



Embrace God | Engage All People | Empower Disciples for Jesus Christ

## Tom Brunson is Retiring After 41 Years as Director of Music at Mt. Hebron



**“There is a time for everything and a season for every matter under heaven.” - Ecclesiastes 3:1**

After 41 years of love, dedication and service, Mt. Hebron’s beloved “Mr. Tom” is retiring on September 1, 2025! Upon arriving at Mt. Hebron UMC on September 1, 1984, with a young wife and 17-month-old son, Tom began developing and nurturing a music program that has become the heartbeat of this church and his personal legacy.

A native of Fairfax, S.C., Tom is the son of Jeff and Margie Brunson and was their absolute pride and joy. Growing up in a small town, his life was shaped around church activities involving everyone. "Tommy's" formal musical studies began with piano lessons at age 6 and continued with trombone lessons and marching band participation for 4 years. Through the encouragement of friends and family, he pursued instructional development for his singing talents beginning in his teen years. In April 1972, Tom drove to Estill to begin studying with renowned voice teacher Davis Powers. It was on that day that he met his future bride, Mary Powers, truly “the one whom his

soul loves.” - Song of Solomon 3:4

In summer 1973, Tom was associate director of the Allendale County Youth Choir and served as director by fall. At his home church, First Baptist Church of Fairfax, he seized his first opportunity to serve as a church musician. In 1974, Tom became director of both the adult choir and the junior choir where his salary was a whopping \$50 per month! He also worked at WDOG-AM, The Big Dog, where the music was country in the morning and rock in the afternoon. Surprising to no one, Tom preferred the afternoons.

During his freshman year at Converse College, Tom served as a choral scholar at Trinity UMC. For the following three years of his college career, he worked at First Church of Christ, Scientist in Tryon, N.C. They had no choir, so he sang a solo every Sunday. The substantial sacred repertoire he learned, chosen by another musician within the church, would prove invaluable for Tom’s career as a voice teacher and Director of Music at Mt. Hebron.

Tom completed his Bachelor of Music in vocal performance with honors from Converse College in 1978. In June, he began his career in full-time church music at Mary’s hometown church, Lawtonville Baptist Church, in Estill, S.C., where Mary’s father also served for many years. Tom remained there until 1984 when he accepted the call to Mt. Hebron. In 1988, he completed his Master of Music in vocal performance at USC—an endeavor made possible by Mt. Hebron’s generosity, and one for which he is forever grateful.

What began as a small chancel choir, adult handbell choir, preschool choir, children's choir, junior choir and youth choir soon grew to a full-blown music program with choirs for every age group! First, Tom added handbell groups for both youth and children, and soon after, a senior adult choir, senior adult handbell ensemble and a third-grade tone chimes choir. At one point, he was directing all 10 choirs as well as various other ensembles. In 1998, he took the youth choir on tour in England, a trip made possible by the Rev. John Culp and the devoted

people of Mt. Hebron. For many years, Tom worked with Hebron Day School to prepare the children for special performances. Everywhere he went, little angels recognized “Mr. Tom” and hurried to give him hugs.

Ephesians 4 teaches that the Lord equips certain ones with the explicit purpose of teaching. Surely, He who called Tom Brunson equipped him well. Under Tom’s guidance, Mt. Hebron’s Chancel Choir involves young adults he led 41 years ago in the church’s preschool choirs as well as many of his current and former voice students including his own daughter Becca. As the choir has grown in number and strength, the well-earned respect its members have garnered is due not only to their musicianship, but also their joy that is exuded when worshipping through song. The Mt. Hebron Chancel Choir, representing a significant portion of both Mt. Hebron and Tom’s legacy, is stronger than ever.

Though change is inevitable, Mt. Hebron’s music program has remained stellar. Post-pandemic, Tom revived the children’s choir and junior handbell choir to accommodate the ages of children currently active in our church. Of particular joy, his adoring grandchildren were enthusiastic participants in his final 3 junior choir Christmas programs. Tom is truly grateful to the volunteers who helped re-establish the preschool choir and supported the junior choirs; these acts of service will help secure the future of music at our church.

In this next phase of his life, Tom is looking forward to time with family and continuing to teach voice lessons. He’s excited to travel, read non-fiction (especially musician biographies), sleep as late as his heart desires, listen to opera–Mary will require headphones–and remain a lifelong learner! He deeply loves the people of Mt. Hebron UMC and will hold you in his heart forever. May we all aspire to honor his immeasurable impact with joyful giving of our time and talents, specifically SINGING!

**“For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands, I sing for joy.”  
- Psalm 92:4**



# Tom Brunson

## IS RETIRING



### AFTER 41 YEARS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR  
HIS RETIREMENT  
CELEBRATION!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24TH  
12:30PM  
FAMILY LIFE CENTER

RSVP BY 8/17:



KRENFR0E@MTHEBRONUMC.COM

## Message from Pastor Ann

Dear Church Family,

I remember the stress and excitement of sending young children back to school: stocking up on school supplies; worrying about getting the best teachers; finding after school care; organizing car-pools; picking out first-day-of-



school outfits. Through the anxiety and tunnel vision of being a young parent, I couldn't see it at the time, but those experiences were from a place of privilege. What a blessing to be able to afford school supplies, to find after school care that met the demand of our working hours, having working transportation and the ability to provide a wardrobe for my girls. Maybe if I'd been aware of those tremendous blessings, I wouldn't have allowed the stress of the moment to overwhelm me. Our community is filled with families who don't enjoy such privileges and live with the additional pressure of unfulfilled provision for their own children. Thank goodness for Christ's church! Thank goodness for Mt. Hebron UMC and the work that God is doing for our community through your faithfulness!

Back to school time is a reminder for all of us, whether we have children or grandchildren returning to school, or completely removed from the experience, to re-engage in those activities of the church that build us up as disciples of Christ, that fill us with God's Spirit to make us aware of our blessings and privileges, to see the needs that surround us, and the ways our resources can be stewarded to meet them. This fall, do a new thing. Start attending Sunday School, Midweek Boost, Bible Study, United Methodist Men, United Women in Faith or some other program or event you feel led to participate in. When we come together through study and fellowship, God opens doors to mission and ministry to grow his Kingdom in new ways.

In Christ • Pastor Ann



## Welcome Quinette Jones



Quinette Jones is the new office administrator at Mt. Hebron. She recently retired from Brookland-Cayce High School with over 35 years of experience as administrative support to the principal and

athletic director. New office hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

## Youth Ministries

### Foam Block Party

On Saturday, July 19th the Mt. Hebron Youth hosted a Foam Block Party Extravaganza funded by the Hebron Heart Fund. Over 150 community members came together to share food, fun, foam and games.



### Salkehatchie



27 Salkehatchie camps worked, witnessed and spread God's love across South Carolina this summer. Campers aged 14-82 participated. Youth and adults from Mt. Hebron

served in the Union, Edisto and Santee camps.

Repairing or replacing roofs was a major need along with repairing interior damage. Other needs included painting, repairing or replacing bathrooms, toilets and commodes, steps and ramps.

Salkehatchie camps strive to show through home site devotions and sharing with the families we served that we are striving to be God's hands and feet in the world. God's love is evident in the campers' dedication to the needs regardless of the circumstances.

The families, in turn, responded with many acts of kindness and appreciation. They helped as they could, provided water and drinks, chairs for our workers to sit and rest and covered our materials when inclement weather suddenly appeared. These acts of appreciation blessed us as we were striving to be a blessing to them.

Each evening, campers worshipped, praised and

had fellowship with each other celebrating the ways they were able to witness to the families in the homes where they worked and the ways they saw God's grace in action. Often, worship starts with the question, "Where did you see God at work today?"

Thank you for your prayers and gifts that helped the 155 campers who physically participated in our 3 camps make 13 families' homes warmer, safer and dryer. Through your gifts and prayers, you became a part of this work and witness.

Want to become a more active part of this ministry? Discover new talents? Witness in a very real way? 2026 camps start in June in many locations, and lots of people everywhere need to be reminded that God loves them! Is God calling you to this work?...To be a part of His team?

## Children's Ministries

### Back to School Bingo Bash

With over 110 people in attendance, our event brought together families, friends, and the wider community to celebrate the new school year with fun, fellowship and purpose.



A huge thank you to the UMM who cooked up delicious hamburgers and hot dogs! We're also deeply grateful to our community vendors who showed up to support the event and added so much to the experience.

We're thrilled to share that all proceeds from the event will go toward supporting our foster family mission projects by helping meet real needs and spread love where it's most needed.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, and supported this event. Let's continue to be a community that gives back and grows together.

### Bookbag Blessings

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, we offered a special bookbag blessing that lifted up our students, teachers, staff and families in prayer. It was a powerful reminder of our shared role in nurturing the next generation and standing beside our schools with prayer and support. May this school year be filled with growth, learning, and God's abundant grace.



June 12, 2025

Sophie Drew Hamm

born to Lauren and  
Drew Hamm

July 9, 2025

Levi Jonathan Gardner

born to Jonathan and  
Katelin Gardner



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**MIDWEEK BOOST  
RETURNS  
SEPTEMBER 3RD!**

**Pastoral After Hours Number - 803.422.8136**



Boy Scouts meet Mondays at  
The Rock from 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
beginning August 11th!



Cub Scouts will meet on  
Monday nights beginning  
August 11th with a popcorn  
kick-off in the Family Life  
Center at 6:30 p.m.



Sunday Night Youth Group  
starts back on Sunday, August  
17th from 6-7:30 p.m.

On Sunday, July 20 in the New  
Life! Service, we received Sara  
Powell as a new member and  
baptized Easton James Powell.  
Please welcome the newest  
members of the Mt. Hebron  
Family!

Thank you so much for helping me  
celebrate my 100th birthday on July  
16. Your cards, notes, visits and gifts  
made my day very special. I pray for  
all of you daily and for Mt. Hebron.  
May God's riches and blessings be  
yours.

In Christ - Pat Morrow

### Hebron Day School

We will have "Meet the Teacher" on  
August 11, and our first day of school  
is August 12. We currently have about  
130 students and 27 staff members.  
We still have a few spots left in our  
2's/3's. Call for more information!

Tuesday, August 12th  
6pm-8pm  
Fellowship Hall

Fun • Fellowship • Food • Devotions  
Singing • Line Dancing

**ALL LADIES  
ARE INVITED!**

**UWF  
SUMMER  
PICNIC**

Bring canned goods for Go Forth  
and/or school supplies!

RSVP to Either:  
• Your Circle President  
• Gathering Area Sign Up  
• Text Mary Nell Trussell  
at 803.609.4160

**JOIN US FOR A NIGHT  
AT SEGRA PARK!**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 16**

REGISTER  
HERE

**FAITH AND FAMILY NIGHT**

- 4:30PM - CALEB AND JOHN CONCERT
- 6:00PM - GAME STARTS
- 9:00PM - FIREWORKS (POST-GAME)

**COST: \$12 (INCLUDES FIREFLIES HAT)**

**AUGUST 22 AT 6:30PM**

**Shrimp  
and Grits**

Proceeds Benefit  
Good Samaritan  
Clinic!

and the Randy Lucas Trio

**BUY TICKETS:**