



**Rev. Norwood N. "Woody" Hingle III, Ph. D; Sunday School: 9:15 AM; Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM**  
(504) 288-2242; email: [office@LakeVistaUMC.org](mailto:office@LakeVistaUMC.org) website: <http://www.LakeVistaUMC.org>; Vol. 20:3-March- 2019

## A Word from Woody. . . Update on General Conference

Perhaps the most significant event in the history of United Methodism occurred last month. The General Conference (GC), the *only* body that can speak for The United Methodist Church, had a special session on February 23-26 to carve out its official position on one of the most significant, sensitive, and contentious ethical issues of our generation: homosexuality. The outcome was basically threefold.

First, and most importantly, the 864 delegates from around the world voted 53% to 47% to pass the Traditional Plan (TP). The TP affirms the biblical position found since 1972 in our rule book, *The Book of Discipline (2016)* that states while "all persons are individuals of sacred worth created in the image of God. . . The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching" (p. 113). **The TP also has accountability provisions** in which Boards of Ordained Ministry cannot ordain practicing homosexuals and pastors cannot conduct same-sex weddings. If a pastor is caught conducting a same-sex wedding he or she will be removed from the pastorate at least for a year without pay; a second infraction will result in the minister's permanent loss of ordination credentials. The TP affirms, by implication, what Methodists and Christians over the centuries have always officially believed—that the Bible is our primary authority, the final authority, and for its passing we give thanks. **The TP's main "competitor" was the One Church Plan (OCP), which was enthusiastically and relentlessly endorsed by the majority of the bishops and many church leaders.** We are to thank the Lord for the fact that The UMC, unlike such denominations as the Presbyterian Church USA and the Episcopal Church, is a *global* church. About 43% of the delegates were from outside the U.S., and about 30% were African, who offer a strong block vote for biblical orthodoxy. The fact that the African church is growing by about 100,000 per year and the U.S. church is declining by about the same number annually means there is good reason to see this victory for the TP as an indicator of things to come. It is expected that the African delegates will increase by 18 at the next GC in 2020 when it meets in Minne-



apolis. And it is expected that in the next five to ten years the African UM church will outnumber the UM church in the U.S.

The second outcome of GC was that a disaffiliation provision, or exit plan, was also passed. This plan would allow UM local churches to leave the denomination with their property if certain stipulations are met. Some of these stipulations, from my understanding, are that the local church would have to make a financial payment to The UMC and that at least two-thirds of both the local church's membership as well as Annual Conference delegates would have to vote on agreement to leave.

The third outcome is that all of the above is "already and not yet". **The TP and the exit plan are both subject to review by the "Supreme Court" of The UMC, the Judicial Council, when it meets this April 23-25.** It is acknowledged that there are parts of the TP and exit plan which may well be found unconstitutional, and thus these parts will be negated. The chair of the Wesleyan Covenant Association, Rev. Jeff Greenway, **has said he is concerned that the TP as it stands "has no teeth" for accountability, and there is some truth to this** view with regard to the actions of bishops and ordinations by Annual Conferences. The TP and exit plan are scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2020. The Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) will possibly call a meeting on April 25-26 to discuss what should be the next steps.

How are we to digest all that happened at GC? I suggest we give thanks to the Lord for the above successes and pray that the Judicial Council finds enough in the TP to be constitutional and to bring the necessary accountability to the church. Also, we need to ground all of our discussions with others in Ephesians 4:15, where we speak the truth in love. Many are dismayed and even devastated by the results of GC, and to them we need to show the unconditional love of Christ, while never denying His truth, which is the only thing that can save our world.

Yours in Christ,

*Woody*

## Youth Corner

**Youth Corner: Congratulations y'all—last month's Valentine's Café was a great success! We had over 20 people at our event, and they had a wonderful time being served delicious desserts and hot drinks, as well as watching the movie "I Can Only Imagine". Many thanks to those who made donations at this Café, and through your generosity we raised \$400! This will help with expenses as we prepare for this summer's MFuge mission trip! This month we will go to see the movie "Run the Race", which was produced by Tim Tebow and his brother Robby, Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. The movie is showing at Regal Cinema in Covington. We will leave New Orleans 11:45 AM, and return to that spot by 4:00 PM. Please invite friends!**



We remember Mr. Marks, a tremendous blessing to our church!



## Church Family Night

Church Family Night will meet on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> with lasagna for supper from 6:00-7:00 PM. Dr. Sarah Kreuziger, a lay delegate to the special session of General Conference (GC) last month and member of Munholland UMC, will update on what happened at GC and what to expect going forward. Please make plans to come, and bring friends!



## Need a Devotional Book for Lent?

*40 Days of Love: a Prayer, Care, Share Devotional* is a wonderful book for Lent. The authors, Chris Vennetti and Kathy Branzell, have broken down the book into five sections: (1) Preparing Our Hearts to Love, (2) **Meditating on God's Great Love**, (3) **Enemies to a Life of Love**, (4) **Spiritual Keys to Remain in God's Love**, and (5) **The Fruit of God's Love**. Each day has a meditation and practical application that leads one to prayer, the Bible, and action. For more information please speak with Pastor Hingle or go to [www.40DaysofLove.net](http://www.40DaysofLove.net).

## Finance & Church Council Meeting

Both the Finance Committee and Church Council meet this month on Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 PM and 7:30 PM, respectively. If you are on one of these committees please make plans to attend. The list of church officers is on the bulletin board in the Education Building.

# Sweets & Retreat



## Sermons for March

Pastor Hingle will continue the sermon series on the Gospel of John called "Good News for Life" on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. On Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> Pastor Hingle will break from the series to begin a Lenten sermon series called, "The Intersection of Cross and Culture" which will explore the necessity of the cross and how it applies to modern culture.

## Outreach to Voters

Lake Vista is a host for two voting precincts, and there will be a free refreshment table for voters at the Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> election. The table will be open from 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon. Financial and/or food donations—e.g., bakery items, homemade cookies, donuts, etc.—are much appreciated, and can be dropped off at the church.



## Prayer Focus

- ✚ Barbara Velasquez, health
- ✚ Let's give thanks to the Lord for the passage at last month's General Conference of the Traditional Plan, which affirms The UMC's position it has always had, that marriage is between one man and one woman
- ✚ Beryl Lynn Jones, back surgery on March 11<sup>th</sup>
- ✚ Brenda Marks, in the death of her husband and beloved church member, Mr. Herbert Marks, Sr. at 104
- ✚ Laura Smith in the loss of her Dad, Dr. Gaut
- ✚ Dr. Elaine Salzer's brother-in-law, Wayne Cotton, cancer
- ✚ Jay Goudeau, healing from last month's surgical procedure
- ✚ Debby Grimm's Mother, Mrs. Thomas, shoulder surgery
- ✚ Kate Bateman and Steven Henderson's wedding on March 16<sup>th</sup>!

## A Time for Fellowship for Guys!

Fellowship! We have a adult Sunday School class which is geared for men! Pastor Woody Hingle is leading this group that meets in the Library at 9:30 AM, and we are currently studying the Gospel of Matthew. Also, the men will enjoy their monthly supper together on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00 PM at New Orleans Hamburger and Seafood, 817 Veterans Memorial Blvd. in Metairie—and please bring your Bibles. All men are invited and encouraged to bring friends!

**FUN Family Night**

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### Skeptic's Class

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This event will return on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 Noon in the Parlor at church. We will continue our discussion of Paul Copan's *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, chapter 20, "We Have Moved Beyond This God (Haven't We?) Jesus as the Fulfiler of the Old Testament".

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### Prayer Walk Around the Neighborhood

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This month's Prayer Walk around the neighborhood is Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:30-11:30 AM. Please join us in this wonderful ministry!

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### New Help on End-of-Life Decisions

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Robin Goldsmith will lead a six-week Bible study based on Hattie Bryant's book *I'll Have It God's Way: Living Fully Now and into Your Future*. This study focuses on end of life issues, and is ideal for seniors, children of aging parents, and family caregivers. It will be held on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30 PM from March 19<sup>th</sup> to April 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Fellowship Hall, and is free (with materials!) to the first 20 participants. Those who would like to participate can sign up by calling the Church Office or indicating on their church attendance sheet.

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### Small Group Offerings

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**Wednesday SONrise and Wonderful Wednesday Bible**—The SONrise Prayer and Communion service will meet from 6:30-7:30 AM each Wednesday this month, and on the Ash Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> gathering Pastor Hingle will apply ashes to foreheads. Later in the day Pastor Woody teaches a Bible study which is an in-depth review of the previous Sunday's sermon, and this group will meet on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall from 7:00-8:00 PM. All are welcome!

**The S(tudy), P(ray), A(ct) Ladies'** The SPA Ladies will complete the "All Things New" Bible study this month beginning on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 9am at Cheryl Richards' house. The study alternates between Cheryl's and Debby Grimm's houses on Tuesdays from 9:00 to 10:00 AM.

All are welcome to participate.

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### St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

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: On Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> after the worship service we will have a pot-luck luncheon celebrating **St. Patrick's Day in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited** and are encouraged to bring a food item to share—and where something green!

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*A lighthouse for Christ in the heart of the lakefront.*

# Lake Vista

## United Methodist Church

6645 Spanish Fort Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70124