

# *The Messenger*

## *First United Methodist Church of Mexico*

### *February 2019*

#### *From the Pastor...*

Dear Family and Friends of Mexico First United Methodist Church,

Grace and peace to you in the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ.

I've been thinking about the nature and mission of the Church lately. Not merely our local church here in Mexico; I've also been thinking about the United Methodist Church too. Looking across the globe we see the Church in Africa thriving, and the Church in the Middle East under attack. We sometimes seem so different in our contexts that it may be difficult to remember we are all one. Yet Colossians 1:18 says that "Christ is the head of the body, the church." We are all connected to Christ through the Church, and therefore connected to one another. Jesus Christ is the leader of the Church, not any human being. It is Jesus who guides us and provides the example and teaching to follow.

Acts 2 tells us how the Church was formed on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descended and drew all those who believe in Jesus Christ together into one entity known as the Church. This includes everyone across the world and across time who has ever declared Jesus is Lord. Our purpose is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. We share the Good News of freedom from sin and death to the people around us who need hope and love. The Church allows us to gather together and worship God, reminding ourselves of God's goodness and love so we have the spiritual strength for our own lives.

If you follow news about our denomination, it is no secret that we have been struggling for years with the issue of same-sex weddings and clergy ordinations. We have been wrestling with interpreting scripture alongside our own experiences and church traditions that stretch back 2,000 years. As we reason things out, we have found ourselves arguing with each other. When we take sides and pour our energy into the disagreement, Jesus Christ gets pushed to the sidelines. We lose our focus as a part of the larger body of Christ.

As I consider the state of the church, I also reflect on my role as a pastor. This year I am making a personal commitment to intentionally look for Jesus Christ in the midst of daily life. Where is Jesus leading me as a person and a pastor? Where is Jesus leading our local church in Mexico? How are we, as individuals and a church community, called to reveal the Gospel to the village of Mexico? At the end of this year, what spiritual success stories will we be celebrating? How will we grow spiritually and be closer to Jesus Christ at the end of this year?

In regards to the United Methodist Church, I've included another article in this newsletter about the upcoming Special Session of General Conference. Please be in prayer for the Bishops, delegates, and everyone involved in that meeting later this month. Then focus on Jesus who is the Christ who redeems us and makes us whole.

In Christ's Peace,

*Pastor Grace*

## IMPORTANT DATES...

- Feb. 4: Administrative Council Meeting,  
6:30pm  
Feb. 6: Bible Study @ Parsonage, 6:30pm  
Feb. 7: Finance committee Meeting,  
@ Parsonage, 6pm  
Feb. 9: Crossroads District Training Day,  
9am-3:30pm (Details below.)  
Feb. 10: Youth Group Fellowship Meeting,  
5-6pm  
Feb. 11: Worship Committee Meeting, 6:30pm  
Feb. 12: Outreach Committee Meeting,  
6:30pm  
Feb. 13: Bible Study @ Parsonage, 6:30pm  
Feb. 16: UMMen's Breakfast Meeting, 8:30am  
Feb. 16: UMMen's Halfway Night, 5-9pm  
Feb. 17: LECM Serving at Brown Memorial  
Methodist Church, Syracuse  
Feb. 20: Bible Study @ Parsonage, 6:30pm  
Feb. 25: Trustee's Meeting, 6pm

### District Training Day:

The Training Day will be held on February 9, 2018, 9:30am – 3:30pm. The event will be held at: Upper New York Conference Center, 7481 Henry Clay Blvd, Liverpool, NY.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO...

- ~ to Had and Linda Fravor for taking down the Advent decorations around the church building.  
~ to Granger Tree Farm for donation of the two beautiful wreaths that adorned the outside doors.

## New Office Hours...

### Church Office Hours:

Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

### Pastor Grace's Office Hours:

Monday: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Pastor Grace's hours may fluctuate with weather or off-site meetings. She is also available by appointment.

## HALFWAY NIGHT

Come and celebrate half way night (winter is half over- we hope!) on Saturday, **February 16, from 5-9pm**, in the fellowship hall. Enjoy food, fun and fellowship. Free chili, hot dogs and new this year, goulash. Bring your appetite and your friends!

## YOUTH GROUP BEGINS!!!

By: Jenna Behling

Calling all youth, grades 5th-8th. We'll be forming a Junior Youth Group on **Sunday, February 10, from 5-6 pm**. Bring a friend (doesn't have to be from church), and bring some fun ideas for the year! I'll bring the snacks, see you there!

-Miss Behling

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

## *BLESSED ASSURANCE ~ Psalm 103:1-8*

My soul, praise Yahweh, and all that is within me, praise His holy name.

My soul, praise the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits.

He forgives all your sin; He heals all your diseases, He redeems your life from the Pit;

He crowns you with faithful love and compassion.

He satisfies you with goodness; your youth is renewed like the eagle.

The Lord executes acts of righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

He revealed His ways to Moses, His deeds to the people of Israel.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in faithful love.

### **Mission Outreach Annual Attic Treasure Sale Saturday, May 4**

By: Carol Watros, Outreach Committee

Happy February! Our first meeting of the year was January 15, and we are planning the Annual Attic Treasure Sale, our biggest fundraiser. This event helps support various mission projects. We welcome your donations of children's toys, books, clothing (in good condition to size 14), collectibles, house and kitchen wares, linens, jewelry, craft items, holiday items, and CDs/DVDs/ BluRay discs. We are unable to accept TVs of any kind, hazardous materials, large appliances, mattresses, encyclopedias/textbooks/magazines. We will provide details of when and where to bring your items in the March newsletter but ask that you keep us in mind as you clean out your closets... Our next meeting is on **Tuesday, February 12, at 6:30pm**, at the church. We would love to have you join us.

### **HAVE A HEART OPPORTUNITY**

On **Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>**, nearly 30 red paper hearts will adorn a small decorative tree in the sanctuary. On each paper heart will be the name and address 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 congregation. Congregants will be asked to take a paper heart and make a phone call, write a letter, send a card, or go and visit that person any time during the month of February. In this way we will all be helping to spread the Love of God. Hopefully all the "hearts" will be taken by Valentine's Day-February 14<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to participate in this ministry, and are unable to come to church, please call Sue Morton @315-963-3566.

## Update on Special Session of General Conference – February 23 – 26, 2019

by Pastor Grace E. Warren

The United Methodist Church has been discussing the issue of human sexuality for almost half a century. As a denomination, we have wrestled with issues related to same-gender weddings and clergy ordination, as well as Biblical interpretation and unity. Our conversation came to a head at the 2016 General Conference, leading the Council of Bishops to create The Commission on a Way Forward. This 32-member commission composed of clergy and laity from around the world spent over a year meeting, studying, and praying before creating a report for the Council of Bishops. This report contains three possible plans to resolve the impasse within the United Methodist Church. The three plans are:

**The One Church Plan:** This plan, preferred by a majority of the Council of Bishops, would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-gender weddings in UMC properties and ordination of “self-avowed, practicing homosexuals.” It would add language to protect churches and pastors who choose not to allow same-gender marriage.

**Connectional Conference Plan (CCs):** This plan would replace the current jurisdictional conferences with three connectional conferences based on affinity: Progressive, Traditional, and Unity. All three would use a general Book of Discipline (Articles of Religion, General Rules, Confessions of Faith) with the ability to adapt other portions to their context for ministry.

**Traditionalist Plan:** This plan, developed more fully toward the end of the Commission on a Way Forward process, broadens the definition of “self-avowed, practicing homosexual”; puts penalties in place for disobedience to the Discipline; and requires bishops, pastors, and annual conferences to certify adherence to the Discipline.

These summaries and further details of the three plans are available in a comparison chart at:

[http://www.unyumc.org/images/uploads/Chart\\_of\\_Explanation.pdf](http://www.unyumc.org/images/uploads/Chart_of_Explanation.pdf)

The Council of Bishops called for a Special Session of General Conference on February 23-26, 2019 to vote on these plans. General Conference occurs every four years and this is only the second time a Special Session has been held. The hope is that whatever structural change is adopted will resolve the conflict within the denomination. Please be in prayer for this Special Session and the future of the United Methodist Church.

You may find these links from the UNY Conference website helpful for more information.

### **Special Session Overview and Resources**

<http://www.unyumc.org/events/special-session-resources#Videos%20from%20Bishop%20Webb>

### **Overview of Bishop Webb’s Presentation on the Special Session**

<http://www.unyumc.org/news/article/bishop-webb-educates-uny-on-what-to-expect-at-the-special-session-of-gc>

### **Special Session of General Conference FAQ’s**

<http://www.unyumc.org/events/2019-special-session-faqs>

These are challenging issues to resolve and will have a large ripple effect. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me. I am available to listen or to help you work through your thoughts and concerns.

In Christ’s Peace,  
Pastor Grace

## SERVING in FEBRUARY

### GREETERS

Feb. 3: Mary Beth Turo & Sparky Rector  
Feb. 10: Chuck and Dotty Parker  
Feb. 17: Faith and David Hubbard  
Feb. 24: Connie Main

### LITURGISTS

Feb. 3: Bill Butman  
Feb. 10: Jen Jackson  
Feb. 17: Jeff Sherman  
Feb. 24: Christy Hall

### USHERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

(Ushers serve all month.)

### AUDIO-VIDEO TEAM

Team #1: Marty Smith and Jeff DeLong  
(Team #1 serves all month.)

### COUNTERS

Barb Lighthall and Jim Sokolowski

### MONDAYS MEAL ~ COOKS

Feb. 4: Sherman's and Barb Lindovski  
Feb. 11: Kathy Rose and Lori Behling  
Feb. 18: No Meal  
Feb. 25: Mary Grants and \_\_\_\_\_

### TRASH DUTY

Jeremy Spencer

**RECIPE CORNER:** These cookies are from the kitchen of Fern Craner (Muriel DeLong's mother). Muriel made these cookies recently to share at a recent coffee hour. The recipe will work well for heart shaped Valentine's Day cookies. Thanks for sharing Muriel!

### Old Fashioned Sugar Cookies

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

#### **Cream together in a large bowl:**

1 cup shortening---butter flavored Crisco works really well.  
2 cups sugar  
2 eggs  
1 tsp. Vanilla  
1 cup sour cream

#### **In another bowl combine:**

4 to 5 cups flour. (Drop cookies only need 4 cups, Cut-outs need 5 cups)  
1 tsp baking soda  
2 tsp baking powder  
½ tsp salt

Add to first mixture gradually until all blended. Cover dough with plastic wrap placing the wrap air tightly on the dough. Chill for at least several hours or overnight.

Place cookies on greased cookie sheets. Before baking drop cookies (by well-rounded tablespoon fulls), sprinkle a little sugar on each and dot with 2 or 3 chocolate chips or raisins.

For cut-out cookies-pat or roll dough to not less than ¼ inch thickness. Generously flour your surface before placing dough and sprinkle dough with flour before patting/ rolling out.

Bake at 375 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes taking care to not over bake. Overly brown cookies may not retain their softness. This recipes makes a lot of cookies. You may want to halve the recipe or store half the dough in the refrigerator for up to a week.

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 1: Orion Behling  
4: Faith Hubbard, Harold Hurlbut  
5: Bill Hiler  
6: Jeremy Spencer  
10: Andy Ross  
11: Elaine DeLong, Had Hinman  
14: A: Eric and Jennifer Spaulding  
18: Chuck Parker  
    A: David and Faith Hubbard  
    A: Jim and Diane Sokolowski  
24: Stephanie Martin  
25: David Anderson



We love because He first loved us.  
1 John 4:19

## LECM to SERVE...

By: Marchi Albrecht

Lake Effect Cooperative Ministries, LECM, will be serving at Brown Memorial United Methodist Church, Syracuse, on **Sunday, February 17th**. Our church will need to contribute 15 bags of salad, several containers of grape tomatoes, and two large bottles of Italian dressing. Anyone wishing to donate or help serve should contact me: Marcia Albrecht, 315-289-7241.

## FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE GIVING TREE

By: Sue Morton

The women of our church's Friendship Circle wish to thank all who donated warm hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves to the "giving Tree" which was located in the church Narthex. These items, and even four pair of warm socks, were given to the Mexico Food Pantry to distribute to our community friends in need. Thank you for sharing.

January 7, 2019

## GREETINGS from our COVENANT RELATIONSHIP MISSIONARY

Dear friends, January 7, 2019

Happy holiday season to you! I pray that you and your loved ones have enjoyed a blessed celebration of Christmas, and a safe and joyful New Year!

It has been a blessing to celebrate the holiday season here in Kyiv, where both Western and Orthodox Christian communities have been gathering for traditional worship services to mark the holy season.

Yesterday I led an ecumenical worship service celebrating Epiphany, when the miracle of Christmas—God taking human flesh, incarnate in Jesus—was first revealed to the world. The Magi visited Jesus in Bethlehem, honored him as their Lord and King, and then went out to share this good news to the world. It was a privilege for me to preach, celebrate Holy Communion, and lead the gathered community in worship on this holy day.

And today, here in Ukraine and in Orthodox communities worldwide that follow the Julian calendar, faithful Christians are celebrating Christmas Day! Last night and throughout the day today around the country, Orthodox believers are gathering to give thanks to God for the birth of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Every night throughout this holiday season here in Kyiv, thousands of people have gathered at St. Sophia's Square, outside a cathedral dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, to celebrate the season. As the lights of the tree and cathedral belfry shine brightly, we are reminded of the light of Christ that burst forth into the dark world on that first Christmas in Bethlehem.

As we enter this new year, I pray God's blessings on you and your loved ones. May the joy of this season remain with you throughout the coming year. May the light of Christ shine brightly within you, so that you may be a witness of God's love to the world. Through you, may others come to know Jesus our Lord, whose birth long ago in Bethlehem we celebrate in these holy days.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. John Calhoun, Coordinator of International Ministries, Kyiv, Ukraine, Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church