

Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Don't forget to move your clocks **FORWARD** at bedtime Saturday night **ONE HOUR** as Daylight Saving time begins Sunday, March 12.

Upcoming Congregational Meeting



The Church Council has decided to call a Congregational Meeting for **Sunday, March 26** to consider our next steps as a congregation.

We will have a 10 a.m. Combined Worship Service followed by an 11 a.m. Congregational Meeting. The Church Council has proposed a formal vote on whether or not to join the Global Methodist Church.

The Global Methodist Church



One of the reasons we are looking so closely at the Global Methodist Church as an option for our congregation is because it was specifically formed for Traditional United Methodists like us. If you'll recall, back in 2020, there was a hope that the General Conference would vote to pass the Protocol for Separation. Part of the Protocol was that Traditional United Methodists would leave the UMC to join a new Traditional Methodist denomination to be named later. The Global Methodist Church is that denomination. It was designed for churches like us.

Part of the attraction of the Global Methodist Church (GMC) is familiarity. In many ways, it is the best of the United Methodist Church with several major revisions.

Consistent Faithfulness in Doctrine: The GMC believes the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God, contains everything necessary for salvation, and is binding upon our faith and practice. They hold to the major church creeds, like the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. And they are distinctly Methodist, holding to the teachings of John Wesley and the early Methodists.

Accountability: Creeds and biblical doctrine don't do any good if you don't abide by them. That has, sadly, been one of the recent problems of the UMC. We haven't always kept our own rules. The Global Methodist Church aims to change that. Every bishop, pastor, and church will be held accountable to their Book of Discipline. As one leader put it, "We can't build a system that prevents bad actors, but we can create a system that makes it easier to remove them."

Trust Clause: There is no Trust Clause in the Global Methodist Church. Every church owns all of its property free of any claim by the denomination. The GMC wants a denomination of the willing, not the constrained.

Bishops: Since bishops have always been a part of historic Methodism, the GMC will have bishops, but they will function differently. First, there will be term limits. That limit will be formally set at the Convening General Conference in 2025, but early thought is that bishops will serve for a maximum of 12 years. After that, they return to being a pastor of a church again. Second, bishops will be less an administrator and more a teacher and Defender of the Faith.

Pastoral Appointment: The GMC is using a Hybrid Appointment System. The Presiding Elder (their DS) will consult with the local church. Together they would form a list of potentially five or so candidates to interview. Where the local church, the pastor, and the bishop all agree that it's a good match, that's the appointment. Likewise, the pastoral appointment only changes when either the church or the pastor request a change. The bishop will not 'take' any church's pastor from them.

Connectional Funding: The local church gives a **maximum of 6.5%** of its prior year's operating income as support to the GMC: 1.5% to the General Church, and 5% to the Annual Conference. However, during this transition period, connectional funding is capped at 2% until a Provisional Annual Conference has formed. By comparison, UMC apportionments average 15%.

Mission Statement: To make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

Discipleship: John Wesley, the founder of our Methodist movement, used small groups called “class meetings” to disciple early Methodists. The GMC wants to recapture that vision. They encourage every church to form small groups of various kinds to help Christians grow in their faith and deepen in their relationship with God. Their goal is disciples who make disciples.

Church Planting: The Global Methodist Church is committed to planting new churches. Where there is already a local church, they want to strengthen that congregation. But, where there is no GMC church, they want to plant new churches to reach people for Jesus Christ.

Local Church as Missional Center: The UMC tends to be a very top-down, highly bureaucratic denomination. This is often felt most in appointments and apportionments. Churches are simply told who their pastor is and what their portion of the Conference budget is.

The GMC is designed to be less-bureaucratic and more bottom-up. So, for instance, right now there is no denominational headquarters. The home office of the GMC is almost literally “home” offices. Many of its leaders are working out of their homes. Likewise, Conference budgets are not determined, and then the local church is told its portion. Rather, the local church gives its connectional funding (up to 5% of prior year’s operating income), and then the Conference builds its budget around what comes in. The whole design is for the denomination to be leaner, more mission-minded, and permission-giving. The local church is the focus of all ministry.

Mississippi Provisional Annual Conference: There is already a Provisional Annual Conference in the works for Mississippi. There are at least 150 churches that will disaffiliate this June at Annual Conference, possibly as many as 200. Likewise, we expect many more to disaffiliate at the Special Called Annual Conference on December 9, 2023. Of those 250 or more churches that vote to leave the UMC, it is likely that 150 of them will vote to join the Global Methodist Church. And that’s just here in Mississippi.

Consequently, there is a group led by Lee Ann Williamson, the GMC regional organizer for Mississippi, who are already working to lay the foundations for a Provisional Annual Conference here in Mississippi. It’s Provisional because no Annual Conferences are final until the Convening General Conference meets in early 2025 and establishes permanent Annual Conferences.

This means that there will be a network of like-minded traditional, conservative Methodists working together throughout Mississippi. Unlike some of the other denominational options we’ve looked at, the Global Methodist Church will be local. It will be here in Mississippi, producing Methodist pastors from Mississippi.

These are just some of the distinctives of the Global Methodist Church. As we prepare for a potential congregational vote on March 26, may we join in prayer that God will lead and guide us in the path we should go.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

9:00 a.m. Contemporary Service

9:50 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service

11:00 a.m. Live Stream Worship

TUESDAY, MARCH 14

6:00 p.m. Ladies' Bible Study

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

6:00 p.m. Bro. Lauren's Bible Study

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

9-12 noon Methodist Market



12. Freda Edwards

14. Garrett McClellan

15. Melissa Gooch

Malinda Thompson

16. Julia Thompson

Kairos Ministry

Kairos #45 will begin on March 23rd at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility. We will be taking 120 packages of cookies to the prison. All cookies must be store-bought. The women especially love the "bakery style" cookies which can be found in the deli section of most grocery stores. If you would like to donate a package or two, please drop them off in the collection box in the Fellowship Hall by Wednesday, March 22nd.

Thank you!
Allison Hughes

Where Am I Headed?

Have you ever been driving down the road automatically—listening to the radio or letting your mind wander—only to discover as you reached a corner, “Oh, no! I’m not supposed to go to work. I’m going to _____” (some other place). Most of us have. We get used to getting in the car and heading toward our usual destination. At some point, we realize we’re not heading where we want to go. Habit has taken over.

For me, Lent is like that corner where I realize I’m not heading in the right direction. My life has been buzzing along, taking its ordinary path. Suddenly it’s Lent. It’s time to stop, think about where I’m heading, and decide if that is where I really want to go. *In the six weeks between now and Easter I have time to take stock, to ask myself: *Where am I headed spiritually? Do I need to allow God to direct my life? Do I need to listen more? Do I need to learn more about God’s word? Do I need to be more responsive in my dealings with others? Do I need to serve more?*

Lent reminds us to pay attention. We won’t figure out the answers to our questions, but at least we can change direction if we need to. All we have to do is wake up and follow where God is leading us. *Beverly Kinego (Virginia)*

—copied

The psalmist wrote, “You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.”

Psalm 16:11

** There are actually 4 more weeks until Easter.*



Hiskidz and Bible in Life

Last Sunday we began a new series called *The Final Days of Jesus*. In this week's lesson, "Jesus' Sacrifice," Jesus and his disciples are celebrating the Passover feast. Jesus knew that he would be crucified the next day, and he gave a new meaning to the meal.

W.O.W. Wednesday

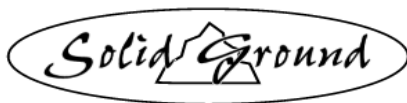
W.O.W. Wednesday's current study is **The Ten Commandments**.

"The Ten Commandments" are the heart of the Old Testament and are the core expression of God's rules for his people. Christians have always looked to the commandments as simple directions for life and worship as the basis of right living. In this series, children will learn that God's rules show us our need for Christ and how we can express his love in how we live. The Ten Commandments are good rules that God gave to Moses for all people to follow, including you and me! These rules help us to have good relationships with God and people. The past 2 weeks, we have been learning about the first 2 commandments. They are closely related since both deal with keeping God first in your heart. So far, we have learned **Commandment 1 - Put God First!** and **Commandment 2 - NO IDOLS!** We will **NOT** meet next Wednesday due to Spring Break!



Confirmation

Confirmation Retreat was held Thursday, March 9- Friday, March 10. We had a very engaging and informative time together, and we will be welcoming new our Confirmands into the congregation within the coming months.



Youth Sunday School

As we begin our new series, *The Final Days of Jesus*, we will be discussing the final days in the life of Christ as we prepare for the Easter season. This Sunday's lesson, "Radically Changed," Paul is talking to the Colossian church and informing them that Christ has forgiven them and offered them a chance for a new life. This is a reminder that God expects radical change in those who decide to trust and follow Him.

Youth Bible Study and Small Group

Sunday and Wednesday Night Youth Group has picked back up with Bible Study at 6:00 p.m. We have been tackling multiple topics on the World's agenda, and what the world is pushing towards us and what the world wants to see pushed out of our lives. It is so important for the youth of this world to not be afraid to stand up and proclaim the name of Jesus.

Spring Break Trip

Spring Break will begin on Friday, March 10 for the children and Youth of our community. Several of our youth will be leaving on Monday March 13 for our Spring Break Trip to Orange Beach, Alabama. We will return on Thursday, March 16.

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Greeter
Scripture
Sermon
Flowers

Donna Heidel
Luke 7:11-17
“The Widow’s Son”
Mary Kay & Chat Phillips

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

MARCH

12. 3rd Sunday in Lent

- 13. He shall be exalted
- 14. Guard against greed
- 15. You will be a blessing
- 16. God Covenants with Abraham
- 17. Stand in awe
- 18. Heirs through faith

John 2:13-22

- Isaiah 52:13-15
- Luke 12:13-15
- Genesis 12:1-4
- Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
- Psalms 22:23-31
- Romans 4:13-25