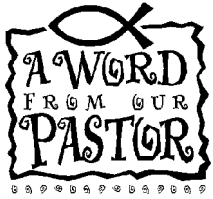


THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
200 NW 2ND Street
Okeechobee, Florida 34972-4174
Phone (863) 763-4021
www.fumcokee.com

FEBRUARY, 2020



How is your year going? It is my hope that you entered 2020 with high expectations and that the year is shaping up to be a great one. As United Methodists, our year was reshaped on January 3, with the news that a group of Bishops, Clergy and Laity had come to an agreement about separation.

<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/files/websites/www/pdfs/signed+umc+mediation+protocol+statement+-2020.pdf>

Since before I became a pastor in our denomination, I have known that there were differences within our church that might one day lead to division or changes within that might cause me to leave my beloved church. Every four years we have debated the issues that have focused on the language in our Discipline in regards to human sexuality and specifically the role of LGBTQ persons. Our Discipline states in ¶4. Article IV that “all persons are of sacred worth”, but it also says in ¶304.3: The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. It also says in ¶341.6: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

There are many who do not agree with these last two paragraphs and believe that pastoral ministry should be open to anyone regardless of their sexual practice and that all pastors and churches should marry anyone. Society certainly has moved in this direction, but the rules of the United Methodist Church have remained the same for many years.

In the January 3 press release announcing

the agreement, it made it seem as though this was already a ‘done deal’. It is in fact, one of a number of proposals that will go before the General Conference May 5-15, 2020, in Minneapolis, MN. But, because of the broad support from leaders on both sides, it is likely that this plan or something similar will pass.

If this passes, two things are likely to happen: 1. The remaining United Methodist Church will drop the language against homosexuality and any restrictions on marriages or ordination in the Discipline. 2. At least one new Methodist denomination will emerge to maintain the current language of the Discipline.

What does this mean for us in Okeechobee? Under “the Protocol”, an Annual Conference can choose to affiliate with a new Methodist denomination or it may choose to remain United Methodist. It is likely that the Florida Annual Conference will remain with the United Methodist Church. If our leadership disagrees with this choice, we will have a Church Conference and choose either to remain a United Methodist Church and accept the changes or to leave and become part of a new Methodist denomination that will keep the current stand of the church. Either choice will allow us to keep our buildings, assets and liabilities.

As your pastor, I want us to stay together as a congregation and maintain ministry to our community and the world. I hate that these issues divide us. Until May, we wait and pray. After May, there will be our Annual Conference in June and then we will have a clearer picture of what lies ahead. Keep praying and I will try to keep you informed.

Blessings,

Pastor Don



VALENTINE COOKIES/GIFTS FOR SHUT-INS will be delivered on February 12. Please bring homemade cookies to the Fellowship Hall by 1:30 p.m. that day. Give your suggestions of any shut-in who should be included to Cynthia Yoder or Opal Wolff. Volunteers are needed to make deliveries and visit our shut-ins.

- 2nd - Melanie Rathbun, Don Hanna
- 4th - Joseph Hall, Brooke Ragamat
- 6th - Tammy Bean, M/M Edward Kavanaugh
- 7th - M/M Steve Rathbun
- 13th - Rebecca Wyatt
- 14th - James Marquis, M/M George Carpenter, Pat Wemmer, M/M Vance Shirley, Brenda Bray
- 15th - Elaine Keller, Hannah Rucks-Zaoui
- 17th - Kerry Simmons
- 18th - Angela Mintz, Tommy Raulerson
- 19th - Ruth Yeilding, Betty Clement, Josiah Harris
- 20th - Pat Tenniswood
- 21st - Jessica Suit
- 23rd - Tammy Rhodes, M/M Keith Poole
- 24th - Justin Murphy, M/M Walter Taylor
- 25th - M/M George Cooper, Pug Weadick
- 26th - Louise Head, Edward Kavanaugh
- 27th - Dorothy Richardson
- 28th - Alice Steiner, Karyne Brass



ATTENTION WOMEN: Please mark your calendars for the following dates:

- February 3, 5:45 p.m. - Executive Committee
- February 3, 7:00 p.m. - Esther Circle
- February 12, 1:30 p.m. - Ruth Circle
- February 20, 1:30 p.m. - Lydia Circle
- February 29, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. - Cluster Mission Study



FROM PARISH NURSE DIANA SAUM, RN:

Glaucoma is a condition of increased pressure within the eyeball which gradually will cause loss of sight if untreated. With all types of glaucoma, the nerve connecting the eye to the brain is damaged, usually due to high pressure. It can be treated, but not cured. Initial signs of glaucoma are usually caused by increased pressure in the eye. They may include blurred vision, halos around lights, severe eye pain, headache, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Glaucoma can start in one eye, but eventually both will be involved.

Treatment of glaucoma is by lowering the eye pressure. Depending on your situation, your options may include prescription eye drops, oral medication, laser treatment, surgery or a combination of any of these. There is one kind of glaucoma, for example, open angle glaucoma that is hereditary. It does not mean you will get it, but you have a higher than average chance. Watching TV and reading, using the eyes does not harm your eyes when you have glaucoma.

Macular Degeneration is a degenerative condition affecting the central part of the retina resulting in distortion or loss of central vision. Treatment can help, but this condition can not be cured. It can be caused by bright light, poor diet without enough antioxidants and too much iron in the retina. Early signs include shadowy areas in our central vision or unusually fuzzy or distorted vision. If you want to know what their vision is like, put vaseline all over your glasses in a thin layer and look through them. On average it takes about 10 years from the time of diagnosis to legal blindness. The most effective treatment for wet macular degeneration is a class of drugs called anti-VGEM. Vascular endothelial growth factor is the protein that promotes blood vessel growth, also called angiogenesis. This can be injected intravitreal (into the eye).

Foods to avoid: Avoid highly processed snack foods, such as cakes, cookies, potato chips. Avoid partially hydrogenated fats, especially coconut oil. Eat a low fat diet. Eat oranges, not orange juice; tomatoes.