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## The Lamplighter

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church

Wishes you and your family a blessed and happy Advent Season as well as a Merry and Joy filled Christmas!



# The Lamplighter

## The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church!



### DECEMBER 2020

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Got News? Do you have something for our newsletter? Send items to the editor, Rick Bergmann at [lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com)

### From the Pastor's Desk Finish Strong!



This is the season of Advent and Christmas, a time of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. It may seem far off during the events of today, but there is a resolution... we must find those things within us. We should have a song and a Biblical verse that makes those feelings come alive. There are songs like "Deck the Halls" and "Jingle Bells" that make us smile when we sing or hear them. I imagine children singing at the top of their lungs in a key that is unique to them. They have huge smiles on their faces as they bump into each other keeping their own beat. Those images and their sounds of joy is what we need this season as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. The year started off with hope and promise for great things, then a Pandemic hit. The virus pandemic made us more sensitive to the other pandemics that we are experiencing. It may sound odd to see me write this, but we still have hope and promise. We, as Christians, live in the hope that comes from our relationship with God. We will face the days to come knowing the promise that God will not leave us nor forsake us. These assurances can be found in Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and Joshua 1:9 and several other places in our Bible. Deuteronomy 31:6 reads:

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."*

As we face the Pandemics of our time, there are several verses and songs that should bring us through as we courageously face them and work together to solve them. We MUST find the ones that bring us Joy, gives us Hope, reminds us of God's Love, and comforts us with the Peace of knowing that these times will pass. And the best part is, we can travel all over the world virtually and share with our family and friends to help them too. As we close out 2020 and work towards an equitable, unified nation, I encourage all of us to Finish Strong! God's got us.

Blessings,  
Pastor Jalene



HOLY BIBLE

## From the Editor



This edition officially marks the end of my first year as editor of the Lamplighter. It has been an unusual year to say the least. It is the first time in my 30+ years at Emmanuel that we have had to shut down for more than a week. Who would have thought that we would live through a pandemic. Although 2020 has been a year of change, it has also been a year of growth, a year of learning, a year of sacrifice for all of us. But, we will all come through it stronger in the end.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed this year, particularly Pastor Chase, Jane Grays and the office staff. They have helped tremendously with the monthly creation of this newsletter. Also, I have to thank all of those who allowed me to interview them for the We Are the Church articles each month. It's not easy to put the spotlight on yourself and they did it without hesitation. So, I thank you. But, I also want to thank members of the congregation who have emailed or called to tell me how much they enjoy the Lamplighter. One person wrote to me and said "it really makes you want to read it."

As we go into this new year, I want to encourage more of you to submit items and articles. We want to hear about what's going on in your lives. If you have some exciting news such as a new job, a graduation, a promotion, a retirement or any other happy activity going on in your life, we want to hear about it. We are a family at Emmanuel and we love to celebrate each other. Once again, thank you to everyone for your kindness and feedback this year. Have a wonderful, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Hopefully we will see each other in person in 2021!  
Rick

## Christmas Colors

By Elsie Cline

*\*Editor's note: This was originally published in the December 2012 edition of the Lamplighter. I thought it would be a good article to reprint as we are in the midst of COVID.*



Thoughts of Christmas conjure up visions of the many traditional colors associated with the holiday, namely: green, red, gold, white and blue. Why these particular colors? One theory is that traditions most of the colors de-rived from and customs of western/northern European countries where Christmas is celebrated in the middle of winter when it is dark & cold.

The Internet defines the symbolism of these colors as: GREEN - represented evergreen plants (Holly, Ivy & Mistletoe) used to, decorate and brighten buildings and also served as a reminder that spring would come; RED - the apples on the tree in the Garden of Eden, Holly berries for the blood of Jesus, and also,

Bishops' robes (hence St. Nicholas and Santa uniforms); GOLD - the color of the sun and light, both very important in the winter, and also for the gift to baby Jesus from the wise men and the star they followed; WHITE - purity and peace and snow of winter; BLUE - the sky and heaven and was typically worn by royal families and very rich people. It is often associated with Mary to show she was very important. All these colors are festive and bright, they reflect the wonder and glory of a special event, and lend an aura of peace, joy, contentment, happiness and serenity to the Christmas Holidays!

Another symbolism of the color blue is associated with Elvis Presley's rendition of "Blue Christmas," commonly known as the holiday "blues." This depressive mood is sometimes triggered, among other things, by the memory of the loss of a loved one, loneliness, stress, fatigue, etc. Unfortunately for some, this color dominates their holiday season.

Some suggested tips to cope and overcome the "blues" are 1.) spend time with loved ones, 2.) make your own traditions, or 3.) surround yourself with positive people and volunteer. An important acronym to remember is "SEE" (Sleep regularly, Eat well, Exercise). If you or someone you know suffer from chronic depression, support groups are very helpful, especially during this time of year.

Contact the office for information regarding the depression and/or bipolar support group that meets at Emmanuel United Methodist Church. Hopefully, these tips will help put more ho-ho-ho's in your holiday instead of bah humbugs! More importantly, focus on the reason for the season. Prayers and hugs to all for a blessed and joyous Christmas.

# Christmas Eve

## VIRTUAL SERVICE

Join us Friday, December 24th at 7 pm for our annual Christmas Eve Service.

Because of COVID restrictions, it will be virtual on Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85125785976?pwd=bExodVh2SE5XckxGVjB3N3A0ZFd2UT09>

Meeting ID: 851 2578 5976; Passcode: 850888 Dial in: number: 1-301-715-8592

## Do United Methodists Observe the Sabbath on Sunday?

*Originally published on umc.org*



Ghanaian immigrants gather for worship at Calvary United Methodist Church in Hamburg, Germany. They rent the sanctuary from the Evangelical Church, the state church of Germany. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

Sabbath (*Shabbat*) is a Hebrew word meaning “seventh.” The seventh day, for both Jewish and Christian people, is Saturday. Sabbath, the seventh day, is the day of rest for observant Jews.

The early Christian day of worship was Sunday, the day of the resurrection and new creation. In the New Testament and early church documents, we see Christians gathering for Christian worship on the day named as either “the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7) or “The Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10).

Early Christians varied in whether they kept Sabbath. Jewish Christians may have observed the Sabbath as part of their continuing participation in Judaism and would also have gathered with fellow Christian believers for worship on Sunday. But, as Paul noted, Sabbath was not to be seen as a requirement for non-Jewish Christians (Colossians 2:16).

Sunday was a workday in the time of the Roman Empire. Roman law recognized Judaism as a legal religion and so recognized Saturday as a day on which Jewish people could not be legally compelled to work. Because Sunday was a workday, Christians in many places did not gather mid-morning as is typical today. They would instead gather on Saturday evening after sundown, very early on Sunday morning, or on Sunday evening, so that those who had to work could gather with the whole community for worship.

When Christianity was declared a legal religion in the Roman Empire in 315 AD, the law did not reset “Sabbath” as Sunday. Sabbath remained Saturday for the Jewish people. Instead, it said that because Christianity was also a legal religion, its day of worship (the Lord’s Day, Sunday) should be recognized as having the same status as the Sabbath in Judaism.

Over time, some Christians conflated Sabbath (Saturday) and Lord’s Day (Sunday), replicating some aspects of a day of rest and borrowing Sabbath language from Judaism to do so.

For United Methodists and other Christians, Sunday is the Lord’s Day, the day of Christian worship. Sabbath remains, as it has always been, the seventh day, the day of rest for observant Jews.

### WHY SABBATH?

United Methodists do not mandate the practice of Sabbath on the seventh day. But United Methodists do call one another to practices associated with Sabbath in Judaism.

**Worship:** The General Rules call for Christians to gather regularly for “the public worship of God,” as Jewish people do each Sabbath. Our United Methodist membership vows of “prayers” and “presence” point to regular participation in gathered worship on the Lord’s Day.

**Trust:** God set a life-giving model for all when God stopped and let the creation simply be. Having a regular practice of stopping our work entirely reflects and builds our trust in God, in others, and in the value of the work we have done.

**Rest:** United Methodists value the practice of rest and note, “Failure to exercise or to rest and relax adequately is also injurious to health.”

## Did Charles Wesley write Christmas hymns?

Charles Wesley, a prolific hymn writer, wrote several hymns for Advent and Christmas. Some we know and others are less familiar. He composed the text of "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" in 1734. In 1744, Wesley published "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" in "Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord," a hymnal which was reprinted many times during Wesley's lifetime. In "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," Wesley wonderfully captured the anticipation of the people of Israel who longed hundreds of years for the coming of the Messiah. As we sing, we sense the words of the prophets calling the people to prepare the way of the Lord into history (Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1-4), and into our hearts and lives.

### The Christmas Story in the Hymns of Charles Wesley

*Come thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free,  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in thee.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 10*

*To you is born on this glad day,  
A Saviour by our host ador'd,  
Our God in Bethlehem survey,  
Make haste to worship Christ the Lord.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 1*

*He comes from on high,  
Who fashion'd the sky,  
And meekly vouchsafes in a manger to lie.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 16*

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"*

*Hymns and Sacred Poems, Hymn for  
Christmas Day (altered)*

*Ye simple men of heart sincere,  
Shepherds who watch your flocks by night,  
Start not to see an angel near,  
Nor tremble at this glorious light.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 1*

*Then let us turn no more aside,  
But use the light himself imparts,  
His Spirit is our surest guide,  
His Spirit glimmering in our hearts.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 17*

*Drawn by his grace we come from far,  
And fix on heaven our wishful eyes,  
That ray divine, that orient star  
Directs us where the infant lies.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 17*

*The wise men adore,  
And bring him their store,  
The rich are permitted to follow the poor.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 16*

*See the stupendous blessing  
Which God to us hath given!  
A child of man,  
In length a span,  
Who fills both earth and heaven.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 6*

*All glory to God in the sky,  
And peace upon earth be restor'd!  
O Jesus, exalted on high,  
Appear our omnipotent Lord:  
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,  
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,  
Once more to thy creature return,  
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.*

*Nativity Hymns, Hymn 18*



## WE ARE THE CHURCH



This month's member is Roy White

### How long have you been a member of Emmanuel?

It will be 26 years in January. After Washington United Methodist Church of the Deaf in Takoma Park closed, Beverly Huneycutt, Margaret Stanton, Doris Greve, Bonnie Bland, my wife Carrie, and I started attending EUMC. Margaret interpreted the worship services in sign language. Later on, Theresa Timity interpreted on most Sundays. We are very thankful for having Marilyn Tucker as the interpreter for the last several years.

### Who was the Pastor when you began attending Emmanuel?

Reverend Karpal

### What is your fondest memory of being a member?

Posing as one of 3 Kings in outside Nativity scenery is one of the favorite things. A sense of being part of the church community has been important.

### What are some of the ministries you have been involved in over the years?

When Reverend Richard Davis was the pastor, we taught Sign Language, and Reverend Davis and his wife, Candace, were in the class. I also taught sign language during Sunday school and between services. I also helped with filling boxes of food for food distribution several times. I also helped with the registrations of ESOL students. I enjoyed getting to know members during these activities. I have served as a Lay Leader since 2017.

### What is your favorite thing about Emmanuel?

Listening to inspiring sermons and participating in Bible studies are very important to strive as a disciple.

### What is your favorite scripture or Bible verse?

Philippians 4: 6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### Anything else you would like to say?

Supporting the Deaf Ministry is very much appreciated. I'm always happy to see anyone signing or even trying to sign.



Roy teaching the congregation to sign the Lord's prayer.



Members of Emmanuel's Deaf Fellowship from left to right: Roy White, Carrie White, Dan Kenyon, and Beverly Hunneycutt

**APPOINTMENTS  
AVAILABLE!**

The Pastor is available for appointments on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Email [office@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:office@eumcbeltsville.com) or call 301.937.7114 to make arrangements.



Attention Members of Emmanuel, If you are in need of food and were not able to make it during our normal distribution times you can contact Mary Ann

Vaughan at [mvaughan@ipcmclean.org](mailto:mvaughan@ipcmclean.org) to set up a time to pick some up. Sincerely,  
The Food Ministry

Find us on Facebook for the most up-to-date information

[www.facebook.com/groups/EUMCBeltsville](https://www.facebook.com/groups/EUMCBeltsville)



## Pitching tents to fight coronavirus

By Kudzai Chingwe (originally published on umnews.org)



Patients wait to be seen inside and outside a screening tent set up at Old Mutare Mission Hospital in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The United Methodist Church's mission hospitals are using the tents to screen and isolate patients to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Photo by Kudzai Chingwe, UM News.

United Methodist churches in Zimbabwe have long used tents to shade those who gathered at worship services or revivals. Tents also have been used after disasters to shelter survivors.

Now, amid a global pandemic, tents are being pitched to fight the coronavirus at The United Methodist Church's mission hospitals.

Most health facilities in Zimbabwe lacked an area for COVID-19 screening, so some have erected tents to protect personnel and patients.

The Rev. Alan Masimba Gurupira, administrative assistant to Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa, said two of the three United Methodist mission hospitals are using tents.

"Some are using them at screening, attending to outpatient (care) and for isolation of cases pending further investigation or transfer to referral hospitals," Gurupira said.

Dr. Godwin Choga, district medical officer for United Methodist Mutambara Mission Hospital, said they have two tents at the gate and in the outpatient department.

"Two people are manning the screening tent at the gate ... to help identify signs and symptoms of COVID-19," said Choga. He said they document detailed information for COVID-19 contact tracing and

management purposes.

Those suspected of being infected with COVID-19 are put in isolation in a tent set aside as an isolation ward, he said.

There have been more than 8,400 confirmed cases in the country and 246 deaths, according to the latest Johns Hopkins University tracking information.

Having a tent at the main gate helps to prevent the spread of the disease, said Annah Mujati, a nurse aide at Mutambara Mission Hospital.

Angela Macherechedze, acting matron and sister-in-charge for the family and child health unit at United Methodist Old Mutare Mission Hospital, said the outpatient department uses a tent donated by Hauna District Hospital.

"With COVID-19, we really need to be careful and manage these patients separately since it is highly contagious," Macherechedze said.

She said there are many advantages to using tents outside the medical facilities.

"It is mobile and can be used in any area where there is a dire need. ... It is good at providing enough ventilation. You can easily adjust it to suit your needs at any given time as compared to permanent infrastructures," Macherechedze said. "A tent is easy to clean and sanitize to maintain hygiene."

While staff and patients agree that having permanent infrastructure would be ideal, the tents offer an easy workaround, especially during an outbreak.

"What is important is to have a working place and save lives," said Annah Kasiyandima, a patient at the hospital.

Portia Gogode, outpatient department nurse at Old Mutare, said having an extra tent to use as a patient waiting area also would be helpful.

The tents have been used in a variety of ways since the start of the pandemic and even before that, said Shingirai Matsenyengwa, environmental health officer at the mission hospital.

"During outreach programs, a tent is easy to carry and to pitch. It provides the necessary privacy to both the patients and staff members. It can also be used as accommodation for staff members," he said. "If there is a shortage or unavailability of infrastructures, a tent is the best tool to use."

He said the main problems are temperature control and germs.

"When it is cold it is very cold and when it is hot it is very hot," he said. "In addition, the groundsheet can harbor bacteria, but most are killed when cleaned using detergents and sodium hypochlorite."

While the tents are a great option, Gurupira said, the cost is not manageable for most of the church's institutions. None of the church's 12 rural health clinics has a tent.

*Continued on page 8*

## United Methodist pens first book at 104 years old

By Kudzai Chingwe (originally published on umnews.org)



Martha "Granny" Mudzengerere shows off her new book, "Old Time Religion," which includes spiritual guidance and history about The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. It is the 104-year-old's first book. Photo by Kudzai Chingwe, UM News.

She is a mother of eight, a grandmother, human rights activist, teacher, preacher, pastor's wife and the only surviving founding member of Rukwadzano RweWadzimai, the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area's women's organization. Now, 104-year-old Martha Mudzengerere can add author to that list.

"Granny" Mudzengerere launched her debut book, "Old Time Religion," at a colorful ceremony Nov. 10 attended by United Methodist church leaders, friends and relatives.

"When I was told of this launch," Mudzengerere said, "I was gripped with fear and excitement. I started shivering and broke into tears. I never expected people to be interested in reading my book."

She was motivated to write the book after realizing that there was very little United Methodist history documented in her church.

"A lot of information is getting lost or people are dying without documenting it. With my age now 104, I have witnessed a lot, which should not go to graves."

The Rev. Alan Masimba Gurupira, administrative assistant to Bishop Eben K. Nhwatiwa, who presided over the launch, said the book is an important tool for church members.

"Our faith is strengthened as we operate from our roots, enabling members to realize the future with hope," he said.

Mudzengerere has been inspiring young women with her passion for activism. As a young woman in the colonial era, she fought for the rights of women and children.

"My achievement in education did not come on a silver platter. I fought my way out with the help of my mother, hence the need to do for others," she said.

In 1968, she said, she wrote the Ministry of Education on behalf of the African Women Fellowship of the Rhodesia Conference of the Methodist Church, expressing great concern for the inadequate education opportunities for African children.

"Children who completed Grade 7 were unable to continue their education. These children were too young to seek employment and desperately needed to be in school ... We wanted equal opportunity for Rhodesian Africans and Rhodesian Europeans," she said.

She also fought against the rising prices of basic necessities and the division of power in the country.

"I wanted blacks to occupy senior positions in government because the country belonged to us, not colonial masters," she said.

Mudzengerere was among the founding members of the popular women's group Rukwadzano RweWadzimai, which was established in 1938 under the leadership of Mbuya Lydia Chimonyo. She also helped develop the group's mountain prayer shrine and assisted in designing the organization's uniform — the women are known for their signature blue dresses with red collars and white headdresses.

The women's organization now has more than 20,000 members. Mudzengerere served as conference chairperson for 10 years and was an adviser after that. Her role with the organization allowed her to travel to different countries, said Evamae Katedza, Zimbabwe East Conference adviser.

"Granny Mudzengerere's leadership in church has been superb. ... She stood for the voiceless in the church and society," said Katedza.

Zimbabwe East Conference Board of Discipleship chairperson, the Rev. Gift Kudakwashe Machinga, expressed joy on Mudzengerere's achievement as author.

"There is high demand for teaching material in the church as the church encourages a culture of reading ... Each circuit is encouraged to have a library for research by preachers, pastors and congregants, (so there is) the need to write books to motivate others.

"There is high demand for teaching material in the church as the church encourages a culture of reading ... Each circuit is encouraged to have a library for research by preachers, pastors and congregants, (so there is) the need to write books to motivate others.

*Continued on page 9*

*Pitching Tents continued from page 6*

Melody Hove, sister-in-charge at the church's Arnoldine Mission Clinic, said she wishes the clinic could afford a tent to use during the COVID-19 crisis. A tent would have allowed less congested consulting rooms and more comfortable working conditions, she said.

The clinic does not have enough rooms for screening and an outpatient department.

"We attend to one patient at a time at the outpatient department and we (counsel and educate) patients under a tree and there is no privacy in these areas," she lamented.

Even when the pandemic is over, she said a tent would provide a place for monitoring children and health education.

The tents also have been lifesavers following disasters in the country.

In Chimanimani, soon after Cyclone Idai in 2019, the government established four campsites and provided temporary structures for survivors.

Nelia Samhiri, stewardship chairperson for the Chimanimani East Circuit's Ngangu United Methodist Church, lost her husband and house in the storm. Her son, Silence, was hospitalized for months due to injuries sustained during the storm.

"(With a tent), you quickly have a roof over your head as you try to come to terms with the calamities. It is fast to pitch. No need for many materials. One easily becomes independent. Having a tent is better than renting or squatting in someone's house," she said.

"However, when it is raining or when the weather is windy, we do not sleep fearing that it can collapse," she said, adding that it has happened before.

She and her family have lived in the tent for more than a year. Her son, a 22-year-old college student, said life in the tent has been difficult, but the family is grateful to have somewhere to stay.

Godwin Mupuro, United Methodist Hartzell High School deputy headmaster, said when a fire burned eight classrooms and other buildings in 2019, the school was left with no option but to use tents as temporary classrooms.

"We managed to pitch tents which accommodated five classes of 50 children each and an office," Mupuro said. "Lessons were conducted decently. The children were protected against bad weather."



Portia Gogode attends to patient Steven Nyakudarika, 73, inside a tent set up outside Old Mutare Mission Hospital in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Tents are being used to protect patients and staff during the pandemic. Photo by Kudzai Chingwe, UM News

## What Are Chrismons?

Chrismons, meaning "Christ monograms," traditionally are white and gold designs made from Christian symbols that signify Christ. Often displayed on an evergreen tree during the Christmas season, symbols such as stars, crosses, fish, crowns, and the alpha and omega remind us of Christ's identity, his story, and of the holy Trinity. Chrismons were first developed in 1957 by Frances Spencer and the women of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, VA. Many churches today display a Chrismon tree during the Advent and Christmas season decorated with handmade ornaments.



104 Year Old Author continued from p. 7

Mudzengerere said God appeared to her when she was a girl and she committed her life to him.

“Now, I can stand firm telling you about the goodness of God. Since the work I wrote is of God, the proceeds will go to the church to beef up the project of writing books,” she said.

Viola Mutema, Rukwadzano RweWadzimai evangelism committee member, said she learned many lessons from Mudzengerere.

“Granny taught us to fast, have ample time with God and to have an early morning prayer (rumuko) around 4 a.m. Before praying, one has to make a true confession to allow the Holy Spirit to enter.”

She thanked Mudzengerere for sharing her wisdom with other women.

“We appreciate the legacy you left to the women’s organization. You were selfless, hence you wrote this book, which teaches, advises and guides us,” she said.

Mudzengerere was overwhelmed by the support.

“Today is my great day,” she said, as she autographed the first copies of her book, which were sold to the highest bidders.

She plans to write another book on child abuse and how the church can help combat it.

Angel Zisengwe, her fourth-born child, said she was thankful to her parents for nurturing her and her siblings in a God-fearing family.

“We are proud of our mother, who opens her mouth with wisdom.”

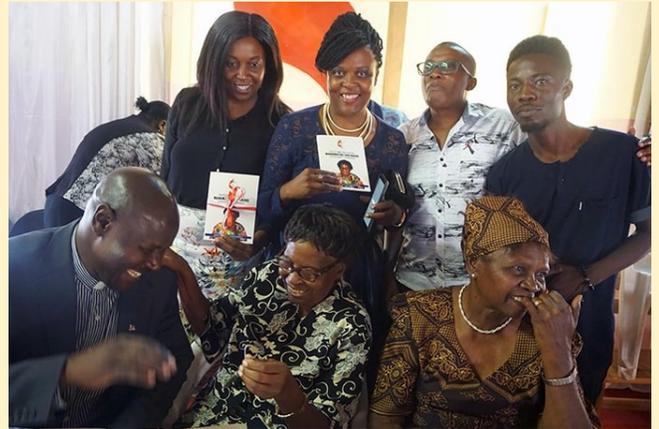
Granddaughter Vienna Zisengwe — one of 67 grandchildren and great-grandchildren — said she is inspired by her grandmother’s legacy.

“We are so excited about this (book) initiative and we are inspired by her ... at her age producing such a masterpiece. I am just overwhelmed by her work,” Zisengwe said.

Mudzengerere said people have been asking about the secret behind her longevity.

“The secret is surrendering my life to Christ. Whatever I do, I put God first,” Mudzengerere said. “As we were growing up my father was a cook and we got good guidance to good eating and exercising at an early age. ... No smoking, no drinking of alcohol.

“Lastly, keeping your life busy, smiling and forgiving others, despite harsh hardships. (Do that and) you will live long.”



Martha Mudzengerere (seated in center) enjoys a laugh with some of her grandchildren at a Nov. 10 event celebrating her new book, “Old Time Religion.” The 104-year-old is one of the founding members of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area’s women’s organization. Photo by Kudzai Chingwe, UM News.

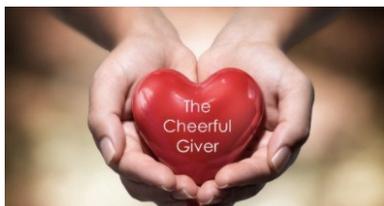
## Estimate of giving 2021

COVID-19 hindered our ability to provide the services to our community that we would have liked during 2020, but we were able to provide food during the monthly distribution. Our goal is to continue outreach in 2021 by providing food to families through our Food Distribution and on-site Pantry, teach English to individuals through our ESOL program, and hand out school supplies to local families. We will collect and distribute mittens and hats to local school children and hope to hold community events including a

Halloween Party, an Easter Egg Hunt, and Vacation Bible School. The Pandemic makes us realize that we are part of the solution when it comes to meeting the needs of our neighbors. Your Stewardship gift will aid us as we endeavor to worship God and service God’s people through our ministries. Join us as we vision our congregation’s assistance and include building an environment to engage the children, youth, and young adults. Your offering makes all the above possible because “a gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.” You can give in 2 ways:

1. You may fill out an electronic Estimate of Giving form online using the link provided. The online Estimate of Giving Form is at <https://www.eumcbeltville.com/estimate-of-giving-submission>
2. Those who receive mailed information from the office will have a form mailed to you. Please return the Estimate of Giving card by mail. If you would like a card, please contact the office.

Thank you for your faithful giving to the Body of Christ.



## Evangelism award winner slept outside church

By Sam Hodges (originally published on umnews.org)



Billie Jean Baker has an apartment now but for about three years had no home of her own and often slept outside Dallas' Oak Lawn United Methodist Church. She recently received a Harry Denman Evangelism Award for helping the church expand its ministry with the homeless. Photo by Sam Hodges, UM News.

Billie Jean Baker knows Oak Lawn United Methodist Church inside and out. She's a member, but she also spent many nights bedded down in the sanctuary shadows as a homeless person.

"I went to sleep on God's property and woke up on God's property," she said.

Baker's role in spurring the Dallas church to expand its welcome to the homeless recently prompted the North Texas Conference to give her a Harry Denman Evangelism Award.

The conference's livestreamed annual meeting featured a short video about her and a presentation from Bishop Michael McKee.

"I keep telling people I'm not deserving," said Baker, 48. "I'm just trying to do the next right thing to keep God happy."

But she does accept that she has helped Oak Lawn United Methodist and Union, a nearby United Methodist coffee shop and worshipping community, embrace a population whose relationship with churches often stops with handouts.

"I stand up for people who can't stand up for their selves," Baker said. "I have a loud voice and I have pink hair, so people are going to pay attention to me."

Baker was born near the Oklahoma-Texas border, growing up there and in Arizona. She describes a deeply troubled childhood that included sexual abuse and placement in foster care. She said she dropped out of high school, married for the first time at 19 and had three children, only one of which she is in contact with now.

Her problems and challenges continued through the years, and she is candid about having been addicted to alcohol and crack cocaine, as well as sometimes working as a prostitute to support her habit.

Baker, who battles Type 2 diabetes and was born blind in one eye, vowed in early 2016 to stop drinking and taking drugs. She removed herself from the people and the Dallas neighborhood that she felt contributed to her addiction.

"I made myself homeless so I could get clean and sober and start doing what God wanted me to all the time instead of just some of the time," she said.

Baker landed in the tony, progressive area of Dallas called Oak Lawn, which has its share of homeless people. For about three years, she spent most nights camping out on what she jokes was her "loft apartment" — an outside balcony of the Gothic Revival sanctuary of Oak Lawn United Methodist.

She also began attending the church, singing in the choir and volunteering.

In the summer of 2017, Baker made friends with the new senior pastor, the Rev. Rachel Baughman. Baughman was committed to having Oak Lawn United Methodist open its doors wider to the community, including unsheltered persons.

A big opportunity came on Dec. 31, 2017, a bitter cold Sunday. Baker entered the sanctuary early that morning and hunted up Baughman.

"I grabbed Rev. Rachel's arm and said, 'Come, I need to talk to you,'" Baker recalled. "She said, 'I've got to go.' I said, 'No! This is a matter of life and death!'"

Baker told the pastor that three different homeless people had asked her to request the church open that night as a shelter, since temperatures would be in the 20s. While Baker herself had blankets, other homeless people she knew did not and were at risk of hypothermia.

Baughman agreed to the request and made an announcement during worship about staying open that night.

That afternoon, Baker walked the Oak Lawn streets, spreading the word to the homeless. And that night a crowd of them enjoyed a meal and warm shelter at Oak Lawn United Methodist, which had pulled together a volunteer team and supplies.

"The homeless came in and they slept on the floor and on the pews," Baker said.

Baughman, in the video that went with Baker's award presentation, describes a church changed.

"That moment was groundbreaking for us at Oak Lawn," she said. "It set the path for us to welcome people inside — not just on freezing nights and not just for shelter, but also for a place of community and to experience what it is to be loved."

*Continued on page 12*

## Fabulous Flashbacks

December is the month in which we celebrate Christmas. This year will be different than any we have had before. Here are some pictures from Christmas throughout the years at Emmanuel.



*Evangelism Award Winner continued from page 10*

Oak Lawn United Methodist has since opened routinely on freezing nights, often with volunteers from other United Methodist churches. Baughman has become deeply involved in trying to persuade the city of Dallas to have a more comprehensive approach to sheltering those at risk, and to have more accommodating policies for churches that want to be a part of that.

She noted in an interview that the county's top elected official — Clay Jenkins, a United Methodist — asked Oak Lawn United Methodist to be a respite center in June 2019 for asylum-seeking migrants from Central America who had overcrowded shelters on the Texas-Mexico border. The church agreed, and migrants were brought in by the busload.

Baughman credits Baker with planting the mustard seed for all this, as well as giving her practical advice about ministering to homeless people. Baker also, the pastor said, has led other homeless people to worship at Oak Lawn United Methodist and participate fully in the life of the church.

“Just as in any kind of cultural or work setting, certain personalities have sway over others,” Baughman said. “Billie Jean is one whose personality certainly has sway over the homeless community we live in the midst of.”

The Rev. Mike Baughman, Rachel Baughman's husband, leads Union, the nearby coffee shop church. He notes that Baker has been an important volunteer and worship service participant there, too.

“Rachel and I are far better pastors because of her and our congregations are far better because of her love for Jesus,” he wrote in nominating Baker for the evangelism award.

With the help of Dallas nonprofit Metrocare Services, Baker moved to an apartment last October. It's 7 miles from Oak Lawn, and she has no car. That, combined with the pandemic, has lately limited her presence at Oak Lawn United Methodist and Union.

But on Sunday and Tuesday evenings, she brings her Bluetooth speaker outside her apartment and invites neighbors to listen with her to Union's livestream services. Sometimes a small group forms. Sometimes nobody comes.

Either way, Baker has found an advantage in worshipping remotely.

She can smoke.

“I gave up the drugs. I gave up the alcohol. God and I are working on the cigarettes, but we just ain't there yet.”



Billie Jean Baker is flanked by the Rev. Rachel Baughman (left) and the Rev. Mara Morhouse of Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, at a pre-pandemic gathering. Baker used to be homeless, and she often slept outside the Dallas church. Baughman, senior pastor, credits Baker with helping lead Oak Lawn United Methodist to open its doors more widely to unsheltered persons. Photo courtesy of Oak Lawn United Methodist Church.

## MEMORY VERSE CHALLENGE!

### Memory Verse number 12: Luke 2:11-14

11 Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. 12 This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, 14 "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."



## How Can I Give?

**Online:** You can now give online through Emmanuel's website at [www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving](http://www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving) or scan the QR Code below. This is a great way to keep up with your giving if you are out of town, are sick or if you can't come to church. If you have any questions, contact Kemi Oluwafemi.

**Through the Mail:** You can mail your offering to the church. The address is 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.



Share your talents at Emmanuel by Sharing the Word as a Scripture Reader during our Sunday Zoom Service! Help for a single Sunday or choose several. You choose how many Sundays you are able to help. To volunteer to serve as a Scripture Reader during our Zoom Sunday Service, just email the office at [office@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:office@eumcbeltsville.com) and they will let you know which weeks are available!

**No experience needed!**  
**We will train you on the job!**



## Start your week off with Virtual Worship at Emmanuel!



Join us on Sunday mornings in virtual worship through Zoom. Join us for 30 minutes of fellowship from 9:30-10:00 am followed by worship at 10:00. Use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85125785976?pwd=bExodVh2SE5XckxGVjB3N3A0ZFd2UT09>

or go to [zoom.us](http://zoom.us) and click join a meeting.

**The meeting number is 851 2578 5976.**

**The Password is 850888**

You can call in on any telephone (cell or landline) at 1-301-715-8592

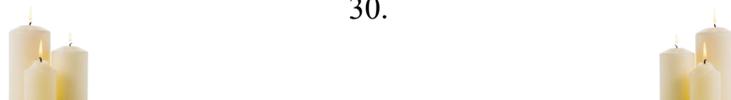
1. Motunriyo Oluwafemi
3. Ann Rowland
4. Gretchen Buchen
7. John Stewart
13. Cheryl Grays
15. Becky Cavallo, Michael McNealy
26. Alexandra Scotland
30. Kim Hiner, Maggie Leatherman



## In Memoriam

### Christian Love and Sympathy:

- ~ to the family of Melinda Hohler (friend of Sonia Kassambara) on her death.
- ~ to the family of Sarah Grace (family member of John Claye) on her death on October 30.
- ~ to the family of John Hill (union brother of Rick Whitecotton) on his death.
- ~ to Bart Seede on the death of his mother on October 30.



Please pray for our sick and shut in  
**Homebound:** Evelyn Adkins, Harry Cottman,  
Norma Hall, Carolyn Scarcia  
**Out of state:** Lil Mizzer, Dottie Gilbert

**EVERY DAY  
MAY NOT BE  
GOOD...  
BUT THERE IS  
SOMETHING  
GOOD IN  
EVERY DAY.**

