



# THE GOOD NEWS

## Lake Gibson United Methodist Church



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

We are in the Advent Season and I for one am so thankful and appreciative of what it represents. This year has been one of turmoil, tragedy, despair and frustration. Advent is the time of waiting and preparing for the birth of the Messiah – our God, who is coming to live with and in His followers. In this season we light four candles, and each has a somewhat different meaning, and those may vary some depending on the tradition of the church and denomination. Here are the four we will be using this year, the reason and how they help recenter us this year.

The first is the **Candle of Hope**. In this year of 2020, we all need hope - real hope. We hope tomorrow will be better than today, that 2021 will result in a vaccine for COVID-19. We hope that people and societies will prosper and thrive in the coming year. Hope gives us the desire to go on, the strength to stand up again and try one more time. *Our hope is in Christ, the one who will never leave nor forsake us.* May we all have the hope of better days ahead.

Candle two is the **Candle of Faith** (sometimes called the Prophecy Candle). We definitely need to have faith to continue after the events of this year. Faith that there is an end in sight, faith that the hope we talked about the first Sunday will be manifest in our lives soon. *Lord, this Advent Season restore our faith in you.* May our faith grow from the mustard seed to that of a giant oak tree rooted by the living stream of water and on the rock of Jesus.

Candle three is the **Candle of Joy**. We all need a little joy in our life, especially after this year. In this Advent Season we focus on the joy that the baby Jesus will bring into the world and the lives of his parents and all mankind. The joy of being in the family of God. As I think of this candle of joy this year, I hear Jesus saying, *“I came that they may have life abundantly in the midst of all that may happen in their life. May my people hope, believe, feel excited and know my love for them is everlasting.”*

The fourth candle is the **Candle of Peace** (also called the Candle of Love). We need peace this season more than ever. May we see peace between the races, between social and economic divisions, between political parties, and the countries of this world. We long for peace in our marriages, families, relationships, schools, workplaces and even in our churches. Real peace is found in perfect love – the love God has for His children. We find that love manifest in our lives and in this world through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

On Christmas Eve we light the **Christ Candle**. We find the hope, faith, joy, peace and love the candles represent as we rest in, trust in and live in and for Christ. Come Lord Jesus, Come. Enter our hearts, lives and world this Advent Season and help us not only find the meanings of the Advent Candles but also share them with others this Christmas Season.

*Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Steve and Mrs. Penny*

## Date

## December Events (as of 12/3/20)

- 6 **Florida UMW Virtual Advent Women's Retreat:** This special Zoom event on **Sunday, Dec. 6 from 1:30 to 6:00 pm** will involve worship and three workshops with fun activities like a live baking demonstration! It will be led by Rev. Monique McBride and the Florida UMW. Tickets are \$10 and will benefit mission. Find out how to register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celebrating-the-season-womens-virtual-retreat-tickets-127731132255>.
- 7 Video conference, UMC Anti-Racism [no info available at this time]
- 8 Video screening of film **Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School**, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tcO6tqjgoEt0PropjfUNlvQRtGgpxtMMV>
- 8 Raise Up Your Voice Against Racism Webinar, December 8th, 8:00 pm EST
- 10 Voices from the Field Missionaries webinar, 10:00 am. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAvduqqqjMuH9ZHrqMCF7pAfaOjqk7js7bV>.
- 10 A Little Bit of Heaven Board Meeting, 2:00 pm, Sanctuary
- 10 Staff-Pastor/Parish Relations Committee training, 6:30 pm, on Zoom
- 12 United Methodist Men (UMM) breakfast meeting, 9:00 am, FLC Classrooms 1 and 2
- 12 UMW video conference to benefit women and children in Pakistan, 9:00 to 11:00 am.  
Text [cstone@cornerstonefm.org](mailto:cstone@cornerstonefm.org) to sign up for this event
- 14 Anti-Racism Prayer Call, noon, with Bishop Carter and Bishop Adam Richardson of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, on the Florida Conference website, <https://www.flconf.org>.
- 14 *Whosoever* Bible Study, 6:30 pm at Debbie Moore's home, 400 Vineyard Dr, Lakeland 33809
- 18 Worldwide Virtual Christmas Choir downloadable video available from <https://www.discipleship.org> or from <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/agencies/communications>
- 19 Friendship Sunday School Class Christmas Party on Dec 19th, 5:00 - 8:00 pm in the Family Life Center (FLC)
- 20 Christmas Cantata, *Christmas Forever Amen* by Russell Mauldin and Sue C. Smith, during the 10:30 am worship service
- 24 Candlelight Service, 7:00 pm
- 24 - 25 Office Closed
- ? A Virtual Service of Lessons and Carols, <https://flsouthern.edu> (date and time to be determined). Bishop Carter, Dr. Waite Wills, President Ann Kerr of FSC and others in the historic Annie Pfeiffer Chapel. Information will be on the FSC and the Florida Conference websites.

## No Hope House Happenings this Month

I apologize to our HH volunteers, Debbie and Rick McLellan, and all the others who diligently report after each of their service days. Because of the abundance of material this month, I have omitted the excerpts from their reports except for a couple of short items. One of the large needs is to replace the inoperative ice maker. This could run between \$2,500 and \$3,500 or more. We are still investigating how best to meet this need and will kick off a fund-raising campaign in 2021.  
Phyllis Kitchens

## Buy Poinsettias to Decorate the Sanctuary

You can fill out the order form below and deliver it and payment to the church office (9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday thru Thursday), or you can go to our website [lakegibsonumc.com](http://lakegibsonumc.com) and click on Order Poinsettias to bring up a form that you can fill out on your computer. There are four copies of the order form so you can designate four people in the dedications.

# Christmas Poinsettias



*Purchase a poinsettia to display in the chapel this wonderful holiday season for the low price of \$10.00.*

*Please Check:*

\_\_\_\_\_ *in memory of* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *in honor of* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *in the glory* \_\_\_\_\_

*Your Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Proceeds will help fund LGUMC,  
Thanks so much for supporting our Church!*

*Paid: Yes* \_\_\_\_\_ *No* \_\_\_\_\_ *Cash:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Check:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Amount:* \_\_\_\_\_

***Please Make Check Payable To Lake Gibson UMC***

## Prayer Ministry

Prayer Warriors are a wonderful reflection of God's love. You keep the spirit of Christmas glowing brightly throughout 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 Lake Gibson's prayer ministry. Please call the church office if you wish to be added to our email list of prayer warriors. Currently we have approximately 40 prayer warriors who may receive an email to pray for an urgent situation during the week.

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

God's blessings at Christmas and into 2021.

Prayer Ministry - Fran

## LAY LEADER'S PAGE

What a joy it was and is to be ever so thankful for the blessings we have had and continue to have for 2020 as we near the end of the year that will live in infamy (to steal a thought from FDR), and as we prepare to celebrate the blessing of honoring the birth day of our Lord and Savior Messiah Jesus. What a wonderful way to end this year of hardship and grief for many who have suffered from the virus.

As we say goodbye to 2020 and look forward to what Father God has for us in 2021, our hope is in His Grace and Mercy to be with us as we look to Messiah Jesus for His forgiveness for what we've done or left undone, and return to Him our hearts and minds to do His Will for Us. Let us continue to be Faithful to Him and follow His leading us. Shalom!

John Bernat, Lay Leader

## Thanks from the Children's Home

Your generosity will be greatly appreciated this Christmas season. On December 1st, Florida United Methodist Children's Home received **\$1670** in gift cards from LGUMC. Since then we have received another \$200 in cards which we'll mail to FUMCH on December 7th. Many cards will be distributed to individual children while others will go towards taking the cottage residents out for a holiday meal.

We have a few more weeks to go before Christmas day. Fortunately, we still have time to show our love for others. As we all go through our own versions of quarantining, let's tell others that we are thinking about them. Whether through Facebook, Christmas cards, Zoom gatherings, or phone calls, this is an important time of year to make contact and let others know that we hold them dear to our hearts.

We also delivered four repaired bikes to the Children's Home on December 1st.

Thank you to everyone who gave generously for store and restaurant gift cards, and to those who keep our FUMCH Bicycle Ministry stocked with used bikes, or who donate to the Bike Repair Fund which allows us to purchase spare parts for donated bikes and for those already on campus.

Dwight Kitchens

## United Methodist Men (UMM) Meeting, Saturday, December 12th

The UMM will hold its last meeting of 2020 on Saturday, December 12th at 9:00 am. A light breakfast will be served.

We hope that men who attend Lake Gibson UMC will join us to learn about this organization, which helps the church and neighbors in various ways throughout the year.

Michael Moake

## Worldwide Virtual Christmas Choir on December 18th

You can **download the video** on Dec 18th from the UMC's Discipleship Ministries at

## November Sidewalk Sale Results

The much-downsized rummage sale on November 13th and 14th raised a total \$1,183.00, which the United Methodist Women will use for various missions. We sold a bunch of stuff, and I put what was left in the church's trailer. I would like to find a place to donate all the unsold stuff this week. I sold the tan couch online. Have the other couch in the trailer; Wood World wouldn't take it. I will try to sell it online also. Altogether, I think it was a great success and would love to do it again, just not real soon 😊. Maybe February?

Lynn Meske  
UMW Rummage Sale Chair

A big **thank you** to the following (and if we've left someone out, please forgive):

Carol Davis was inside the FLC. She handled the furniture sales and did an awesome job. Barbara Allen-Coil did the jewelry and also did an awesome job. Linda Imel, Maria Thomas and Shirley Schmidt did puzzles, children's clothes, toys and books.

Thank you also to Tom Burns and Debbie Moore for helping to set up at 6:00 am on Friday morning. Beverly Hendrich, Susan Ritchie and Sue Bodemer handled the Christmas items. Pat Moon and Ruth Zona did books, DVDs and videos.

Sarah Schiemann was a "floater," helping in all areas and taking care of the money.

Shirley Schmidt is the satisfied customer with her Friday the 13th treasure find (page 11).

I hate naming names because I'm sure I have forgotten one or two but this is a good start.

Lynn Meske

Photos provided by Sarah Schiemann



## Sidewalk Sale Photos



## Introducing LGUMC's 2021 Leadership Team

[The list published in the November 2020 issue of *The Good News* was incomplete. This is the information presented to the October 18th Charge Conference, plus change in United Methodist Women president.] Please remember to thank these servant leaders for their service to Lake Gibson UMC.

### Position

### Name

Church Council Chair	Dick McPherson
Church Treasurer	Yvonne Bower
Financial Secretary	Cindy Heishman
Lay Member	Michael Stafford
Lay Leader	John Bernat
Recording Secretary	Kristie Otte
Administrative and Membership Secretary	Kristie Otte
Campus Ministry Rep	Youth Director
Camps and Retreats	Youth Director
United Methodist Men (UMM) President	Michael Moake
United Methodist Women (UMW) President	Carol Davis
Staff-Pastor/Parish Relations Committee	Sandy Stanfield

Class of 2021: Ken Fuqua, Sandy Stanfield

Class of 2022: David McPherson, Phyllis Kitchens, Michael Booker

Class of 2023: Lou Tindall

Finance Committee

Dwight Kitchens

Members: Pastor Steve Polk (non-voting), Sue Heishman, Dwight Kitchens, Sandy Stanfield, Tom Burns, Yvonne Bower, Cindy Heishman, Sarah Schiemann, Mike Stafford, Dick McPherson

Continued on the next page . . .

## Introducing LGUMC's 2021 Leadership Team, Continued

### Position

### Name

Finance Committee, Continued

Class of 2021: Karen Acor

Class of 2022: Justin Oliva

Board of Trustees

Tom Burns, Chair

Class of 2021: Tom Burns, John Bernat

Class of 2022: Don Smitz, Leon Rumohr, Bob Siegel

Class of 2023: Joe Wallin

Nominations and Leadership Development

Steve Polk

Chairperson: Pastor Steve Polk, Vice Chair: John Bernat

Class of 2021: Sarah Schiemann

Class of 2022: Jan Booker, Kathy Rumohr

Class of 2023: Carol Davis

Interpreter of Connectional Giving

Dwight Kitchens

Florida United Methodist Children's Home Reps

Dwight & Phyllis  
Kitchens

Beyond 50 Ministry

Carol Hanna

Historian Ministry

Phyllis Kitchens

A Little Bit of Heaven Board

Sarah Schiemann, Chair

Members: Pastor Steve Polk, Dick McPherson (Church Council), Tom Burns (Board of Trustees), John Bernat (Lay Leader), Sandy Stanfield (Staff-Pastor/Parish), Dwight Kitchens (Finance) and Andrea Rhynes (Parent Rep)

Class of 2021: Jan Booker

Class of 2022: Sue Atchley

Class of 2023: Mary Wallin

Continued on the next page . . .

## Introducing LGUMC's 2021 Leadership Team, Continued

### Position

### Name

#### Chairs of Other Ministries:

Missions

Linda Alvarez

Children's Ministry

Debbie Moore

Youth Ministry

Jeff Acor

### Upgrades to A Little Bit of Heaven Child Enrichment Center's Playground





## A Little Bit of Heaven, Continued

Thanks to Sarah Schiemann and Director, Latisha Cook, for the photos, and for their leadership in getting this area upgraded with new fencing and playground equipment. Thanks to the Board of Trustees, Tom Burns and Dick McPherson, for their supervision and Tom's safety inspection of all the equipment after it was installed.



### Wreaths Across America

With your help, on **December 19th** the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL, will once again be decorated with Christmas wreaths honoring those who maintained our freedom while serving in America's armed forces.

As of November 30th, wreath-laying is scheduled to occur in Bushnell, although other national cemeteries have cancelled theirs due to COVID-19.

Thank you to all who donated to this cause, and to Bob and Fay Herrick who have spear-headed this commemoration for LGUMC for several years.

### LGUMC Podcast Now Available (Repeated for November Issue)

Want to multitask? Want to hear our messages as a podcast (audio-only .mp3 file). Wait no longer! We now have our weekly worship services and mid-week "Left Overs" available for download to your portable device. Subscribe now on Google Podcast either at

<https://podcasts.google.com> and search for Lake Gibson United Methodist Church or at :

<https://tinyurl.com/LGUMC-podcasts>.

## United Methodist Women

Leadership Team for 2021 will include Carol Davis, President; Phyllis Kitchens, Vice President; Linda Alvarez, Secretary; Sarah Schiemann, Treasurer and Circle Leaders Pat Moon, Ruth Circle of Love and Ruth Zona, Heart to Heart. Lynn Meske will continue as Rummage Sale committee chair and Pat Moon as Pecan Sales chair.

Due to COVID-19 our circles will not be able to hold their Christmas luncheons this year.

**For the Heart to Heart Circle**, we will continue to perform our end-of-year missional gift-giving as follows: Let's make a **gift of a package of socks for the homeless**. There's a box in the church office were you can leave them and another in the narthex.

We're still going to give our **ten dollars per person for the food pantry meat**, and this can be mailed to Ruth Zona or taken to the office and given to Kristie with Ruth's name and Heart to Heart on the envelope. Ruth will pick donations up there.

**For Ruth Circle of Love**, we will not be able to make our Christmas gift bags this year or visit with our shut-ins. Instead, please consider donating socks for the homeless and making a donation to the food pantry as you are able. We look forward to when we can resume our visits to home-bound friends in 2021.



### Need People to Pick Up Publix Bread

We need people to pick up the donated Publix bread Wednesday and Saturday nights. Task includes marking out price labels on each item.

These bread donations are a key part of the blessings provided during our Thursday food pantry and Sunday morning pickup in the FLC.

If you have a heart for feeding the hungry, please call Debbie Moore at 863-614-7193.

## Food Pantry Needs

We thank everyone who brings food into the church office for the food pantry.

We could always use the following:

Canned carrots  
Vegetable soup  
Vienna sausages  
Spaghetti sauce (best buy is at Aldi for 85 cents, packaged in plastic jars).

We can always use peanut butter (Dollar Tree or Aldi) and jelly (Dollar Tree).

Thanks for all your help,

Ann Johnson

## Voices from the Field, Monthly Webinar Featuring UMC Missionaries

You are invited to the first virtual event in the conversation series *Voices from the Field*, featuring leaders sharing their work and life stories, daily challenges, hopes and dreams. The event will take place on **Thursday, December 10, 2020, at 10 a.m. EST**. We would love for you to meet Regional Missionary Elmira Sellu and our local leadership team of women from Sierra Leone Central Conference.

*Voices from the Field* highlights United Methodist Women initiatives supported by your Mission Giving that significantly improve the lives of women, children and youth around the world. The international work of United Methodist Women focuses on lifting families out of poverty by supporting programs that offer tools and training for women to become self-sufficient. Grants from Mission Giving provide funding that creates opportunities through economic development programs.

To register for the December 10th webinar, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAvduqqqjMuH9ZHrqMCF7pAfaOjqk7js7bV>.

## Raise Up Your Voice Against Racism Webinar, December 8th, 8:00 pm EST

Rev. John Oda  
Program Manager for Asian American Language Ministry Plan

I am writing to you because you signed for or participated in one of our last "*Raise Up Your Voice Against Racism*" webinars. I would like to warmly invite you to attend our upcoming "**In Between Conversations**". These are lightly facilitated, hour-long Zoom calls where Asian, Asian Americans and their allies can talk about their own experiences of racism, as well as hear about how others have dealt with and are dealing with racism in their lives. These safe-space conversations are led by Rev. Neal Christie.

The next "In Between Conversation" will take place on **December 8th at 5:00pm PST/ 6:00pm MST/ 7:00pm CST/ 8:00pm EST**. The link to enter the Zoom room is below. We hope you can join us.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81139549216>

Peace,

John

General Board of Global Ministries/The United Methodist Church  
458 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30308 [umcmision.org](http://umcmision.org)

## Children's Ministry

Thank you to Sharon Coddington for the handmade, personalized ornaments she created for our children.

Thanks also to Brad Fox for keeping ants from taking over!

Debbie Moore

## God is Working at Hope House

On November 10th one of our guests showed up in socks but no shoes. We did not have the size he needed. One man went to his campsite and returned shortly with a gift of a new pair of shoes, the exact size our socks-clad guest needed. God is Good!

Debbie and Rick McLellan

## Contact Information

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

**Kristie 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**, Custodian

**Glenda Grant Hess**, Music Director

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

**Kristie Otte, Lexie Otte, Dave McPherson and Justin Oliva**, Audio/Visual Team

## 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.

Phyllis Kitchens, Editor  
phyllis\_kitchens@hotmail.com  
863-984-4564 or 410-790-2662



## Sidewalk Sale Photos, Continued



## UMW Pecan Sale Continues

Good news! We ordered additional pecans. If you did not pre-order, we will have some available for you to buy. These sales generate funds that the United Methodist Women donate to national and international missions.

Plain pecan halves and pieces (16 oz. bag) -  
\$14.00 per bag

Cinnamon glazed pecans (10 oz. bag) -  
\$10.00 per bag

Chocolate covered pecans (12 oz. bag) -  
\$10.00 per bag

Please make your checks out to **LG United Methodist Women** with a note **for pecans**. Call Pat Moon (863-858-6883) to arrange for payment and pickup.

## Screening of *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School*

Tuesday, December 8th, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Join us for a screening of the film "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools." This documentary film was inspired by Dr. Monique Morris' book of the same name. The screening will be followed by participatory discussion groups, a response panel and a call to action. This webinar is part of the ongoing United Methodist Women series on interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

You don't have to be a member of UMW, or be a woman, to participate in this event.

To register, go to the website:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tcO6tqjgoEt0PropjfUNlvQRtGpuxtMMV>

## Hope House Church Service

Lake Gibson Church of the Nazarene held a church service on the Hope House grounds on Sunday, November 22nd, at 10:30 am. Cereal and coffee were provided in the morning and a lunch followed after the service. God is good!

## Audio/Visual Update

There have been a number of improvements to the sanctuary since March. Lots of behind-the-scenes work which you can't see when you sit down to worship have occurred. Much of this has been made possible by our participation in the Paycheck Protection Program offered by the Small Business Administration. This infusion of cash helped us to make the changes which we needed due to COVID-19.

Before March, we recorded the audio of our services and posted them solely to our web page at [www.LakeGibsonUMC.com](http://www.LakeGibsonUMC.com). Since May, we've converted from audio only to full live-streaming video recordings which are posted on our web page, our Facebook page, and on Youtube.com. We now reach people who have never set foot within our sanctuary. Of course, this required a dedicated high-speed internet connection to the sanctuary.

As part of this transition, we have purchased cameras, faster computers, live-streaming software, a larger sound mixer and additional microphones. The sanctuary lighting has been converted from primarily florescent tubes to LED lighting. Much time and effort has been spent in rewiring our sound booth and stage while labeling cables, developing wiring diagrams, and re-soldering failing connections.

In October we added audio-only podcasts of our sermons and Pastor Steve's mid-week "Left Overs." They can now be subscribed to on Apple, Google, and Spotify podcasts. This provides an easy way to download and listen to our messages on most portable devices.

We've been conferring with numerous sound and lighting specialists outside our congregation. It appears that we have thus far done well within our sanctuary. What needs remain are improvements in congregational sound, lighting and video options. To round out our sound system, we envision needing \$2,400 for two new column speakers. To satisfy our lighting needs of the congregation, choir and praise team, we envision needing approximately \$5,000 to revamp our sanctuary's lighting. To enhance our live-streaming, we envision needing two additional cameras to the tune of \$4,400 for the pair. So, while we have done well, we are not yet finished.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Audio/Visual Update, Continued

The additional bill comes to \$11,800 for items to be purchased as funds become available. If you would like to provide any funds for these designated projects, please, do so. As our finances permit, we will initiate these remaining projects to improve both sanctuary and home worship services.

Dwight Kitchens

## What Happened to the Audio?

As you undoubtedly noticed, we had audio problems with the wireless microphones during Pastor Joe Brady's sermon on **November 29th**. The cause was that all of the 9-volt batteries went dead upon use. They were put in fresh from the charger, which was showing green lights (fully charged), that morning at 10:00 am.

When we put the dead ones back in the charger they indicated full charge within minutes, which makes no sense. I suspect the charger does not work well with the new batteries.

I will do some tests to see what is going on. It is not a problem with the wireless units. The Shure unit worked perfectly, but it has its own charger.

Bob Siegel

## Actions to Become an Anti-Racist Church

[Source: United Methodist News Daily Digest, November 24th, 2020, article *Taking Concrete Steps to Move against Racism* by Kathy L. Gilbert]

One of the anti-racist initiatives described in Ms. Gilbert's article is that of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. To read or print the 8-page article, go to <https://www.bwcumc.org/ministries/advocacy-action/racial-justice/>.

To get a free subscription to UM News Daily Digest or Weekly Digest, go to

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/umnews-subscriptions>.

## Anti-Racism Prayer Call, December 14th at Noon

Bishop Ken Carter and Bishop Adam Richardson of the African Methodist Episcopal Church invite you for this advent time of prayer on Monday, December 14th.

Call-in information will be posted on the Florida Conference website ([flumc.org](http://flumc.org)).

## Mission Moments

The **Pick-a-Pair sox project** for 2020 is underway. There are some sox already in the Sox Boxes. There are two boxes this year; one is in the narthex and one is in the office.

We will need children's sox, women's sox and lots of sox for men. Then by the middle of December we can begin to distribute them. I plan to take some to Hope House (actually I have already taken some there!), give some out on food pantry days, and hang the children's sox outside our preschool.

The need is great, but our hearts are greater. I have a card in front of me from David Jeremiah that says, "Your work on earth, whatever God is assigning you right now, is preparatory to eternal service in heaven." We have work to do, then we can celebrate.

Colossians 3:23-24 says, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ."

I hope you can celebrate this Christmas heartily. I don't think there are many who will be sorry to see 2020 end, but we have a great tomorrow to look forward to.

Linda Alvarez, Missions Coordinator

## Salvation Army Red Kettle is Both Virtual and Physical This Year

LGUMC informed the Salvation Army that we would not be ringing the bell this Christmas because of COVID-19. You can still give to the Red Kettles when you're shopping, or you can register to be a virtual fund-raiser at <https://give.salvationarmyusa.org/give/> and make your donation online. You can also donate thru the church.

## Accounting for Your Donations

Thankfully, with the separation of church and state, donations made to our church are tax deductible. With last year's change in the federal tax code, this year's standard deduction has basically doubled. Standard deductions for married filing jointly is now \$24,800, head of household \$18,650, and single/married filing separately \$12,400. Add to these if you are over 65 years of age and/or blind.

Why does this matter? Well, you may not care, but we still account for all of your donations. This insures that your faithful contributions are used for your intended purpose.

Generally, a congregant designates funds for a particular purpose, whether it be for our general operations account or a more specific purpose (such as our Food Pantry, Guardian Ad Litem, etc.). You do this either by annotating a check or your offering envelope. We then spend the funds in the manner you have requested.

Unfortunately, when it comes to electronic contributions, it requires a few steps to set each up. We have three primary means by which funds may be transferred electronically:

The **first is electronic bill pay** (from your bank/credit union) where you can designate an amount for up to fifteen differing categories.

The **second is by using our smartphone application**. Here you can designate among twenty-nine separate accounts.

The **third is giving by text message**. Here you have a choice of fourteen separate accounts (but must send a separate text message for each contribution desired).

Check out the '[Support Our Ministry](http://www.LakeGibsonUMC.com)' hyperlink at [www.LakeGibsonUMC.com](http://www.LakeGibsonUMC.com). All the online options will be found there.

Dwight Kitchens

### CROP Hunger Walk 2021 Information Sunday, February 28th, 1:30 pm



#### **The Walk Is Virtual, But the Need Could Not Be More Real!**

CROP Hunger Walks are happening in a new way! To keep everyone safe and healthy, Walks are going virtual – either walking alone, with immediate family or in small groups walking a safe distance apart.

The work of Church World Service (CWS) and our local hunger agencies continues – and with the possibility of a global famine on the horizon, raising money for vulnerable people is more needed than ever. Join us – virtually - as we continue our shared commitment to stand up for the poor, the forgotten, those left behind. Our Spring CROP Hunger Walks were down nearly \$1 million in 2020. It is urgent that in 2021 we continue to raise funds to provide permanent solutions to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

Phyllis and Dwight Kitchens, 2021 CWS CROP Hunger Walk Coordinators  
863-984-4564/410-790-2662

Details of the Lakeland CROP walk are on the next page, which summarizes the results of a November 20th coordination video conference.

Continued on the next page . . .

## **CROP Hunger Walk 2021, Continued**

***Anyone can be a Team Captain for these virtual Hunger Walks!***

**National Perspective:** Mary Catherine Hinds of Church World Service described changes due to COVID-19 and CROP Walks since last spring and this fall, their successes, how they've done it and tips. "Supporters are driven by our mission." Go to [CropHungerWalk.org](http://CropHungerWalk.org) to learn more. "We Believe in Ending Hunger"

**Tips:** Spend efforts on retention (previous captains, walkers, fund-raisers) vs. acquiring new walkers. Focus on supportive walkers. Have a plan to address them. "Over communicate." Plug in *moment for mission into virtual church services* (ask Mike or Mary Catherine for video, etc.).

**Specific to Lakeland:** Local beneficiaries will be **Talbot House and Lighthouse Ministries** who will share **one-quarter of funds raised in 2021**. Erin Martinez described Talbot House's traditional mission and 2020 efforts to address the needs of homeless and hungry during COVID.

**The Plan for Lakeland:** All congregations walk at or around **1:30 pm on Sunday, February 28, 2021**. Each congregation or group sets their own route. Walk alone, walk in small groups (observing the congregation's and Lakeland's COVID-19 safety protocols), car parade, treadmill, spirit walk, youth group, **bike ride or motorcycle ride**.

Each group should use social media to advertise their walk in advance, during, and after (*Facebook, Instagram, Twitter*, etc.). Please ask for help if you need it! I certainly do! For assistance, we have a **Social Media Director: Logan Ray** from Auburndale HS (LoganRay820@icloud.com). Phone number: 863-585-9935. Take pictures and email them to Mike Fearney (mikeflacpa@gmail.com, 863-529-3134) or Logan who will forward to CWS National. We need "content", that is, *people's enthusiastic participation*.

Register your group on the Lakeland CROP Walk site (Google CROP Walk and find us on the map) as soon as possible *after* the site is updated on **December 3**. [LGUMC: The Kitchens will register LGUMC, but you and your family or friends are welcome to also set up your own group; just include LGUMC in the name so we can count your fund-raising as part of our church's mission.]

Ask Mike for help. Mike will call each and walk through that setup. Mary Catherine can also create some video tutorials for how to register and start a team. She and Mike can also set up their team page for them – just need email address. Set goals – Mike has data recapping what they raised last year – will share and ask that they try to increase to meet additional needs. Will send individual emails to each team after the zoom call.

**Fund Raising and Funds Collected:** Solicit contributions on the Web [Dwight will have a 2021 CROP Walk account set up by the bookkeeper and add information to the website, lakegibsonumc.com]. Cash: If you collect cash, ~~convert it to a check and mail to the treasurer along with other checks to turn it into the church office, Monday - Thursday, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm, with a note that it is for CWS CROP Hunger Walk.~~ Sue Heishman will prepare a check for the grand total collected and submit it to **Bob Burnett (bobsuecleo@yahoo.com 863 944-1028), 249 Granite Drive, Lakeland 33809**. Let's try to shoot for **March 17<sup>th</sup> for turn-in date**.

Posters, bulletin inserts, route markers, walker envelopes, etc. will be sent directly to captains, or, hand-delivered by Mike. Let Mike know – you can have them sent directly to you from CWS or Mike can deliver them the week he's in town around Christmas.

We will gather again for a **Zoom meeting in January and February – an evening**. Mike will send individual emails letting people know along with the minutes of this Zoom call.

Thanks to those who were able to attend, and thank you to others who were able to read about the plans and progress we are making. I, for one, am able to spend more time organizing the walk this year, and I, (for two?) will be reaching out to a much broader cast of characters to contribute to my personal fund  
Continued on the next page . . .

## CROP Hunger Walk 2021 Information, Continued

-raising for CROP. I am VERY OPTIMISTIC that this **2021 CROP Walk** to combat world hunger will be the launch of a **revitalization of the Lakeland Walk**.

Mike Fearney, Lakeland Coordinator

### Need a Dose of Christmas Cheer?

The following events will be available via video:

**December 7th, 7:00 pm** First Presbyterian Church, Lakeland, will present a **one-time only** virtual concert, *Glory of Christmas*. It will not be recorded, so if you want to see it, go to the FPC website, <https://fpclakeland.org/gloryofchristmas>. It will also be on ROKU, YouTube and Facebook.

**December 18th** Worldwide Virtual Christmas Choir downloadable video available from

<https://www.discipleship.org> or from  
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/agencies/communications>

### Links to Bishop Carter's Virtual Bible Study

Dwight and I participated in this Bible study with Bishop Carter and a variety of speakers via Zoom from September 9th through November 25th, and found it very informative and thought-provoking. If the Bishop offers it again, we hope that more Lake Gibson people will participate. The guest speakers were outstanding.

Below is part of Bishop Carter's letter announcing where you can find recordings of the talks. Note that you can view all the recordings by clicking on the link in the next paragraph.

"Last night [November 25th], we completed our fall virtual [Wednesday Night Bible Study](#) with a study of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 and a conversation about Thanksgiving with Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey (President of the Council of Bishops) and Dr. Gil Rendle, noted author and consultant. We reflected on a mindset of gratitude during this pandemic, the nature of sufficiency, and what the Apostle Paul teaches us about generosity.

"I invite you today to watch our conversation here (<https://vimeo.com/483219304/4d34b1e401>).

"You can also watch a special Thanksgiving message from me here (<https://vimeo.com/482703577/5158639011>).

"I am grateful for you and your faithfulness. I hope these resources are a blessing to you on this holiday.

"In the Spirit of Thanksgiving for God's Grace,

+Ken Carter

Resident Bishop, Florida Conference

The United Methodist Church"

### New Progressive Methodist Denomination Starts

by Heather Hahn, United Methodist Communications

A group of progressive United Methodists and other Christians launched a new denomination named the Liberation Methodist Connexion, or LMX. The new church aims to center on the voices of people of color as well as queer and transgender individuals — those the LMX organizers see as marginalized in The United Methodist Church. Continued on the next page . . .



## New Progressive Methodist Denomination Starts, Continued

by Heather Hahn, United Methodist Communications

“We are a grassroots denomination of former, current, and non-Methodist faith leaders working on the unfolding of the kin-dom of God,” the Connexion [says on its website](#). “We intentionally invite the full participation of all who are living out their God-given identities and expressions.”

Organizers announced the new denomination’s formation with an online worship service, presentation and after-party on Nov. 29, the first Sunday of Advent and the start of the Christian year. The online gathering had more than 400 registrants. But because of technical difficulties, a number of those registrants were unable to log on, including United Methodist News.

The new Connexion is getting off the ground after decades of intensifying debate within The United Methodist Church about how inclusive to be of LGBTQ Christians. At the General Conference planned for May 2020, United Methodists expected to take up a proposal to resolve the dispute over same-sex marriage and gay ordination through a formal denominational separation. However, coronavirus-related shutdowns postponed the lawmaking assembly, which is now scheduled for Aug. 29-Sept. 7, 2021.

The new denomination’s organizers, a number of whom are LGBTQ, said they feel called to act now. “The timeline of the Holy Spirit is driving our decision to launch the LMX at this moment, and we are following her call,” the Rev. Althea Spencer-Miller told UM News by email. Spencer-Miller, a New Testament professor at United Methodist Drew Theological School, is one of more than 40 collaborators who are helping to establish the new church.

She and other collaborators declined to say how many congregations or people are part of the new denomination at launch. Organizers said by email they do not want to equate worth with volume. Among the collaborators are both United Methodist pastors and lay people, including at least three church leaders elected to be General Conference delegates or reserve delegates.

The new Connexion is not asking people to choose between the LMX and their affiliations with other faith communities, Spencer-Miller said by email and at the event. Ian Carlos Urriola, another collaborator and veteran General Conference delegate, said at the event that the new denomination plans to work with [The United Methodist Church’s official racial and ethnic caucuses](#), “ensuring that we remain in relationship with our forebears in the struggle.”

At this point, the Liberation Methodist Connexion has obtained tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in the United States. The new church also is in process of applying for a group exemption with the IRS to simplify the administrative process for its congregations and ministries.

[The Wesleyan Covenant Association](#) [WCA], a group on the traditionalist end of the theological spectrum, also plans to start a new denomination separate from The United Methodist Church. The WCA’s leadership includes General Conference delegates, and the association already has drafted its own [Book of Doctrines and Discipline](#).

The new Connexion has no doctrinal litmus tests, said the Rev. Janet G. McKeithen, a member of the new denomination’s working group. The LMX focuses more on actions than beliefs, Spencer-Miller later added. “We seek not answers that lead us to correct doctrines as to why we suffer. We seek correct actions, correct praxis where God sustains us during the unanswerable questions,” Spencer-Miller said during the online event.

Such actions — the Connexion’s website notes — include reparations, caring for the earth and freeing Methodist tradition of colonialism, white supremacy, economic injustice, sexism, ableism, ageism and heteronormativity. The new church draws its name from liberation theology, developed by Latin

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## New Progressive Methodist Denomination Starts, Continued

American Catholic theologians in the 1960s and soon augmented by Methodist theologians such as the [late] Rev. James Cone. The theology emphasizes God's call to liberate the poor and oppressed.

The Liberation Methodist Connexion plans to post a recording of its online event by the end the week [o/a December 5th Ed.] The new denomination plans for its next worship service to be an online New Year's Eve vigil. Learn more at [its website](#).

The name Connexion comes from the old British spelling of *connection* used by Methodism's founder, John Wesley. The letter "X" is also a symbol for Christ, the first letter of which looks like an X in Greek. "In that way it reminds of our heritage, some of the good soil," the Rev. Sue Laurie, one of the group's organizers, said by email.

The new denomination emerges out of the work of UM Forward, which formed ahead of the 2019 special General Conference to advocate for the removal of all United Methodist restrictions against homosexuality. Instead, a majority of General Conference delegates adopted [the Traditional Plan](#), legislation that tightened bans on "self-avowed practicing" gay clergy and instituted mandatory penalties for performing same-gender weddings.

Since that special session, UM Forward has had held gatherings in [Minneapolis](#), Denver and [Dallas](#) to discuss the church's future. The group also submitted its own separation plan to the coming General Conference [that would dissolve The United Methodist Church and form four new denominations instead](#).

While the idea of dissolution has gained little traction, a number of United Methodists have endorsed another proposal titled "Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation," [negotiated by a professional mediator with a theologically diverse group of United Methodists](#). The protocol would allow traditionalist churches — those that oppose same-sex weddings and the ordination of noncelibate gay clergy — to leave with their properties.

The new group would also get \$25 million in United Methodist funds. The Protocol also sets aside \$2 million for any other new Methodist denominations that form. But neither money nor the Protocol was an emphasis at the LMX launch event. Instead organizers focused on plans to provide educational resources, offer pastoral care and address the sins they see plaguing the church.

Laurie, a longtime activist for LGBTQ equality in The United Methodist Church, preached during the event's worship service about her weariness after decades without change to the church's stance. "Now I am grateful for a new day, an invitation to the Liberation Methodist Connexion to be among a fresh constellation of believers who have the urgency for their vision," she said. "I am grateful to be confronted by people who have come to the Gospel from different places."

*Heather Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News. Contact her at (615) 742-5470 or [news-desk@umcom.org](mailto:news-desk@umcom.org). To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free Daily or Weekly Digests](#).*

United Methodist Communications is celebrating **80 years of ministry!** Your support ensures the latest denominational news, dynamic stories and informative articles will continue to connect our global community. You can make a donation to UM Communications directly at [ResourceUMC.org/GiveUMCom](#), or you can give to Lake Gibson UMC with a notation that it is for United Methodist Communications.

**United Methodist Women Video Conference  
to Benefit Pakistan's Christian Women  
December 12th, 9:00 - 11:00 am**

The Gulf Central District United Methodist Women invite you to attend a UMW Christmas event to benefit women in Pakistan on Saturday, December 12th from 9:00 to 11:00 am. This Zoom event will feature special guest speaker **Alice Garrick** who will be joining us from Pakistan! Alice is the executive director of the **Women's Development and Service Society (WDSS)**, a ministry of the Raiwind Diocese of the Church of Pakistan and Royal Range which is a social enterprise for Women by Women.

Pakistan is a hot bed for sex trafficking, organ trafficking and other forms of human trafficking. Christian women and young boys are at high risk of being victims of these practices. **Alice's ministries provide vocational training and social enterprise opportunities** to these women so they can have a dignified way to provide their families with necessities. These ministries give women choices and hope for the future.

Many of you know Alice, who usually comes to the Tampa area each year and speaks at various unit meetings while she is here [she has spoken at one of our unit meetings]. Because of COVID she has not been able to visit and life is even harder there. We do not know when Alice will be able to return to the U.S. to be with us again, but Zoom makes it possible for us to be together. Her UMW sisters in the Tampa Bay Area thought this would be a great way and time of year to encourage her.

During the event you will not only learn first-hand how Alice is making a difference in her homeland, but you will also be able to see the items made by the women she helps. Separate from the zoom event, through Facebook, where the items her women have made will be posted, you can even purchase some of them! The items for sale there are made by women throughout Pakistan and the sale of these items gives each woman a dignified way to support their family. The items are BEAUTIFUL!

Please join us! Your RSVP to this invitation will be a great encouragement to Alice and her women! RSVP by December 8th by emailing Cathy Stone at [cstone@cornerstonefm.org](mailto:cstone@cornerstonefm.org) and she will send you the zoom link.

To learn a little about Alice's ministry at WDSS, read this 2014 article from *Response* magazine:

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/pakistanwomensdevelopment>



## Birthdays in December

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
12/9	Jan Booker
12/9	Elijah Wiley
12/11	Beverly Heinrich
12/11	Henry Zona
12/14	Linda Smucker
12/16	Debra Berry
12/17	Paul Havel
12/17	Beverly Hines
12/20	Kristie Otte
12/21	Brandon Oliva
12/22	Ginger Fredrikson
12/26	Carol Hanna
12/26	Ann Kneeland
12/26	Richard Thomas
12/28	Glenda Hess
12/28	Phyllis Kitchens
12/29	Virginia Collins
12/30	Justin Oliva
12/30	Harriet Shapiro



## Anniversaries in December

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