



THE GOOD NEWS

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church

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



From the Pastor

I was at the hospital very early last week to be with someone having surgery and I left there right at daybreak. I drove around Lake Parker as I often do just to observe nature – to catch a breath and calm me down. The sun was just coming up, the sky was blue and the lake was still. The sun was peeking over the horizon and as it did the light from it formed a bright cross. It was absolutely breath taking.

I was reflecting on how God broke into the lives of his people and brought them salvation, healing and freedom from sin when suddenly, a black plume of smoke appeared between me and the sun. The power plant had just belched out a cloud of smoke ruining my perfect picture. Aaaaahhhh. How dare it! Yet, isn't that what happens in life too? We think we are doing so well, worship is great, things are looking up, and then suddenly a problem occurs like COVID or an air conditioning unit goes out, or the sound tech gets sick.

Personally, we think things are good when we suddenly, unexpectedly, fall and mess up by repeating a rumor, or we allow hatred and rage to come out in our words and actions, or someone comes against us with an unfounded and false accusation. Our view of God, the church or our fellow Christian is tainted and we lose sight of Jesus – like the black cloud obscuring my view of a gorgeous sunrise. How can we restore that view we had at first?

That particular morning it took just about 30 seconds and the smoke dissipated, restoring the awesome sunrise scene. In real life in order to remove the darkness it may take longer than 30 seconds, but we need to refocus on Jesus. We may have to confess our part of the wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness from God and possibly also from our fellow man. It would be a help to search the Scriptures and apply them to the situation and to pray for God not only to guide us in this, but also to intervene in the situation.

God's will is for us to be at peace as much as possible with one another. We find this in Scripture: **How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!** (Psalm 133:1, NIV)

I have found it is easier to be at peace when I am right with God and trust him in every situation. Somehow things are not as bad when Jesus is in the picture. Within the resurrection of Jesus there is a hope and an expectancy that God will work miracles, do the impossible and create new beings of his followers. Focus on God and trust Him only.

Pastor Steve

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	August Events (as of 7/28/2021)
1	Sunday	Communion Sunday
2	Monday	
3	Tuesday	
4	Wednesday	Zooming the Peace, 7:00 pm, discussion of Leftovers from Sunday's sermon, followed by fellowship (repeats every Wednesday)
5	Thursday	Zoom Bible Study with Pastor Steve, 1:00 pm (repeats every Thursday); Faith Talks: Back to School video conference, 2:00 pm; Rethinking Justice video conference, 6:30 pm
6	Friday	
7	Saturday	
8	Sunday	Worship service at 10:30 am with communion; potluck lunch follows in the Family Life Center (FLC); HARVEST SUNDAY (FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS)
9	Monday	
10	Tuesday	First day of school in Polk County
11	Wednesday	
12	Thursday	United Methodist Women (UMW) luncheon, 11:00 am at Smokey Bones; A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH) Board meeting, 2:00 pm, FLC, BeADisciple's Disciple 1 video course (DBS 125) starts (See article); <i>First and Only</i> Zoom video conference, 6:00 pm (See article)
13	Friday	Just Energy for All/Climate Change video conference, 8:00 - 10:30 am (1 of 2)
14	Saturday	United Methodist Men (UMM) breakfast and meeting, 9:00 am in the FLC; Just Energy for All/Climate Change video conference, 8:00 - 10:30 am (2 of 2)
15	Sunday	
16	Monday	Voices from the Field: Three Missionaries, video conference, 6:00 pm
17	Tuesday	Church Council Meeting, FLC, 3:00 pm
18	Wednesday	Just Energy for All monthly video conference, 3:00 pm; BeADisciple's second offering of Disciple 1 video course starts at 7:00 pm (See article)
19	Thursday	Faith Talks: Labor Day featuring the Poor Peoples Campaign, video - conference, 2:00 pm
20	Friday	
21	Saturday	
22	Sunday	
23	Monday	UMW Leadership Team meeting, 11:00 am, FLC classrooms 1 and 2
24	Tuesday	Eat, Pray, Grow (Creation Care) video conference: Planning for Season of Creation, noon
25	Wednesday	
26	Thursday	
27	Friday	
28	Saturday	National United Methodist Men's Virtual Gathering, 11:00 am - 5:00 pm
29	Sunday	
30	Monday	

Letter from Bishop Carter on COVID-19

UPDATE: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their mask guidance for fully vaccinated people on July 27th. They now recommend : **To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission. [That means US! Editor]**

July 20, 2021



The Florida Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Florida Conference Clergy and Laity:

We continue to pray for you as you navigate this season. We had all hoped we would be through this pandemic by now, but we clearly are not.

Like you, the conference is monitoring the increase in new COVID-19 cases and the concerns around the Delta variant and its rapid spread, especially among those who are unvaccinated. We understand that although Florida represents only 6% of the US population, it also represents 20% of the new cases being reported. (source links: [ABCActionNews](#) and [CBSMiami](#)).

We invite you to continue to do what you have been doing. Lean into this next season of the pandemic, being aware that we are living in an in-between time that requires hybrid ministry at every level.

In this regard, we invite you to continue to follow the [guidance we offered on May 14th](#), which is directly connected to the [CDC updated guidance from May 13th](#):

1. Encourage unvaccinated people to wear masks while indoors. ~~Mask wearing is optional for those who have been fully vaccinated [Editor].~~ Fully vaccinated is defined as being two weeks after the last dose of the vaccine.
2. Extend grace to one another. Be sensitive to children under 12 years old who are not old enough to be vaccinated and those who are unable to be vaccinated because they are immune compromised. Adults who are fully vaccinated who have children or grandchildren or vulnerable persons in their household may choose to wear a mask. For this reason, some churches may choose to require masks for everyone.
- ~~3. Making masks optional requires trust. Churches should consider providing caution zones where people who want to wear masks can do so. [Editor]~~
4. We continue to encourage people to maintain social distance and use sanitizers.
5. Continue to work as a team to monitor your local context and consult with your local health department and the CDC about the specifics to your context.

Finally, we know some of you are preparing for the opening of pre-schools later this summer. Our recommendations around pre-schools remain connected to the [CDC guidelines](#) (July 9th update) and the guidelines of your local context. Most pre-schools working with children who are all unable to be vaccinated due to their age require masks for children (over two years old) along with the adults who are volunteering or working with them.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your District Office or the Episcopal Office through ashanks@flumc.org.

The Peace of the Lord
Bishop Ken Carter

A New Adventure for Lake Gibson UMC – Reaching the Next Generation

In Matthew 9:37- 38 (NIV) Jesus tells us “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field”. God’s church was created for something great. That something great is His mandate to reach people with the word of God, His true love and the blessings He has for them and for us.

We cannot reach what we cannot see, but if we open our eyes and look around, and not away, we will find that the harvest is plentiful. At times I have to ask myself “If God answered all my prayers, would it change the world or just change me?” As I get older I become more aware that our generation now has a shorter time to make it happen.

Some of us have spent a fair amount of time asking these questions, “How do we reach the next generation? What are Millennials looking for in a church? How can we attract them and make them a part of it?” The conclusion is we need to use social media and technology to reach people for Jesus, to reach the next generations. Last week we spent some time looking at a system that we believe will help us accomplish our purpose. Here’s an outline of the system design:

- Create an Engagement Pathway with the goal of online ministry conversations.
- Introduce people to our church and our mission.
- Design to build personal connection with new visitors before they show up on a Sunday,
- Work with the expectation that people will start getting saved and an overflow of people visiting our church.

This program comes with templates for creating ads for Facebook and Instagram, built-in follow-up encouraging them to come over a period of time, and 60 days of support in setting up the system and coaching us for success.

As we work toward these goals and expectations, we fully understand and believe these efforts will only be successful with your daily prayers and support, with a desire to see God build His church in our midst. Over time we will be sharing results and more information of the workings of this system as we go forward.



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The Lay Leader Says HALLELUJAH!

Welcome to the “dog days of summer” which actually started on July 3rd and ends on Aug 11th according to the Farmers Almanac. But when I was growing up in Ohio, it was always August.

However, besides the heat, we are in the “best of times and the worst of time” as we view the chaos that is occurring all around us, not only in the USA, Cuba, Israel and the Middle East but wherever Satan is about his business of lying, deceiving, cheating, and corrupting the work of Father GOD.

King David wrote about this in Psalm 12, in the New Living Translation (NLT)* as follows:

¹ Help, O LORD, for the godly are fast disappearing! The faithful have vanished from the earth!

² Neighbors lie to each other, speaking with flattering lips and deceitful hearts.

³ May the LORD cut off their flattering lips and silence their boastful tongues.

⁴ They say, “We will lie to our hearts’ content. Our lips are our own—who can stop us?”

⁵ The LORD replies, “I have seen violence done to the helpless, and I have heard the groans of the poor. Now I will rise up to rescue them, as they have longed for me to do.”

⁶ The LORD’s promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.

⁷ Therefore, LORD, we know you will protect the oppressed, preserving them forever from this lying generation,

⁸ even though the wicked strut about, and evil is praised throughout the land.” (NLT)

Is this not prophetic for a time such as this? We in the church should be even more aware of where we are headed than those in the secular world because they have no foundation in the truth of Father GOD, and we need to pray for them daily for the truth to enter in and set them free from bondage.

The Prophet Jeremiah also warns the world in chapter 25 beginning at verse 30 (NKJV) in his judgement on the Nations.

³⁰ “Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

“The LORD will roar from on high, And utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold.

He will give a shout, as those who tread grapes, Against all the inhabitants of the earth.

³¹ A noise will come to the ends of the earth—For the LORD has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh.

He will give those who *are* wicked to the sword, says the LORD.”

³² Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, disaster shall go forth From nation to nation, And a great whirlwind shall be raised up From the farthest parts of the earth.”

Enjoy the rest of your summer as we look forward to the cooling days of September (up north, not here yet).

Maranatha!

SHALOM!

John Bernat, Lay Leader

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Prayer Ministry



"I love your sanctuary, Lord, the place where your glory shines".

Psalm 26:8 (NLT)

Jesus' house is a house of prayer and Lake Gibson's prayer warriors are dedicated to staying in prayer for one another. Prayer brings us closer together as a church family and praying brings us in steady closeness to God.

Some of us have not returned to our sanctuary for Sunday Service due to different circumstances. But whenever we access these services even through the internet, we feel God's spirit alive in our sanctuary and in our soul through the singing voices and in Pastor Steve's message.

No matter where we are, God's offer to pray remains with us and will reach His sanctuary in heaven.

"I love the Lord, because he hears and answers my prayers". Psalm 116:1 (NLT)

Is God calling you to be a Lake Gibson Prayer Warrior? Please call the church office if you wish to join our prayer team, receiving these requests via email.

In Christian love for one another through prayer,
Prayer Ministry-Fran

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The UMM did not hold a monthly meeting this month to allow for family plans and to catch up on summer projects at home. We are still in the planning stages of concrete repair of the transformer between the Family Life Center (FLC) and A Little Bit of Heaven (ALBOH) Child Enrichment Center. We have the material with the exception of the concrete.

We also approved funds for repairing the old church sign to be used by ALBOH for posting hours and special notices. The UMM would like
Continued . . .

UMM, Continued

to thank all those who supported or helped in the repair of the old sign. It was in terrible shape and required extensive work to be used for the Church as well as ALBOH. [If you drive by at night, notice how bright and readable the sign is now. Editor]

It takes the effort of all to ensure the success of any project. No one person can do it alone and that is what Church fellowship is about. This is what makes Lake Gibson UMC an outstanding church. We have always pulled together as a group to ensure successful project completion.

The UMM will meet **September 11th at 9:00 am in the FLC classrooms 1&2** to discuss plans for a **UMM Sunday service on September 26th** followed by a potluck lunch. We will also discuss the continued support of projects on the grounds of Lake Gibson UMC. We will be working on the lighting upgrades to the Sanctuary and any other small tasks as they are brought to our attention.

In September we will be voting on a **new president for the UMM**. Should anyone care to be considered, please contact Pastor Steve or Michael Moake.

If anyone would like to come to our meetings, you are welcome as they are open door. We would embrace your ideas and suggestions. We are 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.

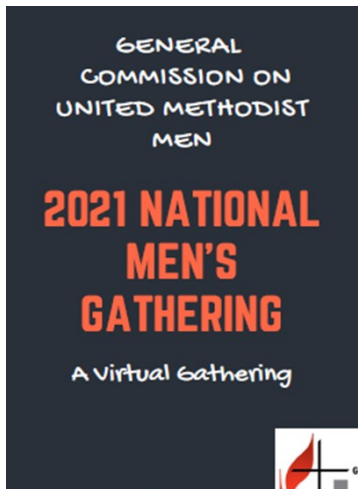
Michael Moake, UMM President

National United Methodist Men's Virtual Gathering, Saturday, August 28, 11:00 am – 5:00 pm EDT

Please see the flyer on the next page for information and to register for this event.

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**National United Methodist Men's Virtual Gathering,
Saturday, August 28, 11:00 am – 5:00 pm EDT**



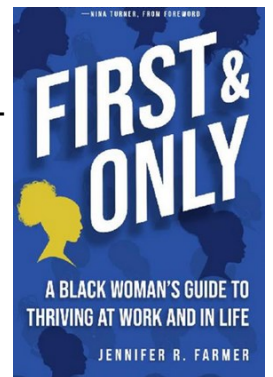
Registration for the gathering is required. You may register by going to bit.ly/umm21.

Jennifer R. Farmer, Author of *First and Only: A Black Woman's Guide to Thriving at Work and in Life*

Zoom Video Conference, Thursday, August 12, 2021, 6:00 – 7:00 pm (EDT)

[Register here.](#)

Join United Methodist Women members and friends to hear Jennifer R. Farmer discuss her new book, *First and Only: A Black Woman's Guide to Thriving at Work and in Life*. Jennifer will share an excerpt of her book, engage with a panel of United Methodist Women readers+leaders, and take your questions. All are welcome.



Keynote Speakers

REV. DR. RON BELL, JR

REV. TOM ALBIN

Saturday, Aug. 28th 2021

10am - 4pm central

Topics:

Combating and healing the trauma of racism

Evangelism & Discipleship

To Register go to bit.ly/umm21 or
Scan QR Code



offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The book is available for purchase at many major bookstores or online.

Note: *First and Only* is a UMW Reading Program selection. Space is limited and registration is

***Voices from the Field: "Back to School at Three National Mission Institutions"*
Zoom Video Conference, Monday, August 16, at 6:00 pm (EDT)**

The **United Methodist Women** will discuss three of their National Mission Institutions' preparations for children, youth and adults to return to school successfully. The UMW supports NMI's through its **Mission Giving**.

Wesley House Community Services, Louisville, KY - New early childhood Headstart program

InterServ (Interfaith Community Services), St. Joseph, MO - Youth educational support program

Wesley Community Service Center, Portsmouth, VA - New GED program for adults.

[Register here](http://umw.convio.net/site/R?i=q4EH-VED7asdLyOQoogeSCRW4t3I01wfW3phZwnLVWEm1ti2xOqLw) (If this link doesn't work, copy and paste this into your browser: <http://umw.convio.net/site/R?i=q4EH-VED7asdLyOQoogeSCRW4t3I01wfW3phZwnLVWEm1ti2xOqLw>)

Just Energy for All and Climate Justice Events

Here are some next steps to get more involved in advancing just energy for all:



The World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women is hosting a free global online event on **August 13 and 14 from 8:00 – 10:30 am, EDT**. The 14th will be focused on **climate change**. [Register here](#).

Join UMW in urging Congress to enact legislation that prioritizes climate justice through a just and equitable transition. [Call and write to your members of Congress today!](#)

We will soon be inviting UMW groups to apply for funding to help support local organizing campaigns to advance just energy for all. More information about this opportunity and the application will be sent out soon. We will be hosting a webinar and question and answer session for the Just Energy for All funding opportunity on **Wednesday August 25 at 1:00 pm EDT**.

Keep Up with the Gulf Central District's Anti-Racism Work on Their Facebook Page

Check out our District's Anti-Racism Facebook page and invite others to visit as well. The page is continuously updated with relevant information. It is a place where we work to provide truth-based information.

Currently, you will find several resources on Critical Race Theory—resources that will give you details on what it is and isn't.

Join us at Facebook page: "Call to Discipleship-End Racism" at <https://www.facebook.com/Call-to-Discipleship-End-Racism-101585868750101>.

Pastor's Bible Study and Zooming the Peace Video Conferences

Zooming the Peace has moved to Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. Information needed to log into this Zoom event is posted on the church's website, lakegibsonumc.com. We watch the Pastor's "Leftovers" from Sunday's sermon and spend 30 to 40 minutes discussing them. Afterward we catch up on what's happening in everyone's life.

You are invited to join us on Thursdays at 1:00 pm for Pastor Steve's Bible Study. We should be starting Galatians in August. Again, the information you need to join this Zoom meeting is on the church's website.

Fellowship Luncheons Resume after Worship Service on August 8th

We will be enjoying our first fellowship meal together as the whole church since March, 2020. It will be held in the Family Life Center (FLC) on **Sunday, August 8th, after the worship service**. The church will provide the meat dishes: Cuban Pork Roast prepared by Rosita Strafford, ham by Michael Moake, and roast turkey by Dick McPherson. We will also serve hotdogs and chicken nuggets for the kids.

Although it is not required, if you can, please bring a salad or a side dish that goes with these meats, or a dessert. We have invited the pastors and congregations of the other two churches that meet in the FLC to join us in worship and to share the meal.

Information on UMW Climate Change Efforts

The main UMW website includes a look at local and national efforts for climate justice, and shares ideas for how our unit can get involved.

Please go to

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/taking-action-for-gods-creation>.

Florida Conference UMW Newsletter

To sign up for the Florida Conference UMW's newsletter *Genesis*, go to <https://flconfumw.org/genesis-newsletter>.

Genesis is published quarterly and can be downloaded from the Florida Conference's website (the April 2021 issue is up now) or received by email when you sign up.

UMW Faith Talks

Faith Talks are monthly conversations with United Methodist Women hosted by Jennifer R. Farmer of Spotlight PR. Each conversation explores themes and resources that empower us to put faith, hope and love into action.

Thursday, August 5 at 2:00 pm EDT,
Subject: Back to School. [click here to register.](#)

Thursday, August 19 at 2:00 pm EDT,
Subject: Labor Day, Featuring The Poor People's Campaign. [click here to register](#)

You don't have to be a member of the UMW (or possess two X chromosomes) to participate in this or any other UMW event. If you are interested in joining Lake Gibson's UMW unit, please call Phyllis Kitchens (863-984-4564/410-790-2662) or phyllis_kitchens@hotmail.com.

UMW's Last Summer Luncheon, August 12th, 11:00 am at Smokey Bones

Our final summer fellowship luncheon will be held at **Smokey Bones, 3901 US Hwy 98 N, in Lakeland at 11:00 am on Thursday, August 12th.** If you would like to attend, please call Pat Moon (cell 863-398-9926, home 863-858-6883). Feel free to invite your friends and neighbors.

UMW Circle Meetings Resume on September 6th

We will resume in-person circle meetings on **Monday, September 6th at 10:30 am** in the Family Life Center, classrooms 1 and 2. This will be a combined meeting of our two circles, Heart to Heart and Ruth Circle of Love. If you haven't Continued

Circle Meetings Resume on September 6th, Continued

already obtained a copy of the book, *You Are Never Alone: Trust in the Miracle of God's Presence and Power* by Max Lucado (Thomas Nelson, 2020), please order a hard copy (new or used) or Kindle copy and **read the first chapter before the meeting.**

Pat Moon ordered copies for some people last spring and may have a few extra copies available. Check with her at 863-398-9926 or 863-858-6883. We're looking forward to seeing you again!

Merry Matters In-person Meetings Resume in October

Regularly scheduled meetings of Merry Matters will resume in October (date TBD). Lynn Meske will again be our leader. In the meantime, you can continue to make plastic yarn (plarn) from grocery bags and crochet the strips to make sleeping mats for the homeless.

Call the office if you have completed mats for delivery to Hope House (HH). Our HH volunteers, Debbie and Rick McLellan, can set up a date for you to deliver your mats in person to HH if you want to.

There's Still Time to Make Baby or Child Hats

Please see the article about making knitted or crocheted hats for infants and children in the July newsletter. Hats can be delivered to the church office. They will be sent to Cornerstone Family Ministry for distribution. You can also bring them with you to the August 12th UMW luncheon.

Results of the Poll on Sanctuary Seating and Lighting

The Church Council asked the congregation in July to advise them on preferences for Sanctuary seating and lighting. Sixty-eight ballots were received. The results are as follows:
Seating: Chairs only - 21 votes; Pews only - 17; Mix of chairs and pews - 30.
Lighting: Recessed (to replace pendants) - 55 votes; Repair existing pendants - 11. The Council will continue to study the proposed changes.

ITEMS NEEDED AT HOPE HOUSE

As of 21 July 2021

PANTRY AND/OR LUNCH BAG FOOD

Single-serving canned pasta, ready-to-eat soup, Vienna sausage, beanie weenies, tuna or chicken salad kits, fruit cups, peanut butter or cheese crackers, saltine crackers, chips, and individually wrapped snacks.

NON – FOOD ITEMS

Disposable razors, baby wipes, triple antibiotic cream, deodorant, hydrocortisone cream; over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, such as ibuprofen and antacids. (These can be found at the Dollar Tree or the dollar aisle at most stores.) Suntan lotion (sun screen) and bug repellent are also needed.

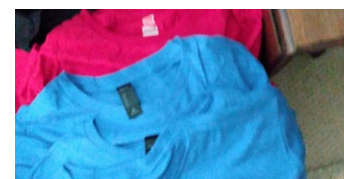
CLOTHES

****HH desperately needs men's shorts, sizes 30 to 34.**** Men's underwear, boxer or briefs are especially welcome. Socks, especially dark, low-cut ones. Men's and women's t-shirts, mainly men's size large. Tennis shoes, especially men's sizes 9 1/2 to 11 1/2.

MISCELLANEOUS

Backpacks, small duffel bags, batteries, small flashlights.

Thank you for anything you can donate. ♥



Geri found 3-packs of socks and t-shirts at Dollar Tree

Introducing the Churches Sharing Our Campus

Did you know two other congregations are currently worshiping God at Lake Gibson UMC?

Several years ago Rev. Jose Rogue brought a Spanish language service to LGUMC as part of the World Wide Missionary Movement. They meet on Sundays at 10:30 am upstairs in the Family Life Center.

The New Testament Christian Church began meeting here recently. Rev. Errol Archibald is the pastor. They meet on Sunday at 1:30 pm in the FLC's main room.

When you see these new worshipers, be sure to greet them with the abundant love and hospitality that LGUMC is known for.

Food Pantry Needs

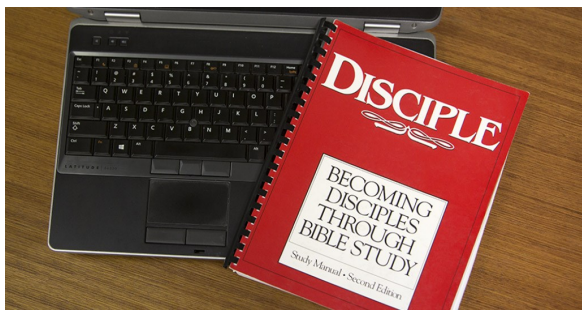
The food pantry currently needs donations of peanut butter, jelly and spaghetti sauce. Please buy these in **plastic containers** if possible -- it's too easy for our volunteers to drop the glass jars when filling the grocery bags, and difficult to clean up the mess. The recipients, some of whom depend on their bikes to get to and from the pantry, also appreciate the no-break containers.

We also need more paper grocery bags. Please bring your used bags to the church office when you can. Thank you.

Ann Johnson

Opportunities to Take Disciple 1 or 2 Classes Online Starting in August

BeADisciple is hosting three entirely online opportunities to take the original *Disciple* Bible Study:



Disciple 1 Online for Mulvane UMC in Kansas and Anyone (DBS 125) - Thursday nights beginning August 12, led by Joe Warne. [Click here for more information](#). Course fee: \$35.00. This study is offered for anyone, anywhere, unchurched or churched people, college age or older. Participants will covenant together to study the scripture faithfully for the duration of the course (34 weeks) and participate in weekly Zoom meetings. The weekly Zoom sessions will be on **Thursday at 8:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**. The orientation meeting will be on **Thursday, 12 August 2021 at 8:00 pm EDT via Zoom**.

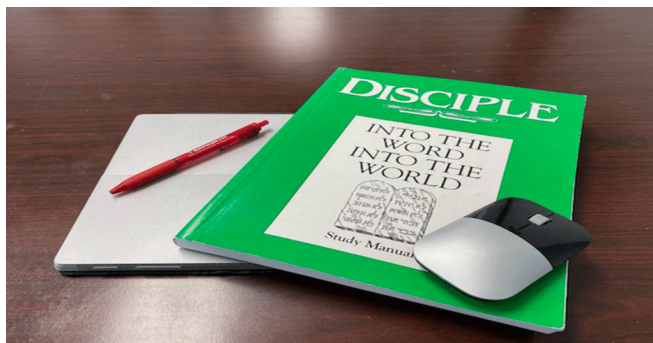
The \$35 BeADisciple fee covers the online assignments, support for the software, and access to the videos and a certificate of completion. Participants will need to independently acquire the student manual after enrolling in the course: **Disciple 1 Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study: Study Manual: Second Edition**. The manual is \$35-40.

Disciple 1 Online for Anyone (DBS 126) offered by BeADisciple, **Wednesday nights beginning August 18**. [Click here for more information](#). Course fee: \$30.00. Led by facilitator Rev. Shirley Connally, this study is offered for all believers interested in studying God's Word and living a life according to His plan. Participants will covenant together to study the scripture faithfully for the duration of the course (34 weeks) and participate in weekly Zoom meetings. The weekly Zoom sessions will be on **Wednesday (7:00-8:30 pm EDT)**. The orientation meeting will be on **Wednesday, August 18, 2021, at 7:00 pm EDT**. Uses same Disciple 1 study manual as above class.

Disciple 2 Online for Soapstone UMC in Raleigh, NC and Anyone (DBS 224), Sundays beginning **September 12**, led by Bill Poston. [Click here for more information](#). The Disciple 2 Bible Study manual (**Disciple 2 Into the Word, Into the World**) is approximately \$35-40 and must be ordered separately from enrollment. Using the manual as a guide, learners will find and reflect on 30-minute daily readings for 32 weeks. You will then go online for videos of Bible scholars discussing the weekly scripture passages and to use the online Discussion Board to share views on what you are reading and hearing, as well as prayer requests and mutual support and encouragement. The group will gather in **weekly 70-minute Zoom meetings**. The sessions will be on **Sundays at 2:30 pm EDT**. The orientation meeting will be on **Sunday, September 12 at 2:30 pm EDT**. Course Fee is \$30, which covers the online assignments, support for the software, and access to the videos.

Additional Requirements for all three courses: High speed internet access, a computer with an internal or external camera with microphone, a study Bible, the course study manual, and an adventurous spirit and desire to study the Bible in a new way!

These three groups are forming now and will begin soon. **Disciple is a big [time] commitment**, but it is also a **transformative experience** for Christians at any level of development.



Update on Florida Conference's Creation Care Initiative

At our last **Eat, Pray, Grow** meeting [monthly at 12:00 noon educational video conference on climate-related topics] we celebrated the passing of the Solar Sanctuaries Advocacy Resolution at Annual Conference and talked with Rev. Andy Oliver about how solar energy has blessed his church with saving \$20,000 a year, and has attracted new members to Allendale UMC. Most Creation Care ministries have solar energy as a goal, and with his model, we may be closer than we think. This would be a great recording to share with your pastor and church leaders to start a conversation about solar at your church. You can view the recording of this session at https://youtu.be/0x_uxSeZhtw.

Our next Eat, Pray, Grow meeting will be on August 24 at noon. Until then, we can keep in touch on our Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/flumccreaioncare/.

Our topic for **August 24th** is planning for the **Season of Creation** that will take place between **September 1st on World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and end on October 4th on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.** We will share what our FLUMC Creation Care plans are for Season of Creation and how to put on a *Blessing of the Animals* event.

You can learn more at www.seasonofcreation.org and we encourage you to gather your Creation Care groups together this month to begin your fall planning. If you have any questions, please reach out to your district leader or give me a call at 850-755-2505. [As of July, the Gulf Central District had not identified a Creation Care district leader.]

Blessings,
Cara Fleischer
FLUMC Creation Care Task Team Chair



INVITATION TO JOIN SEASON OF CREATION 2021

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration of prayer and action for our common home. Together, the ecumenical family around the world unites to pray and protect God's creation.

The season starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations.

2021 THEME

This year we will be uniting around the theme, **"A HOME FOR ALL? RENEWING THE OIKOS OF GOD."**

Oikos is the Greek word for "home," or "household." By rooting our theme in the concept of oikos, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth.



This year's symbol, **Abraham's tent**, signifies our commitment to safeguard a place for all who share our common home, just as Abraham did in the Book of Genesis.

You're encouraged to place Abraham's tent in a local garden as a sign of hospitality for the excluded. **Communities are invited to pray with and for the most vulnerable in their community.**

The tent can also be present in liturgies or events throughout the Season of Creation as a symbol of the community's intention to create a home for all.

Join us:

Individuals and communities are invited to participate through prayer, sustainability projects, or advocacy.

- **Prayer:** Host an ecumenical prayer service that unites all Christians to care for our common home.
- **Sustainability:** Lead a clean-up project that helps all of creation thrive.
- **Advocacy:** Raise your voice for climate justice by participating or leading an ongoing campaign, such as the movement to divest from fossil fuels.

We invite you to schedule your own participation in the season. As a first step, go to SeasonOfCreation.org. You will find the official [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#), a wide range of resources, and a form to **register your events**.

We hope that this Season of Creation renews our baptismal call to care and sustain this ecological turning so that life may flourish, and all creatures may find their place to flourish in our common home.



During the Season of Creation, Christians will transform our home into a tent for all of creation.

Creation Care: Facts about Plastic



First discovered in the 1950's, nine billion metric tons have been produced since then, and only 20–30% of it is still in use, meaning that the rest is waste still on this earth in some form.

Plastic is made of petroleum and uses huge amounts of water in the production of plastic pellets that are sold to manufacturers all over the world.

The vast majority of plastic waste ends up in landfills and oceans, where it degrades into microplastics, which then invade the human food chain through fish and other marine animals that have ingested them, and through tap water. Microplastics can enter the bloodstream, the lymphatic system, and the liver.

The first recycling programs were started by the plastics industry as part of a strategy to encourage companies and families to use more plastic.

At best, only 9% of all plastic is recycled, and it takes 100–500 years for plastic to disintegrate in nature. What doesn't disintegrate is burned, releasing toxic fumes into the atmosphere.

The largest contributor of plastic in landfills today is thrown away clothing—think spandex and polyester!

Now that the demand for petroleum fuel and energy is declining, the industry is focusing more on producing plastic packaging. Currently, Coca-Cola and Amazon are the highest users of plastic packaging.

The United States is responsible for 33% of the world's refuse.

[Source: Email from Creation Justice Movement umcreationjustice@gmail.com, Thursday, Jul 1, 2021, 1:20 pm, Subject: July News from the Creation Justice Movement]

Justice is Love Out Loud

[Source: Gulf Central District Newsletter, May 2021]

As we explore how to engage missionally in our communities, there is a resource in three of the counties that our District covers. These are the **faith-based community organizations** of the DART network: **PEACE in Polk County**, HOPE in Hillsborough County and FAST in Pinellas County.

These organizations teach leaders in congregations how to advocate for justice on issues right where they live: **transportation, mental health, diverting youth from incarceration for minor, non-violent offenses**. The benefit to churches is helping their leaders learn the art of engaging in the public discourse on critical issues that affect their neighbors.

Check out this awesome video: Three leaders in our district talk briefly about why they are involved. Take a moment to listen: [click here](#).

We will be hosting a **Rethinking Justice workshop on August 5th, 6:30 to 8:00 pm EDT** for churches across our District. You and leaders in your church are invited to come and learn more. Please register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88248149265?pwd=NWNtYkE4R0I1YIR5YU9PRWJmUUUvZz09>

Contact Information

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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

Does The UMC Fund These Non-related Entities?

[Source: United Methodist Communications, email, July 21, 2021, subject: Tell Your Story. Used with permission]

Advocacy groups (such as Good News, Institute on Religion and Democracy, Methodist Federation for Social Action, Reconciling Ministries Network, The Confessing Movement): No. These are independent organizations funded by their members and participants.

Black Lives Matter organizations: No. The United Methodist Church addresses anti-racism work primarily through the [General Commission on Religion and Race](#) and annual conference commissions on religion and race. The apportionment your congregation sends to your annual conference funds both your annual conference commission on religion and race and the General Commission. The denominational budget funds no Black Lives Matter organizations.

March of Dimes: No. The United Methodist Church has never funded this organization.

World Vision and Samaritan's Purse: No to both. The United Methodist Church has never funded these organizations.

National Council(s) of Churches (and similar ecumenical bodies outside the US): Yes.

The United Methodist Church, through its predecessor bodies, was a founding member of the [National Council of Churches](#) and its predecessor, the Federal Council of Churches. The ecumenical commitment of The UMC, however, extends beyond the United States, and includes a financial commitment to support these bodies that bring Christians of many denominations together in common efforts. See page 35 of the [Financial Commitment Booklet](#) to learn more, and page 38 to find out how much funding can go annually to support these organizations when 100% of apportionments are paid.

Planned Parenthood: No. The United Methodist Church has never funded this organization.

Political Parties or Political Candidates: No. The United Methodist Church does not fund political candidates or political parties. This is a prohibited activity under U.S. non-profit law for churches and other charitable organizations which qualify for exemption from federal income tax. Churches may jeopardize or even lose this status if they engage in "political campaign activity." Learn more about the [Church's involvement in politics](#).

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice: Not as of 2017. The United Methodist Church was a founding member of this coalition and advocated for the Church's life-centered position on abortion in dialogue with other member bodies, many of whom hold choice-centered ethics. The 2016 General Conference instructed The UMC to exit the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and eliminate all funding for it.

World Council of Churches: Yes. The United Methodist Church, the largest Protestant denomination that functions as a worldwide church, is committed to witnessing to the gospel and extending the mission of Christ in partnership with Christian bodies on a worldwide basis. As a founding member of The [World Council of Churches](#) through its predecessor bodies, The United Methodist Church continues its presence, witness, and collaborative work in the World Council of Churches through the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, one of the apportioned funds. United Methodist funding supports the participation of United Methodists and Christians of many denominations from developing countries in the worldwide assemblies of the Council, as well as the Council's ongoing work of promoting initiatives to build justice and make for peace. See pages 35 and 38 of the [Financial Commitment Booklet](#) for more information.

Stepping into Your Loved-One's Reality: Is It Lying or Compassion?

By Vicky Pitner, First UMC Lakeland

Who doesn't enjoy being surrounded by people who make you feel understood and supported? The need to be validated is important to everyone, especially to those living with memory loss. But so often, care partners, friends, family, and even professionals who support people living with dementia or Alzheimer's disease lack the understanding of the importance of recognizing that people with memory loss have thoughts, feelings, concerns, and wishes that need to be understood and validated.

At one time, "reality orientation" was the most common form of communicating with people living with dementia. The purpose of reality orientation is to disrupt cognitive decline by stimulating the confused individual by reinforcing name, date, time, and other facts. Trying to orient a person with significant memory loss is asking the person to do something they are not capable of. Early on, "nursing homes" used colorful calendars and large clocks in each room so every time staff or family member entered the room, the person was prompted to be "grounded" in reality. Unfortunately, this only caused distress and behavioral symptoms, as the person was really being asked to be in our reality. This still happens today with family members or caregivers who do not understand the importance of entering their reality, and arguments are constant.

In the very early stage of memory loss, gentle reminders of the day of the week (reality orientation) can be helpful, but once the person becomes more confused and disoriented and believes and argues that it is Wednesday when it is Friday, validating their reality and redirecting works best.

"Validation therapy" is a proven, non-pharmaceutical method of communication developed by American social worker and gerontologist Naomi Feil. She was born in Germany, and her parents came to the US, and she said she "was raised in a home for the aged," where both parents held administrative positions. She recognized even as a child that taking a more empathetic approach when communicating with the more confused residents kept them calmer and happier. Using validation therapy is a much kinder and more effective way to communicate and causes less stress and anxiety for everyone

But is it lying? Many family members and friends feel being untruthful is wrong and they continue to correct, scold and argue with their family member, repeatedly asking them "why can't you remember it is 2021 not 1941?" Trying to convince a person with cognitive decline who claims "Christmas is coming" and correcting them that it is February and we just had Christmas, only confuses, frustrates them and results in arguments and conflicts. Using the outdated method to keep people in 'reality' is especially difficult for the person when he/she is told of a death of someone they love. For example, confronting a family member who can't remember the death of their mother 30 years ago each time they ask "when is mother coming to visit," is harmful to the person. "Reminding" the person that their mother is dead over and over is not helpful because hearing the news of the death is always hearing it for a first time, and grief can be overwhelming.

So, is being "in the moment" with your family member and providing comfort and security by validating their feelings really lying, or is it just showing compassion? The next time you are tempted to argue, "remind" or correct inaccurate comments from your loved-one such as when he/she is thinking Christmas is around the corner, ask yourself if it is more important for you to be correct and tell them it is February, or validate how much you both love Christmas and just "go with the flow." Joining them in their reality can be a caring and joyful moment to share.

If you would like more information on our Memory Ministry or need tips on caregiving, please contact [Vicky](#) Pitner at First UMC, Lakeland. [Source: E-Connections, FUMC, July 15, 2021. Used with permission]

UM Books to Inform the LGBTQ Conversation (Part 2 of 2)

The July issue of *The Good News* presented a list of the first 5 of 11 books compiled in an article by United Methodist Communications. Joe Iovino is the media contact. The list was originally published June 7, 2021 [Used with permission].

The introduction of the article reads "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."

["Science, Scripture and Same-Sex Love"](#)

Author Michael B. Regele challenges the premise of some church leaders who assert that same-sex practices are incompatible with Christian teaching. Regele explores current scientific findings in biological brain research, psychology and sociology, which he compares with scriptural teaching from the Bible, to show that a faithful reading of the Scriptures is consistent with Christian teaching that affirms same-sex love leading to same-sex marriage and full participation of LGBT people in church leadership.

["Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology"](#)

Pamela R. Lightsey, United Methodist clergy and author, explores the impact of multiple oppressions experienced by Black Queer women. The book explores liberation theologies to reflect on LGBTQIA+ issues in the Church such as marriage and ordination rights.

["For the Body"](#)

Timothy Tennent, President of Asbury Theological Seminary and author, looks at what it means to be created in the image of God and how our bodies serve as icons that illuminate God's purposes. Tennent examines topics like marriage, family, singleness and friendship, and he looks at how the human body has been objectified in art and media today. He also offers a framework for discipling people today in a Christian theology of the body.

["Our Strangely Warmed Hearts: Coming Out Into God's Call"](#)

As John Wesley discovered his true spiritual identity, he experienced a strangely warmed heart. Karen P. Oliveto, United Methodist bishop and author, shares poignant stories and well-reasoned principles to disclose why and how spiritual renewal and a personal call to ministry emerge in the strangely warmed hearts of lesbian and gay Christians.

["Reclaiming Church: A Call to Action for Religious Rejects"](#)

United Methodist J.J. Warren, a seminary student, continues his call to reaffirm that the Church be welcoming to all, including young queer people. The book focuses on practical and positive steps for joining voices, being heard, building bridges, and working together for young people to reclaim Church in their lives.

["When Christians Get It Wrong"](#)

Adam Hamilton, United Methodist pastor and author, examines why young adults increasingly are opting out of Christianity and the church. Christians are the reason, Hamilton writes. When young adults talk about the problems they have with Christianity and the church, they often name certain attitudes and behaviors they believe are practiced too often by Christians: judging others, condemning people of other faiths, rejecting science, injecting politics into faith, and being anti-homosexual. Hamilton addresses the issues and how and why Christians can get it right when it comes to being Christ in the world.

How One Methodist Church is Helping the Homeless

[Source: United Methodist Communications and Station WTVF, Channel 5 in Nashville, TN, a CBS affiliate. Presented in the UM News Daily Digest, Jul 20, 2021. Used with permission.]

The following article and video clip describe how one Methodist church has taken a bold action to offer respite care after hospitalization for homeless people in its area. Please click on the two links below to learn more.

"Church officially opens respite center for homeless

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — After years of pushback, delays and court battles, a medical respite center for Nashville's unhoused is now open at Glenclyff United Methodist Church. A crowd filled the churchyard for a July 19 ribbon cutting. Eventually, there will be 22 tiny homes on the church property for people who have nowhere to go after a hospital stay. Hannah McDonald reports.

[Read and watch story](#)

[UM News: Church building micro home village for homeless](#)



The Rev. Ingrid McIntyre shares the story of the micro house community for homeless respite care under construction at Glenclyff United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UM News."

Hope House Happenings (Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports)

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we served 30 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Luke 4, JESUS READS THE GOOD NEWS.

Our guests were served restaurant-type ravioli, garlic bread furnished by Miss Joey, a fresh garden salad with tomatoes, and a choice of three dressings. For dessert were cranberry or orange scones. Our brown to-go bag included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of chips, a pudding cup, a Rice Krispies Treat, a pack of Lance crackers, and a cup of dice peaches. To quench thirst 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. We also fed the 6 Hope House kitties.

Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, and clothing items. We also gave out 3 easy-to-read Student Bibles, and filled one request for a pocket New Testament, all provided by Debbie Moore of Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. We love it when our guests want to have their own Bible to study the Word of God.

We did have to ask one lady to leave after lunch. She was high and threatened another female guest.

Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings, Continued

Tuesday, July 20, 2021 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we served 30 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Luke 6, where Jesus taught about A GOOD FOUNDATION.

Our guests were served beanie weenies, a fresh garden salad with cucumbers, sliced tomatoes and a choice of Ranch, Honey Mustard or Italian dressing, and fresh-baked cookies for dessert. Our brown to-go bags included an egg salad sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Lance peanut butter crackers, a Rice Krispies Treat, a pudding cup and an applesauce cup. To drink was ice cold bottled Pepsi or Mountain Dew, bottled water with a flavor packet and orange juice. 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 got up to speed on some of our former guests. We were surprised to learn that Gregory Singletary had passed away. He was 60 years old. And Laramont Nash is out of the hospital and is back with his family in New Jersey, with a clean new start to his life, an answered prayer.

Debbie was busy and gave out toiletry kits, razors, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, men's jeans and other clothing items. She also administered first-aid to some of our guests.

We brought sanitized towels and wash cloths for showers, gave each guest a towel, washcloth and hygiene kit. Eleven guests requested showers. We also had 6 guests who used the washers and dryers.

We were grateful for Cyndi Kuhlman from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. She brought us a large number of ice-cold orange juice cups, and the guests loved them.

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, July 21, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Luz Figueroa and Geri Mayo

A total of 28 guests signed in, with 15 using the shower and 7 using the laundry facilities. Breakfast included cereal, assorted pastries, and a delicious breakfast casserole made by Lori, with juices, coffee and bottled water for the beverage choices.

Laura was quite busy providing our guests with clothes, including new shoes, underwear, socks, and t-shirts. Several of our guests also received different toiletries. Lori counseled many of our guests. She assisted several with paperwork needed for IDs, bus passes, and medical insurance. Luz worked very hard in the clothing boutique. She also helped with setup and clean up for the day.

Laura provided the devotion based on an email from Pastor Nathan at Fuel Baptist Church. It was the story of Noah and God's covenant with him and his sons not to flood the Earth ever again (Genesis 9:8 -11, NIV). One major point was, "In the same way that God will not turn His back on the covenant to never flood the earth again, He will never turn His back on those who are His in this life."

Geri made homemade meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy. Ms. Jean brought a wonderful salad. She also made an upside-down cake and a cake with fig glaze. Every guest received a lunch bag with a chocolate pudding, an applesauce cup, peanut butter crackers, fruit juice, a flavor pack, chips, and a choice of a PB&J, ham and cheese, or turkey and cheese sandwich.

Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings, Continued

Wednesday, July 21, 2021 - Laura Webb, Lori Riddle, Luz Figueroa and Geri Mayo, Continued

Ms. Marie and Mr. Bill donated rain ponchos and various odds and ends. We are extremely grateful as the forecast is for rainstorms all of next week.

The food pantry is running low. Also, HH needs different clothing items. [A list is included on page 10 of this issue of *The Good News*.] Any donations will be greatly appreciated.

Even though it was a very hot day, our guests behaved well. The spirit of the Lord is making his presence known at Hope House. May the spirit of the Lord be with you and keep you safe.



Photos Left to Right: Lori's breakfast casserole, Geri's meatloaf and mashed potatoes, to-go bag items.

Looking for Your Articles in *The Good News*

Do you have opinions or observations that you would like to make known? We are always on the lookout for articles. If you would like to submit a piece for the September issue, please do so by Wednesday, August 18th. Photos, devotions, poetry -- whatever you want to write.

Phyllis Kitchens

Florida United Methodist Children's Home

Although we solicited for back-to-school donations at the beginning of summer, it was hard to get into the mood so early and donations of school supplies were not as large as in previous years. With the **August 10th start of school** looming, it's time to get serious about donating.

Florida's annual Back-to-School "Sales Tax Holiday" will take place from **Saturday, July 31 through Monday, August 9**. Anyone purchasing supplies will get a break from the state's **6%** sales tax, which can add up to big savings for families as the summer break ends and the new school year begins.

Tax-free items: Clothes, shoes and backpacks that cost \$60.00 or less; school supplies that cost \$15.00 or less, and the first \$1,000 of the price of personal computers, including laptops and tablets, and computer accessories.

Bring your donations to the church office and we'll combine them with the earlier donations to take to the Children's Home.



Birthdays in August

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
8/1	George Band
8/1	Thomas Mitchell
8/8	Dan Johnson
8/10	Rosita Stafford
8/12	Danny Hughes
8/16	Wealthy Brown
8/18	Cathy Jones
8/18	Mike Stafford
8/20	Joyce Webb
8/23	Lauren Rodriguez
8/28	Sandy Stanfield
8/31	Carol Campbell
8/31	Lou Webb



Anniversaries in August

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
8/2	Debbie and Dick McPherson
8/5	Karen and Jeff Acor
8/8	Bonnie and Ken Fuqua
8/14	Faye and Claude Hatchett
8/15	Martina and Bob Willome
8/19	Abba and Robert Schmidt
8/21	Anne and John Bernat
8/21	Rosita and Mike Stafford
8/23	Dottie and Jim Huven
8/27	Jan and Michael Booker