



# THE GOOD NEWS

## Lake Gibson United Methodist Church



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

*From the Pastor*

This year Easter will be a real celebration. After a year-long battle with the COVID-19 virus, a nasty political fight still lingering in some ways, a floundering economy and the racial discord dividing America, we are ready for some good news and Easter gives us that.

Easter is in the first week of April this year, so it is a Communion Sunday. We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper the same day we rejoice in the Resurrection. Hallelujah!!! The words we use, "His blood shed for the remission of sin" and "His body broken for us" will have an even greater meaning this year because they are used on Easter Sunday.

The hope that is experienced by Christians as they view the empty tomb is shared with the world as they see a vaccination for the virus becoming available to all people. This year I think we can all relate to Mary Magdalene. She was crushed, dejected, and crest-fallen; she had witnessed her Lord crucified. He had been abused, ridiculed, shamed and nailed to a cross with criminals and died. She wished it had been her rather than him. She felt empty, lost. All she could see was total darkness, much like us in the world today.

We have lost far too many people to this virus. The entire world has experienced grief, sorrow and darkness because of it. Every one of us have a family member, a friend or close acquaintance that has been affected by the virus. We all have had at least one negative experience with the political process and many have felt the sting of hatred due to racism.

Mary goes to the tomb that first Easter morning and finds the tomb empty. I am positive this is another shock to her. She assumed the worst and why wouldn't she after what has happened? She jumps to the conclusion that someone stole Jesus' body to farther humiliate him and his followers. The other shoe just dropped for Mary. Then two men in white (angels) appeared to her – don't you know right now her heart is beating a mile a minute, only the grace of God kept her from fainting. They tell her Jesus is alive – which she cannot comprehend. In the Gospel of John a gardener (which is in reality Jesus) appears to her and she begs him to tell her where the body is. Much like many of us have begged for mercy in the past year. Mercy to help us get through these tough times and over the tragedy that has plagued us. When Jesus speaks her name, she recognizes it is the Lord.

This Easter may each of us hear Jesus call our name and may we realize that God is here with us, among us, and in us. May the assurance of the Resurrection, the light of the world, the very Spirit of God, live in us and in our churches to transform the world through God's love.

Have a Glorious Easter,

*Pastor Steve*

**Date   Day                      April Events (as of 3/30/2021)**

- 1     Thursday    **12:00 pm**, StillInMission episode 29, webinar on missionaries sponsored by the General Board of Global Ministries, UMC; **2:00 pm**, Faith Talks, United Methodist Women (UMW) webinar, Attacks on Asian/Pacific Islanders
- 2     Friday
- 3     Saturday
- 4     Sunday        **9:15 am**, Sunday School, FLC (*repeating every Sunday*); **10:30 am**, Easter Sunday worship and communion service (watch video Sunrise service at any time)
- 5     Monday        **2:00 pm**, Board of Trustees meeting, church office; **7:00 pm**, Boy Scouts, FLC (*repeating every week*)
- 6     Tuesday        **7:00 pm**, Cub Scouts, FLC (*repeating every week*)
- 7     Wednesday **10:00 am**, Merry Matters craft group, Family Life Center (FLC) classrooms 1 and 2 (*repeating every Wednesday in April; changing to 1st and 3rd Wednesday in May*); **6:30 pm**, Choir rehearsal, Sanctuary (*repeating every Wednesday*)
- 8     Thursday        **1:00 pm**, Pastor's Bible Study (2 Corinthians) via Zoom (*repeating every Thursday*); **2:00 pm**, A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH) Board meeting, FLC main room; **6:00 pm**, UMW Racial Justice webinar with Deaconess Garlinda Burton; **6:30 pm**, Let Go Praise Team rehearsal; **7:00 pm**, Scouts Committee Monthly Meeting, FLC upstairs; **8:00 pm**, Seeing Working Class People webinar (part 1 of 2)
- 9     Friday
- 10    Saturday        **9:00 am**, United Methodist Men breakfast meeting
- 11    Sunday        **10:30 am**, Harvest Sunday (bring food pantry donations to sanctuary)
- 12    Monday        **10:00 am**, UMW Combined Circles meeting, FLC classrooms 1 and 2; **1:00 pm**, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee meeting, FLC classrooms 1 and 2
- 13    Tuesday
- 14    Wednesday UMW Climate Justice Federal Legislative Day, Washington, D.C. (all day)
- 15    Thursday        **1:00 pm**, Training on Inclusivity and Diversity in Church webinar
- 16    Friday
- 17    Saturday
- 18    Sunday        **10:30 am**, Native American Ministries Sunday (Special Sunday with Offering)
- 19    Monday
- 20    Tuesday
- 21    Wednesday **3:00 pm**, UMW Just Energy for All video training on Biomass; May newsletter articles due
- 22    Thursday        **Earth Day**
- 23    Friday
- 24    Saturday        **10:00 am**, UMW Rosa Valdez Action Day and Baby Shower (virtual meeting)
- 25    Sunday
- 26    Monday        **11:00 am**, UMW Leadership Team meeting
- 27    Tuesday        **Noon**, Florida Conference Creation Care webinar, Eat, Pray, Grow
- 28    Wednesday
- 29    Thursday        **8:00 pm**, Seeing and Reaching/Working Across Race and Class Lines webinar (part 2 of 2)
- 30    Friday

## Please Help Homeless Graduating Seniors

The celebration is on again this year for Polk's homeless high school graduates. These students are under the care of the Hearth Project of the Polk County school system. These seniors may or may not have family members to live with. Some may live on their own, in shelters or with friends . . . they live the best way they can. Now more than ever our students need a helping hand to overcome their homelessness due to COVID-19 and their own unusual circumstances.

They have worked hard and achieved much in order to graduate on their own. The gifts they are given are not ordinary gifts. They are **gifts to help them eat, live and survive day to day**. This is a very hard life. Some get scholarships but still have a hard time surviving through college or vocational school. Sadly, some don't make it to a better life, and some even drop out just before they graduate.

Once again there will be a graduation party exclusively for them with a photographer to capture the many memories made that day; a guest speaker, Julio Caba (he is wonderful) to motivate them and encourage them to continue; door prizes and a three-course meal provided by Mike's Grill. You can't imagine the smiles on their faces when they walk in the door and see all that has been prepared for them.

You may ask what you can do to help. The citizens of the county have always provided everything they need except food. **With your help we can provide the food items they need.** April 19th is the cut-off date. The luncheon will be in mid-May.

There is a box in the Church office and another in the Narthex for collection of food and supplies. A list of needed items is provided below. It may seem that we are being picky, but the **food must fit into 2-gallon Ziploc freezer bags and quart Ziploc freezer bags**. Cash is always good so we can buy the items that aren't donated.

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Webb at 863-221-5253. May God Bless you for considering this worthwhile project and any donation is greatly appreciated by the students, the Sunshine Committee and our little food committee.

**Items Requested: All items need to be individually sized and individually wrapped. We can't use full size.**

Regular flavor Chicken salad kits with crackers (flat box, not round plastic)

Regular flavor Tuna salad kits with crackers (flat box, not round plastic)

Vienna Sausage

Giant Slim Jim (Sam's)

Jif to Go (1.5 oz cups, need 270)

Ritz crackers (in sleeves)

Honey Graham crackers (in sleeves)

Lance cheese and/or peanut butter crackers

Assorted Lance crackers (substitution acceptable)

Nabisco cookies pouch, 2- or 4-pack

Continued on the next page . . .

## Help Homeless Graduating Seniors, Continued

belVita breakfast bars and biscuits

Granola bars, Nutri-Grain bars, fruit and nut bars, chewy bars, Nature Valley oat and honey bars

Kars sweet and salty trail mix

Planters peanuts (Sam's has peanuts, cashews and honey roasted in box)

Pop Tarts

Pringles snacks (.67 or .74 oz)

Rice Krispy treats

Assorted Cereals (individual servings. Sam's has 30-box cases)

Moon pies

Oatmeal creme pies

Quart freezer Ziploc storage bags (extra bags will be given to students)

1-gallon freezer Ziploc storage bags (extra bags will be given to students)

2-gallon freezer Ziploc storage bags

Plastic fork, knife and/or spoon and napkin sets. Must be sealed sets, not open pieces. (OK if salt and pepper included)

Individually wrapped wet wipes

Candy bags are also provided. All individually wrapped. No mints please

Chocolates

Skittles

Starburst candy

Motts fruit gummies

Life Savers

CASH also appreciated to purchase items that are not donated

Thank you again for any contribution you can make to help homeless high school seniors to feel valued and loved as they set out on the next phase of their lives.

Cindy Webb

## Help Requested

### Housing

Many of you know the story of Junaid Saqib, a member of our congregation who fled Pakistan under the threat of death for being a Christian activist. After four years of working to earn enough money to pay for getting his family through the immigration process, Junaid is close to having them join him in Florida.

Junaid has asked for our assistance in finding affordable, 2-bedroom housing in this area for his wife, Naseem, and two young daughters, Imsaal and Mishmal.

If you know of an inexpensive apartment or house for rent, please call Junaid at 863-500-2173.

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

This past winter ALBOH underwent a re-accreditation which is good for five years. They are now ready to move forward offering continued exceptional care support for children.

There were a number of small items which were recommended to improve our services. The first is that all our cleaning supplies should be stored within a **locked cabinet**. During Spring cleaning, should you find a large two-door cabinet within the 'back 40' of your garage and want to see it disappear, call the church office.

Additionally, we are looking for a **fire resistant filing cabinet** for permanent personnel records. Probably not something you have around the house, but one never knows.

### Easter Cantata Pictures

Scattered throughout this issue are photos taken off the video recording of the March 28th cantata. Thanks to everyone who participated, from the techies to the singers and especially to Glenda Hess for providing such an inspirational program.

Thanks also to Glenda for the hand-made corsages.

## Soffit Repair



Thanks to Leon Rumohr, the church is getting its soffits repaired. You can't see it now, but most of the wood holding up this part of the roof had significant wood rot from water damage.

The replacement wood is actually connected using decking braces rather than being nailed directly into the sill plate. This should improve its longevity.

Once we are able to rent a lift, there is another portion which also requires replacement. This is a time-consuming task. We are extremely lucky to have someone with the skills, dedication and energy to see this project through.

Photo by Dwight Kitchens

## Audio/Visual Progress Report

We are continuing to enhance our capabilities on the audio/visual front. After a disastrous first attempt to deliver new speakers for the sanctuary (which were damaged in shipment), UPS came through with two new speakers. They have now been installed and are ready for the Easter service. You should notice much improved sound quality in the sanctuary.

We've now received a second camera for use in the sanctuary. Our original plan was to have three mounted cameras to use during our worship services. This one is another point-tilt-zoom 30X camera. It has the same field of view as our previous camera, which gives us redundancy should the first camera malfunction. Its location will also give us a different perspective on the service.

The Family Life Center (FLC) now has a drop-down reflective screen which can be used for meetings and videos. This Easter, anticipating larger attendance, we will offer the FLC as an overflow location into which we will simulcast the worship service. We'll

Continued on the next page . . .



## Audio/Visual Progress Report, Continued

present the service in the FLC through our Facebook livecast using a projector, amplifier and speakers.

Lots of people made this all possible. Say "Thanks" to Tom Burns, Bob Siegel, Dick McPherson, David McPherson and Dwight Kitchens for having this ready for the Easter.

## Costa Rica Virtual Mission Trip May 11 - 13, 6:00 pm



Please join First United Methodist Church Lakeland on **May 11-13, 2021** for a **virtual mission trip with Costa Rica Mission Projects (CRMP)** and prayerfully consider joining us for our return trip to serve alongside them, **January 8-15, 2022**.

The virtual mission trip will be conducted via Zoom from 6:00 - 7:30 pm nightly beginning that Tuesday as we join a local prayer service. **Wil Bailey**, CRMP founder and director, asks that we **commit to being present each night** of the virtual mission trip, as though we were actually on a journey to Costa Rica. Wil has led several virtual trips during the pandemic and has lots to share.

There will be reading to do in advance. First UMC sent a team to serve with CRMP during the summer of 2019. We had two mission trips scheduled with them during 2020, both of which were cancelled because of COVID-19.

To register for the virtual mission trip, email Forest White at **Forrest** (fwhite@firstumc.org). You'll receive the Zoom credentials in early May.

## TechSoup.org's COVID Recovery Fund

Computerization for non-profits is often costly. Thanks to TechSoup, churches and other non-profits can often get free or discounted software and hardware from major manufacturers. We were blessed with a \$2,000 COVID Recovery Fund grant from TechSoup to purchase equipment in support of our mission.

We have recently purchased a new Dell laptop computer to use in FLC Classrooms 1 and 2 for Zoom meetings and display on our television. This replaced a much older and slower laptop which we had previously installed. Additionally, we have ordered two convertible laptops which can also serve as tablet computers. These are anticipated to be used to control the sanctuary's sound system from outside of the Audio/Video booth, and to permit the pastor to see the Facebook comments which come in each Sunday during the service.

This gift made it possible for us to acquire equipment which we would have otherwise delayed purchasing into future years.

## Using Amazon Smile to Help the Florida United Methodist Children's Home

How do you donate to the Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH) **without spending an extra penny**? If you ever order from Amazon.com, you join their free **Smile** program.

Visit **smile.amazon.com**. The entire shopping experience is the same as with using Amazon, and most products available on amazon.com are available at Amazon Smile. **Sign in and Choose Your Charity. Of course, we suggest you choose "Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc."** The screen will look slightly different depending on whether or not you're already signed into Amazon.

Amazon uses their profits to **return one-half of one percent (0.5%) of your purchase to FUMCH**. Amazon's website reflects that as of May 2019, FUMCH has received \$2,726.45 from purchases.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Using Amazon Smile to Help FUMCH, Continued

Just imagine how much good could be done if every Methodist in Florida designated FUMCH as their charity of choice! Don't just place orders with Amazon.com. Choose to use <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-0638479> instead. It makes a difference to children's lives.

Dwight Kitchens

## Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH) Virtual Day on Campus

If you missed the first-ever Virtual Day on Campus on March 29th, all is not lost! From the comfort of your own home, at your own pace, you can watch it on YouTube. The presentation is about one hour long.

Click on the link below to enjoy this special event to learn about the vital work FUMCH does with children:

[FUMCH Virtual Day on Campus](#)

## Watch the Easter Sunday 2021 Virtual Choir, *Thine Be the Glory*, Available Now!

Watch as hundreds of United Methodists from across the globe join together to sing *Thine Be the Glory*. Go to <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/be-a-part-of-the-united-methodist-church-easter-virtual-choir> or to the UMC Discipleship Ministries' YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9KnAzKLOgo>.

This was an amazing experience bringing together over 400 singers from different countries, congregations, and communities – proving that even in the midst of a pandemic we are still united.

This project would not have been possible without the help of some amazing folks lending a hand: The arrangement of “Thine Be the Glory” was written and performed by Rev. Jared Wilson, Senior Associate Pastor and Director of The Music and Arts Academy at Madison Street UMC in Clarksville, Tennessee.

## Easter Sunday 2021 Virtual Choir, Continued

The Worship Team at Discipleship Ministries for coordinating the project and providing the vision for the Easter choir.

And of course, all 400 singers who submitted wonderful videos for us to use.

## Thank you all and Happy Easter!

“Thine Be the Glory” is #308 in The United Methodist Hymnal. [Click here for more information on this hymn.](#)

[Source: Email, Discipleship Ministries [newsletters@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:newsletters@umcdiscipleship.org), March 29, 2021 at 10:59 am]

## Prayer Ministry

*God raised Him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2: 9-11 (NLT 1996)*

We give thanks that prior to Jesus's ascension into heaven, he gave his disciples instructions on how to go into the world and spread the Good News. May we continue our journey on earth by praying and restoring hope and faith by the love and compassion for others as Jesus has taught us to do. Take up your cross and follow Jesus; cling to Him to have eternal life. Amen

Please call the church office if you wish to become a prayer warrior for our LG church and Jesus.

Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.  
Happy Easter.

Prayer Ministry - Fran



## Please Sign Petition for Safety of the Rosa Valdez Center

For those of you who may not know, during chapel on Friday, March 12, 2021, we had a shooting on Union Street right in front of the Rosa Valdez playground. This is the second shooting since May in front of the playground.

Both incidents happened in broad daylight while our children were outside. The first incident left bullet casings all along the sidewalk and a bullet lodged in our wrought iron playground fence! In both incidents, our amazing staff acted quickly and no one was physically hurt . . . but the emotional trauma has been building with each incident.

This violence and danger are heart breaking! But . . . we are grateful to God for His protection and to our partners who have offered trauma counseling and support. We are also grateful to law enforcement who have turned their attention toward the safety of our school and seem to be working to do what they can to address the crime in our community.

We have also set up a petition to empower and give our supporters, parents and community members a voice to advocate for safety for their children. Please take a moment to read and sign our online petition to keep our kids safe: <https://www.change.org/rosavaldez>.

[Change.org will ask you for a small donation after you fill out the petition, but you can decline to do so. Please sign this petition to help Cornerstone Family Ministries, a UMW National Mission Institution, call attention to the increasing violence around the Rosa Valdez Center. Editor]

## Cookout for Hope House, March 27th, Continued

never stopped coming. A special thanks to Lesley Kristine for being my right arm today. I could not have done it without you. Thank you so much to The Wretched Few. Such a blessing."

Special thanks go to Laura Webb, her husband, Daniel Webb, Lesley Kristine and The Wretched Few VMC for making this day possible. [Thank you, Laura, for the photos.]



## Cookout for Hope House, March 27th

On Saturday, March 27th, **The Wretched Few Veterans Motorcycle Club**, held a cookout to support Hope House. Laura Webb and Lesley Kristine volunteered that day.

Here is a copy of Laura's FB post: "My heart is so full. The Wretched Few MC BBQed for the Hope House today and served over 20 of our guests. God is so great. Plus, the food donations

Continued . . .



## New Home for Sidewalk Sale Reminders

Usually we give the sale items we can't keep until the next sale to the Salvation Army. Recently the Salvation Army has become more selective in what they will take.



Lynn Meske, the UMM Sales Chair, found the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) website by accident, thinking she was on the SA site and scheduled our pickup. [Perhaps a God Thing?]

If you would like to schedule a pickup by the VVA in Tampa, go to their website <https://pickupplease.org/schedule-email>.



## United Methodist Men

The UMM held their monthly meeting on March 13th in FLC classrooms 1 and 2. We discussed projects that we could do and what needed to be done in order to improve the appearance of the outside grounds and other areas.

We are looking into ways to draw members into UMM and maybe attract other men to join the Church.

**At the last meeting we discussed the following projects:**

Repairing the concrete slab outside the FLC power transformer

Replacing the plants along the walkway

We also discussed having a car show in April/May 2021

### Status:

We are still in the planning stages for concrete repair outside of the transformer between FLC and A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH). We have the material with the exception of concrete.

We were able to replace some of the plants along the walkway between the FLC and ALBOH. At the last meeting we helped replace the fascia boards on the Church that were damaged by a tornado. Thanks to all who helped with these projects, as well as other projects in the past. Every little bit helps make the workload lighter.

**The Car/Motorcycle Show is still up in the air. If we do not have at least 20 vehicles entered by the 10th of April, there will not be a car show on May 15th. It would not be productive for the Church or fair to those who registered to win the trophy or cash prizes.**

We have given out half of our *Strength for Service* booklets to the Polk County EMS/Fire Department and the remaining will be given to Watson Clinic and the Lakeland Police Department. If anyone cares for a copy please contact me. The UMM provided the funds for these out of our dues.

Continued on the next page . . .

## UMM, Continued

We also approved funds for repairing the old church sign to be used to post ALBOH hours and their special notices.

**Our next meeting will be Saturday, April 10th at 9:00 am in the FLC. We'll share a continental breakfast before the meeting starts.**

If anyone cares to come to our meetings, they are open-door. We would embrace your ideas and suggestions. We are willing to help anyone who needs home repairs that are within our capability.

Thanks to all who have supported the UMM and LGUMC; your help is greatly valued. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 863-816-3194.

Michael Moake  
UMM President

## United Methodist Women Combined Circle Meeting, April 12th

**Attention Ladies of Heart to Heart Circle, Ruth Circle of Love, and any other ladies interested in UMW!**

There will be a **combined meeting of the circles on April 12, 2021**, in the FLC, rooms 1 and 2 at 10:00 am. We would like as many ladies as possible to come, so they can **share their ideas about the plans, organization, activities, and studies of these groups**. We hope ladies who have not been participating in a UMW circle will consider attending this meeting to help us plan our activities.

This last year has been a challenge, so we need to come together and plan on where the Lord is leading us in our future endeavors. We will wear masks and social distance, but will come together in unison. **We need your input!**

We will celebrate together at the conclusion of the meeting with a continental breakfast! We hope to see you there! If you have any questions please call Ruth Zona (863-859-5967) or Pat Moon (863-858-6883).

## SIDEWALK SALE

Our February sale was a huge success! This event would not have been possible without the time and effort from many committed people. We would like to thank everyone who donated their items so they could become someone else's treasure.

A Special thank-you to the United Methodist Men who donated their time and muscle and to the United Methodist Women for their many hours of service. Thank you to Dwight Kitchens for handling all the electronics. This was a huge help in the success of our sale.

A very special thank-you to all the people who shopped with us. Our church has been blessed by all the generosity, enabling us to support several local charities.

Unfortunately, we are **NOT able to accept donations of any kind until further notice**. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but our storage facilities are still full.

Watch for the newsletter in the fall for the latest updates on our sale in November, tentatively scheduled for November 5th and 6th.

Have a great summer and God bless.

Lynn Meske

## Merry Matters Making Many Mats

We are continuing to make progress on creating plarn (plastic yarn). For anyone interested in helping out, **or just hanging out**, we meet on Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 am in the Family Life Center (FLC). This schedule will continue thru April. No experience necessary.

Call Lynn Meske at 863-858-3589 if you have any questions. (Photo by Lynn Meske)



## Merry Matters Looking for More Makers



Photo by Lynn Meske

## Seekers Sunday School Class Starts a New Study on April 4, 2021

Seekers Sunday School Class will begin a new study for the 2nd quarter of this year based on *The Bible Code: Finding Jesus is Every Book in the Bible* by O.S. Hawkins. We will start the new study on April 4th at 9:15 am. I know that's Easter Sunday, but there is time enough before the regular 10:30 am service with communion.

Class meets in-person in the Family Life Center and simultaneously by Zoom. (Zoom meeting ID is 834 9800 2155) If you are new to the Seekers and are interested in participating, or would like more information, please call Sue Heishman, 863-858-4985.

Blessings  
Sue Heishman

## Gobs of Information on Our Website

It is surprising from time to time that worshipers ask questions which are fully covered within our website, [www.LakeGibsonUMC.com](http://www.LakeGibsonUMC.com). It offers lots of details about various subjects. Many links are found in the header (the red bannered area at the top of the page).

Additionally, you will find a multitude of subjects accessible from the very bottom of the page. Here, you find five categories covering our church, it's staff, past sermons, past newsletters, forms, and service opportunities (both in church and within the community), etc.

Continued . . .

## Information on Our Website, Continued

It is our intention to keep you up-to-date on new information by the area entitled "**Our Church Blog**" which is found on the left-hand side of the front (1st) page. The Blog is below "Submit Your Prayer Request" and "View Prayers Requested". (If you want to have your prayer lifted up, this is an opportunity for others to join in your appeal.)

The home (front) page includes many timely hyperlinks. If you want to participate in this week's worship service, join an online Sunday School session, link to a podcast of previous Sunday Sermons and Left Overs, find a congregant's phone number and address in our directory (password required, call the office to get it), join Pastor Steve's Thursday afternoon Bible study, all this can be done from the home page.

Browse around and see what is happening in your church.

Dwight Kitchens  
[dwight@dwightkitchens.com](mailto:dwight@dwightkitchens.com)

## Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS), April 18, 2021



*"And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God."* Luke 13:29 (ESV)

Native American Ministries Sunday was created in 1988 to develop and strengthen Native American ministries. United Methodism boasts **157 Native American congregations**. Fifty-three of the 56 annual conferences have a Committee on Native American Ministries which resources, educates constituents about Native ministries, and distributes the annual conference Native American Ministries Sunday offering to Native ministries.

Gifts to the Native American Ministries Sunday offering also provide scholarships for Native American seminarians who will pastor and lead the church. NAMS is one of **6 Special Sundays with Offering** in the United Methodist Church.

Continued on the next page . . .



## Native American Ministries Sunday (NAMS), Continued

Thank you for your generosity in 2020! Across the UM connection you gave **\$273,741** to the **Native American Ministries Sunday** offering. This offering helps to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the Annual Conferences, Native American rural, urban, reservation ministries and communities relating to the General Board of Global Ministries. It also provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology. This fund is distributed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministries and The General Board of Global Ministries.

## Justice Talks: A Look Ahead at 2021

“The General Board of Church and Society recorded our webinar **Justice Talks: A Look Ahead at 2021**. The recording is available on [YouTube](#) for all who wish to view the discussion at their convenience. You can also visit the [Action Center](#) to participate in current advocacy initiatives.”

“This was the first virtual event in our Justice Talks series and we hope that it was an informative time of exploring our priorities for 2021. Keep an eye out for a Save the Date for our next event, tentatively planned for April, where we will focus on international concerns.”

Susan Henry-Crowe <gbcs@umcjustice.org>

[The Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe is the General Secretary of the **General Board of Church and Society** of The United Methodist Church. She has served as the social justice agency’s top executive since 2014 after 22 years at Emory University.]

## General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) Action Center

To see the latest United Methodist Church advocacy initiatives, click here [Take Action](#) (or put this address in your browser: <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action/>). As of March 30, 2021, these are the initiatives shown on the GBGS website:

Continued . . .

## General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) Action Center, Continued

**Take Action by sending a message to your U.S. Senator and your U.S. Representative on the following topics:**

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:** Tell Congress to make climate justice a priority.

**HEALTH AND WHOLENESS:** Tell Congress to support racial equity in health care.

**CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS:**

Tell Congress to support a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants.

Tell Congress to reform prisons, jails and migrant detention.

**PEACE WITH JUSTICE:** Tell Congress to provide COVID-19 international assistance.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE:** Tell Congress to support a just and equitable economic recovery.

## The Reality of Racism Podcasts from First UMC Lakeland

When has the Church participated or benefited from forms of Racism? When has the Church caused harm or looked the other way from those who were harmed? Why do we instantly want to separate ourselves from the realities of Racism with the response: “This Isn’t Us”?

Join Pastor Andy in a new podcast series as he discusses with other pastors and church members the realities of racism within churches and communities. These open discussions can help us in the journey to become more aware of the impacts of racism around us, and how we might better recognize when we can make a difference.

This podcast will allow conversations of clergy and lay members to discuss and examine how our actions and inactions have contributed to Racism in the Church, but we will also discuss how remembering our Baptismal Vows and how

Continued on the next page . . .



## The Reality of Racism Podcasts from First UMC Lakeland, Continued

the gift of Baptism can help us to both acknowledge where we have been, and hope in where we're going.

To listen to Episode 2, March 11, 2021, with three First UMC Lakeland pastors (Andy, David, and Melissa) [click here](https://rememberourbaptism.podbeam.com/) [https://rememberourbaptism.podbeam.com/].

## UMW Climate Justice Federal Legislative Day, April 14, 2021

From Moses and Esther to the persistent widow, God's people have spoken to the rulers of their day, crying out against injustice. United Methodist Women speaks to those in power working and praying with those who cry out for justice, especially for women and children.

**On April 14, 2021** the United Methodist Women's Climate Justice Federal Legislative Day will continue our legacy of putting *faith, hope and love into action*. **We will urge Congress to pass climate legislation that prioritizes just energy for all.**

**We want 100% renewable energy in transportation and energy production, and just transition especially for workers in the fossil fuel energy industry and those living in frontline and fenceline communities.**

We are grateful to partner with the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE), who are working with United Methodist Women to provide training and organize meetings with Congress.

Definitions:

**Frontline community** - one that is among the first to be negatively affected by climate change.

**Fenceline community** - one that is directly adjacent to and affected by a company's noise, odors, chemical emissions, traffic, parking or operations.

Continued . . .

## UMW Climate Justice Federal Legislative Day, Continued

Residents of both fenceline and frontline communities are predominantly people of color and the working poor. Adverse impacts on their property lower its value, if not making it unsellable, and they don't have the money to relocate to healthier neighborhoods.

## Earth Day Sunset Vigil April 8, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

On April 8th we will be hosting a virtual, multifaith Earth Day Sunset Vigil from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The night will honor the importance of healing our Earth and communities as we celebrate Earth Month. This night will include videos from our community, story-telling, a gallery of eco-art, a youth showcase, inspiring reflections from different faith traditions, and a candlelight vigil.

Last year, over 200 people joined us for a candlelight vigil during the first days of the COVID-19 pandemic. A year later now, we will gather again to honor the earth and the wisdom lent to us from our faith traditions.

Join us virtually April 8th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm EDT. We are celebrating on the 8th because we are taking into account the best time possible given religious celebrations and observances happening in April.

To register for this free video event, go to <https://www.faithinplace.org/earth-day-2021>.

[Source: Email, Rev. Brian Sauder, Faith in Place [info@faithinplace.org](mailto:info@faithinplace.org), March 29, 2021 at 1:44 pm]

## Wonder Walk 2021 Super Stars

Despite virtually hosting this event in the midst of a pandemic, God blessed Cornerstone Family Ministries and the Rosa Valdez Center tremendously. They announced that they are **on track to raise more scholarship funds this year than ever before!!!!**

Wesley Memorial UMC in Tampa raised the most money - \$11,384.67. First United Methodist Church of Lutz had the most walkers.

## Call for Action: Rise Above Plastics Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church (FLUMC)



**CREATION CARE TASK TEAM  
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE, THE  
FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH**

We need your help! Email your Florida Representative and Senator, and take other actions in your church to support our **Plastic and Foam-Free FLUMC campaign**. Please share this article with your friends and neighbors to help reduce plastic pollution in Florida.

Advocate now for support of the **Bag Ban Bill** that returns home rule to local governments to pass plastic bag bans by [EMALING YOUR LEGISLATOR HERE](#). If you wish to email or write to your leaders rather than clicking on the link above, the local Florida Senate and House members' contact information is below. Summary of the Florida House and Senate bills is also below.

### **Additional Resources if you want to learn more:**

1. Rise Above Plastics (RAP) Advocacy Week Training. If you missed the March 15th training video, you can access it [here](#). Access Passcode: RAPtraining2021!.
2. Check out and use our RAP Week Toolkit: <http://bit.ly/RAPFLtoolkit2021>.
3. Check out our Plastic Free Florida coalition website to get some background information on plastic pollution in Florida: <https://plasticfreefl.org>.

### **Support for Senate Bill 594/House Bill 6027**

Tell your State legislators to support Senate Bill 594/House Bill 6027 to allow local governments the option to enact *Foam and Plastic Free* legislation.

**Currently Florida law prohibits local municipal and county governments from regulating the use of plastic and foam.** Join us in advocating home rule in *Foam and Plastic Free* regulation.

Description of the proposed legislation:

***Preemption of Recyclable and Polystyrene Materials:*** *Deleting preemptions of local law relating to the regulation of auxiliary containers, wrappings, or disposable plastic bags; repealing the preemption of local laws regarding the use or sale of polystyrene products to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, etc.*

The Senate and House Bills are in committees. Now is the time to voice your support.

**State House - District 39, Representative Josie Tomkow: Capitol Office -** 222 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300, Phone: (850) 717-5039; **District Office:**  
315 Pontotoc Street, Auburndale, FL 33823-3444, Phone: (863) 968-5666

**State Senate - District 22 Senator Kelli Stargel: Capitol Office -** 322 Senate Office Building,  
404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100, Phone: (850) 487-5022; **District Office:**  
2033 East Edgewood Drive, Suite 1, Lakeland, FL 33803, Phone: (863) 668-3028

Continued on the next page . . .

## Call for Action: Rise Above Plastics, Continued

### Actions We Can Take Right Now

1. Advocate for the Bag Ban Bill that returns home rule to local governments to pass plastic bans. Email your legislator.
2. Implement plastic and foam-free practices in our church by **replacing foam and plastic with reusable dishes or biodegradable paper products**.
3. Plan a clean-up in your community to remove plastic and foam trash from the environment

Cara Fleischer is the **Florida UMC Creation Care Task Team Chair**, Creation Care Ministry Leader, Saint Paul's UMC and Tallahassee Green Faith Alliance Organizer.

Cara's phone is (850) 755- 2505. Email: [www.carafleischer.com](http://www.carafleischer.com). You can read more on her blog: [Cara Fleischer | Tallahassee.com Community Blogs](http://CaraFleischer|Tallahassee.com).

### Letter from Bishop Ken Carter

Dear Clergy and Laity of the Florida Annual Conference:

It has been a year since we first asked you to suspend worship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, you have been doing the work of innovation and providing virtual and safe in-person gatherings. We continue to applaud your efforts to provide ministry online and to safely return to in-person activity using the guidelines we have created after discernment with your church leadership. We know every context is different. We continue to promote shared leadership among clergy and laity as you continue to reach the needs of your community.

We know there will come a day when the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] CDC will make changes in their recommendations for indoor gatherings. Vaccine distribution has increased and positive cases have decreased. The light at the end of this tunnel is getting brighter. Thanks be to God!

We will continue to monitor the latest guidance from the CDC. For now, we ask you to continue to practice these essential guidelines:

1. At all times persons must **maintain at least six feet of distance** between family groups.
2. **Masks or cloth face coverings are required** when any group gathers (except for children under the age of 2).
3. **Monitor your symptoms**. Stay home if you are sick or displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive should adhere to the CDC guidelines for isolation and quarantine.
4. All inside activities must be in **well ventilated spaces** that allow for persons to maintain at least six feet of distance between family groups. **Outside activities are preferred over inside activities**.

Our COVID-19 safety [protocols](#) and [guidelines](#) are connected to the ongoing guidance and recommendations from the [Florida Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Although they have updated their guidance related to persons who have received the vaccine and for schools, their

Continued on the next page . . .

## Letter from Bishop Ken Carter, Continued

guidance for gatherings related to churches remains the same. Without knowing the vaccination status of all parishioners, continuing the aforementioned protocols will be the most responsible action.

We encourage local churches to continue the offering of online worship. We pray for patience as some persons return to in-person worship, while others await the vaccine.

We know some of you are beginning to plan summer activities for children and youth. We are pleased that we will be able to host summer camp at Warren Willis Camp this summer as they follow the strict guidance from the American Camping Association. Information about the Warren Willis Camp guidelines can be found [here](#) and you can register [here](#). Your church should plan to follow similar guidelines as you plan your summer.

All of our previous [updates](#) and resources are found on our [COVID-19 website and in our FAQ section](#). If you have questions or we can help interpret these guidelines, please reach out to your District Superintendent or contact the Episcopal Office at [ashanks@flumc.org](mailto:ashanks@flumc.org).

We appreciate your perseverance. We are a people of hope who continue to press on as we remain On Mission Together.

The Peace of the Lord,  
Bishop Ken Carter and The Cabinet of The Florida Annual Conference

## "For Such a Time as This": United Methodist Women Called to Act for Racial Justice

Thursday, April 8, 6:00 – 7:00 pm

A Conversation with Deaconess M. Garlinda Burton, Interim General Secretary of the  
General Commission on Religion and Race

Join with United Methodist Women friends for a conversation with Deaconess M. Garlinda Burton, Interim General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race.

M. Garlinda Burton served as executive director of a Nashville, TN, literacy/enrichment program for under-served, urban children created by the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, D.C. She is also founder of MotherWit, a consulting company that helps organizations achieve cultural/global justice and inclusion, and foster personal and team excellence and cooperation. She has worked since 2013 producing resources on anti-racism, intercultural competency, tribalism and global communications for the Commission on Religion and Race. She has worked for the international agencies of the United Methodist Church for more than 30 years.

Pre-registration is required and capacity is limited. Registrations are approved on a first-come, first-served basis. [Register here](#). If the registration link does not work for you, please copy and paste this text into your browser window:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsf-CvpzouG9beMuVv93vkUHK21HLLMGjm>.



## **Building the Table Together: A Training on Inclusivity and Diversity in the Church**

**April 15th, 1:00 pm**

The Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church invites you to join us at 1:00 pm EDT on Thursday, April 15th for a Zoom training session on diversity and inclusion within the church, hosted by Shanterra McBride of [MarvelousUniversity.com](http://MarvelousUniversity.com). Shanterra's presentation on "Building the Table Together" will cover topics relevant to diversity and inclusion in our church as a whole, as well as in our specific ministries.

Shanterra McBride is the founder of Marvelous University, offering life coaching and success planning for young people, specializing in leadership development for girls and young women.

To register, go to this link: [https://arumc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Kqji31iNQfmhEqLrrUI-IA](https://arumc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Kqji31iNQfmhEqLrrUI-IA)

### **'I See You' Webinar Series from Discipleship Ministries, April 8th and 29th**

**Webinar 1:** Seeing Working Class People

**Date:** Thursday, April 8, 2021, 8:00 pm EDT

**Webinar 2:** Seeing and Reaching/Working Across Race and Class Lines

**Date:** Thursday, April 29, 8:00 pm EDT

Join Scott Hughes as he talks with Rev. Dr. Tex Sample about his book [Working Class Rage](#) for a two-part webinar series. 1 John 5:20-21 reminds us that part of loving God, who is unseen, is seeing and loving those around us who are hurting and feel neglected.

This webinar series is part of the [Courageous Conversations project](#), yet it is open to all pastors and all church leaders [that is, all of us] who are seeking to better understand and love those who feel as though their voice doesn't matter.

Two primary questions at the heart of these webinars will be:

Has the church failed to see the pain of the white working class?

How might seeing the pain of the white working class help the church see the pain of Black people?

**Click the links below to register for the free webinars:**

[April 8, 2021 - Seeing Working Class People](#)

[April 29, 2021 - Seeing and Reaching/Working Across Race and Class Lines](#)

For more information about the how the Courageous Conversation resources can help your local church to engage in meaningful and productive dialogue, [click here to enroll in the Courageous Conversations teaching series](#).

Join UMW for Cornerstone Family Ministries'  
Virtual Action Day and Baby Shower  
April 24, 10:00 - Noon



United  
Methodist  
Women

Cornerstone  
VIRTUAL ACTION  
DAY & BABY  
SHOWER

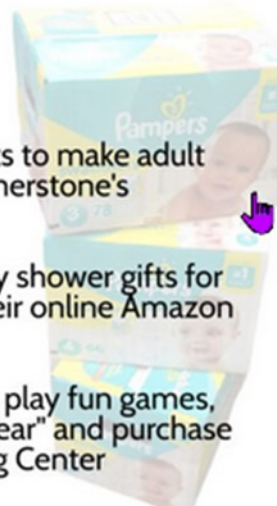
We invite you to join us in  
supporting Cornerstone Family  
Ministries...



Saturday, April 24, 2021  
10AM - 12PM  
Go To: [www.Zoom.com](http://www.Zoom.com)  
Meeting ID: 869-6340-1587

### How to Prepare...

1. For your "Action" we are asking all UMW units to make adult and children size face masks to donate to Cornerstone's sponsored child care centers and students.
2. Donate diapers, wipes and/or purchase baby shower gifts for Rosa Valdez Early Learning Center through their online Amazon registry, go to: <http://bit.ly/rosavaldez>
3. Register & Join the virtual event prepared to play fun games, recognize the Rosa Valdez "Caregiver of The Year" and purchase art work created by Rosa Valdez Early Learning Center Students!



To Register Online Go To:  
[www.CornerstoneFamilyMinistries.org/umwactionday](http://www.CornerstoneFamilyMinistries.org/umwactionday)

Register By Mail: Kathy Robertson  
P.O. Box 657 Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

**Thank you for your  
generous support and  
donations!**

DROP-OFF MASKS & GIFTS @ CORNERSTONE: 1802 N. Albany Ave. Tampa, FL  
If you have any questions contact Jeanette Hodge-Smith at 813-253-3853 ext 301

Register for the April 24th event online at [www.CornerstoneFamilyMinistries.org/umwactionday](http://www.CornerstoneFamilyMinistries.org/umwactionday) or by mail using the form on the next page. To see the gift list or to order gifts from Amazon, go to <http://bit.ly/rosavaldez>. Have Amazon deliver to Cornerstone Family Ministries, 1802 N. Albany Ave, Tampa, FL 33607-4306. **SPECIFY Monday – Friday delivery only; no weekends.** [We were not able to figure out how to go thru Amazon.Smile to set up this ordering procedure. Maybe next time.]

In case you're not inclined to go online, the items needed are as follows: Huggies Natural Care Sensitive Baby Wipes, Unscented, 12 Flip-top Packs (768 wipes total); Luvs diapers size 5, 148 count, Triple Leak Guards disposable baby diapers; Pampers diapers size 6, 144 count, disposable baby diapers; Huggies Snug and Dry diapers size 4, 180 count; Huggies Snug and Dry diapers size 3, 200 count; Pampers Sensitive water-based baby wipes, hypoallergenic and unscented, 6 pop-top packs, 336 total (packages may vary); Pampers Swaddlers disposable diapers, size 2, 84 count, Super Pack (packaging may vary).

Continued on next page . . .

**UMW Action Day & Baby Shower  
Virtual Event Registration**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHURCH/UMW UNIT NAME:** Lake Gibson UMC, Lakeland, FL

**Have you ever participated in a UMW Action Day & Baby Shower to benefit Cornerstone Family Ministries?**

**YES NO** (Circle the answer that applies)

**How would you like to “Take Action!” this year? (Select all that apply.)**

Diaper & Wipes Donation

Baby Registry Donation

Adult Masks Donation

Children Masks Donation

Rosa Valdez Early Learning Center Volunteer

Cornerstone’s Community Garden Volunteer

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for registering for the **UMW Action Day and Baby Shower** to benefit Cornerstone Family Ministries. Please mail your registration form to: Kathy Robertson, Gulf Central District UMW Secretary, P.O. Box 657, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688-0657

## Black Clergywomen Share Challenges, Rewards in New Book

By Jim Patterson, March 15, 2021 | UM News

*"Pioneer Black Clergywomen: Stories of Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church 1974-2016," written by Josephine Whitely-Fields, includes stories from Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, the Rev. Tara Sutton and more.*

When Bishop Linda Lee started work in the Wisconsin Conference in 2004, she noticed that she got a lot of unsolicited advice about the administrative duties of her new position. The strange thing was, most of the advice-givers had never been a bishop. She already had held the position in the Michigan Conference.

"I became aware of the fact that some people were of the mindset that being spiritual and Black could not be equated with good administration," Lee said. The anecdote is one of many in "[Pioneer Black Clergywomen: Stories of Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church 1974-2016](#)" that lays out the frustrations, challenges and rewards during the careers of nine Black United Methodist clergywomen.

The book was written by the Rev. Josephine Whitely-Fields, who retired in 2014 after more than 40 years as a pastor, seminary professor and administrator. She also is one of the subjects of the book, which uses a questionnaire format to let the women speak for themselves.

"Some of our ladies have been attacked physically," Whitely-Fields said. "We have also been sexually harassed." Some people believe no women of any race should be in the ministry, she said.

"There are people who identify with the pastor as a representative of Christ, and because Christ was male, then they feel that a female cannot adequately be the spiritual representative," Whitely-Fields said. Her answer: "Our call didn't come from man. Our call came from God. Therefore, you or nobody else can tell me that I cannot answer the call to ministry." Read more about pioneering Black women in Methodism in a [two-part Ask The UMC series](#).

The Rev. Sallie Crenshaw was the [first Black woman ordained](#) in The Methodist Church in 1958. It took until 1984 for the first Black woman bishop, Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly, to be appointed in The United Methodist Church.

With financial help from the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History and United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Whitely-Fields sought Black clergywomen willing to tell their stories. Twenty-three agreed, nine of whom are included in the book.

In addition to Lee and Whitely-Fields, the profiles include Western Pennsylvania Conference Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, the Rev. Cheryl Bell, the Rev. Ella DeDeaux, Virginia Conference Bishop Sharma Lewis, East Ohio Conference Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, the Rev. Edna Morgan and the Rev. Tara Sutton.

Especially in the earlier days of Black clergywomen, there were appointments to small, isolated churches, some on the way to closure. There were also pay disparities.

On the other hand though, once we get past those initial barriers, people respond to us in a different way because they are able to identify with us as women to women," Whitely-Fields said. "Because the majority of the people in the church are women, and when they find a woman that is sensitive and compassionate, they begin to gravitate and can become our greatest supporters."

**Proceeds from the book will benefit scholarships for Black clergywomen.**

[Article originally appeared in United Methodist News Daily Digest, March 15, 2021 by Jim Patterson. Used with permission of UMNews.org]



## Planned Denomination Gets Name

By Sam Hodges, March 1, 2021, UM News

Traditionalists committed to leaving The United Methodist Church have chosen “**Global Methodist Church**” as the name for the denomination they plan to launch. The group also unveiled on March 1 a logo and [website](#). The work toward a new denomination is guided by a transitional leadership council, which includes some retired United Methodist bishops.



“The primary mission of the Global Methodist Church will be to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly and witness boldly,” said the Rev. Keith Boyette, chair of the transitional leadership council.

But the official start and legal organization of the Global Methodist Church may well be more than a year and a half away. Boyette and other leaders are counting on passage of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation, [a plan negotiated by centrist, progressive and traditionalist United Methodist leaders](#) to end the denomination’s longstanding conflict over how accepting to be of homosexuality. The protocol would let traditionalist churches and even annual conferences vote to leave and form another denomination, with \$25 million to start. However, the protocol requires approval by General Conference, The United Methodist Church’s global lawmaking assembly.

The 2020 General Conference was delayed for a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and [has been postponed again](#) — until Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2022 — because the public health emergency continues. A special one-day, online General Conference has been called by the Council of Bishops for May 8, but it’s only to deal with 12 legislative items whose passage will help the denomination carry on administratively until a full General Conference can happen. The protocol is not on the limited agenda for May 8.

“We’re proceeding according to plan, which is we would legally form and operationalize the Global Methodist Church upon adoption of the implementation legislation for the protocol,” Boyette said by phone. He added that if, in the meantime, there’s erosion of support for the protocol among those who negotiated it, the Global Methodist Church will consider going ahead with an official launch.

Boyette said he has seen no such wavering. He noted that the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) — which advocates for full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in The United Methodist Church, and whose executive director, Jan Lawrence, was on the protocol negotiating team — reiterated support for the protocol [in a recent statement](#). The RMN statement also expressed support for the [Christmas Covenant](#), a restructuring plan for The United Methodist Church that allows for more regional policymaking.

For decades, The United Methodist Church has faced conflict over same-sex weddings and the ordination of “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy. Church law bans both those practices, but there has been widespread defiance in churches and conferences in the U.S. and western Europe.

The 2019 special General Conference in St. Louis saw a major effort to pass legislation allowing more local church control on LGBTQ inclusion, but [delegates reinforced the current bans](#) in a meeting whose levels of conflict, protest and emotion drew national media coverage.

Traditionalists have long maintained that the denomination’s sexuality divide can’t be overcome. The Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA), led by Boyette, [formed in 2016](#) and has been planning for a new denomination. Boyette said the WCA will continue to exist even though the Global Methodist Church has a name, logo and transitional leadership council.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Planned Denomination Gets Name, Continued

"I've often described (the WCA) as a midwife to bring to birth a new denomination. We will continue to pursue that objective," Boyette said. "Our expectation is that once the Global Methodist Church is functioning and has its convening conference, the Wesleyan Covenant Association will have fulfilled its mission."

The name "Global Methodist Church" is in the spirit of Methodism founder John Wesley's statement "The world is my parish," a press release said. The logo brings together circles representing the Trinity, with the cross in the center. "As a whole, the logo communicates God's sending of the church into the world," the press release said. "The sky-blue color reminds us that even though Global Methodists live all around the world, they are united together in God's great creation."

The transitional leadership council includes retired Bishops Lindsey Davis and Robert Hayes of the U.S., and retired Bishop John Innis, who led the Liberia Conference. "I am convinced the Global Methodist Church will be a vibrant, vital expression of Methodism in terms of its teaching and ethics," Hayes said in a press release.

The Rev. Philippe Adjobi, a district superintendent in the Côte d'Ivoire Conference, and the Rev. Andrei Kim, a district superintendent in the North West Russia and Belarus Conference, are among the other members. "I believe the Global Methodist Church will fulfill the expectations and aspirations of local churches throughout Africa," Adjobi said in materials provided by the traditionalist group.

But some United Methodists in Africa are strongly opposed to a breakup of The United Methodist Church, and a [variety of voices continue to weigh in](#) about the denomination's future. Boyette said traditionalist advocacy groups in The United Methodist Church, including Good News, submitted nominees for the transitional council. Another group of traditional leaders met in Atlanta about a year ago to cast a vision for the new denomination, and the group recently met virtually, calling for passage of the protocol as soon as possible.

That group includes active bishops, but Boyette said he "can't speak for them" as to whether they would leave The United Methodist Church for the Global Methodist Church. Nor would Boyette estimate how many churches will be a part of the Global Methodist Church at its launch. The group has a "Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline," available in English, French, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish, but various organizational and operational details remain to be worked out.

"True to our roots, we're a patient and methodical people," Boyette said. Late last year a group of progressive United Methodists [launched a new denomination](#) called Liberation Methodist Connexion, or LMX. [Article originally appeared in United Methodist News Daily Digest, March 1, 2021 by Sam Hodges. Used with permission of UMNews.org]

## Travel as a Spiritual Act

If you were not one of the 4,053 people who watched the Rick Steves live-cast on March 23rd, sponsored by the United Methodist Church's General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), you have a second chance.

The program announcement reads: "GBHEM Presents: TV host and travel author Rick Steves, along with GBHEM's Rev. Dr. Tammy Gieselman, will lead an online discussion focused on "Travel as a Spiritual Act." Steves will share how his travels and experiences with people from different places and cultures have shaped his faith and broadened his perspective on life."

To watch the recorded session (1 hour and 43 minutes), go to You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ3sL-RKnTM>.

## 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, Bob Siegel 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  
410-790-2662/863-984-4564  
phyllis\_kitchens@hotmail.com

## New Federation of Asian American United Methodists

The **New Federation of Asian American United Methodists** (NFAAUM) is a recognized racial ethnic caucus in The United Methodist Church. Twelve sub-ethnic caucuses compose NFAAUM: Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Formosan, Hmong, Indian, Japanese American, Korean, Lao & Thai, Middle Eastern, Pakistani, and Vietnamese.

### PURPOSE OF THIS ORGANIZATION

Our purpose is:

(a) to emphasize on the linkages and the empowerment of the Asian American local churches of The United Methodist Church;

(b) to articulate the concerns, interest and needs of the Asian American constituencies in all levels of The United Methodist Church;

(c) to advocate for the causes of Asian Americans before appropriate boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church;

(d) to coordinate Asian American programs and activities of the general and national United Methodist Church, its jurisdictional conferences, its annual conferences, its ethnic and special interest caucuses in relationship with boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church, its annual conferences, its jurisdictional conferences, and its ethnic and special interest caucuses in relationship with boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church;

(e) to promote relevant and meaningful Asian American ministries at all levels of The United Methodist Church;

(f) to encourage the full participation of Asian American United Methodists in all aspects of the life of The United Methodist Church; and

(g) to carry on charitable and educational activities associated with this purpose.

For more information, please contact us at [nfaaum@gmail.com](mailto:nfaaum@gmail.com). Thank you.



## Hope House Happenings (Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports)

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021 - Laura Webb (in spirit), Lori Riddle and Geri Mayo**

It was a busy day with twenty-five (25) guests signed in. Eleven (11) guests used the shower and seven (7) the laundry.



Marie and Bill had dropped off pantry food Friday. Today, Tom from the Seventh Day Adventist's food pantry donated boxes of pork products. HH was blessed with many other clothes and food donations as well. Also, Winn Dixie (Geri's employer) donated clear plastic, cold food containers.



Two ladies from St. Vincent de Paul CARES visited today. This group is based at St Anthony's Catholic Church on Marcum Rd. They are interested in working with charities in north Lakeland. Note to the other volunteers, a group text will be sent with contact information.

Geri provided the devotional: The Consequences of Anger. Day 2: Anger and Your Attitudes and Behaviors. The guests seemed attentive and engaged.



For lunch, Geri made spaghetti and meatballs with a broccoli vegetable melody. Lori made cupcakes for one of our guest's birthday. Unfortunately, he injured his arm and is in the hospital. Lori asked the guests, when they took a cupcake, to pray for Josh. It was a pleasant day, with only minor arguments. Our guests behaved very well. The spirit of God is working at Hope House.

**Tuesday, March 2, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan**

Today we had 29 guest sign-ins. Rick McLellan led in prayer, and, as always, presented the opportunity for our guests to receive Jesus as their personal Savior. It was a joy to have Josh, one of our guests, give testimony that he has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior. Today's devotion was from Matthew 14, THE MOST DEPRESSING DAYS.

This week our terrific meal was provided by Hampton and Sharon Conway from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, our favorite snowbirds. Our guests enjoyed a delicious penne pasta with spaghetti sauce and lots of meatballs. They also enjoyed rolls and tremendous cookies, too. Each brown to-go bag of sides included an egg-salad sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Lance peanut butter crackers and an applesauce fruit cup.

Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, camping toilet paper, radio and lantern batteries, masks and Band-Aids. Clothing items, men's underwear and socks were provided for our guests. We also filled a request for a new Bible. We brought clean, sanitized towels and washcloths with us for showers, and had 12 guests request showers. We had 8 guests do laundry.

We had a number of wonderful people drop in to see us and bring us items to meet our guests' needs. A special thanks to Harry Card, a military veteran who formerly was a volunteer at the Hope Center. Harry again brought us lots of coffee and laundry detergent. He is a real Blessing to the Hope Center! Barbara Allen-Coil from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church was also here today cutting hair.

We had a Blessed day and as we shared God's Love. We believe that God is able to do exceeding, abundantly. above all that we ask in the hearts and lives of our guests at the Hope Center.

Continued on the next page . . .



## Hope House Happenings, Continued

**Wednesday, March 3, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Lesley Kristine and Geri Mayo**

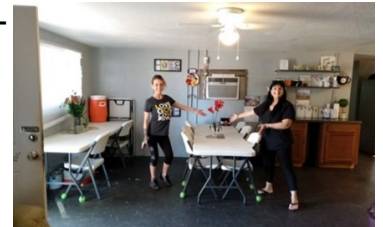
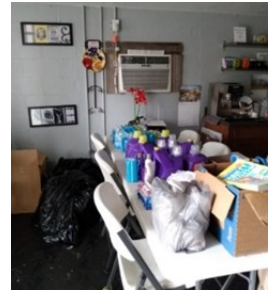
The early morning rainstorm stopped by the time Hope House was opened. Praise God. Chairs were set out and the patio was opened. Guests were required to wear mask while inside. This provided social distancing while taking care of our guests' comfort. It was a fairly busy day with 19 guests signing in; 9 using the shower and 4 doing laundry.

Breakfast consisted of breakfast casseroles made by Lori. There were pastries, chicken salad croissant sandwiches, and bananas brought by Laura. Also, a variety of cereal was set out. Coffee, bottled water, tea, and flavored water were the beverage choices.

Lori, Laura, Lesley and Geri worked on the clothing, food and hygiene donations from this weekend and Tuesday. On the right: Before (top) and after (bottom) pictures of the donations. Thanks to Laura and Leslie for their hard work putting everything away. (Photos provided by Geri Mayo.)



The guests had a wonderful lunch: a cheese tray, Italian sausages, very cheesy mac and cheese, peas, coleslaw, potato salad, pineapple chunks, and homemade brownies. The Hope House cats, Mama Kitty and Niko, enjoy their alfresco lunch.



Exciting news! Lori has been working with a **gentleman who is offering work for 8 to 9 Hope House guests**. They will be **picked up at Hope House and work approximately 8 hours on both Thursday and Friday**. They will be paid at the end of the day. They will be provided a lunch and plenty of water. **Lori and Geri will meet them when they return, so they'll be able to take showers and have a hot meal**. It is possible this may be an ongoing opportunity. God is so good!

NOTE: Geri's employer, Winn-Dixie, is having an **employee clothes drive** for Hope House. Also, there may be a cash donation with which the management team would purchase new underwear and socks. Winn-Dixie will also place the clothes in reusable bags which the guests would be able to use. Winn-Dixie will bring the donations on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, tentatively set for 10:00 am.

**Wednesday, March 5, 2021—Paulette Rolle-Alesnik, Lori Riddle and Geri Mayo**

Breakfast was scrambled eggs, scrambled cheesy eggs, bacon, instant grits, assorted cereals and oranges. Donations came in all day. A couple came with individually wrapped pastries and individual boxes of cereal. Geri's friend Deanna brought 15 fresh meals (pepper steak and Salisbury steak) which were given out with the to-go lunches.

The incomparable Ms. Marie and Mr. Bill brought several large boxes of Vienna sausage cans. When they found out the HH could use some Saltine crackers and fruit cups, they went out and purchased several large boxes. We are truly blessed by our donors.

For lunch, Lori made a wonderful meatloaf; Ms. Jean sent 2 ham and vegetable casseroles (pot pies) and Ms. Paulette made cucumber salad. Buttermilk pie, peach cobbler, cookies, pastries and strawberry bread made by Ms. Jean were the desserts.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Hope House Happenings, Continued

**Tuesday, March 9, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan**

Today we served 27 lunches, had 24 guest sign-ins, and sent out 3 lunches to go. Rick McLellan led in prayer and brought a devotion from Matthew chapter 23, BEST IN SHOW? Debbie and Rick served our guests Debbie's homemade version of Beanie Weenies. Our brown to-go bag of sides each included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of chips, a bonus baggie of cookies, nuts and candy (thanks to Tammy and Kevin), a pack of Lance peanut butter crackers, a pudding cup, and a diced fruit cup.

Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, camping toilet paper, radio and lantern batteries, a flashlight, masks and Band-Aids. Clothing items, socks, shoes and lots of women's sandals were available for our guests. We also filled a request for a new blanket, and a back-pack, both provided by Tammy. We were also thrilled to fill guests' requests for a new Bible and a New Testament. We also gave out some 6-page tracts titled BIBLE BASICS FOR NEW BELIEVERS and several large-print copies of DAILY BREAD.

Rob and Sue Atchley, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, stopped by and brought us needed items that we use to fill our brown bags.

God is touching hearts and meeting needs at the Hope Center. Your prayers and generosity in donating are a Blessing and make a great difference in the lives of those less fortunate!

**Wednesday, March 10, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Lesley Kristine and Geri Mayo**



Lesley and Geri spent the majority of the day processing clothes donations, which were the result of Winn-Dixie's employees clothes drive. (Sixteen stores participated.) Geri and her store management team delivered them on Monday, March 8th. Many of our male guests received shorts which are usually in short supply.

Kelly (on left, not shown), Brent, Geri, with WD team: Laura, Jason, Sandy and Marissa with the clothing donations.

Laura provided the devotional, *Walking in Love*, day 1: A Test of Love. Everyone was asked: Just between you and God, assess yourself, on a scale of one to ten, on the following ten expressions of love. Ask God how you are doing when it comes to love. [Source: *Walking in Love: A Study in John's Epistles*, Geared for Growth Bible Studies (2003).]

Just as Hope House was closing a lovely lady, Mary, donated eight bags of clothing. On Thursday, March 11th, Ms. Marie and Mr. Bill brought more clothing, two pairs of shoes and several boxes of Saltine crackers for the pantry.

**Thursday, March 12, 2021 - Paulette Rolle-Alesnik, Lesley Kristine and Ms. Debbie**

Lesley, Debbie and Paulette were busy processing the huge donation of clothing from Monday. They kept the guests on target with the shower list. Also, they provided razors, deodorant, and clothing.

Lunch was provided by the Sunday school class from Kathleen Baptist Church. They brought spaghetti with melted cheese, a salad, and brownies. Our lovely Ms. Jean sent strawberry shortcake and brownies. A troop of Girl Scouts made a surprise visit and donated several boxes of Girl Scout cookies.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Hope House Happenings, Continued

Thursday, March 12, 2021 - Paulette Rolle-Alesnik, Lesley Kristine and Ms. Debbie, Continued

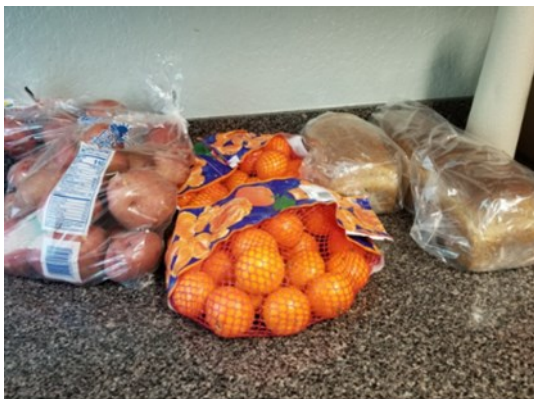


Friday, March 19, 2021 - Debbie Miller, Paulette Rolle-Alesnik and PRA Int'l

Hope House was busy with 25 guests signing in, 6 using the shower and 6 the laundry facilities. Paulette and Debbie provided a hot breakfast. For lunch, Ms. Paulette made baked chicken, jerk chicken, BBQ ribs and cabbage. Ms. Jean provided macaroni and cheese with bacon, and corned beef, cabbage and mashed potatoes. Fresh oranges and cookies were the desserts.

Prayer requests:

- 1) Prayers for Carrie, Dee and Darryl. They go to court on Tuesday.
- 2) Prayers for the spring project: Turning the back building into an open-air cafe for our guests. The project will involve the guests as well as volunteers.



Top Left: Fresh Food Donations from Nannette



Bottom Left: Donations from John



Right: Lunch on March 19th

Continued on the next page . . .



## Hope House Happenings, Continued

### TUESDAY, March 23, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we served 27 lunches, had 26 guest sign-ins, and sent out 1 lunch to go. Rick McLellan led in prayer and brought a devotion from Matthew 18, MATH IN THE GOSPEL.

Our guests were thrilled to see Chef Dick McPherson, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, who cooked and served his wonderful pulled pork with coleslaw, mac and cheese and a delicious cucumber and tomato salad. For dessert we had cupcakes. Our brown to-go bag of sides included a tuna salad sandwich, a bag of Lay's chips, a pudding cup, a pack of Lance crackers, an applesauce cup, and various Hershey's candy. To drink was iced cold bottled water with optional flavor packet. Each guest also received a pop-top can (choice of Chef Boy-R-Dee spaghetti or similar item), which they took to their tents for their supper meal. We also fed the Hope House Kitty.

We were blessed this week by a number of our folks from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church who brought us items needed by our guests. We also had a visit from Jim Aldrich, from Christ the King Episcopal Church, who brought us clothing items and jackets which were gladly received by our guests. Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, camping toilet paper, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, underwear and other clothing items and first aid items for some of our guests.

### Wednesday, March 24, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Lesley Kristine and Geri Mayo

It was a busy day with 25 guests signing in; 11 used the shower and 2 the laundry facilities. For breakfast there were bagels with 2 types of cream cheese, and Nutella (brought by Lori), hard boiled eggs, and a variety of cereals.

Lesley worked diligently in the clothing boutique. She sorted clothing donations and assisted the guests in finding an outfit. Lori assisted our guests on the computer and by phone. She helped several obtain the forms they needed and set up appointments for IDs and bus passes.

Special thanks to Ms. Marie and Mr. Bill for donating rain ponchos and to the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Food Pantry for the pork products.

Lunch was spaghetti with meatballs, broccoli, green beans and Italian bread. Ms. Jean was able to join us and brought delicious chocolate chip cookies with orange zest and Cuties (clementines) for dessert. Every guest was able to choose one canned item and one snack food item from the pantry. They also had a choice of a turkey and cheese, an egg salad sandwich (Ms. Jean) or an Italian sub.

### Friday, March 26, 2021 - Paulette, Debbie, Lori, Ruby and Rekha

The **I Believe in Miracles team (IBIM)** served today at Hope House. The volunteers were Paulette, Debbie, Lori, Ruby and Rekha. Ruby and Rekha are nurses from Paulette's prayer group. Even with their busy schedule, these lovely ladies will volunteer once a month.

Twenty-five (25) guests signed in, with 10 using the shower and 7 the laundry. A wonderful hot breakfast was provided. Debbie presented the devotional. Lori assisted the guests with setting up appointments and filling out paperwork for IDs, health insurance, food stamps and bus passes. Paulette was busy assisting and training the new volunteers, Ruby and Rekha (photo by Geri Mayo).



IBIM provided the food for today's lunch. Ruby and Rekha made garden salad, coleslaw, potato salad, cheesy potatoes, baked chicken, chicken nuggets, cupcakes and pies.



## Hope House Happenings, Continued

**Tuesday, March 30, 2021 – Debbie and Rick McLellan**

We are still under COVID-19 restrictions. We set up a table outside for lunch and jointly maintained social distancing. It was a warm day with our guests spread out in the front yard, and patio area. We require everyone who goes inside to wear a mask.

Today we served 27 lunches to our guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and brought a devotion from John chapter 11, WHEN THE TREES WAKE UP.

Our guests were happy to see Hampton and Sharon Conway from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, who provided a wonderful meal of penne pasta, tasty meatballs and those fabulous, large, soft cookies Sharon brings. For dessert, we also had apple pie.

Our brown to-go bags included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of Lay's Potato Chips, a Rice Krispies Treat, a granola bar, a bag of Planters peanuts, a diced peaches fruit cup, an invitation to Easter services at our church, and candy. To drink was iced cold bottled water with optional flavor packet.

Each guest received a pop-top can (choice of Chef Boy-R-Dee spaghetti or similar item), which they took to their tents for their supper meal. We also fed the Hope House Kitty.

We were blessed this week by a number of our folks from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, including Hampton and Sharon Conway, who brought us items needed by our guests. We also had a visit from Jim Aldrich, from Christ the King Episcopal Church, who brought us doughnuts, other food items and clothing.

Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, camping toilet paper, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, underwear and other clothing items and first aid items for some of our guests. We were able to fill nearly a dozen requests for pocket New Testaments and large print Bibles (thanks to help from Debbie Moore, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church).

Our guests were blessed by Bob and Fay Herrick, who enabled us to give out beautiful colored knapsacks, assembled by the American Legion Auxiliary, with a flashlight, socks, blankets, and other items.

We brought sanitized towels and washcloths with us for showers, had 10 guests request showers. We also had 6 guests use the laundry.

We had a good day and believe that hearts were touched and lives were Blessed. We invited all to our Church Sunday Easter service.





## Birthdays in April

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
4/1	Cindy Heishman
4/6	Connie Damaschke
4/8	Stanley Retter
4/9	Richard Kneeland
4/10	Bonnie Fuqua
4/12	Bryan Mowell
4/14	Susan Chambers
4/14	Rom Harbaugh
4/14	Mary Mason
4/15	Kyle Fox
4/15	Alison Oftedal
4/16	Sarah Schiemann
4/17	Gwendolen Allen
4/17	Sharon Ruth
4/19	David Hess
4/24	Cyndi Kuhlman
4/25	Judy Sadwick
4/26	Juanita (Nita) Davis
4/27	Lynne Rushing
4/29	Ray Welch



## Anniversaries in April

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