

Camp Meeting

at Historic Epworth, Georgia



Schedule

3:00 Bluegrass, Old-Time, Mountain Music:
Martha Scanlan, The Dappled Grays, The Turner Sisters

4:30 Community Sing – Folk Song Favorites
Meridian Chorale and Soloists
Children's Songs and Stories
Amanda Galloway (Epworth UMC)

5:20 Opening Service Music
Bluegrass, Old-Time, Folk Hymns

6:00 CAMP MEETING SERVICE
Martha Scanlan, Dappled Grays, Meridian Chorale,
Steven Darsey, Jason Byassee

In case of rain all events will proceed in the
adjacent Epworth School

MERIDIAN HERALD PRESENTS

the 20th annual

Higher Ground: Camp Meeting Service,
Saturday, August 19, 2017

on the grounds of historic
Epworth United Methodist Church
585 Madola Rd, Epworth, GA.

Music begins at **3:00 PM**
and the service at **6:00 PM.**

The event is **NONDENOMINATIONAL**
and everyone is welcome.

FREE ADMISSION - Offering Taken

Epworth is nine miles northwest
of Blue Ridge, GA, and 101 miles from Atlanta
via I-75 and I-575.

Join Martha Scanlan, featured singer in the *Cold Mountain* soundtrack, Leah Calvert and the Dappled Grays, Steven Darsey and the Meridian Chorale, and Jason Byassee, nationally known writer and preacher for *Higher Ground: Camp Meeting* in the beautiful Epworth Valley where thousands gathered in the nineteenth century for worship at the Spring of Faith, August 19, 2017 at 3 p.m. Come, spend a day—or the weekend—in the wondrous Blue Ridge mountains.

*You bring an open heart and we'll bring
the watermelon.*

Meridian Herald, producer of the Atlanta Music Festival and winner of the Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities, celebrates twenty years of concerts, programs, and services founded on regional traditions and aimed to serve the human longing for sacred higher ground.



"Paths are there for us to follow, this is gospel I believe
Angels are around us flying, truth and mercy to receive.
Pictures of uncommon nature, painted by a master's hand
Draw me ever on life's journey, rendered thus to understand."

"Like A Songbird That Has Fallen,"
Martha Scanlan and the Reeltime Players

Meridian Herald presents its 20th annual *Higher Ground: Camp Meeting Service*

The picturesque Epworth valley was the location of ancient council-lacrosse grounds of the Cherokee Indians. During the 19th century, white settlers began outdoor religious “brush arbor” meetings on the historic Cherokee gaming grounds. The Fightingtown Camp Meeting drew hundreds each summer to camp and worship. According to one account of the Fightingtown meeting, “at night the camp ground was very beautiful; wagon loads of rich pine knots were hauled to the grounds. Log heaps covered with dirt were made and the pine knots placed on these. When they were lighted it was almost as bright as day.” “Fightingtown” is an anglicized, shorthand version of the Cherokee name for the area and nearby creek, which lore says was named for “two frogs fighting each other with stalks of a plant.”

With soul-stirring music ranging from old-time to bluegrass-gospel to classical arrangements of traditional songs, along with compelling preaching, prayer, and spirited hymn singing, the camp meeting service will be held outdoors on Epworth’s historic meeting grounds. Jason Byassee will preach and the Meridian Chorale will provide music. Also performing will be singer-songwriter Martha Scanlan, The Dappled Grays Bluegrass Band featured on the soundtrack of the film *Trouble with the Curve*, and children’s music specialist, Amanda Galloway.



Martha Scanlan

Martha Scanlan first gained national recognition for her songwriting at the prestigious Chris Austin songwriting contest at Merifest in 2004, where she won awards in two categories. With the Reeltime Travelers, she was featured on the

soundtrack for the film *Cold Mountain* produced by Grammy Award winner T-Bone Burnett. Since then she has collaborated and shared the stage with a variety of roots musicians including Alison Krauss, Emmylou Harris, Levon Helm, Ollabelle, Black Prairie, Ralph Stanley and Norman and Nancy Blake. Her song “Little Bird Of Heaven,” was the centerpiece of celebrated American novelist Joyce Carol Oates’ book by the same name.



Leah Calvert

The Dappled Grays comprise powerhouse musicians who combine straight-ahead bluegrass, progressive jazz, blues sensibilities, pristine vocals, and top-flight songwriting into a startlingly fresh and original sound. Their single “The Night Life” reached number one in Sirius/XM’s bluegrass category and remained on the Roots Music Report’s charts for 40 consecutive weeks. The band and two of their songs were featured in Clint Eastwood’s film *Trouble with the Curve*.



Timothy B. Miller

Timothy B. Miller is well known in Georgia for his appearances in opera, community events, and especially for his seventh inning stretch singing for Atlanta Braves home games!



Jason Byassee

Jason Byassee is the Butler Chair in Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation at Vancouver School of Theology. Trained at Davidson and Duke, Dr. Byassee is a prolific biblical scholar, author, and a respected theologian and teacher. A United Methodist clergyman, he served pastorates in North Carolina before going to Vancouver. He is a rising figure among preachers, noted for his biblically rooted theology, humor, and compelling rhetoric.



Betty and Shirley Turner

Betty and Shirley Turner, born and bred in the Epworth Valley, bring haunting authenticity to their mountain-gospel songs.

Steven Darsey is founding artistic director of Meridian Herald. A student of vernacular sacred music, he is also active as a conductor and composer. Since 1986, he has served Atlanta's Glenn Memorial UMC as Director of Music. Last summer Timothy Miller and he gave a presentation at the Chautauqua Institution on the evolution of camp meeting hymnody. His book, *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Music and Worship*, was recently published to critical notice.



Steven Darsey and the Meridian Chorale

With a concert of traditional mountain music beginning at 3:00 p.m., a community sing-along of folk songs, and a time for children to sing and hear stories, there is music for everyone to enjoy. The afternoon will culminate in the 6:00 p.m. service, where preaching, prayer, and holy music will bring all attendees together in a great hour worship. All during the afternoon's activities, drinks and snacks will be available, tours of the historic Epworth Church and grounds will be offered. After the service, watermelon will be served.

Darsey states: "Some of the songs we will sing have been passed down orally, virtually unchanged from the Great Awakening of the early 19th century. Thus, they are "doubly sacred" to generations of frontier folk who raised their voices to God. Fred Craddock: "Folk will recongnize this music who have never heard it before."

Camp meetings began in the 19th century south, when farmers, after the crops were laid by, would go "camping" with their families and friends for a week or more. The days and evenings were filled with fiery preaching and impassioned singing. Camp meetings spread throughout the south and became an integral part of the region's cultural and spiritual traditions. Many continue today, and the participants look forward with loving devotion to the familial, social and spiritual renewal of their annual camp meetings.

The Epworth Church was founded in 1865 and the Epworth School in 1877, so young people could gain an education. The school now sits on the hill, the church in the valley, with the historic meeting grounds



Meridian Chorale

between. On the north side is the "Spring of Faith," which, according to lore and Epworth family Bibles, was fenced off one summer during a camp meeting, depriving hundreds access to their only source of water. That evening campers held a prayer vigil asking God for water. During the night, amid a howling storm, the spring moved onto church property. When the morning came, the campers again had access to its waters. The church still does their baptisms and holds Easter sunrise services at those holy waters. The first camp meeting of record there was in 1843. In August of 2013, Meridian Herald and Epworth church presented the first camp meeting held there since the annual Fightingtown camp meetings ceased in the 1890s.

Epworth is located nine miles northwest of Blue Ridge, GA, and 101 miles from Atlanta via I-75 and I-575. Everyone is welcome. The service is free; an offering will be taken. Events will proceed rain or shine. In case of rain, all program activities will take place in the adjacent Epworth School auditorium. This service is presented by Meridian Herald—www.meridianherald.org and hosted by Epworth UMC, Byron Ahrens, pastor. www.historicepworthumc.org.

