

FEBRUARY 2020 Newsletter

Oakhurst United Methodist Church

PASTOR'S PEN DID YOU KNOW?

Is the UMC Splitting? Why? How?



The national news media in recent days has picked up on a story about the United Methodist Church splitting. It cites an agreement between various church leaders about how to divide up the denomination. I want to set the record straight on a few things about these news stories as they can be scary, confusing, and anxiety producing all at the same time for those of us who have made the UMC and specifically Oakhurst UMC our home for a long time. In order to do that, let me give you the rest of the story.

In 1982, the topic of human sexuality became a hot button topic for the church to address and a line was added to the Book of Discipline specifically (and only) in the section referring to the ordination of clergy that said, "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with historic Christian teaching." This line set off a firestorm of debate within the church that has burned and spiraled in many directions for decades. Some people questioned the need for that line nearly two decades after the United Methodist Church was formed, others saw it as a good and valid clarification. What is clear, is that there must have been at least one, what would later be clarified as, "self avowed, practicing homosexual" who had been ordained by that time.

Growing up, every four years, I had heard from my father and other Methodists that "this is the General Conference where the church splits over the 'homosexual' question." Repeatedly this has not come to pass. However, with the steady march of time and the manner in which our world has dichotomized and polarized, sides have formed and the anger has intensified on both sides of this question which now has two parts - "do we ordain LGBT persons" and "do we marry same sex partners"? These two questions have led a growing rift over this, and other issues within the denomination.

In 2015, prior to 2016's general conference, a group was incorporated called "The Wesleyan Covenant Association." The stated and incorporated purpose of this group was to 1) reform the United Methodist Church if possible to become more theologically evangelical in its teachings or 2) if this not be possible to start a new denomination that would become a safe haven for churches that no longer wished to affiliate with the United Methodist Church. We will get back to this group in a moment.

In 2016, General Conference was held, a lot happened and was voted on regarding these questions, and before that conference wrapped up the Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church ruled the newly passed legislation to be unconstitutional meaning it was voided. With a short time left in the con-

ference, another package of legislation was close to passing when a request was made of the Council of Bishops to take the lead in appointing a task force to "resolve this question and provide for A Way Forward for the denomination." The hope was that this way forward would provide for the ongoing unity of the denomination while also providing space for all "sides" on this issue to carry out ministry as they saw fit. The recommended action would be voted on at a special General Conference before the next regularly scheduled one. This General Conference occurred in 2019.

The Council of Bishops convened the "A Way Forward Task Force" with representatives of clergy and laity from around the world and various theological perspectives to work out this issue. Four ideas were originally discussed and worked out. 1) A Connectional Conference Plan, where every church could choose to be a part of a conference that held their stance on homosexuality. 2) The One Church Plan, that removed the wording regarding homosexuality from the Book of Discipline not making any actions legal or illegal but allowing each church, pastor, and conference to decide for themselves how they would proceed on this question. 3) A Traditional Plan that would add increased enforcement and increase the language related to homosexuality related questions in the Book of Discipline. 4) A plan that basically dissolved the United Methodist Church.

It was decided fairly early on in the process of developing these four plans that plans 3 and 4 would not lead to lasting peace and unity in the church so these plans were laid aside so that the group could work diligently on plans 1 and 2 and have a complete set of legislation for each to present to the upcoming, 2019, General Conference. This they accomplished. The members of this special task force, however, who were also members of the WCA, picked up the pieces of the work of the traditional plan and the WCA worked up their own legislation based on the work already done and submitted their own legislation known as "The Traditional Plan" to this specially called General Conference.

At General Conference 2019, the Traditional Plan from the WCA largely prevailed (by small margins, but significant margins none the less). In effect, the WCA received what they were asking for and working towards which was a call to increased accountability and a strengthened Book of Discipline as it related to these two questions of homosexuality in the church. Following General Conference 2019, the WCA convened a special convention of their members where a vote was taken that requested that the WCA write legislation for the upcoming 2020 General Conference whereby the entire WCA could EXIT the United Methodist Church. If you are confused by this, let me clarify that the WCA legislation passed in 2019 and they achieved their desired results and then subsequently voted to EXIT the denomination anyhow.

The WCA is made up of around 3000 churches, or roughly 3 to 4 annual conferences worth of churches, out of the many annual conferences in the United States. It is a US based group within the United Methodist Church.

(continued on next page)

PASTOR'S PEN DID YOU KNOW? (Continued)

In response to the legislation proposed by the WCA on how its membership can leave the United Methodist Church, a group of diverse leaders met, with WCA representatives present, to discuss a mutually agreeable and beneficial plan to facilitate this exit. This group's meeting results are what is being widely reported throughout the national media. Here is where there must be greater clarity about what it all means.

- 1) This group did not decide to split the church. The WCA already requested to leave.
- 2) This group did not, and has not, determined what will happen to the church.
- 3) What came out of this group was a proposed framework that would allow the WCA to do their own thing, and the UMC to continue to do its own thing moving forward.
- 4) This agreed upon proposal came too late to submit legislation to the upcoming 2020 General Conference and so there is no legislation being voted upon at 2020, at present, that would back this proposal.
- 5) This group does not have the power to determine the future of the UMC, only a General Conference can do that.
- 6) This group's proposal, if somehow adopted and enacted at General Conference means the following:
 - a) The WCA can leave with the blessing of seed money to found their own denomination and set their own rules.
 - b) The United Methodist Church will continue to be the United Methodist Church.
 - c) The language concerning homosexuality in the Book of Discipline will be removed. This, however, does NOT mean that the United Methodist Church becomes a denomination that openly ordains LGBT persons or performs same sex marriages. What it does mean is that each pastor and annual conference can decide where they stand on this matter. If a pastor or church does not like the annual conference's decision, they are free to act otherwise as the Book of Discipline does NOT mandate a position on this theological question.
 - d) Historically marginalized communities and congregations would receive a short-term boost in support to attempt to right some historical wrongs.

In the broadest possible terms, the United Methodist Church as it exists today is the same one that will exist if this proposal actually gets adopted. It is not a church split so much

as it is allowing a sizable few congregation's and pastors who have indicated a desire to leave the denomination to leave anyway. The media has gotten ahead of the story and not related the facts well to the public as the facts are not nearly as interested or scandalous as the headlines that have been shared. The UMC is NOT splitting, nor is it necessarily changing its historic stance. The UMC IS shifting back towards the middle.

The Methodist Movement has always been a movement from and towards the middle. I apologize if this is not your understanding of the United Methodist Church, but it is historically true none the less. We have had many Methodist Presidents over the years, some Republican and some Democrat. It is a broad-based movement along political and theological spectrums, but its primary point of emphasis is that we lead from the Middle. As with the rest of society, it seems, the United Methodist Church has experienced some severely polarized groups developing within it. The WCA is one such group, and there are other groups on the other side of the spectrum from them who are also being offered the opportunity, should they choose to take it, to leave the UMC at this time as well. Neither group, numerically or otherwise, makes up the majority of our denomination. While we will see 3000 or so churches leave and perhaps even more clergy, what we will see remaining will still look like the UMC that you know and have become familiar with. And this is all assuming that this particular proposal that has received so much media attention actually passes at the General Conference. I personally place the odds on that happening about 25-33%. I have seen so many General Conferences over the years where nothing happens, that I enter into those seasons with that expectation and rarely am I disappointed.

I do know this from having very good friends of mine involved with the WCA, this group wants desperately to leave and start their own denomination for a large number of reasons - one of them being the questions of homosexuality. If you want to know if I am a member of the WCA, I am not. Many of my friends are, though, and share with me quite freely about the inner workings of the group. The theological and practical differences between the WCA and UMC are such that on many issues, they already resemble their own denomination within the UMC. I invite you to join with me in praying for calm and peace to prevail, for the media to actually report the truth (I won't hold my breath but I'll pray for it), and for the church of Jesus Christ exhibited by all current members of the United Methodist Church to advance upon the earth.

Pastor Nathan

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 1 (SATURDAY)

9:00am Rehearsal Musical
10:00am Watercolor
8:00pm AA Big Book Study

February 2 (SUNDAY)

COMMUNION

8:15am Light Breakfast
8:30am Contemporary Worship
10:00am Adult SS
10:00am Children's SS
10:00am Traditional Worship
11:00am Coffee Fellowship
11:30am Adult SS

February 3 (MONDAY)

9:30am Craft Group
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical

February 4 (TUESDAY)

6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
6:30pm AA Big Book Study
7:00pm Civil Air Patrol
7:00pm Worship Committee Mtg.

February 5 (WEDNESDAY)

10:00am Bell Practice
10:00am UMW Unit Meeting
1:00pm Wonderful Wednesdays
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
7:00pm Joy Band Practice
8:00pm AA, Alanon Meeting

February 6 (THURSDAY)

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast
3:00pm Each One Teach One
6:00pm Sober Living
7:00pm Choir Practice
8:00pm Drug Addicts Anon.

February 7 (FRIDAY)

8:30am Suncoast Sandpipers
10:00am Thrift Store Open
11:30am Delores Murphy Funeral
6:00pm Girl Scouts

February 8 (SATURDAY)

9:00am Rehearsal Musical
10:00am Watercolor
8:00pm AA Big Book Study

February 9 (SUNDAY)

8:15am Light Breakfast
8:30am Contemporary Service
10:00am Adult SS
10:00am Children's SS
10:00am Traditional Worship
11:00am Coffee Fellowship
11:30am Adult SS

February 10 (MONDAY)

9:30am Craft Group
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
6:00pm Girl Scouts
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical

February 11 (TUESDAY)

6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
6:30pm AA Big Book
7:00pm Civil Air Patrol
7:00pm Missions Meeting

February 12 (WEDNESDAY)

10:00am Bell Practice
10:30am Mary/Martha Circle
1:00pm Wonderful Wednesdays
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
7:00pm Joy Band Practice
8:00pm AA, Alanon Meeting

February 13 (THURSDAY)

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast
10:00am MEA-VITA Meeting
3:00pm Each One Teach One
6:00pm Street Ministry
6:00pm Sober Living
7:00pm Choir Practice
8:00pm Drug Addicts Anon.

February 14 (FRIDAY)

10:00am Thrift Store Open
5:00pm LIFT Middle School

February 15 (SATURDAY)

9:00am Rehearsal Musical
10:00am Watercolor
8:00pm AA Big Book Study

February 16 (SUNDAY)

8:15am Light Breakfast
8:30am Contemporary Worship
10:00am Adult SS
10:00am Children's SS
10:00am Traditional Worship
11:00am Coffee Fellowship
11:30am Adult SS

February 17 (MONDAY)

9:30am Craft Group
1:00pm Lifetouch Photos
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
7:00pm Trustees Meeting

February 18 (TUESDAY)

11:00am Elvira Cestari Funeral
12:00pm Lifetouch Photos
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
6:30pm AA Big Book Study
7:00pm Civil Air Patrol

February 19 (WEDNESDAY)

10:00am Bell Practice
10:00am Lifetouch Photos
1:00pm Wonderful Wednesdays
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
6:00pm Street Ministry
8:00pm AA, Alanon Meeting

February 20 (THURSDAY)

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast
3:00pm Each One Teach One
6:00pm Sober Living
7:00pm Choir Practice
8:00pm Drug Addicts Anon.

February 21 (FRIDAY)

10:00am Thrift Store
6:00pm Girl Scouts

February 22 (SATURDAY)

9:00am Rehearsal Musical
10:00am Watercolor
6:00pm AA Big Book Study

February 23 (SUNDAY)

8:15am Light Breakfast
8:30am Contemporary Worship
10:00am Adult SS
10:00am Children's SS
10:00am Traditional Worship
11:00am Coffee Fellowship
11:30am Adult SS

February 24 (MONDAY)

9:30am Craft Group
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
6:00pm Girl Scouts
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical

February 25 (TUESDAY)

3:00pm Matthew Part 2
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
6:00pm Street Ministry
6:30pm AA Big Book Study
7:00pm Civil Air Patrol
7:00pm Joy Circle

February 26 (WEDNESDAY)

10:00am UMW Leadership Mtg.
10:00am Bell Practice
1:00pm Wonderful Wednesdays
5:00pm Tai Chi Class
7:00pm Joy Band
8:00pm AA, Alanon Meeting

February 27 (THURSDAY)

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast
3:00pm Each One Teach One
4:00pm CLM Orientation
6:00pm Rehearsal Musical
7:00pm Choir Practice
8:00pm Drug Addicts Anon.

February 28 (FRIDAY)

9:00am Musical Performance Rehearsal
10:00am Thrift Store Open
7:00pm Musical

February 29 (SATURDAY)

9:00am Musical Performance Rehearsal
10:00am Watercolor
7:00pm Musical
8:00pm AA Big Book Study

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 02/04 John Payne
Heaven Stiles
Larry Jones
- 02/05 Vicki Sandner
- 02/06 Kathy Lockhart
- 02/07 Edwina Baker
- 02/08 Judi Cunningham
Anthony Dobies
Jack Burgin
- 02/09 Reta Kocses
Edgar Wills (V)
- 02/13 Michael Cox
- 02/15 Robert Benbow
- 02/16 Nancy Pritchard (V)
- 02/18 Patti Sanders
- 02/19 Susan Good
- 02/20 Beverly Rhyneanson
- 02/21 Karlin Wood
- 02/22 Heidi Griffiths
Jo Redman
- 02/23 Mary Wirth

BOOK NEWS

New Releases Available Outside the Fellowship Hall
BUILDING YOUR SPIRITUAL PALACE by Pastor Tim .
CATCH AND RELEASE by Dr. Leeds'
The proceeds of both books go to Missions.



Congregational Care Ministries

I hope you and your loved ones celebrated a warm holiday season that brought you closer together. There was a sketch on Saturday Night Live over the holidays that made me break out in uproarious laughter. The skit portrayed families sitting together around festive dinner tables and attempted to highlight what each of these diverse families had in common with one another. In the end, all but one broke out into a fight about politics. It was hilarious because it hit so close to home for me and I am certain many others.

One of my good friends visited us recently. He shared with me his holidays closely resembled this sketch, but he wasn't laughing. Instead, he poured out his heart to me that his relationship with some family members had become strained over the previous few years. Comments have been made that have deeply wounded him, and he no longer considers his family home and gatherings to be safe spaces to decompress and find support in the midst of a turbulent and cruel world. This can happen to us in many ways. Rev. Dr. Leanna K. Fuller, professor of Pastoral Care at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, wrote in the school's prayer guide about this sort of thing. If you are experiencing strained or broken relationships following the holiday season or for any reason in particular, I hope this guide helps provide a framework of prayer for you to begin the healing process (at least internally).

In Christ,

Pastor Nathan, Associate Pastor

RELATIONSHIPS STRAINED AND BROKEN

The Rev. Dr. Leanna K. Fuller, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care

In Genesis 2:18 we read that after creating the first human being, God decided it was “not good that the man should be alone”—so God created another person. This part

of the creation story reminds us that, from the beginning, we were created to be in relationship with others. Human relationships are the source of some of life's greatest joys.

After all, it is in relationship that we learn to love and care for others, and to receive love and care in return. For this reason, relationships can also be the source of some of our deepest pain. Strained or broken relationships may create wounds that are very difficult to heal.

Often when people are experiencing these kinds of struggles in their relationships, they reach out for sup-

port from their faith community. Praying with someone in this circumstance can, in itself, be a way to accompany the person on a path toward healing. Even so, it is important to be sensitive to the many complex circumstances that may be involved. It may not always be possible to know all the details of what has happened in a relationship. In fact, it is likely that you will only know the story from the perspective of the person who has requested prayer.

In this situation, it is not really your responsibility to try to sort out the “facts” of what happened; rather, your main task is to listen carefully to what the person shares with you and help to name the pain, grief, and other emotions the person is experiencing. Helping someone acknowledge the feelings that result from strained or broken relationships: Psalms 4, 27, 40, 42, 91, and 103.

When you pray with someone who is lamenting a damaged relationship, it is also important to ensure that you are not giving relational advice or encouraging false hope. As noted above, you will likely only know one person's perspective on the situation, so it is vital to remember that your role is to offer support and prayer—and not attempt to tell the person what he or she should do in the relationship. If you sense that someone really wants specific relationship advice, consider referring her or him to a professional counselor or therapist who specializes in this kind of work. Also, avoid saying things like “I'm sure everything will be fine” and “I know that God will make this situation right.” We cannot know the future, and we cannot make promises about how others will respond to a person or about how God may be working in a particular situation. Making these kinds of statements may relieve our own anxiety in the moment, but doing so risks planting false hope in someone who is already vulnerable.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do if you are called upon to pray with someone experiencing a strained or broken relationship is simply to be present—to listen carefully without giving advice or trying to “fix” the person's situation. Reassure the individual you're praying with that God has promised to be with us throughout all the trials we experience in life, and that God can hold all the anger, sadness, and fear that we may need to express through prayer. Remind yourself that it is not your job to heal another person; God is the one who leads us all toward healing and restoration. Simply by offering support and expressing care, you can serve as a powerful reminder of God's healing presence, even in the midst of struggle and pain.

continued over



Congregational Care Ministries

Continued

A prayer such as the one below may be helpful as you minister to someone in this circumstance:

Gracious God, we thank you today for the gift of being in relationship with one another. We give you thanks especially for all the people who love and care for _____ . We ask that you would help to feel your love today and to know that you have created him/her/ them as your beloved child(ren). As goes/go through this very challenging time, help him/her/them to sense your presence and to trust that you are guiding him/her/them toward healing. We ask that you would grant faith, hope, and peace to for this day and for the days to come. Amen.

Children's Corner



The Pennies for Kenya campaign is off to a great start because of you! More than \$200 has come in, with people dropping off pennies daily. There are 'banks' located around the church so search through those wallets, old purses and car cup holder to benefit the building of the boarding school for disabled children with our missionary, Deb Ralph. Special thanks to our incredible Missions Team for allowing that any pennies received in the offering will go toward this objective. All other change still goes to their local activities.

One of Many Ways to Contribute to Your Church



Qualified Charitable Distributions

Secure Act Changes IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions Rules

The SECURE Act (Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement) that was passed by Congress in December 2019 has brought about a couple of changes to the way Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRA accounts are treated.

The original rules for QCD are that if you are over age 70½ years old (subject to Required Minimum Distributions [RMD] under the pre-SECURE rules), you can make a direct distribution to a charitable organization from your IRA. By qualifying this direct distribution as a QCD, you do not have to include the amount of the distribution as income on your tax return. After the SECURE Act passed, QCD now has a few differences.

First of all, even though SECURE changed the RMD age to 72, you are still allowed to make QCD distributions beginning when you reach 70½. That's a slight departure from the old rule, which indicated that you had to be subject to RMD before you could make a QCD. Now you can make a QCD at any age after 70½, even though you may not be subject to RMD until age 72.

The other difference is more important, however: Since SECURE also made a change to the contribution rules for IRAs, by allowing contributions to be made at any age (previously not allowed after 70½), there's an anomaly that the rules address. This new rule is called the QCD anti-abuse rule, and it does exactly what you'd think. This new rule applies certain restrictions on QCDs if a contribution is made to your IRA after age 70 ½.

It is recommended that if you are going to make a QCD for tax year 2020, you contact your financial advisor or tax professional to see if a QCD might be a good tax savings strategy for you, especially under the new SECURE Act rules. If you are making a QCD to Oakhurst, you can contact Tammy Pluskat at Oakhurst 727.391.4769 for information on where to send the QCD.

PULMONARY EMBOLISM: A DEADLY BLOOD CLOT

Did you know? A clot that forms in a leg artery at or above the knee has a 50 percent chance of traveling to the lungs, where it can become a deadly pulmonary embolism.

Pulmonary embolism (PE) is the third most common cardiovascular cause of death after heart attack and stroke, yet many people have never heard of it. A PE occurs when a blood clot travels to the lungs from somewhere else in the body—most often a leg vein—and blocks blood flow to the arteries of the lungs.

Heart diseases, certain forms of cancer and surgery are common causes of blood clots. That's why blood thinners are often prescribed for patients with these diseases.

Blood clots can also arise in people who are sedentary, which is why people are advised to get up and walk periodically when flying or driving long distances.

Symptoms of a Blood Clot in the Lungs

The most common symptoms of PE are:

Sudden shortness of breath

Chest pain that worsens with exertion but does not resolve with rest, or feels worse when you breathe in

A cough that produces bloody sputum

Passing out or almost passing out

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911. PE is a life-threatening medical emergency.

Symptoms of a Blood Clot in the Legs

The most common symptoms of a blood clot in the legs are:

Significant swelling in a leg

Pain or tenderness in the swollen area

Warmth or redness in the swollen area

Red or purple skin near the swelling

If you experience these symptoms, contact your physician immediately.



Youth Group



Youth Group Happenings

Youth Group Happenings

The youth of our church have busy lives but still want to connect with God and one another regularly. At the end of January, we celebrated a first for me, one of our youth had a “Quinceanera” at our youth group. She didn’t want a big deal being made in her family, but the youth in our church were so excited for her that they decided to throw her a small party and make it a part of what we do as a youth group. These are the sorts of experiences, friendships, and loving attitudes youth in our culture today often miss out on if they do not have a safe place to go in our world. Several friends she invited from outside the church commented, “I love that you do this here. It’s awesome that there’s a place that kids our age can come and just be ourselves and ask big questions.” I invite you to let any youth in your family or community know that at Oakhurst UMC, a place where we can Love God, Love One, and Love Life still exists among the youth and that they can be a part of it.

If you would like to volunteer to work with the youth of our congregation, please contact me at nearlson@oakhurstumc.com or call the church office at 727-391-4769. If you know of a youth who would benefit from this sort of gathering, please direct them to get in touch with me for up to date meeting times and locations through contacting me at the same information as previously mentioned.

In Christ,

Pastor Nathan, Youth Pastor and Assistant Pastor

LET US PLACE YOUR AD HERE.

<p>SLAUGHTER PLUMBING 24 Hour Emergency Service RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL 727-596-5663 12920 Walsingham Rd. • Largo, FL 33774</p> <p>LICENSED - BONDED SENIOR DISCOUNTS FREE ESTIMATES Lic. #C9501 • RF11067209</p>	<p>Realty Concepts of Pinellas "The name friends pass along" Lucy SCHEURINGER (727) 804-5104 www.lucysellshomes.com</p>	<p>WE'RE HIRING AD SALES EXECUTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Time Position with Benefits • Sales Experience Preferred • Paid Training • Overnight Travel Required • Expense Reimbursement <p>CONTACT US AT careers@ALPI.com www.ALPI.com/careers</p>
<p>HELP PROTECT YOUR FAMILY CALL NOW! 1-888-386-7928</p> <p>ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER HOME SECURITY TEAM</p>	<p>PROTECTING SENIORS NATIONWIDE MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM</p> <p>\$29.95/MO BILLED QUARTERLY PLUS SPECIAL OFFER CALL NOW! 1.877.801.7772 WWW.24-7MEDALARM.COM</p>	<p>SPREAD THE WORD A Thriving, Vibrant Community Matters</p> <p>SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS</p>
<p>SINCE 1980 CLEARWATER PLUMBING 727-446-8355 \$10.00 OFF ANY SERVICE Find us on Facebook Lic # CFC033850 Limit One Per Customer Not Valid With Any Other Offer clearwaterplumbingonline.com</p>	<p>THIS SPACE IS AVAILABLE</p>	<p>When you need help, DeLoach Hofstra + Cavonis, PA 727-592-5989 dhelaw.com</p> <p>8640 Seminole Boulevard, Seminole, FL</p>
<p>AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME</p> <p>ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE Contact Greg Maurer to place an ad today! gmaurer@4Lpi.com or (941) 243-3206</p>	<p>Jim HOBSON AUTO REPAIR Certified Master Automotive Tech. • 40 Years Experience 727-851-9838 9660 Seminole Blvd. STE. B Seminole, Florida 33772</p>	<p>Serving since 1993 Seminole Title Company 727-592-5465 seminoletitlecompany.com</p>

SUPPORT THE ADVERTISERS THAT SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY



Apportionments

Apportionment Categories and Current 2019/2020 Status

The actual dollar amount of apportionments paid in 2019 = \$43,266.53. The % of apportionments paid in 2019 was 69.25% of \$62,477.00 requested by the Florida Conference.

There were individual donations given in December for apportionment funding that totaled \$6,082. Thank you for those persons who adopted some of the remaining fund categories that needed to be paid!

GOOD News! The apportionment request from the Florida Conference has been reduced for Oakhurst UMC for calendar year 2020, from calendar year 2019, by \$1,897.00; The new 100% paid-up goal for 2020 is \$60,580.

GOOD News! The Stewardship Campaign for 2020 identified (32) pledges for individual apportionment giving that totals \$20,631. Compared to 2019, (10) pledges for \$8,470, the 2020 pledged amount is a significant increase in commitments from individual giving!

Praise God for this improved level of apportionment giving in 2020. There are many local Gulf Central district office, conference office and global ministries and programs of the United Methodist Church that are being benefited by our financial support.

The amount of \$60,580 for 2020 was determined by a "fair share" formula of all 608 churches in the Florida Conference in relation to the EXPENSES of each church in the prior year, in the 3 areas of:

Compensation (Salary and benefits for all lay employees and clergy)

Operational items (utilities, postage, office supplies, yard care, facility maintenance)

Program items (Sunday School items, worship resources, Bible study materials)

The apportionment funding totals are NOT determined by attendance numbers in worship or membership roll numbers, as many members have thought. Apportionment funding is based on the expenses of each local UMC church in the prior year.

SAVE THE DATE!!! February 25th - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Foundry, walk-in 5:00 pm until 6:30 pm. No charge, Donations only, to benefit the apportionment funding for 2020.

Lenten Coin Wrapper bags will be given out on Sunday, March 1st.

SAVE THE DATE!!! Saturday, March 28th - 7 pm, Suncoast Singers in Concert in the Sanctuary.

Rick Jacobson, Interpreter of Connectional Giving

TRUSTEES

MR. CAR WASH coupons are back! Unfortunately the prices have gone up: Express Wash is now \$7.00 and Full Service is \$14.00. Trustees will be selling these during Coffee Fellowship after the 10 a.m. service in front of Fellowship Hall. These prices are the same as you would pay at the actual Mr. Car Wash locations, but we receive 50% of the profits on each coupon sold. These are good at any Mr. Car Wash nationally located. The closest to the church is at 10471 Park Blvd, Seminole, across from Home Depot and next to Culver's. These make great Christmas, birthday, thank you gifts, stocking stuffers, etc. Keep a couple in your glove compartment! Any questions, call Emma Dobies, Trustees Chair, 727-391-2264.

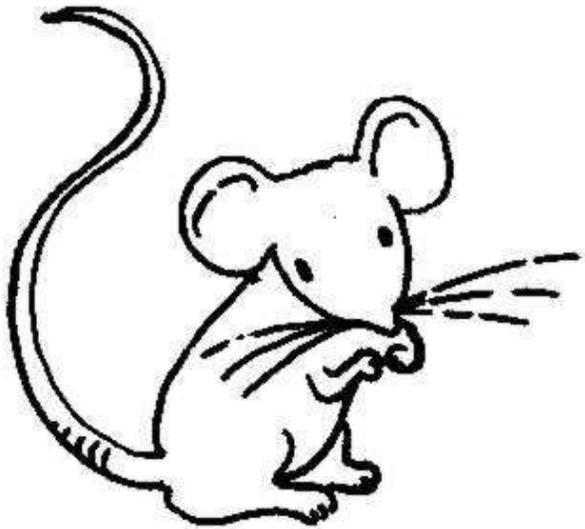


+++++

+++++



We are still awaiting a decision from Pinellas County regarding our tree removal issues. Until the county has made a decision, we cannot remove the huge diseased Laurel Oak in front of the Sanctuary that is in severe decline. It is **ABSOLUTELY NOT SAFE** to park under this tree which is why we have roped it off and asked that **no one park under it.** Limbs are falling more frequently and parking on the root system advances the decline of the tree making the tree even more vulnerable. (There is parking space in the back of the church, if you don't find parking in the front or sides of the church.) Thank you.



Ramblings

from the Church Mouse

We have finished the Advent Season culminating in the celebration of Christmas, the birth of Jesus. The liturgy of Advent features the use of candles, more than any time in the religious calendar year. The candle represents many different things depending on when and how it is used in the service.

Candles are not restricted to just the Christian faith. The first known use of ceremonial candles dates back about 5,000 BC. Candles have been recovered from ancient Egyptian Tombs of that era. These were not true candles by today's definition. They were made by soaking the pithy core of reeds in melted animal fat. They did not have a wick as the present day candle.

The Jews use candles to celebrate the Festival of Lights, or Hanukkah. A time when a one day supply of oil, miraculously, kept the lamps burning for eight days. You can find the story that started the tradition in the Apocrypha. Jews also use candles in other ceremonies; but I mention Hanukkah because that is universally recognized by the symbolism of the Menorah.

In Exodus 27:20-21 and again in Leviticus 24:2-4 the Jews are commanded to have an eternal flame burning before the Ark to show reverence to God. This practice continues today with the candle that burns near the Tabernacle.

As Christians we use candles, symbolically, to represent different and varied things, depending on the occasion. One major use is to represent Christ. Jesus is quoted in scripture as saying, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but have the Light of life." (John 8:12) We celebrate his birth with a Candle Light Service.

We prepare for Christmas by lighting the Advent candles representing hope, faith, joy and peace. The fifth candle represents Christ, the answer to the prayers of the other four.

We celebrate All Saints (Souls) Day by lighting a votive candle, and offer a prayer, in remembrance of Christian friends who passed away in the previous year.

In many churches you will find a votive candle rack. Traditionally, you light a candle as you pray for God's enlightenment, and guidance. Symbolically, it is the light of faith.

I hope this helps explain some of the liturgical symbolism and the historical origins of candles in our services.

Understanding our history can help determine your future.

"Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn."

John Wesley



OUR MISSIONS



BABY BASICS

A new outreach for Oakhurst in the form of diapers is slated to begin in January. The program is called BABY BASICS and will provide diapers for infants of low income working families not qualified for other assistance. For more information or to donate money, please call: Ginny Leeds. 727-798-5484

STREET MINISTRY TEAM

Oakhurst UMC provides food for the homeless 3-4 times every month. Food is cooked in the church kitchen by volunteers. The food is transported, via the church van, to a shelter in St. Pete and then served by more of our wonderful volunteers. Prayers for spiritual, mental and physical health are given. The faces of those that receive the blessing from our ministry show gratefulness with a smile every time.

There are many ways for people to volunteer to help. Interested in volunteering? Please call the church office for contact information or to leave a message for the appropriate team leader(s) listed below:

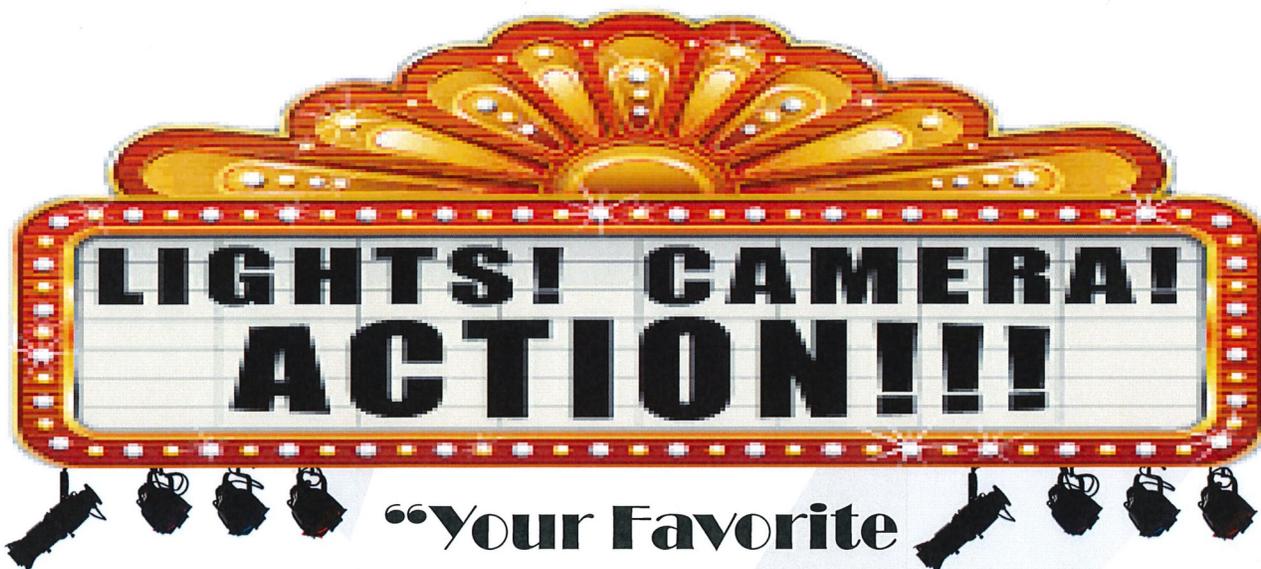
COOKING TEAM

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 2nd Thursday | Gary and Mary Champney |
| 4th Tuesday | Carol Harsh |
| 4th Wednesday | Ray Cook |
| 5th Tuesday | Carol Harsh |

SERVING TEAM

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 2'nd Thursday | Steve Anderson |
| 4th Tuesday | Keith and June Jenneke (interim) |
| 4th Wednesday | Thomas and Debbie Shepherd |
| 5th Tuesday | Ray and Lin Johnson |





**“Your Favorite
Songs from Screens and Stage”**

Join us for a time of great music, hilarious comedy and Decadent Desserts!

Presented by...

The Oakhurst United Methodist Church

Friday, Feb. 28, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Sunday, March 1, 2020 2:00 P.M.

Friday, March 6, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Saturday, March 7, 2020 7:00 P.M.

Seating in the FOUNDRY will begin at 6:15PM and 1:15PM

Ticket price \$20

Reservations : 727-399-2821

OAKHURST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ 13400 Park Blvd. ~ Seminole, FL

UMW FELLOWSHIP

On **March 4, 2020 at 10:30 am** come hear Anna Marie Millet, investigator at the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection - Pinellas, (BCFP). The Office for Older Americans is a special office within the BCFP's Division of Consumer Education and Engagement. A light lunch to follow the program.

WONDER WALK

Come join us as we participate in the 2020 Wonder Walk. We walk on Redington Shores Beach to support Cornerstone Family Ministries on Saturday, **March 28, 2020**. The walk starts at 8:30 am The Wonder Walk supports and provides low-income youth scholarships for childcare as their mothers work or complete their education.. Please contact Margaret Strickland at (703) 593-2916.

PRAYER

CONCERNS

Our congregants have requested that these people be lifted up in prayer, so please add them to your prayer list.

Pastor Tim

Colette Box

Dr. Mac McGlanery

Binet Stiles

Richard Hult (Reta Kocse's nephew)

Rene Francey (George's daughter)

Doris Branch

Mary Kay and Johnny Williams

Linda Butler

Al Hammel

Jo Bryan

Carolyn Malone

Karlin Wood

Betsy Neel



Judy Shabazian

David Baumann

Terry Fluty



MeaVita™

**MEA VITA - LIVING
ARTFULLY WITH
DEMENTIA**

**Join Dr. Cate
Dementia Coach**

for a unique solution-based dual support group
for both you and your loved one at Oakhurst United Methodist.

**SECOND THURSDAYS
FEBRUARY 13, March 12
10-11:30 AM**

Each caregiver session will include research-supported strategies; artistic application and a personalized plan. Meanwhile the care recipients will be creating and reminiscing with Memory Engagement.

Dr. Cate author, trainer, coach is hosting MEA VITA™ with her unique focus on instrumental support and memory engagement. Sponsored by Arden Courts And Fusion Health Care, Memory Engagement Association — a grass-roots movement to thrive with dementia as a community of caregivers.

THE LIVING WATER WALK 2020

RAIN
OR
SHINE

March 7, 2020

8:00am Registration Opens

9:00am Start Time

Boca Ciega Millenium Park

12410 74th Ave N.

Seminole, FL 33772



Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone # (____) _____

Email _____

Entry Fee : \$40 for Adults, \$20 for children and youth (ages 10 and under)

T-Shirts: Receive a t-shirt with pre-registration by February 15, 2020

Refreshments: Fruit and water provided free for all walkers.

T-Shirt Size (please circle one)

Youth S—M—L

Adult S—M—L—XL—XXL

Payment Amount \$ _____ **check#** _____

Please send registration form and make check payable to:

Oakhurst UMC 13400 Park Blvd N. Seminole, FL 33776

Please mark The Living Water Walk in memo line

To pay electronically > Go to

www.oakhurstumc.com

Click the 'GIVING' tab, go to

'FUND', drop down to THE

LIVING WATER WALK

**Email registration form

with signature to

Earthdesigninc@hotmail.com

Please complete one form for EACH walker:

In consideration of entry, I waive and release any and all claims for myself and my heirs against Oakhurst United Methodist Church and all its volunteers, sponsors of The Living Water Walk and Pinellas County (A Political Sub-division of the State of Florida) for illness or injury that may result directly or indirectly from my participation. I further state that I am in proper physical condition to participate in this event. I also give my permission to use of my name or picture in any broadcast, telecast or any public account of this event, as well as advertising for future events.

Your Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Signature (Parent or Guardian if under 18) _____ Date ____/____/____

THE LOVE OF JESUS + 2 MILES = CLEAN WATER