

# First Things

Issue No. 10

A weekly publication of First United Methodist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

March 14, 2021

## A Brief Update on the UMC

by Rev. Chris Black

A great deal of news has come out in the last few weeks regarding the United Methodist Church, General Conference, and denominations emerging after a proposed split. Mark, Jenny, and I want to give you updated information about what is occurring in the UMC.

- The 2020 General Conference has been postponed a second time because of COVID-19 restrictions. It has been rescheduled for August 29–September 6, 2022. Delegates are expected to take up a proposal to split the denomination called the *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation*. This document can be accessed on the website under the Virtual Chapel tab (fumcor.org).
- However, the Council of Bishops has called a special 1 day General Conference that will take place virtually on May 8, 2021, to deal with 12 legislative items. These items will help carry the denomination forward administratively until the General Conference in 2022. The *Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation* currently is not on the agenda for the special called General Conference in May.
- If you have not read the proposed protocol yet, we would encourage you to do so. That way, you will be more informed about what is going on with our general church and where the church likely will be headed when it comes together in 2022 for General Conference.
- On March 1 of this year, a group of Conservative/Traditionalist United Methodists, called the Wesleyan Covenant Association, decided on a name for the denomination they plan to form when a split occurs: The Global Methodist Church. They unveiled this name, as well as a logo and website, just days after General Conference 2020 was postponed again. The Religion News Service reports: "*On its website, the Global Methodist Church says it similarly would move forward with a split if delegates to the General Conference meeting in 2022 do not approve the proposed protocol—or if support for the protocol wanes in the intervening year and a half.*" This comes on the heels of other smaller progressive and conservative groups announcing plans to organize their own transitions away from the UMC.
- What does this mean for us here at FUMC of Oak Ridge? The first answer that comes to my mind is: **Nothing.**

As one of your pastors, I think the best thing we can do as a people between now and 2022 is to continue our work of ministry together as Christ desires. We need to grow in our love for God and neighbor, serve others, pray for one another, study scripture, worship as often as possible, and reach out to those who have neglected church or who are recovering from it.

John Wesley wanted Methodists to be "*a people who have the Love of God shed abroad in their hearts...*" inspired by the Holy Spirit so that "*God's very self is the Joy of our Hearts and Desire of our Souls.*" Let us continue growing in God's grace, working out our salvation in community, and letting the means of grace (i.e., prayer, searching the scriptures, serving others, supporting education for all, partaking in the sacraments, standing against oppression, visiting the sick/imprisoned, and building bridges of understanding, etc.) continue to guide our faith practices as a people.

Finally, I would encourage you to stay informed by reading up about **your** denomination. John Wesley used reason throughout his time as a disciple of Christ and as a preacher; you should too! If you have questions, ideas, or thoughts about what you are reading concerning the church, we, as your pastors, would love to talk with you.

## Ax Throwing Game Created

Our thanks go out to Denny Siemsen for answering the call to create an ax-throwing game for Holston Conference's Camp In The Community. Made from pool noodles and wooden replicas of axes, this outdoor game will be used as part of summer camps offered by churches throughout East Tennessee. Camp In The Community is a week-long program sponsored by local churches and designed for children and youth who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend summer camp. Thanks, Denny!



## Save Your Seat for Worship

If you would like to attend one of our worship services beginning March 21, you will need to save a seat. Visit the Virtual Chapel on the website (fumcor.org) and click "save-a-seat". If you need help with this process, please contact the church office, Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (483.4357).

Worship schedule as we reopen:

- 8:45–9:30 a.m. Traditional in the Sanctuary
- 10:00–10:45 a.m. Contemporary in the Multi-purpose Room  
(in person and livestream)
- 11:00–11:45 a.m. Traditional in the Sanctuary  
(in person and livestream)
- 1:00–1:45 p.m. Worship on the Lawn

Masks and physical distancing is required for those participating in-person. Our 10:00 a.m. Contemporary service and our 11:00 a.m. Traditional service both will be Live\streamed.

## Hospitalized

**Fort Sanders:** Dee Crumm

**Discharged:** Bob Schultz, Chet Morris

## Our Gifts

Offering this Week	\$47,715
2021 Year to Date	\$331,977
2020 Year to Date	\$325,989
Special Offering	\$595
Lent	\$400

## Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead pastor

Chris Black, associate pastor

Jenny Caughman, spiritual care

## Contact Information

865.483.4357

[www.fumcor.org](http://www.fumcor.org)

Pastor on call: 865.272.9862

## Thank You!

I would like to thank everyone who sent me cards during my illness: staff, Sunday school classes, friends, neighbors, and family. I would also like to thank those who knitted the beautiful prayer shawl.

—Norma June Martin

## Girl Scout Troop 21158 Wants to *Egg Your Yard*

Girl Scout Troop 21158 is participating in a special Easter egg fundraiser to help offset the cost for the troop's trip to Savannah, Georgia later this year. The scouts will deliver candy and toy-filled plastic Easter eggs to your front yard on either Friday, April 2, or Saturday, April 3. Eggs will be delivered after dark. Cost is \$20 for 2 dozen eggs. You must live in Oak Ridge. Payment must be received by March 29.

To order eggs, email Jerry Luckmann ([luck7879@bellsouth.net](mailto:luck7879@bellsouth.net)) your address, the number of eggs you want, and which date you would like your eggs delivered. Mail payment to: 103 Clayton Way, Oak Ridge.

## Scholarships Available

Each year, our church offers three scholarships for students: the Bruce and Phyllis Jacobson Scholarship, the Rebecca Taylor Scholarship, and the Jeanette Reynolds Scholarship. Students who have actively participated in our youth ministries at FUMC are excellent candidates for the Jacobson and Taylor scholarships, and those who are interested in full-time ministry work in the UMC are excellent candidates for the Jeanette Reynolds scholarship. Don't let an opportunity for help paying for college pass you by. Criteria for each scholarship and applications are available on the website ([fumcor.org/scholarships](http://fumcor.org/scholarships)). You can also email the Youth Director, Kayla Carico, ([kcarico@fumcor.org](mailto:kcarico@fumcor.org)) for more information.

## Volunteers Needed to Help Secure the Offering

With in-person worship resuming March 21, the Finance Committee is looking for volunteers to help with securing the offering. The 11:00 a.m. Traditional service is set, but if you plan to attend the 8:45 a.m. Traditional, the 10:00 a.m. Contemporary (\*note the new time for Stage 1 reopening), or 1:00 p.m. Worship on the Lawn, your services are needed. Volunteering to help does not require a weekly commitment. You can work one or two Sundays/month, but more time might be needed on these earlier dates as we work to get people back into the building.

Following is a short description of the duties.

Offering Duties:

During Stage 1 reopening protocols, we will not have ushers who will pass the offering plate. Instead, the plate(s) will be positioned near the back of the Sanctuary and/or MPR for people to drop in their gifts. Our offering officers secure those gifts in the appropriately marked bank bag (which can be picked up each Sunday morning from the BLUE BIN outside the front office) and delivered to the designated area.

Please contact Linda Bowen with questions or to offer your help (483.4357).



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

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## Special Offerings: March and Easter

Special offerings are collected to benefit organizations outside FUMC and its budget. The March special offering will support Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties (ADFAC), which serves the needs of the low-income community in Anderson, Campbell, Morgan, and Roane counties. Since March 2020, ADFAC has helped 547 households affected by COVID-19 with rent or utility assistance.

Easter will be United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sunday. Money collected in this offering will go toward humanitarian relief and disaster response in the United States and internationally. In 2020 and during the pandemic, UMCOR provided assistance to survivors of wildfires, hurricanes, and flooding among other disasters. Following 55 disasters last year, UMCOR served people in 25 countries, using 82 grants and \$4.6 million. UMCOR brings hope and healing to those who need it most. "We pray for the best—but we plan for the worst. When the earth rocks, UMCOR rolls!" Please give generously to help ADFAC and UMCOR provide relief. Make checks payable to FUMC (include in the memo the name of the organization you wish to support).

## Morgan Scott Food Ministry Needs Van Drivers

One of the best essential but often unseen ministries of our congregation is a food ministry serving people in Morgan and Scott counties. Since 1972, the Morgan Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns has met the needs of low-income families in rural Tennessee. Members of our congregation drive vans for the ministry on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Volunteers pick up food from Second Harvest Food Bank on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Fridays, the food is delivered to the Morgan-Scott Project site for distribution. This amazing ministry needs more volunteer drivers. If you can offer a few hours on any Monday or Wednesday morning, or an entire morning on Friday, contact the Church office (483.4357). Any time donated would be a great help.