



## South Central District

# April 2011 Newsletter

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Dear Laurie,

### *Remembering*

As many of us are aware, we have an increasing concern about the measurement and monthly reporting of Missional Vital Signs (MVS). Some of our churches have completely omitted participation in this program. Others have participated inconsistently. A few have reported statistics that may have inadvertently been inaccurate or for some reason did not register in the system. We have lifted this concern in our district and most recently been reminded that Bishop Whitaker has deemed this mandatory. However, because the intent is that we would receive the MVS program as another lens of viewing effective ministry, I want to share a recent article written by my North Central District colleague, Rev. Annette Stiles-Pendergrass. I believe this perspective reflects one of our aims in requesting your participation:

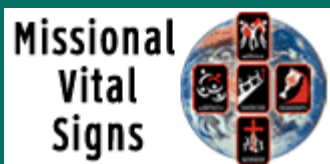
Every once in a while, pastors or lay folks ask me what the district and conference do with the Missional Vital Signs information that churches are required to submit to the Conference. Since I answer that question so often on an individual basis, I thought it might be helpful to answer it in this newsletter for everyone.

First, you should know that in January, Bishop Whitaker asked for a report from every District Superintendent that was based on the missional vital signs data. The report was to include how many churches are actually reporting and what we're learning about the health of congregations based on that report, such as which churches appear to be thriving in which areas, which are struggling, etc. This led to further conversations about which churches might benefit most from intervention through coaching, etc. through the Congregational Excellence Committee with the goal of assisting congregations in their growth in missional vitality and fruitfulness. I was

[Church Music Workshop](#)

[District Calendar](#)

#### Quick Links



#### REMINDER TO ALL PASTORS:

If you have not completed your I-9 form, it is due into the District Office no later than 4/15/2011

Thanks for your help!

#### Information regarding Storms on 3/31/2011

If any churches sustained damage as a result of the violent storms March 31, please call in directly to Ministry Protection. They will direct you to the proper adjuster to assist you with your needs.

happy to report that among our full time churches; all but three were reporting and the three who weren't thought they were! ("I thought some one else was doing that." It happens and it's been corrected.) Also, among our part time churches, over half are currently reporting and that number is still growing. That was great news.

So if you are wondering if anyone besides you is looking at the data you submit, the answer is "Yes!" But as I have said over and over again, in the end, the information you gather around your church's MVS is as useful as you make it. While District Superintendents find this information helpful in knowing our churches and encouraging and problem solving with them, what is even more important is what your church can learn about itself from this information. The best way to illustrate that is with the following testimony that I received last fall in the form of a Charge Conference report from Pastor James Richardson at Spring Hill UMC. I asked James if I could share that report with you and he was glad to share it.

*"No one likes extra work and extra record keeping, but we have begun to look and study the data for Spring Hill in the five vital mission areas. We are using this data to see how and where we are and what we can do to better serve the Kingdom of God. Tracking the vital signs also allows us to tweak what we are doing as a church with both programs and ministry.*

*The vital signs are certainly not an end in themselves, but they offer us a measuring stick to see how we are doing in comparison to ourselves, not other churches.*

*We have become very aware of our worship times, and the worship committee spends time and energy to plan and coordinate our worship. Extra time is spent on the order of worship, and the flow of the service. Attention is paid to all of the music and making sure that it enhances the scripture and sermon message. Special attention is given to make sure visitors and non - churched people understand our time of worship and what is going on and that they feel comfortable with us. We have, as a church, become more aware of making visitors feel welcome and a part of our worship experience at Spring Hill.*

*This awareness and focus on worship has also paid dividends in the other missional vital signs we are tracking. For the year 2010 to date, our worship attendance is up, and we have seen an increase in first time professions of faith. The number of participants in small groups is up and even in a bad economy our giving is up from what we had expected.*

*In short, the missional vital signs have forced us to examine ourselves and how we go about being the Church of Jesus Christ in the twenty first century. We thank God for being a part of a vibrant ministry and of the United Methodist Church."*

That is the kind of dialogue, planning and implementation that we hope the data you gather around the MVS can inspire. In the end, this information is as helpful as we choose to make it.

Thanks to James Richardson for allowing me to share the



Spring Hill experience with you and thank you to all of the churches who are faithfully reporting this information. As you can see here, it can make a difference.

The SC District still has strides to make toward 100% reporting of the MVS. I remain grateful to all of our congregations which participate faithfully and possibly even joyfully. Thanks also to our Business Administrator, Laurie who recently made 'reminder calls' and to those who responded with grace. Let us allow the outcomes to speak to us and to assist us in determining how we can better plant the seeds of effective ministry and to comply with the ministry mandate of our bishop.

Easter Blessings!

**Rev. Dr. Sharon G. Austin**

District Superintendent, South Central District

## → The South Central District Congratulates:

### **Rev. Mary Beth Packard & Keith Krueger**

On March 26, 2011 Pastor Mary Beth Packard and Keith Krueger were joined as husband and wife. The Reverend Thomas J. Price officiated the service which was held at The United Methodist Temple in Lakeland. Mary Beth is the Pastor at United Methodist Temple in Lakeland and Keith is a teacher in Wauchula. Please join us in wishing them a life filled with many blessings. Share your excitement, email them at [mbpackard@flumc.org](mailto:mbpackard@flumc.org).

### **Joanna K. Proferes**

CONGRATULATIONS to Joanna she has been certified as a Certified United Methodist Church Business Administrator in the Episcopal Office. This is a great accomplishment!

## → Prayer Concerns

Prayers are requested for the daughter of Pastor Dennis Roebuck of Thonotosassa UMC. Donna has been undergoing surgeries for several weeks.

Rev. Tom Hughes: Prayers are requested for the family of retired Rev. Tom Hughes and his wife Elaine. Rev. Hughes passed away on April 6. His memorial service will be on April 16 at 11 a.m. at Gentry-Morrison Funeral Home, 1727 S. Bartow Road, Lakeland. Cards and condolences may be sent to Elaine Hughes at 1681 E. Spring Ridge Circle, Winter Garden, FL 34787. In lieu of flowers, contributions to Good Shepherd Hospice and the Florida United Methodist Children's Home would be appreciated.

Retired Rev. Wallace Tervin and family for the passing of his wife Roberta "Bobby" Tervin on March 20.

Rev. Joseph Kim, who serves Riverview UMC in Ormond Beach. His mother, Chong Soon Kim passed away in Chicago on March 17.

Greg Harford (Disaster Recovery Ministry staff) left for Haiti April 1 as part of a 10-person, conference-wide team led by Paulette West, Executive Director of UMVIM SEJ (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Southeastern Jurisdiction.) They will be working at a Methodist church and school project in Cabaret as part of the Haiti Response Plan developed by UMVIM and UMCOR in response to the 2010 earthquake. UMVIM staff in Haiti, funded by an UMCOR grant, receive teams and coordinate the recovery and rebuilding work of the teams on priority projects identified by the Methodist Church of Haiti. The Haiti Response Plan is scheduled to last for three years, with the possibility to continue the work if the needs are still there. United Methodist teams from all over the world are helping with the rebuilding efforts in Haiti through the Haiti Response Plan - more affirmation of the effectiveness of our connection!

Other members of the team are:

Jan and TC Beardslee - Edgewater UMC - Port Charlotte  
Linda Bianco - Killlearn UMC - Tallahassee  
Scott Dedrick, CrossRoad UMC-Jacksonville  
Robert Frink - Killlearn UMC - Tallahassee  
Hollie Tapley - Conference Chair of UMVIM and Associate Pastor - Memorial UMC, Fernandina Beach  
Jeff Tate - Pastor at FUMC Lake City  
Jim Watson - New Covenant UMC, The Villages

## → Japan Crisis Response

As you are aware, a massive 8.9 magnitude earthquake rumbled through northeast Japan on Friday, March 11 triggering a 33-foot tsunami wave. The earthquake is the strongest to hit Japan in 140 years, and it is the fifth strongest in the world. The disaster caused widespread death and destruction including loss of homes and livelihoods. The crisis is intensified with the threat of nuclear radiation.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief offers a church bulletin insert [\[Click Here\]](#) asking United Methodists and friends to pray for the people of Japan and support the Pacific emergency through giving.

Jonathan McCurley, a Florida missionary in Japan, blogged an account of living through the earthquake and the days immediately after. Read Jonathan's correspondence on the Florida Conference website at <http://www.flumc2.org/default.asp>. For more information about UMCOR, visit [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org).

## → Annual Conference District Training Sessions

Held at the following times and locations. If you have been chosen as a District Lay Member to Annual Conference, please plan to attend one of these sessions. More information will follow via email.

**Tuesday, May 3 @ 6:00 p.m.**

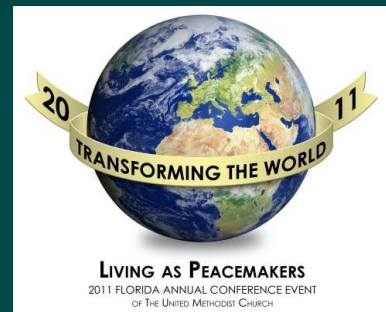
St. John's UMC, 1800 Cypress Gardens Blvd., Winter Haven FL 33884  
863-324-6347

**Saturday, May 21 @ 9:00 a.m.**

Trinity UMC, 402 W. English Street. Plant City FL 33563  
813-752-9316

**Sunday, May 15 @ 2:00 p.m.**

Wesley Memorial UMC, 6100 Memorial Highway, Tampa FL 33615  
813-886-8536



## → New Financial Controls Report released this year

Submission deadline changed to April 15

A new 2011 "Financial Controls, Policies and Procedures" report was released this year. This report has been revised with feedback from local church finance teams and is a more extensive procedure. Since this is a change and some churches may not be aware, please take time to print the new policy/ procedure [\[Click Here\]](#), review it then have the appropriate parties sign the one page "Annual Review & Renewal Document".

The deadline for submission has been changed to April 15, 2011 to give churches ample time for review. Please fax, email or mail a copy of the signature page to the District office no later than 4/15/2011. We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience. Thanks for your help!

## → Church has Movie Night on Fridays in April

The United Methodist Church of Sun City Center - 1210 Del Webb Blvd. West, Sun City Center

We will be hosting our monthly Friday Night at the Movies April 8 beginning at 6:00 p.m. for

refreshments and chit-chat with friends and neighbors. The movie will start at 6:30 p.m. Call the church at (813) 634-2539 for more information. The name of the Movie is "SECRETARIAT". It's about the greatest race horse that ever lived. Staring Diane Lane and John Malkovich. Diane Lane, a woman who inherits her father's stables and goes from being a young all American house wife to running a major horse racing franchise in a male dominated world, faces a great challenge. Will she succeed? We'll see! It's a great movie; one that everybody will enjoy!

## → Ministry for persons with special needs

A few months ago, a reporter from the e-Review interviewed St. James UMC about their Special Connections ministry. You can find the article [\[Click Here\]](#).

Pastor Steven Ezra, Sally DePalma, our Director of Special Connections, Barbara Brosch, our Executive Director of Ministries, would be happy to be a resource to other churches in visioning, developing, and/or implementing ministries to persons with special needs. We believe churches of all sizes can serve the special needs community, not just large churches with paid staff. Enjoy the article!



## → Community Arise: Basic Disaster Training

Saturday, April 30, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Beymer Memorial UMC, 700 N. Lake Howard Drive, Winter Haven, FL 33975

This training provides an introduction to the unique and important role the faith community plays in disaster mitigation, preparation and response. You and your church will hear practical ideas on how to effectively respond to disaster in your community in cooperation with other churches, emergency management officials and the Disaster Recovery Ministry of the conference. You will understand the importance of communication and collaboration in meeting the needs of disaster survivors and the importance of being the church in the midst of crisis. There is no cost for this training; however, registration is required for planning purposes. Check in begins at 9:30 and lunch is provided. For more information or to register, please visit [www.flumc.org/DisasterRecovery](http://www.flumc.org/DisasterRecovery) and follow the links to Community Arise.



## → Meet Superintendent and Pastor from Cuba

An evening of teaching and fellowship  
Monday, April 18, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. with desserts and refreshments  
Hyde Park UMC- Knox Hall #156-157

Methodists United in Prayer (former Cuba/Florida Covenant) and Hyde Park UMC are privileged in hosting the Superintendent of the Sierra Maestra district in Cuba, Pastor Leonardo Diaz and his wife, Mercedes. Everyone who loves and is interested in Cuba is invited to come to this gathering. This will be a unique opportunity to meet and greet Pastor Leo and Mechi who are also the pastors of the Manzanillo Methodist Church (their sister church is Temple Terrace UMC) and have greatly grown churches in their district in numbers and salvation. Our guest speaker, Pastor Leo, will be addressing the following topics: How to extend the borders of our churches in outreach & evangelism; and the importance of cell groups in reaching the lost in our city. RSVP to Renee Kincaid (813) 885-5674 or [rkinc@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rkinc@tampabay.rr.com).

## → Credit Union offers Home Buying Seminar

Thursday, April 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the Florida Conference Center in Lakeland, FL



## Georgia Florida United Methodist FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Are you thinking of buying a home? Selling? What kind of mortgages are available? And how do you know the value of your property? We want to make sure our members have all the tools they need to navigate this important part of life, so Georgia Florida United Methodist FCU is offering two Home Buying seminars. Come join us and listen to advice from real estate professionals, appraisers, attorneys and home inspectors.

Each session will last about an hour and there will be a question/answer period at the end. Sandwiches, cookies and beverages will be provided. You must RSVP to attend. Call the Lakeland office for details at 866-687-2136.

### → Couples Spiritual Retreats Offered

April 29-May 1 and May 20-22

An opportunity for couples to spend time with each other and with the Lord awaits at the 2011 Couples Spiritual Retreats. Sponsored by the Florida Conference United Methodist Men, each weekend retreat centers on the theme "As for Me and My House." Held in Fruitland Park at the beautiful Life Enrichment Center, the retreats include praise time, plenary sessions and breakout sessions, offering time to take your discipleship deeper. Registration and program information are available in the brochure, which you can print and share with your church. Costs vary depending on length of stay, where you stay, and how many meals you need while on-site. Additional information and registrations forms may be downloaded at [www.ummflconf.org](http://www.ummflconf.org) or by contacting the United Methodist Men at 877-815-3692.

### → Summer Intern Applications now being accepted

An Opportunity to Serve in the Florida Conference May 30 - August 5

Summer Mission Interns serve in a variety of outreach ministry settings throughout Florida, with a focus being on community day camps and United Methodist district outreach agencies. A \$2,000 stipend is awarded to each intern for their 10 weeks of service, which runs generally from May 30 through August 5. Internship applications are accepted from students and young adults, ages 19 through 28. Training is provided. The focus is on service in communities experiencing poverty, but the program includes time and support for reflection on vocational and spiritual goals. Supervision and mentoring is provided by conference and agency staff throughout the summer.

In the summer of 2010, the third year of this program, 26 Summer Mission Interns participated at placements with Christians Reaching Out to Society (C.R.O.S. Ministries) in Lake Worth, the East Central District outreach ministries in Orlando, Sons of Thunder Day Camp in Titusville, Grace Place in Naples, Joining Hands Mission in Holiday, BRANCHES in Florida City, and The Carpenter's Workshop in Melbourne.

The goal this year is to expand the program to 35-40 interns with new placements in Fort Lauderdale, Tallahassee, and Jacksonville. The Florida Conference Summer Mission Intern program is a partnership of the Justice and Outreach Ministries, Melinda Trotti, Director, and the Camps and Retreat Ministries, Rev. David Berkey, Executive Director.

Applications and inquiries can be mailed to Rev. David Berkey, 450 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., Lakeland, FL 33815; or fax it to 863-680-1912; or e-mail to [dberkey@flumc.org](mailto:dberkey@flumc.org), or call 800-282-8011, Ext. 140

### → Financial Education Workshop for Clergy

May 4-6 in Orlando, Florida

The Foundation will host its second annual "Clergy Guide to Personal and Church Finance" May 4-6 at the Hawthorn Suites Hotel, 7450

Augusta National Drive, Orlando. The intensive three-day workshop will focus on the major financial challenges facing clergy as they manage their own budgets and that of a church.



The workshop, offered for the first time in 2010, is "designed to fill the gap between training for pastoral leadership and the real life experiences clergy face," according to the Rev. Wee-Li Tan, president of the Foundation. "Because most clergy do not receive financial training or business administrative training as part of the educational process, the Foundation is offering this course as a way to fill the gap," he said. "We believe that clergy need to be familiar with best financial and business practices in order to be successful."

The workshop lays out a foundation for personal and church finance, including how to develop a theology of money. Topics covered include fundamentals of finance and financial planning, church finance, stewardship and the cultural challenges facing clergy and the church. Workshop leaders include Foundation and Conference staff and lay business professionals with wide-ranging expertise on financial matters. Continuing Education credits are offered.

Because many personal financial decisions are family matters, clergy are encouraged to bring spouses to the seminar. Cost is \$195 for couples and \$125 for singles. Tuition covers overnight accommodations, workshop sessions and materials and most meals. Under special circumstances, scholarships are available.

Online registration is available at the Foundation website, [www.fumf.org](http://www.fumf.org). Registration deadline is Monday, April 18. For more information, contact the Foundation, toll free, at (866) 363-9673.

## → Mission Opportunities

We have several Global Mission opportunities coming up this summer, sponsored by the Florida Conference, for which they are still recruiting volunteers. Please contact the Team Leader of each opportunity should you be interested.

### CUBA, YOUNG ADULT TEAM

July 15-24 - Camp Canaan, Cuba

Purpose: Participating at the 2011 Young Adult national retreat and building relationships.

Team leader: Kelsey Linduff, [kelseyinduff@gmail.com](mailto:kelseyinduff@gmail.com)

### COSTA RICA, UMVIM

July 29- Aug 5 - San Jose, Costa Rica

Purpose: Construction of the orphanage, evangelism and Spanish immersion.

Team leader: Icel Rodriguez, [irodriguez@flumc.org](mailto:irodriguez@flumc.org)

### CUBA, UMVIM

August 14-25 - Camp Canaan, Cuba

Purpose: Construction at Camp Canaan while participating at the Pastoral Families retreat.

Team leader: Robert Pinera, [RPinera@aol.com](mailto:RPinera@aol.com).

## → Free Summer Camp Scholarships Offered to Churches

(who have not sent campers in over two years)

The Florida Conference Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries is excited to invite you to send children, youth or even grandparents to camp this summer on us! We greatly appreciate your church's connectional ministry giving, and this is one way to receive it back in ways that will bless the children and youth in your neighborhood and/or congregation for years to come. The first 100

requests we receive from the pastors of churches in the Florida Conference who have not sent a child or youth to summer camp in the past two years will receive \$400 to send one or more campers this coming summer (\$400 per church). Here's how it works:



1. You or someone on your staff nominates a worthy camper or campers for this summer from your congregation or neighborhood to send to one of our events listed below. Note: It is recommended that sending more than one camper helps with the "first-time" experience, to have a friend to share it with.
2. You then help them fill out a registration form which can be found at [www.flumcamps.org](http://www.flumcamps.org) for the correct location - Warren Willis Camp, the Life Enrichment Center or Riverside Retreat. Send the registration form in via internet or mail with a note that you are requesting the "Free Scholarship Offer".
3. Once we receive the application with the deposit, we will send to the church \$400 to apply to the remaining balance on the camper's registration. The money will be sent to the church; please make sure it goes to help the camper complete the payment of fees for this summer.
4. The camper enjoys a summer experience that changes lives! They return to church and share their story, encouraging more children or youth to attend camp next year!

For further information on our summer camp programs you can visit the website [www.flumcamps.org](http://www.flumcamps.org).

## → Rekindling the Flame of the Laity Conference

June 30 - July 3, 2011 Lake Junaluska Assembly, North Carolina

This laity conference will provide an opportunity to experience Jesus Christ and to grow in the Christian Faith and relationship through great preaching, Bible study, inspiring singing, special music, and Christian fellowship as families.

This family experience will focus on the theme of "Christ's Mission and Ours." Adults, college students, youth and children will join together for this weekend of inspiration, information and fellowship!

Download and print the [Rekindling the Flame](#) brochure (PDF).

## → Anyone sense a call to licensed or ordained ministry?

Do you have people in your congregation who sense a call to licensed or ordained ministry? This is a great time to get them started in the candidacy process. Their first steps:

1. Be a member of a United Methodist Church (or other approved ministry setting, such as one of our United Methodist Campus Ministries) for at least 1 year immediately preceding starting candidacy.
2. Read "Christian As Minister" and "Ministry Inquiry Process" with a United Methodist minister.
3. Contact the District Superintendent in writing with a statement about their call, requesting to begin the candidacy process. The DS will usually arrange to meet with them in person.

Pending a background check, the District will then enroll the candidate in the process. They will be assigned to a mentoring group, with two trained mentors who will walk them through the rest of the process toward becoming a Certified Candidate. The process begins with a required retreat for all candidates, and the next one is coming up on July 22nd-23rd. We have a great retreat

planned, excellent mentors lined up, and are getting positive and helpful feedback thus far about this new group process.

For those who want to begin the process in time for the July 22-23 retreat and subsequent August-November mentoring group, they need to be ENROLLED by their District by June 15, and will then have several forms to complete by July 1. (If a candidate misses these deadlines, they will have to wait for the next retreat, in January 2012.)

Which means that NOW is a great time to reach out to those your congregation who have expressed a call, so that they have time to read and discuss those two books, get in touch with the District Superintendent, and get enrolled in candidacy. If you or a potential candidate needs more information, please contact Rev. Emily Oliver, Assoc. Director of the Center for Clergy Excellence at (863)688-5563 ext. 104.

## → 55th Annual Church Music Workshop July 17-22, 2011

Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida

The Florida Chapter of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts is pleased to announce that our 55th Annual Church Music Workshop will be held from Sunday afternoon, July 17th through Friday noontime, July 22nd, 2011, at Florida Southern College in Lakeland.

Forward this information to the music and worship leaders in your and encourage them to take this opportunity to connect with other church musicians and worship leaders in the conference and be renewed. For more information and for registration information, please visit their website at: [www.floridafellowship.org](http://www.floridafellowship.org) or contact Joan FitzGerald, Workshop Chairperson, at [joan.fitzgerald@verizon.net](mailto:joan.fitzgerald@verizon.net).



## → District Calendar of Events

April 1: Reoccurring Monthly Reports  
April 15: Pastor I-9 form due into the district office  
April 17: Palm Sunday  
April 22: Good Friday - District and Conference Offices will be closed  
April 22: Earth Day  
April 24: Easter  
April 27: Administrative Professionals Day

May 1: Reoccurring Monthly Reports  
May 1: Announcement Sunday  
May 3: National Teachers Day  
May 8: Mothers Day  
May 30: Memorial Day - District and Conference Offices will be closed



Latest Conference News

[2011 Conference Calendar of Reports Due](#)