

# The Smoky Mountain District



# Messenger

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Getting ready this morning I was listening to/watching the news and overheard an interview Gayle King did with Instagram's new CEO, Adam Mosseri. I was impressed with how he presented himself and his passion for doing things right, keeping people safe, and working to uphold ethical standards even at the expense of the company's bottom line. It was a two part airing initiated by the recent issues social media platforms have experienced with "deepfakes." If you have watched Bad Lip Readings on YouTube you are familiar with deepfakes. A deepfake is an altered video of a person saying something different than what was actually said. Google "deepfake" and you will find numerous examples.

King pushed Mosseri on why Instagram would allow a video to remain posted when the company knew it was a fake. Remembering what he learned in CEO charm school, Mosseri gave your typical political response. "The company is currently looking into it and working to improve its policies related to the monitoring of uploaded content and the process of removal of videos and pictures deemed inappropriate." Not exact quote but the gist of what he was communicating.

We all can guess the real reason why Instagram has not removed such videos and why all social media companies have and will continue to struggle with content uploaded to their platforms. It's because social media was created to allow a "platform", or soapbox, or pedestal, or sounding board, for people to express their freedom of speech. My optimistic side says the people behind this social expression idea intended for their creations to be used for good and for fun. What they failed to realize is that it can also be used as a tool for people to do harm. Harm that, before, was limited to isolated areas but can now be expanded to the WWW. \_\_\_\_\_ (WORLD WIDE web).

A friend has asked me to proof the first section of a book he is writing on mourning and grief. It's a section that deals with the question "why?" and he is seeking feedback on the soundness of the theology he is presenting. One answer he works to present is the concept of free will and that all people have choices. Again, my optimism says that God's intent was for decisions and choices to be good. However, as we know now, evil worked and continues to work against God and entices people to make choices that are self-serving, harmful, and destructive.

We fail to realize the great responsibility of free will. A large part of the responsibility is recognizing the consequences of our choices; consequences that affect not only ourselves, but others around us. We are bound to ask how God desires the direction of consequences resulting from our great responsibility. Will it point to good or harm?

We read in the 24th chapter of Joshua, "15 But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

Instagram cannot stop people from bullying, embarrassing, manipulating others or any unethical behavior that causes harm, and we should not expect them to try. God cannot stop people from bullying, embarrassing, manipulating others or any unethical behavior that causes harm, and we should not expect God to try. We simply need to 1. recognize it is there, 2. realize it might get directed to us, and 3. do our best to not add to it.

Grace & Peace,

Jason

## Pastors-CEU Update




Pastors, below is the link for the latest Continuing Education Update News:  
<https://app.robly.com/archive?id=8f62c3cb431b57ada139dcb4ee888dae>

## Latvia District Partnership

The Maryville District continues in partnership with the United Methodist Churches in Latvia. The goal this year is to raise funds for pastoral support, Wesley Camp Scholarships, and Hope House. Speakers are available to talk to local churches or small groups in those churches. A video and brochure are available to introduce or reacquaint our local churches with the work in Latvia.


Richard Rudisell, Chair Latvia Team



  
**Free Music**  
  
 Terry Wilson, Music Director at Maryville, First UMC, invites you to come by the church in Wesley Hall on July 8-12, 2019, to look over music that they wish to give to anyone that can use it for their church's music program. Maryville, First UMC is located at 804 Montvale Station Road, Maryville, TN 37803. Any question please call Mr. Wilson at 865-982-1273.  


### Up-Coming Events

**July**

4 District Office Closed- 

23 Pastors' Summer Picnic at Maryville, First, starting at 6 p.m. and eat at 6:30 p.m.

**August**

6 District Nomination Committee meeting at 7 p.m. in large conference room at the District office.

13 District Leadership Team meeting at 7 p.m. in large conference room at the District office.

15 Change for Children Grant Deadline


18 PPR Training at Sevierville, First UMC at 3 p.m.

20 District Superintendency Committee meeting at 7 p.m. in large conference room at the District office.

25 PPR Training at Maryville, First UMC in Wesley Hall at 3 p.m.

27 District Finance Committee meeting at 7 p.m. in large conference room at the District office.

**September**

2 District office closed - 

17 Clergy Meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Event Center at the District office. This will be Missional Hub Training

22 District Conference at 3 p.m. at Cokesbury UMC

## Special Thanks to the following Congregations who are current in their giving to the 2019 District Ministries

(Thru June 26, 2019—50%)  
 (\* Denotes 100% of 2019 District Ministries paid)

- |                     |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Alcoa, First        | * Axley's Chapel    | * Asbury            |
| * Bethel (K)        | * Bethel (L)        | Binfield            |
| Broadway            | * Burnett Memorial  | * Camp Ground       |
| Carpenters          | * Cedar Bluff       | Cokesbury           |
| Ebenezer            | * Eden              | * Fox               |
| * Friendsville      | * Gatlinburg, First | Green Meadow        |
| Hillcrest           | Immanuel            | Kodak               |
| * Logan's Chapel    | Loudon              | Loretta             |
| * Martel            | Maryville, First    | * Meadow            |
| * Middle Creek      | * Middlesettlements | * Mountain View     |
| * Murphy's Chapel   | * New Hope          | * New Salem         |
| Peck's Memorial     | * Philadelphia      | Pigeon Forge, First |
| * Piney Grove       | * Pleasant Hill (B) | Pleasant Hill (K)   |
| * Pleasant Hill (R) | * Pleasant Hill (S) | * Roberts           |
| * Sand Branch       | Sevierville, First  | Seymour             |
| * Shults Grove      | St. John            | St. Mark's (B)      |
| St. Mark (K)        | St. Paul            | * Trentville        |
| Trinity             | Tuckaleechee        | * Union Grove (B)   |
| * Vonore            | * Walland           | * Wears Valley      |
| * Webb's Creek      | * Williamson Chapel | * Zion              |

## Smoky Mountain District UMW - Susan Daffron-President

I had just come from a meeting and was noticing the beauty of the day. You know those days, just after the rain has stopped and everything seems so clean and the sky seems extraordinarily blue. I ran into a friend who had also been in the meeting and we started chatting about how we were glad the rain had stopped and how much our gardens needed tending. I had noticed the past few months that my friend had seemed on edge and wasn't her perky self, so I asked her how things were going in her life. She shared that her 93-year-old mother's dementia was getting worse and the responsibility of being her caregiver was weighing on her. Knowing that her mother's days were never going to be what they had once been, saddened her. I told her that I understood as I, too, had been in that role for a decade as both my parents had gone through what I call their decline before death. Those are very emotional times and you tell yourself that it won't hurt as bad when they pass away, but it does. Some things just have to be experienced though. As I tried my best to prepare my friend for what might lay ahead, I could tell she wasn't ready to know, wasn't able to handle what tomorrow might hold. Jesus told us in Matthew 6:34, "*So do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.*" I have found it is best to live in the present, being thankful for moments shared with friends and loved ones. The one thing we can be sure of is that things will change. Loved ones who have been a part of our entire lives, will one day leave this world and life as we know it will change. But, Isaiah 41:10 says, "*do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you.*" I find great comfort in knowing that no matter what may happen in the future, my friend will never be alone and that God will help her through the days ahead as indeed He will be with all of us.

The Smoky Mountain District United Methodist Women Social Action event was held on June 1, 2019, at Mountain View United Methodist Church. There were 42 who gathered to learn about domestic violence from Tori Clariday and Laura Pinzon from Haven House in Maryville, TN. As always, the generosity of the Smoky Mountain United Methodist Women as apparent as many needed items and monetary donations were received.

Mission U will be held on July 19 – 20, 2019, in Abingdon, VA, at Pleasant View UMC. Mission U's theme is Educate to Transform and specific for this year is Radical Discipleship. We have wonderful study leaders and three choices for adult class study as well as youth and children's studies. I hope you will take this opportunity to be with us as we learn and grow together so we may be able to become radical disciples who transform our world.

We are not in this world alone, we need each other; sometimes just to make it through the moment. I am thankful for United Methodist Women who stand in the gap for those in our communities, in our churches and around the world.

## Welcome to Our New Pastors July 1, 2019

Alcoa, First UMC  
Rev. Todd Chancey

Philadelphia UMC  
Pastor Randy Lawson

St. Mark's (Blount) UMC  
Rev. Rowland Buck

Bethel (Seymour) UMC  
Pastor Valerie Ohle

Piney Grove UMC  
Pastor Scott Montgomery

St. Mark (Knox) UMC  
Rev. Sam Ward

Colonial Heights UMC  
Rev. Rhonda Hobbs

Pleasant Hill (Blount) UMC  
Rev. Archer Coppedge

Tuckaleechee UMC  
Pastor Elizabeth Rudesill, Associate

Ebenezer UMC  
Rev. Tim Paul

Sand Branch UMC  
Rev. Dennis Ford

Williamson Chapel UMC  
Pastor Rex Rogers

## THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN EMMAUS/CHRYSALIS COMMUNITY

If you are looking for...

- \* A renewed relationship with Christ
- \* A deeper understanding of Christ's love and grace
- \* A community of friendships that hold you accountable on your journey
- \* Growth in intimacy with Christ

Consider attending an Emmaus Walk (adults) or a Chrysalis Flight (youth)

### WHAT IS AN EMMAUS WALK AND A CHRYSALIS FLIGHT?

The Walk to Emmaus and Chrysalis is an experience of spiritual renewal and formation intended to strengthen the local church through development of Christian disciples and leaders. It is an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ in a new way as God's grace and love is revealed to you through other believers. Chrysalis Flights are designed for 10th -12th graders.

The walks and flights are a 72 hour short course in Christianity, comprised of 15 talks by lay and clergy on the themes of God's grace, disciplines of Christian discipleship, and what it means to be the church. There are special times of worship and daily celebration of Holy Communion.

The following is a personal testimony.

*"Hi, my name is Stephanie Wasserman and I am a member of the Great Smoky Mountain Emmaus/Chrysalis Community. My experience is a little different than most. When I was a sophomore in high school, I attended Chrysalis with my best friend. This 3-day spiritual growth experience led me to a deeper understanding of God's love. I dove in head first! I served on every flight, attended candlelight for both Chrysalis and Emmaus, sponsored family and friends, and even served on the Chrysalis board. The encouragement to be a leader within my church as well as a community of like-minded peers and adults kept me in church during my college years when it would have been easy to let busyness keep me away. When I got married, I moved to Danville, we landed in a church who supported a strong Emmaus community. I was drawn back into the love of serving and the shared experience of this special weekend. They did not have a Chrysalis community and were not familiar with the similarities, so I attended Emmaus. It was interesting to attend as an adult pregnant with my first child, but God had a plan. When we moved back to Knoxville, I reconnected with GSMEC. I am currently on the board and facilitate our monthly gatherings, which are fellowship and worship opportunities. I love being surrounded by a community that encourages me to serve-with Emmaus/Chrysalis but also with my home church. I am looking forward to serving on the upcoming Chrysalis flight and sponsoring friends on the upcoming Emmaus walks. I believe in what this community has to offer - both for youth and adults. Our God is a big and mighty God and He shows up when we are willing to surrender to spend time in prayer, study and action. God is good all the time! DeColores and Fly with Christ!"*

To find out how to participate go to [gsmec.org](http://gsmec.org)  
You can contact me, Debbie Pope, Community Lay Director  
[debbielevopope@gmail.com](mailto:debbielevopope@gmail.com)

### ***What's Happening in "The Woods"!***

#### **Summer Camp Registration is OPEN!**



One-week sessions are running for all ages June 2<sup>nd</sup> – July 19<sup>th</sup>. To register visit our website at [www.campwesleywoods.com/summer-camp](http://www.campwesleywoods.com/summer-camp). If you would like someone to speak to your church concerning Camp Wesley Woods please call (865) 448-2246.