

Mandeville Scholarship Winner Returns to Epworth



Pastor Rachel Callender's Journey Comes Full Circle as a Mandeville Scholarship Recipient

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Epworth United Methodist Church (Palmyra, NJ) is honored to be celebrating the 30-year anniversary of the Mandeville Scholarship program, a cornerstone of the church's Planned Giving program. In July of 2023, Epworth welcomed Rev. Rachel Callender as their new pastor. She opened her first sermon by sharing that she herself was a recipient of a Mandeville Scholarship grant and offered the following thoughts on how this impacted her journey to the pulpit.

"I've stood here before. Sunday, June 26th, 2016. I had just graduated from college, decided on what seminary I would be attending in the fall, and was an Exploring Candidate for Ordination - just beginning the long, in-depth, difficult process of being ordained. And I knew that scholarships were going to be the difference between surviving seminary and enjoying/embracing the experience of seminary.

The Mandeville Scholarship was the first scholarship I received. It was this catalyst of much needed support by people who didn't even know me, didn't know the many (many) Rev. Callender's there are at other Methodist churches – and who simply saw my call as something they wanted to invest in.

I remember parking right in front of the church with my now late mother, her excitedly bragging about me to everyone – she was so proud. It's special to me that she got to see me here at least once. I remember meeting the other scholarship recipient, another woman who is also a pastor in the conference now and, I kid you not, every time we cross paths at conference events, we always look at each other and say, "MANDEVILLE."

And I remember, in 2019 when I was graduating from seminary, I had such a sense of gratitude toward Epworth, that I wrote to the Mandeville Scholarship Committee to let them know that their investment paid off, that I finished seminary and was applying for ordination. And the card I received back was one of celebration and joy and thanksgiving.

I'm starting off here today, at a new church appointment, having already been blessed by the ministries of this church. It doesn't get any better than this – "than to walk into a sacred space that I already love and have loved for seven years".

Note: If you would like to be considered for the Mandeville scholarship grant, you may access the application via the Epworth website at: www.palmyranjumc.org or you can send in a request to www.epworth.umc.nj.pg.com This information is also available on the GNJ UMC Conference website at <https://www.gnjumc.org> (Google Mandeville Scholarship for specifics).

