

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

General Conference of the UMC will begin at 2pm Tuesday, April 23, 2024, in Charlotte, NC. What is General Conference? From *ResourceUMC.org*: "As the top policymaking body of the global United Methodist Church, General Conference is the only entity that speaks for the denomination. During the 11-day session, delegates will revise the Book of Discipline, which regulates how local churches, annual conferences and general agencies are organized. The Discipline includes policies regarding church membership, ordination, administration, property and judicial procedures. The assembly may modify most paragraphs by a simple majority vote, but amending the Constitution of The United Methodist Church requires a two-thirds affirmative vote, followed by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members voting in annual conference sessions.

Revoking or changing the Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the delegates, and three-fourths of the annual conference members must concur. Delegates also revise the Book of Resolutions, a volume declaring the church's stance on social justice issues. The statements in the book are considered instructive and persuasive but are not binding on members. Because of the delay in scheduling this General Conference, every item in the entire Book of Resolutions will expire in 2024 unless renewed by action of this General Conference. In addition, the assembly approves plans and budgets for churchwide programs for the next four years and elects members of the Judicial Council and University Senate."

General Conference usually takes place every four years, but the latest full conference was held in 2016. There was a "special" General Conference in 2019 supposedly to hash out the human sexuality issues, but it didn't; only muddied the waters more. The regularly scheduled GC of 2020 was postponed to 2022 because of COVID. Then that one was cancelled because of various and sundry reasons. So, here we go into the 2024 GC with many of the same issues on the agenda as eight years ago,

although since 2019, the UMC has disaffiliated roughly 25% of its churches because of differences of opinion on how to treat the issues of gay clergy and same-sex marriage. That will be one of the top concerns of the 2024 General Conference--specifically, how or whether or not to reword the Book of Discipline to coincide with the current climate inside the UMC.

I'm not going to beat that horse any further in this article, but I am hopeful an amicable, reasonable, rational resolution will (finally) come from this GC. I urge us all to be in prayer for the delegates, both lay and clergy, who are tasked with this endeavor, among many others. And I urge you to stay informed, as will I by checking in with what is happening at the 2024 General Conference by any one of many means. Here's the one I'll be using: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>.

Whatever the outcome, know this: the mission of Paradise United Methodist Church will not change. We will still be full-throttle into disciple-making, hungry-feeding, thirst-quenching, hope-securing, gospel-preaching & teaching that we have always done.

Blessings on your head!

Pastor Rob

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The adult Sunday School group is starting a new book, "Help Is Here: Finding Fresh Strength and Purpose in the Power of the Holy Spirit" by Max Lucado. Please let Angie know if you would like to join us.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Weather permitting, we will pick up trash along W Highway on Saturday, April 20th. We will meet at the church at 9:00a.m. to get our gear and figure out everyone's assignments.

APRIL POTLUCK

Join us for the Potluck meal on April 28th after the church service. Please join us for great food and fellowship!

JAM SESSION

Join us on Wednesday, April 24, at 7:00p.m. for a Jam Session and games. Bring a snack if you'd like and come on out. You can sing along, listen, play your instrument (all skill levels encouraged!) or bring a game and enjoy!

OUTREACH/MISSIONS

March Recap

The Smithville Food Pantry 175 cans of meat, 11 cans of fruit and a bag of travel size toiletries;

Trimble Pantry \$400;

UMCOR Flood Buckets ("Pink Can") \$200;

UMCOR Special Sunday (for administration) \$235;

April collections are Boxed meals for the Smithville Food Pantry, the "pink can" located in the back of the sanctuary on the counter will be for Noyes Home for Children in St. Joseph. This month the white can in the family center (and available in the drop down in Church Connect) is for the **Plattsburg** Food Pantry.

Fishes & Loaves Ministry (Unhouse ministry with Scott & Darcy)

We will be providing meals for the Langs to serve to the unhoused again on a quarterly basis this year. Tooti has signup sheets on the back counter along with recipes. We will do June 1, August 3 and December 7. Please have your casserole hot and drop it off at the church on those Saturdays (they go along with Rubies & AMen group to try and make it easier). You can also sign up for dessert or side items.

BUILDING ACCESS

If you find yourself needing to get into the church, please reach out to Bill Schwartz or Tooti Roe and they can work with you to get you in the building.

MONTHLY REPORT

The monthly Report for March 2024 is as follows:

Beginning Balance:	\$55,966.74
General Offerings:	+\$8,948.20
Capital Improvement:	+1,037.10
Expenses:	-\$5,935.09
Final Balance:	\$60,016.95