

150 YEARS
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M E S S E N G E R

July 2025

Helping Ukrainian refugees make new homes

By Urs Schweizer
June 16, 2025 | ZURICH (UM News)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/helping-ukrainian-refugees-make-new-homes>

Key points:

- † The focus of relief efforts for Ukrainians is shifting from emergency relief to helping the victims of the Russian war get comfortable in their new homes in nearby countries.
- † The war has been going for nearly 40 months.
- † United Methodist churches and people in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania are among the most active helpers.

Help for Ukrainian refugees from the war with Russia is shifting from emergency aid to longer-term assistance in settling into their new homes, local United Methodist Church officials from nearby nations said.

“In Cluj-Napoca (in Romania), we have the Ukrainian hub that offers a place for more than 100 children and youth in extracurricular activities such as art, music, dance, etc.,” said the Rev. Rares Calugar, United Methodist district superintendent in Romania.

“It also now offers Romanian language courses for adults,” he said. “In Sibiu, we are continuing the project ‘Ascendent,’ an after-school program for teenagers where Ukrainian and Romanian youth gather together and learn life skills as well as have time for

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United Methodist ministries named in House probe

By Heather Hahn
June 17, 2025 | UM News

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/unity-methodist-ministries-named-in-house-probe>

Key points:

- † The United Methodist Council of Bishops and other church ministries are among 215 charities that received letters from a U.S. congressional committee.
- † The letters aim to see whether the groups used U.S. taxpayer dollars to “facilitate illegal immigration.”
- † However, neither the bishops nor the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, another letter recipient, receive any federal funding.

Four United Methodist ministries — including the Council of Bishops — are among 215 nonprofits facing demands from a U.S. congressional committee about their work with immigrants.

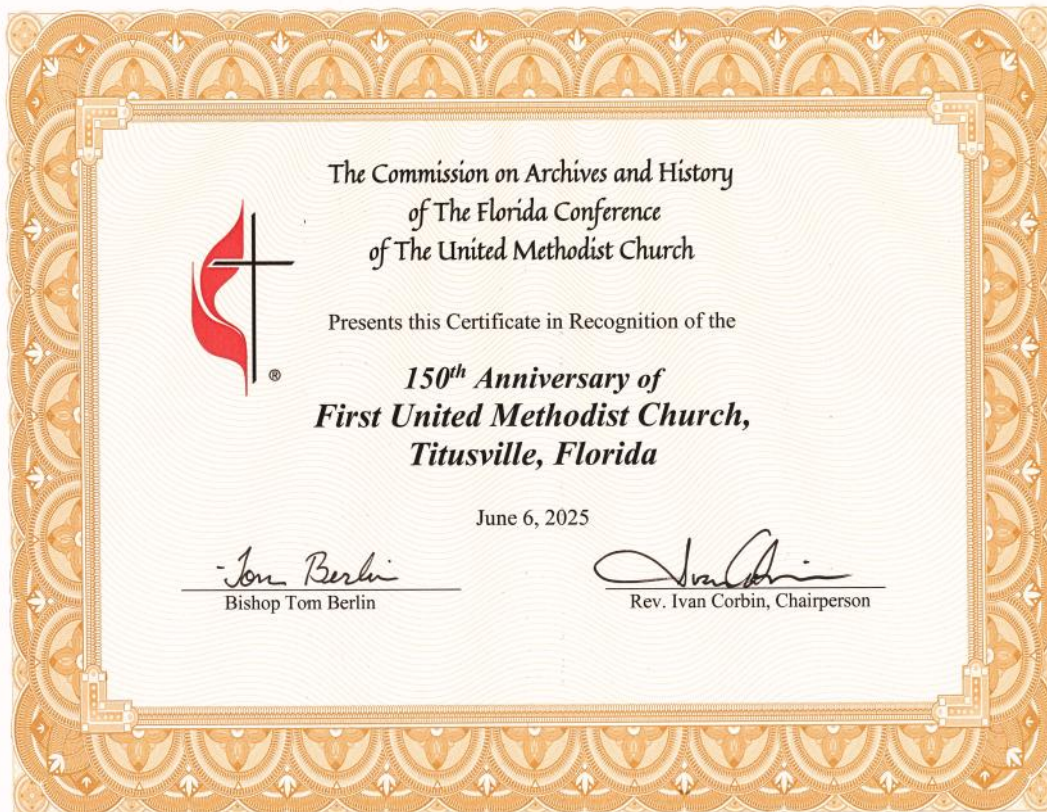
Two leading members of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security last week sent [letters](#) to the nongovernmental organizations seeking to know by June 24 how they used U.S. taxpayer dollars in their work during former President Biden’s administration.

The letter states the committee “is conducting oversight of the potential use of federal resources to facilitate illegal immigration.”



From left, the Rev. Frank Wulf, the Rev. Allison Mark, Monalisa Tui'tahi, the Rev. Hannah Adair Bonner, and the Rev. David Farley pose for a photo during a June 9 vigil outside the Los Angeles federal building to pray for immigrants detained inside. California-Pacific Conference Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank also was in attendance. United Methodist ministries, including the Council of Bishops and the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, are among 215 nongovernmental organizations that received a letter from a congressional committee probing their ministries with immigrant communities. Mark is president of Church and Society. Photo courtesy of California-Pacific Conference.

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2025 May 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:	\$30,443
<u>Expenses</u>	
Church Programs:	\$288
Finance:	\$333
Church Administration:	\$2,123
Facility Maintenance:	\$17,715
Personnel:	\$23,062
<u>Conference Apportionments:</u>	<u>\$3,256</u>
<i>Total Expenses:</i>	<i>\$46,777</i>
Income Under Expenses:	\$16,334

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.

July Anniversaries

- 1 JD & Pascale Daniel
- 3 Ed & Debbie Grimes
- 4 Frank & Pam Delnero
- 4 Winston & Enis Nathaniel
- 11 Dan & Dotty Everling
- 29 Tom & Pam Holmes

July Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Maan Aboulhosn | 14 Lisa Mosier |
| 2 Richard Barron | 15 Lois Queen |
| 6 Leah Patterson | 19 Sherry Gant |
| 7 Donna Mays | 20 Linda Haas |
| 8 Kendra Jeanty | 21 Barbara Clift |
| 9 Kennedy Jeanty | 24 Frank Russell |
| 12 Dotty Everling | 31 Melinda Bouchez |

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The Council of Bishops, the bishops' Immigration Task Force, United Methodist Board of Church and Society, and the Immigration Law and Justice Network all confirmed receiving the letter.

Neither the bishops and its task force nor the board of Church and Society receive any federal funding.

“The Council of Bishops does not receive any resources from the federal government,” Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, the Council of Bishops executive secretary, told United Methodist News. “We have responded to the inquiry stating the same.”

Church and Society, the denomination's social witness agency, plans to respond the same way.

[Immigration Law and Justice Network](#) staff told United Methodist News that all they can comment for now is they are reviewing the letter. The ministry provides legal aid to low-income immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers each year. That means they essentially work within the U.S. legal system. The United Methodist Committee on Relief founded the ministry in 1999, but did not receive a letter.

The letter demands recipients complete a survey that, among other things, asks about the government grants, contracts, and disbursements they have received as well as any assistance they provided since January 2021.

The letter also accuses nongovernmental organizations of getting rich off of federal aid by helping undocumented immigrants, saying they “saw their annual revenues rise significantly” during the Biden administration.

Since 2021, United Methodist ministries [have been reducing staff and adjusting to smaller budgets in the wake of church disaffiliations](#).

U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Mark Green, R-Tennessee, and Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability Chairman Josh Brecheen, R-Oklahoma, [announced their probe on June 11](#).

“The chairmen are examining whether these NGOs used taxpayer dollars to facilitate illegal activity, as the previous administration incentivized millions of inadmissible aliens to cross our borders,” said their press release.

However, the chairmen's ranking-member counterparts — U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, D-Mississippi, and U.S. Rep. Shri Thanedar, D-Michigan — [decried the targeting of charities, religious groups and other nongovernmental organizations](#).

“The fact that they sent demand letters to groups that have never received federal funding and others that received money specifically provided by Congress to assist immigrants, shows how unserious their investigation is,” the Democrats said.

However, Green and Brecheen did not name all the letter recipients. Among the recipients the chairmen did publicize are the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities.

[The U.S. Catholic bishops conference](#) did receive federal support for its Migration and Refugee Services, which has long resettled refugees who arrive in the U.S. each year legally through the nation's refugee programs. The bishops have since ceased cooperative agreements with the federal government related to children's services and refugee support after the Trump administration suspended the federal refugee resettlement program and froze federal reimbursements.

While neither the United Methodist bishops nor Church and Society receive any federal funding, The United Methodist Church has long taught — [based on multiple Scripture passages](#) — that church members are called to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants.

Church and Society and the bishops' Immigration Task Force also have long advocated for U.S. lawmakers to pass immigration reform to offer more legal pathways for people to come to the U.S.

Most recently, United Methodists in Southern California [have been praying and engaging in peaceful protests seeking an end to immigration raids in their communities](#). Most of those being arrested have no criminal record.

“We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees,” [say the Social Principles approved by General Conference last year](#).

“Additionally, we decry attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions. We challenge policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children, and we oppose the existence of for-profit detention centers for such purposes.”

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

Working for immigrant rights and peace in LA

By Heather Hahn
June 12, 2025 | UM News

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/working-for-immigrant-rights-and-peace-in-la>

Key points:

- † As U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations have ramped up, United Methodists in the Los Angeles area have joined in efforts to support immigrants seeing their families torn apart.
- † They also are striving to foster peace, especially after President Trump deployed National Guardsmen and Marines over the objections of California’s governor and Los Angeles’ mayor.
- † United Methodist leaders stress that this is the time to “do our best work as Christians.”

United Methodists on June 10 took to the streets of downtown Los Angeles to call for the return of friends and loved ones seized by federal immigration agents.

Alongside other faith leaders, they prayed, sang, and invited all who heard to heed God’s call to care for our neighbors. As a symbol of their peaceful intent, they ended their vigil by laying flowers in front of the city’s federal building — all under the watchful eye of National Guard soldiers.

“I was weeping because it was such a beautiful image, but it was also heartbreaking,” said the Rev. Allison Mark, a United Methodist pastor and speaker at the event.

“A lot of us prayed for the National Guard and the Marines. We said, ‘You have families.’ ... When we placed the flowers, it marked the end of the vigil. But it also signified to us that we were there peacefully, and we’re hoping that they would be peaceful, too.”

United Methodists across the Los Angeles area are working to both support their immigrant neighbors and de-escalate a perilous situation.

What’s happening

Protests have been ongoing in the second-largest U.S. city since June 6, when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents began a crackdown — [raiding stores, workplaces, schools, and even the federal courthouse to seize people following the legal process by checking in with authorities](#).

The following protests — which have included peaceful demonstrations as well as violent clashes with police — prompted President Trump to mobilize some 4,000 National Guard troops and 700 U.S.



A National Guardsman stands watch at a June 10 prayer vigil organized by the United Methodist-founded Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice in downtown Los Angeles. The participants placed in front of him a poster in Spanish calling for peace, love, and equality and asking for support. United Methodists across the Los Angeles area are working to stand up for immigrant rights while trying to de-escalate a tense situation as the Trump administration has deployed National Guard troops and Marines to quell protests against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Photo courtesy of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice.

Marines. He did so over the objections of state and local leaders, who say the military presence both violates the state’s legal sovereignty and risks igniting more violence.

So far, local law enforcement has been handling the arrests while the National Guard shields federal buildings. Mayor Karen Bass also has instituted an 8 p.m. curfew in downtown Los Angeles since June 10. A federal judge ruled June 12 that Trump unlawfully federalized the California National Guard, but, [for now, an appeals court has put that ruling on hold](#). The Marines still are preparing to deploy in the city.

Protests now have spread to other U.S. cities

(Continued from page 5)

including Austin, Texas; Chicago; Dallas; Las Vegas; Seattle and Spokane, Washington. The Trump administration is also planning to send ICE tactical teams to [Northern Virginia, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Seattle](#).



Members of the youth group at First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, Calif., join in a peaceful demonstration after worship June 8. The protests against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement targeting of workers in the city led ICE agents to leave nearby hotels that day. Photo by the Rev. Amy Aitken, First United Methodist Church, Pasadena.

United Methodist response

Meanwhile, California-Pacific Conference Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank, whose area includes Los Angeles, is among the local United Methodists calling for calm. [In a June 7 statement](#), she urged “those in power to remove their weapons of warfare from our loving neighborhoods, our peaceful cities and our welcoming states.”

Since then, she also has traveled across the Los Angeles area to bring comfort where she can.

“This is the time when we can do our best work as Christians and walk alongside those who are suffering as their families and communities are ripped apart,” Escobedo-Frank, who is herself the daughter of immigrants, told United Methodist News.

“Will we remain silent to our neighbor’s pain? Or will we hear their cries and work to stand, act and love as Christ loves us?”

The Rev. Amy Aitken, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, said she and many in her congregation could not stay silent when they learned during Sunday worship that ICE agents were staying at nearby hotels.

She and other church members, including the church’s youth group, joined with other Pasadena

residents after worship in a spontaneous demonstration against ICE. A couple of hours later, the bishop also joined the peaceful demonstration.

“We knew that ICE agents also were questioning a lot of the hotel workers inside the hotel and trying to intimidate them as well,” Aitken said. “So because of the protest, that hotel asked ICE to leave the hotel and check out. They did so around 4 o’clock.”



Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank of the California-Pacific Conference speaks during a June 9 protest against ICE in Pasadena, Calif. She had spent the morning with the congregation of Community United Methodist Church, which is rebuilding after January’s wildfires. Photo by the Rev. Amy Aitken, First United Methodist Church, Pasadena.

Circumstances were very different in downtown Los Angeles.

That same Sunday, the Rev. Frank Wulf, pastor of Echo Park and La Plaza United Methodist churches, had to contend with rumors that ICE was planning to raid worship services. He warned his congregations of the rumor, and about half of La Plaza’s congregation opted to worship online that day. Escobedo-Frank visited with the pastor and congregants on June 9.

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La Plaza church is in the middle of where most of the protests and property destruction have taken place. Wulf noted that the agitators who wreak havoc tend to come out at night, but the police are managing the situation. He sees the military presence as only inflaming matters.

“I would hope United Methodist churches all over the country would be praying for us,” Wulf said. “But I also think that people need to contact their national legislators to try to get some pushback against this overreach by the Trump administration.”

California-Pacific United Methodists are currently holding their annual conference, which is meeting June 11-14 in Indian Wells, California. While at the meeting, Los Angeles-area church members were troubled to hear from people back home that in their absence, ICE agents have been seen using their church parking lots and prominently circling around church neighborhoods.

Debunking misconceptions

[Despite the repeated and sometimes fake images people are seeing in their social-media feeds](#), United Methodists and others in the area attest that Los Angeles is not a war zone. In a city of around 500 square miles, most of the demonstrations, property damage and skirmishes with police have taken place only in a few city blocks within downtown.

Still, the small scale does not make the ongoing crisis any less frightening.

Among those stepping up to help is [the nonprofit Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice](#), or CLUE for short. The group’s founder was [the late Rev. James Lawson](#), a United Methodist pastor in Los Angeles who previously trained many Civil Rights Movement leaders in nonviolent resistance. To this day, the nonprofit remains a United Methodist partner and keeps Lawson’s teachings alive.

CLUE worked with an interfaith group of women to organize the June 10 prayer vigil downtown. The women modeled the vigil after [the nonviolent demonstrations organized by mothers](#) who brought attention to people’s disappearances during Argentina’s dictatorship in the 1970s and ‘80s. CLUE plans to continue the vigils each Tuesday to raise awareness of immigrants being detained and deported, often without due process.

The group is offering [de-escalation training to foster peaceful protests](#) and also raising money to pay for bonds for immigrants now detained within the Los Angeles federal building.

An undocumented person in the U.S. for less than two years is eligible for expedited removal. Many of the people being detained right now have



Pastors, rabbis and lay people join in a June 10 prayer vigil organized by Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice outside a federal building, where ICE has its offices in Los Angeles. At center holding flowers is the Rev. Allison Mark, president of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and senior pastor of Faith United Methodist Church in Torrance, Calif. Photo courtesy of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice.

been in the U.S. for 20 years or more, said the Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez, a United Methodist and CLUE’s executive director. Therefore, they should be eligible for bond while they argue their cases in court. She said bond is typically set between \$1,500 and \$5,000. A big concern is that those ICE has arrested have been moved to other states and even sent to countries beyond their country of origin.

“The main thing is just to get people out as quickly as possible,” Gutierrez said, “because it keeps them alive, it puts them back with their families, and it helps them fight their cases in a place where their lawyer is.”

For the most part, the immigrants ICE is rounding up are not criminals. Merely being in the U.S. without documentation [is not a crime](#) but a civil offense. Instead, people arrested often have been trying to work to gain legal status within the confines of [the troubled immigration system](#) while raising families, staying employed and paying taxes.

In any case, United Methodist teachings — [based on multiple Scripture passages](#) — are clear. Under the Social Principles [just revised at last year’s General Conference](#), church members are called “to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support.”

Mark, who spoke at the prayer vigil, is also president of [the United Methodist Board of Church and Society](#) —

(Continued from page 7)

the denomination's social-witness agency that advocates for the denomination's Social Principles.

"If we're violating human dignity, the Social Principles say that we deplore it," she said. "If we are harming families, the Social Principles say that we stand against it."

For Mark, care for immigrants is not just a matter of principle but also experience. She is the senior pastor of Faith United Methodist Church, a historically Japanese American congregation in the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance. Many of her older congregants remember when the United States forcibly relocated and detained people of Japanese descent in 10 internment camps.

"Their motto is: Never again," Mark said. "So when Trump imposes the Muslim ban or detains children or separates families, the Japanese American community is actually quite well organized and will show up."

Her congregation also includes Los Angeles police, who are concerned by both the anger they are seeing among some protesters but also want to stand up for human dignity. The Torrance community scrambled to find out what happened to [a local 9-year-old boy, who was first sent to detention in Texas before being deported to Honduras after he and his father showed up for a routine immigration hearing in May.](#)

"We felt helpless because he was taken to another state and whisked away," Mark said, "and that's the language we've been using these days. People are being disappeared or kidnapped, because nobody knows where they're being taken."

Monalisa Tui'tahi, an immigration attorney and the California-Pacific Conference's interim immigration coordinator, personally can attest that working with immigrants often brings heartbreak.

People's appeals to stay can be dismissed through no fault of their own. The U.S. government legally can renege on previous agreements to let people stay, such as the Trump administration's recent cancellation of temporary protected status of people from Venezuela, Haiti and Afghanistan.

Tui'tahi understands many United Methodists may be uncomfortable with protesting, but she said they can care for what's happening with their neighbors.

"If we are going to survive this time," Tui'tahi said, "we just have to be neighbor and family and friends to each other."

How to help

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society offers resources for calling U.S. Congress members and caring for immigrants.

In the wake of the military escalation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in Los Angeles other U.S. cities, Bishop Julius C. Trimble — the agency's top executive — urges United Methodists to pray, stand with immigrants and protest peacefully.

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, a United Methodist partner in Los Angeles, has set up a fund to pay bond for detained immigrants.

MARCHA, the Hispanic/Latino caucus of The United Methodist Church, has issued a statement that stands in solidarity with immigrant communities in Los Angeles and beyond. The group is also calling on United Methodist bishops and all faith leaders "to rise in defense of the immigrant, to speak boldly against authoritarianism, and to act in alignment with the Gospel's call to justice."

United Methodists across the California-Pacific Conference are also asking for prayer, which they believe can help in any situation.

"We would ask United Methodists to pray together and see what their churches and then their local communities can do to support their neighbors and the strangers alike," said the Rev. Allison Mark.

"But we also want to be connectional and support one another from across state lines and national lines. I know a lot of people from other countries are watching us."

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

Church embraces its Muslim tenants as neighbors

By John W. Coleman

June 18, 2025 | BRYN MAWR, Pa. (UM News)

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/church-embraces-its-muslim-tenants-as-neighbors>

Key points:

- † St. Luke United Methodist Church has welcomed the As-Salaam Islamic Society to host weekend prayer gatherings, Sunday school classes and fellowship events.
- † Together they are fulfilling a denominational commitment to bridge the divide that exists between many people of the Christian and Islamic faiths.
- † Despite their differences, the Rev. Mark Salvacion, St. Luke's pastor, has sought to help his congregation embrace its tenant neighbors and learn from them through conversations and cooperation.



The Rev. Mark Salvacion (right center), pastor of St. Luke United Methodist Church in Bryn Mawr, Pa., holds the hands of Ahmad Abdel-Hamid, president of As-Salaam Islamic Society As-Salaam Islamic Society, after a fellowship feast March 15 at the church, during the holy month of Ramadan. Looking on are Abdel-Hamid's wife, Nevan Hamid (left), AIS leader Gail Montgomery Watson (right) and a non-Muslim visitor, Desiree Bright-Threadgill.

Photo by John W. Coleman, UM News.

St. Luke United Methodist Church near Philadelphia is developing a friendship with Muslim neighbors who use its fellowship hall for Friday prayers, children's classes and special events.

Together they are fulfilling a denominational commitment to bridge the apprehensive divide that exists between many people of the Christian and Islamic faiths.

While Christians remained the world's largest



Members and guests of As-Salaam Islamic Society listen to a teaching (khatbah) by a guest lecturer during Friday afternoon prayers (Jum'ah) in St. Luke United Methodist Church's Lurwick Hall.

Photo by John W. Coleman, UM News.

religious group at the end of the decade in 2020, Christianity's growth did not keep up with global population increase. But Islam — the world's fastest-growing major religion — increased its share of the world population, as did the religiously unaffiliated, the Pew Research Center found in a report [released June 9](#).

In "Called to Be Neighbors and Witnesses: Guidelines for Interreligious Relationships," the [2024 Book of Resolutions](#) (Resolution 5202) calls on United Methodists, individually and collectively "to overcome our fears and misapprehensions ... and to open ourselves to dialogue and engagement with persons of other faith communities" (Page 721).

Moreover, Resolution 5204 commits the church to take steps toward "more hospitable and cooperative relationships and encourage dialogical relations" with "Our Muslim Neighbors." It also offers relationship-building suggestions (Pages 731-735).

St. Luke United Methodist, located in the mostly affluent Main Line suburbs just beyond Philadelphia, is taking those resolutions to heart and modeling the denomination's longtime motto of having "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors."

The church rents Lurwick Hall, a comfortable event space with classrooms located near its sanctuary, to the As-Salaam Islamic Society to host weekend gatherings for prayer, Sunday school classes for children, and occasional feasts with fellowship.

The affordable rent is much less than the small congregation could charge other non-religious groups

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that have sought to rent the space due to its prime location. But for St. Luke, use of the hall is more about ministry than money.

That ministry connects groups of two venerable faiths with much in common. Both trace their beginnings back to Abraham, revered as the father of three faiths in the Bible and in the Muslim holy book, The Quran (Koran).

Both monotheistic faiths also honor Jesus of Nazareth as a primary prophet sent by God, or Allah. That includes his virgin birth and miraculous deeds, his ascension to heaven, and his prophesied return to earth in its final days to help lead God's triumph over evil.

Key differences include the Muslim belief in Muhammad as Allah's final prophet and Christian beliefs in the Holy Trinity and the role of Jesus as the humanity's sole savior through his crucifixion.

Despite those differences, the Rev. Mark Salvacion, St. Luke's pastor, has sought to help his congregation embrace its tenant neighbors and learn from them through conversations and cooperation.

One thing they have surely learned is that the standard Muslim initial greeting is one of peace: Assalam u alaikum, meaning "Peace be unto you."

At a Sunday worship service in 2024, during the Muslim fasting season of Ramadan, Salvacion interviewed As-Salaam Islamic Society president Ahmad Abdel-Hamid before the congregation. The two also led a joint Bible study that compared the Quran and the Bible. Members of the church and AIS have attended each other's major events and collaborated in such ministries as a back-to-school bookbag collection last fall.

"I believe our relationship is a success story that's working well," Salvacion said.

The ordained elder came to St. Luke in 2022, after leading Philadelphia's Historic St. George's United Methodist Church for five years. He is a former corporate attorney whose legal acumen has benefited both churches and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Salvacion established and directed the conference's former immigration legal services ministry, Justice for Our Neighbors — a national United Methodist-related program now named the Immigration Law and Justice Network. And he was just named the conference's new chancellor to serve as its primary legal adviser and representative.

St. Luke had hosted a loosely organized Muslim prayer group for several years. But group members also moved around to other locations, including a nearby community center that became unsuitable for their Sunday



Signage outside of St. Luke United Methodist Church in Bryn Mawr, Pa., shows that the church building is also a meeting place for the As-Salaam Islamic Society (AIS). Photo by John W. Coleman, UM News.

children's school.

Finding a stable home in the area had become a crucial challenge when the ideally located Villanova Masjid, also known as the Foundation for Islamic Education, was forced to close in 2018 after nearly 20 years of serving the needs of Muslim residents in the area. The foundation moved more than 20 miles away, leaving a void for Muslim families, including many college students who live, study, and work in the Villanova area. They needed a nearby place to pray and fellowship together and where their children could learn about their faith.

When he arrived at St. Luke in 2022, Salvacion and church trustees worked with Abdel-Hamid and other AIS board members to forge a formal contract and relationship. He also sought advice from the Rev. Christopher Kurien, a fellow pastor of Indian heritage, who is well-regarded as a cross-cultural and interfaith bridge builder. Their mutual goal was to make the new Muslim society feel more welcome, stable, and able to grow there.

"Lurwick Hall is a good, safe space for us because it's located on the church campus, but it's separate from where the congregation worships," said As-Salaam Islamic Society former vice president Gail Montgomery Watson. She is St. Luke's longtime communications director and lives near the church.

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Their eventual goal is to establish a new Masjid for Muslim residents in the Main Line area. But for now, they are happy at St. Luke. “There’s good parking, a playground for our children and discreet signage to help us keep a low profile,” Watson said.

As-Salaam Islamic Society’s Sunday afternoon school attendance attracts about two dozen children, reports Abdel-Hamid. “Our goal is to build good character and an Islamic identity, and to provide them with a foundational knowledge of Arabic, the Quran and Islamic life and values.”

So far, there have been few signs of resistance to the group’s presence in the community. “We’re not well known,” Watson said. “So, we can have worship freely without criticism from this community. St. Luke’s has been extremely protective of us.”

Salvacion admits he has received some disturbing, anti-Muslim pushback from his peers in the local interfaith ministerium. And the federal government’s widespread, intensified efforts to find, detain, and deport immigrant residents has heightened his concern and caution.

But the pastor/lawyer remains undaunted. His relationship with As-Salaam Islamic Society leaders has grown close, setting a good example of interfaith partnership-building in a religiously divided culture.

Abdel-Hamid and fellow board officers Fred Fathy Akl and Sherif Bassyouni are all from Egypt. But As-Salaam Islamic Society’s members are international, multiracial, and predominantly Sunni, the largest branch of Muslims in the world.

Dozens of members and guests arrive each Friday afternoon for Jum’ah (“Friday” in Arabic), which are weekly congregational prayers required of all Muslims. They remove their shoes, and most sit or kneel on colorful prayer rugs to hear a teaching (khutbah) by Abdel-Hamid or a guest lecturer. Then, standing, kneeling, and bowing in prescribed postures, they hear and recite chanted prayers and phrases in Arabic from the Quran.

Afterward, they can leave offerings at the door, pick up fliers about upcoming events, and then either spend moments in fellowship or quietly depart.

Many more come there during Ramadan, an annual holy month of fasting and fellowship that happens according to the lunar cycle in the Islamic calendar. This year it occurred from Feb. 28 to March 30.

Adherents fast from dawn until sunset. They come to Lurwick Hall on weekends to pray and then share with their families and friends in Iftar, a nightly celebratory breaking of their fast, before

joining in more hours of prayer. Salvacion, his wife, Fran, and church members and guests joined in an Iftar feast one Saturday evening in March.

“Fasting gives us joy to celebrate that we are able to meet the commands of God,” explained Abdel-Hamid. “So, it elevates our connection with God. And it strengthens the bond among our community members when we do it together in a way that reminds us of Allah.”

Board officer Fred Fathy Akl, who, like Abdel-Hamid, taught engineering at area universities, emphasizes another important responsibility of Ramadan: Zakat, “the sharing of one’s possessions with the poor, many of whom are having a hard time,” he said. Ramadan is “when we collect as many donations as possible to meet needs that exist year-round.”

This concept of Zakat, he explained, is to “purify one’s money” by giving to others an amount or percentage that exceeds what one really needs.

Last year, As-Salaam Islamic Society was able to support eight families, he reported, giving monthly payments for necessities to mainly single parents with children.

“One thing that really amazed me,” Salvacion said, “was to see how many people come for Jum’ah prayers and even more who come to break the fast during Ramadan. It helped me understand that there are many faithful Muslims in our community. So, my mission at St Luke is to help people understand that we are all neighbors who live in this community, and we must care about each other, especially about our poor and needy neighbors.”

Eid al-Fitr, one of two major Muslim festivals each year, celebrates the end of Ramadan, based on the first sighting of a new crescent moon. It typically includes a feast, gift-giving, and acts of charity.

Eid Al-Adha, the other major festival, happens at the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and focuses on sacrifice, reflection, communal prayers, and a special meal. It commemorates the willingness of Abraham (Ibrahim) in Scripture to sacrifice his son in obedience to God’s command.

As-Salaam Islamic Society celebrated Eid Al-Adha in Lurwick Hall on Friday morning, June 6, with prayers, teaching, breakfast, children’s games and fellowship. As always, St. Luke members were invited to attend.

“In Islam, we have an open door, just like in Christianity,” said Abdel-Hamid. “We feel loved here, and that helps make this a good place to celebrate our faith and to teach our children.”

Coleman is a UM News correspondent and part-time pastor. News media contact: Julie Dwyer, news editor, newsdesk@umnews.org.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM PRESENTS

DOROTHY *meets* ALICE



The Wizard of Wonderland

A Comedy by Joseph Robinette

July 12th @ 6pm

July 13th @ 3pm

206 S Hopkins Ave Titusville, FL 32796

Two of literature's most unforgettable young ladies get mixed up together in a magical meeting that produces hilarious results as the audience becomes reacquainted with a cast of familiar characters and sees them in a new light: the Cowardly Lion, the White Rabbit, the Tin Man, the Mad Hatter, the Scarecrow, the Dormouse, the Queen and the Witch from those enduring classics *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

This fun-filled romp follows Alice and Dorothy and their friends as they try to unscramble their stories with the help of a contemporary young boy who started the whole thing to begin with when he put off a book report until the very last minute.

Performance Dates:

July 12th at 6pm

&

July 13th at 3pm

Ticket Cost: Donation

We will have a donation basket at the showings if you enjoy the show and would like to help fund future productions at First United Methodist Children and Youth Ministry.

Tickets can be obtained at the door or online at <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/9822860>.

(Continued from page 1)

personal development.”

Nearly 40 months have passed since the Russian armed forces invaded Ukraine and escalated the war that had been smoldering for several years. For some time now, politicians have been holding talks about how a ceasefire could be brought about, or what arms deliveries are needed. But the suffering and death in Ukraine continues, and the longing for a just peace remains unfulfilled.

Millions fled Ukraine after the war began. [Churches and individuals with The United Methodist Church in neighboring countries](#) made their buildings available as places of refuge. They provided food, clothing, medical care, accommodations, and other help. Aid transports to Ukraine were also organized with food, hygiene products, blankets, and heavy equipment for hospitals.

Now, the stream of refugees out of Ukraine has slowed, and Ukrainians relocated to Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania have made strides toward integration with their new neighbors.

“Many people who have fled Ukraine have long since found a job and an apartment,” said the Rev. Jana Křížova from Prague, Czech Republic. “While they are still supported by the state, they only need material help from The UMC in exceptional cases.

“As the UMC in the Czech Republic, we are in a position to provide the help they need with our own resources.”

The situation is similar in Romania and Hungary. The need for accommodation is greatest in Poland. The number of refugees registered there is 150% greater than in the Czech Republic, Romania, and Hungary combined. Fourteen United Methodist churches have housed and helped people in Poland.

“Even if the intensity of the commitment to the people who have fled from Ukraine is decreasing, it must be emphasized that support for them and our commitment are still necessary,” said Szarlota Kamińska, the coordinator of this work in Poland.

Jarosław Bator, a United Methodist pastor in Poland, has been traveling to Ukraine every month for some time now. Initially, the focus was on material aid for the needy in the northeast area of the country. Now his aim is to share the power and comfort of the Gospel with the people. He preaches regularly at two locations in Ukraine, one of which is a hospital. He also meets with people online once a week.

Support is needed that goes beyond the provision of material aid and support for integration measures, Calugar said.

The latest project, developed in a cooperative partnership with political and church leaders, is the production of the first waterproof Bibles for the military in Ukraine to provide a “symbol of resilience and hope” to those who are exposed to the horrors of war on a daily basis. It would be possible to make bibles available online via an app, but because an internet connection could make soldiers an easy target for drone attacks, those responsible for the project have opted for a special form of printed bibles in the modern Ukrainian language.

The commitment to [people in Ukraine with post-traumatic stress disorder](#) is a priority for The United Methodist Church in the Czech Republic. They support the organization of 10-day rehabilitation retreats, where widows of fallen soldiers and orphans receive help. This includes rest and psychological and psychotherapeutic support as well as spiritual offerings such as worship services and pastoral care. In 2023 and 2024, a total of 24 such retreats for about 50 people each were held by the partner organization of The United Methodist Church in the Czech Republic. Twenty are planned for 2025.

In addition, the church continues to support hospitals in western Ukraine, which provide important care in the field of surgery and also enable rehabilitation.

In some European countries — not only in Ukraine’s immediate neighbors — Ukrainians are now an integral part of local United Methodist churches, or they form their own congregations and meet in the rooms of United Methodist churches. One such congregation is the [Russian-speaking United Methodist congregation in Prague](#), which has members of Russian and Ukrainian origin.

“We sing in Russian and Ukrainian,” said Eduard Holtman, a member of the congregation. “I try to alternate between these two languages so that people can see that we can have peace in Christ.”

But there’s no escaping that the longing for a just peace in Ukraine is still unfulfilled. And the question “How much longer?” weighs on the people. But signs of hope are becoming visible — not the least through the committed service of people from The United Methodist Church in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania.

Urs Schweizer is assistant to Bishop Stefan Zürcher, based in Zurich.



Residing Hope

Back to School Supplies

June 15th—July 27th, we will be collecting school supplies for Residing Hope (previously known as United Methodist Children's Home). A collection basket is located in the back of the church. The "need" list includes:

Highest Priority: backpacks, posterboard, computer headsets, flash drives

Also needed: file folders, construction paper, highlighters, composition notebooks (8.5"x11"), dividers (sets of 5 & 8), folders with/without prongs, mechanical pencils & lead refills, colored pencils, fine & ultra-fine sharpies, black & blue pens, Scotch tape, Crayola markers

Any questions:

Kitty Baldwin (321-536-9360)

Cathy Spencer (321-543-3549)

UNITED NORTH BREVARD FOOD PANTRY

A collaboration between

**First United Methodist Church of Titusville
&
North Brevard Charities**



Our food pantry has been in operation for many, many years and has served countless people in our community. Thanks to the efforts of Dan & Dotty Everling (an amazing husband and wife duo) along with many other volunteers, our food pantry has been able to stay open to serve the public every single Friday with very rare exceptions for all those. Dotty Everling eventually had to retire from running the food pantry due to health issues yet Dan carried on faithfully stocking the storage closet and picking up and purchasing food items. Eventually, even Dan was forced to retire due to his own health concerns, but the volunteers who had worked alongside them for so long refused to let Dan and Dotty's legacy end with their retirement. They picked up where Dan left off and kept the pantry going. Jutta Yarber and Sue Shocklee stepped up to coordinate and run the pantry and make sure the shelves remained stocked. Janice Korintus helped to keep the Publix donations of bread coming in.

Early this year, [North Brevard Charities](#) needed a new location to run their food pantry. With the help of Tom Mosier, the church was able to coordinate with Sandy Thomas, Director of North Brevard Charities, and Lomika Hardy, Food Pantry Manager of North Brevard Charities, to join forces and open a new combined food pantry venture in our Main Street location (between S. Palm Ave. and South Lemon Ave.) which, until now, had become a space for storage.

The [United North Brevard Food Pantry](#) opened for service for the first time on June 6, 2025 as one united powerhouse to feed everyone who is in need. The new name pays tribute to both organizations while clearly expressing a mission of unity in serving the North Brevard community. Because of our combined efforts, the food pantry has expanded to operate twice per week and has even extended the hours of operation. It has only been running for two weeks and there are already plans to expand operations to meet the demands of a community in need.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Sandy at North Brevard Charities: 321-269-6555.

412 Main Street, Titusville, FL
Tuesday & Friday
11am—3pm



July 2025

First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Children's Play Reh. 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	2 9:00am Patchwork Friends 1:00pm Bible Study: Acts 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh. 6:00pm Children's Play Reh.	3 10:00am Ladies Day Out 6:00pm Children's Play Reh. 6:00pm PEO Meeting	4 Independence Day 11:00am Food Pantry 11:00am July 4th Block Party 	5 7:30am Garden Club 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
6 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	7 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	8 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 9:00am Children's Play Reh. 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	9 9:00am Children's Play Reh. 1:00pm Bible Study: Acts 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	10 6:00pm Children's Play Reh.	11 11:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Children's Play Reh.	12 8:00am Comm. Breakfast 6:00pm Dorothy Meets Alice Children's Play
13 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 3:00pm Dorothy Meets Alice Children's Play	14 10:00am Sara Fernandez Bible Study 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	15 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	16 1:00pm Bible Study: Acts 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	17 12:00pm Ladies Day Out 4:00pm Leadership Team Mtg	18 11:00am Food Pantry	19 8:00am Comm. Breakfast
20 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship	21 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	22 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 5:30pm Moonlight Quilters 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	23 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	24	25 11:00am Food Pantry	26 8:00am Comm. Breakfast 10:00am Moonlight Quilters
27 Parent's Day 9:00am Sunday School 10:00am Worship 	28 7pm Broadstreet Rehearsal	29 7:15am Rotary Club Meeting 11:00am Food Pantry 6:30pm Soliloquy Rehearsal	30 3:30pm Silver Chimes Reh.	31		

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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 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, & 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 & 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 & Adult)</i>
Street Festivals	Vacation Bible School
Open Play	Youth—Longest Day of Your Life
<i>(1st Monday, safe playtime for parents & 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.

Phone: (321) 269-7631

Fax: (321) 269-8359

E-mail Address: office@fumctitusville.com

Website: www.fumctitusville.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/682694095204027

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

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

[UChscOcLDe-wGkXHftvzGX9Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChscOcLDe-wGkXHftvzGX9Q)

