



# *The Messenger*

## *First United Methodist Church of Mexico*

### *February 2020*

#### *From the Pastor*

Dear Family and Friends of Mexico First United Methodist Church,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus who is the Christ.

I was recently talking to someone about the way God works in our lives and she initially quoted the title of a William Cowper hymn, "God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." Our conversation turned to the idea that sometimes God's ways are not so much mysterious as they are unexpected. Sometimes God orchestrates events and allows situations to occur in ways that we are surprised when they happen. We didn't see God's work in our lives coming!

This usually involved change in our lives. As a colleague of mine puts it, "The only person who likes change is a wet baby." But regardless of how comfortable we are, change occurs whether we are ready or not. It's unexpected to us; yet God is not surprised. That is very comforting to me.

I have now returned to my duties as pastor after three months of recovery. The reality of back surgery is that the recovery is a long process taking many months before it is complete. Every day I am doing better, and my doctor anticipates I will have an excellent recovery if I am patient and do not overdo.

So, this brings a few temporary changes for us. While I continue to attend physical therapy and regain strength and stamina, I will not be around the church as much. Some meetings will be held at the parsonage. I will be working primarily from home. This is all just temporary. If you want to talk to me, please give me a call (716-490-3708) and we can pick a time to meet together. I want to be available to you and it will have to be a little different for awhile.

Bigger changes seem to be on the horizon for the United Methodist denomination. Many of you have heard in the news that the United Methodist church split over the issue of LGBT+ weddings and ordinations. These issues are also related to how we interpret scripture and our understanding of God. A split has not happened, although it is possible since we have been arguing about this issue since 1972. Some are saying that it is time to stop fighting and go our separate ways so we can do the ministry God is calling us to do. The General Conference in May 2020 will discuss, among other issues, whether a split will occur and what it will look like. The *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation* that has been in the news is simply one model for the delegates to General Conference to consider.

If you have questions or want to talk about anything related to these events in the denomination, please talk to me. I will be putting more information in future newsletters so we can all be informed.

In the midst of these changes – both small and large – God is still at work in each of our lives. And for that, I give thanks!

In Christ's Peace,

*Pastor Grace*

## **FEBRUARY IMPORTANT DATES**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday School 8:45 am Worship 10:00 am
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Admin Council Meeting 6:30 pm
- 6<sup>th</sup> Choir 6:00 pm
- 8<sup>th</sup> Red Cross Blood Drive 8:30 am – 1:30 pm
- 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday School 8:45 am Worship 10:00 am
- 10<sup>th</sup> Monday's Meals 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
- 13<sup>th</sup> Choir 6:00 pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> UMMen's club Halfway night 5:00 – 8:00 pm
- 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday School 8:45 am Worship 10:00 am
- 20<sup>th</sup> Choir 6:00 pm
- 21<sup>st</sup> Food Sense 12:00 – 2:00 pm
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday School 8:45 am Worship 10:00 am
- 24<sup>th</sup> Monday's Meals 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> Trustees 6:30 pm
- 27<sup>th</sup> Choir 6:00 pm

## **Safe Sanctuary Training**

*The Pennellville UMC is hosting Safe Sanctuary Training on February 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Call Judy at 315-720-5994 if you are interested in taking the training. The address for Pennellville UMC is 389 County Route 54.*

## **Have a Heart**

On February 2nd approximately 30 red paper hearts will adorn a "decorative tree branch" in our sanctuary. On each red paper heart will be the name of a person associated with our congregation or the Mexico community who is either recuperating from a hospital stay, in a nursing home, away from home in college, or who may live alone and would appreciate some communication with a member of our caring congregation. Contact information for that person is on the back side of the red heart.

Members are encouraged to take a paper heart (or two) and make a phone call, write a letter, send a card, or go and visit that person.

Hopefully all the hearts will be taken off the "tree" on February 2nd. If not, another opportunity will be given on February 9th for anyone to take any hearts remaining on the "tree". It is the hope that all the paper hearts will be taken by February 14th (Valentine's Day), and some connection has been made by that time (or at least during the month of February).

This is an excellent way to spread God's Love to everyone. If you wish to participate in this ministry, and are unable to come to church to take a heart off the tree, please call Sue Morton @315-963-3566.



### *Newsletter Information*

*We are looking at how we send the Newsletter out and the expenses associated with it. If you would be willing to receive your newsletter via email instead of a hard copy, please let Diane in the office know your email address. The office number is 315-963-3066, our email is: [fumcmexico@gmail.com](mailto:fumcmexico@gmail.com).*

### **From the UMMen's Club**

2/15 – Halfway Night 5:00 – 8:00 pm

Come and join us for Halfway night. That's right, we are halfway through winter and let's celebrate with great fellowship, food and games. Hotdogs, chili, goulash and desserts will be served.

That night we will also be collecting non-perishable food for the food pantry.



### **Upcoming Meetings**

3/14 – UMMen's Breakfast

4/11 – UMMen's Breakfast

## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Orion Behling
- 4<sup>th</sup> Faith Hubbard  
Harold Hurlbut
- 5<sup>th</sup> Bill Hiler
- 6<sup>th</sup> Jeremy Spencer
- 10<sup>th</sup> Andy Ross
- 11<sup>th</sup> Elaine DeLong
- 18<sup>th</sup> Chuck Parker
- 24<sup>th</sup> Stephanie Martin
- 25<sup>th</sup> David Anderson



## **FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY**

- 14<sup>th</sup> Eric & Jennifer Spaulding
- 18<sup>th</sup> David & Faith Hubbard  
Jim & Diane Sokolowski



## *Need to Contact our Church?*

*The phone is: 315-963-3066. The email address is: [fumcmexico@gmail.com](mailto:fumcmexico@gmail.com)  
The mailing address is: First United Methodist Church, PO Box 255, Mexico, NY 13114*

**PLEASE VISIT OUR CHURCH WEBSITE: [www.mex1umc.com](http://www.mex1umc.com)**

**Our FACEBOOK is: [www.facebook.com/fumcmexico](http://www.facebook.com/fumcmexico)**

*Please Join Us For Worship at 10:00 am.*

*Children's Church at: 10:15 am Sunday School at: 8:45 am*

### Church Cleanliness and Maintenance

Having a clean and well-maintained church building comes under the watchful eye of all of us. With church services and different meetings, our church is a busy building. The general cleaning of our church is done by one custodian that only works a 4-hour work week. Our custodian has a job description to go by that is rather lengthy and all items on that list cannot be completed in one 4-hour week.

Many items are not even covered by his job description. As we are a church of many clipboards, we are creating one more that will be kept in the janitor's closet. The purpose of the clip board is to capture any cleanliness or maintenance items that anyone may see. The Trustees will monitor this clipboard and address these issues as necessary. Please write the issue on the clipboard or contact a Trustee. Thank you.

### Red Cross Blood Drive

February 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm at Mexico First United Methodist Church.

If you are interested in volunteering, please let Diane in the office know.

315-963-3066

### Admin Council Notes

January Administrative Council Highlights

We were reminded again of all that so many people do for the church, community and each other. Highlights from the meeting include:

- Pastor Grace returned on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Most work will be done from home as she continues her recovery. Please call her if you want to meet, (716-490-3708).
- The thermostats in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary have been programmed for the continued meetings, events and worship. The thermostat in the common room upstairs is currently a manual one and will be changed to a programmable one as well.

Anyone can attend Admin Council meetings, although only elected members of the Council may vote.

Our next meeting is Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

## **Bishop Webb's Response to Bishops' Protocol Statement**

<https://www.unyumc.org/news/article/bishop-webb-responds-to-bishops-protocol-statement>

**By Bishop Mark J. Webb**

*On Jan. 6, 2020, Upper New York Area Resident Bishop Mark J. Webb sent a letter to the Upper New York Conference explaining how the media took an independent team of United Methodist Bishops' Protocol Statement out of context, leading many people to ask the question, "has the United Methodist Church split? Has the decision been made?" Bishop Webb explained that the simple answer to those questions is no and then went on to describe how it is important to remember our polity and our process. General Conference is the only body that can speak for the denomination and make changes to The Book of Discipline. At this point, no decisions have been made and none will be made until the General Conference meets May 5-15, 2020 in Minneapolis.*

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the wonderful name of Jesus the Christ!

Over this past weekend, various media were filled with stories about the splitting of the United Methodist Church. Based on some of these stories, people have been asking, "has the United Methodist Church split? Has the decision been made?" The simple answer to those questions is no.

On Friday, Jan. 3rd, an independent mediation team, comprised of eight Bishops and eight representatives from advocacy groups, announced a proposal for the separation of The United Methodist Church that it intends to introduce to the 2020 General Conference. This "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation" is one of several proposals that have been prepared for consideration by the General Conference.

It is vitally important to remember our polity and our process. General Conference is the only body that can speak for the denomination and make changes to *The Book of Discipline*. At this point, no decisions have been made and none will be made until the General Conference meets May 5-15, 2020 in Minneapolis. The Protocol itself says it was developed in service to the General Conference delegates who will decide on its adoption or amendment. While there were some Bishops involved in this mediation process, this proposal does not come from the Council of Bishops but is the work and proposal of the independent mediation team.

I have attempted to be consistent in stating that I believe deeper conversations are necessary regarding the future of The United Methodist Church, our differences and the ways in which we might find a path that blesses one another to be the Church we are called to be. This Protocol, along with many of the other proposals and legislation already submitted to the 2020 General Conference, invites us to such conversations. I am grateful for the individuals who have invested in this hard work and the proposals they have shared.

I hope you will continue to look for ways to engage one another in these conversations with love and respect as we seek a way to faithfully and fruitfully live out God's call upon our lives.

While these important conversations continue and we live amid the uncertainty of The United Methodist Church, I am reminded that our mission is not uncertain. God continues to call us to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

In Upper New York, this mission is lived out through the local church in every community. So, don't stop looking for ways to shine the light of Christ in the place you have been called. Continue to make Jesus known in word and deed. Continue to pray for God's guidance and support. Continue to trust that, whatever the future holds for The United Methodist Church, your call to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be God's love to your neighbors in all place remains the same. Please continue to say yes to that!

*Letter from Bishop Webb Continued.*

Pray for the delegates to General Conference from Upper New York, that God will grant them wisdom, courage and peace amid the work they do and the decisions they will make. Pray for your sisters and brothers in Christ who seek to follow God's call upon their lives. Pray for the future of The United Methodist Church. Know that you are in my prayers.

Blessings,

Bishop Mark J. Webb

A press release from the Council of Bishops about the Protocol may be found at:

<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/united-methodist-traditionalists-centrists-progressives-bishops-sign-agreement-aimed-at-separation-13133654>

## **February Sermons**

February 2: "Recovery Room Reflections:  
Hearing God"

1 Samuel 3:1-10

Does God really speak to me?

February 9: "Salt, Light, and the Law"

Matthew 5:13-20

What do these three things have to do  
with each other?

February 16: "Who Wins?"

Matthew 5:21-26

Angry about anything these days? What  
are you going to do about it?

February 23: "What's a Transfiguration  
Anyhow?"

Matthew 17:1-9

And why does the Transfiguration matter  
to me?

## **SERVING in FEBRUARY**

### **GREETERS**

2<sup>nd</sup> George & Mary Grants

9<sup>th</sup> Scouts

16<sup>th</sup> Earl DeLong

23<sup>rd</sup> Joan Phelps

### **LITURGISTS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Hope Lenhart

9<sup>th</sup> Andy Ross

16<sup>th</sup> Jim Sokolowski

23<sup>rd</sup> Mary Grants

### **USHERS**

Thank you to all ushers who serve during  
worship.

### **COUNTERS**

Barbara Lighthall

Lisa Spencer on 2/2/2020

If anyone would like to be a counter for February and  
May, please let Jim Sokolowski know.

### **TRASH REMOVAL**

Ernie Warren