



## South Central District

# February 2011 Newsletter

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Dear Laurie,

I recently received the services of a health care provider. She noted that I was a clergyperson, and began her conversation about the 'doings' at her (Baptist) church. She shared her disbelief at some of the congregational responses to difficult decisions made by her pastor of a few years, in response to pre-existing administrative situations. While she described her pastor as 'relational and effective' she was perplexed at the unfortunate behaviors and the commentaries displayed by some of the parishioners, including that of a retired pastor in the congregation. The behaviors and commentaries which began by being levied at the pastor have continued their predictable downward spiraling throughout the congregation, now reduced to half its previous size.

Much has been said of late about the 'venom-spewing' contained and levied throughout public discourse. From political campaigns to our efforts to respond to the recent horrific, Tucson shootings, we have been reminded of our unbelievable 'vitriolic' rhetoric, which an increasing number of persons find unacceptable. Are we simply rude or is there something more?

Author John Hooker, addresses the issue of the rudeness of Western culture in his book, *Working Across Cultures* (2003). He speaks to our rudeness as opposed to the politeness of other cultures, while he is quick to state that his reflections are not to be mistakenly interpreted as commentary on each person within either rude or polite cultures. He states, "My point is that courtesy does not play the necessary integrative role in the West that it does in much of the world. Because the West relies instead on rules of fairness, it can tolerate rudeness" (John Hooker, *Working Across Cultures*, 2003).

More difficult than accepting Hooker's commentary on Western

## District Calendar

### Quick Links



## CUBA CARAVAN

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On Feb 21, 2011, there is a caravan of 3 members of Bayshore UMC going to Cuba to visit sister churches Feb. 21, 2011 under the Methodists United in Prayer (formerly Cuba/Florida Covenant) ministry of the Florida Conference. They will also attend the District Conferences of the Santiago de Cuba and Sierra Maestra Methodists sister districts representing the South Central District. Anyone interested in more information about this mission trip or the Cuba ministry may contact Renee Kincaid at [rkinc@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rkinc@tampabay.rr.com) or (813)885-5674.

secular culture is acknowledging the role that rudeness plays in the life of the Church. The language, the diatribe, the tone of meetings, and the entitlement of being heard, have at times led us to forget who we are and whose we are! My prayer is always that the culture of the church will set the example for the world; a culture of respect where we matter to one another because we matter to God. How can we model the love of Christ for our youth and the world if we display verbal brawling in our congregations, Baptist, Methodist, etc? The season of Lent is almost upon us. I hope that this time of inward reflection will settle us down and give us pause for the work that the Holy Spirit may deem necessary within each of us.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6 NIV.

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

District Superintendent, South Central District

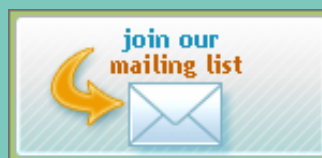
## A couple of notes from the District Superintendent:

When requesting letters of recommendation from the District Superintendent, please allow a 30 day lead time for completion of the letter.

When the District Superintendent is away at Cabinet, she is unavailable during that time and cannot respond to inquiries. The upcoming dates of Cabinet are: the Week of February 21, the Week of March 14, April 11 and the Week of May 30.

## Can you help?

First United Methodist Church of Lutz is starting "The Hole in our Gospel" series. This series comes with 30" x 72" banners. They are looking for churches who may have had this series and would be willing to let them borrow their banners. Please contact First UMC of Lutz at 813-949-1751.



## → Prayer Concerns

The family of Marion McMillan, husband of Rev. Meredith McMillan, Beymer UMC in Tampa. Mr. McMillan's uncle Mervin McCarl passed away January 30.

The family of Rev. Robert Dell, retired elder of the Florida Conference and former member of the Central Jurisdiction. Rev. Dell passed away on Wednesday, January 5.

Connie Thomas, who is experiencing some health concerns. Connie is the wife of Rev. Jeff Thomas, who is Senior Pastor at Manhattan Avenue UMC in Tampa.

The family of Todd Adams, who recently passed away. Todd was the son-in-law of Bill and Annabelle Fisackerly III and the husband of Bill's daughter, Lucy Anne.

Rev. Harold Frierson who has suffered a series of strokes. Rev. Frierson previously served Trinity, West Palm Beach.

Anamaris Feliciano, the wife of Rev. Dr. Juan G. Feliciano, who is the Director of Hispanic Congregational Excellence and New Church Development for the Florida Conference. Anamaris's father passed away during the past few days, and she has lost both her parents in the last two weeks.

Betty Mueller, the mother of Rev. Ron Mueller (Local Pastor in SC District). Betty is at home with round the clock caregivers and hospice.

## → Just a reminder to all of our Pastors

Dear Colleagues,

Please be reminded of your ongoing responsibility to insure that the Missional Vital Signs report is being completed for your congregation. Bishop Whitaker recently expressed his concern to me that our district is lagging in this area and needs to comply as have other districts. Previous reminder phone calls have been made and instructions offered to some of you in an effort to insure that you attend to this concern. Pastors do not have to complete the monthly reports, but do need to insure that the reports are completed for their congregations. If you are an appointed pastor, please understand that the MVS report is not a request but a requirement! Thank you in advance for attending to this most important concern.

Also, be reminded that this season provides an opportune time to discern your congregational goals in keeping with the General Conference, Planting Seeds - Celebrating the Harvest initiative. These goals are to be reported at this year's Charge Conference. You will not do your best work if you delay conversations until the fall of the year. If your congregation is largely populated by winter residents, engage their input now, and do not wait until their return in the fall. Please contact Laurie in the district office if you need her to re-send the PowerPoint presentation previewed during Bishop Whitaker's September 2010 visit with our clergy.

Don't forget to log into your @flumc.com email on a regular basis. This email address is the only one that all Conference and District news and communication is directed to. If email comes to your personal email from the District, know this is just a courtesy. Should you need any assistance with your flumc email, please contact the District Office. Thank You!

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

District Superintendent, South Central District

## → Year-End Statistics Due February 11

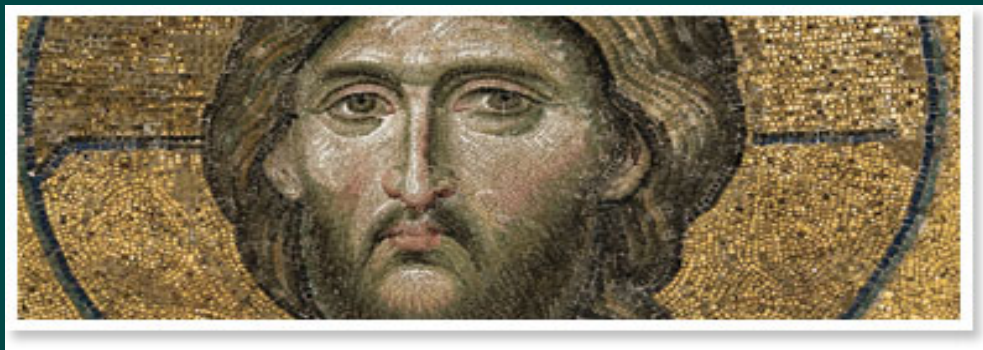
This is a reminder that year-end statistical reports are available online and the deadline to complete the report is 4 p.m., Friday, February 11. Please note that there is an additional login area once you click on the link to complete your statistical form. The username for this login will be your GCFA number, and the password has been set to "password" for all churches. You will be required to create a new password, as well as fill in



some contact information on the person submitting the form the first time you login. Because of all of the changes for the new quadrennium, it is important that you read through all the information and instructions that will be provided before you begin the process. Please do not assume that anything is the same as it was in years past. Should you have any questions or need assistance, your [District office](#) and [Conference Office](#) will be able to assist you. When making a contact for assistance, please include your name, your church's name and GCFA number, and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.

## → Exploring the Faith Lecture Series & Alumni Gathering

February 15, 2011 at Hyde Park UMC, Tampa



Hyde Park UMC is hosting a one-day Faith Lecture Series as part of the continuing education program (.4 units) of United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH. Led by Scholarly Ordained Ministers; Practical, Evocative Lectures; Relevant for the 21st Century Church; Rooted in Scripture and Tradition. Free lunch and registration for all perspective seminary students. See flyer for details [\[Click Here\]](#).

## → Christ's Community Café: An inter-denominational group working to "Feed the Hungry"

February 4, 2011 and every Friday thereafter from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church, Wesley Centre, Plant City, Florida [\[Click Here\]](#) for a flyer.

We serve a nutritious lunch and offer a hand of love to those in our community who are struggling. This is an outreach for those who might not have enough money at the end of the month to have food; who need a dose of friendly fellowship because of loneliness; who are on a fixed income, and a warm meal at the end of the week would be a great boost to the budget. Whatever your struggle, we will be waiting for you with a smile, and a meal! For additional information, contact Nancy at (813) 754-3519.

## → Summer Day Camp Training Offered

February 19 - Mt. Pleasant UMC, Gainesville (RSVP by Feb 14)

March 25-26 at Riverside Retreat Center, LaBelle (RSVP by Mar 18)

These events are for local church and agency leaders, staff, administrators, and volunteers who sponsor day programs for children and youth in their communities. During each event there will be training on basic operations of a summer day camp program whether one week or 10 in length. Summer day camp curriculum will be provided, resources shared, and opportunities for sharing ideas and support given. There is also a chance to sign up for staff training and consultation including information on the Summer Mission Intern program and summer feeding programs.

The event in Gainesville on February 19 will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. The event at Riverside Retreat March 25-26 is an overnight retreat, but you may attend just the Saturday session. There is no charge for either session.

These summer day camp training events are sponsored by the offices of the Florida United Methodist Camps and Retreats and Justice and Outreach Ministries. Please email Tammy Fisher at [tfisher@flumc.org](mailto:tfisher@flumc.org) for more information and to RSVP.

## → Church and Pastor Annual Profiles Due February 18



The final submission date for profiles is **February 18, 2011**. Church and Pastor Profile forms should be reviewed and updated annually by all church SPR Committees and all Clergy in the Florida Conference. Though a move may not be anticipated, it is important that both the pastor profile and church profile be current and up to date at the appointment-making session of the cabinet. It should be an honest reflection of the pastoral ministry and the profile of the church. If a pastoral consultation is scheduled with the DS, the Church and Pastor Profile should be completed online no later than one week prior to the consultation. We will be communicating more specific details directly to Clergy and SPRC Chairs in the near future.

## → Spring Confirmation Retreats at Warren Willis Camp

February 25-27 : March 18-20 :: April 1-3, 2011

The Warren Willis United Methodist Camp in Fruitland Park has four Confirmation Retreats for you to choose from during the 2010/2011 school year. These weekends offer a great retreat experience for confirmation classes from local United Methodist churches throughout the Florida Conference.

Pricing, promotional video, registration information, and a sample schedule of the retreat are available online at [www.warrenwilliscamp.org](http://www.warrenwilliscamp.org). Click on the attend tab to find the retreat you wish to attend. If you have any questions about this retreat or other retreats offered at the Warren Willis Camp, please contact Joel Pancoast at [joel.pancoast@warrenwilliscamp.org](mailto:joel.pancoast@warrenwilliscamp.org) or call him at the camp office at 352-787-4345.



## → Real Ideas Conference

March 3-4, 2011 at Van Dyke UMC Tampa

At the Real Ideas Conference we'll share positive and practical ideas from our 25 years of learning through success and failure. No matter where you are or the size of your church, you will be inspired and



informed to go to the next level at Real Ideas 2011. For more information, visit the [\[website\]](#).

This is our fifth year and dozens of churches across the Florida Conference, as well as several from Georgia and Alabama have benefitted. This is a practical conference dealing with the nuts and bolts of effective ministry across all areas of church life. Clergy, staff and laity leave each year with ideas and inspiration to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

## → 2012 General Conference of the UMC

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church meets every 4 years and is a world-wide gathering of Methodists. The decisions made during the General Conference affect the social policies of the church and how we govern ourselves. The Book of Discipline is amended at the General Conference. The 2012 General Conference is a 12-day event and will be held at the Tampa Convention Center, with us, the Florida Conference, as the host conference. 1,000 delegates from all over the world will be in Tampa from April 23 to May 4, 2012. These delegates represent their conferences located throughout the world. In addition to delegates, there will be 5,000 to 6,000 observers and guests attending the General Conference. As the host conference, our role is to prepare for all the people arriving and to provide volunteer greeters during the General Conference. May we all be inspired to keep the 2012 General Conference in prayer that God's Holy Spirit will use this time to renew and re-energize the church for its ministry.

## → Elections for General & Jurisdictional Conference Delegates



During the upcoming session of the Florida Annual Conference, members will be electing persons to serve as delegates to the 2012 sessions of the General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the United Methodist Church. Serving the Church as a delegate is an awesome responsibility. Decisions are made which effect every congregation throughout the United Methodist Church. It is hard work. It is rewarding work. What follows quickly sums up some of the important information you need to know now as we begin the discernment and discovery process leading up to the election of our delegates. [\[Read the rest....\]](#).

## → Preaching in the 21st Century: Candler Lifelong Learning Event

Dr. Tom Long, Bandy Professor of Preaching, will lecture and lead a discussion on the tasks and opportunities of preaching in the 21st century at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Orlando, FL on Thursday, March 3. This event is open to everyone - clergy and other church leaders are encouraged to attend. The schedule begins with a 9:30 a.m. continental breakfast, followed by lecture and discussion. The program will adjourn by 12:00 p.m. Directions to the event can be found at [www.st.lukes.org](http://www.st.lukes.org). To register for this event [\[Click Here\]](#).



## → SEJ Young People's Ministries announces new staff

As part of the the General Board of Discipleship's plan to hire a person in each Jurisdiction, the Southeastern Jurisdiction welcomes Rori Blakeney to the staff on January 16 in Atlanta, Ga. He brings a wealth of experience this part-time position as well as serving as Youth Director at Winters Chapel UMC in Doraville, Ga. [\[Read letter . . .\]](#)

## → Church by Size Seminars March 2011

Each seminar is designed for your team to receive two days of initial instruction and discussion in March and then a one-day follow-up session in September.



These five exciting seminars, designed and led by Doug Anderson, will help pastors and lay teams understand the unique ministry opportunities and challenges that their church size offers. Participants are given practical models, principles, and options for effectively dealing with the important possibilities and issues facing them. Making your ministry effective and dynamic is the purpose of each seminar.

Building a Terrific Team: Staff Ministry in a Large Church (over 250 in AWA)

- Leading a Church Staff: Basic Tools for Effective Lead Pastors
- Beyond the Barriers: Ministry for Becoming a Large Church (175-250 in AWA)
- Mastering the Middle: Ministry in a Mid-Sized Church (100-175 in AWA)
- Extending the Church Family: Ministry in the Small Church (less than 100 in AWA)

Cost: first person \$89, second person \$75, additional persons \$60. [\[Click Here\]](#) for Seminar Descriptions and Dates. Lunches and materials are included; lodging and transportation in on your own. Register on-line at: [www.congregationalexcellence.com](http://www.congregationalexcellence.com) or [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org). Each seminar is limited to the first 75 participants.

## → 31st Annual Wonder Walk for Children's Services

**March 12, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon at Hyde Park UMC, Tampa**

In this time of economic challenges, there are so many families in need of help with education, therapy and child care. The Wonder Walk provides funds for the ministry to serve approximately 65 at-risk children at the Rosa Valdez Center every week. For details on how you can participate, [\[Click Here\]](#) for the flyer and registration form. Cornerstone Family Ministries is a state-wide, non-profit agency dating back to 1892. Their mission is to "share the compassion of Jesus Christ through feeding the hungry and nurturing the young". They accomplish this mission through the Rosa Valdez Center and the Child Care Food Program. Visit their website at [cornerstonefamilyministries.org](http://cornerstonefamilyministries.org).

## → 11th Annual 5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

**Sunday March 13 - Friday, March 18 at Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland Park**

Are you interested in deepening your spiritual life and honoring your continuing education with a remarkable experience in Florida this March? The Florida Conference Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation is excited to announce that Dr. Elise Eslinger and The Reverend Bob Mitchell will be presenters from March 13- 18, 2011 at the Life Enrichment Center. You may be already familiar with these persons as they are widely known throughout United Methodism.

Dr. Elsinger is a contributor to the current edition of the United Methodist Hymnal, as well as the editor for the new Upper Room Worship Book. Her leadership in seminars and workshops keeps her in high demand across the country. She recently retired from the faculty of United Theological Seminary where she received her doctorate degree.



Dr. Elise Elsinger



Rev. Bob Mitchell

Reverend Mitchell, having studied doctoral programs at both Fuller Theological Seminary and Claremont School of Theology, comes from Arizona where, in retirement, he ministers as a Chaplain at a center for homeless older adults. Never far from music, for 18 years Bob has been providing leadership at the Mingus Mountain Music Camp.

Between these two Faculty, this will be a rare and unique opportunity to grow spiritually and renew musical vitality.

Registration will be Sunday, March 13, 2011 from 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM; Orientation & Dinner will begin at 5:30 PM; The week will conclude on Friday, March 18, 2011 following the Eucharist at Noon, with lunch. For

complete information about this event [\[click here\]](#) for a brochure.

**Other Opportunities:**

**April 30, 2011** - Joyce Estes will lead a gathering on making and using silk for banners, alters, etc. at Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland Park from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (\$25.00).

**August 30, 2011** - Tom Albins (Upper Room) will lead gathering on prayer for General Conference (More details on this later).

**October 2011** - Dr. Trudy Rankin will lead a one-day gathering on "Spiritual Pilgrims: A Study of Jung and Teresa of Avila" (\$25.00) in Jacksonville.

**→ United Methodist Communicators Meeting in Orlando  
March 17-18, 2011 at the Gaylord Palms**

The SEJ Association of Communicators will meet in Orlando at the Gaylord Palms on March 17-18. On Thursday morning and afternoon, workshop options will be offered for local church communicators in the Central Florida Region. For more information, contact Neill Caldwell at the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church at [NeillCaldwell@vaumc.org](mailto:NeillCaldwell@vaumc.org).

**→ Florida Advocacy Days (FAD) @ Children's Week  
April 3-5, 2011 at The Capital, Tallahassee**

This is a time where United Methodists partner with the AME Church, Florida Impact, and United Way to host an educational time about legislative issues surrounding children and families in poverty and how to address these issues with their legislators. FAD will conclude with a 'march' to the capitol to 'Show Up to Speak Out' to their State Legislators for the rights and needs of children and to place those needs at the top of their budget and policy priorities.



Join us in strengthening Florida's families by sharing a commitment to improve our communities through events and outreach efforts aimed at promoting the health, safety and well-being of our children.



## → SEJ Clergy Women's Consultation

April 4-7, 2011 at the Emory Conference Center and Hotel in Atlanta, GA

For those of you who have never been to the SEJ Clergywomen's Consultation, or have never even heard of it, you are unaware of a great event! All three of our Southeastern Jurisdiction women bishops--Bishop Charlene Kammerer, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward, and Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor--will be leading worship and participating in workshops during our time together. We will have other great preachers, teachers, and colleagues on hand to guide us spiritually and help us serve Christ and His Church more effectively. Please check the website for a schedule and more detailed descriptions of what will be offered.



The Clergywomen's gatherings across the years have been wonderful experiences in the lives of many women. We have renewed friendships, made new friends, honed skills, and been totally awed by music, worship, and preaching. Plan to come to Atlanta in the springtime. You will find it a blessing to spend four days in Lent with your clergy sisters.

Let us encourage you to take time today to go fill in the blanks and get your checks in the mail. Your registration won't take 15 minutes. Please [\[Click Here\]](#) here to register. Scholarship assistance to attend the event may be available through the FL Conference Center for Clergy Excellence (contact Winnie Dean at [wdean@flumc.org](mailto:wdean@flumc.org)) and/or the FL Conference office of Connectional Ministries (contact Sherri Lingle at [slingle@flumc.org](mailto:slingle@flumc.org)).

## → Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza to Speak

April 29, 2011 from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

The Doubletree Hotel, 10100 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32821



You are invited to hear a world renown feminist biblical theologian Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, the author of *In Memory of Her*. She is Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School. Dr. Schüssler Fiorenza will speak on 'ekklesia of wo/men' including a biblical perspective on befriending among women. This dialogue is part of the closing program for the Lead Women Pastors and Future Leadership Consultation by The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. There is no registration fee to hear Dr. Schüssler Fiorenza, although reservations are required. To reserve your seat, please contact Elizabeth O'Neal at [goneal@gbhem.org](mailto:goneal@gbhem.org). Visit the registration [website](#) for more information.

## → Background Data for Mission: 2011 and Beyond

Providing data for planning and ministry



As we begin the new year, and by some counts, the new decade, much media attention is focused on what has transpired in the last year and decade, and on what may lie ahead in the next. This little epistle will join the fray. It has been quite a period indeed. For example, Global Ministries' UMCOR and UMWIM units have been busy with a Tsunami, Gulf hurricanes, and Haiti. The latter is especially fresh, as the one-year anniversary is being remembered as this goes to press. The loss of Sam Dixon and Clint Rabb are still being felt in a personal way by many staff, including this writer, as well as numerous United Methodists around the world.

[\[Read the rest . . .\]](#)

## → 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.

Anyone involved in church music or worship planning, both traditional and contemporary, adults or youth, are invited to join us. This year's theme, "The Best Table," is based on Rev. Jan Richardson's graphic of the same name. During our 2011 Church Music Workshop, we are going to "linger at the table and savor every scrap" as we seek that foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet that awaits us, give thanks that Jesus shared his last meal with his disciples and showed us how to remember, and welcome everyone to the Banquet Table. Clinicians for the workshop will be Adult Choral Clinician Joel Raney renowned composer and pianist; Organ Clinician Steve Strite, Director of Music and Worship at Bradenton Christian Reformed Church; Handbell Clinician Blanche Marie Lewis, director of the Magic of Bronze and Ascension Lutheran Church Handbell Choir in Casselberry; and Workshop Pastor, Rev. Lisa Degrenia, Senior Pastor at Community UMC, DeBary.



We are asking all pastors in the conference to forward this information to the music and worship leaders in their church 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 (coming soon), please visit our 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).

## → Asbury Seminary awarded grant

Asbury Theological Seminary is one of only eight evangelical seminaries in the nation selected to receive \$1.5 million for the Kern Scholars Initiative. This grant creates a new source of scholarship money for qualified Asbury Seminary students.

Through the Kern Scholars Initiative, the Kern Family Foundation provides selected seminaries with grants for scholarships awarded to evangelical men and women committed to lifelong service in pastoral ministry who eventually become senior preaching and teaching pastors with pulpit responsibilities.

The initiative will support hundreds of highly qualified students seeking the Master of Divinity degree,

strengthen the education and practical experience they receive in seminary and cultivate a growing nationwide network of pastors. [\[Read more....\]](#)

## Employment Opportunity

### Administrative Assistant - Center for Congregational Excellence

The Florida Conference is a regional unit of The United Methodist Church and comprises more than 700 local churches. This progressive religious organization is seeking a full-time Administrative Assistant to support the Center for Congregational Excellence. The successful candidate must be able to handle diverse tasks in a professional and timely manner. Responsibilities include handling phone and email correspondence for traveling staff, basic financial aptitude for monitoring and tracking department budgets and expense, electronic recordkeeping and meeting and event planning.

The ideal candidate will be detail oriented and proficient in Microsoft Office products such as Word, Outlook and Excel. Strong verbal and written communication skills with 5- 7 years of progressively responsible administrative experience required. Prefer applicants who are fluent in both English and Spanish. Appreciation of the nature and mission of the church is important. EOE. Salary range \$12 - \$14/hr. E-mail resume, including salary history, to [employment@flumc.org](mailto:employment@flumc.org) (or fax to 863- 688-5189 ) no later than February 25, 2011. No phone calls

## District Calendar of Events

Feb 11: Year end statistics deadline  
Feb 11: Workers compensation audit form due  
Feb 18: Pastor / Church profiles due

Mar 31: Child/Youth Protection Policy adoption reporting due  
Mar 31: Fiscal Responsibility and management policy reporting due  
Mar 31: Sexual Harassment Policy reporting due  
Mar 31: Disaster Recovery reporting due

[2011 Conference Calendar of Reports Due](#)