

SERENDIPITOR

The Life & Times at Brooks-Howell Home
Volume 1, Issue 3 NEWSLETTER May/June, 2016

God says,
“Because you are devoted to me,
I’ll rescue you.
I’ll protect you
Because you know my name.

Whenever you cry out to me
I’ll answer.
I’ll be with you in troubling times
I’ll save you and glorify you.

I’ll fill you full with old age.
I’ll show you my salvation.”

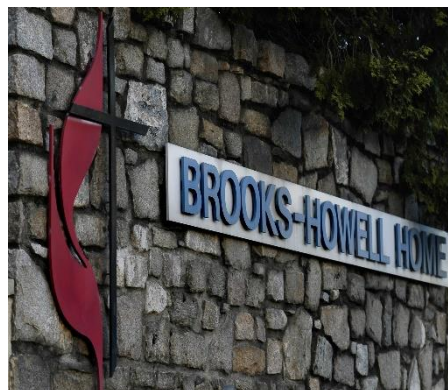
- PSALM 91:14-16
(Common English Bible)

FAITH STEP

For a day or two, keep two clear glasses
within sight. Fill one with clean water
and the other with muddy
Let it be a reminder of what Jesus has
offered you.

Turn to His Word for a big, long

Drink before this day is through.
Excerpted from
Mornings with Jesus 2016



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR FUTURE (3 Part Workshop Series)

On April 18 “Planning Your Memorial Service”
was led by Alycia Johnson, Chaplain & Tracey
Owens, Director of Resident Services.

An opportunity to update or create exactly what
residents want for their memorial service.
will be presented.

Monday, May 9 – “Questions & Answer Forum
with a Funeral Director”

An opportunity to ask questions pertaining to
services provided by funeral homes – also an
opportune time to write your own obituary.

Monday, June 13 – “Advance Directives” - Carole
Gilham, Health Care Administrator & Freda
Woody, Director of Nursing, will share
the importance and explanation of pertinent
Documents such as Power of Attorney, Health
Care Power of Attorney, MOST, & DNR

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WELCOME new independent resident
Gordon Fletcher Anderson, Missionary
to Cuba!

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My first two months have been an event filled and exciting time. There have been many changes that have taken place. As with any new start, there have been some misunderstandings and bumps along the way. It is now time for me to slow down, reevaluate the situation, and continue to build my relationship with the residents and staff.

Many of you have come to visit me, or invited me to come to your apartment, or sit with you in the dining room, so you could share your thoughts and concerns. I truly appreciate getting to know you and have used your input in much of my decision making. For those whom I have yet to visit, I hope to do so soon. Please know that my door is always open to you and my time is your time, as many of you have discovered.

My wife (Tricia), daughter (Megan), and five-year-old grandson (Oliver) have been visiting and volunteering their time at Brooks-Howell Home. They have come to love it and the residents and staff they have met as much as I do. A couple weeks ago, when it was time to leave, Oliver didn't want to go. Megan jokingly said to him, "We will just have to move here and live" to which Oliver excitedly responded, "YES, LET'S DO IT, LET'S DO IT NOW! WE CAN LIVE HERE WITH OUR FRIENDS." And I realized, yes, that is just how I feel. We are among friends, and I want to do everything I possibly can to care for you, comfort you, and give you the best place possible to live and work.

As I have said many times, and you all knew long before I arrived, Brooks-Howell Home is a unique and wonderful place. While it is inevitable that changes will occur, my goal is to see Brooks-Howell Home maintain that uniqueness.

Blessings to all. – Brewier Welch

Please join me in welcoming two new members to our management team:

Rebecca Brawn is our new Human Resource Director. She comes to us with several years of experience in Human Resources, Accounting and Payroll. Rebecca has a Master of Science degree from Suffolk University in Boston, MA. She will be assisting Carole and Colleen with their duties and will be a welcome addition to our office.

Ron Gowing is our new Director of Maintenance. He grew up in the Asheville area and was the Director of Engineering at the Grove Park Inn for eleven years. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Brooks-Howell Home. I look forward to seeing many improvements in our community over the next several months.

Stu Bryan will continue to be a valuable member of our Brooks-Howell family as the Assistant Director of Maintenance. – Brewier Welch

MUSICIANS STEVE AND RUTH SMITH CONCERT



Once again you are invited to enjoy Art and Betty Swarhout's 2015 Christmas gift from their daughter Sarah Howard and her husband Thom. They have arranged for Steve and Ruth Smith to play for the residents, staff and friends to enjoy a concert at Brooks-Howell Home (266 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801) on Monday, May 16 at 3:30pm in the Chapel.

Come and enjoy Acoustic American Music with Celtic & Appalachian Roots. The Smiths will feature hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, guitar and old-time banjo. They are both of Scottish heritage and have been performing together for over 40 years across the United States and around the world.

Ruth and Steve will also have appeared in concert at the Biltmore Estates the Saturday and Sunday prior to May 16th.

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ANNUAL SPIRITUAL LIFE RETREAT

"THE 3 R'S + 1 ... NOT LIKE YOUR GRAMMAR SCHOOL DAYS!"

The Spiritual Life Committee of Brooks-Howell Home will be sponsoring a Spiritual Growth Retreat on Wednesday, May 18th from 1 – 4 pm in the Chapel. It will be a time to remember, renew, restore, and rejoice. This is open to the residents of the Home.

Our leader will be Merit Wolff from Asheville, NC. Merit has been a United Methodist for almost her entire life. She earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and returned to school in 2010 after heeding a call into ministry, attending Pfeiffer University and earn her Masters in Practical Theology.

As a lay woman Merit has served the church as a volunteer, leader and staff member. She loves to speak publicly and lead retreats as well as attend them. She loves helping people make connections with others and with their ministry callings and passions.

She enjoys hiking, cooking and spending time with her family (including two teenage daughters) and friends. She is excited to be spending the afternoon with the folks at Brooks-Howell Home.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO SUSAN GERRIE

Congratulations to Susan Gerrie, Dietary Manager, who was elected recently State President of the North Carolina Association for Nutrition and Food Service Professionals.

RUTH CLARK SHARES "FERNANDO"

Recently our Brooks-Howell community was introduced to an earlier creation of resident Ruth Clark. She wrote and illustrated a story, "Fernando and the Jug-a-rum Song" while serving in Puerto Rico years ago. Her sister arranged to publish the book including Ruth's original drawings.

Fernando is a little green frog living under a green lily pad in a green pool in a green forest. Our resident musician, Patty Higgins, read the story in a delightful style.

"If you listen when you go near the green pool in the green forest you might hear Fernando jug-a-rum. The lily pad is green and if you should see him you will see that Fernando is green, too."

The book includes a picture of Ruth and a summary of her years of service in Puerto Rico and Argentina and her work with the United Farm Workers in California and Habitat for Humanity at its headquarters in Georgia.

Copies of "Fernando" are available in the gift shop at the Home. - Art Swarthout

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RICHARD AND SYLVIA SMYTH SHARE RECENT INDIA TRIP



2015 began as an ordinary year. An e-mail received in March shifted the perspective to make the year quite extraordinary. The transition into 2016 brings us back to the more usual experiences even as we continue to recount an amazing 2 weeks in December 2015!

The March e-mail was from the Director of the Delhi Christian Church (DCC), New Delhi. Royall McLaren shared news that the DCC would celebrate the 50th anniversary jubilee Christmas concert on December 13th. Richard began the DCC in 1965 and served as Director and Sylvia sang until we retired in 1997. Royall noted the DCC wanted us to be part of that jubilee as its guests! We had not been back to India since we left in June, 1997, and now came this special opportunity. We considered the contingencies and responded with a Yes! Then we began working out details.

Our adopted family of 5 and their spouses and 10 grandchildren had been the core of our home life from 1965. Most of them continue to live in New Delhi along with 8 grand-spouses and five great-grandchildren (additions after we left India). Here came a marvelous opportunity for a grand family reunion.

We had been the first pastoral family for the English congregation of Centenary Methodist Church in New Delhi and would cherish fellowship time with families who shared in the congregation's vision and

life. We left Asheville on December 1st , and landed in New Delhi on December 3rd at 1:30am...Richard's 82nd birthday and the 52nd anniversary of the dedication of Centenary Church. A great celebration was held that evening; church's birthday, Richard's birthday party, grand dinner for DCC members (present and alumni)...all at Centenary. 600 were at the worship/birthday event in the sanctuary with members eagerly presenting their grandchildren to meet us and ask for a blessing. The church's 3 congregations are flourishing (English, Hindi, Korean) with more than 6,000 members.

The DCC banquet engaged us with yet another fellowship: singers from 'our time' and scores more who joined after 1997. It continues to be the city's longest-standing Christian volunteer performing body. On Saturday, December 5th our family arranged a grand reunion. The children booked a suite in a Radisson Hotel where we gathered to talk, reminisce, laugh, weep, hug, feast. In 1965 we were 7; now we are about 35. Our eldest son flew in from Manila with granddaughter Florence. Two grandchildren and spouses flew in from Dubai where they are employed. It was remarkable. We had kept up with each other via e-mail and phone so the time together was a mix of recalling wonderful bonding during the Delhi years, but awe to celebrate how bonding intensified, never weakened. Even the great-grandchildren (who had not met us before) seemed to sense our place and part in what they know as 'family'.

The next day, Sunday, December 6, we worshipped at Centenary. Richard preached for the English service. It was moving to have persons consider us part of living heritage and not just historic figures. During the following week we enjoyed luncheons and visits with long-time friends from our diverse involvements during the 1964-97 years. The car and driver DCC provided moved us smoothly and safely through Delhi's very congested roadways.

On Sunday, December 13th DCC's grand golden jubilee was held in one of Delhi's larger auditoriums With an audience of over 1,000, some standing or sitting in the aisles. Royall conducted the Chorus's selection of excellent Christmas music. Richard and Sylvia were presented. Then Richard conducted the traditional closing set of four pieces and Sylvia sang these with the group. Among those we had visits with were a former Chorus member, now retired and living in the Himalayan foothills, a family from south India who had all been members of the Chorus, and 2 families from Centenary who are now retired and living in Bangalore. How marvelous to find bonding that pointedly sustains a commitment to continuity.

We left New Delhi on Tuesday, December 15th at 3:30 am. We changed planes in Frankfurt and Atlanta. We spent 30 hours in Asheville and then left for Florida. It took quite some time to deal with jet lag, and integrate the experiences that were lavished on us, shared in friendly visits, and kept vital by fresh affirmations of the ties that bind. And we sense that initiatives we took during those 35+ years were touches of grace fostering spiritual enablement.

The 'this-is-your-life' Delhi experience of 2015 – was an extraordinary gift that we gratefully and humbly cherish. We were in Florida for January-February, 2016, then back to real life in Asheville. The first part of that 'reality' is knee replacements for Richard and his successful recovery.

- Richard and Sylvia Smyth

MEETING THE FOLKS THAT MAKE IT HOME

JO THE GARDNER: Jack-of-All Trades, Master of many. . .



Jo Bruder has been a gardener at Brooks-Howell Home since October, 2010. Born in Marburg an der Lahn, Germany, 52 years ago, Jo came to the U.S. just eight years ago. When he arrived, he was already an architect, a gardener, a music teacher, a conductor, a woodworker, and a rugby player. “I can do every skilled job in the house - everything except plumbing and electricity - and I love cooking, baking, and photography. I still design houses for friends in Germany!” Since coming to America, he has become a writer, too. Jo is truly a Renaissance Man.

Jo’s early childhood was spent near his father and grandfather, a woodworker, farmer and a hotelier. He says, “They taught me woodworking, farming, and gardening.” In school, Jo was exposed to rugby and music for over twenty years. He sang in several good choirs, and he never stopped playing rugby, even after finishing school. Jo attended University of Darmstadt, between Heidelberg and Frankfurt, for four semesters; continued his education in France; and came back to Darmstadt to finish his Master’s degree in architecture. He took certificates in piano, trombone, voice, and conducting, and he began teaching music while still in college. Soon after graduation, he developed his own architectural firm. Although this was the time of Cold War between America and Russia, with a resulting divided Germany, Jo says, “Politics didn’t really affect our lives. Germany is a rich country. The only thing is . . . we had to pay more taxes after the wall came down..”

When Jo was very young, he had met Marge, a North Carolina girl who was visiting Germany. They exchanged addresses, and he promised to look her up if he ever came to America. Twenty years later, he did. They are still married today, the very proud parents of Valentine (Val), 18, and Samuel (Sam), 14. They moved to America to be near Marge’s family. Jo left his parents and a younger brother in Marburg, and a younger sister in Munich.

When they arrived here during the economic downturn, there were no jobs available in architecture, so Jo began gardening for a living. He says, “When I came to Brooks-Howell, I worked with David Williams, who is a Master Gardener. He taught me a lot about permaculture (natural gardening), using recycling techniques and no chemicals – no insecticides, no fertilizers, and nothing more than necessary to disturb the natural ecosystem. We grow as many of our plants as possible from seed. We have many native plants from all four seasons here, and residents have brought plants in from all over the world. We work with residents who like to garden and who have their own ideas about what plants they want to see and eat. (Yes, some residents like to grow their own food!)

“Our gardens are very unusual; when people hear about them, they like to come and see them. We feel a responsibility to share our ideas with others. We try to label as many of the plants as we can as a way of educating both residents and visitors. We are now developing raised gardens near the chapel

gardens to that our handicapped residents can help work them.” (Wood-working skills come in handy when building a raised garden, tables and some of the garden furniture.)

Asked what people do not know about him, Jo answers, “I read constantly. I exchange books with co-workers.” (He reads all types of books – fiction, biography, philosophy, and all types of information material in English, but also in French, German, and Italian.)

When asked about his philosophy, Jo responds immediately, “As you call it into the woods, so it echoes out of it.” Then he pauses, “ ... That doesn’t really translate well into English, does it? Later he came to hand me a piece of paper on which was written what he meant: “What goes around comes around.”

Today Jo says, “Brooks-Howell is a very unusual place. I love to interact with the residents and their families. It is a lot of fun to work here!” He enriches our lives through beautiful gardens, lovely music at Christmas-time, and everyday interaction with staff and residents. He and his family contribute to the Asheville community through his playing and coaching rugby, his sons’ participation in music and athletics, and his wife’s teaching at Western North Carolina University. His Renaissance presence is a real blessing to all of us! - Gail Hipkins

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CHAPLAIN, ALYCIA JOHNSON



“I was a very well loved child. Big, blue eyes and a happy baby. The first child born to a pastor of the Philadelphia, Tennessee, Methodist Church in 50 years.

My father, Leon Strunk, was sent out to Brazil as a missionary by the Methodist Church; my Mother, Martha Johnson, was also a missionary sent by the Women’s Division. They met, fell in love, and married in Brazil.

Our family came back to the States for a few years so that my father could complete the final requirements for his ordination. I was baptized at an annual meeting where he was the only person ordained.

Our family returned to Brazil by ship, I remember that my sister celebrated New Year’s Day on the ship for all of us. After we settled in, my memories of childhood include moving furniture and polishing floors for some Sunday School class meeting or other meetings to be held in our living room.

Music was central in my childhood. I began to play the pump organ, and I have strong memories of my mother in the kitchen, calling instructions from what she heard as she worked.

At 17 my parents sent me to the States for my last year in high school. I had attended Brazilian schools for my elementary and high school education, and I spoke Portuguese there. Now, I had to

struggle with English, and I felt I really didn't belong, but I had my Grandpa who taught me to drive and Grandma, who was a free and gentle spirit.

These were intense years in every way, and then came college. I attended Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, my Mother's alma mater. It was a private, conservative university. I made friends there, a diverse group of Christians, and we still get together.

It was during college that I felt my call to preach. My friends and teachers said I could never preach, but I held on to the validity of my call. I struggled through 4 years of Greek and of Biblical Speech classes, learning how to present an idea until I felt that my English was actually better than my friends.

I graduated from Garrett Evangelical Seminary in 1983 and was ordained as a Deacon, when I was halfway through the Seminary. Ordination as an elder followed, in Wisconsin. I served a three-point charge for 4 years in Wisconsin, and drove many miles at top speed going from one congregation to the next.

I remember one Sunday morning when we had a communion service, and it took longer than was usual. Still clad in my robe, I dashed to my car and stuffed myself, my robe, and the bulletins for the service into the front seat of the car, then I started off at top speed. Not too many minutes later, I saw the blue lights of a police car behind me. Then he pulled me over. The police officer was trying to account for my full, white robe when I was trying to explain to him the ways of the Methodist clergy who have three point charges, a long way apart from each other. Bless his heart, he did let me off with a warning. The congregation was very understanding about my late arrival and seemed to think that he had to be a Baptist who was now totally confused about Methodist systems.

I married Mandel, and our daughter, Mylah, was born 10 years later. We three reveled in being a family, exploring the new relationships that developed between us and the rest of the world.

I worked at J. C. Penney's for several years, and then we felt we should move to Asheville to be near my parents because so much of our lives had been separated from them. I transferred to the Asheville store and reveled in the joy of Mylah's grandparent's in helping us raise her. Mandel found a job with the City of Asheville, and we settled in the mountains of North Carolina.

The three of us became a part of Brooks-Howell Home when my parent's health began to weaken. I was teaching special children in the Asheville school system during the school session and working in the Residents Services area at BHH during the summers.

Then, our friend, Don Turman chose to retire as part time chaplain at Brooks-Howell. I applied and was hired as part-time chaplain with the other part of my employment being part time in Resident Services. I now preach most Thursdays to our residents, guests, and some employees. It is such a joy! This is a good place for me to be. - Interview by Ann Jansen

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Our community misses Faye Glover, local community outreach resident, who died March 26, 2016.

IN MEMORIAM

Lela Maxwell (1930 - 2016)



I was born in Hillsboro, Illinois on March 21st 1930. My parents were Lawrence and Stella Johnston. I was their only child. We also lived in Sandwich, Illinois; Meadville, Pennsylvania and Olney, Illinois. I graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in science, and after that went to Mayo Clinic School of Physical Therapy in Rochester, Minnesota.

It was in Lincoln, Nebraska that I had my first job as a physical therapist. It was also in Lincoln that I had a call to be a missionary. I didn't feel that I was ready at that time with so little experience. After two years at Park School, I moved to Baltimore, Maryland and took a course in therapy of cerebral palsy in Reisterstown. After finishing the course, I went on staff. At the end of 1960 I again felt the call to be a missionary, and by January 1961, I resigned my job in Reisterstown and went to Stony Point for orientation. After five months there, I went to Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, for more orientation. I left for Korea in September of that year.

Two school years were spent studying the Korean language before starting work as a physical therapist in Severance Hospital in Seoul. After my five-year term, I had a year's furlough, and then returned to Korea to work in home visiting. There were many people who were unable to get transportation to the hospital for therapy. My term this time was for three years. I then had a leave of absence to take a six-month additional course in physical therapy.

I was asked to go to Vietnam for a temporary two-year term. It took me quite a while to say "yes" to that. I was transferred from the General Board of Global Ministries to the United Methodist Committee on Relief, then to Church World Service and Vietnam Christian Service. VCS was an interdenominational organization comprising Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief and the Mennonite Central Committee. I spent five weeks in language study before starting work as a physical therapist at the Rehabilitation Center for Vietnamese in Cantho. I was asked to stay another year and I agreed. After a three-month furlough, I got notice that my father had passed away, so I came home for his funeral. Within two weeks my mother had a couple of strokes, and I felt that I was needed at home to care for her.

After eleven months my mother was able to be alone so I started work at a hospital in a neighboring town. In 1970 I married Jack Maxwell. In 1984 mother felt that she was having some TIA's, and that it was time for her to move to the United Methodist village in the town where I worked. She had more strokes and by 1986 she was blind. Her health continued to deteriorate until she reached the point that she could not do anything for herself. Jack retired in 1987. He wanted me to retire with him, which I did in February of 1988 and we bought a home in Lakeland, Florida. My husband was not a healthy person and he passed away on December 13, 2000. My mother died November 15, 2001 at the age of 100. In 2002 I sold the house in Illinois and moved to my home in Florida. I was there that I became active at Christ United Methodist Church. I came to Brooks-Howell Home on June 2, 2007.

IN MEMORIAM

Arlene Merritt (1924 - 2016)



I was born February 25, 1924 in Jermyn, PA. I was older than my three brothers. Our father was a rural mail carrier. We lived on a small farm and attended township school and a rural Methodist church, part of a three-point charge. Our parents were always active in the church and encouraged me in career plans. Upon graduation from Scott High School, I attended Scranton-Lackawanna Business College and during World War II worked as a secretary at the Remington Rand Company in Johnson City, NY, where airplane propellers were made.

After the war ended I became interested in the Methodist Youth Caravan Movement. In the summer of 1946 I became a member of a team that toured New England. In 1947 I caravanned in Texas and then served as a counselor in 1950 in the Illinois Conference. The youth caravan experiences and a growing knowledge of missions convinced me that my future should be in a church-related vocation. I started college at Penn State University. After two years, I transferred to Scarritt College in Nashville, TN, where I received eye-opening and challenging studies and a BA degree in June, 1951.

After graduation I worked in the summer program of Kingdom House, a large social settlement in St. Louis, MO. In the fall I went to Key West, FL to be Director of Wesley Community Center where they had a beautiful new building and a growing service to Cuban immigrants. I applied to be a Methodist deaconess. In January, 1952 I was commissioned by Bishop Arthur Moore in Pennsylvania. My parents were able to attend.

In the fall of 1956 I left work in Florida to enter Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH (now Case Western University) and earned a master's degree in social work in 1958. My working world from then on was as follows:

Program Director, Wesley House Centers, Nashville, TN, 1958-1965

Social Work Consultant, Tai Wha Christian Social Center, Seoul, South Korea

Social Work Consultant, National Division Community Centers, 1966-1967

Executive Director, Susannah Wesley Community Center, Honolulu, HI, 1967-1973

Study at The Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan, 1973-1974

Assistant Professor of Social Welfare, Scarritt College, Nashville, TN, 1974-1981. (I taught and supervised students who were planning to work with older adults in churches and various community agencies.)

Social Work Consultant and teacher of English, Good Neighbor Christian Center, Morioka, Japan, 1981-1982

Coordinator of Services to Older Adults, Wesley Community House, Louisville, KY, 1981-1989, where I retired in February, 1989.

During my working years and also in retirement I continued my interest in traveling. In early years I explored camping and hiking opportunities in various national parks. In 1965 I had three months traveling in Europe and in 1976 three months in South America. I've visited over 55 churches.



May

Residents

- 2 Lucille McBeth
- 7 Donald Harris
- 11 Nancy Keller
- 15 Marilyn Benson
- 19 June Fischer
- 23 Arthur Swarthout
- 24 Jean Morgan
- 31 Ramona Turman

Employees

- 2 Lyudmila Yarosh
- 4 Patricia Hays
- 5 Lashonda Carson
- 9 Barbara Ingle
- 15 Ron Gowing
- 16 Joshua Settle
- 21 Freda Woody
- 26 Warren Duffy
- 27 Velia Veldez
- 29 Prentice Richardson
- 31 Bobbi Jo Cole

June

Residents

- 19 Gail Hipkins
- 21 Carol Wingeier
- 30 Jack Miner

Employees

- 7 Carole Gilham
- 7 Jean Metcalf
- 8 Danny Dunmore
- 15 Summer Mull
- 23 Marselino Plascencia
- 25 Beatriz De La Cruz
- 26 Kendra Brunette

BROOKS-HOWELL HOME
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and operated by the United
Methodist Women.

Items for publication should be
sent to the Editors (above address).

Our Next Issue: July/August
Deadline for Copy: Monday, June 13th

COMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Monday, May 9 - Questions & Answer Forum with a Funeral Director

Friday, May 13 - Mad Hatter Tea Party

Monday, May 16 - Live Streaming of the Deaconess/Home Missioner Consecration at
General Conference, Portland, Oregon

Monday, May 16 - Concert by Steve and Ruth Smith (see article on page 3)

Wednesday, May 18 - Spiritual Life Retreat (see article on page 3)

Thursday, May 26 - Asheville Catholic School 4th & 5th Grade Music Concert

Recipients of this Newsletter are encouraged and welcomed to join us at the Home for these special events and activities.

For additional information or to confirm details, you may call the Home, (828) 253-6712.