



THE GOOD NEWS

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church

To be a joyful church family that is crucial to our community



From the Pastor's Desk

We begin a new year and a new decade this month, and I dare say most of us are ready for something new. We are tired of the rhetoric and politics that seem to be involved in everything. We want people and officials to work together for the common good of our society and world. We want to see our churches promoting the love of Jesus and the Gospel of peace. Yet 2020 is more than likely to be a year of turmoil and division as we hold a presidential election in the U.S., and within the United Methodist Church we hold a General Conference. Both the country and the church are deeply divided and in turmoil.

I want to point us to the Word of God. God says in Isaiah 43: ⁹ **I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?**

New things occur when old things disappear or become cumbersome or difficult to use. It is not easy for some of us to adapt to new things. Remember the first cell (bag) phones or computers? Few people wanted one, yet now we all have phones that are smarter than the first computers. God is doing something new; that does not mean He changes His word. Church is changing, numbers are declining in worship service attendance, but many people today watch online or live-stream church.

Many worship venues are now not in a church building, but are held in store fronts, homes, work places, hotels and even bars. Is God doing something new by taking His word into the streets where people need to hear and feel His presence? (Or is this really Pentecost occurring in a new setting?) Many of us fear the New Year and what it holds, but our trust is in the God of all ages and not our government or mankind or an organization.

I point out to the church that we are *in* this world but not *of* it, and that our hope is found in the resurrected Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul, who also lived in perilous times, told his protégée this: 2 Timothy 1:7 (NRSV) ⁷ **for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.**

We were reminded at Christmas that our God is Emmanuel, a God that is with us always. In this new decade let us as believers of Christ allow God's Holy Spirit to fill us in the power of God's love, and then may we take that love into the world where it is desperately needed, and watch the miraculous transformation God brings about.

Pastor Steve

Special Events for January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	01 Happy New Year! (Office Closed)	02	03	04 Fay Wright and Bob Herrick Wedding; 11:30 am, Sanctuary
05 Communion Sunday (2 services resume)	06 UMW Heart to Heart mtg, 10:30 am, FLC; Trustees mtg, 2 pm, office; Polk County School Resumes	07 Olive Tree Gathering resumes (Genesis), 10 am, off campus	08 UMW Ruth Circle of Love mtg, 11 am, FLC; Pastor's Bible Study (Romans) resumes, 10 am and 7 pm, FLC	09 ALBOH Board mtg, FLC, 4:30 pm; Cub Scout Committee mtg, 7 pm, FLC	10 M&Ms Mtg, 1 pm, FLC (everyone invited)	11 United Methodist Men breakfast mtg, 9 am, FLC; Emmaus mtg, 3 pm, FLC (members only)
12 HARVEST SUNDAY (food pantry donations)	13 Staff, Pastor, Parish committee mtg, 1:30 pm, FLC; UMW Evening Circle , 6:30 pm, off campus	14	15	16	17	18 Learn a New Card Game , M&Ms, 1-4 pm, FLC
19 HUMAN RELATIONS DAY (Special Sunday with Collection)	20 <i>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</i> ; A Matter of Balance Class starts (1/8), 1:30 pm, FLC (2 per week, over 4 weeks); Church Council & Finance Com joint mtg, 7 pm, FLC	21	22 Articles due for Feb Newsletter	23 Constitution Alive class starts (1/10), 7 pm, FLC	24 A Matter of Balance (2/8), 1:30 pm, FLC	25
26	27 UMW Leadership Team mtg, 11 am, FLC; A Matter of Balance (3/8), 1:30 pm, FLC; Worship Committee meeting, 7 pm, Sanctuary	28	29	30 Constitution Alive class (2/10), 7 pm, FLC	31 A Matter of Balance (4/8), 1:30 pm, FLC	01

January Weekly Recurring Events

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 Upstairs
Contemporary Worship Service	10:30 am	Sanctuary
Kidtricity Children's Ministry (Nursery Available)	10:30 - 11:45 am	Sanctuary & FLC

Monday

Bible Study	2:00 pm	Lakeside Hills*
Boy Scout Troop 711	7:00 pm	FLC

Tuesday

Olive Tree Gathering	10:00 am	Off-Campus
Deadline for Sunday Bulletin	noon	Office
Cub Scout Pack 711	7:00 pm	FLC

Wednesday

ALBOH Chapel	9:20 am	Sanctuary
Bible Study with Pastor	10:00 am	FLC
Choir Rehearsal	6:30 pm	Sanctuary
Bible Study with Pastor	7:00 pm	FLC

Thursday

Food Pantry	9:30 - 11:30 am	Office
Praise Team Rehearsal	6:30 pm	Sanctuary
Constitution Alive Class**	7:00 pm	FLC

**Weekly starting Jan 23rd

After-school care by ALBOH is offered Mon - Fri, 2 to 6 pm, in the FLC

*Lakeside Hills Bible Study (the Book of Acts) is at the Clubhouse, 520 Forest Lake Drive, Lakeland 33809.

Cantata Photos from Jay Ellis



At start of Dec 15th performance (above).



Choir director Glenda Hess leading rehearsal (right).



(Left) Bill Anderson and Bob Willome performed solos on Dec 15th

(Below) Bob Willome led the congregation in *Joy to the World and Go Tell It on the Mountain*. **We've never sounded better!**



Dorothy Burns and Brenda Hess-Werner (above, left) sang a duet. [Photo by P. Kitchens]



Marina's Corner

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one."

Brad Paisley

Update of Key Holders

Every January people who have keys to any of the church structures must bring their keys into the office to update their key forms.

2019 Food Pantry Report

Lake Gibson UMC blessed the needy this year with **839 bags of groceries and 871 bags of Publix baked goods**. For comparison, in 2018 we gave out 709 bags of groceries and 802 bags of baked goods.

For *groceries* the least demand was experienced in June and July (both 49 bags), while the high, 101 bags, was in August, driven by Hurricane Dorian. Our food pantry was open 50 of the 52 weeks of 2019 (closed July 4th and Thanksgiving). The average number of groceries given out was just under 17 bags per week.

For *Publix baked goods*, the low demand was in July (50) and the high in December (105). The average given out was slightly over 17 bags per week.

The Food Pantry staff currently consists of Marina Hernandez (records the tally, identifies shortfalls, packs grocery bags, and provides overall advice and management) and volunteers Ann and Dan Johnson and Ruth Zona. Ruth and Phyllis Kitchens serve our needy on the first Thursday of the month, while Ann and Dan serve the 2nd, 4th and 5th Thursdays. On the 3rd Thursday, Nancy Smith and Sharon Coddington serve.

Ann and Dan buy the dry goods when donations fall short, while Yvonne and Todd Bower continue to buy the meat. Donations of money by individuals and church organizations like the UMW and its circles, as well as funds identified in the general budget, keep the pantry going. Continued . . .

2019 Food Pantry Report, Continued

Some individuals are **on call** to serve on Thursdays when a regular food pantry volunteer can't be there. If anyone else would like to volunteer as a substitute worker, please call Marina Hernandez at 863-858-5431.

Food pantry hours are between 9:30 and 11:30 am on Thursdays. Other days and times can be honored in the event of emergencies with the Pastor's approval.

Phyllis Kitchens
(with input from Marina Hernandez and Ann Johnson)

Thanks to Our Incredible Bell Ringers!

This was our second year of volunteering for the Salvation Army as bell ringers, and what a year it was! People were incredibly generous as they passed by the red kettle. Even if they didn't have anything to put in the kettle, most gave us a smile or a kind word. Bell ringers from other churches or civic organizations stopped to chat about how their campaigns were going, and to cheer us on. The Publix employees couldn't have been nicer. Thanks to the manager who lent us a power cord that first day and showed us how to route it safely to our music system.

According to the Salvation Army's database, this year Lake Gibson UMC provided **72 hours of ringing and brought in \$4,296.92** at the Lake Gibson Publix on US 98N. (Last year we rang 72 hours at Plantation Square Publix and raised about \$2,100.)

Bell ringing is a wonderful way to share Christ's love in our local neighborhood! This "work" brings joy to the volunteers and to passers-by. What a delight it is to be able to smile and say "Merry Christmas" to people! We'll be doing this again in December 2020 -- please consider joining our cadre of happy ringers!

Continued . . .

Thanks to Our Incredible Ringers!

Barbara Allen-Coil
Charlie Alvarez
Linda Alvarez
Sue Atchley
Hannah Berry
Jan Booker (with Lyla and Sadie)
Sharon Coddington
Nancy Coggin
Howard Coggin
Grace Foster
Carmen Garcia
Ellen Haltiwanger
Clarence Hamilton
Cliff Harbaugh
Lilia Harbaugh
Jan Henrikson and Jazzy
Maria Hernandez
Dwight Kitchens
Phyllis Kitchens
Cyndi Kuhlman
Shirley Lux
Lynn Meske
Debbie Moore
Steve Polk
Sharon Ruth
Shirley Schmidt
Sharon Shepherd
Maria Thomas
Rich Thomas
Jack Vanderheyden
Laurel Vanderheyden
John Warren
John Warren, Jr.
Ruth Zona

Christmas Activities

The M&Ms Enjoy the *Sights and Sounds of Christmas*

Our Senior Activities Group, The M&Ms, set up a trip to First UMC Lakeland on Sunday, December 8th, to enjoy their wonderful Christmas concert. In addition to those who rode the church van, many others carpooled with friends and neighbors.



(Dwight Kitchens drove the van and took the photo.)

Our Music Department's Christmas Cantata, *One Small Child*

On Sunday, December 15th (and again on Christmas Eve) the Lake Gibson Music Department presented the stirring and inspirational concert, *One Small Child*.

The sanctuary was beautifully decorated with poinsettias, ropes of greens and ornaments. Dottie and Jim Huven and their grandson decorated the front of the stage to mirror the illustration on cover of the cantata program.

In addition to the singers listed in the December 15th program, due to travel and/or illness, a few singers were called on with short notice to perform on Christmas Eve. They didn't miss a beat and the program was beautiful. Special thanks to Jay Ellis who substituted as a tenor without having actually rehearsed with the group. Dave Hess also substituted for Bill Anderson in a solo.

Thanks to the 16 families or individuals who purchased the poinsettias that decorated the sanctuary. Thanks also to the people who set them out and who removed them at the end of our Christmas celebrations.

Continued . . .

**Our Music Department's Christmas
Cantata, *One Small Child*
Created and Arranged by Tom Fettke**

Soprano

Beverly Ellis
Beverly Hines
Cyndi Kuhlman
Rochelle McBride
Brenda Hess-Werner
Fay Wright

Alto

Dorothy Burns
Lynda Gibbs
Dottie Huven

Tenor

David B. Hess
Dwight Kitchens (12/15)
Jay Ellis (12/24)

Bass

Bill Anderson (12/15)
Bob Herrick
Eric Hines
Pastor Steve Polk
Bob Siegel
Bob Willome

Narrator

Barbara Allen-Coil

Director

Glenda Grant Hess

Audio

Lexie Otte
Kristie Summers

Stage Equipment Assistance

Let Go Praise Team

Stage Decorators: Jim and Dottie Huven and
Grandson

A Few of Our Bell Ringers



Cyndi Kuhlman (above).



Grace Foster (left)
[Hannah Berry as-
sisted, but our Child
Protection Policy
prevents showing
her photo]

Phyllis Kitchens
(below) on a VERY
cold day!



December Activities, Continued

Friendship Sunday School Class Christmas Party



Mike Stafford, the intrepid leader



Pictures provided by Sarah Schiemann



December Activities, Continued

UMW Heart to Heart Circle Fabulous Finger Food Fellowship

Just a few of the members at Ruth Zona's home.



UMW Ruth Circle of Love Christmas Lunch



Praise Team Rocks the House On December 29th



Servant Leaders for 2020 (Repeated from the Dec 2019 issue)

The Charge Conference approved the slate of people who will lead or serve on the committees that help Pastor Steve guide this church. Every year in October the pastor has to fill vacancies on these committees. *If you feel a calling to serve in any of these positions in 2021, please talk to the Pastor.*

Church Council: Chair, Dwight Kitchens; Pastor Steve Polk, Dick McPherson (Finance), Tom Burns (Board of Trustees), Yvonne Bower (Treasurer), Sandy Stanfield (Staff, Pastor, Parish Relations), Mike Stafford (Lay Member to Annual Conference); Michael Moake (United Methodist Men), Carol Davis (United Methodist Women), Glenda Grant Hess (Worship), Linda Alvarez (Missions), Cindy Heishman (Financial Secretary), and Debbie Moore (Children's Ministry) and Sarah Schiemann (ALBOH)

Staff, Pastor, Parish Relations Committee: Chair, Sandy Stanfield; Jean Wesley, Jeff Acor, Ken Fuqua, David McPherson, Mike Booker and Phyllis Kitchens. (Pastor has voice but no vote.)

Finance Committee: Chair, Dick McPherson; Pastor Steve Polk, Sue Heishman, Dwight Kitchens, Sandy Stanfield, Tom Burns, Yvonne Bower, Cindy Heishman, John Bernat, Mike Stafford, Sarah Schiemann, Wayne Wesley, Karen Acor and Justin Oliva

Board of Trustees: Tom Burns, Todd Bower, Dale Gower, John Bernat, Don Smitz, and Bob Siegel (Chair to be elected at January meeting)

Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development: Chair, Pastor Steve Polk; Vice Chair, John Bernat; Pat Moon, Betty Fischer, Sarah Schiemann, Kathy Rumohr and Jan Booker

Permanent Endowment Committee: Chair, Finance Committee Rep; Pastor Steve Polk (voice but no vote), Trustee Rep, Patsy Lennon, Sharon Ruth, Jean Wesley, Kathy Rumohr, Leon Rumohr

Lay Leader: John Bernat

Continued . . .

Servant Leaders, Continued

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Mike Stafford

United Methodist Men President: Michael Moake

United Methodist Women President: Carol Davis

Over - 55 Ministry: Carol Hanna

Youth Coordinator: Jeff Acor

Missions Coordinator: Linda Alvarez

Worship Committee: Chair, Glenda Grant Hess

Recording Secretary to Church Conference: Maria Hernandez

Membership Secretary: Maria Hernandez

Children's Home Representatives: Dwight and Phyllis Kitchens

The M&Ms Senior Activities Group

Our next committee meeting is **Friday, January 10th at 1:00 pm in the FLC**. The agenda will be making our plans for events in January and February. If you are already on this committee and unable to attend, please notify Carol Hanna at 608-335-3421. This meeting is **open to anyone 55 and up**.

Our mission is to create a fun, active lifestyle within our congregation so we might come to know each other better socially.

We hope you can join us for "**Old Dogs/New Tricks**" on **Saturday, January 18th, at 1:00 pm in the FLC**. We will have a variety of card and board games, and people who want to **teach you how to play them**. Please bring a snack to share and your drink.

Carol Hanna
carolandjohn49@gmail.com

Children's Ministry

In Sunday school we made an advent wreath craft adding candles each week following the pattern of the church. We have a new game for Kidtricity called "Bible Blurt". We have had lots of fun in December and expect an exciting New Year.

We truly appreciate all the generous gifts given for our room and for the treasure box. We have not had time to practice our new song, so in February we will be singing "*Jesus, I'm In*". The first Sunday of January we will be singing one of our former songs.

A very big thank you to **Michael Moake** for all the work done to keep us in the "light". I am sure he no longer feels retired when he sees the need for so many more lights to be converted to LED. We are blessed to have Michael do this valuable work for us!

It is truly a joy to **thank** everyone for the beautiful cards and the special Christmas gifts. It is so wonderful to serve God with people who love Him.

Debbie Moore, Children's Ministry

Lay Leader's Letter

Happy Election New Year! As we look forward to 2020 and the chaos of another election year, we would be wise to know where we as Christians stand on the issues as we exercise our privilege and duty to VOTE.

At issue is our understanding of our U.S. Constitution since we hear it talked about and will hear even more as the year progresses. We have available to us a **short 10-week course on the basics of our Constitution** presented by David Barton's ministry.

The course, called "**Constitution Alive,**" is on a DVD set recorded in Independence Hall by Rick Green, a member of the WallBuilders Ministry. There is a class workbook that goes with the course and can be ordered for a donation of \$15.

Continued . . .

Lay Leader's Letter, Cont'd

If you are interested in taking the class that is scheduled to **begin on Thursday, January 23rd, at 7:00 pm** in the Family Life Center, please call the office (863-858-5431) to reserve a place for this very interesting and informative class.

John Bernat, Lay Leader

Mission Moments

The Sox Box Report



Thanks to all who put sox in the Sox Box! We hung up about 200 pairs of sox this year. There were a few pairs left which will be given to Hope House and other needy individuals.

Your support is always awesome!

Linda Alvarez, Missions Coordinator

United Methodist Men

We will hold our first **breakfast meeting** of 2020 on **Saturday, January 11th, at 9:00 am** in the FLC. Every man who attends LGUMC is invited to attend. Come help us plan our projects and activities for the coming year.

Michael Moake, President
863-816-3194

Thank You from the Music Department

I am deeply grateful for all the cards and generous gifts from the Lake Gibson UMC family and the Music Department friends this Christmas.

Thank you for allowing me the PRIVILEGE of working for God through worship in this place. I pray for God's blessings as we walk through His open doors to love and serve in 2020.

Glenda Grant Hess, Music Director

Happy New Year from the Prayer Ministry

Welcome, Prayer Warriors, to a New Year of praying for others as Christians in faith and service to our God.



"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. As you make your requests, plead for God's mercy upon them, and give thanks." 1 Timothy 2:1 (NKJV)

We give thanks to our prayer warriors for being dedicated to God's calling to "Pray for one another". We have been blessed the past year with the addition of new prayer warriors. We currently have over 30 email prayer warriors. Receiving prayer needs through email during the week is a blessing to those who need extra prayers.

Please mark the box on the connection card in the bulletin: "Becoming a Prayer Warrior" or call the church office if you would like to become one of our prayer warriors.

The Prayer Journal is a great tool to enable everyone in the congregation to pray during the week for those in need. Please take the Bulletin and Prayer Journal home with you and pray daily over each section's needs.

We thank God for calling us to be people of prayer.

God Bless our prayer mission and Happy New Year to everyone,

Prayer Ministry

Thankfulness at Christmas

This is a time to give thanks to all our LG prayer warriors. You have blessed so many during the year by all your prayers for those in need. During the spirit of this Holy Season may you be truly blessed also.

We are Christians connected in love and faith through prayer. God's blessings always,

Fran

Contact Information

Pastor Steve Polk, 863-858-5431; fax 863-853-1625; pastor@lakegibsonumc.com

Marina Hernandez, Admin Secretary, 863-858-5431, office@lakegibsonumc.com

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

Sue Heishman, Bookkeeper

Debbie Moore, Children's Director and Custodian

Glenda Grant Hess, Music Director

Latisha Cook, Director of A Little Bit of Heaven Child Enrichment Center, 863-858-8400.

Debbie Moore, Laine Grimes, Kristie Summers and James Beck, Audio/Visual Team

A Matter of Balance (MoB) Class Starts This Month

Lynn Meske has arranged for another MoB class at LGUMC. This will be held twice a week, on **Mondays and Fridays, starting January 20th, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm in the FLC.**

The first three sessions will be conducted in the FLC classrooms. You will be asked to fill out a health questionnaire and may be instructed to obtain medical clearance from your physician before participating in the class.

If you have any questions, or would like to put your name on a waiting list for a future class, and have not already done so (by the yellow cards that were passed out in 2019), please call Lynn Meske, 863-858-3599 (home) or 906-360-8231 (cell). Her email is lynn.meske@gmail.com.

Phyllis Kitchens

United Methodist Women

Leadership Team Meeting January 27, 11:00 am

At the last UMW Leadership Team meeting on December 16th, the major business was to develop a proposed list of recipients for our mission donations and the amounts each is recommended to receive. We decided to distribute \$7,050 of the 2019 rummage sales receipts. (In 2018 we donated \$6,350.)

In December each circle was asked to review the proposed distribution and to make any recommendations they might have about charities and/or amounts.

Starting this year we will require individuals requesting money of the UMW to submit a written request explaining how the money is planned to be used, and a report of the actual expenditures.

Circle leaders updated their membership lists and contact information for the 2020 Year Book. Preparation of the new year book is in progress, but we cannot give a date for its completion due to the struggle to learn new software and find a printer for this special sized booklet.

Circle News

Heart to Heart will meet on **Monday, January 6th at 10:30 am** in the FLC. Please bring your lunch and drink; Phyllis Kitchens is bringing the dessert. If you are planning to come, please call Ruth Zona at 863-859-5967.

Ruth Circle of Love will meet on **Wednesday, January 8th at 11:00 am** in the FLC. We are continuing to study *Women of the Bible*, and after the meeting we will adjourn to a local restaurant for lunch. Please call Pat Moon, 863-858-6883, if you plan to attend.

Evening Circle will meet on **Monday, January 13th, at 6:30 pm** at Debbie Moore's home, 400 Vineyard Dr, Lakeland. We will share a light meal (**please bring finger foods and/or desserts**) and then start our new
Continued . . .

United Methodist Women Continued

Evening Circle, Continued

study, *The Jesus Challenge* by Tony Evans. Lynda Gibbs will lead this study. If you are interested in attending, please call Debbie Moore, 863-614-7193, to arrange for a copy of the study guide (or share one at this first session).

Unit Meeting, February 10th, 10:30 am in the FLC

Even if you're not currently a member of a circle, **please join us** for the first of 3 unit meetings in 2020. All ladies (and gentlemen) are invited to attend and stay for lunch.

The guest speaker has not been confirmed at this time, but will likely be a representative of a local charity which we have supported or are considering supporting in the future.

Lunch will be casseroles, salads and desserts provided by members of the daytime circles.



JoAn Beebe visits with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at the Arbor Hills Christmas party.

(Photo provided by JoAn)

December at Hope Center

[The following paragraphs were extracted from Debbie McLellan's Tuesday reports which she writes to inform other volunteers and supporters of what she and Rick did, problems with the equipment, shortfalls in supplies, etc. This information is presented here to inform our congregation of the types of goods and services needed, as well as the volunteer activities people in LGUMC and others provide. We hope you will be inspired to donate to and/or volunteer at Hope Center.]

December 3rd, 2019

At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from 2 Corinthians 5, THE DOOR OF RECONCILIATION. Then Debbie and Rick served about 15 guests sloppy joes, green beans, individual bags of Lays potato chips and cupcakes for dessert. Egg salad sandwiches in individual bags were available for take-out. We also sent out about ten to-go plates. To quench thirst was coffee, milk, orange juice and iced tea.

The ice machine worked well and the shower was busy all day, as were the washers and dryers. We gave out about 12 pair of new socks, razors, deodorants, lip balms and toiletry items, and some special requests, including 4 camping lanterns, batteries and a back pack. Each guest received 2 easy-open pop-top cans and other items for supper.

We brought John Milliken with us, who is from Belfast, Northern Ireland and is involved in a similar ministry there. He enjoyed talking with our guests today. We also had a visit from Jim Aldrich from Christ the King Episcopal Church who brought cookies, cake and some clothing donations. We also had a number of other clothing donations. Thank you to all our Christian friends who enable us to minister to guests in need.

December 10th

Rick Nelson, Marshall and Grover opened for Breakfast today, offering our guests scrambled eggs, sausage links, pancakes and a variety of cereal with milk, and donuts and pastries. The drink options were fresh hot coffee, orange juice and cold milk.

It was a very hot day for December. The ice machine worked well. The shower was busy all day, as were the washers and dryers. Today we brought some men's and women's clothes and socks. Most were needed sizes and went to guests immediately. We also brought 49 pop-top canned foods, including spaghetti and meatballs, ravioli, etc. We gave out a number of batteries for camping lanterns and lights, mostly AA and AAA. Each guest received 2 easy-open pop-top cans and other items for supper and many health and toiletry items.

We also had 2 men who requested shoes; Billie got his shoes today and we brought Doug a pair of steel-toe boots for his birthday, required on the new job he recently obtained. His job was an answer to prayer and seems to be working out well, Praise the Lord.

There was an attitude of gratitude today, and we really feel that Jesus is using the Hope House to make a difference in lives.

Laura came in and brought some sad news. Renee Palmer, one of the Wednesday volunteers, passed away at Lakeland Regional Medical Center today. Please pray that God comforts her family and those close to Renee. I think there is no doubt that Renee is pain free and happy in the arms of Jesus tonight.

Continued . . .

December at Hope Center, Continued

December 17th

At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from John chapter 1, THE VIEW FROM WHERE YOU ARE! Then Dick McPherson, our Chief Chef for today, with Rick and Debbie McLellan, served our guests pulled pork, mac n cheese and steamed broccoli. To quench thirst was fruit punch, hot coffee and milk. We had served 24 guests and prepared a dozen take-out plates by the end of the day.

We want to say a special thanks to Dick McPherson and Gary and Fran Mudge for their help and many generous members of Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. We are so grateful.

Thanks also to the employees of Lakeland Electric for their kindhearted gift and to a lady from New Life Assembly of God for the items she dropped off.

December 24th

At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from Matthew 2, THE GREATEST MYSTERY. Then Debbie and Rick served 23 guests baked ravioli, fresh garden salad with sliced tomatoes and garlic bread. We also gave out egg salad sandwiches and sent out about ten to-go plates. To quench thirst we served coffee, milk, bottled water and iced tea.

We had some wonderful helpers today, Geraldine, who is so relentless in doing so many things well, Fran who gave great haircuts to a number of the men, Carol Hanna, from our church, who brought Christmas cheer and encouragement to our guests.

Today we brought some men's and women's clothes including 5 hoodies, 2 backpacks, a new pair of shoes for Rob, and a dozen winter hats crocheted by our friend Myrtle Osteen. We gave out a dozen new blankets, a dozen new camping lanterns, and each guest received a men's or women's ditty gift bag of toiletries, 2 pairs of socks and personal care items. Each guest also received 2 easy-open pop-top cans and other items for supper.

December 31st

The ice machine was working well. The shower, washers and dryers were very busy. We gave out clothing items, socks, gloves, razors, toothbrushes and many toiletry items. The Lord provided a new pair of shoes for Daniel, which we gave him today. We had some hot soup in to-go cups with lids and a whole turkey breast donated by a lady who lives near the Hope Center. We also had some items dropped off by Jim Aldrich and friends from Christ the King Episcopal Church.

We were able to give out camping lanterns and radio batteries thanks to the generous donation by Harry Card from Lake Gibson Church of the Nazarene. The employees of Lakeland Electric made a donation to help us restock the pantry with canned goods. All of our guests also received two canned goods and other small supper items.

We had a good day with a congenial atmosphere at Hope Center today. **We have been so blessed in 2019 by your help and prayers!**

God's Richest Blessings to You All for 2020,

Debbie and Rick McLellan
debbienrickhope@gmail.com
863-327-2893

Hidden Realities

Our costs for both Property and Liability Insurance (P&LI) are increasing significantly during FY 2020. Insurance firms have taken a beating with hurricanes and tornados roaring across Florida in the past few years.

The **Property Insurance** portion of our coverage is anticipated to increase by approximately 30% for FY 2020. Our **General Liability Insurance** covers such items as employee theft, employment practice claims, trip-and-fall accidents, sexual misconduct claims and ever-increasing jury awards. The industry overall has seen huge claims which must be covered by premiums.

At Lake Gibson UMC, we anticipate premium increases of approximately **40% for FY 2020**. Last year, we budgeted \$17,000 for P&LI. We might see an **increase of \$6,800 this year on insurance costs alone**.

Why does this matter? Well, unlike many European countries, there is no state-sponsored religion and no religious tax in the United States. Worshipers must cover the costs of keeping their doors open. Yes, costs increase each year, possibly disproportionately to income increases.

There are secular bills which our church must pay in order to perform our mission. If you have not found it in your heart to increase your contributions to God's work each year, something is wrong. Our priorities should insure that our church remains a viable beacon of hope to our community.

Dwight Kitchens
Church Council President



Birthdays in January

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
1/1	Jamie Collins
1/1	Joyce Thompson
1/2	Joe Moon
1/4	Rochelle McBride
1/7	Kathy Rumohr
1/8	Stella Eismann
1/11	Lexie Otte
1/12	Todd Bower
1/16	Ramona Kendall
1/20	Bob Bleam
1/20	Kristie Summers Otte
1/20	Donna Pardis
1/20	Abba Schmidt
1/20	Issac Wiley
1/21	Shirley Lux
1/24	Anthony Wilde
1/26	Barbara Allen-Coil
1/27	Linda Alvarez
1/27	Ruth Zona
1/30	Jackie Webb



Anniversaries in January None