



# The Good News

## Lake Gibson United Methodist Church

*Our Vision: To be a joyful church family that is crucial to our community*



**December 2018**

Steve Polk, Pastor

424 West Daughtery Road, Lakeland Florida 33809

Phone (863) 858-5431

### *From the Pastor's Desk*

<sup>23</sup> ***“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”*** Matthew 1:23 (NRSV)

Christmas is an amazing time of the year; the closer it comes, the better mood people seem to be in. At Christmas time truces are declared in times of war, church attendance is up and peace and civility are promoted – even on the news and in the papers. Christmas is filled with family gatherings, office and neighborhood festivities, the exchanging of gifts and many well-wishes for others. Many charities report that the Christmas Season is their main source of revenue for the year. All of this is good, and yet, the true meaning of Christmas is so much more. There would be no Easter, no redemption, no salvation and no resurrection without a Christmas.

In reality the story of Christmas is the beginning of God's redemptive act to save mankind and the world. Think of the ramifications of the verse quoted above. The God who created the world and all that is in it, the God that is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-loving agreed to come and live with mankind in a human body. That in itself is mind-boggling, but that he would confine himself to a virgin's womb for nine months and then to an infant's body that would have to mature at the same pace a human baby would -- WOW!!! This very act proved that God is patient and that the Apostle Paul's description of love (I Cor. 13) -- not boasting, not being proud, not self-seeking, but being trustworthy, protective, persevering and never failing can be seen in God and His act of Emmanuel -- God with us.

To really understand Christmas is to realize that the real gift of Christmas is God offering His love to every man, woman and child throughout the course of history. Paul prayed for the Ephesians to be able to grasp how wide, long, high and deep the love of God was. Christmas gives us a peek at the scope of the love God has for each and every one of us.

This Christmas I pray that you will feel, experience and know how much God cares for you, and that you will feel that special touch, that warm hug, that fresh breath of air, that invigorating stream of God's living water, and that you will pass it along to your family, friends and all you come into contact with this season.

Merry Christmas,  
*Pastor Steve*

*Thank you!*

## *Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts*

*On behalf of The Lake Gibson UMC Food Pantry Staff, we would like to thank you for your continuous blessings and support of our food pantry. Our numbers are growing and with this holiday season of giving and sharing we were able to help a few families with additional items for a nice Thanksgiving Meal. In addition we will be able to assist families this Christmas Season as well. Once again, Ms. Yvonne Bower, Ms. Marina Hernandez and our volunteers are extending a warm heart-felt thank you to you.*



*Ms. Shirley Lux and Cypress Lakes Bingo Club, on behalf of The Lake Gibson UMC Food Pantry Staff, we would like to extend a warm heart-felt thank you to you. Your continuous support to our food pantry has been a great blessing. This is the time of year for giving and sharing, and giving has its rewards. Once again we thank you for your continued blessing and support to our food pantry.*

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# Special Monthly Events Calendar for December

(Events that do not repeat on a weekly basis, or the first occurrence of a *new* weekly event.)

2018		DECEMBER		SUNDAY		Fill the Sox Box, Dec 1st - 9th	
CALENDAR YEAR		CALENDAR MONTH		FIRST DAY OF WEEK			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
25 Bell Ringing for Salvation Army, 10 am to 8 pm, Public at Plantation Square	26 Call Phyllis Kitchens, 863-384-4564, to sign up to ring the bell!	27	28	29	30	01	
02 1st Sunday of Advent Last Day for Angel Tree donations	03	04	05 UMW Ruth Circle of Love, 10 am, FLC (gift bag prep); Christmas luncheon at Olive Garden	06	07	08 UMM mtg, 9 am, FLC Cantata Practice, 10 am, Sanctuary	
09 HARVEST SUNDAY (food pantry); Last day to donate sox; <b>Christmas Caroling</b> , meet at church, 1:30 pm	10 UMW Evening Circle, 6:30 pm, off campus; Staff, Pastor, Parish Com mtg, 7 pm; FLC	11 UMW Heart to Heart Christmas luncheon, 11:30 am, off campus <b>Pick-a-Pair of Sox starts</b>	12	13 ALBOH Board mtg, 4:30 pm, FLC	14 UMM Pick Up Poinsettias	15 Cantata Practice, 10 am, Sanctuary; Cub Scouts Xmas Caroling, 11 am - 1 pm; Wreath laying, Bushnell	
16 <b>Blood Drive</b> , 9 am; <b>Christmas Cantata</b> , 10:30 am (single service)	17 Finance Com mtg, 7 pm, FLC	18 Cub Scout Pack 711 Christmas Party, 7 pm, FLC	19	20	21	22	
23 Single service, 10:30 am Last Day for Pick-a-Pair of Sox	24 Office Closed <b>Candle Light Svc &amp; Cantata, 6 pm, Sanctuary</b>	25 <b>Christmas</b> Office Closed	26	27	28	29	
30 Single service, 10:30 am (Favorite Hymns); <b>5th Sunday potluck</b>	31 Administrative Council mtg, 7 pm, FLC	01	02	03	04	05	

## December Weekly Recurring Events

(Changes are announced in the Sunday Bulletin, which is available on-line or at Sunday services)

### Sunday

Traditional Worship Service	8:00 am	Sanctuary
Adult Sunday School	9:15 - 10:15 am	FLC
Children's Sunday School	9:15 - 10:15 am	FLC
Contemporary Worship Service (Nursery service available)	10:30 am	Sanctuary
Kidtricity Children's Ministry	10:30 - 11:45 am	Sanctuary & FLC

### Monday

Intercessory Prayer	9:30 am	Sanctuary
Boy Scout Troop 711	7:00 pm	FLC

### Tuesday

Deadline for Sunday Bulletin	noon	Office
Revelation Bible Study	2:00 pm	Lakeside Hills
Praise Team Rehearsal	6:30 pm	Sanctuary
Cub Scout Pack 711	7:00 pm	FLC

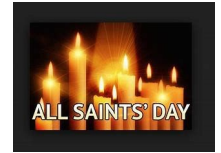
### Wednesday

Mid-week Devotions	8:00 am	FLC (on hold)
ALBOH Chapel	9:00 am	ALBOH
Olive Tree Gathering	10:00 am	400 Vineyard Dr.
<i>The Story</i> Small Group 1	10:00 am	Foxwood Village
Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm	Sanctuary
Bible Study with Pastor	7:00 pm	FLC

### Thursday

Food Pantry	9:30 - 11:30 am	Office
Bible Study with Pastor	10:00 am	FLC
<i>The Story</i> Small Group 2	7:00 pm	Sir George's Trail

## Correction: All Saints Sunday, November 4th



This is the corrected list of deceased Lake Gibson UMC members and friends who were recognized during the worship service on November 4th: Bob Butler, Marilyn Warnack, Vera Ridley, Dorothy McGehean, Marisol Denise Ramirez and Harion Leonel Monge.

A memorial service for Dorothy McGehean will be announced at a later date.

## Audio/Visual Support Needed for 8:00 am Service

We need people to volunteer in the A/V booth for the early (8:00 am) service. Both a sound technician and someone to run the slides are needed. If you are interested, call Debbie Moore, 863-614-7193.

## Volunteers Asked to Serve at Hope House on Fridays in December

Hope House is normally not open on Fridays, but permission has been obtained to open it on Fridays in December. Mr. Bob Burnett has asked for volunteers to take one Friday each week in December. Hours are 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and there are two separate functions that need to be performed: To be in charge (coordination/supervision) or to prepare the food (food can be brought in already cooked or made there). If you are interested, or want more information, please contact Bob or Sue Burnett, 863-944-1028, bobsuecleo@yahoo.com.

## Donations Requested to Help Amber's Children

Ambreen Amber, a Pakistani Christian woman who was introduced to us by Junaid Saqib, is asking us to help her by making donations to pay attorney fees to arrange for her children, who are still in Pakistan, to join her here. If you would like to help save these children, who are in danger simply because they are Christians, please send a check (with the notation For Ambreen Amber) to the following address: NeJame Law, 189 South Orange Ave, Suite 1800, Orlando, FL 32801.

## Praise and Worship in a Service *An Opinion*

[During an Olive Tree Gathering the issue of church music generated a lively discussion, with advocates divided evenly for traditional hymns and modern praise music. Etmonia (Ettie) Davis expressed her view (very politely) that some of us were missing the purpose of this music. I invited her to write up her thoughts (which I've edited a little) to share with the congregation. Ettie is from Liberia, and the praise and worship she describes below represent her experiences in churches in Liberia and the U.S. Anyone who would like to continue this topic, or any other, please send me your thoughts for a future newsletter. Editor]

Praise and worship consist of singing spiritual songs that are led by the choir or by a singing group which has a leader with the same function as the choir director. The leader gives praises to God and encourages the congregation to focus on God in order to get in the mood to worship. It allows you to open your heart to God to receive the Holy Spirit.

Praise and Worship continued on the next page . . .

## Praise and Worship in a Service, Continued

The purpose of praise and worship is to invoke the spirit of God in the worship service. It occurs before the pastor preaches and after the opening of the service. It normally lasts for at least 15 minutes.

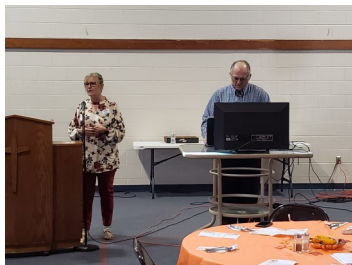
The songs to be sung are selected by the choir or singing group, and there is a continuous flow of singing from one song to another. The singing group may consist of three or more persons.

Ettie Davis

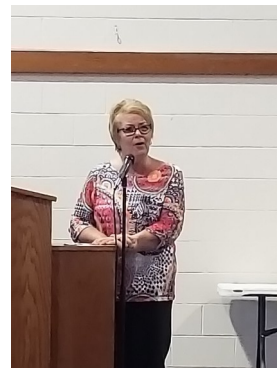
## November News

### United Methodist Women Unit Meeting, November 12th

The United Methodist Women (UMW) held our third and final Unit Meeting of the year on November 12th. Unit Meetings are where all three UMW circles come together. The guest speakers were Kathy Guin, Volunteer Coordinator, and Carol Maietta, a volunteer, with Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine. Ms. Guin told us about LVIM and typical volunteer jobs like patient escort, receptionist, intake specialist, etc. Ms. Maietta, a retired nurse, started volunteering at LVIM at the beginning of 2018 and talked enthusiastically about her experiences and the impact this organization has on the working poor, who aren't eligible for other medical programs.



LVIM volunteer Ms. Maietta  
Ms. Guin, LVIM, and her tech support  
(husband)



### Final Craft Group Meeting for 2018, November 15th

Sharon Coddington provided all the supplies and instruction to make small, seasonal gifts for our shut-ins for autumn and Christmas visits. There have been several crafting get-togethers since this summer, and everyone at this final session wanted to continue to work together. Look for an announcement next year for future crafting meetings.



Sharon Coddington expertly paints small, wooden  
angels

Ruth Zona, Pat Moon and Carol Davis  
planning their work



Phyllis Kitchens and Sharon  
Painting (Photo by Pat Moon)



We will be getting information on Prayers & Squares, an interfaith outreach ministry that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. Prayers & Squares International Quilt Ministry has local chapters, one of which is at First UMC Lakeland. The P&S motto is "It's not about the quilt, it's about the prayers." We'll see if this type of ministry is of interest and supportable at LGUMC in 2019. Phyllis

## November News, Continued

### Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11th



Cub Scout Pack 711 and Boy Scout Troop 711 honored Veterans Day by presenting the Colors at the worship services. Later the leaders surprised Pastor Steve Polk by presenting him a check to be used on church maintenance to express their gratitude for our sponsorship.

A highlight of the worship service was Bob Herrick's rendition of the anthem, Arlington, which earned a standing ovation.



## December Events

### Spreading God's Love this Christmas Season -- Be A Salvation Army Bell Ringer at Publix

Help us live our vision to be a joyful church family that is crucial to our community in December. **Be a Salvation Army Bell Ringer at the Plantation Square Publix.** One of the members of the Olive Tree Gathering (Wednesday morning Bible study) offered this memory of how the Salvation Army helped her family:

"Salvation Army [is] always doing the most good! God bless them! When I came from Puerto Rico at 5 years old and 11 children in the family and my dad the only one working, Salvation Army was there for us and always blessed us. When I was a teenager they took my siblings and I to their summer camp for free in Plymouth, Massachusetts, which was a beautiful place! I will always be grateful to Salvation Army."



Bell Ringers are needed *Monday through Saturday*, 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, up to 2:00 pm on Christmas Eve. Ringers are requested to **work one or two hours.**

Please call or email me if you are interested in volunteering to be a Bell Ringer this Christmas season at Publix Super Market #392 at Plantation Square Shopping Center, 5375 N. Socrum Loop Road, Lakeland. I will coordinate with the Salvation Army's scheduler, which may require a couple of iterations to get an acceptable time block. Guidelines are available for Bell Ringers. Phyllis Kitchens, [phyllis\\_kitchens@hotmail.com](mailto:phyllis_kitchens@hotmail.com), 863-984-4564 (home)/410-790-2662 (cell)

December Events continued on the next page . . .

## December Events

### Join Us December 9th and Sing Christmas Carols!

We are going caroling on December 9th at 2:00 pm. Please meet at the church at 1:30. The schedule will be available on December 2nd. Please plan to come and bring joy to the bedridden and shut-ins. Let there be A SONG IN THE AIR about O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM where HE IS BORN on O HOLY NIGHT with ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH singing JOY TO THE WORLD. It is fun already!

Debbie Moore

### Two Opportunities to Attend the Christmas Cantata

Sunday, **December 16th**, there will be a single worship service at 10:30 am featuring our Christmas Cantata, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*. The Cantata will be performed again on **Christmas Eve** during the 6:00 pm candlelight service. (As traditional on Christmas Eve, we will take up a special collection for the Florida United Methodist Children's Home.)

### December 30th is a 5th Sunday

Fifth Sundays, which occur 4 or 5 times a year, feature a special collection for the Florida United Methodist Children's Home. As usual, this will be a single worship service at 10:30 am followed by a potluck dinner in the FLC. We're planning a traditional New Year's Day dinner with the church preparing black-eyed peas and ham. Please bring side dishes and a few desserts.

### Lost and Found

The Lost and Found basket is located in the church office. Two keys have been in it for quite a while. A Toyota ignition key was found in the parking lot on Nov 25th; if it wasn't claimed that day, the owner should check the L&F basket.

### Editorial Policy

The articles contained in *The Good News* express the opinions of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect policies of the United Methodist Church or of Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. All members of LGUMC are encouraged to write articles and share their thoughts with the congregation. The purpose of this newsletter is to foster better communication of ideas and opportunities for worship and service among LGUMC members and friends as we seek to share God's love and to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Phyllis Kitchens, Editor



## Marina's Corner

*It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.*

Mother Theresa

### What a Difference a Month Made to Our Food Pantry!

[In last month's newsletter we reported that the Food Pantry's cupboards have been close to bare throughout the fall. Despite that, through the end of October, we gave out 587 bags of groceries and 659 bags of Publix baked goods. Then came November!]

On behalf of LGUMC Food Pantry Staff (Ms. Yvonne Bower and Ms. Marina Hernandez), we would like to extend a very warm, heart-felt thank you to a few individuals. I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Tom Burns and Pastor Steve along, with Mr. Todd Bower and Mr. Dick McPherson, for helping us on November 14th to put away and organize a *huge blessing* that was received for the food pantry. Thanks to the following donors and organizations:



First, the Food Pantry received an anonymous donation of goods for needy families; they also gave the pantry Cornish game hens for our Thanksgiving grocery bags! Each person will receive two hens plus all the usual fixings!



Second, the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts gave LGUMC Food Pantry a very generous amount of dry and canned goods. (Photo provided by Pastor Steve)

Third, Cypress Lakes Bingo Club and Ms. Shirley Lux for delivering the canned and dry goods. (Photo in November issue)

Fourth, Publix for their continued donations of baked goods which really light up faces and allow the needy to leave with something every week, whereas groceries are limited to once a month.

Finally, to our Church Family: We thank you for your donations. (Photo taken before 8:00 am service on November's Harvest Sunday)



Each one of you deserves a huge hug and a warm, heart-felt thank you for all that you do.

A special thank you to the ones who do not want to be recognized for the great blessings they are sharing. Included in the special thank you are the volunteers who come in and assist the office with the handing out of grocery bags.

Marina's Corner continued on the next page . . .



## Marina's Corner, Continued

Thank you to the individuals who pick up the bread at Publix twice a week. Each and every one of you is a huge blessing to this church and to the strangers who come to our Food Pantry. This is the season of giving and sharing, and it is always a blessing to give.

Once more on behalf of Ms. Yvonne Bower and Ms. Marina Hernandez, we thank you all for dedication and support to our Food Pantry.

Marina Hernandez  
Administrative Secretary/863-858-5431  
office@lakegibsonumc.com



The dishwasher is a convenient place to store cans.



Light boxes go up high

Just about every place that could hold Groceries was used.



Your generosity will carry over to the bags we fill before Christmas.

# Finance and Related Topics

## Financial Update

Congratulations! We are making slight improvements in meeting our general budgetary needs from year to year. Note that our contributions thru the end of October were above our 3-year-cumulative average, and October ran ahead of the same month in 2017. Thank you!

Current Year **2018**

Current Budget **\$328,334**

Month	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	3-Yr Total	3-Yr \$ Avg Monthly	3-Yr \$ Avg Cumulative	Actual 2018
January	\$22,306	\$29,299	\$28,306	\$79,911	\$26,637	\$26,637	\$23,610
February	\$26,282	\$29,218	\$27,256	\$82,756	\$27,585	\$54,222	\$29,950
March	\$31,316	\$21,386	\$26,501	\$79,203	\$26,401	\$80,623	\$29,201
April	\$22,325	\$24,069	\$28,612	\$75,006	\$25,002	\$105,625	\$26,066
May	\$26,498	\$28,167	\$21,816	\$76,481	\$25,494	\$131,119	\$19,712
June	\$18,538	\$17,395	\$17,272	\$53,205	\$17,735	\$148,854	\$20,390
July	\$17,763	\$23,318	\$23,381	\$64,462	\$21,487	\$170,341	\$23,856
August	\$18,641	\$15,985	\$16,366	\$50,992	\$16,997	\$187,339	\$16,727
September	\$16,310	\$23,646	\$21,139	\$61,095	\$20,365	\$207,704	\$24,401
October	\$18,372	\$24,737	\$20,835	\$63,944	\$21,315	\$229,018	\$24,825
November	\$32,022	\$22,606	\$21,926	\$76,554	\$25,518	\$254,536	
December	\$28,664	\$23,214	\$27,446	\$79,324	\$26,441	\$280,978	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$279,037</b>	<b>\$283,040</b>	<b>\$280,856</b>	<b>\$842,933</b>	<b>\$280,978</b>	<b>\$280,978</b>	<b>\$238,738</b>

With designated funds, we are close to meeting our needs for the roof repair contract. Hopefully, this should be completed within the next month or so. Of course, we are still working to fully fund an air conditioning replenishment project, as well as putting aside funds to cover our 5% insurance deductible in case of future hurricane damage.

Your enthusiastic support for the FUMCH Angel Tree project is reaping gift cards. Hopefully, we will be able to support the objective of \$150 per child for many of the residents.

The LGUMC family reached out again with support for Wreaths Across America. Honoring those interred in the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell is always a worthwhile endeavor.

Thank you to Bob Herrick and Fay Wright for leading LGUMC's efforts to provide financial support and for helping to lay the wreaths. Wreath-laying at Bushnell is scheduled for December 15th.



Dwight Kitchens, Co-chair  
Finance Committee

Finance and Related Topics continued on the next page . . .

### 9 Questions to Assess Your Church's Financial Health

Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

#### **1. What percentage of your operating budget is funded through recurring and predictable sources of income?**

Ideally, a church's ongoing operating expenses should be covered by recurring and predictable sources of income, such as pledges and offerings, program and facility fees, fundraisers, and the percentage of rental income not directed to support your capital budget. If your church relies too much on nonrecurring or unpredictable sources of income, such as large, one-time gifts or bequests, to cover routine, ongoing expenses, it's cause for concern, as is drawing down an endowment at too high a rate.

It's typical for middle-aged and older givers to be more generous to the church. But if the percentage of giving coming from those age 70 or older grows larger each year, it represents a point of vulnerability.

#### **2. How well are you estimating revenue and expenses?**

Look at your financial history, going back three to five years. What is the amount of income you budgeted compared to your actual income? What did you budget for expenses, and what did you actually spend? Is there typically a deficit or a surplus? Are you overestimating income? Or underestimating expenses? This exercise will help you gauge the accuracy of your budgeting assumptions.

#### **3. What percentage of your giving comes from pledges?**

Not all churches rely on pledging, of course. But if you do, you'll want to calculate what percentage of your total giving comes from pledges. If you discover, for example, that the amount is typically 80 percent, this gives a basis to estimate your total giving in future years based on the amount pledged. It also can reveal trends. For example, are people continuing to give, even if fewer are pledging?

#### **4. How are people giving?**

The high point of check writing came in 1995. Today, only about 50 percent of financial transactions come from cash and checks, and it's getting lower all the time. Determine what percentage of giving to your church comes from cash and checks and what percentage comes from other means of giving. Are you giving people the options they typically use to conduct their financial transactions? For some, the check they write for church is the only check they write all week.

#### **5. How much of giving comes from persons age 70 or older?**

It's typical for middle-aged and older givers to be more generous to the church. But if the percentage of giving that comes from those age 70 or older grows larger each year, it represents a point of vulnerability. So, it's important to know this statistic. Even if you don't know everyone's exact age, you can make an educated guess.

#### **6. Is any expense category threatening sustainability?**

Has one component of your budget become so disproportionate that it jeopardizes the church's future? You'll want to examine three things: your debt, which is often a problem for newer churches; your pastoral compensation, which can be overly burdensome for smaller congregations; and your facility costs, particularly if your congregation has older, expansive facilities that no longer fit the size of the congregation.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Finance and Related Topics, Continued

### 9 Questions to Assess Your Church's Financial Health, Continued

#### 7. Are you deferring maintenance?

One common way for congregations to balance budgets in challenging times is to defer maintenance. Consider what should ideally be spent each year to fund at least a minimal level of ongoing capital renewal and replacement needs in categories such as safety, accessibility, heating and cooling, roofs, painting, technology upgrades, and renovations. If you are consistently budgeting less than is needed for capital renewal, you are risking greater expense down the road. And even if you can't fund everything right away, it's helpful to know the demands for the funds you do have.

#### 8. Is your endowment or permanent fund invested to maintain its value?

There is a tendency to think it's best for churches to invest endowment funds in such a way that the principal is guaranteed and to spend only the interest. But if you do this, the value of the fund will be declining each year by the rate of inflation. Even if the dollar amount remains the same, you can't do as much with that amount of money as you could do when it was given. Examine the percentage of stocks and bonds in your fund and get advice on how to balance your investments to allow enough total return growth in the fund (with interest, dividends, and appreciation) to keep up with inflation so you can have a reasonable spending rate for ministry each year (perhaps 4 or 5 percent) while also replacing the cost of inflation. By doing that, you can maintain the percent) while also replacing the cost of inflation. By doing that, you can maintain the purchasing power of the endowment.

#### 9. Do you have a reserve fund, and how is it used?

Some churches are so concerned with preparing for a rainy day that they amass large reserve funds while neglecting current ministry needs. Other churches depend on reserve funds to cover chronic deficits or mask imprecise budgeting. It's important that a reserve fund is governed by a policy stipulating what money goes into a reserve fund and how a reserve fund is to be used. Churches need to have a goal for their reserve fund such as three or six months of operating expenses. If the fund reaches that level, additional funds may go for other purposes until the reserve fund needs to be replenished.

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Lovett H. Weems, Jr., is senior consultant at the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, professor of church leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary, and author of several books on leadership. **This article is reprinted by permission from *Leading Ideas*, a free e-newsletter from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary** and available at [churchleadership.com](http://churchleadership.com).  
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### Introducing Lake Gibson's 2019 Leadership Team

Chairperson of Church Council: Dwight Kitchens

Church Treasurer: Yvonne Bower

Financial Secretary: Cindy Heishman

Lay Member: Mike Booker

Lay Leader: Sue Shelton

Recording Secretary: Marina Hernandez

Continued on the next page . . .

## Lake Gibson's 2019 Leadership Team, Continued

Membership Secretary: Office Secretary

Campus Ministry Rep: Jeff Acor

Camps and Retreats Rep: Jeff Acor

UMW President: Pat Moon

UMM President: Michael Moake

### Administrative Committees

Staff, Pastor, Parish Relations Committee: Chair, Ken Fuqua. Members: Roy Bodemer, Tom Fischer, Dick Shepherd, Jean Wesley, Jeff Acor, Ken Fuqua and Sandy Stanfield.

Finance Committee: Chair, Dick McPherson. Members: Pastor Steve Polk, Sue Heishman, Dwight Kitchens, Ken Fuqua, Tom Burns, Sue Shelton, Mike Booker, Yvonne Bower, Cindy Heishman, Ann Fox, Wayne Wesley, Karen Acor.

Board of Trustees: Chair, To be elected. Members: Leon Rumohr, Judy Sadwick, Todd Bower, Dale Gower, Tom Burns, John Bernat.

Nominations and Leadership Development: Chair, Pastor Polk; Vice Chair, Sue Shelton. Members: Jan Booker, Sue Bodemer, Pat Moon, Betty Fischer, Sarah Schiemann.

Interpreter of Connectional Giving: Dick McPherson.

Permanent Endowment Committee: Chair, Finance Committee Rep; Trustee Rep; Senior Pastor (Voice, no vote). Members: Sandy Stanfield, Rita Fredrikson, Patsy Lennon, Sharon Ruth, Jean Wesley, Kathy Rumohr.

### Other Ministries

Missions Coordinator: Linda Alvarez

Christian Education:

Prayer Advocate: Fran Mudge

Children's Ministry: Debbie Moore

Youth Coordinator: Jeff Acor

A Little Bit of Heaven Child Enrichment Center Board: Chair, Sarah Schiemann. Members: Pastor Polk; Administrative (Church) Council Rep, Dwight Kitchens; Trustee Rep, Tom Burns; Finance Rep, Dick McPherson; Lay Leader, Sue Shelton; SPPR Rep, Ken Fuqua; Parent Rep, Amy Mercado, Rowena Betz, Carol Davis, Jan Booker.

## Our Departments

### Lay Leader's Letter

Dear Church Family,

I am still processing my **Walk to Emmaus** -- I have 17 typed pages and I am not halfway through my notes! It indeed was an amazing walk, one that I hope and pray lasts a lifetime. All of the "talks" were inspiring and beneficial, but the one that I feel moved to deal with right now is the talk entitled "Growth through Study". The speaker on this topic used scripture that I am familiar with to introduce this topic, but I had never really thought of it in the context she used.

The verse is Romans 12:2, *Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (RSV)*. The speaker pointed out that "Christian study involves 2 parts -- our being *informed of the truth* and being *formed in the truth*. We study Christ so our lives will be conformed to His." I guess this talk has my attention right now because we have several small groups currently meeting that revolve around *The Story* and, of course, that study is about to come to an end. However, **that does not mean our pursuit of growth through study should end**. To my way of thinking, it should never end. Yes, there are many other aspects to our walk with Christ, but I think growing in understanding of His Way and Word are an important part of the foundation to help us to grow in service, prayer, developing a personal relationship with our maker and being disciples of Jesus Christ.

So, how can our church family at Lake Gibson, and even those beyond our church walls, grow in this area? I would be thrilled to organize new groups, and help the groups already started keep going. Please contact me if you are interested in joining a new or existing group, or have an idea for a new group study (Sue Shelton, email [gatormom2@verizon.net](mailto:gatormom2@verizon.net), call 863-853-9212 or see me at church or call/text cell 863-272-8316).

Also, it has been on my mind for a while that we have not had any Discipleship classes in a long time. Perhaps it is time to bring those back to life. For those of you who have not participated in the 3 levels of this study, I would describe these as fairly intense Bible studies. I have taken level 1 and highly recommend it. Let me know if you are interested. Those of you who have participated in one or more of these studies, I would greatly appreciate it if you would contact me with which levels you have taken and if you are interested in the next level. I would be glad to get these studies going as well!

Don't forget that you are also welcome at any time to attend the Bible studies Pastor Steve teaches on Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm and repeats on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am in the FLC. They are currently studying the Book of Mark. Also, the Olive Tree Gathering which meets Wednesdays at 10:00 am at Debbie Moore's house is currently finishing up a study of Revelation from a Messianic Jewish perspective, and will then be going back to the Bible for a study on one of the books starting in January. I know everyone is really busy right now, but please consider continuing a study in January or joining one.

In closing, the Walk to Emmaus is another tool to strengthen, reinforce and help you to separate yourself from the world for a little bit, so that you are better equipped to deal with the world and walk your own personal walk with a renewed spirit. Think about the possibility of taking that walk, maybe next spring. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Love in Christ,

Sue Shelton

## Our Departments, Continued

### Administrative Council

No report

### Board of Trustees

No report

### Music Department

Join us for Christmas Caroling Sunday afternoon, Dec 9th.

### Children's Ministry

We have had a thankful November with the children while focusing on the Bible. In December we plan to have informative, joyful sessions on the birth of Jesus after we finish *The Story*. We've enjoyed *The Story* and now look forward to new, refreshing materials.

We will have our children bell ringers in the church Christmas cantata on December 16th. The little ones have practiced hard to ring a Christmas carol. You'll love it!

Debbie Moore, Children's Ministry Director  
863-221-1096

### A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH) Child Enrichment Center



Andrea Rivera is recognized as A Little Bit of Heaven's Employee of the Month for her dedication, passion and hard work.

We held our Thankful Dinner for students, their families, church members and the staff on Thursday evening, November 15th. Thanks to Sarah Schiemann for her photograph on the right.

Mandy Carr was giving piano lessons to several children in the FLC on November 15th. One of the students is shown below, left.



Before the lessons, Director Cook (on the left) conferred with Ms. Carr (on the right)

Latisha Cook, Director, 863-858-8400

Our Departments continued on the next page . . .



## Our Departments, Continued

### Worship Committee

A huge THANK YOU to all who helped decorate the church for Christmas on Monday, November 26th!

### Custodian

When I became custodian I envisioned a clean church would be an open door for new Bible studies, more teachings and meetings to **glorify** Jesus. My desire is for us to become disciple makers.

Debbie Moore, Custodian

### Adult Sunday School Classes

Adult Sunday School classes meet in the FLC from 9:15 to 10:15 am. **Each class welcomes new members. Please join us!**

The **Friendship** Sunday School Class is led by Mike Stafford and meets downstairs in the multipurpose room.

The **Seekers** Sunday School class meets in Classrooms 1 and 2. Sue Heishman is the leader.

The **Upstairs** class meets next door to Kidtricity with Michael Moake as the leader. They are currently using the 2014 - 2015 Standard Lesson Commentary (KJV). Copies are available from the leader.

## Our Ministries

### Mission Moments

#### The Sox Box is Here!

The **collection phase** of our third annual "Pick-a-Pair" **sox project** started on November 25th and will **run through December 9th**. New sox of all sizes and types may be placed in the box in the Narthex or dropped off in the office.

The sox will be put in baggies, labeled appropriately for men, women, boys or girls, and **hung on clotheslines** outside our church starting **December 11th**. Pick-a-Pair will run **through the December 23rd**. Anyone wanting sox can pick out a pair or more as needed. (Photo at right, from Dec 2017, shows one of the areas that was decorated with sox. Photographer unknown)



Please fill the Sox Box up, and we will fill a need in our community to help keep feet warm this winter.

Linda Alvarez, Missions Coordinator

Our Ministries continued on the next page . . .

## Our Ministries, Continued



### United Methodist Men (UMM)

The LGUMC United Methodist Men held their monthly meeting on November 10th. We opened with a prayer of thanks for all the projects that were completed and that we were able to provide a service to those in need.

We collected \$80.00 in love offerings which was donated to the LGUMC hospitality account which funds 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday meals.

The LGUMM voted to contribute money to the LGUMC bike repair fund for the Florida United Methodist Children's Home.

Lake Gibson men: Make a New Year's resolution to join the United Methodist Men and help us help the church, its members and our neighbors. We need more men to help us make a difference in the quality of life at and around the church!

### NEW PROJECTS FOR UPCOMING YEAR 2019

1. We have been asked to pressure wash A Little Bit of Heaven's outside playground equipment.
2. We will be painting the FLC's air conditioning enclosure at some point, now that all the fence repairs are done.
3. We will assist Mike Booker as needed with sidewalk patching
4. We are getting ready for the annual Easter Egg hunt for 2019

Thanks once again for all your support, hard work and cooperation. It makes the job so much easier when everyone helps to complete a project.

If at any time you feel a need to call me, please do so.

Michael Moake, President  
863-816-3194 home or 386-965-0170 cell



### United Methodist Women (UMW)

Please read the article about our **Unit Meeting** under November News.

President Pat Moon opened the Unit Meeting.



UMW continued on the next page . . .

## Our Ministries, Continued

### United Methodist Women (UMW), Continued

We have a few bags of **pecans** left. If you would like to purchase them, please call Pat Moon at (863) 858-6883.

The next meeting of the **UMW Leadership Team (LT)** is scheduled to be **Monday, December 31st, 11:00 am in the FLC**. Final approval of the distribution of the mission money we've raised will be made.

#### Circle News



**Ruth Circle of Love** will meet on **Wednesday, December 5th, at 10:00 am** in the FLC. We will be preparing gift bags for our shut-ins, and afterward will go to the **Olive Garden** restaurant for our Christmas luncheon. All ladies are invited to attend. Please let Pat Moon (863-858-6883) know if you're coming to lunch so we can reserve a table.

**Evening Circle** will meet on **Monday, December 10th, at 6:30 pm** at Debbie Moore's home, 400 Vineyard Drive, Lakeland. We start with dinner, so come hungry and enjoy the fellowship. Everyone is welcome! We will be having **baked ziti**; please bring side dishes.



We will conclude our study of *Women of the Bible* with chapter 31, Lois and Eunice (2 Timothy 1:1-5). Starting in January 2019 we will be studying Lois Tverberg's *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus*, and we have extra books if you want to join a vibrant, humor-loving group. We also have food too good to pass up every month. For information, please call Debbie Moore, 863-614-7193.



**Heart to Heart** will meet on **Tuesday, December 11th, at 11:30 am** at Jackie Webb's home. This is our **Fabulous Finger Food Fellowship** Christmas party. Please bring \$10.00 contribution to buy meat for the church's food pantry, your white elephant gift to exchange and socks, soap and plastic soap boxes for Hope House. And don't forget to bring a dish to share! Call Ruth Zona at 863-859-5967 if you plan to attend.

#### Prayer Ministry

Prayer Warriors are a wonderful reflection of God's love. You keep the spirit of Christmas glowing brightly through the year. Every day you show what Christian love is about through your prayers, compassion, concern, warmth and kindness for others. The caring things you say and do bring Christ's peace, hope and joy to everyone around you. Lake Gibson's Prayer Warriors are blessed by God's calling to bring us together in prayer and service to him.



May your heart be filled with the wonder of this blessed season. In Christ we give thanks.

In this season of celebrating Christ Jesus you may receive a calling from God to join our circle of prayer warriors. Please mark the connection card if you so choose.

*Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (NLB-1996)*

Prayer Ministry Advocate - Fran Mudge  
Our Ministries continued on the next page . . .

## Our Ministries, Continued

### Scouting Report

See November News section for Veterans Day report. The Cub Scouts are planning to sing Christmas carols on Saturday, December 15th, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, location to be announced. They will hold their Christmas party in the FLC on Tuesday, December 18th, 7:00 pm.

### Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH)



There are three opportunities to support FUMCH this Christmas season: **Angel Tree** -- Buying gift cards for the children and needed items for the cottages; **Christmas Eve's special collection** for the Children's Home and the **5th Sunday, December 30th**, offering. Thank you, everyone, for making this Christmas a good memory for the children at the Children's Home.

The last day for turning in gift cards and cottage items is **Sunday, December 2nd** so Karen and Jeff Acor can take them to FUMCH that week.

### Neighborhood Missions Ministry

#### Salvation Army Bell Ringers

THANK YOU everyone who has signed up to be a Salvation Army Bell Ringer! We started on Black Friday, November 23rd, at the Publix at Plantation Square. At the time of this writing, Lake Gibson people have volunteered to contribute 19 hours of ringing in November.

There are still lots of opportunities to serve in December. Ringing is scheduled between 10:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday through Saturday. This campaign ends at 2:00 pm on Christmas Eve.

People have been generous and kind to our ringers. On the first day, three asked about our church -- where it is, what time services are, etc. Several people who have been bell ringers in the past, or will be ringing at another location this year, stopped by to chat. The Publix employees were uniformly friendly and helpful. What an uplifting experience!



### Hope House: Lake Gibson Members Serving Others

Debbie and Rick McLellan have been volunteering for several years at the Hope Center (also called Hope House) which helps homeless people in the north Lakeland area. Recently other Lake Gibson members were recognized for their assistance. Hope House is looking for volunteers in December to serve lunch and provide services on Fridays in December (see article on page 5). If you are interested in helping the McLellans, please call them at 863-327-2893. Every week they provide a summary of actions taken during their service on Tuesdays. This is one of their weekly reports which mentions LGUMC:

Hope House continued on the next page . . .

## Our Ministries, Continued

### Hope House: Lake Gibson Members Serving Others, Continued

**TUESDAY Nov 13, 2018 at HOPE CENTER**

Rick and Debbie opened for Breakfast today, and served 2 dozen guests a Sunrise Breakfast Casserole, hot biscuits with sausage gravy, and fresh hot coffee, cold milk, apple juice and iced tea to drink. Guests also ate a variety of cereals.

Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from Luke 15, THE PRODIGAL SON.

At Lunchtime, Rick Nelson served Shepherd's Pie, with a variety of rolls, lemon meringue pie, cookies and various pastries for dessert. To quench thirst was coffee and iced tea.

The ice machine worked well all day, and the shower, washers and dryers were busy. A number of clothing, toiletry and pantry items were issued. We should point out that we allow each guest to take 3 cans of food because we are not open at supper time or weekends, at present.

We were able to bring in many needed items today thanks to many wonderful people. Our load included: **82 cans of food, 36 Five-minute meals, a case of hotel shampoo, 3 blankets, more than a dozen new T-shirts, more than a dozen pairs of new socks, and more than a dozen nice towels.**

We would like to give a special thanks to folks who gave us extraordinary help by donating much: **Ray and Bonnie Strait, Clifford and Lilia Harbaugh, Jerry and Gail Bishop** (all of Lake Gibson United Methodist Church), and Julio and Elba Santana (of Bread of Life Christian Mission). We also are grateful to all who donate anonymously and those who help in any way. We could not do this without those of you who are behind us with gifts and prayers! AND thank you, Brent, for having the sugar and cups there first thing!

WHAT IS COMING UP: The Hispanic CAF Church (House of Love and Faith) will open the Hope Center this Saturday, Nov 17th.

THANKSGIVING DAY is a Thursday and Jan and Jim are opening and we (Deb and Rick) are helping them to serve Thanksgiving for the homeless on Nov 22nd.

It was a terrific day of meeting needs for those less fortunate at Hope House today.

God's Richest Blessings to You All,

Debbie and Rick McLellan

#### **Typical Needs at Hope House**

These needs were identified in the Oct 30th report: We especially need **pop-top** cans (Chef Boy R Dee, etc.) which our guests rely on because we are closed at suppertime. They also love small jars or containers of peanut butter.

We are getting some cooler nights and requests are coming for blankets, the smaller ones are great in tents.

[Unlike the guests who use our Food Pantry, many of the Hope House guests live in tents with no way to store food once cans are opened. Canned items for them need to be single-use, and pop-tops eliminate the need for a can opener. Ed.]

## Celebrations

[Please let the editor know if there are errors in these lists so we can correct the data base. We print both members' and constituents' celebrations.]



### Birthdays in December

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
12/2	Wayne Davis
12/3	Sue Shelton
12/5	Kristopher Welch
12/9	Jan Booker
12/11	Henry Zona
12/13	Bob Gilmore
12/13	Lucio Hernandez
12/14	Linda Smucker
12/15	Marian Schroeder
12/16	Anna Adkins
12/17	Paul Havel
12/17	Beverly Hines
12/18	Lois Havel
12/19	Don Heishman
12/20	Kristie Summers
12/22	Ginger Fredrikson
12/26	Margaret Kneeland
12/26	Rick Mueller
12/26	Richard Thomas
12/27	Theodore Butterfield
12/27	Kayla Freeman
12/27	Kevin Patterson
12/28	Glenda Hess
12/28	Phyllis Kitchens
12/29	Roy Bodemer
12/29	Virginia Collins
12/29	Bob Gunter
12/29	Judy Van Zile

### Birthdays in December, Continued

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
12/30	Dorothy Gabor
12/30	Justin Oliva
12/30	Matthew Rogers
12/31	Marion Cope



### Anniversaries in December

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
12/10	Phyllis and Dwight Kitchens
12/11	Bonnie and Will Cochran
12/12	Sue and Bob Holmes
12/15	Jean and Wayne Wesley
12/19	Jean and Ray Welch
12/21	Maria and Rich Thomas
12/22	Tammie and Steve Schertzer

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church shares and supports the love of Jesus Christ.

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church  
424 West Daughtery Road  
Lakeland, FL 33809

Web Page: [www.lakegibsonumc.com](http://www.lakegibsonumc.com)

Office Hours: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday thru Friday

### Contact Information

Steve Polk, Pastor	Phone:	863-858-5431
	FAX:	863-853-1625
	E-mail:	<a href="mailto:pastor@lakegibsonumc.com">pastor@lakegibsonumc.com</a>

### Support Staff

Marina Hernandez	Administrative Secretary 863-858-5431 <a href="mailto:office@lakegibsonumc.com">office@lakegibsonumc.com</a>
Sue Heishman	Bookkeeper
Debbie Moore	Children's Director
Glenda Grant Hess	Director of Music/Organist
James Beck, Kristie Summers	Audio/Visual Support
Debbie Moore	Custodian

### A Little Bit of Heaven Child Enrichment Center

Latisha Cook	Director
Office	863-858-8400
E-mail	<a href="mailto:alboh@lakegibsonumc.com">alboh@lakegibsonumc.com</a>

*The Good News* is a monthly church newsletter that supports Lake Gibson UMC's vision *to be a joyful church family that is crucial to our community*. We welcome your suggestions, comments and articles. Please contact the editor at 863-984-4564 (home) or 410-790-2662 (cell), or by e-mail her at [phylis\\_kitchens@hotmail.com](mailto:phylis_kitchens@hotmail.com).