

Bird Feeders and Pie Pans: Pandemic, Faith, and the Rural Community

*A 5-Week Webinar Series beginning Wednesday,
April 29, 12:00pm-1pm EST*

We fill feeders and hang houses for them, hoping the birds will rid our yards of bugs and fill our days with song. At the same time, pie pans hang in our fruit trees and scarecrows stand watch over our gardens, to keep those same birds away from our produce. Just as there are multiple, creative responses to birds in gardens, rural folk have the potential to respond to their COVID-19 realities and the fallout from this disease. This five-week webinar series will explore those realities and consider some uniquely Christian and rural ways in which we can respond. Hosted on Zoom. Format is lecture, PowerPoint, and Q&A. Discussion opportunity at end of class.

1 CEU credit available. Contact karen@hintoncenter.org for more information.

April 29

Methodist Models for Community Response

You don't have to be Methodist to appreciate that for almost 300 years the Methodist Movement has responded to sickness with love, education, action, and creativity. This session explores key tenants of Methodist (and broader Christian) responses to pandemics and disease and how those can inform how we respond in our rural communities.

May 6

Connecting for Care: Responses to Isolation and Depression in Rural Communities

Issues of loneliness, isolation, and depression continue to grow in rural communities. The various "stay at home" orders have restricted many vulnerable populations to their homes for the duration of this event. Without visitors, connection, and community, there is increased risk for substance abuse, suicide, and domestic violence. This session explores the statistics and engages how rural places can create community even at a distance.

May 13

Disappearing Doctors: The Unique Issues of Rural Healthcare in this Pandemic

Many rural communities continue to lose their doctors and hospitals as healthcare consolidates to more wealthy and populous areas. With the already strained rural healthcare system and an aging population, overwhelmed healthcare systems can reach their breaking points. This session explores these issues and how churches and communities can rethink healthcare in their settings.



May 20

Reclaiming Old Tin: Reclaiming Rural Genius and Resilience

In 1988, when Hurricane Hugo decimated much of the Carolinas, my grandfather's barn fell. It was old with not a lot inside, but the tin on the roof was still good. He let people come and take the tin from the fallen barn to use as they needed for repairs or new projects. This is what I call, rural genius. The ability to connect needs with place in ways that bring life. Rural communities have this in their bones, and this session seeks to connect people to this earthy resilience in the midst of a very anxious time.

May 27

Beyond the Shutdown: Life after Pandemic Isolation

With well over 20 million unemployment claims in the first four weeks of shutdown, we know we will experience the impact of the crisis for likely years to come. This session looks at how the pandemic might impact rural communities, and how what we have learned over the course of these sessions may lead us into a new way living.

Instructor Bio:

Jonathan LeMaster-Smith lives with his wife, Shannon, a United Methodist deacon, in Hildebran, North Carolina (District 12 of *The Hunger Games* movies). He holds a PhD in Christian Education and



Congregational Studies from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, with a focus on Rural Ministry and Methodist Studies. He teaches for several universities, including Garrett and Wesley Theological Seminary. His work includes presentations on Dolly Parton, articles on ditch lilies, and musings about the genius of mayonnaise. Jonathan is currently working on a book, *On Visiting the Sick: Methodist Responses to Disease and Pandemic*, and will teach a course on the topic this summer for BeADisciple.Com.



This webinar is hosted by Hinton Rural Life Center and coordinated by Rev. Karen Kluever, Minister of Church Relations and Development. Questions? Contact Karen at 828-389-8336 or karen@hintoncenter.org.

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Hinton Rural Life Center is an agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church.