



In the First Place

the monthly newsletter of First United Methodist Church, Sheridan, Arkansas
February 2019 Volume 2019/Issue 2

From the Pastor's Desk...

From February 23-26, 800+ delegates (half clergy, half laity) representing annual conferences from around the world, will meet in St. Louis for a Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. The purpose will be to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops. The 32-member Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church.



These are the facts. More factual information, including the report of the Commission on a Way Forward, can be found at <http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session> - I'd particularly recommend downloading and reading the final report from the Commission which shows the actual plans that are before the Special Session without any commentary from the right, left, or center.

For some of us, this is a topic that we have followed with keen interest for decades, but particularly since the 2016 General Conference. For some of us, this is something that we have heard a little about over the past few months, and we have dismissed it, researched it, or something in between. And for others of us, this is new news entirely. What is General Conference? What is The Book of Discipline? What is the Commission on a Way Forward? Why are we talking about human sexuality?

For most United Methodists, particularly for laity, I suspect that the most important question is, "How will this affect my local church?" It does not take long to discover that our denomination will be spending millions of dollars for a global meeting to decide how, as a denomination, we will address homosexuality with regards to marriage and ordination (currently our stance is that all persons are persons of sacred worth and that participation in the UMC by persons of any sexuality is permissible, with the exception of ordination and clergy officiating same-sex weddings - and there is nothing before the Special Session that will change the first part of that). Furthermore, most, if not all, of us have on one level or another wrestled with the "issue" of homosexuality/human sexuality and have come to a decision point about that. Nothing that General Conference decides is really going to change anyone's mind about whether we think or feel that homosexuality is right or wrong or somewhere in between; whether Scripture has anything definitive to say about the issue, and if it does, whether it is relevant; or whether we think gay people should or should not be pastors. But...
(continued on page 2)

Youth Collecting on "Souper Bowl" Sunday February 3 at 8:45 and 10:50 Services

For many years, our United Methodist Youth have asked for a "Souper Bowl" offering on Super Bowl Sunday for the local food pantry. This Sunday, February 3, they will collect money and boxes of Hamburger Helper at both services for the food pantry at Kathy's Closet.

Youth Sunday February 10, Both Services

Sunday, February 10, the United Methodist Youth will lead both the 8:45 and 10:50 services. We look forward to hearing about what they have done over the past year!



"BBQ with Bill" President Bill Tsutsui of Hendrix College Fellowship Hall Sunday, February 10, at Noon RSVP by Wednesday, February 6

Following the Youth Sunday Service on February 10, there will be a "BBQ with Bill" at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Hendrix President, Bill Tsutsui, is getting to know Arkansas by traveling to each of its 75 counties and sampling his favorite cuisine along the way. Because Hendrix wants to spend time with the United Methodists of Grant County, we are not just providing the location; we are invited to be the college's guests at this meal. You must RSVP by calling (877)208-8777 or emailing rsvp@hendrix.edu by Wednesday, February 6.

Tadlock Reception on Sunday, February 24



Everyone is invited to attend a reception celebrating the recent marriage of Charles and Alexis Tadlock. The event will be Sunday, February 24, from 2-4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The couple is registered at McCoy-Tygart. From their invitation: "Please join us for a reception celebrating our commitment of love and faithfulness to each other as we give thanks to God for His divine plan for our lives."

(continued from page 1) But...the Special Session will meet. And it will either adopt new language regarding this issue (or not), and therefore the political reality of our denomination will be affected. It is not hyperbolic to ask whether The United Methodist Church will continue to exist as a denomination or not. Nor is it hyperbolic to wonder what shape the denomination will take if it does continue to exist.

Will the "traditionalists" win and secure the church's stance on Biblical authority, global accountability for bishops and clergy, and once and for all end the divisive debate over this topic? Will the "progressives" win and provide ordination rights for homosexuals, opportunities for same-sex weddings in United Methodist churches, and once and for all end the divisive debate over this topic? Will "winning" for either side be a Pyrrhic victory, burning down the denomination, splitting not only our denomination, but local churches in such a way that ministries end, bonds of fellowship are broken, and Christ is shamed in the eyes of the world?

I do not have an answer to any of the questions above. Like everyone else, I will be watching what happens in St. Louis with great anticipation. I certainly have a preference as to what I would like to see happen; though my preference of an outcome in church polity and language is far less important to me than my preference for an outcome in church unity and practice. And I have some pastoral advice for each of us.

First, pray. Begin now praying for the Holy Spirit to be active now and in St. Louis for each of the delegates and for all United Methodists. Pray that God's will is revealed and expressed by the actions of General Conference and by all United Methodists so that the witness of the love of Christ is shared with the world. Next, study. Before you form an opinion or even more importantly, express a thought, be well versed on what is happening, what is before the Special Session, and what The United Methodist Church's stance and polity are currently and what they may be potentially. Currently, it is far too easy to share misinformation. Doing so intentionally or unintentionally never aids the Body of Christ. The links provided above are the only place where one can discover each of the plans in their entirety without bias. Next, breathe. Stop for a moment and just breathe. Do not let the anxiety and fear of this world take you to a place of hostility, paranoia, or destruction. Remember that God is still God (whether we United Methodists mess up our denomination or not). Furthermore, remember that First United Methodist Church of Sheridan is and has been living with a membership full of people who hold different and deeply-held beliefs that are contrary to one another for a long time. And we still love one another. And we still work together in ministry. And we still gather to worship our God at least every week and share in Holy Communion at Christ's Table at least every month. I can't imagine anything that happens in St. Louis will break the

bonds of fellowship and love that are shared by the many people of our church.

Finally, a personal word: I believe that the issue of human sexuality (including homosexuality) is of interest to God and therefore to God's people. This is not unimportant. The division that exists in our denomination represents the division in our country and our world and touches on topics such as the authority of scripture, justice for the least of these, and the meeting of this fallen world and the Kingdom of God. Each of these topics represents more than just a single conversation or Sunday School lesson; indeed, earnest and loving Christians have written tomes upon tomes. If theology is faith seeking understanding, then the exercise of unpacking these topics is of extreme importance. However. However. I do not think that the issue of human sexuality (including homosexuality) is at the core of our beliefs as United Methodist Christians. I think that our understanding of grace and the process of salvation; the relationship with a Holy Other that is available through Jesus Christ; the means by which the Creator continues to be in relationship with us, God's people, through Baptism and Holy Communion (and what those sacraments represent and how we as United Methodists understand what is happening when we partake); and the work of the Holy Spirit in and through real persons in today's world are each topics that are more definitive of what it means to be a United Methodist Christian than other topics.

I hope that you will join me in praying for a positive outcome for the Body of Christ. I also encourage you to know that whatever develops from the events in St. Louis this month, First United Methodist Church of Sheridan will continue to be a church, will continue to worship together, will continue to offer ministry to our community and the world, and most importantly, will continue to seek to bear witness to the love of God through Jesus Christ for the people of the world.

-Pastor Todd-Paul

Memorials and Honor Gifts Received

In memory of Emma Lee Gordon (grandmother of Helen Shirron): UMY by Helen & Stephen Shirron

Our Prayers and Deepest Sympathy to David Rawls in the death of his father, Roy A. Rawls of Jefferson, Arkansas, who passed away Wednesday, January 30.

Birth Announcement



Hunter Hudson Hogue was born on Wednesday, January 23, to Hunter and Brittney Hogue. Hudson was 8 pounds, 14 ounces, and 19.5 inches long. His big sister, Alexis, was excited to meet him! Proud grandparents are Bob and Conelia Williamson and great-grandmother, Von Williamson. Congratulations!

First United Methodist Church

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United Methodist Women

Thank You!

I want to say thank you in the beginning of this article to every woman who helped during January with the Southeast District UMW training session and the Poor Boy lunch, setting up, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. I also want to say thanks to all those men who the women dragged along to help with setup, tote tables, tote crockpots, and then helped undo it all! A thank you to each of you.....

At the training session we hosted over 50 women from across our district and provided training in all work areas and all officer positions. This was a first for our district!



Fifty-plus SE District UMW leaders at the training meeting gathered for a breakfast provided by our UMW members and a blessing by Pastor Todd-Paul



A very special thanks to those of you who participated in the Poor Boy lunch through your donation. You were especially generous, and we will prayerfully allocate your dollars to missions. Our local UMW is focused on several missions in our community as well as in our state. One mission of particular interest is Aldersgate in Little Rock. This year they have received their final support from the Arkansas Conference. Aldersgate is a designated UMW national mission institute, the only one in Arkansas. Therefore, we will be considering how we can help with their needed funding.

On March 23, a celebration at Aldersgate marking the 150 years of UMW is being planned. I hope we can fill the bus! Mark your calendar now and more information will follow as plans become solid.

We then will turn our attention to honoring our Seniors and Confirmants in April and May.

There is also a district meeting on Saturday, April 27, in Warren, where Betty Cook will be presiding as our District President. The meeting will be enlightening and the fellowship will be worth the trip. We invite the women in our church to consider taking this outing with us.

I continue to look forward to where God calls us to be and what He calls us to do. Be listening and let me know if I miss a direction He has for UMW in 2019!

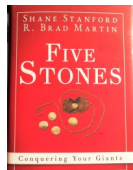
*-Zoe Hines
UMW President*

United Methodist Men

The UMM will have a wild game potluck at "Man Church" on Monday, February 18, at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Logan Hancock, three-time World Champion Duck Caller. All men of the church are invited to attend.



Five Stones Book Study Begins Sunday, February 10, at 5:30



Beginning Sunday, February 10, at 5:30, Dee Ann Daniel will lead a five-week study on *Five Stones: Conquering Your Giants* by Shane Stanford and R. Brad Martin. The class will meet either in the Fellowship Hall or in the Good News classroom.

"Stanford and Martin frame their powerful book on one of the most well-known and well-loved stories in history: David and Goliath. We all feel like the seemingly powerless, scrawny boy David sometimes. And we all must face "giants"—those challenges that threaten to overwhelm us in ministry, work-life, and in our personal lives.

"*Five Stones* is a series of clear and compelling lessons. Each lesson arms the reader with practical and powerful tools of self-discovery, so that the reader's own liabilities, opportunities, convictions, and capabilities are revealed. Like modern-day Davids, readers will leave this book empowered to conquer challenges, in ministry and in life, with clear-eyed confidence and well-grounded hope." (abingdonpress.com)

Five Stones has a daily training manual, so anyone planning to take this study should see Dee Ann Daniel on February 3 or 10 between the two worship services to get a copy.

There is no cost for materials. If you would like to participate please contact Dee Ann Daniel at 917-8537 or deeanndaniel@windstream.net.

UMW Raises Money for Missions



The United Methodist Women held their annual Poor Boy Luncheon on Sunday, January 27, to raise money for their missions, which includes organizations in our community and Aldersgate. This year, \$639 was donated.

The UMW is grateful for those who attended for their generosity and continued faithful support.

Tinley Teague along with her family ate at the PBL and helped raise money for UMW missions.

Youth Ministries

Youth Important Dates (from Robin, UMY Pastor):

February 10 is youth Sunday! We will be leading worship for both services. We have been practicing the past two weeks and will continue ironing out the kinks tonight (Jan. 30) and next Wednesday night (Feb. 6). We will also have a special guest during our worship services as well as at Sunday School (Confirmation class and Senior High). Dr. Bill Tsutsui from Hendrix College will be here to talk to parents and youth about Hendrix, the UMC, and whatever other questions youth and parents may have. All parents and youth are encouraged to come meet Dr. Tsutsui! After worship on Feb. 10, we will also have a church-wide BBQ lunch with Dr. Tsutsui in the Grand Hall!

February 15-17 Veritas Weekend (7th -12th grade) is in Rogers! Youth will leave the church at 3:30 on Friday, February 15 and stay at the Hyatt Place in Rogers. They will be home mid-afternoon on Sunday, February 17, and there will not be UMY meeting that evening.

June 29—July 6 The destination for the youth trip 2019 has been chosen. We will be heading to the Great Smokey Mountains near the North Carolina/Tennessee border. We will be leaving Saturday, June 29, and returning Saturday, July 6. More details will follow in the coming months.

UMY Snack Suppers Needed

Every Sunday at 5:30, the United Methodist Youth are fed a snack supper before youth group begins. Most of the time, it is youth parents who bring food, but this is a wonderful opportunity for anyone in the church to provide a meal to them. Right now, there are meals provided up to March 10. After that, there are ten Sundays left before summer UMY when no suppers are needed.

There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex so you can volunteer for any Sunday from March 24 through May 26, or you can contact Sandra Turner, UMY snack coordinator, at sparhamturner@gmail.com. Thank you for caring for our Youth!

UMW Poor Boy Luncheon



Charles Tadlock gets a piece of the ever-popular broccoli cornbread from Virginia Lancaster

Gail Harrington helps up a bowl of chili for Gary Hines



Sam Green chooses good old-fashioned cornbread



Jeannie Camp ladles up soup for Dana Teel while Shelba Barranco and Steven Turner decide what soup they want to try first



David Puckett almost missed out on the broccoli cornbread, but Betty Cook helps him get out one of the last pieces



Joe Archer, Jameson Archer, JD Drayton, and Jim Lancaster go through the line while Judy Green stays busy serving bowls of soup





Sunday Services & Activities: Wednesday Night Activities:

8:45 Early Service
9:30 Coffee & Donuts
9:45 Sunday School
10:50 Worship Service
5:30-7:00 UMY

5:30-6:15 Soul Food Café
5:30-7:30 UMY
6:15-7:30 UMK
6:45-7:30 Choir practice

Soul Food Café Menu:

6 Baked potato/Vegetable soup/Pizza
13 Salisbury steak/Cheeseburgers
20 BBQ chicken sliders/Corndogs
27 White chili/Baked mac & cheese

\$5 7th grade-Adults \$3 K-6th grade **Free** Pre-K

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>Kathy's Closet Food of the Month: Hamburger helper boxes</div>	<div> Worship Schedule February 2019 Greeters: John & Lezleigh Robinette Counters: John Robinette, Betty Lancaster, Lang Wells Ushers: J.N. Schee, John Robinette, Jerry Humphries, Korey Reed, Carolyn Duncan, Jerrod Williams, Sandra Turner </div>				1	2
3 "Souper Bowl" Sunday UMY collecting \$\$ and Hamburger Helper UMY Super Bowl party 5:00-end of game	4	5 Finance Mtg. 6:00	6	7	8	9
10 UMY Youth Sunday BBQ with Bill Noon Five Stones study 5:30	11	12 UMW Night Circle 7:00	13	14	15 UMY at Veritas Feb. 15-17 Rogers	16
17 Five Stones study 5:30 No Youth	18 UMW Afternoon Circle 2:00 UMMen Wild Game Potluck 6:30	19 Retired Teachers	20	21 Dinner Fellowship Hall 6:00	22 Newsletter deadline	23 2019 Special Session of General Conference Feb. 23-26 St. Louis, MO
24 Alexis & Charles Tadlock reception Fellowship Hall 2-4 Five Stones study 5:30	25	26	27	28		
<div> Children's Church 3 Lezleigh Robinette 10 Shannon Archer 17 Pam Reed 24 Audra Hines </div>		<div> Health Screenings 8:00-8:30 a.m. Lezleigh Robinette 9:45-10:30 a.m. Shelba Barranco </div>		<div> Coming in March: 3 Pledge/Commitment Sunday 6 Ash Wednesday </div>		