."

She's loved by the Mount Shepherd board and the staff—both year round and seasonal. She's been thoughtful in treating each of them with personalized gifts. Further, she has made it a point to visit our site during all phases of its operation. Dr. Freeman's passion and commitment to Mount Shepherd is undeniable. She's certainly spent countless hours doing the governance work of a board member, but she's spent even more time thinking about Mount Shepherd beyond board meetings. She's constantly looking for ways to connect our ministry with the work of others.

Cheryl is going to get a well-deserved break from official board duty, but we aren't going to let her go too far. Her indispensable wisdom, creativity and generosity are far too important to Mount Shepherd. We give God thanks for Cheryl. Well done.

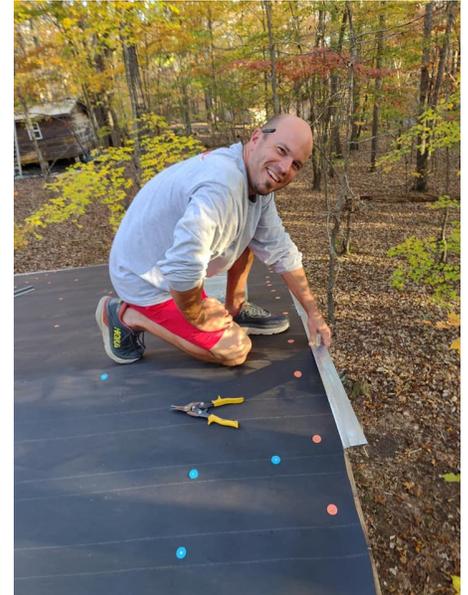


Top: Dr. Cheryl Freeman with her family

Bottom: Dr. Cheryl Freeman with the Board in 2016

ORA ET LABORA

by Josh Britton



*AFTER THIS THE LORD APPOINTED SEVENTY-TWO OTHERS AND SENT THEM TWO BY TWO AHEAD OF HIM TO EVERY TOWN AND PLACE WHERE HE WAS ABOUT TO GO. HE TOLD THEM, "THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE WORKERS ARE FEW. ASK THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, THEREFORE, TO SEND OUT WORKERS INTO HIS HARVEST FIELD."
LUKE 10:1-2*

Last Saturday I learned more about my neighbor in an hour than I had in the months I'd lived beside him. We were on top of a cabin roof at Mount Shepherd, ripping shingles and pulling off nails. During our work, we talked about the stuff that mattered-- family, career, North Carolina barbecue. During our brief history as neighbors, we'd shared some time together with family, but the roofing work afforded us a unique experience to connect. Especially in this anxious time of COVID-19, I was thankful for the opportunity to build relationships with the people around me. I may be crazy, but I have to say it felt good, right and holy to be working on a roof. When I say holy, I'm not using cheesy puns to describe the conditions that necessitated the service project. I mean it was holy. That experience of knowing that what you're doing is right because it's what God wants.

It was holy because that time and that effort and those reasons had a particular, set apart purpose for a particular, set apart place. It was holy because the ministry of Mount Shepherd is holy. It was holy because the interactions were holy. Over the course of the weekend, there were about a dozen of us with the shared purpose of roof renovation. This included members of the FUMC Asheboro men's group and their families, board members, and guests of Mount Shepherd. Our work brought us together and built a mini-community. Working as a camp director, I should have this down pat by now. Of course when you work with people, there's a unique bond that forms. I should know by now that even the most menial of tasks can bring people together. Each summer I find that one of the best ways to build a relationship with our staff is to work with them. I've seen the friendships born, I've

heard the laughter, and I've felt the shared pride of working on a job with others. There's a certain vulnerability formed when a group of people serve together.

And to continue stating the obvious, none of this is my idea. God's design for humanity is community. Even before that fatal curse in the Fall of Man, Adam and Eve had an assignment. They had work. They had a job to do. Work is holy.

Some of our deepest convictions about Jesus include our understanding that Jesus was a craftsman, a carpenter. Jesus worked. And Jesus called all those who would follow him into work. Jesus's ministry was marked by shared work. When Jesus sent his disciples out into the world, he didn't simply send them as messengers. Rather, Jesus calls them laborers. In doing so, Jesus connects discipleship to mission. Following Jesus is more than saying the right things and praying the right prayers—it means that sometimes you're going to have to get your hands dirty.

Some of the earliest Christian communities understood this. In the book of Acts, Christians had special practices that complemented their beliefs. For them Christianity wasn't just what you thought about or talked about--it's what you did. In the 5th and 6th Centuries, some communities started emerging with the motto "Ora et Labora" (Pray AND Work). Just like Jesus, they understood that discipleship and mission were

"PERHAPS THIS IS A HIGHFALUTIN WAY OF SAYING WHAT EVERYONE NATURALLY KNOWS"

inseparable. What I mean is, if you were to reduce Jesus to his sermons, teachings and stories, you would miss the full truth of who Jesus is. Likewise, if you were to reduce Jesus to his actions, his suffering and his death, while ignoring his teaching, you'd have an incomplete picture. For Jesus and those who follow him, what we believe is connected to what we do.

Perhaps this is all just a highfalutin way of saying what everyone naturally knows. We all know that work is good. We all know that while it may leave our hands, backs and knees sore, volunteer work is worth it. And there's almost definitely a self-serving element to this newsletter: we have opportunities for you to get this experience too!

This weekend, our ragtag team of volunteers put new roofs on two cabins. We have four more roofs that need to be done. Perhaps you know a team who would love the challenge and opportunity of working on a roof. Perhaps your mission team at church is looking for a COVID-friendly project. We have the opportunity here at Mount Shepherd.



DONORS & VOLUNTEERS

*FOR THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT
TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE...
MATTHEW 10:45*



FINANCIAL GIFTS SINCE FALL 2019

Alice Cashatt
Donna Anthony
Alex Antonakakis
Jackie Auman
Dail Ballard
Peggy & Jon Barnett
Sandra Bevels
Bobby & Lynn Chaney
Jerry A Bohnsack
Kristin Brackett
Bill & Carolyn Brawley
Doug & Susan Brawley
Hannah Brawley
Anne Starnes Britton
Erin & Josh Britton
Stuart Britton
Brenda Bruton
David & Karen Caldwell
Carolyn Johnson
Dennis & Connie Carroll
Andrea Cashatt
Jessica Shaw Cashatt
Leticia Chessell
Chick-fil-A of Asheboro
Garrett Collins
Amanda Cook
Craig & Laura Ingold
Gifford & Julia Del Grande
Rebecca & Michael Dellinger
Nikki & Marc Domally
Don Douglass
Paula Evans
Cindy Everhart
Fairfield UMW

Jeannie Farabee
First UMC Asheboro
William & Sherry Fonner
Franklinville UMC
Bryan & Cheryl Freeman
Carla Freemyer
Friendship UMC-Albemarle
FUMC Asheboro United Methodist Women
FUMC Randleman United Methodist Women
Ryan Gehsman
Green Memorial UMC
Shea Grosch
Darlene Hammond
Jodi Harrison
Nicole Harrison
Cindy Hayes
Donald W. Haynes
Bruce P. & Hannah Rae Hedlund
Scott & Cindy Hedlund
Robin Hedspeth
Spencer Henderson
Highland UMC-Raleigh
Briana Hogan
Ann Hoover
John Isley
Jamestown UMC
Andrew A Johnson
Fred & Taffy Jordan
Kelly & Jason Mandara
Kenneth Bridle
Angie Kern
Juanita Kindred
Laura & Michael King
Jack Lail

Lake Norman Oil Company, Inc.
 Lauren Ingold
 Jonathan Lawrence
 William & Bonnie Lemke
 Christie Luckenbach
 Molly & Charlie Lyons
 Tanner McCall
 Mark & Shannon McKaughn
 Martinez & Associates
 Art & Brooke Martinez
 McDowell Family
 Vontina McGrant
 Kathie McLary
 Zack Medlin
 Michael Miller
 Milford Hills UMC
 La-Tesha Miller Allen
 Teresa Miller
 Ben C. Morgan
 Michael Morris
 Mt. Lebanon UMC United Methodist Women
 Trudi Neptune
 Erika Norris
 Jason & Heather Norris
 Ryan Nunn
 Tracy Nunn
 Frances & Marcelo Pariz
 Trent Patterson
 Robert & Julie Perman
 Callie Phillips
 Pat Phillips
 Laura Preslar
 Anne Presnell
 Prospect UMC United Methodist Women
 Elke Redding
 Peggy Reinders
 Rev. Brad Treece
 Ruthie Roberts
 Katherine Robinson
 Libby Robinson
 Lisa Rose
 Christina Schoolman
 Anne Shaw
 Erin Shellman
 Michael & Jennifer Smith
 Jennifer Sotherly
 Sam & Freida Starnes
 Laura Stirewalt
 John & Barbara Strahan
 Nolan Strahan
 Paul & Lisa Strahan
 Carol & Jerry Sutton
 McCall Tanner
 The Wesley Fund
 Kathryn Thill
 Larry Rusell Thomas
 Robin Thomas
 Thad R Thomas
 Emily Thompson
 Karen Tuck

The Uwharrie District of the UMC
 The Western NC Conference
 Betsy & Charlie White
 Tyler Wilhoit
 Todd Williams
 Daniel Wood
 Gene Woodle
 Andy Yates
 Erin Young
 Zak Hussein

IN-KIND GIFTS

DART Displays
 Paul & Lisa Strahan
 Angie Kern
 David & Karen Caldwell
 Sonja & Craige Murray
 The Rock International Church
 Kathryn & Jonathan Thill
 Grace Kelley & Family
 The Matthews Family
 The Pariz Family
 Paul Smith
 Steve Pfaff
 Chris Smith



I do it all for the sake of
the Gospel, that I may
share with them in its
blessings.

1 Corinthians 9:23

Mount Shepherd Retreat Center
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