



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

December 2017

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. Luke 1:38

"May it be to me as you have said"

Mary's response is where faith begins.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we reflect on how it all started.

God chooses a young woman who is willing to humble herself to follow God. Richard Rohr, in his book **Breathing Under Water – Spirituality and the Twelve Steps** says, *"Letting go is not in anybody's program for happiness, and yet all mature spirituality, in one sense or another, is about letting go and unlearning. You can take that as an absolute. As German mystic-philosopher Meister Eckhart said, the spiritual life has much more to do with subtraction than it does with addition."* p. 6

What do we need to let go of?

For me it is control. I want control of my time. I want to go where I want and not where God wants many times. What would it be for you?

Mary begins it all with nine words – *"May it be to me as you have said"*.

Are we willing to allow those nine words be our prayer this Advent and Christmas season?

I believe if we are open to God's leading, willing to let go, then our faith will expand and God will use us to redeem His world in the name of Jesus.

Love and peace,

Gary



Dear friends and colleagues –

By now you have seen the increased communication around Hurricane Irma Recovery and the financial gifts and volunteers needed as we begin the process of repairing our churches and our communities. Nearly every part of our conference was affected by Irma and we estimate it will take a minimum of 3-5 years for recovery. It was a big, big storm but We Are Bigger!

Using a one million dollar grant from UMCOR, we are in the process of hiring disaster case managers, construction coordinators, volunteer coordinators and team leaders to work in five regions:

Monroe County (the Keys)

Collier County (Naples, Goodland, Everglades City and Immokalee)

Central Florida (Polk, Highlands, Glades and potentially Hendry Counties)

Tampa Bay Area (Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco Counties - will work with our Hermine Recovery Staff)

Northeast Florida (St Johns, Flagler, Putnam and potentially Clay and Duval Counties – will work with our Matthew Recovery Staff)

This six month grant will help us assess the needs in these areas so we can determine the exact communities in need of our help, the long term staffing requirements for the work and what additional financial resources will be needed for the recovery – currently estimated to be at least \$4,000,000. To date we have hired:

- 2 Case managers and 1 team leader for the keys
- 2 case managers for Collier County
- 2 case managers and 1 volunteer coordinator for Central Florida
- 3 case managers for the Tampa Bay area

We also have 5 trained volunteer family advocates who will assist and support the recovery staff. This is only the beginning. We are still hiring staff so please let your churches know! (They can find the job opportunities on the conference web site under classifieds.)

While UMCOR grants – both now and future -- help us hire staff who provide direct

services to clients, it will take more than staff to help families recover. We need resources to repair homes (money, material donations, volunteers, vendor partnerships, etc.). We also need our churches to participate in long term recovery groups organizing in the affected communities. We have an incredible opportunity to provide leadership and, even more important, to be the church in a tangible and meaningful way to those in our communities who are hurting, in need and don't know where to turn. Together, we can be a fresh expression of church in our communities – empowered by God's love and led by the Holy Spirit to be hope – a hope that prevails, no matter how big the storm.

Reverend Laura Ice, copied, has been working with Disaster Recovery Ministry for the last two years – first as a disaster case manager for a small, undeclared flood event in West Pasco County and then as our recovery coordinator for Hurricane Hermine in the Tampa Bay Area. She has now agreed to coordinate recovery around the conference for all three events, Hermine, Matthew and Irma. Laura will provide you with updates on our work moving forward, including ways we need you to be involved and especially, ways we need you to encourage your churches to be involved. I know you will enjoy working with Laura as much as I have over the last two years. You can also contact her by phone at 352-424-8067 with any suggestions or questions you have about recovery activities in your district.

I'm excited to see where God is going to lead all of us as we continue to lead recovery throughout the conference.

Together with God's help #flumcWeAreBigger.



Apportionments and End of Year Payments

Apportionment payments for 2017 must be received in the lockbox at Regions Bank or paid on line by Friday, January 12, 2018. This is not a postmarked by date, but is the last day by which monies must be received in the Conference or our bank lockbox to be included in 2017 apportionments receipts. Any payments received after that date will be applied to 2018 apportionments. Any payments received between January 1 and January 12 must be clearly marked as to which year they are to be applied.

All apportionment payments should be accompanied by a completed Remittance Report.

[Click here](#) to access the Remittance Report on the Conference website.

Or go to the website at: www.flumc.org:

- Click "Financial Services" tab on the home page
- Click on "2017 Apportionment Giving Report Forms"
- Select one of the two versions of the Giving Report listed at the bottom of the page

Complete the Remittance Form with the following information:

- Church Name
- GCFA Number
- Preparer contact information
- Allocation amounts for each fund

To pay online, [click here](#).

Any amounts due for Ministry Protection and Health and Benefits at the end of the year will continue to show as outstanding on your statement in 2018. To ensure proper processing of these payments and avoid errors, payments should contain the following information on the check, check stub or statement:

- Church Name
- GCFA Number
- Invoice Number (include all letters and any 0's)
- Allocation amounts for each invoice

When mailing payments to Regions take note of the billing address for each of these types of payments. The last 4 numbers after the zip code are different for each, and it is very important to include to ensure your payment is processed properly.

To be considered a 100% connectional church in the Florida Annual Conference Journal, 100% of 2017 apportionments must be received by January 12, 2018, and all outstanding Ministry Protection and Health and Benefits obligations must be received by December 31, 2017.



2017 end-of-year giving resources and



In [Matthew 25: 34-40](#), Jesus implores people of faith to heal the naked and welcome the stranger. In doing these things "to care for these," he said we are also doing them to him.

We respond to that call, in part, by generously offering our financial gifts to The United Methodist Church and its worldwide connection. *many people are planning their giving with potential tax benefits. These options fulfill our need to care for "the least of these."*

The Florida United Methodist Foundation has developed several resources to help members consider the kinds of year-end gifts they can make for their church. See them.

[END-OF-YEAR GIVING IDEAS INSERT](#)

This insert highlights six end-of-year giving options. It can be used in black and white and as a bulletin insert or flyer.



[END-OF-YEAR-GIVING VIDEO](#)

This short video features the Rev. Mark Becker, the pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, highlighting some of the giving options available and encouraging members to be generous to their church and the ministries they support. The video can be used to accompany the flyer as a stewardship moment or shared as a link via social media, email or other communication.



Individuals are encouraged to *consult with their financial advisor before making a gift to determine what's best for their situation*. This information is also available by contacting Tom Wilkinson, the foundation director for church relations and new business, at 863-904-2970, extension 7105.

There's no ministry without money

Cultivating generous givers requires offering a vision people can embrace and support with their gifts. Money follows ministry.

The two-part video "Old Money, New Money, More Money: Cultivating Generous Givers to Transform Ministry" offers five steps to help church leaders cultivate generous giving to their church's ministries. This three-hour session helps church members and leaders:



- Discover how vision grows generosity.
- Examine and strengthen the "case" they make for their church's ministries.
- See how strong leadership at church creates a foundation for generosity.
- Learn the practices of development professionals that are changing the giving
- Discover the importance of describing outcomes, not just output.

The videos are a recording of the Visionary Stewardship workshop presented by the FUMF Foundation as part of series of workshops held before the start of the 2017 Florida Congregation gathering.

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Vilardo, president and founder of Transforming Christian Ministries, led the workshop. Vilardo has worked as a pastor and development professional for more than 30 years, using his strategic planning and analytic skills as vice president for fund development and co-founder of a Christian retirement community. As a pastor in The United Methodist Church, he led a congregation that more than quadrupled its membership and ministry. Building on his ministry and consulting experience, he founded Transforming Christian Ministries, a consulting firm that works with churches and organizations to increase their impact by helping them envision, plan and secure resources for their ministries.

To obtain the accompanying PowerPoint in English or Spanish and a worksheet to help with giving, email Nadara Brock and nbrock@fumf.org.

[End-of-year Giving Insert](#) | [End-of-Year Giving Video](#) |

[Visionary Stewardship Videos](#)



5 DAY ACADEMY FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

March 11-16, 2018

"Seeking Sabbath - Sabbath Keeping"

For more information and to register: [2018 5 day brochure Final.pdf](#)

ARE THERE YOUNG ADULTS IN YOUR CHURCH WHO WANT TO EXPLORE PASTORAL MINISTRY?

If so, please give them the attached application for the 2018 Summer Pastoral Ministry Internship Program and encourage them to apply!

DO YOU SERVE A CHURCH COMMITTED TO SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PASTORAL LEADERS?

If so, please sponsor a Summer Pastoral Intern for 2018!

Here are the quick facts for hosting an Intern. Attached is a more detailed program description.

Internship Dates: Monday, May 28, 2018 through Friday, August 3, 2018

Intern Training Day: Friday, May 25, 2018 (Students and Supervising Pastors)

Intern Reflection Day: Monday, August 6, 2018 (Students Only)

Hours: 30 hours/week as scheduled with Supervising Pastor

Housing: Provided in congregant's home, if needed

Stipend: \$3,500 (\$1,500 by host site; \$1,500 by Office of Clergy Excellence, plus an additional \$500 from the Office of Clergy Excellence IF the Intern attends both the Orientation and Reflection Days)

If interested, please email or mail an Intern Job Description for your church. Please feel free to contact the Office of Clergy Excellence if you have any questions about the program.

Holly Finley at hfinley@flumc.org

Rev. Sara McKinley at sara.mckinley@flumc.org

Office of Clergy Excellence

450 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.

Lakeland, FL 33815

863-688-5563 x134

Thank you!

Love In Christ,

Sara

<http://florida-email.brtaapp.com/files/tables/emails/1867071/files/SummerInternProgramDescription2018.pdf>
[SummerInternshipAPP2018](#)



Church Safety Resources & Firearm Information

The Florida Conference has a long-standing commitment to safety, and considers the care of God's people to be of utmost importance.

As such, we want all of our churches to be prepared for any crisis situation that may arise on their campuses. Below are resources recommended by the Ministry Protection Department:

- [The Department of Homeland Security's website](#) has a wealth of information, including facts sheets that can be downloaded and printed, and training videos.
- The Department of Homeland Security's ["Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship"](#)
- Redacted Security Assessment Reports (SAR) performed on a pilot group of Florida Conference churches by a global security firm. The randomly selected pilot group included a cross-section of churches within the Conference, i.e. a large, urban church, a large, suburban church, a small urban church, etc.

The SARs include specific assessments related to all levels of security in our churches and a helpful checklist that would be beneficial to all churches. The SARs will be made available upon request from the Ministry Protection Department (hmitchell@flumc.org). You will be sent the SAR that most closely matches your church based on membership, average weekly attendance and square footage of your campus. Please provide this information when you make your request for an SAR.

Firearm Information

While the Book of Discipline does not address the matter of guns in church, and the Conference does not mandate an official policy, the 2016 United Methodist Book of Resolutions Number 3428, paragraph 7 calls on congregations “to display signs that prohibit carrying guns onto church property.”

The following information relates to weapons and conduct as contained in Florida statutes:

- It is unlawful in Florida to carry a concealed weapon or electric weapon or device on one’s person without a license, except in one’s own home or place of business. F.S. 790.06 and F.S. 790.25(3)
- Provisions concerning guns in the workplace can be found in F.S. 790.251.

Please consult with your church attorney regarding specific requirements contained in these laws and how they apply to your church.

SAVE THE DATE

Please save the date for next year’s Missio Ecclesia event. We had such an incredible gathering in the spring of 2016 at Grace Church with Deb and Alan Hirsch. This time we will gather on February 22 and 23, 2018, at First UMC in Lakeland. Dr. Martyn Atkins, a renowned church leader in England and a key movement collaborator in the work of Fresh Expressions, will join us as we explore what it means to be a church on mission. More information will be forthcoming soon. I hope clergy and lay leaders will make every effort to attend this important gathering.

Global Ministry

Your church can be a part of Christ’s global mission of The United Methodist Church by entering into a covenant relationship with a missionary. Presently, 311 missionaries are serving in 60 countries including the U.S. Every year, many are commissioned and are in need of support through covenant relationships with local congregations. Here is how your church can enter into a covenant relationship with a missionary:

Missionary support would come from your church, through offerings of \$5.00 per member per year. One hundred percent is designated for missionary support.

1. Your church welcomes the missionary to visit and bear witness to Christ’s saving ministry where he/she serves. They become part of your extended Christian family. The Holy Spirit ministers with both congregations across the miles, cultures and languages.
2. The missionary is committed to stay in touch with your church on a regular basis, through intercessory prayers, letters, email and video links. Your church is committed to do the same.
3. Your church and the missionary can agree to your church sending a mission team to where he/she serves.

Let me introduce you to our newest missionaries in need of covenant relationships:

Jonathan and Satomi McCurley – Japan

Janet Horman – Florida, USA

Michael Zdorow – Russia

Charles Mulemena – Brazil

Jim and Bernice Keech – Central Asia

William Llanos and Rocio Barcenas – Argentina

To support one of our missionaries spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, go to flumc-missions.org and click on the “Missionaries” tab or contact the Office of Missional Engagement at (800) 282-8011 x. 346 or by email at irodriguez@flumc.org.

As we remember our baptism and receive Jesus Christ into our lives, we are all called as missionaries in service into His Kingdom.



Easter Pilgrimage to Italy with Bishop Carter slated for April 2018



The United Methodist Church
Florida Episcopal Area

Kenneth H. Carter
Florida Area Resident Bishop

November 16, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to extend an invitation to you to join me and Pam, your clergy colleagues, and many of our Florida Conference church members on a Florida Conference pilgrimage to Italy planned for April 3 – 12, 2018.

As we visit the stunning cities of Venice, Assisi, Siena, Florence and Rome, we will be immersed in the rich traditions of the Christian faith. We will learn more about the gospel of Mark in Venice and the legacy of Peter; we will read the dialogues of Catherine of Siena and the meditations of Dante; and we will reflect on the renewing vision given to Francis of Assisi. In Rome, as we visit the Sistine Chapel, we will consider the legacies of the most recent Popes, especially John XXIII, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis. And in each setting we will be inspired by the world's great art and architecture.

Our ten-day fellowship with each other will be April 3 – 12, 2018. For a detailed description of our itinerary and registration, please visit our website at www.flumc.org and click on this link: <http://www.flumc.org/opportunitydetail/8868904>

I look forward to sharing the experience of travel, study, worship and fellowship with you on this wonderful, life-transforming pilgrimage in April!

The Peace of the Lord,



Bishop Kenneth H. Carter

View more information [online](#) or in this [downloadable brochure](#).
[Click here](#) for online registration.

Calendar 2017

December

4th- 7th - Appointive Cabinet and Extended Cabinet
25th - District office closed for Christmas
Jan. 1 - District office closed for New Year

Gary

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