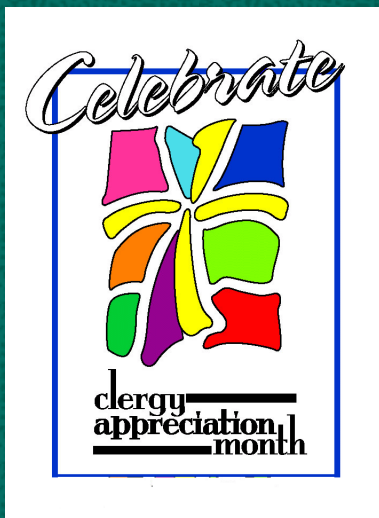




South Central District

October 2010 Newsletter

October is Clergy Appreciation Month!



Please remember your pastors in thoughtful ways. It's also nice to express appreciation to their families for their ongoing sacrifice and support. Most importantly, please remember to express thanks to pastors for their leadership and faithfulness.

Dear South Central,

As we progress into fall with the end of the year within striking distance, I am reminded of the increasingly challenging conversations in which I must engage with pastors and congregations regarding Connectional Giving opportunities and responsibilities. While this method of ministry participation is critical to our ministry as United Methodists, it is not more important than the spiritual discipline from which it derives its substance; namely, a life of Christian Stewardship. I recently had the opportunity to hear a fine sermon by the Reverend Mark Reynolds, Pastor of First UMC of Dundee, Florida. Mark will begin his new appointment as pastor of Christ UMC (Lakeland) on January 1, 2011. Fortunately, he will remain in our district as a pastor who also serves on the SC District Board of Location and Building.

Mark's Sunday worship service design includes a provocative introduction early in the service which whets the appetite for the sermon. Mark gave his permission for the inclusion of the introduction from the Sunday, September 26th service, in this edition of our newsletter:

"One of the reasons that churches struggle to say anything relevant and helpful about money and the economy these days is because they are sometimes absorbed into the culture of consumerism that is our primary context in the modern West. If churches see themselves through the lens of consumerism, if they assume that they are suppliers of religious goods and services and that their parishioners are consumers, then tithes and offerings will be seen as payment, and when people become dissatisfied with our goods or services, or see a better "deal" somewhere else down the road ("Sacrifice less and get more blessing!") they will go church shopping. In addition,

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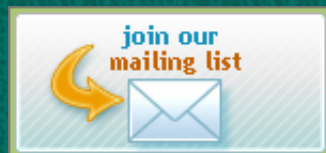
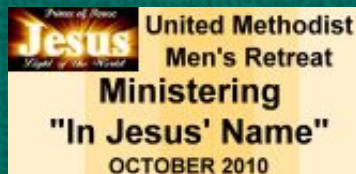
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Quick Links



people outside the church will see us as snake-oil salesmen. When the unchurched are asked why they don't attend Sunday services, they often respond, "The church is always asking for money." These problems are furthered when we consider that during this election season everyone is talking about the economy, and it seems as if the politicians, who are primarily interested in furthering their own careers, are dominating the conversation and drowning out other voices, including the voice of the church. If the church is going to have anything relevant and prophetic to say about money in our current context, then we have resist the impulses of consumerism, refuse to take the bait of party politics, and continue redefining the meaning of money in light of scripture so that it does not become an idol in our personal or corporate life. We need to emphasize giving as a spiritual discipline, as something that is a necessary part of our journey in becoming more like Jesus. The church offers something that cannot be found anywhere else, redemption and rebirth through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and everything we say about money must be understood in light of this divine gift of salvation."

As we lead our congregations in this season of Charge Conference planning, stewardship discernment, and budgeting for next year, I hope that Mark's message speaks to our hearts. Too many pastors are apologetic and ill-prepared in addition to reluctant, for teaching the compelling message of our Lord about the joy of a life of generous giving! I trust that in the days to come, conversations and responses will reflect a more comprehensive treatment on this subject. As pastors continue to respond to my requests for information on the plans to meet the Connectional Giving expectations, I hope you will do so with optimism and with Joy!

Rev. Dr. Sharon G. Austin

District Superintendent
South Central District

Note: Mark Reynolds is a doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University. He is writing his dissertation on a theology of giving and the economy of grace.

Prayer Concerns:

- Rev. Tom Hughes (ret.) battling cancer
- The daughters of the Reverends Dennis Roebuck (First, Thonotosassa) and (First, Dover)
- Elsie Olsen, SC District UMW President - UPDATE: Praise report for healing!

→ Mid-Year Clergy Moves in the SC District

Please welcome and pray for the following clergy and congregations who will experience mid-year moves effective January 1, 2011 (in most cases):

- Ed McWilliams (ret. SC Conference) currently serving as interim at First, Seffner
- Deborah Mak (on Leave) moving from First, Seffner to First, Dundee
- Mark Reynolds moving from First, Dundee to Christ, Lakeland
- Jack Jackson (and by virtue of the move, Rev. Anna Jackson) leaving Christ, Lakeland and accepting a professorship at Claremont School of Theology, CA
- Andy Sistrunk moving from the Van Dyke North Campus new church start to First, Deland second campus new church start
- David Huff moving from Blanton and Trilby UMCs as he leaves the Connection and moves to the former Trinity UMC, Wesley Chapel

→ Charge Conference forms are now online!

Please download and pay close attention to the SC District specific forms and note new Charge Conference format.



Churches with new pastoral appointments have already been scheduled, along with any others that the DS would prefer to lead. Please be reminded to complete the three required October reports, and the recurring September and November reports. Do not allow Charge Conference to become an excuse for failing to complete other required reports in a timely fashion.

Churches to identify Spiritual Formation Coordinator

A number of anticipated, exciting spiritual formation opportunities are coming in 2011 and 2012 according to Frances Jennings, Chair of the Spiritual Formation Task Team. Therefore, it is important for every church to designate someone who will lead the spiritual formation efforts for its congregation. This person's name should be included on your paper work at charge/church conferences. We will then update the Conference's database. Pastor Lia Willetts (First UMC of Ft. Myers) will contact each Spiritual Formation Coordinator for opportunities available throughout the state and/or during Annual Conference 2011 and General Conference 2012.

[\[Click Here\] for Calendar of Reports Due](#)

→ Our Clergy Meeting with the Bishop

We enjoyed a marvelous time of information and inspiration during Bishop Whitaker's visit with the SC District Clergy. The bishop previewed the PowerPoint presentation Planting Seeds: Celebrating the Harvest, which is to be shown at this year's Charge Conferences. The bishop also addressed important matters such as leadership and relationships, the dangers of underestimating 'church craft', formerly known as good old-fashioned 'churchmanship' (i.e., church polity, membership and leadership). He was quick to point out that inability of pastors to do this well, often results in congregations unable to handle crises. The bishop also reminded us that pastors are the CAOs (Chief Administrative Officers) of their churches, with responsibility to lead effectively. Finally, he laid to rest the understanding of 'privatism' held by some members and some congregations and leaders regarding the pastor's knowledge of finances and stewardship giving. Pastors are expected to have knowledge of the stewardship of the church as well as overall finances. In this way, they can offer effective leadership and comprehensively teach the faith as a way of living.

Jim Harnish offered his usual thought and heart-provoking message during a closing devotion. Jim

encouraged us to do five things: Go deep when the going gets tough, to remember our call, find a friend (who loves you enough to tell you the truth), keep our sense of humor, and not to give up on the promise! The bishop's time and insights, Jim's devotion, and opportunity to congratulate pastors, Sharon Davis, Pam Rhodes, Warren Langer, John Legg and Gary Brady for leading transforming ministries! Thanks Pastor Earl, Donna, Laurie, Tom and Nancy for being wonderful hosts!

→ Lighten the Burden - International Aids Conference

October 14-16, 2010 in Dallas, TX

Lighten the Burden III is the third international AIDS Conference sponsored by the UMC Global AIDS Fund Committee with the support of UMCOR and several United Methodist general agencies. This event promises to provide spiritual and educational fuel for the journey as The United Methodist Church works to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Florida has only two young adults and no clergy attending. If you are interested in this remarkable event and want to help us in ministry to persons who are HIV positive or have Aids, consider attending this conference.



The purpose of Lighten the Burden III is to help create an AIDS-free world through ACTION: Advocacy, Combating HIV, Training, Increasing awareness, Overcoming apathy, and Nurturing a Christ-centered and church-oriented global health initiative. The conference will offer participants practical ways to get involved in HIV/AIDS education, advocacy, prevention, and awareness, as well as mobilize and influence their communities through action. [\[Click Here\]](#) for more information and to register.

→ New Blog by Greg Mills - Information Technology for Non-Profits

Gregory Mills is a curator at the Polk Museum of Art, a member of our UM Church and a talented sound and IT person. His new blog is very helpful to churches and other non-profits that don't pay someone on staff for IT help. This is a helpful, no-cost resource to share with churches in our district.

Hi Everyone!

I thought you might like to know that I am starting a new blog on my website called IT for Non-Profits. It is meant to be a resource for charities, churches, museums, and other non-profits who do not have a dedicated IT staff. I am writing about my experiences as the part time IT Manager at the Polk Museum of Art and it contains tips on getting the most from your IT budget. I hope you can find it useful and pass it along to anyone you may think could benefit from it. The blog can be found at GregoryMills.com/it-for-non-profits and I am updating it a couple times each week as I hear news that I think is important. Today I posted about protecting your network from malware infected USB thumb drives and next week I will be discussing backup strategies. --Gregory Mills

→ The Lockmiller Christian Education Award

Nominations must be returned to the UM Foundation by November 28, 2010

All of us have been helped along in our spiritual journey by leaders who took the time to teach us about the boundless love of God. One of our donors, Mrs. Alice Lockmiller, understood the importance of fostering spiritual formation in children and youth. As part of her charitable trust, administered by the Foundation, she set up a Christian Education Awards Program. The awards

program offers a \$500 award to the best Christian Education Leader in the Conference, and a \$1,000 award to the best Christian Education program in the Conference. We would like to ask each of you to help us find these outstanding people and programs.

To help with the process, please use this [announcement poster](#) and [interactive nomination form](#) to submit nominations from local churches. Please tell us why a particular program or teacher is making a significant contribution to the religious life of the children and youth of the church. We all know people and programs that are especially deserving. Please help us take this opportunity to honor them.

→ Participate in the Fourth Annual Reverse Trick-or-Treating

Reverse Trick-or-Treating gives thousands of schoolchildren (and high school/college students, and adults) the opportunity to treat neighbors with Fair Trade chocolate while educating their communities about how they can help end poverty, promote human rights, end child labor, and bring awareness to the environmental abuses in the cocoa industry.

The Fair Trade chocolate is attached to a card with information unmasking social and environmental problems in the cocoa industry, and how buying Fair Trade certified chocolate provides a solution. Reverse Trick-or-Treating kits are distributed FREE to individuals and at a DISCOUNTED WHOLESALE PRICE to organizations, thanks to the generous donations of Fair Trade chocolate companies Equal Exchange, Sweet Earth, and Coco-Zen. (Participants pay the cost of postage.)

Price: \$24 per box of 150 cards/chocolates (maximum 2 boxes per organization) + shipping costs. Place your request today . . . we always run out fast!

Request a kit/more information available at: www.reversetrickortreating.org.

→ EntreLeadership Seminar Simulcast



Friday, November 5, 2010 from 9:00 am - 3:30 pm
First United Methodist Church of Brandon

Want to understand business and leadership based on biblical principles?

EntreLeadership is for you. This one-day seminar conducted by Dale Carnegie Leadership recipient, Dave Ramsey, will open the window to the leadership practices that has made his LAMPO Group the Nashville Journal's Best Place to work each of the past four years.

As the exclusive Tampa SIMULCAST site, South Central District members have a unique opportunity to hear this "one of a kind" seminar that will provide information to help your organization, whether

profit or non-profit, reach the next level.

You will learn the keys to successful marketing, administration, accounting, management, team building-and even unique life lessons that have directly impacted how Dave operates each day. Not only will it allow you to reach your business and leadership goals, but it has the potential to transform your business into a place where people LOVE to work!

This event will be broadcast out of Orlando where the cost of the LIVE seminar of \$99. By attending by SIMULCAST you can receive a special price of \$35. Call First United Methodist Church-Brandon at 813-689-4161 to register and receive a 10% discount of the on-line SIMULCAST price or email Dave Schapiro at hdeas@earthlink.net.

→ Black Church Focus Presentation

November 6, 2010 from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon
Palma Ceia UMC, 3723 Bay to Bay Blvd., Tampa

Pastors, Lay Leaders, and Staff Parrish Relation Committee Chairs of the Gulf Central, South Central, and Southwest Districts are invited to join us to hear the vision for the Black Church with Dr. Harold D. Lewis, Sr., Director of Black Church with the Center of Congregational Excellence of the Florida Conference. Please RSVP by contacting your District Office.



→ Come Enjoy Time at Riverside Retreat FREE!

Pastors-Layleaders-Youth-Children-Family Leaders
October 19, 2010 - Just for the Day or Relax through the Night!

We want your input on what guests would like to see at Riverside Retreat. The morning will start with a tour of the camp, followed by a meeting in the Program Worship Center.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- update you on options the camp has to offer
- let you know about ideas we have for upcoming retreats and events
- listen to your ideas for retreats and events
- gain knowledge on how we can better serve our guests

Please bring your church and school calendars so we can get your input on dates for upcoming events. Lunch will be provided at no charge. After lunch Rev. David Berkey will lead us in worship. THE REST OF THE DAY AND NIGHT IS YOURS TO ENJOY!

Kayak down the Caloosahatchee or walk a nature trail. How long has it been since you've been fishing? You never know what you're going to pull out of the Caloosahatchee! Sit by the river and watch the birds. Relax! Stay through the evening and have a campfire. The stars are amazing here at the camp. Your welcome to spend the night. A bed, restroom/shower and kitchen can be provided. Bring your own food and drinks for the evening and the next morning. Please bring your own bedding, and personal items. Vacating the building by noon the next day would be greatly appreciated. Call our office 863-675-0334 for more information or email gc60008@yahoo.com.

→ Board announces no increase in health insurance premiums 2011

There will be no increase in health insurance premiums in 2011 for active and retired Florida Conference clergy, lay employees, local churches, and conference staff. Current premium rates will remain unchanged for the third consecutive year, according to Russ Barlow, vice chairman of the Florida Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. [\[Read more\]](#).

Adoption Agreements for Health Insurance Plan Due October 15

In preparation for our annual Open Enrollment window, the so-called adoption agreements must be signed and returned to the Conference before October 15. A person with the authority to make financial commitments for the church must sign this agreement and fax it back to the conference in order for lay employees at local churches throughout the Florida Conference to be eligible for health insurance and other benefit programs in 2011. The due date, October 15, is prior to the health insurance open enrollment window which begins on October 25. If your church has lay employees enrolled in one or more of the benefit plans, or your church is considering offering Conference benefit programs to eligible employees anytime in 2011, you must complete the adoption agreement and fax it to Human Resources at 863-688-5189.



Open Enrollment Window Begins on October 25

Open Enrollment for the Conference Health Insurance program begins Monday, October 25. During this window of opportunity, clergy, eligible lay employees at local churches and Florida Conference staff can enroll and/or make changes to their health insurance, dental insurance, flexible spending accounts and life insurance benefit plans.

Last month, the conference announced the exciting news that there will be no increase to health insurance premium rates in 2011. The total premiums rates and the clergy "blended rate" will remain the same in 2011 as it is in 2010.

There will not be a webcast as has been offered in the past. Instead, participants can visit www.flumc.org/hr and click on the link for Open Enrollment for additional information and to access the online enrollment system. Open Enrollment ends on Monday, November 8, 2010

→ Renewal Time for Clergy Spouses November 4-6

Florida Conference UM Ministers' Mates Retreat

Mrs. Melba Whitaker and the Conference Retreat Team invite all ministers' mates to come and spend three days to experience friendship, renewal, fun, and fellowship with God and one another. We all will gather together to relax and refresh on the shores of Lake Griffin (Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland, Florida).

As Mrs. Whitaker has so beautifully stated, "As a spouse of a minister, you are continually taking care of others. You uniquely live out your life as a pastor's spouse, nurturing your children, serving your church, working in your vocation and/or volunteering in your community. As you attend to all the needs of others, often your own personal needs are neglected. The retreat is an ideal opportunity to do something special for yourself in a peaceful, safe and relaxing setting. You will be blessed as you take time away for renewal, refreshment and to grow spiritually."

The event includes worship, keynote speaker Susan Gray, enrichment sessions and unstructured free

time! [\[Click Here\]](#) to register. [Download brochure.](#)

→ Our Giving Tree: giving life to missions

Ten Thousand Villages Sale November 13, 14, 17
First United Methodist Church, 72 Lake Morton Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801 :: 863-686-3163

Our sale will open to the public on Saturday, November 13, and for the United Methodist Women's conference that will be held at the church. Other dates of sale: Sunday Nov. 14 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Wednesday evening 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The location of the sale will be room B-2, next to Our Giving Tree.



Our Giving Tree is the gift shop and bookstore at First United Methodist Church of Lakeland.

The purpose of the bookstore is to GIVE. One of the ways that the store contributes to missions is to buy products that assist persons who couldn't ordinarily earn a living, through fair trade organizations that support them, such as Equal Exchange Coffee, the Women's Bean Project and the Beacon of Hope in Nairobi, Kenya.

This fall, Our Giving Tree will be featuring products from Ten Thousand Villages for a special sale (November 13, 14 and 17). Ten Thousand Villages works with over 130 artisan groups in more than 38 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East to bring fair trade jewelry, home decor, gifts and more. As one of the world's oldest and largest fair trade organizations, they build long-term relationships with artisans that are based on mutual understanding and respect. Fair trade enables artisans to earn a fair wage and provides the opportunity for a better quality of life.

→ Crosstrainers 2010 - The Last Crosstrainers Ever!

November 12-14, 2010 - Warren W. Willis Camp in Fruitland Park, FL
Cost: \$100 per person (one free registration for every 15 paid)

Crosstrainers has been a great youth group fall retreat opportunity at the Warren Willis United Methodist Camp for over 15 years. This year we are blowing it up, to have a massive celebration and send off celebrating the ministry and fun that has been Crosstrainers. If you have ever taken your group to Crosstrainers, or ever thought about going, this is the year to jump on board and sign up your youth group. We hope to make this weekend at camp one of the best retreats you have ever taken your group to.

Your group will be lead in worship by our Camp Band and Rev Wes Olds from Grace Church Cape Coral & North Fort Meyers. The band Lost and Found will be playing a show on Saturday night of the retreat. We will have the most epic competition ever played on camp property on Saturday afternoon. As always, there will be a variety of games, activities, and hang out time for your group to enjoy during the weekend.

Bring your middle school and high school youth group and have a chance for spiritual renewal, amazing fun, and a time to develop friendships within your group and with other groups from around our conference. Please check out our [\[website\]](#) for more information, a promo video, and a registration form.

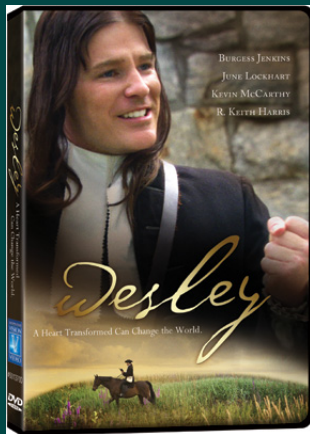
At this event, we will be unveiling the next generation of fall retreat coming in November 2011!!

→ Clergy Day Apart 2010: November 15

Life Enrichment Center, Fruitland, Park
Register Online Now!

Bishop Timothy Whitaker and the Clergy Excellence Team invite all active clergy to come and join us in a day focused on connecting with God and one another. The day will include worship, breakout sessions, Q&A with the Bishop, lunch and unstructured free time. Check-in and refreshments will begin at 9:00 a.m., and the event will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with lunch available at the Life Enrichment Center or off-site. Please contact Rev. Emily Oliver with questions at emily.oliver@flumc.org. Registration [\[Click Here\]](#).

→ WESLEY film now available for Churches



Foundry Pictures has announced the availability of a special license for local churches to screen the award-winning independent film Wesley for their congregations. The movie, which premiered in 2009, was exhibited at select theaters across the US, but many areas have not yet had a screening of the film. The home DVD was released in July from Vision Video, www.visionvideo.com.

The special church license for congregations is available directly from the official movie web site, www.wesleythemovie.com. Pricing is based on the average Sunday attendance of your congregation, which makes the license affordable even for smaller congregations. There is a special [CHURCH MOVIE NIGHT KIT](#) that provides everything you need for a screening event, including posters, DVD and license. The home DVD may not be exhibited publicly without the purchase of a special exhibition license; Wesley is not covered by

the CLVI license

→ Youth Leader Training, Fellowship & Spiritual Growth

January 24 - 26, 2011 :: Warren W. Willis UM Camp in Fruitland Park
Keynote Speaker: Hank Hilliard from the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville
Worship Leader: Patrick Willis, Former member of the Summer Camp Praise Team

Workshops, networking, fellowship, and fun for Adult leaders of youth. (Paid, volunteer, full-time or part-time.) How Much? \$30.00 (meals, lodging, and program fees). Register at <http://www.flumc2.org/registrations/register/27> or send payment to: Gathering/Heidi Leab, 450 Martin L. King Jr. Ave., Lakeland, FL 33815-1522.

For more information, contact: Dave Sippel - Director of Ministries with Young People
Direct Line: (863)393-1442 or email: dsippel@flumc.org. See our flyer [\[Click Here\]](#).

→ Asbury Theological Seminary and Asbury University announce first annual Wesleyan Studies Summer Seminar June 2011



WESLEYAN STUDIES SUMMER SEMINAR

This seminar is being established to develop and support research, writing and publication in the broad field of Wesleyan studies. The seminar will promote the work of serious researchers in the following ways:

- Making the scholarly resources of Asbury Seminary and Asbury University available to each participant.
- Fostering dialog between researchers and the faculty of Asbury Seminary and University who have expertise in the researcher's field.
- Creating an environment for conversation, study and networking among scholars in the field of Wesleyan studies.

There are no tuition charges for the seminars, and participants will have access with full privileges not only to the B.L. Fisher and Kinlaw libraries (including significant electronic databases), but also to their special collection holdings in Wesleyan and Methodist studies. The staff of the Wesleyan Studies Summer Seminar will also help to make arrangements for free housing at the Asbury Inn for each participant throughout the seminar. Asbury Seminary will pay the airfare for international researchers. Beyond this, all other personal expenses (travel and food for example) will be the responsibility of the researchers, though the Seminary will provide a common meal on the evening of each seminar. [\[click here\]](#) for more information or to apply. [CLICK HERE FOR MEDIA KIT.](#)

Classifieds

Dundee UMC has a **large beautiful altar** to give free to anyone who would like it. Anyone who is interested can contact Rev. Mark Reynolds at 863/521-2858.

Choir Director - part time: First UMC of Fort Meade is hiring a choir director. Primary responsibility is to work with the choir and congregation to assure the success of a worshipful music ministry. For more details please visit our website www.ftmeadeumc.org, call us at (863)285-9059; or email admin_assistant@embarqmail.com.

Harvest UMC in Lakewood Ranch is seeking a **full-time children's minister** with an outgoing, dynamic personality, a love of children, and a strong Christian faith. Harvest is seeking a person with developed leadership and administrative skills, commitment to serving children and their families, expertise in recruiting, developing, training, and supporting numerous volunteer servants, and a desire to serve as a part of a team. Required: Undergraduate degree in early childhood or elementary education or commensurate experience and an understanding of and commitment to the United Methodist Church. Please Contact Charlotte Wright, office administrator, at 941-907-7333 with questions or send resume to cwright@harvest-umc.org.

For Sale - Forest UMC (NC District) has:
50 chairs in excellent condition \$50.00 each; Square, almond color frame, 3" red upholstered cushions; Hymnal/Bible shelf under each with communion cup holders; Can be ganged together in rows.
1 conference table in fair condition Dark walnut color \$100.00

27 sky blue polyester choir robes with dark blue trim \$12.00 each
Call Lee Boysen at 352-347-0216 or cell 352-233-7594 for more
information.