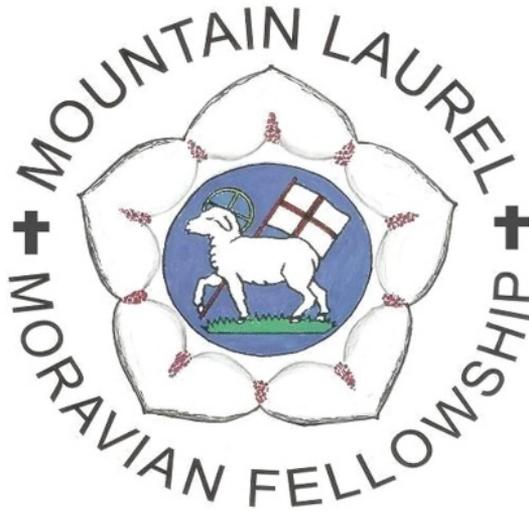


Composed by Julia Simmons
Mountain Laurel Moravian Fellowship
October 2017



A brief history of
Mountain Laurel Moravian Fellowship
2007 to 2017

Pastor Ted Burcaw: (336) 341-5655

Information

Bill Ebert (336) 372-7451

Julia Simmons (336) 971-0098

Worship

Sundays at 11 a.m.

at Transou United Methodist Church,
Highway 88, Laurel Springs, NC

next to the Upper Mountain Research Farm

Web site: www.mountainlaurelfellowship.com

Pastor Ted's sermons can be found in the archive section of the web page

Mountain Laurel also has a Facebook page. "Like" us to receive notifications of our events.

Mountain Laurel Moravian Fellowship is a community of faith who share a common bond of love for Jesus Christ, a fellowship of family and friends, and in appreciation for traditions – both old and new – of the Moravian Church. We seek to be a caring and supportive part of the Body of Christ.

October 14, 2007 – Nine Moravians who had relocated to the area from various communities gathered at Laurel Ridge to consider the question, “How might we offer fellowship in the Moravian tradition among ourselves and to others who might care to join us?”

Those present were: Bill and Jane Ebert, Mike and DeAnne Warren, Bob and Teresa Baldwin, Sam and Julia Simmons and Aaron Linville.

DeAnne Warren made connections with the congregation and Pastor Rob Brooks at Transou United Methodist church and we were invited to hold our worship services in their sanctuary. The Transou congregation has welcomed our Moravian Fellowship wholeheartedly from the beginning. We are deeply grateful for their hospitality.

Guidance was received from the Southern Province’s Provincial Elders’ Conference as to the creation of a Moravian Fellowship.

December 16, 2007 - Our first service was a Christmas Love Feast held on a very snowy night at Transou United Methodist Church with 32 people in attendance.

January 2008 - we adopted the name: MOUNTAIN LAUREL MORAVIAN FELLOWSHIP. We chose this name for the lovely, tenacious wild blooms that grow in unexpected places across our mountains and because of the word “Laurel” that connects us with our nearby Moravian Camp and Conference Center: Laurel Ridge. Shortly after adopting this name a logo was created in the Moravian style and a sign was erected beside the church.

February 10, 2008 – Our first Sunday morning worship service was held with 38 people in attendance for communion. The first hymn we sang was “Join We All with One Accord.”

Mountain Laurel initially held regular worship services on second and fourth Sundays, later adding fifth Sunday worship, until 2014 when we began weekly worship.

From February 2008 until October 2010 each Fellowship member took responsibility for hosting worship services for one month. The members offered a message themselves or invited a visiting pastor to do so.

October 10, 2010 – Pastor Ted Burcaw became our permanent worship leader and pastoral care “shepherd”.

2012 – Mountain Laurel adopted “Rules of Order” to further formalize our Fellowship.

“Christmas in July” Love Feast – has been held each year since 2012. This cuts down on the need to cancel Love Feast due to snow! And blends with West Jefferson’s “Christmas in July” celebrations.

Music

For about two years we sang most hymns and liturgies a capella with occasional visiting musicians, and soloists for Morning Star.

Periodically Caitlin Miller played during the Offertory

Mackie (Jerry) Wingate from Independence was our first regular accompanist.

Dini Parsons became our permanent accompanist in 2013.

Each time we have held a Lovefeast we have invited a Moravian band to join us. The word is spread and we go by faith, never knowing how many bands men and women will be present. We have always had a good group of musicians with us and appreciate this support from our larger Moravian community.

Each year since 2011 the Moravian Music Foundation has held “Music on the Mountain”, which is a weekend workshop of band and choral music, at Laurel Ridge. The “Music on the Mountain” choir and band have provided the music, and a presentation about the Moravian Music Foundation during Mountain Laurel Fellowship’s regular Sunday service at Transou.

Ecumenical opportunities

Mountain Laurel Fellowship has been blessed with a number of ecumenical opportunities:

Love Feasts have been held with St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, West Jefferson; Christ Episcopal Church, Sparta; and four times with Sparta Presbyterian Church.

Through the Alleghany County Ministerium (ecumenical mission ministries) we have partnered in Sparta community worship services and lunches each year at either Advent or Lent, and in Thanksgiving community worship services. Julia Simmons has been Mountain Laurel’s representative to the Alleghany Ministerium for approximately 10 years and has served at various times as the Ministerium’s Secretary and President.

Julia Simmons is the Coordinator of an ecumenical Chaplaincy program at Alleghany Memorial Hospital.

Missions

- Each year Mountain Laurel has offered scholarships for campers to attend Laurel Ridge summer camp. Dozens of children have attended camp at Laurel Ridge with the support of Mountain Laurel from 2007 to 2017.
- Donations are made annually to Alleghany and Ashe County food closets, and to the Blue Ridge Opportunity Center – BROOC – for home heating.
- Donations are made to Camp New Hope, a camp for life challenged children and their families in Glendale Springs, NC.
- Several Mountain Laurel members serve Camp New Hope by mowing many acres of grass, maintaining a flower garden, assisting with light construction.
- Two members bring a message of faith, hope and love to families by portraying Santa and Mrs. Claus to Camp New Hope families!

Provincial

Mountain Laurel has had an advisory delegate at Southern Province Synods of 2010, 2014, and the pre-Synod of 2018.

Bible Study

Periodically Mountain Laurel has held time-limited Bible studies.

Unexpected history

On December 10, 2012 country singer George Hamilton IV gave a program of song and history at Mountain Laurel Moravian Fellowship. George sang with the Grand Old Opry from the 1960s until his recent death and was known as the "International Ambassador for County Music." As a young man George spent much time in the Transou area. There is an interesting history between Mountain Laurel Fellowship and George Hamilton and his family. The Upper Mountain Research Farm that now belongs to NC State University used to belong to the George's grandparents, the Transou family. George and his brother, Cabot Hamilton (both now deceased), spent every summer on their grandparents' farm playing in the fields around Transou. The Hamilton brothers grew up as Moravians in Winston-Salem. When their great-grandmother lived at the Transou farm she requested that a Moravian church be formed in Laurel Springs. The Moravian Bishop at the time did not encourage this development and their great-grandmother went to the Episcopal Bishop to make the same request. The Episcopal churches now known as the "Churches of the Frescoes", St. Mary's in West Jefferson and Church of the Holy Trinity in Glendale Springs, were built. Land of the Transou farm was given to the Methodist Church who built Transou United Methodist Church. The idea of a Moravian congregation in Laurel Springs was seemingly lost. The Hamiltons were delighted to learn later of the establishment of a Moravian congregation on their grandparents' farm with worship services held at Transou United Methodist Church. When George learned of the Moravian Fellowship at Transou he immediately offered to give a musical program when in the area. About 60 people attended a lovely evening of music and stories given in

George's gentle and entertaining manner. What a lovely circular story of God's love.

A program regarding the history of Love Feast and the relationship between Ashe County Episcopal Churches, Transou UM and Mountain Laurel Fellowship was presented to the women's fellowships of St. Mary's and The Church of the Holy Trinity by Julia Simmons of Mountain Laurel and Cabot Hamilton (George Hamilton's brother) then of Ashe County Chamber of Commerce.

Miscellaneous and fun!

- Pork shoulder smoking – on 2 or 3 occasions the men of Mountain Laurel sat up all night tending a smoker laden with large pork shoulders. The shoulders had been pre-purchased by members of the community and the income created was most welcome. However, the men decided fairly quickly that staying up all night tending a smoker was not exactly their 'cup of tea!'
- On 2 occasions Mountain Laurel members tended a booth at a local festival, one in Ashe and one in Alleghany County. News was spread about the Moravian Fellowship and Moravian goodies were handed out. Again, this plan did not last long!
- On occasion Mountain Laurel's own baker, Jane Ebert has given a workshop on the baking of Love Feast buns.
- For each Love Feast we have had a "candle trimming". Our ecumenical partners have also been part of this lovely event.

- Mountain Laurel members enjoy socializing and have taken several trips to plays in Yadkinville, Winston-Salem, and most recently, Abingdon, VA. Some of the plays have been acted in by Pastor Ted Burcaw who does a great job of playing both a pastor and a school principal!
- A bicycle ride from the top of White Top Mountain down to Damascus, VA, provided lots of fun, fresh air and fellowship. We are glad that no major injuries were sustained, although one member who was a newbie to bike riding in his 70s did take a tip!
- Most Sundays after worship a group of members gather to decide where to eat lunch and a lively time of fellowship and delicious food commences.
- We read the book called, “The Man Who Moved a Mountain” about Bob Childress who turned a community around through his service and vision in the 1940s and 50s in the Buffalo Mountain area of Floyd VA. We visited Bob’s original rock church and Bob’s 90-year-old son gave us a lovely presentation of his father’s life.
- A family picnic and workday was held at Camp New Hope
- Members attended a Bethabra Band Concert and family evening

Technology

For the past several months Ted Burcaw has recorded his sermons and placed them on Mountain Laurel’s website at the request of both members and visitors. The website can be found at www.mountainlaurelfellowship.com . Mountain Laurel also has a FaceBook page. “Like” us to receive notifications of our events.

Our Numbers

Approximately 15 to 25 people regularly worship at Mountain Laurel. In the summer when seasonal members are present, or Laurel Ridge campers choose to join us, or for special services we have 50 to 100 worshipping with us. Participants often express pleasure at having Moravian worship opportunity close to Laurel Ridge.

Mountain Laurel's unexpected blooms

Sadly, one of our members passed away on November 4, 2016. Several of us were blessed to travel down to Orlando, Florida to participate in her memorial service. The lovely service attended by around 600 people was led by our own Pastor Ted Burcaw. Mountain Laurel really does bloom in the most unexpected places.

