

THE COURIER: EARLY SUMMER 2017

Cokesbury United Methodist Church of Margate, Florida

Along the Way: We Embrace God's Grace

We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved **grace** of the Lord Jesus.— Acts 15.11 (NLT)

The conspiracy of long summer days is to convince us that we can put things off until later. Even in South Florida where daylight swings from mid-year to mid-year are not quite as pronounced as in places farther from the equator we get lulled into thinking that there is no hurry. Mañana is soon enough.

Scripture backs this up—partially—for we have the very words of Jesus reminding us that we need not borrow trouble from tomorrow, anticipating the future at the expense of fully living today. Jesus is NOT saying, however, that we can give up wise planning and investing energy now for the harvest to come. Just the opposite! He teaches disciples to pray without ceasing, to work while there is light, to be diligent for we do not know when we will have to give a reckoning for the time and talents God has entrusted to us during this earthly sojourn. How do we reconcile these seemingly opposing views? I think it comes down to grace. Grace is both a gift and is the means by which we respond to the gift by living purposeful (methodical) lives. As recipients of God's undeserved and amazing grace we know that the freedom we have to live with anxiety and fear are not because we are people who have it more together than others but rather when we are anxious or fearful we know where to take it—to the Lord in prayer.

That's why we're looking at PRAYERS THAT CHANGE THE WORLD for the month following the 4th of July. From the cries of anguish to the songs of praise, the men and women of the Bible prayed with candor and passion. They struggled, they questioned, they confessed and they worshipped, but above all, they discovered an intimate relationship with God through prayer. In this series on prayer, we can learn lessons from the characters of the Bible and explore new ways to deepen our own prayer lives. Is there a "right" way to pray? What if my prayers seem routine and empty? How do I know God hears me? Wherever you are on your faith journey, this series will offer something to help you develop a richer, more meaningful relationship with God through prayer.

For we embrace God's grace as being available to everyone for the seeking. Don't wait until another time to invite your friend or neighbor to church with you. Your timely invitation could be just what they need to discover God's grace for themselves and know freedom to live abundantly in faith, hope and love. Invite them to CONVERGE, the Saturday night dinner and worship in the round (Settle Hall @ 5.30). There you can explore God's Word, engage with other disciples and seekers, and encounter God in fresh ways. Invite them to Sunday mornings or the midweek Bible study or to serve alongside you at Food Pantry.

Before you know it summer will have flown by and the school calendar will impose itself on bedtime routines and traffic patterns. Our good intentions of inviting others during the lazy days of summer will be either fulfilled or not. Pray today that the Holy Spirit will lead you to invite just one person this month—God will direct you if

you but ask. Embrace God's grace that you might be God's partner rejoicing in the salvation of someone this summer; for now is the time, now is the day of salvation.

Blessings for the journey,

Pastor CJ

THANK YOU all who made HERO CENTRAL Vacation Bible School an enjoyable learning experience for all ages. Adults and babies and in between have been greatly encouraged to DO GOOD! SEEK PEACE! AND GO AFTER IT!!! (Ps. 34.14).

Adopt a Street is a program sponsored by the City of Margate. Cokesbury has adopted NW 66th Avenue, from 18th to Atlantic Blvd. We will have organized twice yearly clean-ups and training in road safety before we go out. In return there will be signs erected at the beginning and end of our "route" letting people know about Cokesbury...and hopefully, our clean street will encourage them to check us out.

DIGITAL PHOTO DISCOVERY

We WILL not be meeting during the summer. We will resume meeting Thursday, August 17th.

We will be offering the Cokesbury Fundraiser Calendar Contest for 2018...so, get your photographs ready!

The contest rules are:

Photographs must be horizontal

Photographs must be digital

NO previous photographs

Photographs must be Florida places and things

You can submit two (2) photographs each

NO photo shop pictures

Must be submitted by **Friday, September 1st**. Judging will be the third Thursday of **September, the 21st**

Also! Please attempt to get business card-size ads for the calendar from local businesses to help defray publishing costs! (See Ad Receipt form below) Thank you,

John & Gerry Leone, 954-380-0487 or 954-979-9855

REGISTRATION FOR BUSINESS CARD-SIZE AD TO BE DISPLAYED IN THE 2018 CALENDAR

Name

Address

Phone

Donation: \$50.00 Cash _____ Check No. _____

Make checks payable to: **Cokesbury UMC** * Attention or Memo: **Digital Photo Discovery**

This calendar is a fundraising project to benefit the Digital Photo Discovery Group that meets on the third Thursday of each month to share and experience the use of our digital cameras. Meetings are held in Room number 6 of Cokesbury United Methodist Church. Membership is open to amateur photographers over the age of 18.

Join us Saturday night starting at 5:30pm



CONVERGE is an all ages, family style event combining dinner, music, fellowship, and fun in a fresh interactive format focused on relationship building. Building relationships with each other and most importantly, with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, will be the intentional focus throughout each part of the program. We will be patterning ourselves off of how the early church organized itself in Acts 2: 42-47. Worshiping together, praying together, studying together, singing together, eating together, living with each other as the Body of Christ.

The program will change from week to week to keep it fresh. We will have shorter sermon sections, followed by table discussions and singing. The room will be arranged in a semi circle, with round tables to enhance discussions and relationship building. Children and teens will be lead in parallel activities that they will then share with the group at the end of the service.

The music will be coffee house style with one musician leading the service with up tempo, fun and joyful songs.

CALENDAR FOR JUNE-JULY

Other Groups Sharing the Campus:

Monday through Friday, **Victory Living**, 7 am- 4 pm, Rooms 2, 3, 4

Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, **Spanish Alcoholics Anonymous**, 8-10 pm, Grace's Place (Room 4)

Wednesday and Fridays, **Anglo Alcoholics Anonymous**, 7-8 pm, Don Lowe Chapel

Thursdays, **Spanish Al-Anon**, 8-10 pm, Don Lowe Chapel

Always check with our Church Secretary about room availability before you schedule usage as there are "one-off" meetings NOT listed. Thank you.

June

- 25 9:30 & 11:00 am Worship; also Sunday School & Children's Church**
9:45 am - Choir Practice - Room 7
10:45 am – Bible Study – Lowe Chapel
- 26 4:30 pm – Food Pantry – Settle Hall & Room 1**
- 28 10:00 am – Morning Bible Study – Bowman Library**
4:30 pm – Intercessors – Sanctuary
6:00 pm – Evening Bible Study – Bowman Library
- 29 7:00 pm – Praise Band Practice - Sanctuary**

July

- 01 9:30 AM – NO GALS**
5:30 pm – Saturday Night Dinner/Service – Settle Hall
- 02 9:30 & 11:00 am Worship; also Sunday School & Children's Church**
9:45 am - Choir Practice - Room 7
10:45 am – Bible Study – Lowe Chapel
- 03 7:00 pm – NO Trustees Meeting – Bowman Library**
- 04 Church Office CLOSED – INDEPENDENCE DAY**
7:00 pm – **NO** Evangelism Meeting – Bowman Library
- 05 10:00 am – Morning Bible Study – Bowman Library**
4:30 pm – Intercessors – Sanctuary
6:00 pm – Evening Bible Study – Bowman Library
- 06 7:00 pm – Praise Band Practice – Sanctuary**
- 08 5:30 pm – Saturday Night Dinner/Service – Settle Hall**

09 **9:30 & 11:00 am Worship; also Sunday School & Children's Church**

9:45 am - Choir Practice - Room 7

10:45 am – Bible Study – Lowe Chapel

4:00 pm – Next Steps with Pastor – Bowman Library

10 4:30 pm – Food Pantry – Settle Hall & Room 1

12 10:00 am – Morning Bible Study – Bowman Library

4:30 pm – Intercessors – Sanctuary

6:00 pm – Evening Bible Study – Bowman Library

13 7:00 pm – Praise Band Practice – Sanctuary

15 5:30 pm – Saturday Night Dinner/Service – Settle Hall

16 **9:30 & 11:00 am Worship; also Sunday School & Children's Church**

17 1:00 pm – Lunch Bunch – Settle Hall

6:30 pm – Church Council Meeting – Lowe Chapel

18 6:00 pm – Mission & Ministry Meeting – Bowman Library

19 10:00 am – Morning Bible Study – Bowman Library

4:30 pm – Intercessors – Sanctuary

6:00 pm – Evening Bible Study – Bowman Library

20 7:00 pm – Praise Band Practice – Sanctuary

7:00 pm - **NO** Digital Photo Discovery – Room 6

22 5:30 pm – Saturday Night Dinner/Service – Settle Hall

23 **9:30 & 11:00 am Worship; also Sunday School & Children's Church**

24 4:30 pm – Food Pantry – Settle Hall & Room 1

26 10:00 am – Morning Bible Study – Bowman Library

4:30 pm – Intercessors – Sanctuary

6:00 pm – Evening Bible Study – Bowman Library

27 7:00 pm – Praise Band Practice – Sanctuary

CONGRATULATIONS to GALS (God's Angels, Loving Servants) for their successful Arts and Craft Show/Fair. They made friends and raised over \$600 which they donated to the purchase of Pastor Scott's robe and licensing school, etc.

2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Revive Us Again was the theme of the 2017 Florida Annual Conference, and around 1700 Florida United Methodists gathered at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Orlando June 8-10 to learn and share about changing the world through a request and petition to "Revive Us Again" found in Psalm 85.

Celebrations, Revival, Remembrance

The Annual Conference gathering began with the celebration of Holy Communion, with Bishop Ken Carter serving as preacher and celebrant. We celebrated the twentieth anniversary of our covenant relationship with the Methodist Church of Cuba, and Cuba Methodist Church Bishop Ricardo Pereira preached a "revival" message Friday evening, followed by an altar call. Many members participated in a blood drive adjacent to the hotel to remember the 49 victims of the June 12 mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando and to support the community. Inspirational, celebratory music was led by Robert McMichael and Jarvis Wilson of Atlanta, Georgia.

Revive Us Again Theme

Annual Conference speakers included Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath, Dean of the Duke University Divinity School, whose presentation underscored the revival theme. She said the church must be incarnational, embracing "the new kind of thing God is doing...acting "like Jesus without permission" in our time. She believes we are living through "a full blown systems change for the church," which normally results in confusion and chaos. Rev. Dr. Kevin M. Watson, Assistant Professor of Wesleyan and Methodist Studies at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, echoed the theme of revival, calling for a return to and reclamation of Christian conferencing. "The (Wesleyan) class meeting was at the epicenter of the explosive growth of American Methodism." For revival, "we need to move from information-driven small groups to transformation-driven small groups." Rev. Dr. Walter Monroe, South Central District Superintendent, preached at the service of remembrance, and Bishop Carter delivered the sermon for Saturday's ordination service.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Pre-conference workshops launched the Revive Us Again theme, and all sessions were held on Wednesday, June 7, at St. Luke's UMC in Orlando. They included presentations on Board of Ordained Ministry preparation, cultivating generous givers to transform ministry, how to help churches reach the next generation, how to help churches get connected to Cuba, lay servants/certified lay minister training, Commission on a Way Forward update and discussion, connecting your congregation and your annual conference, Fresh Expressions, church-school partnerships and a special conversation with Florida Conference authors. That evening Dr. Tammy Pawloski, director of the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty at Francis Marion

University, gave a special presentation: "Children at Risk: A Mission of Bridge Building." She discussed why poverty matters and why schools matter more. There are currently 43-million children in the U.S. living in poverty. Addressing the need for church-school connections, Pawloski called human capital a vital element that can "change the trajectory of these children."

Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits

The conference implemented the health care supplement (i.e., The Freedom to Choose plan) on 1/1/17 as recommended by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits and adopted by annual conference. The details of the Freedom to Choose plan are on the website at www.flumc.org/freedomtochoose. The Board of Pension continues to evaluate the marketplaces and the impact this has had on clergy. The board meets in August to set the stipend levels in 2018 or to respond to any major legislative changes.

Strategic Leadership Team Report and District Reduction

The three key initiatives of the Strategic Leadership Team continue to be Fresh Expressions, the Nehemiah/Legacy Project and the School-Church Partnerships. The future vision for the Annual Conference includes the realization of 500 Fresh Expressions and 500 local churches, while doubling the number of vital congregations. With over 75 Fresh Expressions in process through the state, we are reaching new people, in new places, in new ways. The Nehemiah Project has created a unified process for walking with churches toward closure and regeneration, and the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet recommended to the Annual Conference the reduction from nine to eight Districts. Conference members approved the reduction. Future work includes finalizing a Conference Strategic Plan, partnering with the Committee on Finance and Administration to look at the future sustainability of the Annual Conference, realizing a vision for reaching the next generations, and utilizing data visualization tools to help create outcome-based measurements.

Bishop's Offering

Conference churches gave over \$67,422 toward the Bishop's offering Thursday evening. The offerings celebrate our partnerships with our neighbors in Cuba and Haiti. One-half of the offering will be directed to each initiative.

Cuban Pastor Pension Initiative — In collaboration with the leadership of the Methodist Church of Cuba, we will develop a pension fund for Cuban pastors based on their years of service there and related to their economic scale. The UMC's General Board of Pension and Health Benefits will help us design and administer the plan. A matching gift of \$50,000 is already in place!

Abundant Health for Haiti — One of four areas of focus for The UMC in 2016-2020 is the development of Abundant Health Initiatives across our planet. Meds and Food for Kids (mfkhaiti.org) fights malnutrition in Haiti, treating children with life-saving medika mamba (medical peanut butter). A gift to mfkhaiti.org feeds desperately hungry children. This will be developed through our Haiti Partnership.

Treasurer's Report

· The conference treasurer reported that local church membership was 239,000 in 2016, down 7,000 or 2.8% from 2015. Average weekly worship attendance was down 5,000 or 3.8% at 125,000.

- CF&A reported the number of churches paying apportionments at 100 percent went from 418 in 2015 to 417 in 2016; the percentage paid was approximately 87% in both 2015 and 2016.
- CF&A's 2018 budget request is 2.19% less than 2017.

Ordination

Ordination, licensing and commissioning of 51 individuals. Ordained: twelve as elders, one as deacon. Commissioned: fourteen as provisional elders, two as provisional deacons. Licensed as local pastors: 22.

Local Churches

Seventeen churches are celebrating milestone anniversaries: Four marked 150 years, seven have reached 125 years and one other has reached 100. Four are celebrating 50 years and one is celebrating 25 years. Conference members approved discontinuation of 16 churches. Complete coverage of this year's annual conference event is available at www.flumc.org and www.acflorida.org. Full ministry reports are included in the 2017 Annual Conference Workbook at www.acflorida.org.

Florida Conference Connectional Relations, June 10, 2017.