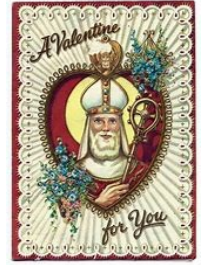




THE GOOD NEWS

Lake Gibson United Methodist Church
*To be a joyful church family that is crucial to
our community*



From the Pastor

Have you ever wondered about Valentine's Day and how it occurs in the depth of winter? Isn't it a bit ironic that at some of the coldest days of the year for North America our thoughts are directed to love and the feelings that warm our hearts? The history of Valentine's Day is a bit confusing, but most scholars agree it was named for Saint Valentine, a Catholic priest. In the time of Emperor Claudius II, the emperor decided that single men made better soldiers than married men with families, so he issued an order banning marriage. St. Valentine was found to be secretly marrying couples in defiance of the emperor's order and was executed for it. The day of romance is named after him.

Many people are longing for love in their life. They earnestly desire to find true love but they look for it physically and in places that are full of lust and sex, not true love. There is a country song, "*Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places*" famously recorded by Johnny Lee, and written by Bob Morrison, Patti Ryan and Wanda Mallette. The lyrics go like this:

*Well, I spent a lifetime lookin' for you
Single bars and good time lovers were never true*

*Playin' a fool's game, hopin' to win
And tellin' those sweet lies and losin' again.*

*I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places
Lookin' for love in too many faces*

*Searchin' their eyes, lookin' for traces
Of what I'm dreamin' of*

Hopin' to find a friend and a lover

How often do we look for love in the wrong places and the wrong people? We often have no idea of what real love is. True love can only be found in God, who is love.

Isn't it strange that the death of one who celebrated and sanctified love would be the foundation of such a day when we think fondly of our spouses, family and those we love in a special way. How can the death of one so good be the cause of such a wonderful celebration? Yet, isn't that exactly what Christianity and Jesus are all about?

Our creator God loves us so much that He sent His son Jesus to redeem us from the sin we were trapped in. To pay the debt and set us free, Jesus gave his life on a cruel cross. The true love we all long for and celebrate on Valentine's Day can only be found in the love of God.

Happy Valentine's Day 2022

Pastor Steve

February is Black History Month

It's 54 Years Later

From the Desk of Susan Henry-Crowe: **Many things have happened. Many things have not. Is there still the possibility of non-violent change?**

Today [January 17, 2022] we honor the life and work of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His Gospel vision, his majestically prophetic voice and his commitment to non-violence mark his place in history as one of the greatest influential figures for civil rights. In his remembrance, some things have changed. Yet, so much still needs to change. The vision is clear, but the strategic human will languishes.

On March 18, 1968, Dr. King spoke to a huge crowd at the Mason Temple, a Memphis Pentecostal Church. The centerpiece for that speech was Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the poor man at his gate (Luke 16:19-31). Both men died and the rich man experienced an after-life of torment, while Lazarus experienced an after-life of comfort. Dr. King eloquently interpreted that willfully overlooking and making invisible the African American working poor would bring condemnation.

Ten days later, March 28, Dr. King returned to Memphis for a protest on City Hall. It led to one of the worst riots in the civil rights movement. Dr. King was at the head of the march as it made its way down Beale Street. During the peaceful march, some young people began breaking storefront windows. Police in riot gear were waiting across the street. Fearing the police would attack, James Lawson, the organizer of the march told Dr. King, "You must leave. They are going to break up the march and go after you more than anyone." A reluctant Dr. King was led away. The marchers turned around. Then, police attacked with tear gas and clubs. Peaceful marchers were caught up in the same violence as youthful looters. One teenager, a suspected looter, was shot to death. Dozens of protestors were injured and nearly 300 African Americans were arrested. Stores in that section of town were looted and burned. Tear gas drifted across the neighborhood. Journalists captured the debacle on film and broadcast it live on local radio and television (<https://features.apmreports.org/arw/king/c1.html>).

Three days later, Sunday, March 31, Dr. King preached his last (Sunday) sermon to a congregation of prominent, wealthy, mostly white influencers at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The sermon title was ***Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution***. The text from the book of Revelation, chapter 21 was: "*Behold, I make all things new. The former things have passed away.*" He began the sermon by telling the story of Rip Van Winkle, who fell asleep on a mountain near a sign indicating that King George of England was the monarch. When Rip Van Winkle awoke after 20 years, the sign had changed picturing George Washington. Rip Van Winkle was completely lost. He did not know who he was or where he was. He had slept through a revolution in which the course of history had totally changed.

In this, his final sermon, Dr. King outlined an America engaged in triple revolutions. One of technology, of nuclear arms build-up, and of human rights. The challenges facing the nation are developing a world perspective of "brotherhood," (I have little doubt he would come to understand the importance of inclusive language). The second challenge is of eradicating the last vestiges of racism. The third is ridding the world of poverty.

He ended his last sermon, "There are difficult days ahead for justice, but I will not yield to a politic of despair. I am going to maintain hope. The cards are stacked against us...Our goal is freedom. However dark, we shall overcome.... the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. Change takes a long time, but it does happen."

Continued on the next page . . .

It's 54 Years Later, Continued

Right before, the Poor People's March on Washington, Dr. King said of the anticipated march scheduled for May 1968, "We are not coming to tear up Washington, but to see if Washington will address poverty. It is to ask America to be true to its promissory note. This is a dramatic NON-VIOLENT ACTION between promise and fulfillment. This is a question of non-violence or non-existence." Dr. King never witnessed the Poor People's March in May. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

In January 2022, 93 years after the birth of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (and 54 years after his last sermon), we face a threatened democracy, undefeated racism, incalculable violence, grave economic disparities, voter suppression and a profoundly divided country. In pursuit of Dr. King's legacy of non-violent progress, we still have much to accomplish. In his memory, we must never give up hope, never stop working for peace and justice and never, ever give up dreaming for a better tomorrow. As Dr. King said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that."

Church and Society
100 Maryland Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20002



Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church



A Call for Equal Voting Rights
January 21, 2022

The United States Senate on Wednesday night [January 19, 2022] rejected legislation which would counter actions taken by several states legislatures that will make voting more difficult, particularly in minority communities.

In the fall of 2020, the United Methodist Bishops of the United States took a strong and bold stand against voter suppression standing firm on the voting rights of all persons. Today, we the bishops of the United Methodist Church reaffirm that stance believing that the right of every citizen to vote in the United States is under attack, and with it, the foundation of American democracy and the sacred worth of all persons.

The right to vote is rooted in a commitment to the value of all persons, created in the image of God as individuals of sacred worth. This belief in the sacredness of humanity is a foundational principle of many religious traditions present in the American body politic.

The legacy of injustice told in civil rights museums across our country is one of suppression of the vote. And the legacy of white supremacy and privilege continues. At times this suppression has been overt, as when one was required to own property or be a white male to vote. At other times it is more nuanced, as in moving or eliminating polling places, or in sowing confusion over early voting or voting by mail. Such actions undermine the people's confidence that voting matters. And in some instances, where the people have affirmed the right to vote for convicted felons who have served their sentences, state legislatures and governors' offices have sought to overturn the will of the people in order to suppress the vote.

Efforts by our government or elected officials to suppress the freedom to cast ballots violate the high principles upon which our nation was founded. By contrast, these high principles are affirmed and realized when elected officials and government entities promote, defend, and guarantee the unfettered right of all citizens to choose our leaders in free and fair elections.

Continued on the next page . . .

A Call for Equal Voting Rights, Continued

We are in a moment of national crisis as we navigate two viruses, COVID and Racism, and suffer the economic consequences of both. In these crises we are reminded that our religious faith and our nation's principles support elections that faithfully reflect the will of the American people. Our faith in God who created all people in the divine image, and our hope that our nation can live into the aspirations of our founding ideals, lead us to pledge ourselves to the fullest expansion of this right to vote.

To that end we call upon the people of the United Methodist Church to use their influence in their states, legislative districts, and local precincts to enable voter registration and to encourage elected officials to provide the resources necessary to support the fullest participation in elections.

In Christ's name,

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey
President – Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

[Reprinted from United Methodist News Friday Digest, January 21, 2022]

Fraud Alert: Phishing Scam Targets United Methodists (Again)

Someone in our church has been solicited for gift cards using the Pastor's name. Please read the article below to make sure you aren't taken in by scams like this one.

[Article Source: The North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, 12/20/21]

We have heard from a number of North Georgia Conference clergy whose congregations have been the target of an e-mail scam. Church members have received fraudulent emails that appear to be from the pastor and ask for help (usually financial help). A common theme is a need for a gift card or urgent help for a loved one.

This fall we heard about a new e-mail scam, targeting clergy directly. This phishing seems to come in one of two ways: from a "missionary" seeking support or from a "new neighbor" who would like to meet with the pastor. Most recently, some fraudulent emails claim to be from Bishop Sue [Hauptert-Johnson].

The issue isn't unique to North Georgia. An article in The Christian Post last year shared that churches nationwide are the target of these scams. The Federal Trade Commission shares tips on how to recognize and avoid phishing scams at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-and-avoid-phishing-scams>.

The issue is also not unique to email, but extends to texts and phone calls. Remember that the Conference, clergy, and churches do not ask for personal or financial information by text or email.

Don't be rushed; instead, be cautious and confirm the legitimacy of a communication before you respond.



Prayer Ministry

“Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at the altar. And a great quantity of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God’s people, to be offered on the gold altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of the saints, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out.” Revelation 8:3-4 (NLT)

When we think of our prayers being ascended into heaven and how they are received and entered into God’s presence, we can’t help but wonder what happens from there. We discover gold bowls full of prayers mixed with incense; every prayer prayed, kept safely in heaven’s throne room for eternity.

That is how much God values our prayers. These prayers may be answered in the lives of our descendants when exactly needed. They may be prayers just prayed or prayers from past generations. Prayers can outlive those who uttered them. God loves us that much to hold our prayers dear to Him to be answered at the right time.

Thank you, Father, for fulfilling our needs through eternity and making praying the center of our lives today. Amen

Prayer Ministry - Fran

Financial Update

Is there a correlation between our 2021 budget and either last year’s pandemic, concerns about a potential breakup of the United Methodist Church’s congregations, inflation, or myriad other issues? I certainly don’t have an answer. But, we did spend more than we took in last year. Overall, while meeting our needs, we spent \$17,341 more than we received in contributions.

Thankfully, some of these funds came from designated funds accounts for roof

Continued . . .

Financial Update, Continued

replacements, air conditioning upgrades, refrigerator replacement, lighting upgrades in both the Sanctuary and the Family Life Center (FLC), etc.

We have not put together the FY 2022 budget yet. It should be ready for approval within the next month. Unfortunately, it may also reflect a shortage between revenue and expenses.

We are hoping that many of our major expenses are behind us. As you are aware, we will be covering the move of our new pastor come this June. We have budgeted up to \$6,000 to cover those costs. Our new pastor may not be a local pastor, which may mean a slightly larger pay package. You may have noticed that many items are increasing in price due to inflation (caused primarily by supply chain issues). This will also affect the church in our normal operations.

This is all mentioned as I envision our need for each of us to consider increasing our current contributions. Every little bit helps. Our church has been through some hard times over the past decade. I hope we will be here for years to come, offering a place of worship and to foster Christian growth and fellowship for our community.

Dwight Kitchens, Finance Chair

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The first meeting of the New Year opened with a prayer on Saturday, January 8th at 9:00 am followed by breakfast. We discussed the future of the UMM and some of our projects for 2022:

- Continue to replace the mulch around the church as materials become available.
 - Decide on a date for the Classic Car/ Motorcycle show [**April 9, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm**] and what prizes will be awarded, as well as what classifications we will
- Continued on the next page . . .

United Methodist Men (UMM), Continued

judge each area.

We are planning to **rebuild the UMM storage shed on the 18th and 19th of February**. On Friday, the 18th, we will start at 1:00 pm and work until about 4:00 pm, depending on the weather. Then on Saturday, the 19th, we will have short meeting and breakfast for all who care to show up. We will start work about 10:00 am and, if all goes smoothly, we will wrap it up about 2:00 pm. We hope a lot of people will come to help out. [Note: The regular monthly UMM breakfast meeting will be held on February 19th at 9:00 am, instead of on February 12th.]

The UMM would like to thank again all those who showed up to assist in the church yard clean up. We greatly appreciate any help we can get.

It is hard to devote your time for these meetings and small projects, but it is our church and appearances do matter. We tend to get caught up with other projects, but if we don't do it, no one else will. So, if you would like to join UMM please contact me at 863-816-3194 or call the church office.

Michael Moake, UMM President

Polk County Senior Games

Well, it's that time again. The Annual *Polk County Senior Games* will be run **February 26th - March 12th** (depending on the event). While COVID has scrubbed many of the indoor events (Jeopardy, chess, bowling, etc.), most of the outdoor events are still scheduled (golf, putt and chip, bocce ball, field events, fishing, archery, etc.). There are team events like softball.

Come for a good time and maybe a medal or other prize. If you place in your category you may find yourself in the regional or even the national games.

Continued

Polk County Senior Games, Continued

To participate you must be **registered by February 11th**. Obtain Registration and Rule Book by phoning 863-533-0055; or by email to polkseniorgames50@gmail.com, or on the Polk County Senior Games website: www.polkseniorgames.org.

Barb Allen-Coil

United Methodist Women (UMW)

The next Joint Circle Meeting will be on Wednesday, February 2nd at **10:00 am** (note the time change) in the FLC. We will discuss Chapter 5 of *You Are Never Alone* by Max Lucado.

If you haven't already done so, please make your UMW annual pledge at this meeting. Pledges may be made monthly or one-time. Only you know the amount pledged and the balance left on your pledge.

Checks should be made out to Lake Gibson UMW and given to treasurer Sarah Schiemann.

Planning Meeting for Rummage Sale will be on February 9 at 1:00 pm in the FLC. Everyone interested in helping with the organizing and execution of the rummage sale, please plan on attending a planning meeting in the FLC classrooms on Wednesday, February 9th, at 1:00 pm. Please contact Lynn Meske (906-360-8231) with any questions or concerns.

Our Rummage Sale is February's BIG event, which raises funds for donations, largely to charities serving in the local area. The sale will be in the FLC and outdoors depending on the type of merchandise.

Hours are Friday, February 25th, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Saturday, February 26th, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Worker bees are requested to come in at 8:00 am both days.

Continued on the next page . . .

United Methodist Women (UMW), Continued

CORRECTION: The January newsletter reported that our UMW Unit donated \$1,000 to the church's Jerusalem Fund (which is for short-term emergency needs like paying an electric bill). The money actually was donated to the church's Long-term Benevolence Fund which was designed to pay for recurring financial needs.

Lynn Meske designed a Rummage Sale flyer to post on your neighborhood bulletin boards which is elsewhere in this issue.

Phyllis Kitchens, President
410-790-2662/863-984-4564

StillinMission Monthly Video Thursday, February 3, 2022 at Noon

United Methodist Missionaries are #stillinmission and we hope that you will join us to learn more! To learn about the missionaries who will participate this month and to register for the video conference, click here:

<https://gbgm.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMoceytpzwqGdbBvplyzPUsr1cpAFZ-F4CE>

You will be asked to select the specific missionary you want to see in the Zoom breakout room when you register.

Christmas 2021 Sox Box

Thanks to all who donated new socks for children (on shrubs) and adults (clothesline). Linda and Charlie Alvarez were kept busy hanging new packages. Thanks to Linda, LGUMC Missions Coordinator, for her hard work and these photos.



February 4th is Rosa Parks' Birthday and Transit Equity Day

In honor of Rosa Parks' birthday, February 4th is Transit Equity Day -- a national day of action to highlight all people's right to quality public transportation. Transit equity is a matter of racial, economic, environmental and climate justice. The transportation sector is the main source of U.S. climate warming pollution. Limited access to affordable public transportation disproportionately affects low-income and communities of color — the same communities that experience a higher burden of negative impacts from air pollution that arises from transportation.

"I learned people should stand up for their rights, just as the children of Israel stood up to the Pharaoh." – Rosa Parks, civil rights leader.

Do you want public transit to be accessible, safe, affordable, support transit workers, and powered by clean energy? Take action and join the Transit Equity Day livestream event on February 4 from noon - 2:00 pm EST on the Labor Network for Sustainability YouTube Page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOZT8zMfp56GxAJSxnyoxaw?reload=9&app=desktop>.

There are many other ways to take part in Transit Equity Day, whether it be joining an action, placing a rose on your bus, or hosting a Rosa Parks pancake breakfast! You can learn more about Transit Equity Day in this short video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=7VYYy-AgIY&ab_channel=LaborNetworkForSustainability.

We hope you can join us to celebrate the legacy of Rosa Parks and act for transit equity! United Methodist Women is a sponsor of Transit Equity Day and a part of the Transit Equity Network. To learn more about Transit Equity, there is a 44-minute video, Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act H.R. 3744, at this location: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RRZGOE4rJo>.

RUMMAGE SALE

LAKE GIBSON
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
424 W DAUGHTERY ROAD

FRIDAY **FEBRUARY 25TH**

9 AM - 3 PM

*GLASSWARE * BOOKS
*PICTURES * PUZZLES
*CRAFTS * CLOTHES
*BOOKS * JEWELERY
*PUZZLES * ELECTRONICS
*COLLECTIBLES
*LINENS * MENS STUFF

SATURDAY **FEBRUARY 26TH**

9 AM - 2 PM

Hope House Needs Volunteers

by Geri Mayo

👍 **Can't commit to a set day because your schedule changes?** No problem! Contact one of that day's volunteers and let them know when you can come in.

👍 **Can't come in when HH is open, or not comfortable working with unhomed guests?** Great! HH needs folks who can come in after hours to clean, organize, and process donations. We can also provide "homework", such as sending you supplies to make toiletry bags.

👍 **Not physically able to do a great deal?**

Terrific! You can sit at the table and make sandwiches, lunch bags, toiletry bags or sort socks and under clothes.

👍 **Think that you're too young?** No way! HH can always use young people to come in after hours to help out. On Saturdays, we welcome youth groups to volunteer. (Remember, high schools require community service hours for graduation.)

👍 **Not sure what you can do?** Everything! Cook a meal. Have a canned food drive. Hold a clothing drive. Pick up clothing donations at HH and take them to other charities.

Florida Conference Church Leadership Training

If you are a member of one of our church committees this year (**Finance, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations (SPRC), or Board of Trustees**) or serve as **Lay Leader, Lay Member** to the Annual Conference, or **Children's Home Local Church representatives**, this training is for you. Also, if you interact with children or youth in the church, or volunteer at A Little Bit of Heaven or at a local school, be sure to take the **Child and Youth Protection Policy training**.

The training will be via Zoom and each class will be repeated three times over two days. To register, go to <https://florida-reg.brtapp.com/ConferenceWideLocalChurchTraining2022> and select the classes you need. (Use this website, not the one on the flyer below.)

Join us for **six weeks** of virtual training to equip you for local church ministry.

The Conference is offering Local Church Training via Zoom over six consecutive weeks. Each subject will have three opportunities for you to attend: Tuesdays at 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 9 a.m. The material will be the same for all three sessions.



FINANCE TEAMS

Craig Smelser, Conference Treasurer

- February 8 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
- February 12 | 9 a.m.



SPRC TEAMS/HR

Lois Durham, FLUMC Human Resources

- February 15 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
- February 19 | 9 a.m.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LaNita Battles, Director of Ministry Protection

- February 22 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
- February 26 | 9 a.m.



CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

LaNita Battles, Director of Ministry Protection

- March 1 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
- March 5 | 9 a.m.



FL UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME LOCAL CHURCH REP

Elisabeth Gadd, Chief Development Officer

- March 8 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
- March 12 | 9 a.m.



LAY LEADER & LAY MEMBER TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Alice Williams, FLUMC Co-Lay Leader

- Derrick Scott, III, FLUMC Co-Lay Leader
- March 15 | 2 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.
 - March 19 | 9 a.m.



Each session will begin **on time**. It is recommended that you log in to each session a few minutes early to ensure that you don't miss any of the content.

REGISTER TODAY!

bit.ly/local-church-training

Lake Gibson's Mission at Hope House

Lake Gibson's volunteers are **Debbie and Rick McLellan**, who serve at Hope House on **Tuesdays from 10:30 am until 2:00 pm**. Joining them are Dick McPherson who cooks lunch at Hope House one Tuesday and Hampton and Sharon Conway who cook there the other Tuesday.

If you can help out with any of the **tasks described on the previous page**, please let Debbie or Rick know by phone call or text (863-327-2893) or by email to debbienrickhope@gmail.com.

We thank everyone in our church who supports Hope House with donations of food, toiletries, clothing, sleeping mats, Bibles, etc. Everything that you provide reassures the HH guests that they are God's children and are loved.

Caring for a Loved One with Memory Challenges

by Vicky Pitner, First UMC Lakeland

When caring for loved ones with memory challenges, many tasks can become increasingly challenging. One common activity that many caregivers experience an increased resistance to is the participation in shower or bathing routines. There can be various reasons for the disinterest of bathing, and someone with dementia may have a difficult time expressing exactly why. Below are some strategies to make showering/bathing more pleasant for your loved one.

- Cold temperatures can be a major cause for someone not wanting to disrobe for showers. It can be helpful to turn on the shower ahead of time with the bathroom door closed in order to create a warmer and more comfortable environment. Warm up towels in the drier for before and after bathing.
- As the day goes on, many people with dementia may experience increased confusion and sometimes agitation. If this is the case, taking showers earlier in the day should go over more smoothly. Be mindful to respect the person's routine. If a man has always shaved before his shower, adhere to that or it will be confusing.
- It is always important to keep one's integrity and modesty in mind when helping with showers. Use draping materials, such as towels or washcloths, to help maintain as much privacy as possible while assisting with a shower. This will help the individual feel more comfortable and thus, improve cooperation.
- Some individuals will be more agreeable to a doctor's request for scheduled showers, versus a family member. In this case, keeping a prescription for showers written by their physician will come in handy.
- Engaging in an activity such as walking or gardening prior to taking a bath or shower provides a great rationale for caregivers. Using a phrase like, "Wow, that was a lot of work, we better go get cleaned up," can be a non-threatening way of making the transition.
- Consider mixing up the language and swap the word "shower" with the word "spa." This word may sound more pleasing, especially to a female.
- Check the pressure of the showerhead. If it is too powerful, it can actually be painful for someone with dementia. Change to a gentler pressure setting or replace it with a new one if necessary.
- As with any caregiving activity, allow your loved one to be as independent as possible in helping with their self-care. When an individual feels involved and useful, self-esteem and feelings of success are able to emerge. Their involvement will also help to lighten the caregiver's load.

For more information or questions about our Memory Ministry, contact Vicki Pitner, our Connections Ministry Coordinator: vpitner@firstumc.org, (863) 686-3163 x275

(Used with permission)

Journaling Through Caregiving -- Overcoming Caregiver Stress

by Vicky Pitner, First UMC Lakeland

Let's face it: Caregiver stress is a real thing. It can lead to a multitude of health concerns when left unaddressed. Having a "toolbox" full of stress-reduction strategies that can be incorporated into caregivers' daily routines can assist in combating such negative effects. One such strategy is journaling. Studies have shown that routine journaling can improve mood, immune system responses, and even blood pressure. Below are tips for caregivers on how and why to begin to incorporate journaling into your daily or weekly routine.

- Set a short time goal of 5 -10 minutes for a journal entry, and be lenient if it doesn't happen daily. Write as often as you can for as long as you would like. One day it may just be a word of gratitude or a prayer for help. Another day, it might be a comical caregiving story you don't want to forget.

- Journaling creates time for reflection, insight, and even problem solving. Caregiving lends itself to many challenging situations. Journaling about a specific scenario provides an opportunity to find creative solutions.

- Many emotions arise on a daily basis throughout the caregiving journey. Using a journal as an outlet to identify specific emotions and/or conflicts can assist in stress reduction. This can also help a caregiver discover his or her own wants or unmet needs and promote change.

- Regular journaling can assist a caregiver in identifying patterns or trends in a loved one's behavior that can be modified for improved ease of caregiving and minimize stress for the individual. For instance, "Mom was angry again when I asked her to take a shower tonight. Tomorrow I think I will try to ask her during the daytime before she gets too tired."

- Remember that your journal is for you only. Do not worry about writing perfect sentences or having flawless grammar (unless you enjoy that). A journal is a place for unedited thoughts, fresh ideas, insights, praise reports, and struggles. It is a creative outlet for the mind as well as the heart.

- Journaling provides an opportunity for the individual to press the "pause" button on life for just a moment. Especially in a day of caregiving, it can feel like there is never a moment of rest; however, by making the effort to sit down and journal for just a short period of time, respite can be achieved. This time is invaluable and necessary for someone providing care to another.

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn." Anne Frank

If you would like to know more about our Memory Ministry, Memory Cafe, or our Caregiver's Support Group contact Vicky Pitner: vpitner@firstumc.org, (863) 686-3163 x275.

Merry Matters Making Many Mats

Our merry group of plarn makers and crocheters completed 7 ground mats for the homeless in January! They delivered the 5 shown below to Hope House on January 26th.



Left to Right: Sandy, Linda, Barb, Harriet, Shirley, Frankie, Sharon, and Dot.

Photo by Lynn Meske

February 27th is CROP Hunger Walk 2022!

The Lakeland CROP Hunger Walk will be held on **Sunday, February 27th. Join us at 1:00 pm for group photo on the church steps; the walk starts at 1:30 pm.** This event is a vital fundraising program of *Church World Service*. Walking can be in-person starting at First Presbyterian Church, 175 Lake Hollingsworth Drive, Lakeland or wherever and whenever you choose to walk.

Ask your neighbors, family and friends to sponsor you as a way to support this worthy organization.

Whether you walk or not, we hope you will **donate** to CROP Hunger Walk. Checks should be made out to Lake Gibson UMC and annotated **CROP Walk**. If you do participate in the Lake Hollingsworth walk, please bring a nonperishable food item which will be given to a local food pantry.

Phyllis Kitchens is our point of contact. Call her if you need more information (863-984-4564).

Monthly Webinars on Race



Join us for a monthly half-hour conversation with various speakers and share your thoughts about anti-racism efforts in our Conference. Hosted by The Beloved Community. To register for any or all of the sessions go to https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TtaoB7k7Rfm-sgPU3mRTjw.

Webinar Schedule

(All sessions begin at **12 noon**)

February 2: The Basics of Anti-Racism I

March 2: The Basics of Anti-Racism II

April 6: How to talk to People about Race I (Including laity, clergy, family, children, and people we disagree with)

May 4: How to talk to People about Race II (Including laity, clergy, family, children, and people we disagree with)

June 1: What is Martin Luther King's (MLK's) "Beloved Community?" I

July 6: What is MLK's "Beloved Community?" II

August 3: The History of Race in Florida I

September 7: The History of Race in Florida II

October 5: How to Implement Anti-Racism Ministries I

November 2: How to Implement Anti-Racism Ministries II

December 7: Celebrating Anti-Racism Ministries in the Florida Conference

Justice Talks: The Social Principles

February 22nd, 3:00 pm

We hope you will join us for our next installment of Justice Talks. Participants will hear from Church and Society staff about the Social Principles and how they shape our work of living faith, seeking justice and pursuing peace. The speakers will be:

Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society

Mr. John Hill, Deputy Secretary for Advocacy and Grassroots Organizing

Mrs. Aimee Hong, Senior Executive Director of Education and Engagement

Rev. Laura Kigweba James, Director of Grassroots Organizing.

To register go to

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qgwpGLW0TI2vYfzeYd_F9g?emci=cdf2af4f-d67a-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&emdi=b618da4c-267d-ec11-94f6-c896650d4442&ceid=9620580.

Bike, Hope, Love Cyclists Visit February 2 - 3

This group of United Methodists previously known as the **Pedaling Parsons** are once again stopping at Lake Gibson to overnight in the FLC. Their mission this year is to **raise money to build a much needed women's dormitory at Africa University.**

The United Methodist Women are preparing their dinner for an expected arrival of 20 - 25 cyclists by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, February 2nd. The United Methodist Men are getting up early to cook breakfast on February 3rd before their departure.

You are welcome to meet them, learn about their mission and share the meals.

Is Our Church Large Enough for Two Services?

When the COVID-19 pandemic originally hit in 2020, we closed down in-person worship for a few weeks. We rushed to get equipment which would permit us to livestream the worship service. Once installed, we were able to stream services weekly.

Later on, we opened the sanctuary to in-person worship while continuing a livestream offering. The original guidance was to keep 6 feet of separation between families, to wear masks, only allow solo and duet singing, sanitize, and bring in as much fresh air as possible. With the advent of inoculations, we have separated our sanctuary's seating into inoculated and un-inoculated seating areas. We now have 180 chairs on the sanctuary floor, plus eight pews. This gives us the versatility to rearrange seating as the pandemic waxes and wanes.

We are currently holding one service at 10:30 am each Sunday with lower attendance than we had before the pandemic started. A few people have demanded that we resume the 8:00 am worship service. To do so would present significant challenges. Some of those currently staying at home are either in the choir or the praise band. With one service at 10:30 am, the two groups alternate the Sundays they perform. If we were to offer an 8:00 am service at this time, it would likely cut the number of people currently attending in half between two services. In addition, we currently rely upon only **three people** to operate slides, sound, and livestreaming for our single service. Thus far we have been unable to find more members willing to learn these functions. Asking these three people to work both services is a burden too far.

So, what would we need to do to once again hold two morning services?

1. Get the pandemic under control where more people are willing to return to in-person worship.
2. Grow our church by bringing others into our worship community.
3. Find a number of people willing to be trained and scheduled to operate either the slides, sound, or livestreaming equipment for either the early or late service.

Dwight Kitchens

Just Energy for All February Webinar, February 17th and 18th at Noon ***Breathe Again: Healthy Air is Health Care***



The United Methodist Women's next ***Just Energy for All*** webinar is a two-partner on **Thursday, February 17th and Friday, February 18th, from noon to 1:30 pm EST on both days.** Thursday, February 17th, is a "Train the Trainer" event to **learn more about the issues surrounding air pollution, the climate crisis, and the public health impact;** connect with other people working on air pollution in your state; and learn how to train others on these issues. Friday's "Day of Action" will provide an opportunity to participate in collective action as together we will call our elected officials and ask them to take action!

Register for both parts of this Zoom webinar at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwscOyprzkuHdSIhIHT_uzt71doTV1x7kTJ. (This registration is different from our monthly webinars and is in partnership with other organizations.) We will be back to our **third Wednesday** of the month schedule on **Wednesday, March 16th at 3:00 pm EST.** You do not have to be a member of the UMW, or even a woman, to watch the informative Just Energy for All Webinars.

Second Commentary on *The Toxic Evangelical Variant* by Martin Thielen by Sue Heishman

[This commentary by a Lake Gibson UMC member is on Martin Thielen's article which was published in the December issue of *The Good News*. Maria Thomas's commentary was printed in our January 2022 newsletter. Mr. Thielen's article was originally published in *The Doubter's Parish Newsletter*, www.DoubtersParish.com, November 1, 2021. (Used with permission)]

I struggle with the same issues that Maria Thomas and Martin Thielen struggle with. I believe all Christians have the same struggle. Pastor and I have discussed some of these issues. There is no easy solution!!!

I do believe that the Bible (Scripture) is correct even though it was written a LONG, LONG time ago. Times change, people change, the world changes, but God never changes. Scripture says God is the same yesterday, today and forever. I am so glad that God is unchanging! If God changed his mind every time a situation like this one in question comes up, then we would be in a much bigger mess than we are now.

He has set certain criteria in motion and when those criteria are not followed -- things that follow are not usually good. I need to be very mindful of how I interpret Scripture, because when I become overly judgmental or critical, then I am trying to play God. It is up to God to pass judgment -- not me. We will all stand before our creator one day and we all have to answer to him.

I believe that Christians can sometimes be "toxic" toward those who think differently than we do. That's why sometimes it is better to "bite the tongue" than to spit out words that cause pain, grief or anger. Jesus simply answered questions by quoting what Scripture had to say about the situation, and that person had to make a choice about what they would or would not do as it pertained to the issue in question.

I believe when a person asks me as a Christian something concerning spiritual matters, they need to show me the same courtesy in their reply that I try to show them in my answer to their question. They need to listen to my answer as nicely as I listen to their question and what they believe. Christians as well as unbelievers can be toxic to each other. This is not a good thing.

I still stand on the word of God as my final answer, but I pray every day that God will give me answers that agree with His word. God is not happy when we treat each other disrespectfully, or when we try to make his word fit what makes us happy or what our "itching" ears want to hear.

I shared this article with my friend before she left and the thought came to me: If the modern technology that we have today had been available at the time of Jesus' conception and up to the night of his birth, what would the physicians and technologists have to say about his virgin birth? What would be their comment on the way in which Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb? When they did a sonogram or blood test to determine the sex of the baby would they have seen the image of God in this mass of being in Mary's womb? If it had been unusual or abnormal would it have been aborted? Would the blood tests have been such that the DNA would have shown Jesus to be God in the form of a baby?

SO MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS! No wonder we have to believe by FAITH.

Blessings,

Sue Heishman, 863-858-4985, Sue.heishman@verizon.net

Food for Thought: Excerpts from Ruth and Naomi: A Story for Our Times

[Source: ONE FOR ISRAEL; used with permission. To read the entire article, go to <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/ruth-and-naomi-a-story-for-our-times/>]

Thanks to Maria Thomas for submitting this article.

When reading the book of Ruth recently, it dawned on me that the opening scene is a pertinent metaphor for our situation today as believers. Especially when you take into account the Hebrew names of the key characters. That image of Ruth clinging to Naomi [Ruth 1:16-17] has a lot to say to the church in the West in a time when many are tempted and pulled back by the “spirit of the age”. Here are my thoughts.

Decision-making time.

Sands are shifting, and the world is screaming that good is bad and bad is good... as followers of Jesus, we can foolishly think we are above all that. It's so very human of us to think that we know what's really going on, and be convinced by our own opinions. But the Bible warns over and over again about a great deception, a strong delusion, a mass falling away. This could only come about because people are deceived, and people are deceived because they are tricked. They are led to believe something is good when it is not. We think we know the difference, but unless we have a healthy appreciation of our limitations, we are in danger too. Pride comes before a fall. We need to humbly admit that it is possible for our human minds and hearts to fall prey to deception.

Who then can stand? Since we all have fallible hearts and minds? In the context of this end-times lawlessness and delusion, Paul gives us a sturdy mast to cling onto – the factor by which we will perish or be saved: Love of the truth.

“They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” (2 Thessalonians 2:10)

That means, those who do not *love* the truth perish, and conversely, those who do love the truth will be saved. What does loving the truth look like?

Here's where the picture of Ruth and Naomi comes in.

Naomi in some manner represents the people and the God of Israel – the truth about God and His Word – out in the nations. If Naomi is a representative of the people and God of Israel, Ruth and Orpah can be seen as representatives of the nations that have been invited into that Jewish family. Both loved Naomi, but when hardship hit and Naomi decided it was time to go back to Israel, the two women respond differently. Both loved her, embraced her, valued her and kissed her, but Ruth clung to her and would not let her go.

Interestingly, the Hebrew names ... are highly significant. The root letters of Orpah (עֵרָפָה) refer to the back of one's neck, or back. It is the word that God often uses when describing the Israelites as being stiff-necked, and has connotations of turning back or apostasy. Orpah's name has an additional letter at the end, ה (ah), which in Hebrew often indicates direction when attached to a word. The word “smol” means “left”, and “smolah” means “to the left”, home is “beit”, and if you say you're going home, you're going “habeitah”. Orpah, although it means gazelle, can also look like, I'm “turning back”. Naomi (נְעֻמִי) means “my delight”.

Ironically, the Jewish return to Israel prophesied of so frequently in the Bible is one of the matters that divides many Christians today. What about the Palestinians? That can't be right? Continued on the next page . . .

Food for Thought: Excerpts from Ruth and Naomi: A Story for Our Times, Continued

Surely the State of Israel is not the work of God, but the actions of men? And so many reinterpret those prophecies to mean something else, other than the promised literal regathering of God's people to the Land. In doing so, they miss out on a lot of amazing promises and information in the Bible which we should pay attention to as we watch and wait for Yeshua's [Jesus's] return. (By the way, God has certainly not forgotten the Palestinians, Ezekiel 47:22-23, even as he continues to fulfil his promises to Israel. If you know him, you'll know he can be trusted to do all things well and that he's completely just.)

Similarly, the Biblical take on issues of gender and sexuality, the horrific reality of hell and Jesus being the only way to salvation... these all seem so... harsh. Especially if any of these issues affect you personally, or someone you love. The world demands that the Bible must be updated and sanitized for our times, and sadly, there are Christians that agree. Like Orpah, they are too fond of the life and culture they know to go the way of the wild with God and his people. They will not follow the God of Israel along a path that defies commonly held beliefs, because they do not know God well enough to trust that he knows what he's doing, and that he is right in what he says. Things often get pretty alarming and bewildering with God, it's just how he rolls. Instead they choose to lean on their own understanding. They adapt the Bible to say what they wish it said, instead of seeing God's word as their delight.

Hang on tight!

But Ruth was welded to her beloved Jewish family through deep relationship. She decided she was willing to risk everything to be with Naomi and the life she'd found with her. The risks were great and there were many unknowns, but like Yeshua's friend Mary, Ruth had chosen the most important thing. Her mind was made up, *because she knew the person she was following*.

The deceptions are strong and confusing, but we can come to God and ask him for wisdom and insight whenever we need it. Sometimes it's quite the journey to understanding his heart on a matter, but he does promise that those who seek diligently will find. In the meantime, hang in there, and trust that he does know where he's going!

Here are some other illustrations the Bible gives us of clinging to God for dear life: Moses didn't dare take a step without God (Exodus 33:15) and Jacob refused to let the Angel of the Lord go until he was blessed (Gen 32:26). In Song of Solomon, the bride (representing us, God's beloved) clings to her bridegroom. Like Ruth, the Shunamite refuses to budge:

"I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go." (Song of Solomon 3:4)

Don't be an Orpah – be a Ruth!

Hold on tight, friends, and don't let go. The road is getting rocky, but there's a great future to look forward to.

ONE FOR ISRAEL is an initiative of native-born Israelis on the forefront of high-tech media evangelism, proclaiming salvation to Israel, raising up spiritual leaders through ONE FOR ISRAEL's Bible College and equipping them with the tools they need to transform our communities.

Help Build a Wall to Protect Children at the Rosa Valdez Center

[Excerpts from Cathy Capo Stone's email of Dec 28, 2021]

I pray this letter finds you and those you love healthy and looking forward to a new year! We are grateful for the financial, in-kind and prayer support of faithful friends like you who made it possible for us to come alongside 14,000+ children, at 150+ childcare centers and serve 3,500,000 nutritious meals in 2021. As we enter into a new year and the challenges that it will present to children and families in need, we have HOPE for the resources to serve many more because of you.

In 2021, we and the families we served faced challenges keeping our children safe. Not just from a virus, but from physical harm caused by violence in the neighborhood where we have served since 1892. But God has protected and blessed us. He has used what the enemy meant for evil to do good by using us as a conduit to unite the community to work together and build a safer neighborhood and school for our students. We are prayerful and confident that He will provide the remaining resources needed . . . to complete the safety measures yet to be implemented. In particular, the building of a **\$75,000 privacy wall around our playground at the Rosa Valdez Center** in Old West Tampa to protect our students from gunfire and other criminal activity. We hope you will donate to our **"Keep Our Kids Safe" Fund**.

As we look to 2022, we are grateful for the opportunities to continue to replicate and expand the impact of our Rosa Valdez Early Learning Center to two new locations at Morgan Woods Elementary and Oak Grove United Methodist Church. Both serve economically disadvantaged children and neighborhoods.

Thank you for helping us do God's work - You give the children and families we serve HOPE!

Cathy Capo Stone, Executive Director
Cornerstone Family Ministries, a UMW National Mission Institution

Please donate to Lake Gibson UMC with a notation that it is for **Rosa Valdez Wall**.

Classic Car Show April 9, 2022

The United Methodist Men (UMM) are holding their 2nd Classic Car and Motorcycle show on Saturday, April 9th, 2022. Setup will start at 10:00 am with judging starting at 11:00 am. There is NO entry fee for contestants and no admission fee for spectators. Tickets for the 50/50 raffle are 10 for \$5.00.

The event opens for spectators at 11:00 am. All are welcome to participate and/or drool over the vehicles on display. Results of judging and drawing for a 50/50 raffle will occur at 3:00 pm.

The UMM will offer a luncheon consisting of hot dogs, chips, and beverages. Donations will be gratefully accepted. Invite your neighbors to come and join the festivities. This should be a great day to walk around and see what our local motor enthusiasts have done with their vehicles.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 9th. See you there!

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 this 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 of LGUMC are encouraged to write articles and share their thoughts with the congregation.

Phyllis Kitchens, Editor
(phyllis_kitchens@hotmail.com).

Clothing Items Urgently Needed by Hope House

The January 26th volunteer report stated that Hope House is **in desperate need of jackets and men's jeans, sweats, and casual long pants. (Waist sizes 32 and 34 or medium.)**

If you can help, please take your donations to the Lake Gibson church office, Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Thank you.



Hurray!
Debbie's
baaack at
Hope House.
Praise God!

Photo by Rick
McLellan

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

Sue Heishman, Bookkeeper

Glenda Grant Hess, Music Director

Leon Rumohr, Custodian

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



Refurbished bike donated to a Hope House guest on January 11th.

Photo by Rick McLellan

Hope House Happenings Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports

Tuesday, January 4, 2022 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we served 15 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Mark 10, REAL WINNERS.

Our guests were served a meal by Chef Dick McPherson, who again came across our hero on short notice that Debbie was not going to be able to cook. Dick dished up the food and ministered to our guests with Rick McLellan. Our guests enjoyed Dick's fabulous Cottage Pie with a garden salad. Our brown to-go bag included a ham and cheese sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Goldfish crackers, a pudding cup, a pack of Oreo cookies, and an applesauce cup. 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 supper. We also fed the Hope House kitties.

We had some donations of many very useful items provided for those less fortunate. We want to especially thank Jamie and the folks at Foxwood for providing terrific food and clothing items.

Wednesday, January 5, 2022 - Laura Webb, Chris Hernbrott and Geri Mayo



Breakfast consisted of a breakfast casserole, homemade banana nut bread made by Ms. Jean, bananas and cereals. Milk, cocoa, coffee, and bottled water were the beverage choices. Ms. Paulette of IBIM donated several pints of white, chocolate, and strawberry milk. Chris brought several boxes of cereal, donated by Celebrate Recovery.

Laura Webb is back at Hope House. Everyone has missed her so much! She and Chris were busy processing food and clothing donations, setting up the patio and breakfast table, and distributing clothing and toiletries. Laura is SO happy with all the donations! It was amazing to see the amount of food, toiletry and clothing donations HH received. Several new blankets were also donated. A special thank you to Paulette at IBIM. Along with the milk, a case of coffee creamers, cases of instant stir fry noodles, and boxes of rolls were donated.



Many thanks to Cypress Lakes Veterans Association Auxiliary. Marianne Evans and her husband came by with boxes of insect repellent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, Burt's Bees lip balm (from CVS) and food. The CLVAA newsletter has a request for donations for HH. Ms. Marianne said she will be back next month. HH is so blessed people's generosity. Thank you!

Volunteers Going the Extra Mile: One of our guests, Natasha (Tasha) Owens, was recently released from jail. We were able to provide her clothing, shoes and a backpack filled with toiletries. She has been clean and sober for 8 months and was trying to enter a rehab program. Unfortunately, she missed her pick up yesterday. After HH closed, Laura, Chris and Geri made many phone calls, texts, and instant messages to ensure she did not have to go back onto the street. After much running around town to find one, they bought and activated a new prepaid phone for her. Tasha is at Talbot House for tonight. At 8:00 am tomorrow she is to call her liaison at Grace House. They'll arrange a pickup and transport her to the Rehab location in New Orleans. Please keep her in your prayers. One more person off the streets. Praise the Lord!

Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

It was a cold day with our guests in the front yard and the patio area. By the end of the day, we had served 15 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from I John 5, BELIEVING ABOUT JESUS or BELIEVING IN JESUS?

Our guests were served a meal by guest Red Bowen and Chef Dick McPherson, who together cooked RED'S FAMOUS SPAGHETTI. Our guests enjoyed Red's special spaghetti recipe, with Texas toast and a fresh garden salad. Our brown to-go bag included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Skyflakes crackers and a cup of JIF peanut butter, a pudding cup, a pack of Oreo cookies, and an applesauce cup. To quench thirst was ice cold bottled water with a flavor packet, and hot coffee made by Chef Dick. 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 Hope House kitties.

We brought sanitized towels and wash cloths for showers, gave each guest a towel, washcloth and hygiene kit, and had 5 guests request showers. We had one guest use the laundry. We gave out blankets, toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, flashlight, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, and clothing items.

We had a visit from Jamie who brought us food and other items from our friends at Foxwood. We received a donation of some useful items from Charles and Linda Alvarez, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. Dwight Kitchens, from Lake Gibson United Methodist Church, brought us a bicycle for one of our female guests. Our brown bag items and Pocket New Testaments issued were provided by members of Lake Gibson United Methodist Church.

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 - Chris Hernbrott, Lesley Kristine, Ms. Stevie and Geri Mayo

It was a busy day with 20 guests signing in, 10 using the shower and 5 using the laundry. Chris set up the patio and breakfast table. He took charge of the sign-in sheet and shower list. Chris made sure all of our guests received everything they needed. A new volunteer, Ms. Stevie, from New Life Assembly was an answer to prayer. She helped cook and serve breakfast; set up the lunch bags and made the PB&J sandwiches. Lesley worked a miracle in the clothing boutique. It looks fantastic! She also stayed and washed a ton of dishes. She and her father took the re-donated clothes to other charities.

Earlier this week, Geri had contacted Ms. Kay Kasser to see if Combee Connection Ministries (CCM) could use some of HH's overflow (dried beans, larger comforter sets, etc.). Mr. Harry from CCM picked it up today. CCM blessed HH with a huge cooler of meat. We are so thankful. This will make several lunches for our guests. Jim from Christ the King Episcopal Church brought cans of ready-to-eat soup.

We recently received new backpacks, large umbrellas, insulated reusable bags, socks, blankets, and hand sanitizer. Our storage room is overflowing with food, clothing, and toiletry donations. If anyone would like to come and help organize the donations, please contact Laura, Chris, Lesley, Luz or Geri (gerijmayo@yahoo.com). **Special request:** Ms. Paulette from IBIM **needs a twin bed** for an older gentleman. If anyone has one they can donate, please let Ms. Paulette or Geri know. Thank you.

Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we had served 20 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Matthew 7, THE NARROW PATH. Our guests were happy to see Debbie back, and our day was full of answered prayers and help God sent us. We were happy to see our snowbird friends Hampton and Sharon Conway back safely, an answer to prayer. Our guests were served a great meal prepared by Sharon featuring a delicious chili, individually wrapped corn bread, and individual packs of fresh baked cookies.

Our brown to-go bag included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Lance crackers, a pudding cup, a pack of Oreo cookies, and an applesauce cup. These brown bags were filled with items furnished by Hope Community Church, and the brown bags were packed by their Youth Group. The young people also included in each bag a Bible verse (John 14:6) and a short personally written note, such as "Don't give up" or "We care about you" or similar. We saw men and women encouraged by reading those notes!



We gave out blankets, toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, flashlight, lantern and radio batteries, masks, socks, and clothing items. We also gave out knit winter hats for men and women which were made and delivered by the Take Off Pounds Sensibly club that Rick and Debbie are members of.

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 - Laura Webb, Stevie Paton, Ms. Anna and Geri Mayo

A total of 20 guests signed in, with 7 using the shower and 3 using the laundry. Breakfast consisted of toast and scrambled eggs with sausage and ham. Cereal, breakfast bars, and instant grits were also served along with coffee, cocoa, and bottled water. The HH kitties enjoyed their al-fresco breakfast. (They were at the door at 7:00 am, demanding breakfast.)

We were blessed today with two new volunteers from New Life Assembly, Ms. Anna and Ms. Stevie. Ms. Anna faced the challenge of the donations in the storage room. She spent a large portion of the day processing clothing, food, and toiletries. She also served breakfast and assisted with lunch. Ms. Stevie provided wound care for 3 of our guests and was able to advise a few who have diseases/conditions or have had surgeries about healthcare. She assembled the lunch bags, made sandwiches and worked in the pantry. Both ladies helped with cleanup and trash.

Laura did her usual amazing job with overseeing the guest list and making sure everyone who wanted to was able to take a shower or do laundry. She made sure every guest received gloves, jackets, scarves, knitted caps and blankets. She also gave out new socks, hand sanitizer, lip balm and other toiletries. Thank you! Thank you!

Ms. Paulette with IBIM provided cartons of yogurt, milk, cheese, and fresh produce. She has provided **two cases of blankets** and said more will be donated very soon. Mr. Buzz blessed HH with two boxes of felt blankets. One box contained blue reusable bags with a blue blanket and a small bottle of hand sanitizer. The other box was filled with red blankets. We will share these blankets with Joy Miller and Carrie Miller with North Lakeland Homeless Outreach, so they can bless our unhomed folks when distributing food.

So many donations have been received, that we need volunteers to help sort and organize them. Please contact an HH volunteer if you can help We've had enough blankets donated
Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, Continued

that a box of gently used blankets was set outside the door for anyone in need.

For lunch, Geri prepared boneless pork loins, gravy, cornbread stuffing, extra cheesy mac and cheese and green beans. She also served cherry tomatoes and fresh cantaloupe. A gallon of sweet tea and Powerade were added to the beverage selections.

Two of our ladies requested prayer. One was for a job interview. We are believing she HAS this job. She said the interview went well and will have final notification this afternoon. Another lady needs a prayer about her living situation. We are trusting and believing God will protect and bless her. It is fantastic that these ladies came to the volunteers ASKING for prayers!! Lives are being changed. Hearts are being moved. God is so good.

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 - Debbie and Rick McLellan

By the end of the day, we had served 19 guests. Rick McLellan led in prayer and a devotion from Romans, WHO'S COMING FOR YOU? The guests also received terrific words of hope from Pastor Bryan Burton, pastor of **Hope Community Church**. Pastor Burton also made us aware that his church has Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings on Friday nights at 8:00 pm, and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings on Sunday nights at 8:00 pm. The church is on US 98N near Harbor Freight.

Our guests were happy to see Debbie back, and our guests were served with appreciated help from Chef Dick McPherson, Debbie's Chicken Pot Pie, and for dessert, individual packs of fresh brownies baked by our neighbor. To quench thirst was ice cold bottled water, also furnished by Hope Community Church, with a flavor packet, and hot coffee, Mountain Dew or Pepsi. The sodas were donated by another neighbor. Our brown to-go bags included a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a bag of chips, a pack of Lance crackers, a pudding cup, a pack of Oreo cookies, and an applesauce cup. These brown bags were filled with items furnished by Hope Community Church, and were packed by their Youth Group. The young people also included in each bag a Bible verse (John 14:6) and a short personally written note, such as "Don't give up" or "We care about you" or similar. We saw men and women encouraged by reading those notes! We also gave out a snack item and pop-top cans of Chef Boy-R-dee spaghetti, which our guests took to their tents for their supper.

We gave out blankets, toiletry kits, razors, deodorant, flashlight, lantern and radio batteries, a tarp, masks, socks and clothes. Most of these items were provided by Lake Gibson United Methodist Church. We brought sanitized towels and wash cloths for showers, and gave each guest a towel, washcloth and hygiene kit. Six guests requested showers and one used the laundry.

God worked in the midst of terrible weather and we were grateful that our guests were Blessed!

Continued on the next page . . .

Hope House Happenings Excerpts from HH Volunteer Reports

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 - Laura Webb, Lesley Kristine, Stevie Paton and Geri Mayo



On this cold and rainy day, 15 guests signed in, with 5 using the shower and 1 using the laundry. Breakfast consisted of individual sausage, egg, cheese and biscuit casseroles and a pot of pasta fagioli soup. Also served were cereal, and breakfast bars, with coffee, cocoa, juice, and bottled water as the beverage choices.

The Wednesday team has amazing volunteers! Laura processed the mountain of new donations which were left in the living room. She also cleaned the bathroom and shower room. Stevie worked in the storage room; she organized and then brought boxes of donations into the pantry. She also organized the toiletries and medical supplies. Lesley did amazing job, cleaning and organizing the clothing boutique. (She and her dad took a carload of clothes to other charities.) Thanks to all of them, the living room, pantry, storage room and clothing boutique look fantastic!

After they processed the clothing donations, we found that HH is **in desperate need of jackets and men's jeans, sweats, and casual long pants. (Waist sizes 32 and 34 or medium.)**

Hope House has received so many wonderful donations! On Tuesday afternoon, Geri was delighted to find food and clothing donations. Most of these were from Hope Community Church and Lake Gibson United Methodist. The pudding cups and peanut butter crackers were especially appreciated. Paul Barrett donated a box of knit gloves! Paulette Rolle-Alesnik must have been by; fresh produce was in the fridge.

The Merry Matters from LGUMC brought in crocheted mats made from grocery bag "yarn". These mats are terrific in keeping the dampness from soaking our guests' blankets. The wonderful folks from Kathleen Baptist Church donated huge bags of blankets and blanket kits (blankets paired with toiletry bags). They also donated bags of toiletries, new underwear and new socks. They were also kind enough to take away bags of things HH could not use to be donated to other charities.



Turkey lunch with all the trimmings



Birthdays in February

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>
2/2	Lonnie Brady
2/3	Carol Troup
2/3	Tim Watson
2/4	Sandi Harwell
2/4	Lou Tindall
2/5	Emma Davidson
2/6	Yvonne Bower
2/6	Edward Chambers
2/6	Sharon Moake
2/10	Betty Jennings
2/11	Jimmie Gunther
2/11	Geri Mayo
2/15	Logan Oliva
2/15	Maria Thomas
2/16	Doug Harwell
2/16	Trevor Watson
2/16	Wayne Wesley
2/17	William Anderson
2/17	Mary Lou Barrell
2/17	Junaid Saqib
2/21	Brandon Oliva
2/21	Courtney Wilkinson
2/26	Larry Gitt
2/26	Linda Imel



Anniversaries in February

<u>Date</u>	<u>Names</u>
2/11	Ruth and Henry Zona
2/12	Laurrel and Jack Vanderheyden