



**Rev. Norwood N. "Woody" Hingle III, Ph. D; Sunday School: 9:15 AM; Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM**  
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## A Word from Woody. . . Making Sense of The UMC

The last few months we have witnessed significant drama in The United Methodist Church over the issue of homosexuality. How are we to make sense of it all? Perhaps a summary of some of the primary events this year can help.

First we had a rarely-called special session of General Conference (GC) in February 23-26 called to stake out the official position of The UMC on homosexuality. We had waited three years since the 2016 GC for this special session. The majority of the bishops along with General Boards and UM colleges and seminaries conducted a massive effort to get GC to embrace the One Church Plan, which would have allowed pastors, churches, and annual conferences to marry and ordain practicing homosexuals. Instead, the Traditional Plan (TP), which strengthens accountability and refines the current UM position, passed with overwhelming support by the African delegates as well as about one-third of the American delegates. A disaffiliation—or, “gracious exit”—plan passed as well where churches can leave with their property.

The shock and anger among liberals at this passage was palpable. Delegates from the Western Jurisdiction of The UMC, which included states like California, Oregon, and Colorado, immediately proclaimed before GC ended that they would not stop their practice of full inclusion. The drama continued after GC, where certain liberal delegates claimed there were African delegates who were bribed for their votes, but no evidence of this has been found. The UMC in Germany has announced that it refuses to follow the TP. The pastor of the largest UM church, Adam Hamilton, plans to hold a large meeting of liberals and centrists on May 20-22 to strategize—among the options being considered are that the conservatives would leave the denomination with their property or they themselves would do so. Another group of 10 UM leaders—liberals, centrists, and traditionalists—are currently meeting secretly to find an amicable separation plan by September that can be proposed at the next GC, which meets in May, 2020. Finally, and most recently, the “Supreme Court” of The UMC, Judicial Council (JC), met on April 23-25 to decide whether the gracious exit plan and any of the TP was unconstitutional, and thus unenforceable. In addition, the JC was asked to decide whether, should there be unconstitutional parts in the TP, the entire plan was then unconstitutional.

The JC decided yes and no. Yes, seven parts of the TP were unconstitutional—with eight parts (minus one sentence) found constitutional. And no, this situation did not negate the

entire TP, which will take effect on January 1, 2020 in the U.S., and in May, 2021 for churches in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines (the Central Conference). The UMC now has key provisions in the TP to help the church. It expands the definition of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” to include those “living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual” (UMNews.org, May 1, 2019 article, “Chart of Top Court’s Ruling on GC2019 Legislation”). It also provides a minimum penalty for clergy who conduct a same-sex wedding— one-year suspension without pay, and termination of ordination credentials upon a second offense. Moreover, those who bring a complaint against a clergy person are allowed to appeal to the JC if a ruling in a trial court is believed to be in error—which is important, as some liberal trial courts have previously given mere “hand-slap” penalties to clergy who have conducted same-sex weddings.

The JC also decided that the gracious exit plan is constitutional, given certain requirements are met by December 31, 2023. Among these requirements are that, prior to leaving, the congregation votes by at least two-thirds to exit, a simple majority vote of the annual conference approves, the church has paid its share of its unfunded pension liability, and the church is up-to-date on paying its apportionments for the last 12 months before disaffiliation and additionally pays the next 12 months of apportionments. It appears any congregation—liberal, centrist, or traditional—can take advantage of this exit plan “for reasons of conscious regarding a change in the requirements and provision of the *Book of Discipline* related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow” (from “Judicial Council Decisions Search, Decision No. 1379”, April 25, 2019; [www.umc.org/decisions/79923](http://www.umc.org/decisions/79923)).

Let’s give thanks that we serve a denomination which, unlike so many others, has stood for biblical truth on marriage between one man and one woman in a loving, gracious way. Lake Vista UMC welcomes all people, regardless of how they may live or think. We also need to pray for the 2020 GC, where all of the above can be reversed or strengthened. Regardless of the outcomes ahead, we remain faithful to Jesus, who is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Yours in Christ,

*Woody*



# Youth Corner

## Pizza Party!

Bowling last month was a lot of fun. Jack beat us all, as usual. Pastor Woody was very pleased to have beaten Kaylor once—though in the next game she soared past him!

This month we will celebrate the beginning of summer with a pizza party at the Grimm's home on Tuesday, May 28th from 7:00-8:30 PM, where we will also discuss the youth mission trip MFuge, which is June 17-22. Please feel free to invite friends!



# Palm to Easter Sunday



Thanks to Laura Smith for taking photos and to Jenny Rueb for editing them for publication.

## Church Family Night

Church Family Night will meet on Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> with a choice between two wonderful meals—**Popeyes Chicken and Captain Sid's crawfish from 6:00-7:00 PM.**

Our speaker will be Caroline Sholl, the Development Associate at the New Orleans pro-life advocacy organization **Women's New Life Center**. She will share about the work of her organization which is located on Claiborne Ave. next door to Planned Parenthood and she will touch on some of the issues brought up in the important recent movie "Unplanned".



Last month's speaker  
Robin Goldsmith

## Rummage Sale June 1<sup>st</sup>!

On Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> the Church Council is organizing a rummage sale in the Fellowship Hall from 8:00 AM -2:00 PM. Donations (clothes, toys, furniture . . . or anything else) are encouraged, and can be placed in the last Sunday School classroom on the right in the Education Building. Please take a look at the signs in the room and place your donations where indicated

## Sermons for May

Pastor Hingle will return to the sermon series on the Gospel of John called, "Good News for Life" on May 5th. On Mother's Day, May 12th he will give the message, "The Shepherd Our Heavenly Shepherd Shepherds" from Psalm 23. On our celebration of our graduates on Sunday, May 19th he will give the message, "Who Is Wise?" from 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. And on Memorial Day Sunday, May 26 he will give the message, "The Source of Courage Makes All the Difference" from 1 Samuel 17:41-51.

## VBS Is Around the Corner!

Our Vacation Bible School program is called "Roar: Life Is Wild—God Is Good". Mary Ellen Herbert is our VBS Director, and all who are interested in this wonderful ministry are invited to be involved. Our next meeting is Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. VBS this year will be from July 22-26 at a new time—5:45-8:00 PM, with the VBS Celebration Luncheon on Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. Please help us get the word out!



# Pancake Breakfast and Egg Hunt



## Prayer Focus

- ✚ Barbara Velasquez, health
- ✚ Give thanks for the decision from The UMC's "Supreme Court", the Judicial Council, last month for finding constitutional the bulk of the Traditional Plan which upholds the biblical view of marriage
- ✚ Beryl Lynn Jones, recovery from back surgery
- ✚ Brenda Marks, in the death of her beloved husband, Mr. Herbert Marks, Sr.
- ✚ Dr. Elaine Salzer's brother-in-law, Wayne Cotton, cancer
- ✚ Six-month old Emmeline Bond, healing from fever

## A Time for Guys' Fellowship!

Pastor Woody Hingle is leading a Men's Sunday School Class 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 Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</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!

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### Skeptic's Class

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We are continuing our book with a bag lunch and discussion on atheist Duke University philosopher Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's book *Morality Without God?* The discussions will be on Fridays, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, on ch. 3 ("What's Wrong with Secular Societies?") and ch. 4 ("What's Wrong?"), respectively, from 12:00-2:00 PM in the church's Parlor. All are welcome to join us!

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### Mission Outreach—Babies!

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We will hold a Baby Bottle Campaign for the pro-life organization Women's New Life Center during which financial donations can be placed in a baby bottle. The baby bottles will be distributed, one per family, on Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> and returned to the church by Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup>. Also, gifts can be made to the Women's New Life Center with gift cards in small denominations (\$5 or \$10) to such places as Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, etc. which will be distributed to expectant mothers.



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### Prayer Walk Around the Neighborhood

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This month's Prayer Walk: Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:30-11:30 AM Please join us for this important ministry

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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

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### Small Group Offerings

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**Wednesday SONset and Wonderful Wednesday Bible Study**—The SONrise Prayer and Communion service will meet from 6:30-7:30 AM each Wednesday this month. 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 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 29<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 close out the Spring studies with a brunch at Mary Ellen Herbert's house on Tuesday, May 14 at 9:00 AM. Please call Susan (504) 288-2242 or email office for details. All women are welcome to participate. *Please watch this space for summer reading selection!*

**Sunday School classes for all ages** begin at 9:30 AM on Sunday mornings. Adult classes meet in the Parlor and library. Youth and children meet in the Education Building.

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### Mother's Day Breakfast— Graduate Luncheon!

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The men of the church will cook the women a special breakfast on Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-10:00 AM. There will be a brief devotional at 10:00 AM. And we will celebrate our graduates— Emily Hingle, Brian Humphrey, and Wendemi Sawadogo— on Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> after church in with a luncheon in the Parlor All are invited!