



# THE GOOD NEWS

## Lake Gibson United Methodist Church

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



*From the Pastor*

### A Prayer for Independence Day

**F**ather God, we thank you for divinely giving

**O**ur forefathers the wisdom, strength, courage and Holy

**U**nction to found our nation on religious freedom. As a country we have not always made the

**R**ight choices in how to live out our faith. We have

**T**respassed on the rights of our brothers and sisters and humbly ask your forgiveness.

**H**elp us to better love our fellow man and see all people through your eyes

**O**pen our hearts and fill them to overflowing with love for you, your Word and our

**F**ellowman. May Godly love be the foundation of all our thoughts, words and actions. May

**J**oy fill our nation as we allow you to have your way in our society and politics.

**U**nless you hear our prayers, we are lost. We can only succeed as you fill us with your Holy

**L**ove for all people. We can only reach our full potential and be a great nation as we depend on

**Y**ou, O Great God. Amen

Hope you have a happy 4th of July. *Pastor Steve*

**Date   Day**

**July Events (as of 6/27/2021)**

|    |           |  |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1  | Thursday  | Food Pantry, 9:30 - 11:30 am (repeats every Thursday)  |
| 2  | Friday    |  |
| 3  | Saturday  |  |
| 4  | Sunday    | <b>Independence Day</b> ; Sunday School 9:15 am (in person or Zoom); Worship Service 10:30 am (in-person, via Facebook or on website, lakegibsonumc.com (events repeat every Sunday)   |
| 5  | Monday    | Independence Day Observed (Federal Holiday)  |
| 6  | Tuesday   | Racial Justice Movie <i>Dawnland</i> , 3:00 pm via Zoom (registration required)  |
| 7  | Wednesday | Merry Matters suspended until September (no meetings in July or August); Zooming the Peace via Zoom, 7:00 pm, discussion of Pastor's Leftovers from previous Sunday (on website); repeats every Wednesday  |
| 8  | Thursday  | UMW Fellowship Luncheon, Palace Italian Restaurant, US Hwy 98N, 11:00 am. All invited. Pastor's Bible Study, 1:00 pm via Zoom (call office (863-858-5431) for login. (Repeats every Thursday)  |
| 9  | Friday    |  |
| 10 | Saturday  | No United Methodist Men (UMM) meetings until September   |
| 11 | Sunday    | Information Meeting about January's Costa Rica Mission Trip, First UMC Lakeland, after 11:00 am service, in Fellowship Center (all invited)  |
| 12 | Monday    |  |
| 13 | Tuesday   | Racial Justice Movie <i>Pushout</i> , 3:00 pm via Zoom (registration required)   |
| 14 | Wednesday | Call for August newsletter articles (all are invited to write articles)  |
| 15 | Thursday  | Mission u in-person at Warren Willis Conference Center and via Zoom, July 15 thru 17 (see June issue of newsletter for registration information for virtual class. In-person class is full.); <b>Church Planting and Revitalization</b> , presented by UM Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Language Plan via Zoom, 8:00 pm (part 1 of 2) |
| 16 | Friday    |  |
| 17 | Saturday  |  |
| 18 | Sunday    |  |
| 19 | Monday    | Reparations: Remember, Repairing and Reimagining webinar, 1:00 pm, Zoom  |
| 20 | Tuesday   | Racial Justice Movie <i>The House We Live In - Episode 3 of Race: The Power of an Illusion</i> , 3:00 pm via Zoom (registration required)  |
| 21 | Wednesday | UMW Just Energy for All educational presentation via Zoom, 3:00 pm; deadline for August newsletter articles to editor  |
| 22 | Thursday  |  |
| 23 | Friday    |  |
| 24 | Saturday  |  |
| 25 | Sunday    |  |
| 26 | Monday    |  |
| 27 | Tuesday   |  |
| 28 | Wednesday | Draft August newsletter to Pastor for review   |
| 29 | Thursday  | <b>Church Planting and Revitalization</b> , by UM Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Language Plan via Zoom, 8:00 pm (part 2 of 2)   |
| 30 | Friday    |  |
| 31 | Saturday  | Back-to-School Tax Holiday Starts (7/31 - 8/9, 2021)   |

## Issues for Discussion and Eventual Church Vote

The LGUMC Church Council is grappling with a number of issues as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made significant progress with installing livestream equipment to get our messages out to those not attending services within the sanctuary. We understand the necessity of reaching younger Christians, and believe additional changes may be necessary in our physical plant as we seek to invite both churched and unchurched people into our community of Christ.

Two major issues which are under consideration address seating and lighting within the sanctuary:

### 1. What type of seating should we have within our sanctuary?

The Church Council, as part of the upgrades to the sanctuary, is recommending that we move from using pews to chairs in the future. We envision that this more contemporary look will improve the first impression we make on younger families visiting our congregation.

Listed below are some of the factors both pro and con to such a move. After reading the pros and cons for each, we ask that you pray on what is best for the church community. During July we will take a formal vote. Your vote will help the Church Council decide on the direction we should take.

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Chairs - Pro                                  | Pews - Pro                            |
| Easy rearrangement of sanctuary – few or many | Lower seating than most chairs        |
| Contemporary look to sanctuary                | Traditional look to sanctuary         |
| Easier to vacuum carpet                       | Use forward pew for leverage to stand |
| Turns sanctuary into multipurpose facility    | More room to spread out               |
| Easy to move                                  |                                       |
| Stackable                                     |                                       |
| Laid out according to purpose                 |                                       |
|   |                                       |
| Chairs - Con                                  | Pews - Con                            |
| Cost for additional chairs with arms          | Fixed arrangement                     |
| Disposal of replaced pews                     |                                       |

### **The three options we envision for the floor of the sanctuary are as follows:**

- Chairs only in the sanctuary, or**
- Mix of chairs and pews in the sanctuary, or**
- Pews only in the sanctuary**

### 2. What type of lighting would you like to see in the sanctuary?

Over the past year Lake Gibson UMC has replaced our sanctuary's florescent tubes peripheral lighting to light emitting diode (LED) tubes. This has nearly doubled the lighting brightness within the sanctuary. We are now faced with what to do with defective chandeliers in the sanctuary.

In working on the chandeliers, we have found that their older paper-covered wiring, as a minimum, would require that all ten chandeliers be removed and rewired before reuse.

Alternatively, the Church Council suggests that we consider removing all the chandeliers and replacing them with ceiling-mounted recessed lighting. This would give the sanctuary a more contemporary look and feel.

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## Issues for Discussion and Eventual Church Vote

### 2. What type of lighting would you like to see in the sanctuary?, Continued

Listed below are some of the factors both pro and con of such a move. After reading the pros and cons for each, we ask that you pray on what is best for the church community. During July we will take a formal vote. Your vote will help the Church Council decide on the direction we should take.

| Either Recessed lighting or chandeliers could be made dimmable |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Recessed Lighting – Pro</b>                                 | <b>Chandeliers - Pro</b>                   |
| Single pluggable fixture                                       | Provide both downlight and glow            |
| Contemporary look  | Antiquated look                            |
| Easier to change burned out fixture                            |  |
|  |  |
| <b>Recessed Lighting – Cons</b>                                | <b>Chandeliers - Cons</b>                  |
|  | Must remove fixture to change 6 of 7 bulbs |

**The two options we envision for the sanctuary lighting are as follows:**

**Recessed lighting for a more contemporary look in the sanctuary, or  
Remove, repair and reinstall existing chandeliers in the sanctuary**

### Pot Luck Dinners are Baaaack Starting August 8th!

COVID -19 has had significant impacts on LGUMC for over a year. We're still taking some precautions to insure those who are immunosuppressed are relatively safe. You've noticed this by the layout of the sanctuary and the request to keep those "Southern hugs" to yourself.

We are planning to hold this year's **first pot luck luncheon following the August 8, 2021 worship service**. Not quite sure yet what the main course will be on the menu, but most likely a meat of some type (tofu not included) will be provided by the church. All the extra goodies need to come from the congregation. So . . . start planning now. Find or dust off those cookbooks and see what you can bring to the celebration.

Yes, we know we still have some pews in storage reducing our square footage in the FLC, but between the FLC's main area and the classrooms, we're sure to have enough space for everyone. Please bring your family, friends and neighbors, too.

Mark your calendars for August 8th. If you have been avoiding in-person services, it is time to return to the family in body as well as in spirit. We'll look forward to seeing you that Sunday.



## Can You Help with Communications and Messaging?

### Update from June Newsletter

At present there is no job description for this important function. We need to learn more about the many aspects of church communications and messaging to create a useful job description.

Books such as *From Social Media to Social Ministry - A Guide to Digital Discipleship* by Nona Jones (Zondervan, 2020) and *Rethink Communication - A Playbook to Clarify and Communicate Everything in Your Church* by Phil Bowdle (Center for Church Communication, 2019) are available to help guide us to define the necessary functions of this position.

**Excerpt from June Article:** "One place we are missing a leader or coordinator is in church communications and messaging. We have tools, such as Microsoft Publisher for newsletters, signs or flyers; Servant Keeper Notify to create and deliver voice mails, text messages and emails; Facebook; Zoom; electronic signage; and newspaper notices and articles."

We are lacking in a coordinated strategy and actions to use additional social media that are favored by younger folks.

**What we need is one person to help plan, coordinate and create our communications and messaging within the church and community. That person would work under the guidance of the pastor and in coordination with church leadership, such as the Church Council.**

Might you be interested in helping to direct and coordinate our messaging efforts? Maybe we're not making the best choices or missing opportunities to use existing communication resources to tell our story. You could make significant improvements in how we interface with those inside and outside the church community.

Call the church office (863-858-5431) if you are willing to donate some time and effort in leading, coordinating and creating communications and messaging.

## Prayer Ministry

*"The Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will."* Romans 8:26-27 (NLT)

We usually have close to 75 long-term prayer requests listed on our Prayer Journal, including 11 members living in facilities other than their own homes and 9 in the US military service. The prayers we receive each week for short-term needs such as surgeries, hospitalizations, etc. are offered up during Sunday service and the prayer warriors also receive that list by email the beginning of each week.

Our Prayer Warriors receive an updated prayer journal at the beginning of each month via email. A copy can be obtained in the narthex at our church. Along with our prayers, you may want to give those in need a call or send them a card to let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Kind gestures as these may truly lift spirits and give encouragement.

If you would like to become a prayer warrior, please call the church office (863-858-5431) Monday through Thursday between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. Have a blessed summer and stay safe. Prayers and God's blessings.

Prayer Ministry - Fran

## Pastor's Bible Study

You are invited to join us on Thursdays at 1:00 pm for Pastor Steve's Bible Study. Please call the office to get the log-in information for this Zoom meeting (or see the list on page 17, or on the website)..

## Zooming the Peace

Join us for a discussion of Pastor Steve's "Leftovers" (additional material expanding on the topics of the past Sunday's sermon) on Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm via Zoom. We watch the Leftovers and discuss them, and then fellowship for the rest of the hour. Call the office or Dwight Kitchens, 410-790-4422 for the link.

## Lay Leader's Message



As we look forward and prepare for the 4th of July, THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY, let us remember that our freedom and liberty as Believers was already here long before the 4th. Paul discovered this on the road to Damascus and stated this to the church in Galatians 5:1: *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”*

And we are reminded that freedom is not “free” and required the Revolution of freedom fighters against the most powerful military of the time. And it was the miracles of Father God that helped them overcome the British.

Today, we are again surrounded by opposition from within and without who want to destroy what we have and put us under bondage. The Constitution which Father God guided the forefathers to produce, based on the biblical principles of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” is in jeopardy.

And so, “RISE UP O PEOPLE OF GOD” and become the “FREEDOM FIGHTERS,” ready to stand for justice and righteousness guided by Messiah Jesus!

SHALOM

John Bernat, Lay Leader

## United Methodist Men (UMM)

We are taking a break in July and August before resuming our meetings on Saturday, September 11th at 9:00 am in the Family Life Center. **In month of September we will be voting on a new president for the UMM. Should anyone like to be considered, please contact Pastor Steve or Michael Moake.**

All are welcome to come to our meetings - they are open door. We would embrace your ideas and suggestions. We are also willing to help anyone when it is possible. Thanks to all who have supported the UMM and LGUMC. Your help is greatly valued. Any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 863-816-3194

Michael Moake, UMM President

## United Methodist Women (UMW)

The Lake Gibson unit of the UMW held a fellowship luncheon at the End Zone restaurant on Thursday, June 10th, at 11:00 am. Judging by the noise level, everyone had a great time. Our next **luncheon will be July 8th, 11:00 am at Palace Italian Restaurant** on US 98N. Please call Pat Moon to reserve a seat (863-858-6883).

**Faith Talks** are monthly programs hosted by Jennifer R. Farmer of Spotlight PR. You can listen to 34 Faith Talks by going to <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks>. Topics range from the Criminalization of Black Girls in School (51(mins):12(secs)); Preventing Gun Violence (1:06); Soul Care (56:20); Sustaining Faith (55:37); Faith in the Midst of Uncertainty (58:41); Education Inequality (39:24); Grief (1:16) and many more.



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## United Methodist Women (UMW), Continued

### UMW Reading Program 2021 - 2022

The UMW Reading Program Catalog is available online at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram). You can download a printer-friendly version or a digital version. The first seven pages of the catalog provide information on how the program works. The 65-page catalog includes thumbnail sketches of each book, whether for adults, children or young adults. There is a .pdf file that presents all the books for 2021 and 2022. Other Reading Program books from 2017 - 2020 can also be read for credit. These books are identified on the website. Some books may be available from a Polk County library, either in hardcopy or Kindle version. Our unit no longer purchases a representative sample of the books, which are in five categories (Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action and Spiritual Growth). Bonus books are identified that count in two categories.

If anyone would like to **volunteer to serve as the unit's Reading Program Secretary**, please let Phyllis Kitchens know. The RP Secretary is responsible for informing and encouraging members to participate in this program, as well as keeping track of the readers and the books read to prepare an annual report to the Gulf Central District. The RP Secretary is a member of the Lake Gibson UMW's Leadership Team.

### UMW National Assembly Coming to Orlando May 20 - 22, 2022

The Florida Conference UMW is the host for the UMW National Assembly to be held at the Orlando Convention Center next spring. Volunteers will be needed for a wide range of tasks before and during this event. We can expect that the Gulf Central District will invite our unit to participate. To learn more about Assembly, go to the website <https://www.assembly2022.org>.

Early registration to attend the conference begins on September 1st and ends on November 30, 2021. **Early Registration fee is \$330**, which includes lunch on Friday and Saturday. Hotel expenses are \$158 to \$203 per night for up to four people (double/double room). You will have to pay for breakfast and dinner on Friday and Saturday, and Sunday breakfast.

### Just Energy for All Strategy and Capacity Building Session, July 21 at 3:00 pm

This monthly UMW Just Energy for All Zoom presentation provides information on the effects of energy production, siting of highways and other governmental decisions that impact health and the environment. Many of the hazardous side effects generated by these decisions impact persons of color disproportionately. To learn more, go to [United Methodist Women - Just Energy For All](https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/just-energy-for-all) (<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/just-energy-for-all>).

### Knitted Together for God's Good Work: UMW Mission Action Project

This year's mission action project is knitting or crocheting baby and children's hats. The UMW provided have several knit patterns and one crochet pattern that you may try, or you may have a pattern you already like. Let me know if you would like to receive these patterns by email.

I am getting information on where to send our hats. For now, please bring your hats to the church office and I'll pick them up and deliver them to the recipients.

Phyllis Kitchens, President  
phyllis\_kitchens@hotmail.com  
863-984-4564 home/410-790-2662 cell

## Can You Help Junaid Find a Home for His Family?

Junaid Saqib, a Pakistani Christian who fled death threats in his country and is a member of our church, is arranging for his family to come to the US. He's currently living in Sebring, but wants to bring his family to the Lakeland area.

Junaid has requested our help in finding him a 2- or 3-bedroom house or apartment to rent. He is able to pay up to \$1,000 a month for rent. If you know of any rental houses or apartments that would meet his needs, please call Junaid at 863-500-2173.

## Financial Report: What is Our Financial Condition?

As far as the General Budget for FY 2021 goes, we are tracking as would be expected. The table below reflects our receipts through the end of May 2021.

| Three-year Congregational Giving Profile (CGP) Template: Monthly Version |             |             |             |            |                     |                        |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Data Entry   |             |             |             |            |                     |                        |             |
| Current Year   | 2021        |             |             |            |                     |                        |             |
| Current Budget   | \$321,975   |             |             |            |                     |                        |             |
| Month  | Actual 2018 | Actual 2019 | Actual 2020 | 3-Yr Total | 3-Yr \$ Avg Monthly | 3-Yr \$ Avg Cumulative | Actual 2021 |
| January  | \$23,610    | \$32,120    | \$19,250    | \$74,980   | \$24,993            | \$24,993               | \$41,469    |
| February   | \$29,950    | \$23,134    | \$26,344    | \$79,428   | \$26,476            | \$51,469               | \$26,663    |
| March  | \$29,201    | \$34,381    | \$31,430    | \$95,012   | \$31,671            | \$83,140               | \$23,181    |
| April  | \$26,066    | \$29,060    | \$48,131    | \$103,257  | \$34,419            | \$117,559              | \$24,073    |
| May  | \$19,712    | \$22,029    | \$25,816    | \$67,557   | \$22,519            | \$140,078              | \$26,093    |
| June   | \$20,390    | \$27,031    | \$25,894    | \$73,315   | \$24,438            | \$164,516              | \$0         |
| July   | \$23,856    | \$23,569    | \$20,865    | \$68,290   | \$22,763            | \$187,280              | \$0         |
| August   | \$16,727    | \$21,790    | \$22,494    | \$61,011   | \$20,337            | \$207,617              | \$0         |
| September  | \$24,401    | \$22,385    | \$25,185    | \$71,971   | \$23,990            | \$231,607              | \$0         |
| October  | \$24,825    | \$22,385    | \$20,998    | \$68,208   | \$22,736            | \$254,343              | \$0         |
| November   | \$22,133    | \$28,024    | \$25,284    | \$75,441   | \$25,147            | \$279,490              | \$0         |
| December   | \$24,397    | \$52,968    | \$26,088    | \$103,453  | \$34,484            | \$313,974              | \$0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | \$285,268   | \$338,876   | \$317,779   | \$941,923  | \$313,974           | \$313,974              | \$141,479   |

We have a number of designated funds which may be of interest. For a few, we have listed below their account number, name of fund, and amount on hand:

### 2325 Insurance Deductible Reserve \$20,516

In case of hurricane damage, our insurance policy requires that we pay the first 5% of damage prior to the carrier providing the remaining 95%. Based on values in 2018, our 5% would amount to \$181,170.

### 2342 Sanctuary Roof Reserve \$ 3,423

The roof was replaced approximately two years ago. This reserve will hopefully continue to grow so that sufficient funds might be available in another 10-13 years to replace it once again.

### 2343 Air Conditioner Reserve \$19,309

This reserve was established to replace air conditioning units within the sanctuary, Family Life Center and office. A recent quote for upgrading the entire sanctuary's heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, consisting of slightly larger capacity, fresh air ducting, air purifying equipment and new

Continued on the next page . . .



## Financial Report, Continued

fire detection units, produced an estimated cost of approximately \$35,200. If we chose to do this in the near future, we would be approximately \$16,000 short. The Trustees have some monies which were made available when we liquidated our endowment. Should they choose to do so, they could contribute up to \$11,000 towards this project, leaving us with a \$5,000 shortage.

FYI, both the roof of A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH) Child Enrichment Center and the church office will need replacement shortly. Better a roof repair now than water damage during a hurricane. Current estimates are approximately \$15,000 for the ALBOH (estimated need within one year) and \$14,000 for the office (estimated need within two years). No designated funds have been set aside for these roofs.

Dwight Kitchens, Finance Committee Chair

### Maintenance Is Never Completed

Over the past three months, we've found water leaks within both the Family Life Center and ALBOH. Sometimes it's rather simple to fix (flapper valve in toilet for ALBOH), and other times more difficult (main valve replacement for the Family Life Center, which requires cutting off the water to the campus and professional workers).

These types of problems happen in older facilities, and will continue to cause headaches. Should you hear water running for longer than seems usual, let the Church Secretary know immediately. If the office is closed, try to find a member of the Board of Trustees or the Custodian so action can be taken to stop the problem. Those bills from the local water authority can be astronomical. We need everyone to keep an eye (or ear) out for utilities problems, just as you would in your own house.

Recurring maintenance is one reason the church Board of Trustees has been working on upgrading the lighting systems with light emitting diode (LED) fixtures, both large and small. Once installed, they should have fewer maintenance requirements while also saving electricity.

If you notice any part of our physical plant which needs repair, please let the Church Secretary know of the requirement. Hopefully, we can get it fixed before it becomes a larger expense.

### Feedback on CROP Hunger Walk 2021

Mike Fearney, the Lakeland organizer for the 2021 CROP Walk, sent the following update to the organizations that participated in this important fundraiser for Church World Service:

"Good news! Church World Service has mailed out checks to our local agencies. As you will recall, the CROP Hunger Walk raises funds for local hunger relief agencies as well as for their global initiatives to combat world hunger. Twenty-five percent of what we raise stays locally.

"We selected, again this year, **Lighthouse Ministries** and **Talbot House** to be our local recipients. Each is receiving **\$1,912.94**, thanks to your combined efforts.

"Thanks again! And please mark your 2022 calendars and church calendars for **February 27, 2022** for the 38th Lakeland CROP Hunger Walk."

Fourteen organizations, mostly churches, participated this year. The Lakeland CROP Walk raised **\$14,263!** This sum compares to last year's \$8,244. When you consider that we were in pandemic lockdown and many of the walks were virtual, God's hand was at here.

## Merry Matters Making Many Mats Is Taking the Summer Off

We've finally reached the point that enough people have left the area, or are unable to gather at this time, that the Merry Matters have decided to suspend in-person workshops until fall (either September or October).

Please continue to fold plastic grocery bags, cut strips to make plarn and crochet ground mats for the homeless. If you would like to deliver your finished mats before the fall, please take them to the church office.

### 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

## Florida Sales-Tax-Free, Back-to-School Holiday Is July 31 - August 9, 2021

The "Back-to-School" Sales Tax Holiday is from **July 31st to August 9th**. Over these 10 days, Floridians will pay no sales tax for certain clothing of \$60 or less per item, school supplies of \$15 or less per item, and the first \$1,000 of personal computers and related accessories.

This sales tax holiday adds to your blessing as you purchase needed back-to-school supplies for the children at the Florida United Methodist Children's Home and Padgett Elementary School, just down the street from church.

Thank you to everyone who has donated supplies so far. We will deliver the supplies to FUMCH this month.

### 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

## Support Disaster Relief Efforts For the Victims of the Surfside Condo Collapse

[Source: Based on email from Florida Conference Disaster Recovery, [floridaconference.florida@brtapp.com](mailto:floridaconference.florida@brtapp.com), June 28, 2021, 6:28 pm]

The Florida Conference has asked that we pray for and support the families affected by the partial collapse of the Champlain Towers South building in Surfside, Florida. The conference is also supporting the residents of the other tower that has been evacuated. Hundreds of people have been displaced from their homes and rescue teams continue to lead search and recovery efforts. In addition to prayer, you can provide practical support for the victims in the following ways:

**Financial Assistance:** As we do in other fund-raising efforts, we ask you to donate to Lake Gibson UMC instead of sending donations directly to the Conference. The church will collect the donations and send a check to the conference. This way we have a record of our church's impact on the people affected by this disaster. Be sure to indicate that your donation is for the **Surfside Disaster Fund**.

**Gift Cards:** Families need \$25 or \$50 gift cards -- Visa, Mastercard, Walmart, Publix, Target, Uber. Please deliver your gift cards directly to the church office.

Thank you!

## Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH) Comments on June 1st Incident

[Source: Excerpts from FUMCH letter, undated, sent by email on June 3, 2021 to local church representatives]

"On the evening of June 1st, two youth assigned to our Emergency Shelter Care program ran away from the Children's Home. They broke into a residence in the community and later were involved in a confrontation with police involving weapons which they stole from the residence.

"I want to express our deep appreciation for the law enforcement officers involved in the incident on behalf of the Volusia County Sheriff's Office. We value and appreciate our longstanding partnership with the Sheriff's Office. Once again, the responding deputies demonstrated professionalism and selfless service to our community.

". . . as a result of this event, we have placed a moratorium on our Enterprise campus Emergency Shelter Care program for the next 30 days and then it will be discontinued. This action is being taken at this juncture due to the level of children who are being sent to us through the local child placing agency. There are times when the children's needs and behaviors are beyond the scope of our mission.

". . . as you know, we are a child welfare facility, not a secure care facility. Therefore, we are not allowed to restrain children unless they are at risk of injuring themselves or others around them.

"The Children's Home is mandated to contact law enforcement once a child breaches the perimeter of our property because it then becomes a community issue. Therefore, while there are many calls to the Sheriff's Department in a given year, it is important to note that not all calls are emergent in nature. In fact, some of these calls throughout the year include prior case follow-up, written witness statements, Baker Acts, or other legal related inquiries.

"Thank you for your unwavering support of our children . . . "

## Food for Thought: It's Greek To Me

Whether from the original Greek or Hebrew, we rely upon translations of the Bible to glean its meaning. There are over 450 English translations. Each was thoughtfully translated from some earlier version, whether the originally written documents were in Hebrew, Greek or English.

As a Methodist, we might find guidance in thoughts from John Wesley. He appealed to what he called “**the Rule of Faith**” as a tool for interpreting the Bible. The rule of faith identifies the central and unifying themes in the Bible. Difficult, ambiguous, or obscure passages should be interpreted in light of Scripture’s central themes.

Wesley’s comments about the trustworthiness of the Bible focus on what he calls the “rule of Christian faith and practice.” Wesley followed 2 Timothy 3:16–17, in which inspiration of Scripture is related to its usefulness for instructing in Christian belief and training in lives of righteousness.

A strategy for reading the Scripture may be found in the following six concepts:

**We Read** (“I read His book”) The basic starting point for anyone is simply to begin reading.

**We Pray** (“I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights”)

**We Compare** (“I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture”)

**We Meditate** (“I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is ...”)

**We Consult** (“I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak”)

**We Teach** (“And what I thus learn, that I teach”)

Unfortunately, if the source documents in either Hebrew or Greek were misinterpreted, portions of our multiple English translations may also be suspect.

As the United Methodist Church discusses issues about amicably dissolving its structure, only time will tell what we see at the other end. Why did this ever become an issue? Primarily it revolves around the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ) persons fully within the church family. Whether sexual orientation is learned or God given, do we consider whether it is sinful or not?

Much study has recently been given to what is referred to as the six “clobber passages” of the Bible. Reading the commentary should shed a new interpretation on the meaning of each passage.

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| GENESIS 1:27                          | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/genesis-127/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/genesis-127/</a>                                   |
| GENESIS 19 (cf. 18:20*)               | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/genesis-19-cf-1820/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/genesis-19-cf-1820/</a>                     |
| LEVITICUS 18:22 (20:13)               | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/leviticus-1822-2013/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/leviticus-1822-2013/</a>                   |
| DEUTERONOMY 23:17-18                  | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/deuteronomy-2317-18/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/deuteronomy-2317-18/</a>                   |
| ROMANS 1:26-27                        | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/romans-126-27/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/romans-126-27/</a>                               |
| CORINTHIANS 6:9 and<br>I TIMOTHY 1:10 | <a href="https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/i-corinthians-69-timothy-110/">https://ecinc.org/clobber-passages/i-corinthians-69-timothy-110/</a> |

From Mark 12:28 - 31, we find the following in the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Bible:

<sup>28</sup> One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

Continued on the next page . . .

## Food for Thought: It's Greek To Me, Continued

<sup>29</sup> “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>31</sup> The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[c]</sup> There is no commandment greater than these.”

From Matthew 28:18-20, the (NLT) states:

<sup>18</sup> Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,<sup>[b]</sup> baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Understanding both the greatest commandment and the great commission, should we not include all within the family of God? The exclusion of those who have been marginalized based on our misinterpretation of scripture is something we should seriously reconsider.

Primary references:

*Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality* by Jack Rogers (Presbyterian)

*Making Sense of the Bible* by Adam Hamilton (Methodist)

*Homosexuality – A Scriptural Way Forward for the United Methodist Church* by Joe Miller, Jr. (Methodist)

*Unclobber – Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality* by Colby Martin (Baptist)

*Finding Our Way – Love and Law in The United Methodist Church* edited by Rueben P. Job and Neil M. Alexander. Articles by multiple Methodist Bishops

Dwight Kitchens

\*Note: cf means "compare to", i.e., GENESIS 19 (cf. 18:20)

## Tips for Caring for Your Spouse When They Cannot Care for Themselves

No one knows what the future holds when you commit to someone “until death do us part.” Drastic changes in one partner’s health can shift plans for a happy and active retirement together, to anxiety, fear and confusion for both people. Below are a few ideas that may be helpful keeping the “spark” alive in the relationship while providing daily care.

- Enjoy music together. Reminiscing about the time the song became important can be an emotional connection and bring shared moments of joy.
- Dance! Even if your partner can no longer walk, take hands and swing to the music. Do this daily!

Continued on the next page . . .

## Tips for Caring for Your Spouse When They Cannot Care for Themselves, Continued

- Do something you like together. For instance, rather than just giving ice cream to your partner, sit down, take a break and have a bowl together. Recall the ice cream memories you shared.
- Dress up and have a romantic meal together. This takes a little more energy, but the experience will be worth it.
- Create morning and evening rituals. It may include a hand massage, devotion, or prayer.
- Read to your partner. Offering an opportunity to enjoy a book together can be rewarding. Even if your partner may not remember the book, or be able to respond, the sound of your voice for an extended amount of time can be comforting.
- Start a gratitude journal. Research shows that grateful individuals experience increased positive emotions, are more satisfied with life and are more likely to be forgiving.
- Watch funny shows together. Regardless of how much your partner may be able to follow the plot, you can enjoy a good laugh.
- Make intentional time to sit and hold hands. This will be comforting to both of you.

*"Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2*

If you would like more information on our Memory Ministry or need tips on caregiving, please contact [Vicky Pitner](mailto:vpitner@firstumc.org) (vpitner@firstumc.org). [Article used with Vicky's permission.]

## Virtual Opportunities to Learn in July

### Free UMW Racial Justice Movies on Zoom at 3:00 pm (EDT)

Separate registration is required for each film. Click on each title to register.

#### **[DAWNLAND, JULY 6TH](#)**

"Amidst the echoes of genocide, an unprecedented truth commission attempts to heal the wounds of a foster care system devastating Native American families in DAWNLAND. A documentary about cultural survival and stolen children: inside the first truth and reconciliation commission for Native Americans." [Description from VisionMaker Media on YouTube]

#### **[PUSHOUT: THE CRIMINALIZATION OF BLACK GIRLS IN SCHOOLS, JULY 13TH](#)**

"This is a feature length documentary that takes a deep dive into the lives of Black girls and the practices, cultural beliefs and policies that disrupt one of the most important factors in girls' lives – education.

"The documentary underscores the challenges Black girls face with insight from experts across the country who have worked extensively in the field of social justice, gender equality and educational equity. These experts give context to the crisis and provide a roadmap for how our educational system and those who interact with Black girls can provide a positive rather than punitive response to behaviors that are often misunderstood or mis-represented." [Source: <https://pushoutfilm.com/film>]

Continued on the next page . . .

## Virtual Opportunities to Learn in July

### Free UMW Racial Justice Movies on Zoom at 3:00 pm (EDT), Continued

Separate Registration Required for Each Film [Click on the titles to register]

#### **[THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN, EPISODE 3 OF THE PBS SERIES RACE: THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION,](#) JULY 20**

'If race doesn't exist biologically, what is it? And why should it matter? Our final episode, "The House We Live In," is the first film about race to focus not on individual attitudes and behavior, but on the ways our institutions and policies advantage some groups at the expense of others. Its subject is the "unmarked" race: white people. We see how benefits quietly and often invisibly accrue to white people, not necessarily because of merit or hard work, but because of the racialized nature of our laws, courts, customs, and perhaps most pertinently, housing.' [Source: <https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/episodes/three>]

**There is no cost to participate.** The sessions will include a brief introduction, viewing the movie together, breakout groups to discuss the film and wrap-up reflections. Movie/episode lengths vary, but are usually about 1 hour long. Depending on the film length, we will be together 1.5 - 2 hours. These sessions will not be recorded. No prior knowledge is required. **All are welcome.**

### **Costa Rica Mission Trip Info Session July 11th at First UMC**

Please join us at Lakeland's First UMC on **July 11 after the 11:00 am worship service** to find out more about their **January 8 - 15, 2022** mission trip serving with *Costa Rica Mission Projects* (CRMP). The meeting will be in the Fellowship Center. The mission team is open to anyone age 16 and older. We expect to be doing light construction work and working with children at the CRMP child development center. Members of other churches have been invited to participate in this mission trip. Point of contact for more information at First UMC Lakeland is Forrest White ([fwhite@firstumc.org](mailto:fwhite@firstumc.org)).



### **Making New Disciples in New Places! "Ready, Set, Plant - The Why and How of Starting New Churches"**

**Webinars on July 15 and July 29, 2021, 8:00 - 9:30 pm**

Are you in a church with a membership that has been in decline? Are you a lay person or clergy person who is trying to gain new members and increase the size of your worship? AALM (United Methodist Church Global Ministries Asian American Language Plan) and Path 1 have teamed up to create a webinar series on **Starting New Churches and Church Revitalization**. The "Path 1" Program trains people in the church to plant new churches where none has existed and to revitalize existing churches. By the end of this two-part series, participants will have gained basic skills in Church Planting and Revitalization.

Webinar #1 - July 15th: Why Start New Ministries? (1.5 hours), July 15

In this workshop, we'll discuss the biblical and organizational reasons why every church should be planning on starting new groups, new worship services, new ministries, new congregations, or new

Continued on the next page . . .

## Virtual Opportunities to Learn in July, Continued

### “Ready, Set, Plant - The Why and How of Starting New Churches,” Continued

churches. We'll look at the basics of how to discern God's calling to reach new people through new ministries, and we'll help participants identify how to get started praying and planning to plant something new.

[Webinar #2: Leading New Ministries](#) (1.5 hours), July 29

Finding, inspiring, and supporting good leaders is the key to successfully starting new ministries. This workshop will outline a practical and practiced strategy for identifying, developing, and supporting leaders who can create new ministries and new faith communities. We'll look at essential practices that every church can take to build up these leaders. And we'll talk through the next steps in developing leaders in your church.

Click the link below to register:

[Ready, Set, Plant! - The Why and the How of Starting New Churches - Webinar Registration](#)  
([google.com](#))

### Part 3 of Special Webinar Series Reparations: Remember, Repairing and Re-imagining

July 19, 1:00 pm [Register Here](#)

[Source: Extracted and edited from a message from Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), United Methodist Church]

Note: It was originally intended to present this three-part Zoom webinar series in June, but the final part (Remembering) was postponed to July 19th. If you missed the first two parts, you can still participate in this third webinar. The previous two parts (June 17th, Repairing and June 24th, Re-imagining) were recorded and links to all three recordings will be provided by CBCS when you register for this session. Rev. Dr. Henry-Crowe's message (with minor edits):

Recently we observed 100 years since the Tulsa Race Massacre (May 31- June 1, 1921), one of the worst events of anti-Black terror and violence in US history, which devastated the Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Greenwood was known as “Black Wall Street” because it was a thriving community and home to hundreds of Black-owned businesses. In two days of gunfire, arson, and aerial bombing, as many as 300 Black people died, and a thriving community was destroyed, with damage estimated at over \$27 million (in today's equivalent). The aftermath of the Tulsa Massacre left an incalculable loss of what would have been future generational wealth and opportunity.

In recent years, the survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre and their descendants have called for reparations. They are asking not only for us as a nation to address the harm and wrongs done to Black lives 100 years ago, but to the lasting harm and impact every day since. The Tulsa Race Massacre is a vivid example of how racial terror and intergenerational systems of racism and discrimination act to widen racial inequalities. According to the Brookings Institution, for example, the average net worth of a white household is ten times that of a Black household today.

Because of persisting inequities like the racial wealth gap and growing calls for a meaningful reckoning with past wrongs, we are witnessing new and exciting conversations around reparations for

Continued on the next page . . .



## Virtual Opportunities to Learn in July, Continued

### Part 3 of Special Webinar Series Reparations: Remember, Repairing and Re-imagining

descendants of slavery. The United Methodist Church officially supports reparations and calls on Congress to pass H.R. 40, the bill that would authorize a study on reparations ([Resolution 3066](#)).

That is why I hope you'll **join us at Church and Society for a special webinar series, "Reparations: Remembering, Repairing, Re-imagining."** We will examine the intergenerational racism and discrimination experienced by descendants of slavery to ask how it contributed and continues to contribute to the widening racial wealth gap we see today. We will also examine examples of reparations taking place today and in US history, and explore the theological case for reparations.

We will explore how our Christian faith and United Methodist tradition informs our response to reparations. If you cannot attend a scheduled session but are still interested, I encourage you to register to receive a link to its recording.

### The Children's Defense Fund Presents "Listening to the Children: A Radical Revolution of Values"

July 20 - 22, 2021

This year, the Children's Defense Fund's **Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry** will be offered **online** and at **no cost** to participants. The 2021 theme is ["Listening to the Children: A Radical Revolution of Values."](#)

Many members of **United Methodist Women** know Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools and/or Children's Sabbath. Some of us even had the privilege of hearing Founder and President Emerita Marian Wright Edelman speak at UMW Assembly 2018.

If you admire the Children's Defense Fund's amazing work but logistics, cost or scheduling challenges have prevented you from traveling to CDF's Alex Haley Farm in the past, this summer is a great opportunity to experience the inspiring spirit of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry from your very own home. Whether you are a longstanding part of the Children's Defense Fund family or brand new to the work, you are invited to join this inspirational and informative gathering.

**CDF's Proctor Institute program begins on Tuesday, July 20th from 5:30 - 8:30 pm EDT. On Wednesday and Thursday, July 21 and 22, two workshop sessions are offered between noon - 3:30 pm EDT, and the plenary program is held from 5:30 - 8:30 pm EDT.** The plenary program includes theology and child advocacy sessions, "listening to the children" discussions, music and spoken word, and the Great Preacher series. We can't wait to be together again. To learn more about the schedule of events and access registration options, [visit the CDF Proctor Institute page.](#)

To hear Rev. Janet Wolf and Emily Jones share more about this powerful upcoming gathering, how it connects to United Methodist Women and what to expect, check out this [Facebook Live video](#) [[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=208754954742633&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=208754954742633&ref=watch_permalink)].

[Source: Email from Emily Jones, [ejones@unitedmethodistwomen.org](mailto:ejones@unitedmethodistwomen.org), June 24, 2021 at 2:04 pm.]

## Hope House Happenings - Excerpts from Volunteer Reports

### Tuesday, June 1, 2021 – Debbie and Rick McLellan

Our guests were served sloppy joes, corn on the cob, mac n cheese, and watermelon. Our brown to-go bags included an egg salad sandwich, a bag of chips, a cream-filled cupcake, Lance peanut butter crackers, candy, and a fruit cup. Debbie was busy and gave out new baseball caps, toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, shoes, underwear, T-shirts and other clothing items.

We were grateful for items provided by our friend Tammy: new baseball caps, food containers we used today, and the cupcakes which our guests loved. Our friend Marty provided Chef Boy R Dee pop-top cans we gave out. We also had a visit from Jim Aldrich from Christ the King Episcopal Church, who brought us a variety of great items. And we are thankful for the generosity and many items supplied by Lake Gibson United Methodist Church.

God provided a great day with a congenial atmosphere and we received many expressions of gratitude from our guests. We're so grateful for the prayers and generosity of donors and friends of the Hope Center!

### Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – Laura Webb, Lori and Larry Riddle, Luz Figueroa, Lesley Kristine and Geri Mayo

A total of 15 guests signed in. (A total of 19 with latecomers who just received to-go bags.) Ten people used the shower and one guest used the laundry. Larry and Lori braved the heat and stayed outside to counsel our guests. Lori also made sure everyone had their paperwork for appointments, IDs, Social Security cards and healthcare. Larry did a lot of "behind the scenes work": washing dishes, taking out trash, etc. Lesley was able to volunteer today! She has been truly missed. Ms. Luz was a powerhouse. She made sandwiches, cleaned the bathroom and shower room, and swept and mopped the floor. Laura gave out clothes, shoes, socks, backpacks, underwear, rain ponchos, and all sorts of hygiene products.

#### \*\*\*Urgent prayer requests! \*\*\*

Please, keep one of our guests, Laramont, in your prayers. He has been in ICU at LRMC for the past 25 days. He has a trach tube, a feeding tube, and is receiving IV medication and sedatives. Laura and I visited him today. We prayed and when Laura told him that Jesus loved him, he smiled! The nursing supervisor said hearing is the last sense to go. Earlier this year, Laramont said he was saved. Whatever happens to him, we believe God is in control.

Also, prayers are needed for Krystal, who is wanting to deliver her baby in the woods. She may have the baby at any time. She has not had any prenatal care. Also, unfortunately, she has been using drugs. Please pray for her health and the health of her baby.

Even on such a hot day, our guests were calm and well-behaved. The spirit of the Lord is making Himself known at Hope House. God bless you all and keep you safe.

### Friday, June 4, 2021 - Paulette Rolle-Alesnik and Ms. Debbie

As HH is still following COVID-19 restrictions, chairs and tables were set outside. The patio was open and fans were set out. Only two guests were allowed inside at a time, and we're required to wear masks. A total of 24 guests signed in, with 11 using the shower and three the laundry facilities. We served a continental breakfast. Thanks to Publix for donating donuts on National Donut Day.

Continued on the next page . . .



## Hope House Happenings - Excerpts from Volunteer Reports

### Friday, June 4, 2021 - Paulette Rolle-Alesnik and Ms. Debbie, Continued



Debbie and Paulette were busy providing our guests with clothing, overseeing the shower list, processing donations and providing lunch. Paulette provided today's devotional and took prayer requests. A special thanks to Ms. Bianca for providing today's lunch: baked ham, mashed potatoes, and green beans. Corn and cucumbers were also served along with several desserts. Thank you to Ms. Jean for providing pimento cheese handhelds (sandwiches). Guests received take-home bags with two MREs, a lunch bag with assorted goodies and a sandwich.



### Tuesday, June 8, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

Our guests were served sloppy joes, corn on the cob, mac n cheese, and watermelon. Our brown to-go bags included an egg salad sandwich, a bag of chips, a cream-filled cupcake, Lance peanut butter crackers, candy, and a fruit cup. To drink was ice cold bottled water with a 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 kitties

We were grateful for items provided by our friend Tammy: new baseball caps, food containers we used today, and the cupcakes which our guests loved. Our friend Marty provided Chef Boy R Dee pop-top cans we gave out. We also had a visit from Jim Aldrich from Christ the King Episcopal Church, who brought us a variety of great items. And we are thankful for the generosity and many items supplied by Lake Gibson United Methodist Church.

God provided a great day with a congenial atmosphere and we received many expressions of gratitude from our guests. We're so grateful for the prayers and generosity of donors and friends of the Hope Center!

### Wednesday, June 9, 2021 – Laura Webb, Lesley Kristine, Luz Figueroa, Ms. Marie and Geri Mayo

Laura was busy overseeing the shower list, giving out bug spray, razors, and other hygiene products. She had purchased several pairs of men's shorts. Also, a large donation of men's t-shirts came in on Monday. Our guests were very pleased with the new clothes. (We had been very low on men's clothing last week. God provided.)

Lesley worked diligently in the clothing boutique. She tackled the mountain of donated socks, as well as processing the other donations. Ms. Luz and Ms. Marie make sure everything ran smoothly. They set up lunch bags; made sandwiches and kept the food table well supplied. Ms. Luz cleaned the shower, bathroom and floors. Poor Ms. Marie may have washed every dish at Hope House.

For lunch, Geri made homemade Salisbury steaks, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots. Laura made an Italian pasta salad. Also, canned peaches and pears were served, with freezie pops for dessert. Take-out bags included a fruit cup, peanut butter crackers, a Rice Krispie Treat, a granola bar, a water flavor packet, and a choice of a PB&J or ham and cheese sandwich. Every guest had a choice of one canned good and one snack from our pantry as well.

Prayer requests: Doug - healing; Alex - all the homeless; Lesley - her mom's continuing health; Geri - Laramont, at LRMC's ICU in a coma. Please continue to pray for one of our guests, Krystal and her baby. She was due to have her baby last week. She refused to go to the hospital. At this time, we have not been able to find her or speak with anyone from her camp.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Hope House Happenings - Excerpts from Volunteer Reports

### Wednesday, June 9, 2021 – Laura Webb, Lesley Kristine, Luz Figueroa, Ms. Marie and Geri Mayo, Continued

Laura, Ms. Luz, and Ms. Marie counseled and prayed with several of our guests, today. Lives were touched. The spirit of the Lord has made His presence known at Hope House.

### Tuesday, June 15, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

We arrived about 9:30 am and gave out lunches in front of the House. We did not open today due to a medical appointment that Rick had. We had a time of group prayer and afterward had spiritual interaction with some of our guests. We only served 20 guests today due to an early and short day. Thomas C. got a to-go lunch and his mail from the IRS. We also fed all 5 cats: Grandma cat, Momma cat and 3 babies.

We communicated last week with our guests to get showers and laundry done on Monday or Wednesday. We were glad Kelly was open yesterday. But we did give out gift bags to all today which included a large pack of bathing wipes, mosquito repellent spray, a rain poncho, radio and flashlight batteries, a Kleenex pack, a Chapstick, a toothbrush, 2 new pairs of (men's or women's) socks, and a chicken salad kit with a spoon for later.

### Hope House, Wednesday, June 16, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Lesley Kristine, Luz Figueroa and Geri Mayo

A total of 15 guests signed in, with 9 using the shower and 3 using the laundry. Breakfast consisted of cereal, bananas, breakfast bars, and delicious quiches made by Lori. Laura was busy providing our guests rain ponchos, masks, bug repellent, Chapstick, and other toiletries. She also oversaw the shower list. Both Laura and Lori were able to pray with and counsel our guests. Lesley processed both hygiene and clothing donations. She did a wonderful job in our clothing boutique. Jim from Christ the King Episcopal Church brought bread and a case of new white socks.



Ms. Luz was a powerhouse as always. She made to-go bags and sandwiches; helped our guests with clothing; cleaned the shower and bathroom, and swept and mopped the floors. Ms. Luz's husband, Marco, cleaned up a large limb which had fallen into the backyard during a major thunderstorm. He also repaired the gate to the patio.

Laura gave the devotion from thebible.com lesson plan, "Seven Things the Bible Says About Anxiety: Day 2, Joy and Peace." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

We continued to ask for prayers for Hope House, our guests and our volunteers. We especially ask for prayers for Aubrey. She is a 10-year-old granddaughter of one of Laura's friends. Aubrey has stage four cancer.

**PRAISE REPORT:** After leaving Hope House, Laura and Geri visited Laramont at LRMC. He was awake! When Laura spoke to him, he recognized her and began to cry. When she told him how people missed him, that we loved him, and God loved him, Laramont smiled. He mouthed, "I love you. I love God". The nurse advised he was off of IV sedation. He is on oral sedatives. The goal is for him to be weaned off of the ventilator. God is so good!

Continued on the next page . . .

## **Hope House Happenings - Excerpts from Volunteer Reports**

### **Friday, June 18, 2021- Paulette Rolle-Alesnik, Ms. Debbie, Luz Figueroa and Lori Riddle**

A total of 17 guests signed in, with 5 using the shower, and 5 using the laundry. Breakfast consisted of cereal, yogurt, boiled eggs, and breakfast bars, with coffee, juice, and bottled water as the beverage choices. Ms. Paulette, Ms. Debbie and Ms. Luz were busy providing toiletries, clothing, rain ponchos, and overseeing the shower list. Lori stopped by later in the day to work with one of our guests, D, and his social worker. They are working together to obtain permanent residence for him.

Ms. Paulette provided the devotional from Ephesians 6:13 - 17. She especially focused on verse 13, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." She focused on how we all face things we cannot handle on our own. However, we are given the tools we need to overcome.

Prayer requests: Gena - her aunt passed away; Carrie - for healing and peace.; D - he is currently working with Ms. Lori and a social worker. Please pray for a permanent residence for him; Laramont - pray for continued healing. Praise report: Laramont is off of IV sedation, and is becoming more alert and responsive. The hospital staff are working to have his trach tube removed in the near future.

### **Tuesday, June 22, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan**

By the end of the day, we served 22 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Psalm 46, NOT RUSHING PRAYER. We brought sanitized towels and wash cloths for showers, and gave each guest a towel, washcloth and hygiene kit. Twelve guests requested showers and one guest used the laundry.

We were grateful for items provided by our friend Tammy; a donation from Lilia Harbaugh from Hope Community Church, and things provided by our friend Marty. And we are thankful for the generosity and encouragement of members of our church, Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. Ethel Somers brought us a donation and Cyndi Kuhlman brought a donation of clothes.

### **Friday, May 28, 2021 - Ms. Jane, Ms. Debbie and Geri Mayo**

We had a total of 17 guests sign in, with 7 using the shower, and 7 using the laundry. Breakfast consisted of scrambled eggs, bacon, instant grits, cereal, and donuts. Coffee, hot tea, fruity waters, and bottled water were the beverage choices. Lunch consisted of baked chicken, zucchini frittata made by Ms. Jean, red beans, broccoli medley and sliced Italian bread.

Ms. Debbie oversaw the shower list and assisted the guests in the clothing boutique. Thanks to our donors, all of our guests received new socks. Our male guests received gently used shorts. Everyone was most grateful! Ms. Jane provided a wonderful devotion. It started with a hilarious "recall" of all human beings by their Manufacturer. She then asked the questions, "Does everybody here know where they're going when they die? Are you sure that you are going to heaven?" Our guests were engaged and participated in the discussion. PTL!

### **Tuesday, June 29, 2021 – Debbie and Rick McLellan**

By the end of the day, we served 21 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Mark 5, WATCH JESUS WORK! Our guests were served a meal by Chef Dick McPherson, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, who served the food and ministered to our guests with Rick and Debbie McLellan. Our guests enjoyed some cooler Hawaiian food on a hot day. Chef Dick served a fabulous pineapple injected pork loin with pineapple BBQ sauce, Hawaiian macaroni salad, broccoli and chocolate chip cookies from Publix. Debbie served fresh strawberry shortcake with whipped cream.

Continued on the next page . . .

## Hope House Happenings - Excerpts from Volunteer Reports

Tuesday, June 29, 2021 – Debbie and Rick McLellan, Continued

We had a visit from Jim Aldrich, who brought us a cake and other items from our friends at Christ the King Episcopal Church. We were grateful for other terrific items dropped off by the following people: Charlie and Linda Alvarez from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church; Julio Santana, our friend and pastor of Bread of Life Christian Mission; Betty from Family Worship Center, and the First Baptist Church of Polk City.

God provided a great day with a congenial atmosphere and we received many expressions of gratitude from our guests. They were so thankful for the generosity and prayers of donors and friends of the Hope Center!

### UM Books to Inform the LGBTQ Conversation

This list includes the first 5 of 11 books listed in the article. The books were compiled by United Methodist Communications; Joe Iovino is the media contact. Originally published June 7, 2021  
[Used with permission]

Caring for and loving one another as we live into our diversity as a denomination are pillars of The United Methodist Church. The long-running conversation about sexuality often has created dissension and pain, so how we show Christ's love to each other in the midst of the conversation is significant. For those interested in educating themselves with a variety of viewpoints and seeking to create a space for understanding, we offer this collection of books written by United Methodist leaders and laypersons.

#### [“Living Faithfully: Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church”](#)

Published by Abingdon Press from the *Faultlines* collection, this book examines the deep disagreement about what The United Methodist Church should teach about homosexuality, same gender marriage, and the ordination of LGBTQ persons. In this revised edition updated following the 2019 Special Session, the book is designed to help readers understand the debate and what it means for the present and the future. The book, which includes a leader guide, can be used as a four-part small group study.

#### [“Into the Light: Healing Sexuality in Today’s Church”](#)

In this book, Dr. Mark Ongley, United Methodist minister and author, seeks to begin a biblically grounded and theologically informed discussion of the gift of sexuality, addressing sexual brokenness in many forms and the path to true healing.

#### [“Homosexuality and the Church”](#)

Howard A. Snyder, seminary professor, pastor and author, addresses a variety of questions about homosexuality in the context of scripture. The book also addresses how Christians and the church should respond to the topic of homosexuality.

#### [“God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships”](#)

United Methodist Matthew Vines shares his story as a young gay man navigating relationships with his family, his hometown church, and the Christian church at large as he expresses what it means to be a faithful gay Christian. In addition to sharing his experiences, the book is the result of years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality.

#### [“Holy Love: A Biblical Theology for Human Sexuality”](#)

Steve Harper, United Methodist pastor, seminary professor and author, examines the teaching of the Bible and Wesleyan tradition on human sexuality, making a constructive case that biblical, Christian teaching is compatible with faithful, covenantal love and intimacy amid all sexual orientations.



## Birthdays in July

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Names</u>         |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 7/1         | Adam Schertzer       |
| 7/2         | Maureen (Mimi) Meyer |
| 7/4         | Gary Mudge           |
| 7/5         | Dick McPherson       |
| 7/8         | Mary Armentrout      |
| 7/8         | Dottie Beckum        |
| 7/8         | Jessica Cogswell     |
| 7/9         | Shirley Schmidt      |
| 7/11        | Jeff Acor            |
| 7/11        | Dennis Greenwood     |
| 7/12        | Dottie Huven         |
| 7/14        | Laura Welch          |
| 7/15        | Mollie Oliva         |
| 7/15        | Joy Walters          |
| 7/16        | John Bernat          |
| 7/18        | Debbie Moore         |
| 7/22        | Allison Wesley       |
| 7/23        | Larry Smucker        |
| 7/24        | Matthew Collins      |
| 7/24        | Raymond Merritt      |
| 7/26        | Eric Hines           |
| 7/30        | JoAn Beebe           |
| 7/30        | Mike Fitzgerald      |

Continued



## Birthdays in July, Continued

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Names</u>    |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 7/30        | Ed Haney        |
| 7/30        | Lynn Meske      |
| 7/30        | Martina Willome |



## Anniversaries in July

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Names</u>               |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 7/1         | Sandi and Doug Harwell     |
| 7/10        | Jamie and Matthew Collins  |
| 7/11        | Merry and Dennis Greenwood |
| 7/30        | Fran and Gary Mudge        |