



Sylvester Weatherall was born August 19, 1956, and grew up in East St. Louis. Things were pretty tough. Upon graduating from East St. Louis High School, Sylvester went through a questioning period in his life. Although he had been raised in the church, he began to question the very existence of God, and the relevancy of both God and the church upon his life, as the social strife in that area and timeframe continued to influence and impact him. But, God had a plan!!

At the age of 25, while working as a railroad switchman, God's Spirit managed to get his attention and his spiritual journey back to the church began with association and interaction with the members and Rev. John Grob, Pastor, of First Methodist Church, Lebanon, Illinois in the late seventies and early eighties. Through this loving community of faith, and a spiritual-father, John, he saw unconditional love modeled and Sylvester was shown what the grace of Jesus Christ looked like. Through them, he met Jesus again, and again, and again, and was modeled the meaning and process of fasting and prayer and setting aside time to be with God.

As a student at McKendree College (now University), Sylvester studied religion, not to become clergy nor a leader in the church... but "because I wanted to make sense of it." But God had a plan. And, after graduating from McKendree, Sylvester began serving East St Louis Metro Ministry, which later became Grace United Methodist Church in Washington Park, IL. Sylvester served in this pastorate for 15 years, during which time the congregation grew from a membership of 8-10 (mostly his family members) to 150 congregants, at the time of his departure.

Family:

Wife – Pastor, Aletha R. Weatherall

Sons – Pastor, Monty Weatherall (47); Rico Weatherall, (44); Cartavas Weatherall, (41) Daughters- Reverend, Rhoda T. Warner (25) Blessen Pratt (16)

Background and Experience:

Formal and Significant Continuing Education:

College: McKendree University, 1988, B.A.

Seminary: Eden Theological Seminary, 1991, M. Div.

Significant continuing education work completed. Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary—2yr Clergy Mentor Program. A Certificate of Completion was awarded.

Inter-cultural competency training.

Thirty years of workshops, training and equipping events designed for pastoral leadership.

Three CPE Course.

Certified Mentor Training at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Ordination Dates and Conference of Which You Were a Member:

Year of ordination as deacon. 1990 Southern Illinois Conference

Year of ordination as elder. 1993 Southern Illinois Conference

Previous Work Experiences and Pastoral Appointments:

Lebanon First UMC 1988-1990 (I supervised no Staff) I preached about five times a year.
Position: served was Student local Pastor

East Saint Louis Metropolitan Ministry, 1990 – 1992. Lead Organizer prior to starting the local church in Washington Park. I had no staff.

Washington Park Grace UMC. 1990-2002 –Washington Park Grace was chartered by Bishop White in 1992. At the Chartering service nearly one hundred youth and 60 adults joined the church that day. When I left in 2002, the Church averaged 150 in worship with there were 320 on the rolls. The church was also served by an appointed Deacon and a paid staff of four. A host of volunteer staff helped staff this 7 day a week ministry. In 2002 the church became a part of a parish which consist of all three East St. Louis churches. They were staffed by 2 fulltime pastors. While I was there, we build a family life center that was paid for the day it was opened. We completely renovated the old church building. And, we installed a state of the art playground. All of which were paid for upon completion. When I left in 2002, the church had no debt. These were very significant achievements in a city that is among the poorest in the nation.

Springfield East Side Mission Parish, 2002 – 2012 (Springfield Grace-Springfield Kumler) (Sometime in 2005-2006 they dropped the parish name and just went by Springfield Grace-Springfield Kumler.) When I came, Grace was averaging 50 in worship while carry 175 on the rolls. Kumler averaged 35 people while carry 200 on the rolls. The Bishop and the Cabinet called this appointment the great experiment. It was so named because this was the first time a Black pastor served a Caucasian and African American congregations. They are only 12 blocks apart. I was given a half time associate for both churches. Together both churches had about 75 people on the sick and shut in list and they were not use to sharing a pastor. Both churches also had community ministries program, received large state grants and both were staffed by laity who were not members of the churches. Kumler had a staff of 10 fulltime and part-time lay people. The lead pastor was the supervisor for the staff of the Kumler Outreach ministries. Grace UMC had a community ministry called Grace Urban Ministries.

When I left these two ministries, we were serving more constituents. But, we intentionally cut State funding. That was done so the ministries were not dependent on state funds to remain in operation. The number of staff at Kumler UMC was cut to four. The number of volunteer staff increased tremendously. At Kumler UMC the number of volunteers numbered well over a hundred in all the ministries.

Worship attendance the first year of appointment/Worship attendance the last year of appointment. The Washington Park Grace Church was a new church start. That was in the days before the Congregational Development Team. There were no funds. In fact I was in seminary and I had to work a fulltime job in addition to starting the church. When I left in 2002 they had over 150 people worshipping. The worship attendance at Kumler UMC in 2002 was 25 to 35. When I left in 2012 it was 135-150. And, the church maintained two facilities. Both were completely remodeled with no debt incurred. Grace UMC averaged 50-70 in 2002. When I was reassigned in 2012, they averaged 100-125. It also underwent major renovations. Again, with no debt incurred.

In 2012 I was appointed The District Superintendent for the Spoon River District. I followed a long history of successful DS's including my colleague on the Cabinet, Janice Griffith. Spoon River has long been a leader in paying its' apportionments as well as starting innovative ministries.

Connectional and Ecumenical Church Experiences:

1. Current:

North Central Jurisdiction Commission on Race and Religion

North Central Jurisdiction of Black Methodist for Church Renewal

North Central Jurisdiction Structure Task Force

General Conference Delegate – 2016 (First Clergy elected and head of the Delegation)

Jurisdictional Conference Delegate – 2016

General Conference Delegate 2019 Head of the Delegation

2016 IGRC Candidate for The Episcopacy Support by the Annual Conference.

2. Previous:

General Finance Administration Task Force for Tithe Based Apportionments

Conference Commission and Race Chair

Member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry

General Conference Delegate 1996 (1st Reserve) 2000, 2008, (2nd Reserve) 2012

Jurisdictional Conference Delegate -- 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020

Community Service Activity:

1. Current:

Member of the Board of Trustees McKendree University

Member of the Wesley Village Board

Member Macomb Wesley Foundation

2. Previous:

Member of the Springfield IL Homeless United for Change Coalition

Member of the Washington Park Improvement Association

Member of the Enos Park neighborhood improvement association

Publications, Awards, Honors:

Two-time recipient of the Harry Denman Award from the Foundation for Evangelism (An Affiliate of the of the Board of Discipleship of the UMC)

Special Interests and/or Hobbies:

Fishing, Bike Riding, B.B. Que competitions, cooking at home, shopping.

Faith and Leadership Issues

I believe: The mission of the Church is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of God's world. I believe this is done one heart at a time through a relationship first with Christ and with our Neighbors. The Church is to equip the saints for this mission and ministry.

Jesus the Christ said, "If love me?" "Feed my sheep!" The church exists to:

- Dip into the Fountain of Forgiveness and feed Christ's sheep the food of the heaven.
- We are to feed them the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.
- We are to feed them the peace that passes all understanding.
- We are to feed them the touch of the Divine Physician.
- We are to feed them the support of God's everlasting arms.

My vision for our United Methodist Church is to be a Global leader in leading people to Christ. My vision is for us to make the absolute purpose of the church to introducing people to Jesus. To become a global leader in teaching people how to be disciples. Our church is both universal and local, therefore uniquely in places where God can use us to make disciples. Our church is a unique expression of God's universal church. We are Universal because there is literally a UM Church on every continent in the world. We are uniquely in all places at all times. God strategically has us placed to transform the world. We are local in that UMC congregants includes Christians who come together in local assemblies to carry out God's work. It's best to think of the UM church as a living organism rather than a cold lifeless institution. The church is not buildings or even great programs, it is people! Transformed People.

In spite of the dangers of the journey the UMC face, we are still a global leader in mission and ministry. In spite of the troubles and difficult circumstances we must face, we must come together corporately; we do so as the body and bride of Christ, and the building of God! So rather than approaching our discipleship responsibilities with a spirit of detachment or duty or "here we go again," let us enter God's world with a sense of joy and

celebration—because each time people see the people called Methodists they should see the visible expression of God’s presence on earth.

My Style of Leadership:

I am one who brings a “fire in my belly” to the table for innovative approaches to ministry in this century, while not losing concern for the smaller ministry settings where pastoral care is the primary focus with little hope of re-birth.

I am a “Bridge Builder” between theological perspectives represented within the Spoon River district and our conference. I believe those same skills and personality traits would serve the General Church well.

My leadership style is relational. I believe that each person is a unique gift of God. I lead by equipping. My equipping style is to help people discover their God giving gifts for the Church. To help people use those gifts in the Church and the world. I approach churches, districts and our global church as a living system. The term "systems" is derived from the Greek word "synistanai," which means "to bring together or combine." The United Methodist is a global system. I believe successful leaders (Pastors, Superintendents and Bishops) must create precedents in supervision successfully by following innovative ways and means so that it becomes a good precedent for our Districts, Churches and Conferences. In the United Methodist Church there is always change, (The Itinerant System and the assignment of Bishop). Change is the inevitable. I believe that Bishops, Superintendents and Pastors must have standards in place that future incoming Leaders can follow. They can incorporate their gifts, ideas and innovations in to Churches, Districts and Conferences. The system I put in place is one that is collaborative, relational and respectful of all people’s gifts and abilities.

Describe Your Gifts and Graces:

Positivity- always looking for, discovering and bringing the positive. They are lighthearted, generous, optimistic, and enthusiastic – to the point where these characteristics become contagious to others.

Strategic – able to sort through the clutter and find the best route. Have a distinct way of thinking, a special perspective on the world at large. Able to see patterns where others see complexity. Able to move forward in clarity.

WOO – Stands for “winning others over”. This is a social intelligence theme. Have a great capacity to inspire and motivate others. Skillful in the social setting.

Communication – feel that they must express themselves, and the expression can take on many different forms- verbally, artistically, musically, through writing or composition, how one dresses, teaches or even how one tells stories.

Relator – have a profound relational capacity to develop a relationship with anyone. Have the ability to create the right environment for team members to form close, honest, and trusting relationships.

Those strengths to office of District Superintendent, First in Spoon River (five years) nor in Sangamon River (three years). I also have a broad range of gifts and experiences, from Urban, Suburban and small Town. I have been gifted with the ability to bring a people together. I love people and have the ability to see Christ in all people. I love preaching. God has blessed with me with oratorical gifts. I love to teach. I have the heart of a teacher. Some of my other gifts are: service, encouragement, generosity, church growth, music, organization and hospitality.

I was loved into The United Methodist Church. I believe my life story is a model of how to disciple people. The United Methodist Church has given so much to me. As a young man, I had many doubts about the Church and God. The environment I grew up in was not conducive to learn of the love of all people no matter their ethnicity. And it was not conducive of experiencing the love of God. First United Methodist Church in Lebanon, IL (a church that was mostly Caucasian) changed all of that. The church and its' pastor the Reverend John Grob loved me into experiencing an authentic relationship with Jesus. They became, for me, a visible expression of God's love for me. An example of how the United Methodist can make a difference in the world and individuals. At age sixty three, I believe that God is calling me to share with the Local Church and Community that same love and be the visible embodiment of Jesus. I believe God is asking me to give back to the United Methodist Church, the Leadership in the person I've become and the Christian I have become because of the United Methodist Church.

Significant Achievements

College: McKendree University, 1988, B.A.

Ordained as deacon. 1990

Seminary: Eden Theological Seminary, 1991, M. Div.

Ordained as Elder, 1993

Denman Award Recipient, 1993 (Southern Illinois Conference)

Denman Award Recipient, 2007, (Illinois Great Rivers Conference)

Continuing Education, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary—2yr Clergy mentor Program, Certificate of Completion; 3 units of CPE. Inter-Cultural Competency training.

If given a choice, Pastor Weatherall would rather: *Clarify* than *condemn*, *Listen* than *talk*, *Coach* than *dictate*, *Preach* than *play*, *Have Friends* than *fans*, *Stay* than *move and...* Be a *Minister* than *anything else!* “My call is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all, bringing the lost sheep back to the fold. The best vehicle we could use to gather the sheep is a Revival. During a revival, people tend to let go of the pretenses of being in control and yield to the moving of the Holy Spirit. Enthusiastically, I answer that call, every chance I get!”