



MONTEAGLE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

· A CHAUTAUQUA EST. 1882 ·

PO Box 307
Monteagle, TN
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A Look Back at the Quiet Season

It has been quite a year and a summer that has become known as “the quiet season.”

The program book was ready to print; a terrific staff was on board; the talents and generosity of so many members had been offered; and my ever-patient predecessor, Lisa Hammett had answered more questions than anyone should be asked. The stacks of platform suggestions and the committee’s ideas for topic threads through the weeks helped shape the “robust platform” I had been asked to prepare. When the decision to cancel was made, it took a few days for the reality to sink in, but it was the responsible choice.

Suddenly, the long list of things to do disappeared and left behind eight weeks of details to be taken apart. After spending the first four weeks of the non-season dismantling the work, I was invited to take a walk, began to stop and visit people on their porch, and went swimming a few mornings each week. The conversations were helpful and enjoyable. (Yes, I’d

love to come sit on your porch and chat!) Later in July, the college students who had been hired as platform assistant and coordinator came to Monteagle and began work on various documents that will support the work of the Platform.

This was not the season that was planned, but it was good. That sentiment has been repeated to me in many ways: it was nice to just sit and read; listen to the quiet; play card games with their children and grandchildren; and realize that you don’t have to take a class to make something!

Each of the 2020 platform lecturers and presenters was informed that I would be in touch this fall to begin scheduling for next summer. That task has just begun, and their responses are similar. They express their delight at the prospect of participating in the 139th Platform and caution that it will depend on the COVID-19 situation. We agree to stay in touch.

Once again, we’ll make a
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MSSA

A Look Back at the Quiet Season

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schedule and live in hope. This year, I'm confident that whatever needs to happen we will manage, and the 2021 summer in Monteagle will be another of enjoyment and gratitude.

Ruth Cobb,
Platform Superintendent

In Our Prayers



Dr. Luther Washington Richardson, Jr., died on August 11, 2020 at the age of 84. He is survived by his wife, Louise Carleton Winslett Richardson "Sissy," of Tuscaloosa; his daughter, Louise Talbot Richardson Manzella, and her husband Stephen Michael Manzella of York, Pennsylvania; his son, Luther Washington Richardson III, and his wife Adrienne Taylor Richardson of Tuscaloosa; and his grandchildren, Matthew Winslett Manzella, Frances Winslett Richardson, Luther Washington Richardson IV "Luke," and Sarah Louise Manzella "Sadie." He is also survived by his sisters, Beth Richardson Howell of Fort Walton

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Help Archives Document Summer 2020

We have experienced a very unique summer at MSSA! Help us record it!

On July 26, 2020, David Stark presented a sermon on the parables of Jesus and invited the assembly to "tell me about your experiences of seeing heaven break into earth. [Tell me, what is the kingdom of God like?](#)" (Type Ctrl + click)

The MSSA archives preserves the record of our shared life for future generations, and the archives committee wants to chronicle this moment in our history. How has the global coronavirus pandemic impacted your experience of life in the Assembly? What are your stories of the summer of 2020?

Some classic examples may be letters, diaries/journal entries, news articles, and photographs. We especially welcome photographs taken this summer!

Please send your material to morganvmerrill@gmail.com or mail your response to the office.

Thank you,
The Archives Committee

QUICK BITES

Lawn trimmings are collected on Wednesdays.

The possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on public grounds, in public places, or at public functions on the Assembly grounds is prohibited and subjects the offender to disciplinary action by the Board of Trustees.

Safety first! Call (931) 607-8615 when the main office is closed for any security questions or concerns.



The Monteagle Sunday School Assembly was organized by Charter issued by the State of Tennessee on October 4, 1882 for the purpose of: "... the advancement of science, literary attainment, Sunday School interests, and the promotion of the broadest popular culture in the interest of Christianity without regard to sect or denomination."

The Mission of the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly is to be a welcoming community of Christian faith where people gather to engage in spiritual growth and renewal, lifelong inquiry and learning, recreational and cultural enrichment, while being good stewards of our natural resources and our Assembly heritage.

Smith-Boeth Monarch Waystation Celebrates the Births of Eight Monarchs and Much More!

As you walk from the front gate to the first walk bridge and stroll around Chestnut



Hill, you may have noticed a rather large rectangular patch of garden down the hill from the corner of Broadway and Wilkin streets. What you have seen (or will want to see) is the Smith-Boeth Monarch Waystation, the two-year-old brainchild of Dr. Stephanie Smith, who has been a supporter of providing Monarch habitats for years and contributed to the first Monarch garden in the Assembly by the East Tennis Courts.

The garden is certified by three national organizations, the North American Butterfly Association, Monarch Watch, and the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail. During the week of August 4, Stephanie and her husband, Richard Boeth, celebrated the emergence of eight new Monarch butterflies from their chrysalises. Eight births is exciting any time, but the last two were just ahead of the remnants of Hurricane Laura, thus fulfilling the primary purpose of the garden: protecting and preserving the dwindling populations and habitats of Monarch butterflies.

Because Monteagle is not on a major flyway for Monarchs on their epic migration

each year to Mexico, Monarchs are actually relatively rare visitors to the garden. Only a couple land there each month at best. Stephanie and Rick are grateful that they have successfully had Monarchs born there every year. This year they had sixteen caterpillars, and to have half emerge and fly successfully is extraordinary. Normally in nature only two of a hundred eggs laid survive to be butterflies. Of the eight born here, several are now returning to the garden to feed, a beautiful sight.

To be certified, a garden must provide Milkweed, the essential host plant for Monarchs, a variety of other nectar plants, water, and shelter, and must be of a minimum size. Also, the garden must avoid the use of all pesticides and herbicides that might prove harmful to butterflies. In designing her waystation garden, Stephanie has planted hundreds of flowers. The most successful for attracting butterflies include Butterfly Bush, Zinnias, Phlox, Lantana, Marigolds, Verbena, Joe-Pye Weed, Coneflower, Black-Eyed

Susan, and Beebalm. As a result, the butterfly garden is alive every day – spring, summer, and fall -- with butterfly visitors. Dozens of different species of butterflies have been recorded and photographed; among the sightings are Eastern Tiger Swallowtails, Pipevine Swallowtails, Spicebush Swallowtails, Zebra Swallowtails, Great Spangled Fritillaries, Diana Fritillaries, Painted and American Ladies, Buckeyes, Sulphurs, Hairstreaks, American Snouts, Red-Spotted Purple, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azures, Checkered and Cabbage Whites, numerous Skipper varieties, Pearl Crescents, and Silvery Checkerspots.

The Checkerspots have also laid eggs in the garden, on Purple Coneflower leaves, and developments there are still being monitored. Long-tailed Skippers were also spotted laying eggs on Panicleleaf Ticktrefoils just outside the garden, and their leaf-rolling caterpillars are expected to pupate soon.

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Prayers

From the editor: A full obituary is forthcoming, but we had late news of the death of Bettie Hill. Every death at MSSA is a palpable loss, but Bettie was someone special to me and many others. She was one of the loveliest people I have ever known: smart, funny, kind and warm. She was, as another friend said, a role model. Her son John died in 2011, and it broke Bettie's heart. Today, I think not of my own sadness at the thought of the world, and the MSSA community, without her, but of the joyful reunion of her soul with John's...filled with so much love and laughter. *Ann Ewing*



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ARC PROJECT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Planning a renovation project? The Architectural Review Committee will accept projects for review and recommendation to the Board of Trust for approval four times per year. Questions about possible projects, the process, and necessary requirements should be referred to the General Manager. Projects submitted by the following dates will be reviewed and presented at the board meeting following the submission.

September 30 January 15

February 28 June 10 July 31

The ARC is available throughout the year to advise members on their project planning prior to submission of a request. Not sure if you need ARC approval? Check with the General Manager first.

SAFETY FIRST

The MSSA security team is at your service. If you have any emergency --medical or otherwise-- call 911, but our seasoned team is here to help for non-emergency situations. If you have a safety issue or see suspicious activity anywhere on the grounds or at the Point, don't hesitate to call (931) 607-8615 after 5 pm or call the office during business hours. There are no silly concerns--it's better to call and quell your fears than to let something go because you are afraid of a false alarm.

Consider putting the security number by your home phone and/or plugging it into your cell phones.

Kids got cell phones? Plug the security number in those too.

Together we'll keep MSSA the safe haven it is!



David M. Stark

July 26, 2020 Sermon

Mt 13:31-33, 44-52,

Ro 8:26-39, Ps 119:129-136

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²And he

said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Before I begin today, I want to thank Ruth Cobb, Scott Parrish, the chapel staff, and all of you who invited me to share a word with you this morning. Even though we are physically distant, it is a joy and honor to be with you in this wonderful place.

I still remember the first time I came to the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly. I had been driving past the entrance for several months when, finally, curiosity got the better of me, and I had to find out what was beyond that arched entrance

It was Fall. So, after I passed through the portico I came into a vast, forested cathedral where oak and maple trees rise like columns to support a canopy of gold leaves mixed with oranges and browns. I meandered through the Assembly, and I noticed how the nave is filled with beautifully landscaped domestic scenes, many of which seem to be transported from the Victorian age. Finally, I came to the center of it all—to the heart of the Assembly. And I discovered a place where people share learning, prayers, food, and play.

And I stopped in that moment to call my parents, who live in an old Victorian home in Southern Indiana. And I said to them, “You won’t believe it, but just off the highway in Monteagle there is a little slice of heaven.”

In today’s Gospel Jesus talks to us about heaven. Jesus shares with us

five different parables. Five similes. Five brief narratives meant to connect with our lives, our experiences, our feelings, and our imaginations. These parables teach us something about who God is and what it looks like when heaven comes upon the earth.

Jesus says,
The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Mustard seed.
It is like Yeast.
The Kingdom of Heaven is like Hidden treasure.
It’s like a Merchant looking for a great deal on pearls.
The Kingdom of Heaven is like a net filled with fish.

And after sharing these parables Jesus asks his disciples, “Have you understood all this?” ...Have you understood all this?

Perhaps it would help us if we turned our attention to the action in these parables.

Again, Jesus says,
The kingdom of Heaven is a little something sown that grows into a great big tree. It is just a little bit that gets mixed in with flour to raise up the whole loaf.

The kingdom of Heaven is a treasure hidden in plain sight that you would give up everything for. It is something worth dedicating your life searching for.

But also, The kingdom of Heaven is something cast upon all people, gathering all people, drawing all people into a judgment of accountability.

“Have you understood all *this*???”
Now the disciples answer, “Yes.

Sermon

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Oh yes, of course we understand all this Jesus.” But I wonder... about them and I wonder about us.

When I was in graduate school I served for a semester as a teaching assistant for John Darr, a New Testament professor who actually studied up the road from here at Vanderbilt. John taught a class on parables to undergraduates.

After the first few weeks it became clear that many of the students seemed to find the parables beneath them. Parables can come across as quaint and simplistic. This kind of literature does not sound like Rumi or Shakespeare, Kafka or Woolf.

The students were certain they could easily understand what Jesus said in parables. So, the professor asked the students to try writing their own parables. “Your assignment is to finish this thought: “The kingdom of heaven is like....” Next week, the students came back to class with words on a page...and with a lot of caveats and questions for discussion about how their parable might be improved.

And the professor asked, “Now have you understood all this?”

I wonder if Jesus is doing something similar with his audience.

In chapter 13 Jesus has already had to explain two different parables to the disciples. Jesus told the parable of the sower and the parable of the weeds of the field. Both times, the disciples didn’t get it. They couldn’t figure it out on their own. They needed to hear Jesus making it plain for them. So, Jesus already

knows that his disciples don’t understand all this.

And on top of that, in the middle of one of his explanations, Jesus actually says that he is telling parables so that people will see but *not* perceive, hear but *not* understand (13:13).

At first glance, Jesus’s preaching agenda seems intent on obfuscating and on confusing his audience. He seems to want to bury the main point of the sermon. Jesus’ goal seems not to hear from the congregation at the end of the service “good sermon, preacher” but something more like “I didn’t get it. I have not understood. Could you please tell me more?”

So then, when we look a little deeper, the parables can be understood as Jesus’ invitation for all who would be his disciples to let go of the pretense that these simple stories about everyday life are beneath us. let go of an arrogance that insists that we have figured out all the answers on our own. and to take up a posture of looking with new eyes and listening with fresh ears to Jesus and to the experience of others.

Jesus’ parables are calling us into a theologically imaginative, story-listening and story-telling community—one where we proclaim and celebrate how God makes a way for heaven to break into our very lives.

And in this moment when we’ve spent so many months quarantined in social isolation, hearing daily news reports of great loss, and seeing persistent injustice on our social media feeds, maybe an imaginative and hopeful storytelling community of God is exactly what we need. Maybe we need a few more parables in our lives.

John Donahue a noted scholar of the parables, says that “the parables of Jesus” offer a Gospel in miniature (*The Gospel in Parable*). That means that when you and I listen to Jesus’s parables and to each other’s stories, we open ourselves to receiving a little bit of God’s good news in our lives. I began this sermon by telling you a story about my experience of God here at the Sunday School Assembly. If I was able to knock on your door today, sit with each of you on your front porch, what stories might you tell me about your experiences of seeing heaven break into earth? Where have you seen God at work? How have you experienced the Gospel in miniature?

Perhaps some of you would tell about the courage and sacrifice of nurses and doctors that you know. Or others might tell tale about where you are seeing God at work out on the streets of our cities. Maybe some of you gardeners would talk about what the seeds have been doing in your garden. Some of you would surely mention how the bread baking is going, and maybe a few of you might even want to talk about your understanding and experience of Jesus’ parables in your life.

This week, as you gather with family and with friends at a safe social distance, let’s be about storytelling and story listening.

Where have you seen God at work? How have you experienced the Gospel in miniature?

Tell me...what is the kingdom of heaven like?



Still standing after an hour at the East Courts with Coach Felix are (L-R) Agnes Short, Helene Thompson, Kathy Flatley, & Betty Webster.

Tennis Anyone?

As I reflect on the summer, I am thankful that from the moment I entered the gates of the Assembly in June, I was greeted with warmth and enthusiasm by the residents of MSSA. The summer months were hot, and the tennis courts were ablaze as players worked tirelessly every day. With each passing week, more winners were hit than unforced errors. Days were filled with private lessons for those brave enough to endure an hour with me under the sun. The players brought an unprecedented level of energy and excitement to the clinics, and if they enjoyed our time together as much as I, we can count the summer as a success!

2021 promises to bring a new day and a renewed excitement to the mountain. As you return to the Assembly next year, don't forget to pack your rackets, tennis shoes, and gear. And if you are back on the plateau during the off-season, please reach out to "Coach Felix" to schedule a hitting session (feman@sewanee.edu) or 571-278-5132. I look forward to seeing you all soon!

*Felix Mann, Head Men's Tennis Coach,
Sewanee: The University of the South*

Dr. Luther Washington Richardson, Jr.,

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Beach, Florida, and Nancy Richardson McKinnie and her husband James Merrick McKinnie, Jr. of Burnsville, North Carolina; his brother-in-law, the Reverend Hoyt Winslett, Jr. and his wife Emily Cosby Winslett of Tuscaloosa; and several nieces and nephews.

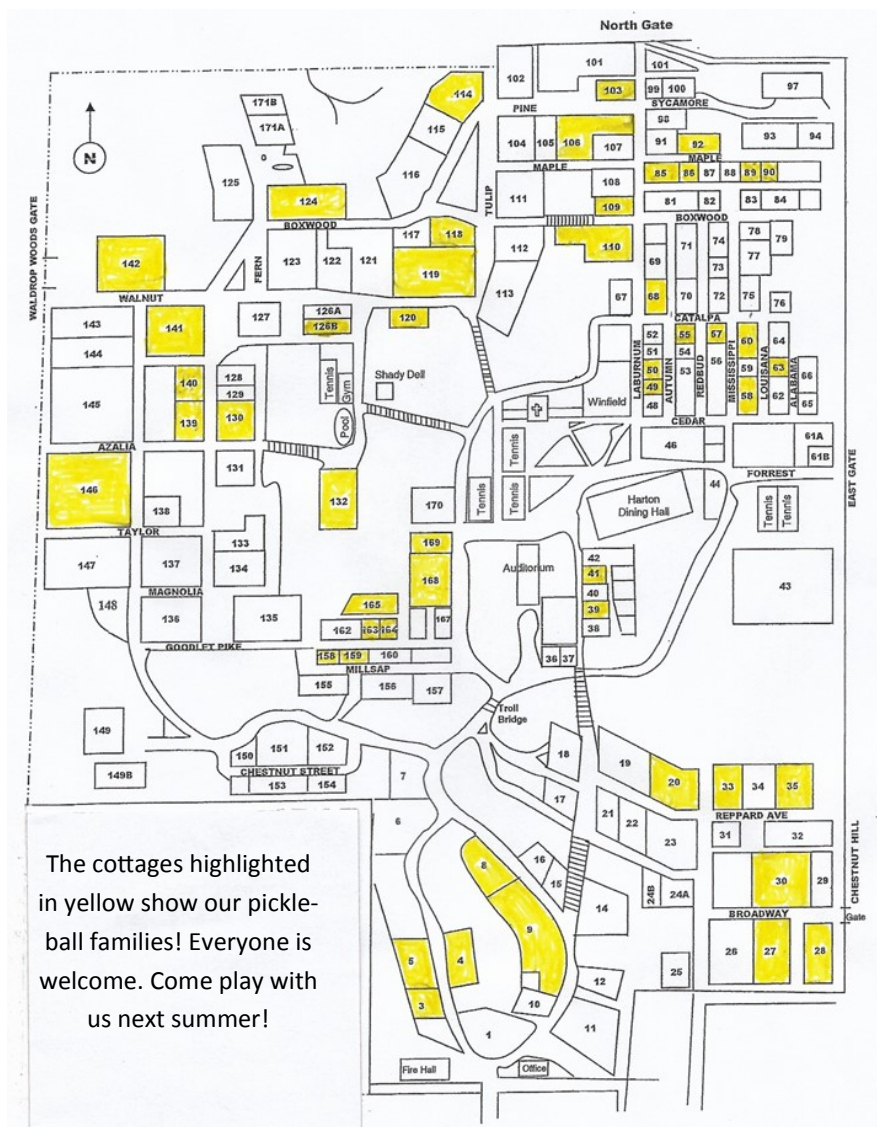
Dr. Richardson was born in Columbus, MS, in 1935. He graduated from Tuscaloosa High School as valedictorian of the class of 1953 and from The University of Alabama with a B.S. degree in 1956. Following graduation, he attended medical school at Tulane University School of Medicine and continued his training in San Francisco and New Orleans. He and Sissy, married in 1962, moved to Florida where he served as a Captain in the United States Air Force. They later returned to Tuscaloosa where he was in private practice of dermatology for over 50 years and served as a Clinical Professor at The College of Community Health Services, Department of Family Medicine, University of Alabama.

At Christ Episcopal Church, he served on the Vestry on several occasions and as Chairman of Christian Education, Long Range Planning, Every Member Canvas, and New Ministries Committee. For the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, he served on the Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Department of Christian Education, Finance Department, and as a Trustee of the Diocesan Trust Funds. He also served on several committees of MSSA.

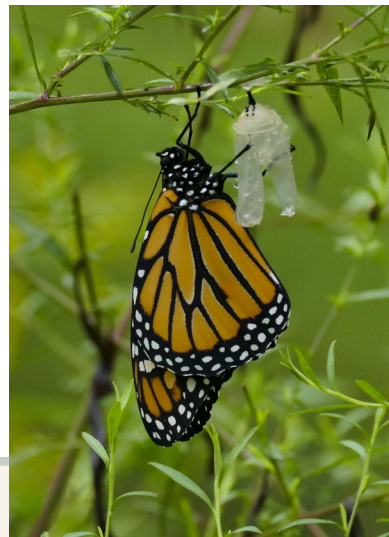
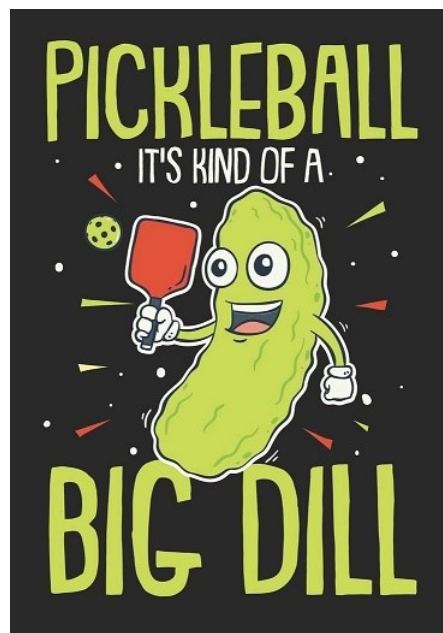
Donations may be made to the Christ Episcopal Church Foundation, Tuscaloosa, AL, or Hospice of West Alabama.



Pickleball: over 150 players x 45 cottages = the most popular activity on the mountain!



The cottages highlighted in yellow show our pickleball families! Everyone is welcome. Come play with us next summer!



Smith-Boeth Monarch Garden

(continued from page 3)

Stephanie and Rick maintain a website, www.monteaglemonarchs.com, to share news and photos of goings on at the garden, and next year they hope to develop a presentation to share with children and other interested folks here at the Assembly.

Visitors are always welcome to come experience the garden for themselves. Plan to wear a mask and don't wear any mosquito or bug spray.

Also, don't touch any of the chrysalis, butterflies or caterpillars.

"We are so excited about having people come to enjoy the garden," said Stephanie. "There were some who came to keep watch the chrysalises develop and emerge! The process is very slow but so rewarding to see! We hope the website visitors will join in the fun!"

For further information about Monarch butterflies, please go to MonarchWatch at www.monarchwatch.org. You can also go to the North American Butterfly Association at www.naba.org.