

Don't forget: Daylight Savings Time Begins March 13

General Conference Delayed Again

The organizers of our denomination's top lawmaking assembly have announced that our General Conference, long postponed by pandemic and scheduled to take place in August 2022, has been postponed again until 2024. Although many called for the delay for health and safety reasons, the Commission on General Conference cited long wait times for visas as the deciding factor.

Multiple officials of the Department of State outlined that COVID-related backlogs in the U.S. State Department can push wait times for visas for international delegates to more than 800 days for scheduling an initial interview. In addition, commission members described an increasingly complex interview process in some areas requiring two or three interviews, which creates a roadblock that would preclude participation by many delegates outside the United States.

A technology study team reported in February 2021 that it was not feasible to create a virtual alternative of the General Conference that would safeguard the integrity of the voting and credentialing process, meet legal requirements, and support the complexity of the legislative committees required by the Book of Discipline, including but not limited to interpretation in multiple languages, and meaningful participation across multiple time zones.

As a result of the delay, General Conference delegates

will not be able to vote on the proposed split of the denomination over same-sex weddings and the ordination of LGBTQ persons. That delay has led leaders of the "Global Methodist Church," a theologically conservative schismatic group, to move the launch date of their denomination to May 1.



Following the announcement of General Conference's postponement, the "Resist Harm" group released a statement signed by over 1,000 United Methodists urging bishops to hold charges against pastors who have performed same-sex weddings and ordained LGBTQ pastors in abeyance.

While it is still unknown how many congregations will leave the denomination before General Conference meets in 2024, around 130 of the roughly 31,000 US local churches have disaffiliated from the UMC in the last two years. Most of the departing congregations identify as conservative.

These decisions mean our congregation and Holston Annual Conference will most likely continue to wait until 2024 for a resolution on the questions of same-sex weddings and LGBTQ ordination. However, with the departure of the most extreme conservative elements from our denomination to the "Global Methodist Church," it is much more likely the UMC will choose a more progressive path in 2024.

Major Trustees Expenditure Ahead

Our Trustees have discovered that our 21-year-old chiller has failed. A chiller is that part of an HVAC system that produces cold air for air conditioning. We must replace our chiller. Sadly, the decision on how best to move forward is a difficult one. The Trustees could replace two failed compressors with rebuilt compressors for approximately \$31,500. Those parts are available now.

However, all our experts point out this is a short-term fix that will only work for a couple of years. The entire chiller needs to be replaced sooner rather than later. A brand new chiller would be more energy efficient with fewer working parts to fail and cost up to 30% less to run than our current chiller. Unfortunately, not only does a new chiller system cost \$145,538, the soonest one will be available for installation is 34 weeks from placing the order! That would mean we would be without reliable

air-conditioning throughout the summer, an untenable situation. First Steps and Keystone are legally required to close if the temperature exceeds 78 degrees for more than two hours.

Therefore, in an emergency called meeting on Sunday, the Trustees voted to move forward with a two-step plan. They will have two rebuilt compressors installed by early April 2022. They will also place an order for a new chiller system and hope the time frame for delivery does not move beyond that 34-week lead time. When it arrives, the Trustees will ensure that it will be installed in winter. Our congregation will pay for all these expenses from the Trustees' Capital Improvements/Contingency Fund which presently has a balance on \$245,000. This account was initiated by the Finance Committee many years ago to deal with just such situations.

We extend our sympathy to the families of:

Ann Allen, sister of Fred Barry
Caroline Rader, daughter of Sam and Ann Snow
Mary Keen, mother of Teri Smith-Pearson

In the Hospitals

Dave Tull (Parkwest)

Hospice:

C.D. Martin, Jr.

Our Gifts

Offering This Week: \$44,266
2022 YTD offering: \$285,330
2021 YTD offering: \$318,738
Monthly Mission Offering: \$980

Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead

Jenny Caughman, spiritual care

Seth O'Kegley-Gibson, worship

Contact Information

865.483.4357 www.fumcor.org

Pastor on call: 865.272.9862

Worship for March 13

Second Sunday in Lent

Sermon: A Hen in the Fox House

Psalm 27, Luke 13:31-35

8:45 & 11:00 am Traditional Services

11:00 am Contemporary Service

Preaching: Mark Flynn



1350 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Return Service requested

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Birthday Cards Needed

Edna Earl Donaghe has resumed a Birthday Ministry by sending cards to FUMC members. This ministry is a big job - in March there were over 125 birthdays! You can help by donating birthday cards. We do not need Christmas cards or any other kind, but we would be very grateful to receive birthday cards. Please drop them by the church office. Thanks so much!

March Food for Kids

There will be no Food for Kids next week (Mar. 14th & 15th) due to spring break for Oak Ridge schools. This program will resume the second week in April.

New Bottle Cap Bench

Many thanks to our Koinonia Sunday School Class and the Tellico Village Kiwanis Club for partnering with Green Tree Plastics to provide a new bench for our playground area. Our congregation collected 200 pounds of bottle cap plastic to make this possible! The Koinonia Class organized this effort and paid a nominal fee to bring the new bench to our church.



Prayer of the Week Videos

How do we pray? Have you ever wondered what the most meaningful forms of prayer are? To help people expand their spiritual practices, we are presenting a 'Prayer of the Week' during Lent. Each week a short video will be available on our website in which one of us will talk about a different form of prayer. We will briefly share why we find it meaningful, and then provide either instructions or a link for those who would like to experience this form of prayer. We encourage you to take this opportunity during Lent to explore different forms of prayer. Look for the video each Wednesday on our website.

Please join us this Sunday, March 13th at 5:30 pm in the Nave for Choral Evensong sung by our FUMC Choral Scholars and friends. Choral Evensong is an Anglican tradition

dating back into the mid-sixteenth century and is a sung version of Evening Prayer. In his worship resource for the early American Methodist Church, John Wesley advocated saying or singing Evening Prayer weekly. We will pray together as we observe the Second Sunday of Lent. This service will feature music by Henry Purcell, William Byrd, and traditional plainchant.

