



Methodist Homes of Alabama & Northwest Florida
1520 Cooper Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35210
(205) 951-2442

www.methodisthomes.org

Methodist Homes News

A Publication of Methodist Homes of Alabama & Northwest Florida

Methodist Homes Communities

Housing & Health Services

- Fair Haven**
Birmingham, AL (205) 956-4150
- Wesley Place on Honeysuckle**
Dothan, AL (334) 792-0921
- Wesley Gardens**
Montgomery, AL (334) 272-7917
- Mathison Retirement Community**
Panama City, FL (850) 215-4663
- Wesley Haven Villa**
Pensacola, FL (850) 434-1035

Affordable Housing Apts.

(Income-based Rent / Income Restricted)

- Wesley Acres & Wesley Acres II**
Decatur, AL (256) 355-8281
- Wesley Apartments**
Anniston, AL (256) 237-4371
- The Epworth House**
Selma, AL (334) 875-6450
- Wesley Glen**
Decatur, AL (256) 355-8281
- Wesley Park Apartments**
Anniston, AL (256) 741-8666
- Wesley Scott Place**
Pensacola, FL (850) 437-1400



Fountain of Love

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- [Facebook.com/Wesley-Gardens-Retirement-Community](https://www.facebook.com/Wesley-Gardens-Retirement-Community)
- [Facebook.com/MathisonPanamaCity](https://www.facebook.com/MathisonPanamaCity)

PENSACOLA

Transportation Grant Award Winner '25



Tess Helton accepts golf cart delivery

Congratulations to the residents and staff of Wesley Haven Villa (Pensacola), recipient of a 2025 Pensacola Bay Area Impact 100 Grant in the amount of \$103,500. The grant, titled *Rolling With a Purpose: Connecting Seniors to Care and Community*, is a transportation initiative designed to enhance resident mobility, safety, and independence. Funds will support the purchase of a converted Toyota Sienna van with a wheelchair lift, a six-person street-

legal golf cart (both of which have already been received), and the replacement of the aging wheelchair lift on the existing 14-passenger community bus.

The new van offers safer, more efficient transportation for individual medical appointments and errands, particularly in tight clinic parking areas. The new golf cart will provide convenient access to nearby downtown Pensacola amenities for small groups, encouraging social and spiritual engagement. Replacing the well-worn lift on the existing bus - used nearly daily for seven years - will ensure its continued reliability for larger group excursions. Together, these improvements will expand transportation options, ease family concerns, and help residents stay connected to the people, places, and experiences that enrich their lives.

Most of Wesley Haven Villa's residents' family members live in Escambia or Santa Rosa County. In addition to the increased access to medical care and improvement to resident safety and efficiency, this transportation initiative supports family peace of mind by ensuring that loved ones have consistent access to healthcare and meaningful social experiences, without placing logistical strain on those families.

Rolling with a Purpose empowers residents to remain active participants in their healthcare, spiritual life and community. In every way, this grant helps Wesley Haven Villa live out its mission in taking care of God's "Older Children."



Donna Kent and Sally Davis check out the new van



DECATUR

Fall Festival Fun & Games



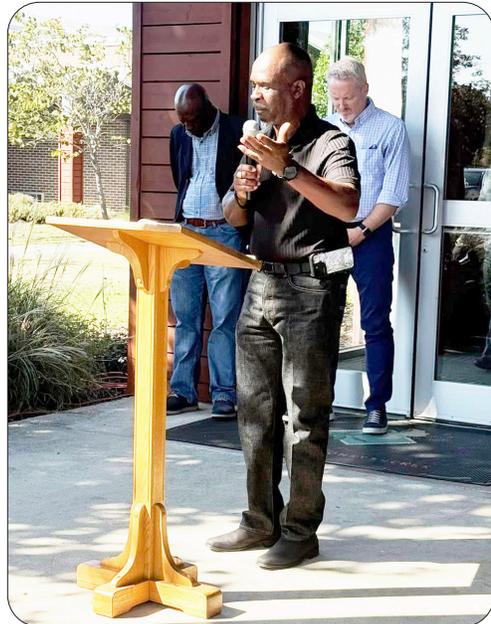
Residents at Wesley Acres (Decatur) enjoyed a Fall Festival complete with grilled hot dogs, carnival games and a cakewalk. **Amedisys Hospice** helped secure the local band **Cowgirl Up Bluegrass** as a musical feature. Residents provided the cakes and other goodies for the cakewalk. Pictured above at the cakewalk are **Phillip Gray, Judith Lorenson** and **Willo Hall**. **Imogene Roberts** manned the “wash” booth. Residents were asked to choose an object on the table and look underneath it. They might discover a quarter or a dryer sheet!

DOTHAN

Prayer Vigil

“For where two or three gather in My name, there I am with them.” - Matthew 18:20. On October 17, Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan) held a prayer vigil. We joined together in faith as ministers, chaplains, vendors, staff and residents and circled the entire building to pray. Thank you to all who joined us and covered our community with love, hope and blessings.

Special thanks to **Southern Care Hospice, ACG Hospice, Dothan First UMC, Dothan Community Church, Harvest Church, and Calvary Baptist**, among many others. Your support means so much! Pictured at the podium is Wesley Place Executive Director **Hubert Paul Jr.**



SELMA



Fellowship filled Epworth House (Selma) as residents and staff shared their annual Thanksgiving meal together. Pictured are **Vivian Clement, Gloria Varner, Bettie Davis,** and **Corine Effinger**.



In October, the men and women of Epworth House wore pink to show their support for Breast Cancer Awareness. Pictured are **Ronald Dixon, John Glover, Woodrow Dickerson, Tommie Garner, & Willie Moorer,** and **Corine Effinger, Bettie Davis, Gloria Varner**.



BIRMINGHAM

Meet Jim & Gemma Hickman

Jim and Gemma Hickman will celebrate 19 years of marriage in January 2026. Interestingly, both would be called Jimmie Hickman, but for the wise decision to call Mrs. Hickman by the affectionate name “Gemma” (pronounced Jim’-uh) early on.

Both came into this marriage having already known love. Gemma is originally from Arkansas and moved to the Birmingham area in 2000 following the death of her husband. Jim’s life had taken him far from his Missouri roots by the time he settled in Alabama in 2004 after losing his wife.

The two met at First Baptist Church of Trussville, where friends in the church’s Senior Adult Ministries group encouraged them to date. They married, and together, they built a comfortable life in the Birmingham area until severe pain in one of Jim’s legs led to amputation, making it clear that living with care nearby would be essential.

The couple moved to Fair Haven the day before their 18th wedding anniversary in January 2025, beginning a new chapter together.

A Life Fully Lived

Jim Hickman is the author of two books and a lifelong storyteller. Long before becoming a Fair Haven resident, Jim was already familiar with the community, often visiting as a guest speaker to share stories from his career, travels, and life experiences.

Recently, Jim shared something especially meaningful with fellow residents: a documentary film called “Labor of Love” from the 1950s that surfaced on YouTube in which he appears early on in his career with the Forest Service.

The documentary is only a small chapter in a life defined by curiosity, courage, and movement. After Jim and Gemma were married, Jim made a point of taking Gemma to many of the places he had lived throughout his life.

Gemma finds his life endlessly fascinating. She described Jim as someone with a deep curiosity and love for life, recalling how he often traveled alone as a young man, hitchhiking to explore new places. “It always fascinated me that as such a young age he was doing these things all by himself,” she said. “His whole family are adventurers.”

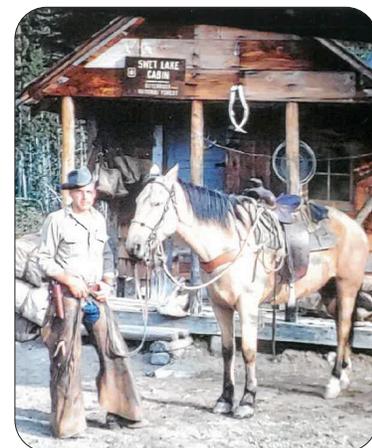
Shaped by History, Family, and Hard Work

Jim’s life has been shaped by where—and how—he grew up. He was born in the Ozarks of Missouri. “My family were hill people,” Jim said.

Gemma shared that Jim’s father left when he was about two years old, and he was raised by his mother and grandparents. His grandfather was a minister, and his grandmother and mother were teachers. “That made a huge difference,” Jim agreed.

During the Great Depression, Jim’s family followed preaching and teaching work wherever it led. Though they earned only about a dollar a day, they worked. Jim remembered his mother telling him about taking Jim to see men who were not so lucky - men riding flatcars west in search of jobs.

From an early age, Jim worked alongside other students during World War II in wheat and vegetable crops. He also worked with



his stepfather, a logger, learning skills that later served him well. Although his stepfather did not attend college, Jim said his own path was never in question. “I was going to college, so I did.”

After starting at a two-year college, Jim transferred to Oklahoma Baptist University, earning a degree in physical chemistry. Along the way, he worked in a steel mill and at a nearby airport. He later trained as a smoke jumper before being called to serve three and a half years in the U.S. Navy in underwater demolition, with a group of men known at the time as “frogmen.”

Following his military service, Jim returned to school on the GI Bill, earned a pilot’s license, and eventually joined the Forest Service, where he spent 35 years in a career that included smoke jumping, fire reconnaissance, and leadership roles across multiple states. In semi-retirement, he spent five more years supporting emergency response teams fighting fires in the mountains.

Stories Written—and Still Being Lived

Jim’s love of history led him to write the novel “Mule Shoes to Santa Fe”, a carefully researched work that even prompted him to retrace parts of the story himself. He also authored “You Smell Like a Grandpa, and Other Campfire Stories”, inspired by moments from his life.

The title story comes from a memory Jim and Gemma treasure. While Gemma worked in the church library, Jim would bring lunch so they could eat together. One day, a little girl climbed into Jim’s lap and said, “You smell just like a grandpa!” The moment left them both laughing through tears.

Home at Fair Haven

Today, life is quieter—but no less full.

“Our needs are met,” Jim said. “There aren’t many concerns.”

At Fair Haven, Jim leads a weekly Bible study and sings in the Fair Haven Chorus. Together, Jim and Gemma enjoy movie nights, ice cream socials, outings, puzzles, and community events. Faith remains central to their lives, both at Good Shepherd Chapel and through their longtime church.

“It became home almost immediately,” Gemma said. “It’s a very loving, kind community.”

After a lifetime of movement, service, and adventure, Jim and Gemma Hickman have found something deeply meaningful: a place to belong.



Thank you



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Alabama-West Florida Conference
Alabama-West Florida Foundation
North Alabama Conference
Frazer Free Methodist *Montgomery*
Gulf Breeze UMC *Gulf Breeze*
Pollard Methodist Church *Pollard*

INDIVIDUALS and ORGANIZATIONS

ALL Families Giving To Christmas Fund
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Worldwide United Appeal Fund

Our heartfelt thanks to all of our donors and friends.
Gifts received through December 19, 2025

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LEGACY GIVING

Methodist Homes is able to accept gifts in many forms, including property and stocks. Another way to make a significant difference at Methodist Homes is through Legacy Giving. Let your estate planner know how much you would like to give, and direct that the gift will be made to Methodist Home for the Aging, 1520 Cooper Hill Rd, Birmingham, AL 35210. Or call Sherri, Director of PR at 205-951-2442.



Learn more at givebutter.com
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ANNUAL REPORT

The Fountain of Love Fund was the primary recipient of your generous donations to Methodist Homes during the fiscal year of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The Fountain of Love supports residents whose own resources become exhausted and they now need help meeting their monthly obligations. Other gifts were provided to various activity funds, two volunteer initiatives,

Fountain of Love Receipts Fiscal Year 2024-2025

- Fair Haven \$39,172.37
Mathison \$1,264.00
Wesley Gardens \$19,117.06
Wesley Haven Villa \$14,680.52
Wesley Place on Honeysuckle \$34,195.78

Number of People Served & Total Assistance Provided

- Fair Haven - 3 people - \$38,590.00
Wesley Gardens - 5 people - \$92,473.42
Wesley Haven Villa - 6 people - \$76,380.39
Wesley Place on Honeysuckle - 12 people - \$66,092.36

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general operational support, and to the Associate Christmas Fund at each community. Our mission would not be complete without your support. We hope that you will keep Methodist Homes in your prayers and in your giving plans during the current fiscal year and beyond. Through the strength of your giving, ministry is possible.

FOL Gift Sources & Amount Given

- Alabama-West FL Conf. UMC Apportionment \$16,760.65
North Alabama Conf. UMC Apportionment \$6,449.27
Churches & Church Affiliates \$29,284.77
Other Sources (memorials, donations, etc.) \$55,935.04
Jewell D. Dennison FOL Endowment Fund \$237,671.41

TOTAL Fountain of Love Gifts FY 24-25: \$346,101.14

YES - I WANT TO HELP YOUR MINISTRY

- \$ _____ General Contribution (undesignated)
\$ _____ Redefining Home (capital fund raising campaign)
For: Fair Haven (B'ham) / Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan)
\$ _____ The Fountain of Love (provides help to residents)
Designate for: Where most needed / Fair Haven (B'ham)
Wesley Gardens (Mtg) / Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan)
Mathison Center (PC, FL) / Wesley Haven Villa (Pns, FL)

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MONTGOMERY

Pretty In Pink

At Wesley Gardens (Montgomery), we honored Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The Pretty In Pink Resident Doll Display was dedicated this year in memory of **Margery Rives Lindsey**, who passed away in May. Each doll dressed in pink stands as a reminder of courage, hope and the fight for a cure. We wear pink, we remember, and we stand together.

Pictured below are **Melissa Thompson, Cassandra Williams, Alishya Brown, Lindy Seals, Ethel Barnes, and Shirley Hamilton**, and the late Margery Lindsey.



PANAMA CITY



What a great time we had at Mathison Retirement Community (Panama City) for Oktoberfest. Bratwurst, sauerkraut, pretzels, and all the festive drinks and trimmings made the party an event to remember. We enjoyed German trivia and a stein-holding contest. We even had a friendly round of Hammerschlag!

A big shoutout to **Darrell McGuire** and his team from **Select Rehab** for helping to make this party so memorable. Pictured are **Darrell McGuire & Bernie Johnson**, and **Mildred Bollinger, Ellie Russo, & Rae Edwards**, and **Annette Lippencott, Sharon DeBouge, Pat Bernard** and **Bernie Johnson**.



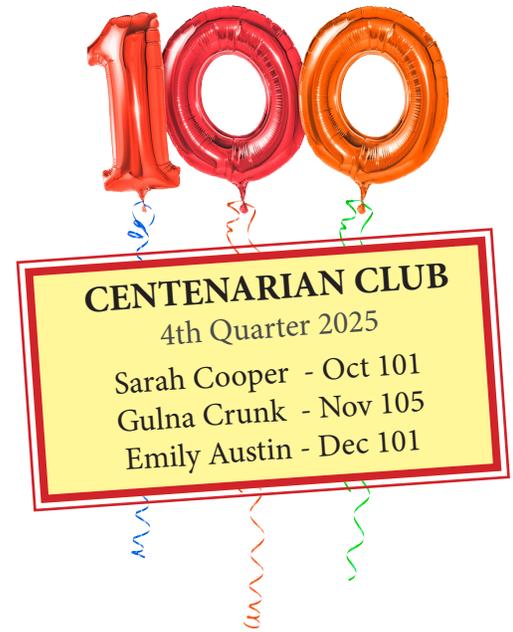


ANNISTON

Family Christmas

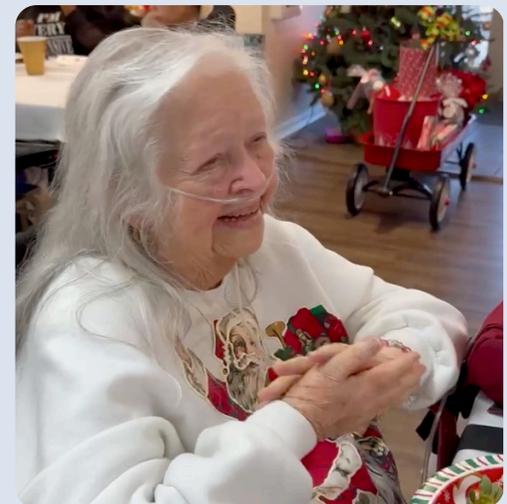
It was a beautiful Christmas for the residents of Wesley Apartments (Anniston) and Wesley Park Apartments (Anniston) who enjoyed their combined Christmas party at the Anniston City Meeting Center. Montgomery entertainer **Preston Frazier** kept the party lively with music throughout. **Christopher Tomlin**, President & CEO of Methodist Homes brought the Christmas story straight from Luke 2.

Pictured serving are Christopher Tomlin, **Jeremy Locklear** (VP for Affordable Housing), **Barbara Raney** (Director of both Wesley Apartments and Wesley Park), and **Maudine Holloway**, who is the Executive Director of **Community Enabler** and the longest serving member of the Methodist Homes Board of Trustees.



PENSACOLA

Wesley Scott Place (Pensacola) also enjoyed their Christmas party with Preston Frazier. He inspired enthusiastic jingle bell ringing and hand clapping!



DOTHAN

Honoring Heroes: God Bless America



Wesley Place on Honeysuckle (Dothan) is very proud of its heroes. We celebrated Veteran's Day with a ceremony honoring each veteran among our residents and associates. Special thanks to **Gentiva Hospice** for sponsoring this special event. Pictured receiving their honors are associate **Gwen Baker**, and residents **Gerald Casey** and **Ronald Swihart**.



METHODIST HOMES

of Alabama & Northwest Florida

Methodist Home for the Aging Corp.
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From Your Friends at Methodist Homes (and Wesley Acres, Decatur)!