

Happy Thanksgiving

November South Central District Newsletter



The South Central District Office will be closed during the week of Thanksgiving. From 11/19/11 - 11/27/11

Thank you for planning accordingly.

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Enjoy this new area of our newsletter for up to the minute thoughts!

Enlarge the 'Circle' of Thanksgiving!

In our recent clergy gathering we had the opportunity to hear the pain of exclusion and the joys of inclusion through a stellar message delivered by the Rev. Bernie Lieving, one of the pastors on staff at Hyde Park UMC.

The message was followed by the presentations of three pastors in our district, Dr. Kevin James, Sr. Pastor, Palma Ceia UMC, the Rev. Erwin Lopez, serving the two-point charge of Lakewood Park and Good Shepherd UMCs, and the Rev. Raphael Dessieu, serving the two-point charge of Faith Community Haitian Mission and Northeast UMC. Each of these pastors is serving a Cross-Racial, Cross-Cultural appointment (aka CR/CC appointments). They each shared stories of vice and victory, challenge and joy about their appointments and/or experiences in the church and in the society as a result of being included or excluded from and by different groups. A lively discussion ensued in which it became apparent that while we are called to embrace and engage in a broad-based discussion on issues of inclusion of all persons, issues of race and culture speak to the painful history of this country in profound ways.

The Rev. Harold Lewis, Black Church resource staff person for both the Conference offices of Congregational Transformation and New Church Development further impacted our awareness through a series of exercises, activities and conversations that serve as a beginning and not an end to conversations in which we need to engage as a Church. Our hope is that we will be better prepared for grace-filled conversations during General Conference on issues of inclusion and that we will all pray that United Methodists will engage in Holy Conferencing in informed and prayerful ways.

A small and meaningful, yet profound way for us to 'give thanks' in every season for the breadth of ministry throughout our district is depicted through the photos below. The photos display several of the pastors named above and others as they cross the dividing lines of difference and effect Kingdom witnesses through their respective ministries!

[Bishop Whitaker](#)
[Angola Mission Blog](#)
[Congregational Excellence](#)
[El Blog Hispano](#)
[The Black Church Blog](#)
[Jeff Stiggins](#)
[Juan Feliciano](#)



Pastor Kyu-Seok of First UMC Lakeland's Korean Ministry with members of his congregation.



Pastor Raphael Dessieu and Rev. Sharon Austin with members of Pastor Raphael's churches, Northeast UMC and Faith Community Haitian Mission



The youth group at Palma Ceia UMC, Pastor Kevin James, prays for the homeless as they prepare to serve dinner.



Pastor Erwin Lopez and the youth of Lakewood Park UMC. Pastor Erwin is also the Pastor of Good Shepherd UMC.

JOYS AND PRAYERS

Healing Prayers are requested for...

Rev. Caroll Phillips who has been diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma and is undergoing treatment.

Maude Fairchild, the Mother of Pastor Nora Ramirez of Trinity UMC in Winter Haven and Mother-in-Law of Rev. Sam Ramirez (Ret.). Ms. Fairchild is suffering from heart issues.

Catherine Westley, future daughter-in-law of Rev. Daphne Johnson of College Heights UMC.

Jerry Reynolds, father of Pastor Mark Reynolds of Christ UMC in Lakeland. Mr. Reynolds is recovering from heart surgery.

Rev. Geraldine Christopher of Tyer Temple as she recovers from her bone marrow transplant.

Prayers of Sympathy and Comfort are requested for...

Wendy McCoy who is the Conference Director of Health & Benefits whose husband, Terry Christian lost his battle with cancer on October 20th.

The family of Pastor Kathleen Durbin on the death of her Mother

Prayers of Thanksgiving for...

Rev. Daniel Parrish of St. John's UMC and his wife Toni. They celebrate the birth of their new granddaughter Olivia Elizabeth Klipfell. John and Monica Klipfell are the proud parents.

Pastor Jeff Smith of CrossRoads Community UMC who is pleased to announce that he has been given the "all clear" after his heart cath procedure last week. He is thankful for all of your prayers.

DISTRICT HAPPENINGS

Considering a Clergy Move in 2012?

In preparation for the upcoming 2012 appointment season, Rev. Austin is scheduling time to meet with pastors considering a move in 2012. If you are considering a move, please send an email to flumc-sc@flumc.org and request a meeting in December with Rev. Austin. Please bring a copy of your completed pastor's profile form.

If you are an SPRC Chair and are requesting a change in your appointed pastor, please send an email request to flumc-sc@flumc.org. Please bring a copy of your completed church profile form. These meetings will be set in January or at the latest February.

APPORTIONMENTS: Your-portion-meant for MINISTRY!

As I continue through this season of Charge Conferences I hear the joys and challenges of ministry. Spending money is one unavoidable aspect of ministry challenge. Since money is one of God's many gifts to us it is incumbent upon us to use it wisely and well. One of the ways in which United Methodists apply the stewardship of this gift is through fruit-bearing spending. Our Connectional system includes Connectional Giving which is intended to enable ministry throughout every expression of the life of the Church throughout the world. I often commend churches that fulfill their responsibilities well and those who are planning and practicing an increase in their giving. In addition, I often reference our need to be accountable to those who pay on behalf of others who don't or won't pay. In an effort to reflect the sentiments on behalf of some of the congregations which are sacrificially giving their gifts at or near 100%, I invited one of our pastors to share his thoughts following a phone conversation with me where he rightly expressed his frustration and that of his congregation in having their Apportionments increase due to the lack of payment of others:

Having serviced in the Florida Annual Conference for over 30 years, it is difficult for me to perceive that there are UM Churches not paying their apportionment in full. Through the years, I have refused salary increases, developed fund raising ideas to make sure that our apportionments were paid 100%. I know churches that have held monthly dinners, pancake breakfasts, Saturday rummage sales and many other ideas (NO gambling please). We have frequently been reminded that if all of our churches paid their Apportionments at 100% the rate for all of us would be 33% less! The same basic principle applies to our Property and Casualty Insurance. The costs of those churches that do not pay are passed on to others thereby creating higher premiums for everyone. COME ON GIVE IT A TRY!!!

Faithful pastors serve faithful congregations of every size and resource throughout the UMC despite the economy for those who use this as an explanation for non payment. Our greatest resource is our faith and

passion to serve the cause of Christ in the world. Apportionments are one important means through which United Methodists accomplish this eternal cause. We are accountable to God *first and then one another*. **Plan to pay Apportionments by design and not by default!** This represents the Church and the spirit of the Connection at it's best! Let's us give God our best by giving our best and *first gifts* to ministry! May God bless us on the journey!

(Rev. Dr.) Sharon G. Austin, Superintendent
South Central District

Interim Pastors at Tyer Temple UMC

Our thanks go out to Rev. Florence Parra and Rev. Del McIntosh for filling in for Rev. Geraldine Christopher as she recovers from her bone marrow transplant. Prayers are requested for Rev. Christopher that she will experience a complete recovery.

South Central District Calendar

- November 5: National Donut Day
- November 6: Daylight Savings Time Ends
- November 11: Veterans Day - District and Conference offices will be closed
- November 15: MVS report entry deadline
- November 19: Staff Pastor Parrish Relations Committee District Training 9:00 a.m. at Beymer UMC.
- November 21 - 25: Thanksgiving Holiday - DISTRICT OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING.
- November 27: First Sunday in Advent

- December 1: Staff Pastor Parrish Relations Committee District Training 6:30 pm at Palma Ceia UMC.
- December 1: Projected "go live" (accessed) date for Church and Pastor Profiles
- December 2: District Leadership Christmas Party
- December 16: National Chocolate Covered Anything Day
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 26: Kwanzaa begins
- December 31: New Years Eve

2011 Conference Calendar of Reports Due

TRAINING & EVENTS

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES &EVENTS



December 1, 2011 - Projected "go live" for church and pastor profiles. You may begin to access and update your church and pastor profiles at this time.

January 28, 2012 - Annual District Leadership Training Event to be held at First UMC Brandon

February 7, 2012 - Mission Centered Ministry Seminar - Staying focused on the mission of "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World" is essential to being a fruitful congregation. For more information and registration please [click here](#).

Black Church Events



SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT BLACK CHURCH QUADRANT MEETING

Our district is paired with the Gulf Central and South West Districts for a gathering at McCabe UMC, St. Petersburg on Saturday, December 3, 2011. While we hope to have you join your district colleagues, it is more important that you attend one of the event locations. The Rev. Lewis has openly invited us to attend when and where we can, therefore you are encouraged to attend the event in another district, if needed. This event is for clergy and laity so please be sure to RSVP so that the planning team is prepared for you and your group wherever you go.

BLACK CHURCH CONVOCATION - December 9-10 Real church reaching real people in a real world for a real God. For more information, [please click here](#).

31st Annual Clergy Mates Retreat

November 4-6

FL-UM LIFE ENRICHMENT CENTER

Fruitland, Park, Florida

To register: visit www.flumc2.org/events/detail/3414/

For more info: email FLUMC-Mates@cfl.rr.com

Or call Judy Renault at (352) 567-5471

Scholarships available!

Exploration 2011 - Registration Now Available



EXPLORATION 2011

an event for young adults ages 18-26 who are exploring God's call to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church, will take place **Nov. 11-13 in St. Louis, MO**. Sponsored by the UMC's General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the event provides a chance to learn more about the call to ordained ministry through worship, prayer, workshops, networking, and small groups. To find out more [click here](#).

Questions? Email Emily at emily.oliver@flumc.org or Dave at dsippel@flumc.org

MINISTRY RESOURCES

Clergy Healthcare - Open Enrollment and Changes



The Clergy and Conference Health Care is changing for 2012. Take time to review the items below and the link at the bottom.

- Open Enrollment runs from October 24 - November 11, 2011.
- Re-enrollment in health ins is not necessary unless a current participant wants to make changes (like adding a dept or dropping coverage). Participants currently enrolled in UHC will remain enrolled unless they take specific action to drop their coverage.
- Re-Enrollment for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) is required every year. IRS rules require an annual election as to the amount of funds to be designated either for health or dependent care. If a participants has an FSA in 2011 but fails to re-enroll and make a new election for 2012 - they **will not** have a FSA account in 2012.
- The Conference is terminating the FLUMC dental plan and will not offer a dental plan in 2012. The website has some suggestions for deciding how to replace dental insurance.
- Because of a change to physician office co-pays and pharmacy co-pays all participants enrolled in UHC health insurance will get new ID cards by the end of December.
- The Adoption Agreement period allowing local churches to adopt (or drop) the Conference health insurance plan for 2012 is currently underway. Churches must sign and submit their agreements by the Oct. 14 deadline.

Any other questions? [Please click here.](#)

Wendy L. McCoy, SPHR
Director of Human Resources & Benefits
The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

General Conference Needs YOU!



The General Conference of the United Methodist Church will be here before you know it. About 1,000 volunteers are needed for this event. For more information about volunteering please [click here](#). Should you wish to download a flyer to hand out to the congregation or to post at the church, please [click here](#).

Mission Trip to Cuba is Scheduled

Interested in a week long mission trip to Cuba, there is one scheduled to attend the Sierra Maestra District Conference from February 21 through February 28. Please contact Renee Kincaid (813-885-5674 - rkinc@tampabay.rr.com), South Central District Coordinator for the Cuba ministry ASAP.

Trinity UMC Plant City's Festival of Joy

The Ministry Center of Trinity United Methodist Church hosts its third Festival of Joy at its West campus, 416 Walter Drive in Plant City, Saturday, November 5, from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The Festival of Joy will include "something for everyone" - a huge yard sale, plant sale, hot dogs, drinks, popcorn, boiled peanuts,

