



June 1, 2023



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A message from Pastor Sharon...

The Work of Annual Conference 2023

Part of the polity/structure of The United Methodist Church involves organizing the churches geographically by conference. We are part of the Missouri Annual Conference (AC), and Bishop Bob Farr officiates as our conference bishop, meaning he's the top guy (though still much lower than Jesus). The founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, thought it useful to gather all the clergy annually for "holy conferencing". Years later, the church lay representatives were added to this connection. So annually, we gather all the active clergy and church lay representatives connect through worship, prayer, reports, and the business of our Annual Conference. Josh Krakos is our AC Lay Representative and is traveling from South Dakota to attend on our behalf.

This year, there are two non-binding resolutions put forth for us to vote on at AC. A non-binding resolution is a written motion adopted by a deliberative body that cannot progress into a law. This type of resolution is often used to express the body's approval or disapproval of something that they cannot otherwise vote on, due to the matter being handled by another jurisdiction, in this case, the General Conference, who has exclusive authority over all changes to the Book of Discipline. Essentially, these two resolutions are asking the Missouri AC body "Hey, do y'all think this is a good idea or not?"

Here is the essence of the two resolutions we are being asked to consider:

Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference

Some years ago, special Central Conferences were established among many of the countries where United Methodism had spread beyond America, but whose context needed to have some special rules differing from the U.S. Book of Discipline. This resolution in support of creating a U.S. Regional Conference asks us to recognize that the American context is unique as well. This would allow each region to design ministry for its particular contexts. Establishing an American Conference would be especially helpful in terms of issues relating to human sexuality.

Removal of Harmful Language in the Book of Discipline

At the 1972 and 1976 General Conferences, restrictive language was added to our Social Principles that restricted marriage to "only between one man and one woman" and stated that "the UMC does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice to be incompatible with Christian teaching." Further, currently "self-avowed homosexuals are not

to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the UMC.” The inserts also barred UMC clergy from celebrating the union of same-sex couples, or holding these celebrations in a UMC church, or for any UMC church to give UMC funds to support any LGBTQIA+ caucus or group. The nonbinding resolution seeks to remove all these exclusionary restrictions.

While both resolutions to be considered by the session are purely aspirational in nature, and neither will by itself result in any change to the Book of Discipline, I am excited to see these questions put before our AC body to voice their position on these two important considerations. That is how large bodies of people holding differing ideas and positions begin to gather energy for change. These same issues will be part of the work of the 2024 General Conference.

Another piece of business will be the official disaffiliation of 75 churches within the Missouri Conference. While this sounds like a terrible number, and certainly every church is important and precious, at last count that is 75 churches out of about 700 in our conference. Some are leaving to join the newly created, more conservative church denomination, Global Methodist Church; some are intending to remain independent, and still others expect to affiliate with other denominations. We pray God’s blessing upon them.

What this means is that the churches left under the broad United Methodist tent will largely be those who share more progressive theology on issues of human sexuality and those who may differ in perspective but are willing to share the tent with those who hold a differing point of view on this issue. While we mourn the loss of these sibling churches from our UMC family, it is actually encouraging news for those who are ready to re-establish our denomination as a vital, thriving, multicultural, and diverse church open to all people whom God has created.

Grace and peace+

Pastor Sharon

Worship Under the Stars! Thursdays at 7:30PM

Come join **The Mountain Service** in the parking lot at 7:30PM every Thursday this summer, **beginning June 8th**. *Bring your folding chair. Pets are welcome on a leash.*

Father's Day Photos



We will feature a slide show of photos of fathers of church family members during worship on **Father's Day, June 18th**. To include your fathers, please send photos along with your father's first name to Cindy Andrews cyndrews@gmail.com by Tuesday, June 13th. If you have provided a photo in recent years, it is not necessary to send a new one. *To check to see if Cindy has one of your father from previous years, please include his first name when emailing her. (Slides are in alphabetical order by first names.)*

Everyone is welcome!

Family Friendly

wear orange

we can end gun violence

wearorange.org

National Wear Orange Day

Remember and honor victims of gun violence

Gun Violence Awareness And Prevention March

Sunday, June 4th 12pm, Rain or Shine

Start:
Webster Groves Presbyterian Church
45 West Lockwood Ave.

End:
Emmanuel Episcopal Church
9 South Bompert Ave.

Wear orange or a Moms Demand Action shirt

Light refreshments at Emmanuel

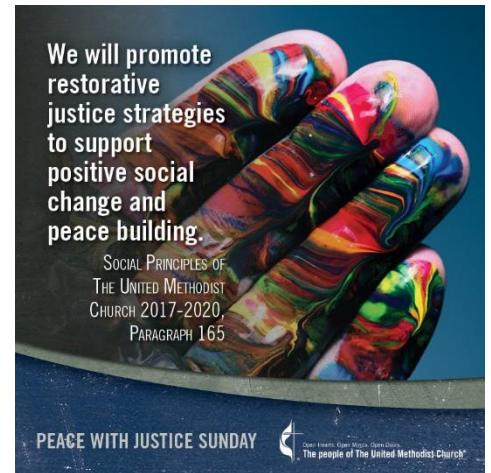
Prayers, Speakers, Information

*** Be inspired * Take action**

Organized by Churches Together for Justice: Christ Lutheran Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, First Congregational Church, Peace United Church of Christ, Webster Groves Presbyterian Church

Peace With Justice Sunday June 4

This year marks 55 years since the assassination of [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#), who gave his life in pursuit of racial equality and the eradication of poverty. Dr. King was killed in 1968 after showing up in support of a sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. King used nonviolence as a way to make his voice heard in the midst of a culture that was violent toward him. He understood that peace and quiet and true peace were not one and the same; rather he believed “true peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”



Sunday, June 4th United Methodist Churches will observe [Peace with Justice Sunday](#), one of our six church-wide Special Sundays. That Sunday we will be united in our attention and commitment to striving toward the kind of peace Dr. King pursued with his words and life. On Peace with Justice Sunday, United Methodist Churches will take up an offering to fund programs and projects that echo the very heart and spirit of those who fought peacefully for racial equality during the Civil Rights movement.

Please think prayerfully about a Peace with Justice Sunday gift to support the work of reconciliation that the world is crying out for in the midst of its brokenness. Such gifts allow us to respond to the world with the love of Christ.

Thanks,

The Risk-Taking Missions Team

Youth Ministry News

Sunday, June 4th Outdoor Night Activities in the Church Parking Lot
Make your own sub sandwiches and snow cones!

Nurses for Newborns Collection

The youth ask you and the community to join them in collecting supplies for **Nurses for Newborns**. A **collection bucket is located in the downstairs foyer** near the entrance. A list of items being requested is attached to the bucket. You can also go to: <https://nursesfornewborns.org/missouri/mo-wishlist/> This collection has been extended until June 11th.

Youth Car Wash June 10th

The Youth Car Wash Fundraiser for their Milwaukee Mission Trip is **Saturday, June 10th from 9:00 AM -2:00 PM at the Masonic Lodge** off Lockwood next door to Webster Groves City Hall and police department. The youth welcome your ***donations for the car wash!***

PRIDE Month Witness: We Are a Reconciling Congregation



Reconciling Congregations are committed to full inclusion in the life of the church of persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, family configurations, and standing against their discrimination in the church and the world. We chose to be a Reconciling Congregation over seven years ago. **PRIDE month** is an apt time to remember our commitment. We have a new rainbow banner outside, and for June we have hung a rainbow banner at the back of the sanctuary. These banners are part of our sacred space and will be dedicated this coming Sunday. Of special significance currently is standing with the trans

community in the face of harmful and discriminatory legislative actions. Last month, we stood with trans children, youth, and families against the passage of laws prohibiting medically certified health care and gender aligned participation in sports by raising our voices with Missouri legislative leaders. Pink and blue are the colors adopted by the trans community. Adding pink and blue to our banners is a witness to our continued support of the trans community in the face of discrimination.

Carolyn Redmore
The Justice Team

Prayer Concerns



Eli Stuart; Becca Stevens; Katie (Cindy Andrews); Randy Turman (Lettie Morse); Carol Carinci (Debbie Lund); Joanne (Marcia Kennon); Carol Wright (Bev Mesey); Adam Mallette and family (Beth Gewinner); and for meaningful gun control laws in United States

WUM Member Gold Medalist!



Congratulations to **Carol Gilker**! She participated in the **Senior Olympics** this past weekend and won **FOUR Gold Medals**—Weight Lifting, 50 yard dash, 100 yard dash, and 200 yard dash!

Grab & Go BBQ

Friday, June 16, 5:00-7:00

**Webster Groves Christian Church Parking Lot
1320 W. Lockwood Ave., Glendale, 63122**

BBQ meals to go with all of your favorite sides will be available for curbside pickup

Tickets on sale now, \$20/each
go to www.shepherdscenter-wk.org for online sales

*All proceeds benefit the
Shepherd Center's essential
services for older adults –
medical transportation,
grocery delivery, tech
support and more.*



Living Stones on Summer Break



Living Stones is on summer break. Our 10:30 AM worship service will feature a Children's Story led by Pastor Sharon. We also have **activity bags in the entryway near the upper Bompert door** for children to use during church service. We will resume the Living Stones program in the fall at the beginning of the school year. *If you need help finding the activity bags, one of the ushers will be happy to help you.*



Vacation Bible School

We are so excited for this year's **Vacation Bible School!** Children ages 4-12 are welcome to join us as we learn to be vital members of our community. VBS will run **Friday, June 23rd, 5PM-8PM, Saturday, June 24th, 9AM-1PM; and Sunday, June 25th during our 10:30AM service** with lunch following. *There will be a meal provided each day.*

If you have questions, please email directorchildren@websterum.org or leave a message at the church office 314-961-4133. To register for VBS, click on this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/vbs-2023-tickets-646690788557> We hope you will join us!

Save the Date: Juneteenth Celebration



Juneteenth commemorates the day (June 19, 1865) when 2000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas, and announced that 250,000 enslaved people were free by executive decree, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.

Save the date for the City of Webster Groves Juneteenth Celebration. This year's celebration will be held in **Ivory Crockett Park on Thursday, June 15th at 6:30 p.m.** *The Red & Black Brass Band will perform.* More information is coming soon!

Check out the City of Webster Groves weekly e-newsletter for updates and other opportunities to support the community. You can subscribe to have it delivered to your inbox by visiting <https://www.webstergrovesmo.gov/> and clicking on the *Stay Informed* button.

Freestyle Pool Passes--what are they and why should we support them?

Founded in 2021, the Freestyle [Pool] Pass program is a joint effort of the Webster Groves School District, the City of Webster Groves, the Alliance for Interracial Dignity, and Webster Rock Hill Ministries.

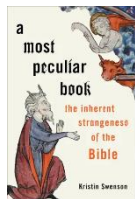
The Freestyle Pass removes barriers to the community swimming pool by providing free daily swim passes for individuals and families that require financial assistance. Thanks to the generosity of this community, 944 pool passes were used last summer! This program, initiated by the Alliance for Interracial Dignity, is an expression of community healing in response to our local history of discrimination.

For many years, our municipality denied the use of the community swimming pool to African Americans; additionally, for decades after the pool was integrated, policy maintained that non-residents could use the pool only with a resident "sponsor." That policy was rooted in exclusion, and while it was thankfully revised in 2021, Webster Groves hopes to demonstrate accountability for past wrongs by working to expand inclusion to water safety and swim instruction opportunities.

Freestyle Passes depend on private donations, with fundraising taking place every other year. This is a fundraising year. The hope is to expand the Freestyle Pass program to include a limited number of scholarships providing free water safety and swim classes to those who have a financial barrier to participating. The fundraising goal is \$8,500 for pool passes, with funds raised above and beyond that to be dedicated to "Gordon Grants," swim instruction scholarships named for Benny Gordon, Jr. Benny Gordon, an African American, was the lead activist who worked to integrate the Webster pool in the 1950's. He did so not knowing how to swim.

We can help keep it going! Checks can be made payable to WRHM, memo line "Freestyle Pass Fund", and mailed or brought to 111 East Waymire, Webster Groves, 63119. You may also donate online at <http://bit.ly/wgfreestyle>. Questions? Contact freestyleswimpass@gmail.com.

New Book Study for Space Class



Come join the **Space Class Sunday mornings at 9:00** for their new book study: ***A Most Peculiar Book-The Inherent Strangeness of the Bible***, by Kristin Swenson. They will begin exploring it **beginning June 4th** and all are welcome. Questions? Contact Jesse Hebisen at jessehebisen@gmail.com.