



Christ United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 710  
Levelland, TX 79336

# THE BELL RINGER

## January 2020



### COMING IN JANUARY

Sundays, January 5, 19, 26 – 2:00 p.m. – Women’s Study Group

Tuesdays, January 7 & 21 – Grief Support Group at 1:30 p.m.

Thursdays, January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 -- 11:30 a.m. – Pastor’s Devotional

Wednesday, January 1 – Office Closed for New Years

Sunday, January 5 – Epiphany of the Lord Sunday/Imagine No Malaria Sunday

Monday, January 6 – Epiphany of the Lord

Sunday, January 12 – Baptism of the Lord  
All Church Donation Lunch – Beans & Cornbread

Sunday, January 19 – Second Sunday After the Epiphany/Human Relations Sunday

Monday, January 20 – Office closed in honor of Martin Luther King’s Birthday

Sunday, January 26 – Third Sunday After the Epiphany

Thursday, January 30 – Assemble UMCOR Hygiene Kits – Fellowship Hall

Friday, January 31 – End of Year Statistical Reports Due

**January Birthdays** – Brenda Clanton-Jan. 1, Liz Brandt – Jan. 6, K.W. Hill- Jan. 17, Virginia Yarbrough – Jan. 26, Tiah Taylor – Jan.29, Ross Joplin - Jan. 30

**January Anniversaries** – Wayne & Barbara Foley - Jan. 2, George & Deborah Payne – Jan. 4, Neil & Frannie Guthrie – Jan. 31

# Thank you

We have reached our  
Shared Ministries goal for 2019

## Donation Lunch for January

The donation lunch for January will be January 12<sup>th</sup> following church. We will have beans & cornbread. All the donations go toward Shared Ministries. The sign-up sheet is on the podium in the narthex.

## UMCOR Hygiene Kits

Please pick up information sheet in the Narthex.  
We will meet and assemble kits on Thursday,  
January 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

## *Extending The Table Ministry*

If you are interested in serving God by taking communion to those who are homebound, contact Sue Cates at 806-782-8607.

## *A Word from the Pastor*

Dear Not Sure Saints,

On January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year we begin to operate under the rules voted on at the Called General Conference of 2019. Those rules addressed the manner in which the church would deal with the issue of serving LGBTQ persons. I will try to summarize these changes here.

First, persons who are LGBTQ are still welcome in our churches. That part of the Book of Discipline has not changed. If a person who is LGBTQ, or any person for that matter, wants to become a professing member of a United Methodist congregation, they must first meet with the pastor of the church. It is the pastor who determines where their heart is, and if they are ready to profess their faith. In the United Methodist Church, entry into membership is not based on a church vote.

Concerning the definition of homosexuality, the

definition of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” was expanded to include “a person living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who states he or she is a practicing homosexual.”

Under the new rules, bishops are now prohibited from ordaining any person as an elder or deacon if the Board of Ordained Ministry has found them to be a homosexual, even if that board recommends that they be ordained. This gives bishops less latitude in dealing with this issue.

Another provision concerns penalties for performing same-sex weddings or unions. Any clergy found guilty in a church trial of performing a same sex wedding or union will be suspended without pay for one year. Loss of credential will occur after that period if the clergy continues to perform same-sex weddings or unions.

The General Conference added a provision which allows churches to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church without having to purchase the property. Financial procedures were added which could be prohibitive for some churches. Disaffiliation must be related to the issue of homosexuality. Churches have until 2023 to disaffiliate without being subject to property purchase. The vote on this particular issue was found to involve votes which would nullify this decision; however, the Judicial Council has delayed hearing this case until May of 2020. That means churches may assume that the rule voted on applies for now.

All of these changes are now in effect. There are proposals to the 2020 General Conference to change these new rules. Because of this, many groups, churches and individuals within the United Methodist Church are planning for what they will do after General Conference. Some are planning to leave now regardless of the outcome. Some have vowed to stay and fight. Some have said they are tired of fighting and plan to leave. What should We do?

Pray for our local church and the United Methodist Church. Changes may come that are more restrictive or less restrictive. We should still plan to be a welcoming church that loves all people. If one cannot abide with the new changes or subsequent changes, then one can make a decision about one’s church future. Until that happens, look upon each person you meet with love and respect. No one has approached me about leaving as a church. Some have expressed their opinions relative to the issue of homosexuality and the church. My hope is that we as Christ UMC will continue to make disciples for Jesus for the transformation of the world. If I were to feel that that ability were somehow restricted, then I would have a decision to make. I have chosen to wait until the 2020 General Conference to do the deep soul searching necessary to determine my future as a Wesleyan Christian.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Dennis