



*The Voice of the Harpeth River District UMW*

*Newsletter*

*Let Your Light Shine ~Ignited for Justice*

Hello Everyone,

Are you having fun with this COVID-19? I seriously doubt you are, just like I am not. I imagine you are like me in the fact that I miss my freedom to go when I want to, to hug someone when I want to, to stand close to someone when I want to and to go to church when I want to. Then, there is the other side of this: wearing a mask when you go out in public, wash your hands constantly and if something might have come in contact with the virus, clean it with a bleach or alcohol solution.

Have you really thought about how this is going to affect our church services once we are allowed to go? I am going to include part of Bishop McAlilly's blog that was posted on May 21<sup>st</sup> : **"Tentative Date for Return to In-Person Worship Extended."** After this important feature for our newsletter, I will continue to email each update from the Bishop as I receive them.

Local Unit Contact Ladies, please be sure to check your email at least once a week for further updates from the Bishop. In addition, when received, I will send you updates regarding our events sent to me by Nita Wright, Tennessee Conference President and Peggy Owen, Harpeth River District President. Regarding the Local Unit events, please email me any changes you may have regarding your events.

Thank you,

Janet Pierce  
District Communications  
Coordinator



## *From Bishop McAlilly's Blog:*

### **Tentative Date for Return to In-Person Worship Extended into June**

Posted May 21, 2020

On April 24, I announced that in-person worship and congregational gatherings would remain suspended until the end of May. After careful observation of the current trends and most recent data surrounding the spread of COVID-19, consultation with medical professionals, conferring with the COVID-19 response task team, and deep prayer, I have discerned that our tentative date for churches to begin coming back together for in-person worship will be **June 21, 2020**.

This date is **not** a mandate for which you **must** return to worship. Many of our churches will not be equipped and ready to safely engage in in-person worship. Rather, June 21 is a tentative date that will allow for in-person worship in an organized, phased manner **where it is safe to do so**. It is also a tentative date which is subject to revision based on current COVID-19 data at that time.

In this season, I have often been reminded of John Wesley's General Rules, "Do No Harm, Do Good, and Stay In Love With God." As we navigate our cautious and phased return to in-person worship amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been guided by these rules, particularly the first one, "Do no harm."

Therefore, I ask you to observe the following:

- First, approach this transition with prayer, seeking wisdom and guidance as you move forward.
- Evaluate your local community and church context. What are the local, state, and federal guidelines? Is it safe to begin physically meeting again? Would it do harm?
- Have you assembled a local team to assist in guiding the congregation through the necessary steps to ensure you do no harm in coming back together?
- Do you have on hand, or a plan to obtain, an adequate amount of approved cleaners and disinfecting agents?
- Do you have face coverings available for those who may not have one?
- Do you have volunteers ready, and does your congregation know the protocols and plans your leadership has agreed to follow?

On May 9, I announced that I had named a task team to guide us through reopening in light of Wesley's General Rules. This team, composed of laypeople, elders, deacons, local pastors, district staff, and current and former healthcare professionals from across our episcopal area, is diligently working to equip our ministries and local churches to come back together while being continually aware of our vow to do no harm.

**Today I share the team's initial [guidance for coming back together](#) while continuing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.** This guidance is compiled from the vetted resources of the CDC, HHS, OSHA, and state health departments.

Many of you have questions. I want to urge you to refrain from seeking out answers from sources that are unverified, unregulated, and unreliable. I will remain vigilant in communicating this guidance to you with time to react on your local level. I remain grateful for all who have done their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 during this season. Stay calm, stay the course, and stay connected.

(I encourage all of you to read the "[guidance for coming back together](#)" document. Janet Pierce)

## The Treasurer's Report

I hope this finds everyone well. I know that with the “staying at home” orders and with meetings cancelled, your funds may not be coming in as they normally would. I just wanted to remind you that the next remittance due date is **June 5<sup>th</sup>**. In addition to your remittances, your **2021 Pledge** is due on **June 15<sup>th</sup>**. The forms for these reports are in your Treasurer's Packet and can be found on the website as well.

I pray good health for each of you.

Debbie Miller  
District Treasurer  
615.337.2686  
debbie.miller718@gmail.com



## Treasurer Report

## Spiritual Growth



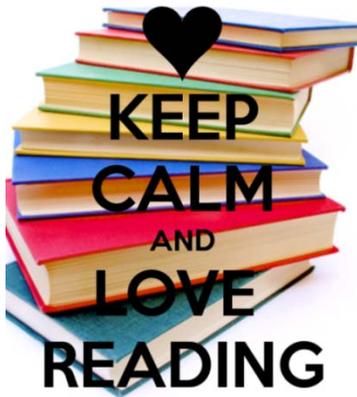
*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

*(John 14:27 NIV)*

### ***A PRAYER FOR GOD'S PEACE***

*Heavenly Father, please remind us to turn to You during times of distress. Help us to call upon Your Name, as we remember that You are a constant presence in our lives. This presence brings us peace which is lasting and secure - impervious to circumstances. In the middle of this uncertain season, we pray that Your strength will sustain us. In the precious name of Your Son, Jesus, Amen.*





## *Explanation About Book Lists on Website*

I think that some of you are afraid of the Reading Program. And, I believe if you knew more about the Reading Program, then you might participate. I know I did. I was not a reader before I started proofreading and formatting the lists for Bobbi Toombs (our Program Resource Officer). As I read the summaries of the books, I realized there were some that actually sounded like I would enjoy reading them. Here is an explanation of "Books" on the website.

If you click on Books, you will see kids holding books and an explanation of the program. The green writing gives you a very brief description of what to do. Then, the categories are listed. The plans for the Reading Program are listed next. For your first time, just focus on Plan 1.

Next, you will see Alphabetical. Skip that for now and click on Education for Mission. I have rearranged the lists in all 5 categories to begin with 2015 and end with 2020. The 2015 books will not be available next year to read. So if you see something you like, be sure to get it now. Of course, books are available at your public library. If they do not have it, but it is in the library system in another county, they will request it for you from that library. Also, you can find books at Amazon & Cokesbury. I suggest not purchasing 2015 books using your unit's money this year, since you will not be able to use it next year. If you buy a book, be sure to share it with the members of your unit &/or donate it to your library.

Now, back to the Alphabetical List. After I read a book, I always forget which category it is listed in. Obviously, you can scan the Alphabetical List to find the book and its category. Why is this important? At the beginning under Books, it explained that you have to read 1 book per category.

Under Forms, go to Reports, scroll down to Reading Program Reporting form, download it & print it; you will need this. When you finish a book, you need to record it here. All of the forms must be turned in to the person in charge of your Reading Program by August, whether you have read from each category or not. This information will be forwarded to Bobbi Toombs. At the Annual District Meeting, units that participate in the Reading Program receive a Certificate of Recognition.

Presently, Bobbi and I are going over the lists to make sure everything is in order. In addition, she has put together a list of the Bonus Books available. Bonus Books count for 2 books in that category. If you see a title with \*\*\* before it, that means it is a children's/youth book. For these to count, you have to read 10 books first, then you can read them.

If you need help in finding your first book, or a book in a certain category, contact Bobbi. She will gladly help you and give you suggestions. Of course, if you have questions, we are both available to help you.

Choose and follow one of the four plans. Selections can be from the 2015-2020 reading lists if not included in previous reports (including children and youth titles). When you have read the required number of books and magazine issues, report your completion to your local member in charge of program resources.

#### Categories:

Education for Mission  
Leadership Development  
Nurturing for Community

Social Action  
Spiritual Growth

Janet Pierce  
[pdj1169@gmail.com](mailto:pdj1169@gmail.com)  
931.242.0428

Bobbi Toombs  
[bobbitoombs@att.net](mailto:bobbitoombs@att.net)  
615.516.9428

## *The Program Resource Report*



Hey there – it’s me again!! Your Crazy Book Lady – [Surviving Social Distancing One Book at a Time!](#) I know that getting books is difficult for some of you with churches and stores being closed. Don’t forget about Amazon and Cokesbury. Just keep plugging away on that reading list. Be sure to look over the list on the website. Decide which books you will read for the rest of the year and write those on the report form. All books read during 2020 count. For those in charge of the Reading Program in your unit, the Reading Program Report for your unit is due in August.

### **2020 Social Action**

*Six by Ten: Stories from Solitary*

Taylor Pendergrass and Mateo Hoke, Editors

This is an eye opening book!!

Six by ten feet. That’s the average size of the cells in which tens of thousands of people incarcerated in the United States linger for weeks, months, and even decades in solitary confinement. With little stimulation and no meaningful human contact, these individuals struggle to preserve their identity, sanity, and even their lives. In thirteen intimate narratives, *Six by Ten* explores the mental, physical, and spiritual impacts of America’s widespread embrace of solitary confinement. Through stories from those subjected to solitary confinement, family members on the outside, and corrections officers, *Six by Ten* examines the darkest hidden corners of America’s mass incarceration culture and illustrates how solitary confinement inflicts lasting consequences on families and communities far beyond prison walls. Stories include those of Brian, who was shuttled from prison to prison across Illinois as part of an unofficial program that came to be known as “the circuit”; Heather, a mother fighting for the life of her son, Nikko, who was diagnosed as bipolar at a young age and sent to solitary as a teenager; and Sonya, a trans woman sent to solitary in a men’s jail in Texas, supposedly for her own protection.

### **2017 Nurturing for Community**

\*\*\* *The Perfect Place*

Teresa E. Harris

Delightful book that reminds you that the perfect place is where you make it.

Treasure’s dad has disappeared, and her mom sets out to track him down, leaving twelve-year-old Treasure and her little sister, Tiffany, in small-town Virginia with their eccentric, dictatorial Great-Aunt Grace (GAG). GAG (as the girls refer to her) is a terrible cook, she sets off Treasure’s asthma with her cat and her chain smoking, and her neighbors suspect her in the recent jewel thefts. As the hope of finding their dad fades, the girls and their great-aunt begin to understand and accommodate one another. When a final dash to their dad’s last known address proves unsuccessful, Treasure has to accept that he’s gone for good. When she goes back to Great-Aunt Grace’s, it is the first time she has returned to a place instead of just moving on.

## 2017 Spiritual Growth

### The Blessings & Bling

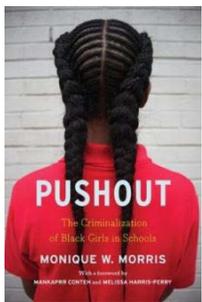
Sheron C. Patterson

Wonderful account of one woman's journey with breast cancer.

*Blessings and Bling* gives an upbeat take on a serious matter and shares real-world tips for helping you cope. Author Sheron Patterson uses her story to help others facing some of life's toughest challenges. In the book you will: find inspiration; get practical tips for dealing with life-changing diagnosis; learn to live in the moment; find purpose in your pain; and realize that God has not abandoned you. When Sheron Patterson put off a shopping trip to drop by a medical center for her annual breast exam, she thought she'd be in and out and back to her shopping. But when the results came back positive for cancer, she was stunned. That diagnosis eventually produced a life's work which focused on helping others facing challenges. Bling- fashion helped Patterson face her cancer head-on. From the depths of despair surrounding her diagnosis--to a heart filled with gratitude as she looks back on her journey, she tells the story of *Blessings and Bling* to help you see hope.

## Mission Study

I have been asked by Peggy Owen to be the presenter for our **August 22nd District Mission Study** at Waynesboro First UMC. This will be a 2 - 2.5 hour long study, followed by a brown bag lunch. (Normally, Mission Studies are 4 hours, but that requirement has been waived this year because Mission u was cancelled.)



The study will be: *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* based on the book by Monique W. Morris, which is on the UMW Reading List. "Despite increased attention to the mass and over-incarceration of black men, the plight of criminalized black women and girls is overlooked, underreported and under analyzed. *Pushout* shows how even with obstacles, stigmas, stereotypes and despair, black girls still find ways to breathe remarkable dignity into their lives in classrooms, juvenile facilities and beyond, and challenges the rest of us to do the same." Additionally, themes from *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, a *New York Times* #1 bestseller by Bryan Stevenson, will be

discussed. Stevenson is the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative. His book is an unforgettable true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to end mass incarceration in America. I am passionate about these topics and hope to share that passion with you. **BONUS!** I will be bringing door prizes to give away!!

Beth Stockwell

District Social Action Coordinator

## Partners in Mission

This is one of the highlights on the district calendar for the year. It is the perfect opportunity to advance unity between clergy and United Methodist Women, especially since the clergy are members of United Methodist Women.

The theme for this year is: “The Shining Light of our Children”. Mrs. Donna King will be our guest speaker. She will share important information about a statewide initiative focusing on the effects of traumatic childhood experiences on the families and their children.

The Harpeth River District will pay for the pastor, their spouse and two members from each unit. For the additional members that would like to come, the cost is \$8 per person. A Registration Form is available on the website. It is due Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. The event is Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at the Columbia First UMC. Units are encouraged to cover the cost of their members to increase participation. This is a wonderful time to enjoy fellowship with one another and to hear about an issue United Methodist Women are concern with involving women, children and youth.

Paulette Bledsoe  
Education & Interpretation Coordinator

## Calendar Update

*RISE - Postponed*

*June 27 - District Local President's Round Table w/ Potluck Lunch - To Be Determined*

*June 27 - District Leadership Team Meeting - To Be Determined*

*Mission u - Cancelled*

*August 22 - District Mission Study w/ Brown Bag Lunch - As Scheduled*

*August 22 - District Leadership Team Meeting - As Scheduled*

*September 11-13 - Spiritual Life Retreat - To Be Determined*

*September 26 - District Annual Meeting - As Scheduled*

*October 15 - Partners in Mission - As Scheduled*

“Let your light shine, the world is watching.”

~~ Darla from Antioch, TN

# NOTES

