

150 YEARS  
1875-2025

# MESSENGER

August 2025

## Grieving church brings comfort in Texas floods

*The Rev. Amanda Banda and Heather Hahn  
July 7, 2025 | KERRVILLE, Texas (UM News)*

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/grieving-church-brings-comfort-in-texas-floods>

### Key points:

- † Kerrville First United Methodist Church in Texas opened one of the first shelters available early July 4 as the Guadalupe River rose 26 feet within 45 minutes.
- † Church leaders have been providing respite for families waiting to hear about the fates of loved



*Workers search through debris at Louise Hays Park in Kerrville, Texas, on July 6 after catastrophic floods over the Fourth of July weekend killed at least 95 people, including 27 campers and counselors at nearby Camp Mystic. Photo by the Rev. Amanda Banda, Rio Texas Conference. (Continued on page 7)*



# Children team up to help sick kids in Zimbabwe

By Chenayi Kumuterera

June 25, 2025 | HARARE, Zimbabwe (UM News)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/children-team-up-to-help-sick-kids-in-zimbabwe>

## Key Points:

- † The Harare Inner-City Junior Church members donated medical supplies and other gifts for children in the city hospital's pediatric unit.
- † With support from their parents, teachers and other well-wishers, the youth raised \$2,500.
- † Each age group raised funds for specific donations: plastic dinnerware (youngest students), material for hospital pajamas (grades 2-3), medical supplies (grades 4 and 5), television (grades 6-7), and refrigerator (teachers).

More than 20 Harare Inner-City United Methodist Church children worked together to gather money and supplies to help sick children in Harare Hospital's pediatrics unit.

"I feel so happy to reach out to kids my age," 8-year-old Mecalala Shombga said. "Our Sunday school teacher taught us to give generously to those in need and pray for them."

The donation, valued at \$2,500 USD, included medical supplies such as gauze, oxygen masks, syringes, and zinc cream; an upright refrigerator; two four-plate stoves; a television; plastic dinnerware; individual fruit baskets; and textbooks.

"I want to encourage other kids to pray to God," said Anopa Zaranyika, 9, who was treated at the hospital after a fall at age 4. "I prayed to God for life and believed that Jesus' resurrection had already brought victory."

The young givers, ages 4-12, inspired appliance shop salesman Roper Chakava to join the fundraising efforts. "This act of generosity challenged me and my team," he said. "This act of love reminded us to know where we can channel our funds."

The Harare Inner-City Junior Church Sunday school class visited various wards at the hospital on May 1.

"We are giving these gifts with love in our hearts and believe that they will bring joy and hope to you here," said 10-year-old Chitsidzo Zhungu, as he gave a fruit basket to each patient.

"May God bless you," responded a parent whose son was recovering from a leg fracture. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she received the gift.



*Members of the Harare (Zimbabwe) Inner-City United Methodist Church's junior Sunday school class pose with some of their gifts for the local hospital's pediatric unit. The children and teachers donated medical supplies, stoves, and gifts for children. Appliance salesperson Roper Chakava stands second from right. Photo by Chenayi Kumuterera, UM News.*

Four-year-old Mirainashe Gwara shared fruit with a new friend who, like her, loves long braids.

Chelsea Chigodora, Junior Church lay leader, said she was grateful to be with the patients representing Harare Inner-City United Methodist Church.

"We know you might not be feeling well right now, but we want you to know that we are thinking of you and we care about you very much. Just like the Bible tells us in [1 John 3:18](#), 'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'"

She said together with support from their parents, teachers, and other well-wishers, the youth raised the funds to buy the gifts.

"We believe (they) will go a long way in making your road to recovery easier. We are excited and humbled by the love of God that has enabled us to bring you two four-plate stoves to help make warm meals for you, a TV for you to enjoy, 150 plastic cups and plates, 76 school textbooks, and exercise books for grades 1 to 7, so when you are feeling better, you will be ready to learn."

She said in addition to the medical supplies, they also provided material to make pajamas and soft bed sheets to help the children feel more comfortable.

"We hope that these gifts will bring a smile to your face and make things a little bit easier for you while you are getting better," Chigodora said. "Remember that God loves you very much, and we are praying for you to get well soon and be able to go home and play. Be brave and know that you are strong."

She thanked the medical staff for their care. "We appreciate your hard work, kindness, and dedication,"

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## 2025 June 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:	\$39,901
<u>Expenses</u>	
Church Programs:	\$33
Finance:	\$543
Church Administration:	\$2,401
Facility Maintenance:	\$9,188
Personnel:	\$22,689
<u>Conference Apportionments:</u>	<u>\$3,256</u>
<i>Total Expenses:</i>	<i>\$38,110</i>
<b>Income Over Expenses:</b>	<b>\$1,791</b>

The budget for 2025 is **\$500,000** which, divided evenly, makes each month's goal \$41,667 rather than being weighted differently throughout the year.

Thank you for your loving generosity in keeping this church operating! Only with the generosity of our congregation have we been able to weather the storms of the past and even the storms that will inevitably come.

### August Anniversaries

- 10 Larry & Jan Gilreath
- 17 Duane & Nancy Torneden
- 17 Phelix & Salome Owiti
- 18 Bill & Natalie Walls
- 23 John & Carol Stephens
- 24 Jackie & Imogene Smith
- 31 George & Fran Nolan

### August Birthdays

- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Bob Titus                | 22 Sue Whitson     |
| 6 Julie Harrison           | 24 Eva Jenkins     |
| 7 Joy Brady                | 25 Jan Gilreath    |
| 10 Patty Mooney-Hildebrand | 26 Carole Copeland |
| 19 Carol Henn              | 27 Trudy Metzger   |
| 22 Rita Clark              | 31 Peggy Moyer     |



PARTY PREPARATION,  
(at First United Methodist Church)

Miss Good: "I hear there will be a grand party on  
October 11 & 12 at the church! Whatever shall I wear?"

"I think anything but that, my dear."

# US Supreme Court rulings challenge church

By Heather Hahn  
July 2, 2025 | UM News

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/u-s-supreme-court-rulings-challenge-church>

## Key Points:

- † At the end of its term, the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for more rapid deportations to “third countries” and limited how lower-court judges can respond to a challenge to birthright citizenship and other Trump policies.
- † Both actions disappoint United Methodist leaders who urge fellow church members to speak out for biblical teachings and continue to care for immigrants.
- † A church historian points out that this is not the first time the people called Methodist have found themselves at odds with U.S. laws while trying to live out their faith.

Recent U.S. Supreme Court orders have left United Methodist leaders troubled but no less committed to the denomination’s longtime emphasis on caring for immigrants.

The high court closed out its term by [making it easier](#) for the Trump administration to deport people to “third countries,” where they risk torture, and [making it harder](#) for lower-court judges to stop President Trump’s salvo against birthright citizenship.

Those orders come after the court in May allowed the Trump administration [to end protected status for thousands of Venezuelans](#) and [revoke parole](#) that authorized another half million people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to stay in the U.S. Essentially, these actions clear the way for the government to declare people’s status illegal en masse — with no accusation of wrongdoing — even as their cases move forward in the courts.

Taken together, these rulings give a green light to mass-deportation plans while raising doubts about due-process protections.

“These decisions raise deep concern for us as people of faith,” said Bishop Tracy S. Malone, [president of the Council of Bishops](#). “As United Methodists, we are called to see every person — regardless of status or origin — as a child of God.”

Malone, who also leads the Indiana Conference, said the orders threaten immigrants’ basic rights.

From a Christian perspective, she added, the



*The U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington. While disappointed in recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings related to immigration and birthright citizenship, United Methodist leaders remain committed to upholding the denomination’s teachings to welcome all people as children of God. File photo by Clayton Childers, United Methodist Board of Church and Society.*

rulings also stand “contrary to the Gospel’s call to welcome the stranger, defend the vulnerable, and honor the dignity of every human being.”

## Rising dread

Retired Bishop Minerva Carcaño, who chairs the bishops’ Immigration Task Force, said both church members and the communities churches serve are living with growing fear.

For the most part, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are rounding up people who are not criminals. Agents — often masked and refusing to identify themselves — are seizing people at worksites, convenience stores, farms, and courthouses.

Merely being in the U.S. without documentation [is not a crime](#) but a civil offense. The people being arrested often have been working to gain legal status while raising families, working needed jobs, and paying taxes.

“Our immigrant brothers and sisters are day by day being attacked emotionally and even physically in the light of day for all to see,” Carcaño said. “Often without due process, they are being separated from their families without their families knowing where they have been taken and even sent to prisons in other countries where they cannot be helped by anyone. This violates U.S. laws and is unjust and inhumane.”

The United Methodist Church has long taught — based [on multiple Scripture passages including Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:35](#) — that church members are called to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants. The

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## We need a new table where all are welcome

*Commentary by Ben Smith*  
June 13, 2025 | KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (UM News)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/we-need-a-new-table-where-all-are-welcome>

### Key points:

- † **The systems we've inherited are suffocating our future, writes young adult leader Ben Smith.**
- † **Built for another era, these systems function to protect power, are resistant to change, and preserve a table that was not built with everyone in mind, he says.**
- † **If we want a future, we cannot simply pull up more chairs. We need a new table; one by and for the very people the Spirit is calling to lead us forward.**

After years working inside my annual conference and across our connection, I've seen up close how our structures dismiss the imagination of young adults, sideline the insights of lay people, and grow increasingly silent when confronted with honest truth.

If The United Methodist Church is going to have a future, it won't come from doubling down on what's familiar. Instead, it will come from a movement of people — especially those long pushed to the margins — not just pulling up chairs, but building a new table from scratch.

This conviction was reaffirmed earlier this month, when I stood before my annual conference and named some of these very truths.

In Holston's first Young Adult Address, I spoke from a place of deep fatigue — weariness that comes from holding up structures that no longer serve the communities around us. I confessed how often we confuse institutional preservation with faithful mission.

I spoke of the weight young people inherit when we step into systems we had no hand in building but are now expected to save. And I shared the grief that comes with watching a church we love grow smaller, older, and more risk-averse while the world cries out for courage, imagination, and belonging.

The response in the room was undeniable: cheers, a standing ovation and dozens of conversations afterward with people — young and old, clergy and lay — who said, "Finally, someone said it." For the first time in a long time, someone on the stage said what so many of us have been carrying in silence.

And yet silence (or worse, dismissive platitudes) is what I received from some of

the very leaders I've served under and looked up to for years.

I've spent the past three years on my conference's staff, trying to effect change from the inside. I have been in the rooms. I have served on the committees. I have offered ideas. I have asked questions. I have raised concerns. And, yet, again and again, I have seen the walls come up, boxing me out of a culture more invested in institutional order than holy imagination.



*Ben Smith. Photo courtesy of the author.*

That silence speaks volumes.

But so does the response of my annual conference. And it's that response that convinced me: This must be a movement of the people.

This movement will not be led by bishops or carried out by committee. This movement will be rooted in the voices and bodies of those most often left out of the decision-making process — the young people, the lay people, the queer people, the people of color. The ones who've had to build community in the cracks of our broken table.

This isn't just in Holston. Friends and colleagues across the connection report strikingly similar stories. I am willing to bet that you have felt it too if you've tried to lead from the margins. The gatekeeping. The silence. The deflection. The slow erosion of energy when your questions go unanswered and your contributions go unrecognized. The systems around us were not built to make space for the future. That's why it's time we start building something new.

In my address to Holston, I named more than what's broken. I named the Spirit's invitation to something new: a resurrection that holds our wounds without hiding them, a re-remembering of the Body of Christ that centers the voices we've too often excluded, a church that journeys together not for the sake of survival but in pursuit of The Spirit's calling.

We need more than rebranding and strategic plans. We need a reimagining of leadership itself. One that prioritizes the voices who haven't always been in leadership — not as a demographic to reach but as leaders to empower. It means examining every system and tradition and asking: Who does this serve? Who does it silence? What might we need to release so others can finally have space?

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## United Methodist pastor: I believe Jesus weeps with us

Commentary by *Hannah Buchanan*  
July 9, 2025 | DALLAS (UM News)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/united-methodist-pastor-i-believe-jesus-weep-with-us>

### Key points:

- † A pastor at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Hannah Buchanan writes about grief and serving in a community that has been “shaken to its core” by deadly flooding.
- † Eight-year-old Hadley Hanna, who died in the flood, is part of the church’s family. Her parents were married 12 years ago in Highland Park’s sanctuary, the same space where Hadley’s memorial service will be held on July 11.
- † “For me, to grieve as a Christian is to grieve with hope. I believe I am not alone in my outrage and sadness. God feels it, too,” Buchanan writes.

The Lakewood Parade in East Dallas had barely finished when murmurs of the missing girls from Camp Mystic passed between moms at our Fourth of July party. We had all just fetched our third graders from their “Wizard of Oz” parade float, with thoughts largely centered on what’s for lunch, and where we’d watch fireworks later.

Murmurs quickly became headlines, video footage and then names. These were names of girls and families we

knew. The festivities continued, but the party was over.

I serve as a pastor in a community that has been shaken to its core by this crisis. Many of our grandmothers, mothers, and daughters mark the onset of summer by driving through the green gates of Camp Mystic. The Hill Country is familiar territory for us, along with the river that swallowed more than 100 people last weekend, at least seven of whom were little girls from our neighborhoods.

Sunday morning, we came to church hungrier for God than usual. Or at least hungry for comfort, for guidance, and for some reassurance that things will be OK. Could God give that to us in a moment like this?

Huddled together in the dim lights, we sang songs about God’s faithfulness, how God is our solid rock and how it is well with our (very sad) souls. I prayed from the platform as honestly as I knew how. Then my friend and colleague, the Rev. Matt Tuggle, delivered a deeply moving message, borne from his own grief as a father and a pastor.

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*Hannah Buchanan.*  
Photo courtesy of the author.

## Giving Methodist women their due

By *Jim Patterson*  
July 16, 2025 | UM News

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/giving-methodist-women-their-due>

### Key points:

- † The women who were first through the door to become leaders in The United Methodist Church haven’t gotten the recognition they deserve, say two historians who’ve edited a book to start correcting that situation.
- † “Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice” features profiles of Mary McLeod Bethune, Bishops Charlene Kammerer and Leontine T.C. Kelly and six others.
- † The book was intended for classroom use but has fascinating stories that would appeal to more general readers.



*Holding hands during a service of appreciation for African Americans who stayed in the church despite institutional racism at The United Methodist Church's 2004 General Conference in Pittsburgh are, from left: Anne Marshall of the church's Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns; Juanita Bryant of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Jerry Ruth Williams; the Rev. Larry Pickens; and Bishops Violet L. Fisher and Charlene P. Kammerer.*  
File photo by Mike DuBose.

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**ones at the inundated Camp Mystic, about 18 miles away.**

† **Church leaders are asking for prayers to bring comfort to those affected, as well as financial donations to begin relief efforts. The Rio Texas Conference is not yet ready to mobilize volunteers.**

Shortly after midnight July 4, leaders of First United Methodist Church in Kerrville got word that the Guadalupe River was rising rapidly and people needed shelter.

So the church quickly opened its facilities — including [its ministry Light on the Hill](#), a former retreat center that now serves as a hub for social services. Among those who came were families from across the country waiting to learn the fates of loved ones at Camp Mystic, the Christian camp swallowed by floodwaters.

By July 6, grieving church members and visitors gathered in the stained-glass-lit sanctuary to worship God and seek God's comfort.

“You can just feel the heaviness in this space,” said Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, who joined the church for Sunday services.

“And at the same time, we know that we serve alongside a God of hope, a God of possibility, a God that never leaves us or forsakes us, a God that is always promised to be with us.”

Catastrophic floods over the Fourth of July weekend [have killed at least 95 people](#), including 27 campers and counselors at Camp Mystic. In the predawn of July 4, the remnants of what had been Tropical Storm Barry brought heavy rains with the Guadalupe River rising 26 feet in 45 minutes.

The result was a historic disaster in Kerr County and other Hill Country communities outside San Antonio. Questions remain about Kerr County's [lack of an emergency-siren system](#), the National Weather Service's own warnings and the federal government's slashing of staff and services since the beginning of the year.

For now, United Methodists are focused on what immediate help they can provide.

Harvey, a former head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, is no stranger to natural disasters. She now leads both the Houston-based Texas Conference that stretches along the hurricane-prone Gulf Coast, as well as the San Antonio-based Rio Texas Conference that extends from the southernmost tip of Texas up through the now-inundated Hill Country.

However, she acknowledged it is hard to find the right words to respond to the scale of

devastation and human loss in this tragedy.

Everybody at Kerrville United Methodist, she said, knows at least someone who has experienced loss or is mourning for someone dear themselves.

“There's lots of friends and families, a local soccer coach, other prominent figures in town and whole families that were lost,” said the Rev. David Payne, Kerrville First United Methodist's senior pastor.

The Texas Hill Country — known for its natural beauty and typically peaceful waters — also has long been a place where people have come each summer to grow in faith at various religious campgrounds across the area.

The 99-year-old Camp Mystic, while not United Methodist related, is special to many in the Kerrville congregation. During his Sunday sermon, Payne grappled with the terrible news that Dick Eastland, the beloved director of the Christian girls camp, [had died while trying to rescue campers from the raging waters](#).

In comforting his flock, Payne turned to Paul's words in [Romans 8:38-39](#), reminding churchgoers that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Not death nor life, not angels nor rulers, Paul wrote. “Not floodwaters, not loss of life, not catastrophic storms,” Payne added, [according to Texas Monthly](#).

In the days since the flood, United Methodists and friends as far away as England have asked Payne and other Kerrville church leaders how they can help.

Payne spent most of the weekend informing well-meaning people that the area is not ready to accept volunteers.

What's needed most right now is prayer and financial donations to the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the denomination's disaster-response arm. UMCOR has already distributed a \$10,000 solidarity grant to the Rio Texas Conference for immediate needs.

“It's funny how so many times, what I've heard is: ‘OK, besides prayer, what can I do?’” Payne said. “And shame on us, because that's the best thing we can do.”

The Rev. Melissa O'Donnell, the church's associate pastor, asked for prayers for her and church staff to know how to comfort families who lost children or other loved ones at Camp Mystic.

“As the day goes on and you're not finding your daughter, then you're realizing it's now a recovering mission, and you just want them to be recovered as soon as possible,” O'Donnell said, “because these families really are wanting some closure.”

The families have come from across the nation,

*(Continued from page 7)*

O'Donnell said. "Giving them that Hill Country love and supporting them has been, I think, really important," she said.

Beth Palmer, the church's outreach director, said the hope of Christ has been central to the church's response to all in need.

"It's the foundation. It is the focus of everything that we're doing," she said. "Because when you have lost everything, and when you feel like there's nowhere to go, and that all hope is lost, that is where our hope comes from."

As the rescue operations turn into relief operations, the Kerrville congregation's Light on the Hill ministry will now become a staging ground for National Guard and other first responders.

Throughout the long grieving and recovery process, Harvey said she and other United Methodists in the region will hold onto God's promise "as we walk alongside these people here whose hearts are broken alongside ours."

She asked that people continue to pray. Referencing Methodism founder John Wesley's last words, she said, "We know, best of all, even in moments like this, God is

with us."

*Banda started July 1 as the director of communications for the Rio Texas Conference. Hahn is assistant news editor for UM News. Contact them at (615) 742-5470 or [newsdesk@umnews.org](mailto:newsdesk@umnews.org). To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free UM News Digest](#).*

### How to help after deadly flooding

The Rio Texas Conference is continuing to assess the impact of the catastrophic flooding that killed at least 95 people, including children.

One of the most effective ways to help right now is through prayer and through financial gifts.

People can give to the Rio Texas Conference Disaster Response Advance #2050, noting "Guadalupe River Flood" on the gift. Monetary donations to the conference disaster response can be mailed to Rio Texas Conference, 16400 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, TX 78248. The conference is working on an online giving option.

Learn more about [Hill Country Flood](#)

People also can give online to the United Methodist Committee on Relief U.S. Disaster Response.

*(Continued from page 2)*

she said. "You are doing God's work by helping these young ones. We pray that God will give you strength and wisdom every day."

Pfungwa Mhlanga, Junior Church coordinator, said it was a rewarding experience for all involved.

"This was, indeed, a success to see our kids being able to respond to the teachings we give them using our community Bible study material and Bible texts on giving generously, outreaching, and making impact to our church and our communities through love and caring."

Each age group raised funds for specific donations: plastic dinnerware (youngest students), material for hospital pajamas (grades 2-3), medical supplies (grades 4 and 5), television (grades 6-7), and refrigerator (teachers).

"This is just a drop in an ocean," Mhlanga said. "We will move on to our UMC hospitals and health institutions."

The Rev. Phaniel Razo, Harare Inner-City pastor in charge, said the values and principles instilled in childhood can have a lasting impact.

"Train children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn

from it," Razo said. "Our Junior Church members gained a strong sense of belonging and personal fulfillment due to their participation. The children were overjoyed by the opportunity to be connected to the community as they joined the world in making a tangible difference in the lives of those around them by showing them God's love."

Representing Harare Inner-City United Methodist's Connectional Ministries, Stewart Chatsama and Rumbidzai Muzanenhamo noted that the project was a great lesson for the children on how to share faith, build relationships, strengthen social connections, and build character.

Phoebe Zuze, Harare Inner-City Christian education superintendent, said the outreach initiative is something the children can be proud of.

"Your act of love, generosity, and selfless giving speaks volumes about the work of Christ in your young hearts," she said. "You have reminded us that age is no barrier to making a meaningful impact on the lives of others."

*Kumuterera is a communicator in Zimbabwe.*

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[United Methodist Social Principles](#), adopted by last year's General Conference, reaffirm the church's call to "recognize, embrace and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God."

United Methodists have been working to live out that teaching in their churches — where no one asks people about their documentation — and in ministries such as [the Immigration Law and Justice Network](#), which works with low-income people to meet the requirements for legal status.

United Methodists also are standing up for immigrants on the national stage.

Church leaders' actions include:

- † [Joining in an ongoing interfaith lawsuit](#) filed by Christian and Jewish groups to stop immigration enforcement inside houses of worship.
- † Helping to organize peaceful protests [against ICE raids](#) and [federal legislation that would more than triple the budget for ICE detentions while making deep cuts to Medicaid and food assistance](#).

The church's stance has drawn attention. In June, [the Council of Bishops and other church ministries](#) were among 215 groups that received letters from a U.S. congressional committee probing their work with immigrants. Neither the bishops nor the United Methodist Board of Church and Society receive federal funding.

Now is not the time to back away from church advocacy, said Carcaño and other church leaders.

"People of faith and good will can help immigrant neighbors by speaking out from the pulpit and publicly about the deep harm that is being carried out against immigrants," she said, "remembering above all, what Jesus teaches us about caring for the migrant."

In the meantime, Carcaño is working with United Methodist agency staff and [leaders of the denomination's national plans for racial-ethnic ministries](#) to respond to the recent court actions.

### What the Supreme Court ruled

What the Supreme Court did in late June could radically change U.S. understandings of due process for years to come.

In [a brief unsigned ruling](#) on June 23, the Supreme Court permitted the Trump administration to deport immigrants to countries not identified in their removal orders without ensuring they won't be tortured. Among those potential countries is South Sudan, where the U.S. State Department warns U.S. citizens not to travel.

Four days later, the court majority ruled in [Trump v. CASA](#), Inc., which limits the scope of lower-court judges injunctions against Trump's actions, including his executive order denying automatic citizenship to babies born in the U.S. to mothers either temporarily or illegally here. Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented in both rulings.

The June 27 ruling does not deal with the merits of Trump's executive order and opens the door to a class-action suit, which has already been filed.

However, the ruling specifies that Trump's executive order can take effect 30 days after its release. That raises the possibility that Trump's order — seen by many as a clear violation of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment — may end up applying in some parts of the country.

[The 14th Amendment's first sentence states](#): "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

The amendment, adopted in 1868, itself overturns one of the Supreme Court's most ignominious decisions, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which held that the Black descendants of enslaved people could not be citizens.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1898 in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* that birthright citizenship applies to the children of all immigrants.

Carcaño is troubled that the Supreme Court did not use its authority to expand the scope of its cases to go ahead and uphold its 1898 precedent.

"It is deeply concerning that even the U.S. Supreme Court is unable or unwilling to protect this country's Constitution, including its amendments established for the sake of justice for all people," she said.

While the Supreme Court might not protect people's rights, she said, the church should try to protect people and their families as possible.

United Methodists, she said, can extend "a web of protection for migrants" by accompanying them to court and working with migrant parents to determine who will care for their children should they be deported.

"We should provide safe space for migrants in our churches and in our homes," Carcaño added.

"We should pray for our migrant brothers and sisters without ceasing, while examining how our actions or inaction may be causing them suffering."

### A history of dissent

This is not the first time Methodists have  
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found themselves at odds with U.S. laws, said the Rev. William B. Lawrence, a scholar of American church history and author of “[When the Church Woke](#).” He is also a former United Methodist theological dean and former president of the denomination’s top court.

“Virginia Methodists in the 1780’s issued a clear statement in opposition to slavery,” he said, with slave ownership preventing church membership. “That was reaffirmed multiple times, including at the General Conference of 1800.”

He added that immigration helped build both the United States and The United Methodist Church. In fact, [the Declaration of Independence](#) — whose adoption Americans celebrate each Fourth of July — lists the king’s prevention of migration and obstruction of naturalization of foreigners among the reasons for cutting ties with Britain.

Lawrence said that openness shaped the predecessors of The United Methodist Church, which had conferences shaped around different immigrant populations until the early 20th century.

He urges United Methodist bishops and conference leaders to find a way to rediscover the denomination’s connectional life and invite discussion of immigration at every congregation.

The Rev. Jacob Dharmaraj, an immigrant himself and veteran leader of multiple United Methodist ministries, said the question United Methodists should discuss is this: “Do I see the image of God in the one who is not made in my image?”

“We are often silent bystanders and passive onlookers when violence against the vulnerable and migrants are perpetrated in the name of religion, faith, and even Scriptures by claiming ourselves to be true Christians,” he said.

That needs to change, he said. Instead, he urges church leaders to ask parents to make a simple covenant: “I will not raise my child to kill your child; I will not raise my child to hate your child; I will not undermine the image of God I see in your child.”

Carcaño agreed.

“This is not the time for the Church to hide nor to focus on protecting its institutional self,” she said, “lest it lose all credibility as it proclaims that it is a community grounded in the love of God.”

*Hahn is assistant news editor for UM News. Contact her at (615) 742-5470 or [newsdesk@umnews.org](mailto:newsdesk@umnews.org). To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free UM News Digest](#).*

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I believe in the church. I’ve given my life to the church. But belief doesn’t mean blind loyalty. It means loving the church enough to let it change, loosening our grip on the way things have been, and believing that resurrection is possible — it just might look different than we expect.

Moving beyond prophetic words into courageous action is going to require you and me and others to faithfully join together to re-create, re-member, and resurrect our conferences. So here’s what I’m asking:

† **To young people and others who’ve been boxed out:** We need to connect with each other. If you’re longing for a place to belong within The UMC — or if you know someone who is — please reach out. There are more of us than we realize. Let’s find each other.

† **To lay and clergy allies across the connection:** Help us make room. Invite new people to the table. And if the table won’t expand, help us build a new one.

† **To those in power:** Your silence will not stop this, but your voice could amplify it. Your leadership can model what it looks like to share power, to trust the margins, and to be led by the Spirit instead of fear and systemic protections.

catch up. In fact, the Spirit is already moving ahead of us — among the lay people, young adults, Fresh Expressions and ministry experiments that most of our structures weren’t designed to support.

Our job is not to control that movement but to recognize it, make room for it, learn from it, and follow where it leads. This means leaving behind the table we’ve known and gathering at a new one where the Spirit sets the place cards. I am sure we’ve all got a few pieces of scrap wood from the tables of our past. Will you join me to put them together into something new?

*Smith is multimedia specialist for the Holston Conference, chair of the conference’s Young Adult Ministry Area and a delegate to the Southeastern Jurisdiction. He can be reached at [bensmith@holston.org](mailto:bensmith@holston.org).*

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### **Commentaries**

*UM News publishes various commentaries about issues in the denomination. The opinion pieces reflect a variety of viewpoints and are the opinions of the writers, not the*

*UM News staff.*

*(Continued from page 6)*

Matt and his wife, Amy, have a third-grade daughter, one of whose best friends did not survive the flood. Matt went home Sunday to deliver the news to his kids.

Eight-year-old Hadley Hanna, who also died in the flood, is part of our church family. Matt married her parents 12 years ago in our sanctuary, the same space where Hadley's memorial service will be held on Friday. This is personal for Matt, as it is for so many in our city.

By 12:15 p.m., when church was over, I was oversaturated with emotion. My mascara had run down my cheeks, and my blouse was marked by the tears of others I'd held at the prayer railing. So, like the driver of a '90s limousine, I raised the partition between me and the unwelcome passengers in my backseat: sadness, anger, fear. I had to put up the wall.

For those of us who are not at the epicenter of this trauma, how do we manage our feelings? Is it selfish to compartmentalize? To set aside our text threads and news feeds so we can function for the afternoon?

Michelle Gielan, happiness researcher and author of "Broadcasting Happiness," once offered me a strategy for consuming bad news you can't do anything about. "Read it, pray about it, then take one small step to heal something broken in your circle of influence. Remind your brain that your behavior matters. This will counteract the paralysis of sadness and overwhelm."

I took her advice to a group of young moms grappling with this tragedy, many holding their fresh-faced newborns. "If there is nothing you can do to directly ease the suffering of those affected, fix your eyes on what you can do: turn off the news and be present to your babies."

But some of us are so close to the epicenter of trauma that compartmentalization is not an option. What do we do then?

I was 20 when my father died by suicide. I climbed under the covers of my parents' bed. A family friend, a psychologist, stepped into the darkness of the room and sat beside me.

"How do I do this?" I asked him. "What's the proper way to grieve?"

I wanted a manual for grief. He had none to give me.

"There's no right way to do this. Other than to feel your sadness," he said with compassion, because sad is an awfully heavy thing to feel.

For me, my sadness simmered, then boiled into rage I could only access in my dreams. It receded into lethargy, as I walked around unable to accomplish much or remember things that happened yesterday. Sadness rattled me, forcing me to ask God,

"Where are you? How could you let this happen?" I wasn't sure I could even stay engaged with God at all.

I'm not the first to ask these questions. John's Gospel records the words of two women who asked Jesus the very same thing: Mary and Martha, whose brother Lazarus was in bad condition.

They sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick," meaning, "Come on, do something!" He didn't, and Lazarus died.

When Jesus made it to their small town, Martha, the sister known for her get-it-done spirit, rushed him on the road and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Moments later, Mary fell at his feet sobbing, and also said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Can't you hear in their cries, the questions we too wish God would answer? "Why didn't you do something? How could you let this happen?"

Jesus was "deeply moved in spirit," a Greek word that translates to something like, "groaned." Have you ever heard the sound out of someone's mouth when they learn someone they love has died? Jesus made a sound like that, and then he wept.

He didn't provide answers. What answer could be given to ease the ache of their suffering? Instead, he ached with them. Later, he would call Lazarus out of the grave. It was a glimpse of what Jesus himself would go on to do — rise from the dead. But in the meantime, he shed his own tears.

For me, to grieve as a Christian is to grieve with hope. I believe I am not alone in my outrage and sadness. God feels it, too. And on my good days, I believe Jesus rose from the dead and promised we will, too. Death isn't the backstop; there's life beyond it. And if that's true, the girls who died at Camp Mystic have already had their tears wiped away. It's the rest of us who are still crying.

*Buchanan is a pastor at Highland Park United Methodist Church. This commentary was first published in The Dallas Morning News.*

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### **Commentaries**

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(Continued from page 6)

Sometimes, even in happy moments full of affirmation, Bishop Charlene Kammerer feels a twinge of the pain from earlier in her career, when women leaders in The United Methodist Church faced serious roadblocks.

“There are times when something in the church, in a conference or in a gathering of friends, where I will be triggered of a memory that was very painful to me, and not me only, but other early women in ministry,” said Kammerer, [the first female bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, who served from 1996 to 2012](#).

At the Florida Annual Conference meeting in June, Kammerer had that feeling while addressing clergywomen at a breakfast meeting.

“I gave some examples of what life and ministry looked like and felt like in that first wave, which would be 1970 to 1980,” she said. “Many of the women there would not have similar experiences or know that those kinds of things happened.”

“Like what?,” you might ask.

That’s where a new book with a mouthful of a title — [“Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice: Interracial Activism in the Long Twentieth Century”](#) — can help. Written by an assortment of authors, it was edited by Janet Allured and M. Kathryn Armistead.



*From left, Ellen Kirby, Thelma Stevens and Peggy Billings, are shown in a photo included in “Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice: Interracial Activism in the Long Twentieth Century.” The three provided leadership of the Christian Social Relations Section of the Women’s Division, Board of Global Ministries since its inception in 1940. Stevens headed the section from 1940 to 1968, Billings from 1968 to 1984, and Kirby worked with the Women’s Division from 1969 to 1993. Photo courtesy of Janet Allured.*

“Clergywomen described incidents of harassment and threats, including inappropriate comments about their bodies and clothing, similar to incidents that continue to this day,” write Jeanette Stokes and Fran Wescott in the chapter on Kammerer, though not referring to Kammerer personally.

“Congregants harassed women by making comments or posing questions such as, ‘Why isn’t a nice little lady like you married?’ Some women ministers were targets of unwanted sexual advances — grabbing, kissing, and more violent attacks.”

As horrible as that is, the problem has been much broader than that, Allured said in an interview with United Methodist News. For the most part, official Methodist history has been about men.

“Traditional church histories were male because men ran it, right?” Allured said. “For a long time, the women’s group in the Methodist Church, [United Women of Faith and its predecessors](#), they used to make fun of it or say this kind of as a joke: ‘When are the women going to join the church?’ because their women’s group was so separate, and so it’s really easy for people who are writing church histories, institutional or otherwise, maybe histories of pastors or bishops or whoever it is, those are going to be male.”

“Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice,” although intended as a book for students and academics, with a hefty price of \$95, has a great deal of fascinating information for more casual readers. Published by the [University Press of Florida](#), the cost will be less when a paperback edition comes out down the line.

The new book spawned from Allured’s 2016 book, [“Remapping Second-Wave Feminism: The Long Women’s Rights Movement in Louisiana, 1950-1997.”](#)

“I was doing research on that other book, about second-wave feminism in Louisiana,” Allured said. “I began to notice that many of the people who were part of the movement in Louisiana were Methodist, which was kind of surprising to me.”

Allured grew up Methodist, but as an adult joined the Episcopal Church.

“I hadn’t stuck around to be Methodist long enough to make the connection,” Allured said. “So I was like, ‘Wow, there’s something here,’ and then I decided to go down that rabbit hole.”

[There are plenty of important stories about women and Methodism](#), and Allured is hoping “Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice” might inspire historians to bring more of them to light.

“From anti-racism, worker’s rights, equal housing opportunities, fair pay, economic justice, gender equality and bodily integrity, creation care, to ending mass incarceration, and developing new models of leadership, Methodist women, rooted in faith, have expanded the vision for a better South, a better United States,” Allured writes in the epilogue of the book.

(Continued from page 12)

“I really want to encourage graduate schools to put their graduate students on it, because there’s so much material out there and all these archives,” she added in the interview.

“There’s a million dissertations out there, if you just want to deal with the women. But that’s not where people gravitate. It’s very unusual to have them gravitate to the women.”

Armistead, an author, scholar, and United Methodist clergyperson, brought her knowledge of Methodist history to the project. She is the managing editor of “[Methodist Review](#),” a journal for Wesleyan and Methodist studies. She noted that all of the subjects of the book “married their faith with politics.”

“That’s how they understand their faith, putting their love of God into action and through the political process to make a difference in our culture,” Armistead said.

“There’s always a lot of controversy whether the church should get mixed up in politics, but I think these women really show that sometimes that’s absolutely necessary to make the kind of changes that we believe are good for the world.”

The connection with issues outside of the church lent her individual story more resonance, Kammerer said.

“It was important to the co-editors, and it’s certainly important to me that the relationship between women’s struggle for full clergy rights and ordination and exercising ministry in the church did have some parallels with what was happening with the equal rights struggle and what was happening with civil rights,” Kammerer said.

“Those were sometimes going in the same direction, but they were all acknowledged, and I think that’s important.

Asked about other Methodist feminists who might be ripe for scholars, she reels off a list.

“Honestly, I think there are dozens,” Kammerer said.

The first to come to her mind is retired [Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader](#), today bishop-in-residence at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

“We were in seminary together at (Garrett), and she became a bishop a long time before I did, and she mentored me a lot at seminary.”

Kammerer said she observed closely as Rader preached, offered pastoral care, and displayed leadership.

“I sat with her in meetings where I saw her spiritual leadership and that had a big imprint on me,” she said.

“There are a strong number of men who in the



*In recognition of her mentoring prowess, the Women’s Division created the annual Theresia Hoover Community Service and Global Citizenship award. In this 1979 photo, Hoover (right) and Mai Gray (center), president of the Women’s Division, greeted Xue Zheng, an educator from China. Photo by John Goodwin for the General Board of Global Ministries.*

early years among ministry in Florida sought me out as a sister, friend, and as a colleague, and have told me over the years that I had significant impact on their ministries,” Kammerer said.

But female mentors were critical, she stressed.

“We women, I think particularly early on, we couldn’t be fully validated in our call for exercise of ministry unless it was by other women,” she said. “We needed to see other women, to experience other women, to hear the stories, to support each other, to encourage each other.

“It only reinforced our calling when we knew that other women had been called as well, and it gave us a lot of courage along the way.”

*Patterson is a UM News reporter in Nashville, Tennessee. Contact him at 615-742-5470 or [newsdesk@umnews.org](mailto:newsdesk@umnews.org). To read more United Methodist news, [subscribe to the free Daily or Weekly Digests](#).*

*Cover art courtesy of  
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## Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice

Interracial Activism  
in the Long  
Twentieth Century

Edited by  
Janet Allured and M. Kathryn Armistead

## 9 women to know

By Jim Patterson  
July 7, 2025 | UM News

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/9-women-to-know>

“Southern Methodist Women and Social Justice: Interracial Activism in the Long Twentieth Century” features the stories of nine important Methodist women. They are:

**Bertha Payne Newell** (1867–1953), was a racial justice, labor rights, and peace activist. She served as secretary of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. She also was an expert on the education of young children, especially kindergarten age. She opposed child labor and served on the editorial board of the journal “The Elementary School Teacher.”

**Mary Jane McLeod Bethune** (1875–1955) was sometimes called “the first lady of the Negro race.” She founded the Daytona Beach Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls in 1904. It evolved into Bethune-Cookman College after merging with an all-male school. Bethune was a friend of first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. President Franklin Roosevelt appointed her as director of Negro affairs of the National Youth Administration, which oversaw the training of thousands of Black youth and made her the highest-ranking Black woman in government at the time.

**Thelma Stevens** (1902–1990), worked for racial justice, international peace and women’s rights while serving as secretary for Christian Social Relations at the Woman’s Division of the Board of Missions. Her work as a civil rights and feminist advocate in the 1960s made her a social action heroine to young Methodists. She was director of the Bethlehem Center in Augusta, Georgia, from 1910 to 1939. It was the first of a network of African American community centers established by the Woman’s Missionary Commission.

**Bishop Leontine T. C. Kelly** (1920–2012), became the first African American woman to be elected bishop in any major Christian denomination in 1984. She was also the second woman bishop in The United Methodist Church. She was a founding member of Africa University, the pan-African United Methodist university. The daughter of a Methodist minister, she was a teacher, and a lay speaker drafted to take over a church in West Virginia after her husband, James David Kelly, died. She advocated for women and minorities in the church.

**The Rev. Helen Gray Crotwell** (1925–2006), was the first woman appointed as a United Methodist district superintendent in North Carolina and was former chairperson of the United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Crotwell was a champion of gender equity, women and theology, counseling and social justice. She pastored several North Carolina churches and worked in campus ministry at Winthrop College and Duke University. She



*Mary McLeod Bethune with some of her pupils in 1905. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress World Digital Library Collection.*

also served on the United Methodist Hymnal Committee.

**Theresa Hoover** (1925–2013), led the Women’s Division of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, the corporate body of United Methodist Women, from 1968 to 1990. That achievement made her the first African American woman to become a top staff executive for the denomination. She was a mentor to many young women, promoted the leadership of laywomen, and engineered a secure future for the women’s organization of the denomination during a period of tumultuous change.

**Peggy Marie Billings** (1928–2019), advocated for human rights, civil rights, and gender equality in the 1960s, heading social justice work for the Christian Social Relations Section of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries until 1984. Her tenure spanned the Vietnam War, the modern women’s rights movement, and the unsuccessful fight to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked to develop female leaders for the church, participated in the peace movement and promoting nuclear disarmament, the anti-apartheid struggles of South Africa, and racial and economic justice.

**Bishop Charlene Kammerer** (1948– ), was the first female bishop in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. She served as bishop in the Western North Carolina Conference from 1996 to 2004 and then the Virginia Conference until her retirement in 2012. She worked to make pursuing leadership in The United Methodist Church easier for women, and served in parish ministries as well as a campus minister at Duke University. Her long-time interests in ministry include higher education, mission involvement and the spirituality of administration.

**The Rev. Carol Burnett** (1956– ), was one of the first women to be ordained in Mississippi. She is founder and executive director of the Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative. She is also executive director of Moore Community House, a nonprofit providing affordable child care and job training in nontraditional occupations for low-income single mothers in Biloxi, Mississippi. Burnett has also served in state government as federal child care administrator at the Department of Human Services.

# August 2025

## First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 11:00am 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</b> 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	<b>6</b> 4:30pm Chancel Choir 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	<b>7</b> 10:00am Ladies Day Out 6:00pm PEO Meeting	<b>8</b> 11:00am Food Pantry	<b>9</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>10</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	<b>11</b> 10:00am Sara Fernandez Bible Study 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	<b>12</b> 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	<b>13</b> 4:30pm Chancel Choir 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 11:00am Food Pantry	<b>16</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>17</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>18</b> 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	<b>19</b> 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	<b>20</b> 4:30pm Chancel Choir 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	<b>21</b> 12:00pm Ladies Day Out 4:00pm Leadership Team Mtg.	<b>22</b> 11:00am Food Pantry	<b>23</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>24</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	<b>25</b> 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	<b>26</b> 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 5:30pm Moonlight Quilters 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	<b>27</b> 10:00am United Women of Faith Mtg. 4:30pm Chancel Choir 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 11:00am Food Pantry	<b>30</b> 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
<b>31</b> 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship						

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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
J.D. Daniel - Organist	
Steve Rossi - Sound Tech	
Josh Henn - Lights and Visuals	

## 1st UMC Ministries

### OUTREACH

Bags of Grace	Patchwork Friends
Christmas Store	<i>(Quilting group providing quilts to the community)</i>
Community Breakfast	School Outreach
Community Garden	<i>(Apollo Elem., Madison MS, Andrew Jackson MS, Astronaut HS, &amp; Titusville HS)</i>
Cuba Missions	Stop Gap Community
<i>(Santa Cruz Methodist Church in Holguin, Cuba)</i>	Dinners
Food Pantry	Shoe Ministry
Good Shepherd	Undue Medical Debt
<i>(Funds to help the community with bills &amp; other needs)</i>	

### MUSIC MINISTRIES

Church Choir	Holiday Cantatas
Evensong Services	Special Concerts
Handbell Choirs	

### FAMILY MINISTRIES

1st Wednesday Dinners	Theater Programs
Children's Ministry	<i>(Children &amp; Adult)</i>
Street Festivals	Vacation Bible School
Open Play	Youth—Longest Day of Your Life
<i>(1st Monday, safe playtime for parents &amp; kids)</i>	Youth Ministry
Rock the Universe	Bus Ministry
Summer Youth Camp	

### NURTURE MINISTRIES

United Women of Faith	Bible Studies
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## 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.

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