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First United Methodist Church of Bartow

GOOD NEWS

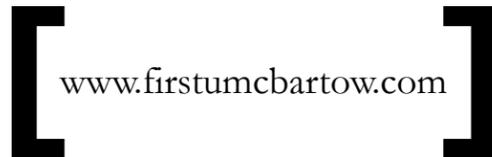
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,
BARTOW, FLORIDA

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February 2019

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Building Bridges for Christ in Bartow

IMPORTANT DATES

- Fri. Feb. 1 40th Anniversary of Ms. Elsa's Class Walking Wilderness Trail
- Sat. Feb. 2 1 pm Golden Girls meet at Asbury for Valentine Party
- Tues. Feb. 5 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting
- Wed. Feb. 6 6 pm Living Truth 2 at Fellowship Dinner
- Wed. Feb. 13 6 pm Fellowship Dinner with Youth Cake Auction
- Sat. Feb. 16 9 am-3 pm Gulf Central District: Connect, Grow, Innovate at Anona UMC, Largo
- Sun, Feb. 24 ~12:30 pm Lunch Bunch meet at Mike's Grill



The Pastor's Perspective

A Time for Prayer and Discernment

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2019

“Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”
Romans 14:19

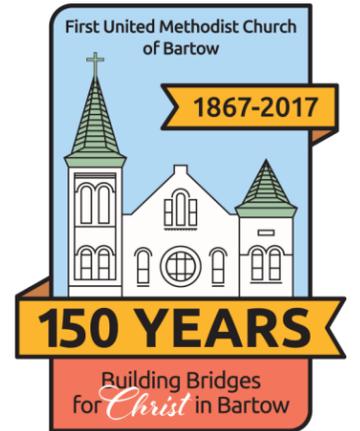
These days, fear and stress are running high for many members of our denomination. The reason? A special session of the General Conference of the UMC will meet February 23-26 of the current year, in order to discuss our Discipline in regards to gay and lesbian rights within the church. Many fear that the United Methodist Church might split into different bodies as a result of possible changes to our Book of Discipline. Our Bishop has called us to be in prayer for results that lead to unity and to the fulfillment of our God-given mission, namely, “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

What can we do to help in this process? Listening to the call of our Bishop to pray will go a long way. As the pastor of our church, I will invite our members to join me in morning prayer at the sanctuary during the days of the conference. However, in addition to intercession, there is something else we can do.

Chapter fourteen of Paul's letter to the Romans has always been a classic example of how to handle differences in the church. People of both Jewish and Gentile background comprised the church in Rome. These cultural differences resulted in divergent ideas on how to lead a Christian life or conduct worship services. For example, some wanted to observe Jewish Sabbaths and religious festivals (14:5-6), while others were used to eating any meats sold at local markets even though these could have been consecrated to pagan deities (14:2-4). To make things worse, those involved in the disputes were passing personal judgment on one another (14:10-12).

The Apostle Paul appeals to our common faith in Jesus Christ to bring some resolution to the conflict. Despite our differences, we live by one common savior, whom we all strive to serve (14:7-9). Paul acknowledges that both those who kept the Sabbath and those who did not were trying their best to honor the Lord (14:6a). In the same way, those who ate any meats were doing so with gratitude to the Lord, while those who abstained shared the same motivation (14:6b). There was no need to judge the integrity of anyone's heart. Paul urges the congregation to no longer pass the judgment that could become a stumbling block on somebody's way (14:19). Members of the church in Rome should work together towards peace and mutual upbringing (14:19)

In my estimation, Romans 14:19 contains the key to solve our disagreements in the UMC today. Acknowledging our differences, we must pursue “what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding.” It is important to notice that our church will hold a Council and Leadership Retreat on April 13; its primary purpose will be to respond to the decisions of the General Conference. I ask our church to be invested in trusting prayer through the General Conference and beyond. God will provide a way for us to be faithful to the Scriptures while at the same time proclaiming the love of God for all persons.



Building bridges for Christ in Bartow

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF BARTOW

*Choir Notes
by Bonnie Allen*

**Love, Love, Love, Love,
it's all about Love this month!!**

I have been thinking about all the different kinds of love that we experience in our lifetime. The love between parents and children, husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend, brothers and sisters, and family and friends. There is a love at Christmas, especially, where we reach out to people we don't even know. There is a love between military men and women (team-mates) who risk their lives because of the love they have for this country. We use the love word very easily, but do we really know the greatest love of all?

I was reading this morning about God's amazing love, and it brought to mind how unconditionally His great gift is bestowed on us. His love is the greatest, and one that we should all try to emulate. We are called to love each other without qualification. That means looking beyond the flaws to the beauty in each person. We are definitely challenged with all the debate about Gay, Transgender, and other major differences which to some may seem wrong and undeserving of love. But our Father tells us that we must love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. Even loving ourselves can be challenging!! When we love others, we are actually showing love to God, our creator!! I pray to be more loving in 2019!!

Our choir is so wonderful and faithful and dedicated. It is my honor to be the director of this great group of people who have become family. Speaking of love, it is happening in choir. There is a great love for Jesus, and when we sing, He is with us. We all feel it. There is a great love for each other, and a desire to help if someone is in need. We are blessed with several generations, but no barriers arise. I am so thankful for each and every member.

We have two great praises to report. First and foremost, after years of praying for the Orem's to have their own home, God has provided. Hopefully, by the time you receive this letter, they will be moving in right next door to their rental home. They are so excited and so grateful to their heavenly Father.

The second praise is for the engagement of Amy Whitehurst and Brandon Pickard. It has been my joy to watch these two grow up in the nurture of this congregation. They are truly gifted young people, and so dedicated to the ministry of this church. We are overjoyed that they have found their mate for life, and it all started here at First United Methodist Church. For all the old-timers, Carol Keen would have been busting her buttons over this announcement. She predicted it would happen, and it has. Glory to God!!

With all this love in the air, I hope that we can catch it, give it, and receive it! Help us, Lord to live, love, and be filled with your Joy and Peace!!

February Menu for 6 pm Wednesday Fellowship Dinners:

**6—Covered dish + chicken (\$2/piece)
Living Truth 2 Concert**
Servers: Lee, Wood

**13—Steak tips w/mushrooms, onions, peppers;
roasted potatoes, broccoli, strawberry/feta salad,
roll**
Youth Cake Auction
Servers: Layton, Presnell, Roth

20—Covered dish + chicken
Servers: Huff, Kloster, Packard, Wright

27—Spaghetti, salad, garlic bread
Servers: Presnell, Tucker

FEBRUARY 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
+ = Each Sunday 9 am Contemporary Worship 9:30 am Disciple & Joy Adult Sunday school 11 am Traditional Worship Children's Church	Most Mondays 7 am Men's & Women's Bible Study & Breakfast (Perkins)		* = Each Wednesday 5 pm Hand Bells 5:30 pm Youth Fellowship 6 pm Fellowship Dinner 7 pm Intergen'l Choir 7 pm Bible Study		1 40th Anniversary of Ms. Elsa's Class Walking Wilderness Trail	2 1 pm Golden Girls meet at Asbury UMC for Valentine Party Youth to Rock the Universe
3 + Communion	4 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study (870 Lila)	5 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting (Library)	6 9:30, 10, 10:30 am FMS Chapel Services * 6 pm Fellowship Dinner Covered dish + chicken Servers: Lee, Wood Living Truth 2 Concert	7	8	9
10 +	11	12 6:30 pm Care Committee Meeting (Library)	13 * 6 pm Fellowship Dinner Steak tips w/mushrooms, onions, peppers; roasted potatoes, broccoli, strawberry/feta salad, roll Servers: Layton, Presnell, Roth Youth Cake Auction	14	15	16 9 am-3 pm Gulf Central District Connect, Grow, Innovate Anona UMC, Largo
17 + Social between 9 & 11 am Services with cookies and drinks 4 pm Orpheum Theater Fundraiser (Allen Barn)	18 10 am Evangelism Committee (Library)	19 10 am Evangelism Committee (Library)	20 * 6 pm Fellowship Dinner Covered dish + chicken Servers: Huff, Kloster, Packard, Wright	21	22	23 General Conference in St. Louis thru 2-26-19 Please be in prayer.
24 + ~12:30 pm Lunch Bunch meet at Mike's Grill	25	26	27 * 6 pm Fellowship Dinner Spaghetti, salad, garlic bread Servers: Presnell, Tucker	28		

February Birthdays

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1—Jeff Locke | 19—Beverly Albritton |
| Loren Hartsaw | Rahechel Orem |
| 3—Jodi Snell Stevens | 23—Laura Roth |
| 4—Lindsay Chance | 24—Charles Colvin |
| 5—Elsa Huff | Killian Van Hook |
| 6—Jan Jackson | 26—Justin Clements |
| Trish Pfeiffer | Linda Dolan |
| 8—Caleb Rosier | Jennifer Hartsaw |
| 11—Jenny Brooks | Greg Neely |
| Lee Taylor | 27—Aaliyah Bryant |
| 15—Chris Brooks | Elizabeth Orem |
| 18—Roger Orem | 28—Miranda Neely |

♥ **February Anniversaries** ♥

- 2—Justin & Talesha Clements
- 12—Pat & Elsa Huff
- 14—Bill & Marlene Simpkins
- 24—Bill & Jane Meyer

Sympathy

We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the family of
Marjorie Henson
(mother of Gene Whitney)
who passed on to eternal life on January 4, 2019.

Memorial Gifts

Gifts have been received by
First UMC
in memory of
John Wright
By
Jeff & Kathy Moss
Lillian E Bunker Foundation for General Fund

in memory of
Marynette Gray

By
Clarence & Karen Boswell

Please note: Information for March newsletter should be submitted by **Friday, February 15th**. Thank You for helping us send out the Good News in a timely manner. The Good News is published monthly by First United Methodist Church of Bartow, 455 S. Broadway Ave., Bartow, Florida 33830

2018 December Finance Report

General Fund	
Summary for December	
Income	\$37,845.93
Expenses	\$30,996.21
Net Income	\$ 6,879.72
Summary Year to Date	
Balance 12/31/17	\$15,147.60
Net Income YTD	(\$303.26)
Balance YTD	\$14,844.34
Apportionments 2018	
Paid as of December	\$18,633.30
Building Fund	
Balance 12/31/17	\$23,571.56
Income	\$21,146.00
Expenses	\$18,312.00
Interest	\$ 207.84
Balance Building Fund	\$26,613.40

Meetings & Events

Fort Meade UMC
150th Anniversary Celebration
 Saturday Feb. 2, 9 am-2 pm
 Annual "A Day Apart"
 Mini retreat for women.

Golden Girls Valentine Party
 1 pm Sat. Feb. 2 meet at Asbury UMC, bring a friend for games, fun, fellowship, snacks.

Women's Bible Study
 6:30 pm Monday, February 4 at 870 Lila St.
 Bring an hordourve, salad or dessert.
 Soup provided. Come enjoy the fellowship.

Church Council Meeting
 6:30 pm Tuesday, February 5 in the Library.

Living Truth 2
 will perform during our fellowship dinner at 6 pm on **Wednesday, Feb. 6.**
 Living Truth 2 is primarily an acoustical group whose diverse musical style is difficult to categorize. This talented duo challenges the listener with scripture, drama sketches, original compositions, old hymns, and personal testimonies.

Emmaus Reunion Group,
Covered Dish Luncheon & Meeting
 ~12:30 pm Sunday Feb. 10 in the Fellowship Hall

Care Committee Meeting
 6:30 pm Tuesday, February 12, in Library.

Youth Cake Auction
 6:30 pm Wed. Feb. 13 after Fellowship Dinner

Gulf Central District Learning Event
Connect, Grow, Innovate
9 am-3 pm Sat. Feb. 16
 Anona UMC, Largo

Orpheum Theater Fundraiser
4 pm Sunday Feb. 17
 at Allen Barn

Evangelism Committee
 will meet at 10 am on Tuesday, Feb. 19 in Library.

General Conference
Saturday-Tuesday, Feb. 23-26
Please be in prayer.

Lunch Bunch
 Meet at Mike's Grill after worship on Sunday, Feb. 24 for good food and fellowship. Please RSVP by Sunday, Feb. 17 to Elsa Huff 863-533-6688.

Homeland Sunday, March 17
Church Leadership Retreat Sat. April 13

Thank You
 Thank you First United Methodist Church for everything you provided for the gathering after Mom's (Marynette Gray) service. It was all just as Mom would have wanted. It was a special time to be together. Thanks again, Suzannah and Bob

Thank You, UMYF
 A visit into our home by the UMYF Youth Group and their leaders truly blessed our Christmas Season. The carols they sang and the gifts they brought left us feeling the real joys of Christmas. With grateful hearts,
 Dr. Ed and Beverly Etheredge

Missing Communion bags
 If you have previously taken communion to anyone and have not returned the bag, please return it next Sunday in church or to the church office. We only have a few left to send out monthly. Thanks for your help in finding lost things.

*Please remember these in your prayers, visits
and other expressions of Christian love.*

Not at home: Mary Grose (Savannah Court in Lake Wales)

At home with medical issues: John Anderson, Pat Barber, Ed Etheredge, Judy Gay, Marjorie Gay, Steve & Marion Harrison, Pastor Jim Hatch, Walt Heidel, Brandon Hess, Melissa Hicks, Marianne McMillin, Sylvia Mears, Ann O'Berry, Ruth O'Berry, Sara Odom, Bill Poe, Carolyn Presnell, Holly Sutherland, Lee & Louise Taylor, Ed & Eldora Thorn, Roger Waters, Chuck & Barbara Weaver, Greg & Kathy Wood, Pat Wright

In military: Chris Brooks, Victor Orem

Needing prayers: Pastor & Staff, District Supt. Candace Lewis, Bishop Ken Carter, Christian, Dawn & Joshua Williams, Pioneer Missions, Indonesia
Cuba Covenant Sister Church: Iglesia Metodista de Santa Cruz del Sur, Camagüey, Cuba

Pastor's Perspective continued from page 1:

Regardless of our personal opinions, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." I urge every member of our church to continue to work in the spirit of Romans 14:19. Hand in hand, with our knees bent for prayer, let us be relentless in our service of the Lord.

In the love of Christ,
Armando J. Rodriguez, Jr.

Wandering in the Wilderness

Forty-four years ago, I started a wonderful teaching experience at First Methodist School. When I first started teaching there I taught 4 year olds and then I moved up to kindergarten. When the school began to add grades, I decided to move up to third grade. That was when I knew I was where God wanted me to be.

My first year teaching third grade we had Bible reading and prayer time each morning. We read through the Bible starting at Genesis. That year when we go to the story of Moses and the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, I told the children we should walk somewhere to see what that was like. We decided to walk to Homeland. That was 6 ½ miles from the school. We made plans; we walked to the home of one of our parents to have manna from heaven (in the form of bananas and Cheez-its). We headed out on Kissingen Avenue to Homeland. We climbed the berm for Mt. Sinai and Homeland was the promise land. We carried our lunch and ate on the grounds of the church at Homeland.

As of 2019, I have been doing this walk for 40 years. We now walk on Ft. Fraser Trail, which I felt was much safer. This year on February 1, we will be bused to Polk State College to start our walk. We will walk to Bartow Ford and be bused to First Methodist School for a light lunch. I have invited all the alums who walked with me to join us. The school children in 3rd through 8th grade at FMS will walk also. Pastor Armando Rodriguez will help lead the group with me, Mrs. Moses.

I want to dedicate this 40th walk to Pastor Roy Lowe who told me I had to do this for 40 years so I could have wandered in the wilderness for 40 years like the Israelites. During his 17 years as pastor of FUMC Bartow, he always walked with us, and brought his guitar so we could sing "Pharoah, Pharoah", and other tunes. He was always encouraging to me. God blessed our church with his ministry for 17 years.

Submitted by Elsa Huff



Across the Courtyard *by Nadine Waters Robbins* **Church Historian**

February is "Fair Kickoff Month" in our beautiful state of Florida.

In 1904 when Theodore Roosevelt was President, our flag had 45 stars and the average wage was 22 cents an hour, T. J. Laud-Brown, the manager of the Tampa Bay Hotel (now University of Tampa) convinced the city's founders that they needed to bring the South Florida Fair to the grounds of the hotel.

The first fair had simple attractions and was held in a single building on a 27 acre plot adjoining Henry B. Plant's Hotel. A few years later the Fair was renamed the Mid-Winter Festival. The name finally was changed to the Florida State Fair in 1915.

In 1975 the Florida Legislature designated the yearly event in Tampa as the official Florida State Fair. 1977 was the first year that the Fair was held at its present location, a 330 acre site near the intersection of I-4 and US Hwy 301, just 7 miles from its original downtown Tampa location.

This year's Florida State Fair (Feb. 7-18) boasts over 37 entertainment events, ranging from animal acts, magicians and Lypnotists to truck pulls, acrobats, and Country Music Legends.

In 2001 our FUMC Choir took one of the Fair's stages as a participant in the Florida State Fair's "First Annual Choir Festival." Our own "Awesome Allen's", Ken and Bonnie were asked to organize the occasion, which was held on Feb. 10th of that year. Bonnie stated that they were delighted the Fair wanted to honor God on a Sunday. On tap were performances by 10 choirs from five different counties, Polk, Pasco, Hillsborough, Pinellas and Manatee. The other local choir representing Bartow was the First Baptist Choir, at that time directed by John Anderson.

In her newsletter "blurb" about the upcoming evening of music and worship, Bonnie wrote ". . . The auditorium will seat 5,000 people so we need you all to attend . . . Hope you can choose February 10th as your afternoon and evening to visit the Florida State Fair, but don't miss church (Ha)."

As far as I know, the "First Annual Florida State Fair Choir Festival" became the "One-time Florida State Choir Festival". However 18 years ago our FUMC singers were blessed to be part of such a wide-reaching religious happening and (some 5,000? more or less) fairgoers were graced with the melodious gifts of two of Bartow (and we like to think the state's) finest church choirs!



Local Mission Project

We are forming a team to work at the homes of some of our church members. Let us know if you would like to help with this project. It may include painting, minor house repairs and gardening.

We also would like to have someone prepare a meal for the home-owner and the volunteers. Dates will be announced at a later time.

Please, let us know if you would like to volunteer. Contact the church office or Clarice Roth at 863-258-2678 or by email at roth ranch@aol.com