



THE GOOD NEWS

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church

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



May the grace and peace of God be with you in these chaotic days. WOW!! How our world has changed in just a few short days. If you remember last month's article, I was reflecting on the closure of the church I served before coming to Lake Gibson and how sad it was, when God spoke to me about the church not being a building but a group of people. Today we are not able to meet together for church because of the coronavirus, but the message from last month is reinforced. The church is a people, not a building or a specific site.

While we cannot gather we are still the church with the mission of sharing God's love with others. We can share God's love by checking up on family and friends, by being respectful and taking the proper protection steps to lessen the impact of this virus on ourselves and others, by writing personal notes to those who mean so much to us and many other ways. This time also gives us more opportunity for personal devotion, study of the Word, prayer and reflection. Perhaps this also reminds us that as a church we are to be involved in the community. The church is only the church as we interact with others and spread the good news of God's love to the world.

I pray that when this is all over and we can meet again we will find a new appreciation for church worship. Perhaps this disruption will remind us that the time, dress, style, music and other external trappings of the service are not nearly as important as the corporate fellowship and worship of our Lord Jesus. Prayerfully, there will be a new energy, a more loving spirit and a renewed devotion to the awesome and loving God we serve. In the light of today's situation the message of the empty tomb and resurrection brings comfort and hope in the midst of despair. The Easter message is a much needed truth this year.

I wonder if God is using this virus as a test to see if His church will act like a caring and loving community in the midst of all of this craziness, and if we have the faith to trust Him and act accordingly.

Check out our web site, lakegibsonumc.com and our Facebook page under Lake Gibson United Methodist Church for updated information. I encourage you to read Psalm 91 where you will find this message: God is our refuge and fortress in whom we trust.

THE TOMB IS EMPTY -- HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!!!!

Pastor Steve

April Calendar

As of March 31st, our preschool, **A Little Bit of Heaven Child Enrichment Center is OPEN**. Please inform anyone you know who might be interested.

All church activities scheduled for April have been cancelled due to the need to maintain social distance between people and to minimize potential exposure to the novel coronavirus. The church office will remain open as scheduled, Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, as long as health permits.

The food pantry is also operating on Thursdays, from 9:30 am to 11:30 pm, as long as food donations hold out and volunteers are available to serve. We are setting up tables outside the church office for the groceries and bread to minimize the number of people who enter the office.

Thank you to the people who have come into the sanctuary to enable us to live stream our Sunday service! Without their participation, we would be limited to audio recordings of the sermons.

Off-campus worship activities have also been suspended for April: Monday, 2:00 pm, Bible study at Lakeland Hills and Tuesday, 10:00 am Olive Tree Gathering at Fox Lake Estates.

All in-person committee meetings are on hold; use of a free video conferencing program may be considered, or telephone conferencing.

The UMC General Conference scheduled for May 5 - 15 has been cancelled.

April Rummage Sale: As I'm sure you are already aware, the spring rummage sale has been officially cancelled. Donations are discouraged at this time; HOWEVER, we have several people who were saving items and waiting until closer to April's date to make arrangements for delivery or pick up. We would like to accommodate them since we still have some room in our shed. Please call Lynn Meske at 863-858-3589, and leave a message if she's away from the phone.

Special Sunday Donations

March 22nd was UMCOR Sunday. The money donated supports the administrative expenses of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, so that 100% of moneys donated to a specific relief effort goes to that effort. Examples of recent UMCOR projects include tornadoes in Tennessee, earthquakes in Puerto Rico, Taal Volcano eruption in the Philippines and Wildfires in Australia.

March 29th was a 5th Sunday, normally with a collection for the Florida United Methodist Children's Home (**FUMCH**). Some people also donate to our Children's Ministry on 5th Sundays.

April 5th is scheduled for a collection for our sister church in Cuba, Quesada (see article).

April 26th is **Native American Ministries Sunday**; monies donated are used to support Native American ministerial students.

By not being together in church, these four vital ministries may not receive the donations they need to perform their missions. Please consider sending in designated donations to the church by mail or electronically (please see the article on page 3 for instructions).

How COVID-19 Affects LGUMC

You've noticed that we have not held in-person church services since the 15th of March. Our worship experience has been impacted in numerous ways. As a community of Christians, worshiping together is fundamental to growing in the faith.

How do we overcome this problem? Well, a number of our members have been working diligently to find a means to offer online services which you can attend at home. Numerous problems have been addressed and many resolved.

On March 22nd we offered our first video recorded message. It was placed on our Facebook page (Lake Gibson United Methodist Church) and linked to our website www.LakeGibsonUMC.com as well.

We offered our service as a live stream event on March 29th. This meant that we could provide Pastor Steve's sermon and be able to respond to concerns our congregants provided online thru Facebook comments. Facebook logged 262 addresses watching this service.

We've been diligently working to resolve legal issues with putting our worship service online. In addition to the licenses required to offer copyrighted music in the sanctuary, an additional streaming license is required to permit certain music and liturgy to be shown electronically outside the sanctuary.

As you may imagine, we don't own the best equipment for Live Streaming our services. We're putting together a list of what might be required to make this a permanent means of permitting our shut-ins, Snow Birds and others to join us in worship each Sunday.

Even with an online worship experience, many participants have lost an opportunity to thank God by making an offering. We ask that you continue to support our church and its missions financially as we also experience these troubled times.

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How COVID-19 Affects LGUMC Continued

A number of means have been employed to make it easier to financially support our mission, both during the closure of our sanctuary and after we return:

1. As always, you may use our "Automated Contributions" button (selection) which is in the red colored heading of our webpage. Either print and complete the form by hand, or type in the form using the free [Adobe Acrobat DC Reader](#) software, and then print it. Deliver the completed form by hand, mail, or email to the church office for processing.
2. Alternatively, you can use the "One Time Contributions" selection in the red colored heading of our webpage. This permits you to make contributions to both the general budget and/or to most of the designated fund accounts.
3. We additionally have **GivePlus** apps for both the Apple iOS and Android's OS (operating system) which permit offerings to both the general budget and (currently) three other designated funds. See the website for both links and instructions.
4. We now have **GivePlus-Text** which permits you to use the Text Messaging application on your phone to quickly make contributions. After performing a one-time setup, you can use this feature at any time to give to your church. See our website for links and instructions.

[Lynn Meske reported that she texted her weekly donation to the church on March 29th and found it was really easy to set up and do!]

We are continually working to enhance your worship experience. We hope that we will all be worshipping together again soon in our sanctuary at LGUMC.

Dwight Kitchens
Church Council President

Do All Roads Lead to LGUMC?

No, not all roads lead to LGUMC. But some do. Recently, we've installed three road signs providing arrows pointing towards LGUMC.

Why not more? Well, Polk County has a sign ordinance which limits the number and size of signs. Rather than using larger signs, we chose to buy and install more.

Our signs are located on the corner of U.S. 98 N and W. Daughtery Road (in front of the CVS Pharmacy), at the intersection of Socrum Loop Road and E. Daughtery Road, and finally at the intersection of Old Polk City Road and Walt Williams Road.



The M&Ms

The M&Ms Senior Activity Group had no scheduled meetings or events planned for April due to the number of Easter and rummage sale activities. We will pray that we will be able to gather together in May and resume our activities.

Carol Hanna

Mission Moments

Our mission activity these days consists mainly of prayers, lots of prayers. Charlie and I still volunteer at Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine (LVIM) a few hours a week. Other than that, as with many others, monetary support is done via mail.

Please remember that many organizations are helping others more than ever. If you can, continue to support them in any way you can.

Linda Alvarez, Missions Coordinator

Live Streaming Communion April 5th

Since April 5th is a first Sunday, we will be holding communion with "do-it-yourself" elements, as Pastor Steve announced at the end of the March 29th service. Prepare some bread and grape juice beforehand and we'll take communion together, apart.

April 5th is LGUMC's Special Collection Sunday

You have a collection envelope in your set for **our sister church, Quesada**, in Cuba. The *Friendship Sunday School Class* supports Quesada by taking up a collection in their weekly meetings. April 5th is an opportunity for the rest of us to help a Christian pastor minister to believers in that communist country.

Please send you donations for Quesada by mail (LGUMC, 424W. Daughtery Rd, Lakeland, FL 33809), text (see page 3 for instructions) or by the church website. Be sure to note that it is for Quesada.

Lakeland Wonder Walk Cancelled

The Lakeland Wonder Walk **did not take place on March 21** at College Heights UMC due to concern about coronavirus.

Teams that had planned to walk at that location, and **churches collecting donations, were encouraged to continue to collect them and send them in by April 15th.**

This fund raiser supports Cornerstone Family Ministries (CFM) which is a National Mission Institution of the United Methodist Women. You can donate to LGUMC with a note that it is for Cornerstone on the church's website or by text as described on page 3.

LGUMC and Social Distancing

On Saturday, March 14th, the Church Council sent out an email to everyone whose address we have explaining how the church was implementing social distancing on Sunday (for example, taping off every other pew with painters tape and not passing the collection plate down each pew).



Since that date, guidelines for limiting the spread of coronavirus have become more stringent, making it prudent to protect worshippers via video and/or audio-recorded services.

Please make sure the church office has your current email address and telephone numbers, both cell and home phones. Call the office (863-858-5431) to report changes; if you do not wish to receive text messages on your cell phone, let us know that, too.

Children's Ministry Homework Assignment!

Here's a link I would like the children to look at: <https://youtu.be/OhVrcV6WmfQ?t=28>. The video's title is "Jesus in Every Book of the Bible" and shows a boy identifying verses with reference to Jesus throughout the Bible. The video is 4:09 minutes long.

If parents are looking for a lesson for this week, go to 1 Kings 18:17- 40, Elijah and the prophets of Baal, which I would have used if we had met. After reading it, have the children tell it back to you, or act it out. This is a great way to know that they understand the scripture.

Pray we are all testing positive for FAITH in Jesus!

Debbie Moore, Children's Ministry

United Methodist Women

The **Evening Circle** is planning to hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, April 13th, at 6:30 pm**. We'll share a meal and then work on Session 4, A Challenge to Greater Convictions, in our book, *The Jesus Challenge*, by Tony Evans. Debbie Moore will call everyone if this changes.

Both the Ruth Circle of Love and Heart to Heart Circle will not meet in April.

Pat Moon sends the following request: Please be in prayer for our members during this month. If you have any needs, please call Pat at 863-858-6883 and we will be glad to help. Hopefully we will be able to meet again soon. Yours in Christ, Pat

United Methodist Men

The UMM meeting scheduled for April 4th has been cancelled, as have the Easter Egg Hunt and the Classic Car and Motorcycle Show.

Lay Leader's Page

Happy springtime! And remember we are also entering the beginning of the religious year of the Hebrew faith. This is the season for the beginning of the LORD's Feasts which you can read about in Leviticus 23:1-22 that include during the month of Nissan (March/April) the first three feasts. Passover (Pesach, also in Numbers 9:1-14), Feast of Unleavened Bread and Feast of First Fruits, eight days later.

All these feasts are associated with the first harvest of the year and a time of remembering the exodus from slavery in Egypt for the Hebrew. For the Christian, it is a time of remembering that our Messiah Jesus was crucified and resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits which is our Easter Sunday.

The last feast of this spring season is the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Shavuot) which falls on May 28. It celebrates another harvest,

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Lay Leader's Page, Continued

this time for wheat (the first harvest was for barley). This is also celebrated as the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. **For us Christians, it is the birth of the Church and the giving of the Holy Spirit.**

Surely Father God has a purpose and a reason for these feasts to unite His chosen people and the Gentile world through the fulfillment of these feasts, as He did when He sent Jesus to be our Messiah and gave us the Holy Spirit to build His Church.

Can't wait to see how the fall feasts will be fulfilled by Father God!

I am a firm believer that there is no Christianity without Judaism, but that Judaism is not complete without Christianity. PRAISE THE LORD!

HAPPY EASTER!
John Bernat, Lay Leader

Are You Retired?

If you are, there are some advantages:
1. You can't be fired; 2. You've weathered lots of storms in the past; 3. You probably have a fixed income from the Social Security Administration; 4. You may also have a pension from previous employers and/or another fixed income source (either an annuity or payout from an IRA/401k).

In these trying times, with unemployment increasing, you are one of the few who can help to keep our church infrastructure intact. We're keeping our office open, working to improve how we conduct normal business remotely, and improving how we maintain contact remotely through our worship service.

Yes, we would like things to go back to normal. But, it will take time. Although you are not attending church in person, we hope that our electronic services are uplifting and enhance your worship of our God.

During this period of uncertainty, our financial needs continue. We have increased
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Are You Retired? Continued

the means by which we can accept offerings, whether they occur on Sunday or anytime during the week. With the exception of our employees' salaries, we're attempting to cut our expenses. Our church, like many institutions, still has recurring bills which must be met.

If you are in a position to help our church financially, it would be most appreciated. If you are not, we fully understand and pray that we will all come out of this with a greater appreciation of the blessings we have been fortunate enough to receive.

Should you not need the funds being provided by the CARES Act, we want you to know "*Recovery Rebates Gratefully Accepted*" by Lake Gibson UMC.

With prayers that you all stay well,
Dwight Kitchens, Church Council

Prayer Ministry

"How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!"
I Corinthians 15:57 (NLT 1996)

As we come to Jesus' Crucifixion, we give thanks to God for sending his only son to die on the cross for us, and for the Resurrection that we are saved and for the promise of living with Him throughout eternity.

Jesus set an example for us to be dedicated to prayer. Please join us at Lake Gibson by becoming a prayer warrior by receiving emails of weekly prayer needs, and by taking your Prayer Journal home and praying for those with long-term needs.

*There can never be too many prayer warriors in one church. **Let us all make a commitment to spend more time in prayer, especially in these perilous times.***

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18 "*Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the*

Continued . . .

Prayer Ministry, Continued

Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.” (NLT)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you,

Prayer Ministry

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.

The purpose of the 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 make disciples of Jesus Christ. All members and constituents are encouraged to write articles and share their thoughts and photos with the congregation.

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How Coronavirus is Affecting Operations at Hope Center

On March 24th Debbie and Rick McLellan reported on the way Hope Center has adapted to the threat of coronavirus. There is an outside shower in back of the house; it was repaired and is being used now for showers.

Here’s the report for March 24th:

“We had a very unique day today. We are serving to-go lunches now to try to maintain social distancing. Dick McPherson, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, made up a Brown Bag Brisket lunch, which included a terrific beef brisket sandwich, a bag of chips, and cookies. Dick even brought the bottled water!

Continued . . .

Hope Center, Mar 24, Continued

Initially, there were 16 guests, who seemed happy and grateful to see us. We did not unlock the building, so Debbie was busy and gave out socks, razors, soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lantern batteries, mosquito repellent and some canned goods for supper from our car trunk.

We did use the garage/carport area. As we were saying goodbyes, giving out second helpings, and were ready to leave, we got the SECOND WAVE. A dozen guests showed up, and we did our best to take care of them. One of the second wave asked “Did we miss the devotion?” May the Lord forgive us, we realized we had not done it yet.

We had a good group spread out in the front yard and shared prayer and a devotion from Psalm 91, GOD'S PROTECTION, and a story of the Lord delivering Gladys Aylward, a great missionary to China, from danger.

We want to say a special thanks to our friend Marty, who brought us some great items we gave out today from the folks at First Baptist Church of Polk City. Thank you also to Julio and Elba Santana from Bread of Life Christian Mission who pray for us and have helped us. Today Julio brought slim-size jeans and we had a guest who needed them.

We have been so amazed in six years of volunteering, that God is so good at sending the right person with the right item at the right time to meet the needs of the less fortunate people!

Please join us in prayer for one of our volunteers, Rick Nelson, who is temporarily ordered to stay home because of a severe sinus infection and bronchitis.

We had a Blessed day and we were able to comfort and encourage our guests at the Hope Center today!

God's Richest Blessings to You All,
Debbie and Rick McLellan

Hope Center Happenings

[These paragraphs are extracted from Debbie and Rick McLellan's Tuesday reports about their day serving at Hope Center. They are presented here so LGUMC people can learn about the needs and help to fill them. Editor]

March 3rd

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

At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from Colossians Chapter 1: JESUS, THE GREATEST MYSTERY. Then Debbie and Rick served 20 guests grilled chicken breasts with mashed potatoes and gravy, and green beans with strawberry short-cake for dessert. We gave out a dozen of Debbie's made-from-scratch egg salad sandwiches with Publix Strawberry Apple Fruit Squeeze pouches, and also sent out about twelve to-go plates. To quench thirst was coffee, milk, Pepsi and iced tea. There were also a variety of breads and desserts thanks to Rick Nelson and Publix.

... Today we gave out some clothing items, razors, nearly 40 pop-top canned goods, including spaghetti and meatballs, ravioli, Vienna sausages, etc. We also gave out 12 pair of new socks ...

A special thank you to Bob and Crystal Blow, who always encourage and pray for us. Thanks, Bob, for covering for us last Tuesday. Thank you to our friend Marty, from First Baptist Church of Polk City, who brought us some clothing items and a variety of toiletry items. Thank you Dwight and Phyllis Kitchens from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, who gave us a case of pop-top cans to give out today. We are grateful for the many toiletry and personal hygiene items put together by the ladies of Heart to Heart UMW Circle at Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. It is wonderful to have so many Christians helping us to do this ministry for Jesus.

Continued ...

Hope Center, Continued

March 10th

... At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a devotion from John chapter 8, FREE INDEED. Then Debbie and Rick served our guests sliced turkey ham, macaroni and cheese, green beans, and cupcakes for dessert. ... We had served 32 guests and 15 take-out plates by the end of the day, and gave out 16 bagged meat and cheese sandwiches to take with them.

The ice machine was down, but we brought ice. ... We gave out requested shoes to Michael and Joey. Our guests also received over three dozen easy-open canned goods and other small supper items. We brought over 2 dozen canned goods today, but due to increased attendance, gave out 3 dozen. **We are really needing pop-top pastas (Chef Boyardee, etc.).** We were blessed today by a visit from Jim Aldrich and our friends from Christ the King Episcopal Church who brought us cake, coffee cake and some pantry items.

March 17th

... At Lunchtime, Rick McLellan led our guests in prayer and a message of salvation, which St. Patrick preached in Ireland from the Book of Romans. Then Debbie and Rick served our guests chicken breasts, mashed potatoes with chicken gravy and green beans. ... We had served 28 guests and provided 10 take-out plates by the end of the day, and gave out 24 bagged meat and cheese sandwiches to take with them.

We talked to our doctor this morning, who was adamant that we wear both gloves and masks to the Hope Center. We felt freaky going in, but were surprised that our guests were very accepting, and thought it was a good idea.

Due to COVID-19, we are going to work as a to-go lunch operation for a few weeks. ... and a similar operation on Fridays, giving us a 5-day service schedule, as we have done before during Hurricane Irma and other crises.



Birthdays in April

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
4/1	Gail Bishop
4/1	Cindy Heishman
4/7	Sean Broecker
4/8	Stanley Retter
4/9	Tyler Jacoby
4/9	Richard Kneeland
4/10	Bonnie Fuqua
4/12	Bryan Mowell
4/14	Susan Chambers
4/14	Mary Mason
4/14	Marita Willey
4/15	Kyle Fox
4/15	Alison Oftedal
4/16	Sarah Schiemann
4/17	Marina Hernandez
4/17	Sharon Ruth
4/18	Jacob McKnight
4/19	Dave Hess
4/20	Will Cochran
4/21	Nora Kocsis
4/25	Judy Sadwick
4/26	Nita Davis
4/27	Lynne Rushing
4/29	Ray Welch
4/30	Gage Mueller



Anniversaries in April

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
4/4	Linda and Larry Smucker
4/29	Kathy and Leon Rumohr

Contact Information

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

Kristie Summers Otte, Administrative Secretary, 863-858-5431, office@lakegibsonumc.com

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

Sue Heishman, Bookkeeper

Debbie Moore, Children's Director

Glenda Grant Hess, Music Director

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

Debbie Moore, Kristie Otte, Lexie Otte, Audio/Visual Team