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This will be Holy Week preview.....

In the FIRST PLACE

The United Methodist Church and the Future

Perhaps you saw the news last week that the General Conference of the United Methodist Church has been postponed for the third time. Originally, it was supposed to be held in the spring of 2020 and the decision was made to postpone until the next regularly scheduled General Conference in 2024. The significant matter is the delayed General Conference was to consider the Protocols for Reconciliation and Grace through Separation. This is the plan that would allow for a gracious exit of individuals and churches from the United Methodist Church to start or join new denominations, thus allowing the United Methodist Church to stay intact and change the policies prohibiting the marriage and ordination of LGBTQ+ people. (Read the full protocol here <https://www.gracethroughseparation.com/legislation>)

These delays have prevented moving forward with this protocol legislation.

The delay is not a surprise. The global pandemic continues to disrupt plans especially when attempting a global gathering. The process for obtaining travel visas is taking several months and up to 2 years in some cases. Many delegates from outside the United States were unable to complete the process in time. I assume the war in Ukraine will further complicate matters seeing how there are United Methodist Conferences in both Russia and Ukraine. These delays are quite frustrating, namely because it delays the justice of full inclusion that many of us long for.

These delays have also frustrated the more conservative individuals and churches wishing to break away from the UMC. They have prepared new denomination called The Global Methodist Church (GMC). With this latest postponement, they announced that the GMC would officially start May 1st of this year. This means that some churches might leave the UMC before the Protocol legislation is voted on or enacted. Without the Protocol in place, the process of disaffiliation is difficult and expensive. Therefore, I don't expect a large number of churches will leave immediately. The organizers of the GMC have said the intent of launching now is to create a "landing place" for those who cannot wait until the full process has been carried out.

One aspect of the Protocol that is still not clear is if entire Annual Conferences can leave the denomination. The original proposal speaks to how that might happen. However, earlier this week, the Council of Bishops requested a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council on whether this is possible. A full explanation of the Council of Bishops request can be found here <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/news>.

All of this may insight lots of questions for you. Right now, my answers to most of your questions will be "I don't know." But I will share some things I do know and believe deeply. First of all, God's grace is abundant and sufficient to hold us in these times of uncertainty and confusion. Second, even though our denomination languishes with these unjust policies that exclude LGBTQ+ people, the greater truth is these have never been God's "policies." Worthiness and belonging ultimately belongs to God. Third, First United Methodist Church of Little Rock will continue be faithful to God's call of being good neighbors to make Little Rock a place where all God's thrive.

Gracefully,
David

Praying for YOU!

Months of separation and isolation have left us all feeling disconnected. To overcome that, we're searching for all kinds of ways to enhance people's sense of connection to one another and the church as a whole. That process begins with prayer. Each week, we'll be listing about 20 names in the newsletter for you to pray for during the week. Over the next several months, we'll be working our way through the church roll (backward alphabetically) so that everyone is lifted in prayer. You may not know these people personally, but that doesn't matter. Praying for someone by name is a powerful way to experience a connection beyond physical distance. We'll be connected by the Spirit and the power of praying for one another.

March 7-13: Judy, Irma, Mason, Joe, John, Dick, Rita, Jeff, Corinne, Paula, Lee, David, Amy, Sydney, Emery, Ansley, Tashee, Ryleigh, Mariah, Michael, David, Haley, Alex, Sophia, Samuel, Scarlett, Lauren, Collin, Carter, Katy

March 14-20: Dennis, Marla, Mimi, Joseph, Hayden, Maggie, Roger, Stuart, Christy, Kate, Connor, Donna, Robert, Kelly, Tyndal, Sarah, Paul, Karen, Amanda, John, Anne, Ronald, Jaimee & Dublin

March 21-27: Kent, Julie, DeeAnn, Ben, Heather, Jack, Ellie, Gus, Paul, Kaye, Vincent, Ross, David, Lenna, Nick, Thomas, Danielle, Dennis, Sam, Kathleen, Sarah, Elizabeth, Andrew, Greg, Becky, Reed, Austin, Taylor, Rowan, Levi, Scout, Bill, Jean, Stephen, James, George, David, Laura

March 28-April 3: Cindy, Hal, Mary Katherine, Heath, Garrett, Piper Joy, Rick, Tracy, Caitlyn, Alex, Dennis, Trisha, Richard, Helen, Brad, Chuck, Sara, Cathryn, Kim, Betsy, Alma, Scott, Diane

With His Face Set Toward Jerusalem

We've heard the saying "Life's a journey, not a destination" so much that it's become a cliché. But for Jesus, in the Gospel of Luke, it's more like death is a journey, not a destination. Early on, in chapter 9, it says that Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem," and it seems like Jesus is in a hurry to get to his destination and face his ultimate act in death. But as resolute as he was, it takes him a long time to get there. In fact, he doesn't arrive in Jerusalem until chapter 19, and along his journey are some of the most important encounters. Jesus tells some of the most notable parables and gives some of the most critical teachings. He was resolved in going to the cross, but there is so much to gain in the journey.

This Lent, we are following Jesus' long journey from the moment he set his face to his triumphant arrival in Jerusalem and the days that follow. As we join the journey, we will discover deeper truths for our lives and the transformation we experience in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. So join us each Sunday, March 6 through April 10 at 9:00 or 11:00 am as we follow Jesus with his face set towards Jerusalem.

Lent Services, Events & Activities

Methodist Family Health Get Up and Give Challenge

Lenten Devotional Guide - Pick one up at church or subscribe to the digital version by emailing Lesley (landrews@fumclr.org).

Lent Guide for families with small children- Rev. Brittany will be sending these out! Be on the lookout!

Vespers- Every Sunday: 6:30 pm each Sunday, live-streamed to Facebook and fumclr.org/LIVE

Savior Class: Mondays on Zoom at 6:30- March 7-April 4

Register by emailing Rev. Brittany (bwatson@fumclr.org).

Palm Sunday- April 10: Easter Egg Lunch and Hunt—12:00 to 1:30, People of all ages are invited!

Maudy Thursday - April 14: 5:00 pm Soup Supper, 6:00 pm Worship Service

Good Friday- April 15: Prayer Walk 10:00 to 6:00

Get Up & Give with Methodist Family Health Lenten Service Opportunity

FUMCLR is shaking things up this Lenten season! We are joining the mission of Methodist Family Health to give sacrificially for vulnerable children in our community. They are collecting funds and various items to support our state's children and families who are abandoned, abused, neglected and managing psychiatric, behavioral, emotional and spiritual issues. You can purchase items from their Amazon Wishlist (below), donate monetary funds to FUMCLR for donation, or donate these supplies to the Church for drop-off at MFH: card games, board games, art supplies, crayons, canvas and paints.

For a link to the Amazon Wishlist, visit: <https://www.fumclr.org/getupandgive>



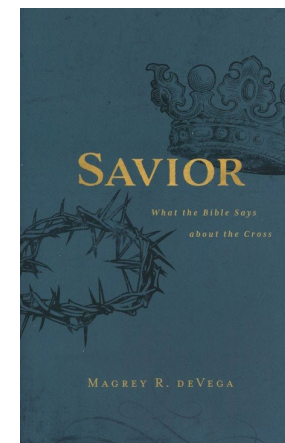
Easter Egg Lunch and Hunt

Join us on Sunday, April 10th for a fun Easter celebration for the whole church family. We will gather in the gym at noon for a delicious lunch (donations accepted) and creative easter lesson. After lunch, kiddos (toddler through 5th grade) are invited to head over to the CDC for a playground Easter egg hunt! Please bring kids, grandkids, or friend kids to this exciting easter celebration.

Lenten Study Savior: What the Bible Says About the Cross

By Magrey Devega

Join us starting on Monday, March 7th for the meaningful 5- week study. We will gather on Zoom at 6:30 pm. We will learn more about what the death and resurrection of Christ means for us and how it changed the world. While reading along is an option, it is not required to participate. If you would like to sign up, email Rev. Brittany (bwatson@fumclr.org).



Gay for Good Service Opportunities in Little Rock

Our very own Eric Zenor and Robert Kennedy have helped start an Arkansas Chapter of Gay for Good. G4G recognizes that many organizations in our local communities need help to do what they do better. Each chapter consists of a volunteer network that partners with nonprofits in group service projects. Projects can literally be anything that helps others, from partnering with food banks to sort and bag food for homeless shelters, creating greeting cards for seniors in nursing homes, cooking for families living in shelters or temporary housing like the Ronald McDonald house, working with cities to beautify parks, assisting animal shelters to care for animals—you name it! G4G is changing how people view the LGBTQ+ community through a servant model.

Want to join their work? It doesn't matter if you are LGBTQ+ or an ally, what matters is your heart for community, connection, and service. Sign up to get the Arkansas newsletter with great opportunities: <https://gayforgood.org/signup/>

FIRST YOUTH

We will resume Sunday night meals on April 3.

We had a great night Sunday with our interactive, Lenten prayer stations by reflecting, creating, and doing acts of letting go. The quiet was appreciated by all, though when you are still, this building makes some interesting noise.

Mar. 13- Sunday School @ 9:50 am

Sunday Night Youth 5-7pm. Theme: "In My Head", In the future we will have some more in depth aspects about mental health, but tonight we will focus on the teenage brain, what's typical, effects of trauma, and how to get a better idea about yourself. Led by Dr. Pearman Parker, PhD.

Mar. 20- No Sunday School but youth room will be open No Sunday Night Youth

Mar. 27- No Sunday School but youth room will be open Online Movie and Pizza Night @ 6pm. Movie TBA

April 3- Sunday School @ 9:50am

5-7pm Youth meals return, plus check-in, and discussion.

April 10- Sunday School @ 9:50am

5-7pm Youth check-in, Stations of the Cross Worship, and competition.

KIDS@FIRST

God-Lessons: You don't have to come to church to learn about God! Each Saturday Rev. Brittany emails a video lesson for kiddos and their families to be used on Sundays or any time throughout the week. These videos will be a fun and simple way to get your family talking about who God is and how much God loves us! If you are not receiving these Saturday lessons, please contact Rev. Brittany so that she can add you to the list!

FAMILY & FRIENDS

Congratulations on Baptism

Congratulations to Chelsea Kennedy and Andrew Garrison on the baptism of their son Finn Garrison during First Tradition on Sunday, March 6th,



Congratulations

To Kaye and Harry Brown on the birth of their granddaughter Clara Ann on February 17th, Proud parents are Elisabeth Brown and David Suich.

Sympathy

To Pat Matthews following the death of her sister, Barbara, on February 27th.

To Ethan and Jane Sartor following the death of Ethan's grandmother, Billie Boyd.

To Roger and Pam Williams following the death of Roger's mother.