



# MESSENGER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF TITUSVILLE  
206 S. HOPKINS AVE, TITUSVILLE, FL 32796  
SEPTEMBER 2023

## Special sanctuary lost in Maui fires

By Sam Hodges  
Aug. 15, 2023 | [UM News](#)

### Key points

- **The historic and beloved sanctuary of Lahaina United Methodist Church was destroyed in last week's wildfires on Maui, Hawaii.**
- **The pastor says some congregation members lost their homes.**
- **United Methodists are expressing concern and offering support.**

The massive losses from last week's [Maui, Hawaii, wildfires](#) include the beloved and historic Lahaina United Methodist Church sanctuary, as well as the homes of some congregation members.

Pastor John Crewe said he has been able to determine that no members were killed or injured, but many are displaced, as are he and his family.

Everyone, he said, is still coming to terms with the loss of life and property in Lahaina, a town of 13,000 on Maui's west coast.

"As the shock of witnessing the damage from the Lahaina fire begins to wear off, we will now endure waves of grief," Crewe wrote in a message posted to the church website.

The Maui wildfires claimed nearly 100 lives, and the search for bodies continues. About 2,200 structures were destroyed or damaged, and photos show the community of Lahaina — once the royal capital of Hawaii — was essentially wiped out on Aug. 8.

Reached by phone, Crewe said he has been encouraged by so many examples of Maui residents helping one another, and by expressions of concern and support from United Methodists near and far.

"I've got a backlog of emails to answer," he said.

Crewe has been tending to scattered church members, including finding and delivering insulin for one woman. He also has been visiting shelters to check on members of the church's homeless ministry.

On Aug. 13, he and a few others from [Lahaina United Methodist](#) attended worship at Ala Lani United



*Though a sign survived, the Lahaina United Methodist Church sanctuary was destroyed by the Aug. 8 wildfires that swept through the town of Lahaina, on the Hawaiian island of Maui. Photo by Tiffany Winn.*

Methodist Church, in the Maui community of Kahului.

Meanwhile, members of the church's Filiiai, Malamala, Oliveti and Tagaloa families gathered in a hotel room on Aug. 13 for worship led by lay leader Sione Malamala.

"We prayed for one another and praised God so many of our loved ones are safe," they posted on Facebook. "We mourned what has been lost but ultimately left with the comfort only God can bring, looking towards the future of our church."

The Rev. Tom Choi, the California-Pacific Conference's Hawaii District superintendent, verified the commitment to rebuild.

"Although the devastation to Lahaina UMC and the community is massive, the faith, commitment and spirit of the people will be able to overcome this tragedy, and they will ultimately rise from the ashes in triumph," he said by email.

The loss of the 101-year-old Lahaina United Methodist sanctuary is personal for some who live far from Hawaii. These are regular visitors to Maui who fell in love with the church building — and with the multicultural congregation.

"I am just devastated, as I know so many others are," said Jamie Harrington of McKinney, Texas, who first

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*Lahaina United Methodist Church's sanctuary was a special place for church members but also regular visitors to the west part of Maui, Hawaii. The sanctuary, built in 1922, was lost to the fires that devastated the community of Lahaina on Aug. 8. Photo courtesy of Lahaina United Methodist Church.*

*(Continued from page 1)*

attended the church with her partner in 2015 and has been back often. "They will rebuild. They are a strong and resilient people in Maui. But I know it will never be the same. The history and tradition in those four walls is irreplaceable."

The Lahaina United Methodist Church [dates to 1896](#), when a missionary from Japan, the Rev. Sotoshichi Kihara, arrived to minister to Japanese workers in the sugar cane and fruit plantations. Thus began a

remarkable church narrative that would eventually include Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, Tongans, Anglos and others.

The sanctuary lost in last week's fire was built in 1922, on Lahaina's Front Street. Elevated by lava rock and piers, the building's exterior was in the craftsman bungalow style, but the interior had a New England church feel, with Japanese carvings and other elements interspersed throughout.

A restoration project had begun just last year, in honor of the building's 100th anniversary.

Crewe said that on the afternoon of Aug. 8, he was at the parsonage with his mother-in-law, Angelina Burgos, his visiting brother, Ryan Crewe, and his brother's longtime girlfriend, Carmen Roman, when strong winds brought the smell of smoke.

They got no official warning to leave, but neighbors sounded their own alarm of the urgency for getting out.

"Hot embers were flying everywhere, brought over by the wind," John Crewe said.

By the time he and his group had left in two cars — taking nothing but what they had on — fire had begun to menace a fence by the parsonage.

Crewe's group faced traffic delays getting out of town but reached a shelter, and by the next night were settled with his wife, Hyaline Crewe, in an apartment in the town of Wailuku, where she works as an ultrasound technician. The apartment building is being restored

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## SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12 Henry & Eva Jenkins  
15 Mike & Kay Mustard

26 Bernie & Margaret Coveney

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 JD Daniel  
4 Janice Korintus  
6 John Bradford  
7 Jan Kikta  
7 Pat Cutter  
8 Bill Baldwin  
10 Jutta Yarber  
12 Larry Gilreath  
13 Floyd Lee

17 Helen Beeker  
19 George Nolan  
20 Nancy Burgess  
22 Margaret Coveney  
23 Mary MacPherson  
26 Patsy Gadapee  
28 Dan Everling  
28 Sharen Talbert



# 2023 July Budget Summary

The Finance Committee appreciates your contributions and donations. With your support we will be able to continue sharing God's love with those around us.

<u>Income</u>	
Total Income:	\$31,709
<u>Expenses</u>	
Church Programs:	\$308
Finance:	\$132
Church Administration:	\$1,094
Facility Maintenance:	\$9,920
Personnel:	\$21,696
<u>Conference Apportionments:</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Total Expenses:	\$33,150
<b>Income Under Expenses:</b>	<b>\$1,441</b>

The budget for 2023 is **\$489,821** which, divided evenly, makes each month's goal \$40,818 rather than being weighted differently throughout the year. Although we have begun trying to cut expenses where we reasonably can, we are still feeling the financial pinch. If you are able to still contribute during these lean times, please help us to maintain our regular operating costs as you find you are able. Only with the generosity of our congregation have we been able to weather the storms of the past and even the current storm we are in.

Thank you for your loving generosity in keeping this church operating!

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and their unit has no windows, but Crewe said it is comfortable and being provided by the owners at no cost.

Though the Lahaina United Methodist sanctuary was destroyed, along with an area used by a preschool, the parsonage survived.

Crewe credited Sione Pasikala, one of the property caretakers for the church. Unbeknownst to Crewe, Pasikala had stuck around as so many were leaving, and spent the night hosing down the parsonage and another residence — at times using well water.

“It really was an act of bravery,” Crewe said. “It’s a miracle he made it through.”

Crewe said the sanctuary was insured. Access into Lahaina has been restricted since the fires, but Crewe hopes to get back in soon to see if any artifacts might be salvageable from the sanctuary. He has so far relied on others’ reports and photos, and on satellite images.

He also is intent on getting the congregation back to a regular worship schedule, whenever and wherever that can happen. That some members are in shelters or other temporary housing around Maui is a challenge.

“Everybody is ready to have services as soon as we

can,” Crewe said.

As for Lahaina more broadly, Crewe is hoping that rebuilding will reflect local history and character — and not be just an opportunity for resort hotels.

“We need to make sure that spirit stays in the community and it doesn’t just become another playground,” he said.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank of the California- Pacific Conference has issued a [pastoral letter](#) about the Maui fires. The conference mobilized its disaster response task force and established a [Lahaina Relief Fund](#).

[The United Methodist Committee on Relief](#) has authorized a \$10,000 solidarity grant to the California-Pacific Conference for emergency relief.

“Recognizing the long road to recovery ahead in the aftermath of such destructive and deadly wildfires, we are accompanying the people of Hawaii in prayer and

## How to help

The California-Pacific conference has set up the [Lahaina Relief Fund](#) to take financial donations for the long recovery ahead. Donations also can be made to the United Methodist Committee on Relief’s [U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery Advance](#).

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# Waking Up

by Jake Owensby | Aug 3, 2023

<https://jakeowensby.com/2023/08/03/waking-up-3/>

The movers had finished unloading the van after sunset. Joy and I had gotten up early to get a jump on the unpacking. I was desperately searching for the coffee maker when the phone rang. It was our realtor C-. He said, "I need to ask you a question."

Thinking that he needed information to complete some form or other, I kept tearing open boxes and said, "Well sure. What's up?" It hadn't occurred to me that C- was a member of my new congregation, not as our realtor. That became clear when he asked, "What do I have to do to be saved?"

C- went on to tell me that he had had a very strict religious upbringing. He had left home and left church as soon as he graduated. Now in middle age, C- had started worshipping at the congregation I would be serving in just a few days. He didn't remember much about the faith, but he was pretty sure that he wasn't saved.

Initially, he talked about God's judgment and heaven and hell. But then he went on to tell me about his past and about the personal struggles he was facing just then. After a while, we made an appointment to meet in my office. And then I suggested that we would be talking about a slightly different question: How do I get to know God? That question would help us approach salvation in a way that might prove helpful to him.

I suspect we all know what it's like to need saving. Oh, I don't mean some guarantee that you'll go to heaven and avoid hell once you die. Instead, many of us have come to points in life when we feel like the wind has simply gone out of our sails. When life feels heavy or hollow or suffocating or overwhelming. Barbara Brown Taylor puts it this way: "[Most] of us know what is killing us. For some it is the deadly rush of our lives; for others it is the inability to move. For some it is the prison of our possessions; for others the crushing poverty that dooms our children to more of the same." (Leaving Church, p. 226).

In the Bible, being saved is always being saved from something right here on planet earth. Something like war or disease or catastrophe. God does the saving, and faith plays an indispensable role. I'll explain in more detail in moment, but first let's look at the story of Jesus walking on water. It goes like this.

Jesus has instructed his disciples to climb into a boat and go ahead of him to the other side of the lake. A fierce storm hit as the sun was setting. At daybreak, the disciples spotted Jesus. He was walking on the waves toward them. But they're not so

sure it's him. Maybe it's a ghost. Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus invited him to step over the gunwales. After a few steps, Peter sank and cried out to Jesus to save him. Pulling him out of the water, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:22-33)

Preachers and teachers often point to Peter's failed attempt to walk on water as a lesson about faith and doubt. If only he had had enough faith he could have stayed above the wave. But I'm going ask you to shift your focus. Notice that the disciples were not sure that the figure coming toward them was Jesus. Peter even said, "Lord, if it is you..." Did you catch that? "If." And then he asked for proof of identity: get me out on those waves with you.

It seems to me that this was what Jesus had in mind when said to Peter, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Or to put it another way, "You don't really know me yet, do you? Let's work on that. That way you will see that I'm always in the midst of things with you. Even the worst things."

Through the centuries Christians have gotten to know Jesus through spiritual practices. They connect us to the God who is always already reaching out to us in love. There are many traditional practices: worship, works of mercy, social justice work, fasting, almsgiving, Bible study, and personal prayer. The list goes on.

But let me be clear. An emphasis on spiritual practices shouldn't be confused with works righteousness. We don't worship or feed the hungry or pray to win points with God. We engage in spiritual practices in response to God's love for us. In fact, it's our way of being receptive to God's love for us.

As Nora Gallagher writes: "[The] purpose of a spiritual practice is to help us stay awake. Hidden in this kind of repetition is the chance that on any given day, the mind or the soul will connect with what is waiting to connect to us." (The Sacred Meal, Kindle Loc. 121) God is always present. Spiritual practices help us to be aware that God is always initiating connection with us.

Brian McLaren puts it this way, "Spiritual practices are ways of becoming awake and staying awake to God." (Finding Our Way Again, p. 18) We don't have to walk on water to get God's attention. Actually, it's sort of the other way around. God walks on water to wake us up. We're the ones who need help to be aware of God's presence right under our nose.

Some people might scoff at jailhouse conversions and the atheist's foxhole prayers. Not me. I believe that sometimes difficult circumstances can clarify our deepest longings. We long for a connection that makes this life worth living. A connection that assures us that

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our lives matter. Only God gives us a connection like that, and God is already offering it.

To paraphrase Richard Rohr, God is always present. What's lacking is our awareness. Spiritual practices wake us up to the love that we're always already being given.

Jake Owensby is the fourth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana and the twenty-sixth Chancellor of Sewanee: The University of the South.

The most recent of his six books is *Looking for God in Messy Places* (Abingdon). He is currently working on a manuscript about discipleship in the contemporary

world.

Before attending the School of Theology at Sewanee, Jake earned a PhD at Emory University and was an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Jacksonville University. He taught the history of philosophy and wrote about human consciousness and theories of meaning and understanding.

Jake and his wife Joy have been married since 1983. They have three adult children, three young grandchildren, and a very affectionate rescue dog named Gracie.

You can follow his blog at <https://jakeowensby.com/>.

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support,” said Roland Fernandes, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

Another \$10,000 is on its way from the Louisiana Conference.

Choi and the Rev. Van Stinson, assistant to Louisiana Conference Bishop Dee Williamston, were roommates while in the doctor of ministry program at Wesley Theological Seminary.

After seeing news footage of the disaster in Maui, Stinson worked with Williamston to fast-track a grant for the Hawaii District to use in relief efforts.

“We here in Louisiana have been the recipients of so much help from so many throughout the years,” Stinson said, referring to rebuilding after Gulf Coast hurricanes and flooding. “We like to try and respond when we’re able. It’s just another example of the beauty of the (United Methodist) connection.”

Lahaina United Methodist is a small congregation — just 75 members, with about that many people attending worship most Sundays, Crewe said.

But it is large in diversity, with English and Tongan services most Sundays, a Tongan choir and various Hawaiian elements in worship, including the [prayer of Queen Liliuokalani](#).

The church’s mission statement says, in part: “We are a rainbow of unique cultures and perspectives, striving to affirm and reflect our unity as sisters and brothers in Christ. ... We seek to enable and maintain a place and atmosphere of Aloha — of holy hospitality, enriching those in our island community and guests from around the world through worship, learning and fellowship opportunities.”

Many speak of the special feeling they’ve had in worship at Lahaina United Methodist.

“The services are intimate — you feel the presence of the Spirit there with the people,” said G. David Smith of Rockwall, Texas.



*Lahaina United Methodist Church has had many repeat visitors from the mainland U.S. and other countries who call it a special place where they've felt embraced by the multicultural congregation. The church's sanctuary burned on Aug. 8 in the wildfires that devastated the Maui, Hawaii, community of Lahaina. Photo courtesy of Lahaina United Methodist Church.*

He and his wife, Diane, were married at the church on Jan. 27, 1999, with the Rev. Piula Ala'ilima, pastor at the time, not only performing the ceremony but also playing the guitar and singing for them.

They've been back often and renewed their vows there in 2019.

Smith said he and his wife will be contributing financially to the church's rebuilding. They plan to be back on Maui in January, when he's hoping they can lend a hand if construction of a replacement sanctuary is underway.

“That will be our 25th anniversary. We will spend it giving back to the church that has given us so much.”

*Hodges is a Dallas-based writer for [United Methodist News](#). Contact him at 615-742-5470 or [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org).*

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**We will be in your neighborhood soon on Thursday, October 5, 2023 at Titusville - First United Methodist Church**



HOSTED BY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
TITUSVILLE & CONNECTION KIDS

CORNER OF S PALM AND BROAD STREET  
TITUSVILLE FL 32796

# September 2023

## First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>2</b> 7:30am Garden Club 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>3</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>4 Labor Day</b> — OFFICE CLOSED —	<b>5</b> 1:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 6:00pm Soliloquy 6:00pm Youth 7:30pm Broadstreet	<b>6</b> 9:00am Patchwork Friends 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh. 4:30pm Chancel Choir Reh. 5:30pm We Gather 6:00pm Crosspointe Reh.	<b>7</b> 9:00am Ladies Day Out	<b>8</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>9</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast 10:00am PEO Meeting
<b>10</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	<b>11</b> 8:00am Conn. Kids Chapel 9:30am Kids Playtime 10:00am Sara Fernandez Bible Study	<b>12</b> 1:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 6:00pm Soliloquy 6:00pm Youth 7:30pm Broadstreet	<b>13</b> 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh. 4:30pm Chancel Choir Reh. 6:00pm Crosspointe Reh. 6:00pm Family Yoga	<b>14</b> 10:30am Retired Teachers	<b>15</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>16</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>17</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>18</b> 8:00am Conn. Kids Chapel	<b>19</b> 1:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Unafraid Bible Study 6:00pm Soliloquy 6:00pm Youth 7:30pm Broadstreet	<b>20</b> 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh. 4:30pm Chancel Choir Reh.	<b>21</b> 11:30am Ladies Day Out 4:00pm Leadership Team Mtg	<b>22</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>23 Fall Equinox</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>24</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 3:00pm Songs of the Stage	<b>25</b> 8:00am Conn. Kids Chapel	<b>26</b> 2:30pm Sit & Fit 6:00pm Soliloquy 6:00pm Youth 7:30pm Broadstreet	<b>27</b> 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh. 4:30pm Chancel Choir Reh.	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 1-3pm Food Pantry	<b>30</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast

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## FUMC Staff

Reception Desk	Ext 201
Rev. Wayne Cook - Pastor	Ext 202
Mario Davis - Administrative Assistant	Ext 203
Glenda Waring - Membership Secretary	Ext. 204
Leah Patterson - Finance Secretary	Ext. 204
Lauren Good - Family Ministries	Ext. 205
Tom Mosier - Facilities Manager	Ext. 206
Leah Patterson - Custodian	Ext. 206
Carol Henn - Music Director	
J.D. Daniel - Organist	
Steve Rossi - Sound Tech	
Josh Huss - Lights and Visuals	

### **First United Methodist Church**

206 S. Hopkins Ave  
Titusville, FL 32796

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.

Worship Services: 10:00 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 8am – 4pm, Monday - Friday  
Closed from 12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Phone: (321) 269-7631

Fax: (321) 269-8359

E-mail Address: [office@fumctitusville.com](mailto:office@fumctitusville.com)

Website: [www.fumctitusville.com](http://www.fumctitusville.com)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/682694095204027](https://www.facebook.com/682694095204027)

Twitter Handle: [@MethodistFirst](https://twitter.com/MethodistFirst)

Instagram Handle: [@UnitedChurch321](https://www.instagram.com/UnitedChurch321)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChscOcLDe-wGkXHftvzGX9Q>

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# HELLO AUTUMN

