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One of my devotional books has a prayer to start the daily devotional. It begins with:

I kindle my soul at the forge of the Soul-Smith.

I love that line. I love it because I am a Smith, which probably means somewhere in my heritage, one of my ancestors was some type of goldsmith, silversmith, or, most likely, a blacksmith. I love it because of the imagery that Jesus is my Soul-Smith. He is shaping me into who I am called to be.

Have you ever seen a blacksmith at a forge? One of my cousins up in North Carolina is a master forger. Several times Carl-Perry has let me work with him. It's pretty cool. I mean, it's super hot, but the work is cool. You heat up the coals so they are glowing red and then stick the iron into

them. The heat softens the iron so you can mold it. But most times, the molding is a beating. You hammer away to get the right shape. Sometimes when you are being more artistic, you twist the metal, etc. It's really cool.

Jesus is the Soul-Smith. When our hearts are on fire for him, we become moldable. When we pull out of the fire, our hearts grow hard. To be shaped by Christ, you have to keep the fire going. We must also realize it doesn't always feel good to be shaped by Christ. But we must trust that the Soul-Smith is the master crafter, not us. We have to let him shape us and mold us.

Then the devotional has this closing to the prayer.

*I kindle my soul at the forge of the Soul-Smith
Kindle in me the enthusiasm that makes life's path a joyous thing.
Ever encourage and support all I do today to help me reach my full potential.*

Amen.

Grace and Peace,
Scott

What is a church?

"A church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints."

— L.L. NASH

"As long as you notice, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God." — C. S. LEWIS

"Church-goers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out." — BILLY GRAHAM

"God never intended his church to be a refrigerator in which to preserve perishable piety. He intended it to be an incubator in which to hatch converts." — F. LINCICOME

"Never before has the church had so many degrees yet so little temperature." — VANCE HAVNER

The church is like a bank—the more you put into it, the more interest you have in it.

"The holiest moment of the church service is the moment when God's people—strengthened by preaching and sacrament—go out of the church door into the world to be the church. We don't go to church; we are the church."

— ERNEST SOUTHCOTT

"Going to church doesn't make anybody a Christian, any more than taking a wheelbarrow into a garage makes it an automobile."

— Billy Sunday

The Town Hall was a video presentation on May 14th, led by Brett Robinson, Operations Manager. He said Easter Sunday services attendance was down slightly from last year, no doubt affected by the bad weather that Sunday morning. The wind and high tide forced the Sunrise service to move to the Cardinal Avenue parking lot.

The damaged tile walkway at the East entrance to the sanctuary will be replaced with brick pavers. Also, the roofs on the window and door awnings will be replaced. These awning roofs were not repaired when the main roof was recently replaced.

Since Dr. Tim McNeil's retirement, First United has not hosted a counseling center. In February, it re-opened with a new contract, providing the former center's space to the Presbyterian Counseling Center. Rebecca Railsback, the

counselor, has had 255 visits since that time.

Financially, our contributions are down slightly from last year but higher than in 2021. Expenses have been trimmed to be less than the receipts so far this year. The Florida Conference provides all in insurance coverage and costs are up significantly because of hurricane and storm losses. They are "leveling out" the increases, so it is only 25% this year.

The \$25,000 raised by the congregation for Barracks of Hope was matched, providing \$50,000 for this project.

The Staff/Parish Relations Committee is assisting in the search for a Worship Leader/Ministry Coordinator for The Gathering Place. The Task Team for The Gathering Place is developing the next steps for the use of the property on Williamson Boulevard.

TOWN HALL MEETING

May 14, 2023

Tom Berlin, new Bishop of Florida Conference



as the Lead Pastor of Floris UMC, a multi-site, multi-staff congregation near the nation's capital. He believes in the value of our connectional church and cares deeply about its vitality and unity. He longs for a church where all people feel that they belong.

Bishop Berlin started his term last January and is a native of Winchester, Virginia. He received his call to ordained ministry while serving as a summer counselor at the Tennessee Outreach Project (Mountain TOP) mission camp in Ozone, Tennessee.

Bishop Berlin attended Virginia Tech and received a BS in business with a major in public administration. He received his Master of Divinity from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University and was ordained in 1987.

He has served churches of all sizes in the Virginia Conference, including 25 years

He is a speaker and author of books that focus on the Christian life and stewardship and has co-authored books on church leadership.

In a time of difficulty in The United Methodist Church, he finds hope in the love and resurrection of Christ and the ways he sees the Holy Spirit active among those committed to the congregations where they live and serve.

Tom is married to Karen, and they have four daughters. He enjoys spending time with family, woodworking, hiking, and taking long walks with their dog, Mudge.



THE EIGHT DECADES CLUB

We are highlighting those wonderful seniors in our church that have reached that young age of 80 or over. Send them a card, or if you see them, wish them a Happy Birthday.

- Jun 18—Lawrence Steedley—2900 Ocean Shore Blvd, apt 103. Ormond Beach FL 32176-2374
- Jun 21—Laverne Cox—508 Crooked Stick Dr, Daytona Beach FL 32114-7119
- Jun 26—Barbara deVignier—8 Pine Valley Cir, Ormond Beach FL 32174-3821
- Jun 29—Bill Turner—3324 Bailey Ann Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174
- Jul 3—Lorraine Gallagher—10 Sweetgum Dr Apt A, Orange City FL 32763-9022
- Jul 6—Ray Holmstrom—6767 Calistoga Cir, Port Orange FL 32128-4033
- Jul 6—Shirley Rohm—3 Sunwood Trail, Ormond Beach FL 32174-4320
- Jul 6—Marshall Snyder—611 Woodbridge Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174-1015

- Jul 7—Carolyn Dickens—16 Tanglewood Circle, Ormond Beach FL 32176-5746
- Jul 11—John Gamin—431 Long Cove Rd, Ormond Beach FL 32174-9241
- Jul 12—Les Cartledge—417 N Beach St, Ormond Beach FL 32174-5302
- Jul 13—Marilyn O’Keeffe—52 Sea Island Dr N, Ormond Beach FL 32176-2171
- Jul 14—John McCullers—6 Creek View Way, Ormond Beach FL 32174-6751
- Jul 17—Nan Resta—19 Hunter’s Run Cir, Ormond Beach FL 32174
- Jul 17—BJ Bardsley—172 Country Club Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32176
- Jul 20—Linda Underwood—1412 Kilrush Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174-2882
- Jul 21—Coco Lewis—40 Spring Meadows Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174-1541

If you know of a name that should be on the list, or if a correction is needed, please let Frank Johnston know at :

fjohnston@firstunited.org

Florida Annual Conference June 8-10, 2023

Bishop Tom Berlin opened the Florida Conference with words of comfort for the laity and clergy after having gone through many trials in their churches and the Conference in recent years.

“It was a great Conference,” said Pastor Amy Armistead. “It was so uplifting and we came away feeling better.”

Using the parable of the hidden treasure from Matthew 13 about the man who sold everything he had to buy a field as a theme, Bishop Berlin told those about to be ordained, licensed, and commissioned to buckle up for an amazing journey.

“Be aware of what you are doing today. To find this treasure, you have to be more than committed. Jesus said that they sold everything. To buy the field, the person sold everything they had,” he said.

“The merchant sold every good pearl they possessed to gain the pearl of great price. Jesus is not asking if you and I are committed. He’s telling us that if we want to find the treasure of the Reign of God, we have to sell out. We must be undeniably committed.”

Being a pastor means answering the phone with the calls that come at 2 a.m. He did that one night when a member of his congregation called to say his father had just died. The death was not unexpected, and Bishop Berlin said he had asked that son to let him know when it happened.



They talked for a while, and that might have been the end of it for a while, but his wife, Karen, firmly said that he should go to the hospital.

“Do you really think he would call at 2 a.m. if he didn’t want you to come over,” the Bishop said his wife told him. “I went to the hospital. I prayed. I read



scripture. I offered words of consolation and hope as we sat in the grief of that death. In all things, we see the beauty of God’s love and provision.

“That night, Karen was teaching me that we don’t have to do this. We get to do this. That is why Paul said to count it all as joy. It’s joy that makes you sell out. Joy that leads you to be undeniably committed. You are treasure hunters. You have no idea where that quest may take you. Places of wonder and abandon lie before you.”

He was speaking to the newest ministers in the Conference, but his words apply to everyone who calls themselves a United Methodist. The world needs the gift we have, the gift we are supposed to share. Whether preaching from the pulpit or offering a kind word to someone you just met at the park, we are all ministers.

The goal of this year’s Annual Conference was to leave the division of the last few years behind and get on with that work. It’s about inclusion and seeing that everyone has value and a call-

ing. It also emphasizes the “United” part of our denomination’s name.

It’s about hearing the calling he gave to the new pastors and realizing it applies to everyone. It’s about valuing service over being served.

“You have no idea where this thing will take you. But I’ll tell you this. If you pursue this calling with abandon, if you sell out, if you cut ties with the complainers and the whiners and the cynics and throw your lot with those who have a shovel in hand and sweat on their brow, it doesn’t matter where you end up, it will be treasure after treasure after treasure, and pearl after pearl after pearl,” he said.

“You will dig long and hard, hours and days at a time, wondering if there really is any treasure to be found. You will dig giant holes and wonder how you are missing it until one day, you hear the shovel clank against the chest. You will dig it out to discover that the treasure you find is of such value and such beauty and significance that it makes it all worthwhile. It is the treasure that is worth the sacrifice of all the other treasures.”



Excerpted from an article written by Joe Henderson, News Content Editor of FLUMC.org



Youth Mission Trip to Ft. Myers
to help Hurricane victims
June 3-9, 2023



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We need your help in providing suggestions for our newsletter. We will be publishing it each month and we need your help in writing articles and news stories. Contact Will McLaughlin, <willmcla@gmail.com>