

The Insight

Giving *insight* into the life of FUMC Loveland and keeping our mission *in sight*.

Pastor's Pondering, by Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

As I approach my first sabbatical leave of my career as clergy, I find myself anxious. Most people ask if I am excited. The truth is that I know that this time is necessary, but it will be a challenge. Yes, I get a thrill from thinking about what I will get to do with this much time off! But that moment of thrill quickly turns to thoughts such as “I *must* come back renewed and restored,” and “I *need* to develop better habits during this time so that I don’t keep going through a cycle of exhaustion,” and “I *have to* use this time wisely.” Those are expectations, demands even, that I am putting on myself (and, let’s admit, are also expressed by a few others too). Does that sound restful? No, it sounds like another project that I am hoping to accomplish. And this is why this time is necessary, but will be challenging. I often think in terms of getting things done, productivity, to-do lists, tasks. And while that certainly has its benefits, if not kept in check it leads me to be overwhelmed, and I miss the point of who God created me to be and why. Sabbath is time to stop. And not simply stop doing, but also stop the mental activity that typically goes on within.

These days there is a lot of mental activity, and I don’t just mean for me, but I am guessing this is also true for anyone reading this. There is a lot going on. Within the span of six months, we have seen a lot of upheaval in this country, and as I am writing this we are on the brink of another war; and we have learned that FUMC has financial challenges and that might mean big changes. Prior to the start of 2025 we were already feeling spread more thin, as we realized that Church and the U.S. and health and social circles and families are all undergoing change...sometimes good, sometimes bad, depending on your perspective (or how you feel that day!). When there is so much going on, the mental activity ramps up. For instance, I am supposed to lead people in how to think about and respond to the various crises, but I’m also going through them at the same time. That’s quite a mental exercise! And there are a lot of responses going on inside our bodies too, activities we don’t see, such as spikes in cortisol levels and tightening of muscles that are linked to other parts of our bodies in ways we didn’t even know exist. Here’s another moment of honesty: the more I learn from my dentist, doctor, and massage therapist about what stress is doing to my body, the more stressed I get because I add these to the things “I must control and change.”

And that last thought sums it all up. There are so many things to worry about, it seems. And I know I am not alone in thinking...even though it’s not a loud or very conscious thought, but a quiet one...that there is a list of things to control and change. My response to so much going on is to create spreadsheet upon spreadsheet. But John 1:16 says “From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” There are so many reminders for me to stop. Slow down. Breathe. Remember that I am not in control, and that’s actually a good thing. “Be still, and know that I am God,” says Psalm 46:10. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls,” says Jesus in Matthew 11:28.

We know from our scriptures that God wants us to care for our neighbors, love one another, and look after the vulnerable, poor, and strangers in our land. And our faith tradition teaches us to stand against oppressive powers and unjust systems, to speak truth to power. We are to be the Church in these ways. Caring for ourselves, creating sabbath, does not mean ignoring this part of true discipleship. But right now, I am writing to the ones who are not ignoring this part of our faith; I am writing to those who feel overwhelmed, ineffective, frenzied, or stuck because you don't know where to start. (For those who are skeptical about whether or not scripture and tradition challenge us to care for others, I recommend looking into the UMC's Social Principles; see the short article about this in this newsletter).

I remember taking classes to learn to swim as a child. I wasn't training to be a competitive swimmer, I was learning how to have fun but also be safe in the water. One of the lessons we learned was to relax, and this was especially important to do when learning to float. As soon as you tense up, you stop floating. If you want to stay on top of the water, and not under it, you don't want to fight against it so much that you sink. Of course, when swimming, you have to use your muscles. But there is grace and coordination to that effort as well. Simply flailing about isn't going to get you anywhere. This is one way to think about the balance between relaxing and letting yourself float in the arms of God, and knowing when to get to work. Both are important, and they complement each other.

Karen Fulner shared with me a poem in May 2024 that I kept, written by Lynn Ungar and posted on her website lynnungar.com. It is titled *Breathe*. Lynn writes:

Breathe, said the wind.

How can I breathe at a time like this,
when the air is full of the smoke
of burning tires, burning lives?

Just breathe, the wind insisted.

Easy for you to say, if the weight of
injustice is not wrapped around your throat,
cutting off all air.

I need you to breathe.

I need you to breathe.

Don't tell me to be calm
when there are so many reasons
to be angry, so much cause for despair!

I didn't say to be calm, said the wind,

I said to breathe.

*We're going to need a lot of air
to make this hurricane together.*

If you seem to have lost the ability to sabbath, I want to remind you how important it is and encourage you to practice sabbath this summer. These are hard times, and God cares about each person, including you. And you are needed.

Meet FUMC's Newest Members!



Wyatt Sanderson joins FUMC after spending the past few years active in youth ministry. Recently, we celebrated Wyatt's graduation from Loveland High School. He is an accomplished saxophonist and has played a number of times during FUMC's worship services. Currently, Wyatt is hard at work at three jobs: as a youth soccer referee, and in food services at Freddy's and The Boot Grill. Soon, he'll head off to college at Iowa State, majoring in aerospace engineering. Eventually, we could be calling him Lieutenant Sanderson, as he has been accepted into the ROTC and hopes to enter military service as an officer in the U.S. Air Force upon graduation. When not working and preparing for his future plans, he enjoys hiking in the mountains, his truck, building model airplanes, camping, music and working out at the gym. Wyatt joins FUMC on profession of faith.



Laura and Julio Aleman, and their children Bailey and William moved to Loveland a year ago from Tyler, TX. The Alemans found us online before coming to worship in person recently. Julio works for Stryker Corporation, travelling all over the country to hospitals and surgical centers, installing big, fancy, life enhancing operating room equipment. He also has experience working with special needs children and adults. His hobbies include golf, grilling, family, friends, hiking, game nights and spending time with their dogs, Chief and Scout.

Laura is a board-certified behavior analyst who works with high-support Autistic youth, often with aggressive and self-injurious behaviors and their families. Her work, too, is life-enhancing. She has recently been hired and will

begin work soon at the Center for Autism and Behavioral Disorders. Laura enjoys hiking and outdoor time, game night, community events, gardening, spending time with family, and their dogs.

Bailey is 14. She likes to write fiction and play the violin. William is nine and can tell you all about the world of Minecraft. The Alemans join FUMC on profession of faith.

Meet FUMC's New Office Manager!



Pam Day has lived in Loveland for 20+ years and is originally from Durango, Colorado. A few of her favorite things to do include spending time with her husband Brian, creating art, hiking in the mountains, and traveling the world. Pam has a vast array of business experience and has worked for a variety of companies and organizations providing administrative assistance. She is also a Certified Spiritual Coach and has owned several businesses.

Pam is grateful and excited to be a part of the FUMC office staff and looks forward to providing a welcoming, caring place for all.

Take note! With Pam on board, FUMC now has new office hours. The church office is now open Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-3:00pm, and Friday 8:00am-Noon.

A Message from Your FUMC Stewardship Committee, by John Kindred

You are probably aware the FUMC budget for 2025 has a significant short fall between expected revenue and expenses. The situation has improved since its adoption by the Church Council late last year. However, we are currently expecting a short fall in the range of \$40,000 to \$60,000 even with the anonymous gift of \$60,000 that we have received from generous donors. Also, expenses (some unplanned) have been greater than expected this year due to safety improvements and some renovation in the building.

Another change from last year is the District Superintendent has scheduled the church conference for October 12th for the 2026 approval of pastor salaries and other business. In view of the current financial situation and early church conference date the Church Council has asked the Stewardship Committee to ask the congregation to consider additional giving this year and to have a pledge campaign for the 2026 budget. It was the decision of the Stewardship Committee to combine these two undertakings into one campaign. Please be on the lookout for the letter in July to prayerfully consider your giving. This letter will be in either email or paper form with space for your decisions.

We hope you will thoughtfully consider your responses to the coming giving campaign. We hope for and are striving for a vibrant and financially stable church in the future so we may continue to serve God and his kingdom far into the future.

Mission Memo, by Mark Elliott

Faith Build

Our first Faith Build of the year with Habitat for Humanity is scheduled for July 26th, 7:30am to 2:30pm. This year, H4H has a new theme, “Feed, Pray, Build”, which is a play on the book title “Eat, Pray, Love”. On the 26th, Steve Goodier will join us in the morning at the build site to pray for the volunteers and staff to have a safe and productive day. Lunch will be provided to feed all those working at the site. And of course, we will be there to help build a home for a deserving family.

No skills or experience are required. You will be trained for any of the tasks at the site, be it framing, painting, landscaping, or whatever. You will not be required to do anything you don’t feel comfortable doing. All tools will be provided, but feel free to bring personal tool belts, and be sure to bring water bottles, hats, gloves, sunscreen, etc.

To sign up, follow the link below or add your name to the list found at the Volunteer Hub in Lobby Court. Looking forward to seeing you on July 26th!

<https://lovelandhabitat.charityproud.org/VolunteerRegistration/?groupcode=Loveland2607>

Mountain Sky ERTeam (Part 1)

The call went out for help at the beginning of May in response to devastating flooding in Kentucky after major storms hit the state in February, March and April. All major rivers in the state posted record flood levels. The Kentucky UMC Conference asked for help with muck out and cleanup in the "lowlands" of the state.

Early Response Teams (ERT) are found in each of the UMC Conferences, including our own Mountain Sky Conference. These teams consist of people trained to respond to local disasters, or to disasters in other conferences on an invitation basis. They are trained to provide aid in the relief phase of a disaster when families need support and help to clean up their homes in preparation for the repair phase.

A team of seven from the Mountain Sky Conference was formed and deployed to Kentucky on May 17th for a week. One member, Theresa, is a pastor from Montana and she shared a sermon she gave about the experience. Here is an excerpt from that sermon:

I got to see fireflies in action for the first time on my recent trip to Kentucky. I was fascinated by the beauty and wonder of the lights appearing and disappearing seemingly out of nowhere.

One team member helped me learn how and where to see the glowing bugs. We were staying in a church with a graveyard, where the bugs seemed to enjoy flitting among the gravestones. On the last night the whole team went out to feel the magic that somehow spoke to our mission.



I went to Kentucky as a member of a United Methodist Committee on Relief Early Response Team – an UMCOR ERT. “Compelled by Christ to be a voice of conscience on behalf of the people called Methodist, UMCOR works globally to alleviate human suffering and advance hope and healing.” The more specific mission of an ERT is “to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster.” In Kentucky I saw this caring Christian presence in action and was blessed to contribute to it in a small way.

The people of Kentucky had suffered through extensive flooding about a month before we arrived. Emergency personnel had come and gone; we followed behind to provide a caring presence and unskilled labor.

Between a day of travel to get there and a day to get back, we had six days during which we worshiped in the Sacramento, Kentucky church where we laid our sleeping bags – population of Sacramento is 459; watched a reenactment of a Civil War battle – spoiler alert, in Southern reenactments the south wins; organized donations and the Kentucky conference’s tool trailer; tore out wallboard and floorboards down to basic structural elements like joists; and sprayed chemicals to kill the black mold that had climbed at least four feet up the walls of the homes where we worked.

The people for whom we performed this work were overwhelmed by and unprepared for the extent of mitigation needed. Our team leader walked them gently through the need for removing more and more pieces of their homes to stop the spread of mold. People who had so little to start with now had even fewer usable goods, and it often took them a while to accept and agree to the measures needed to help keep them healthy.

We worked in two homes – the first was only slightly larger than this sanctuary and housed nine people; the second was, as the woman said, too much for the two of them since their children had grown and moved into homes of their own. In the first instance, the family intended to rebuild and return to their house, despite the standing water beneath it, the occurrences of two floods in a few short years and the threat of more to come. In the second place, the couple were coming to the realization that a smaller place with less land might suit them better as they aged. But still, who would buy low-lying land that could flood again at any time?

I like to think that, despite the ugly truths provided about the extent of the work that needed to be done, we brought some light to people who needed physical labor they could not perform themselves, and a Christian presence that cared – specifically – for them. We lightened their load in a physical way, and we lightened their spirits with our care.



Greetings from Finance! by Charlie Bouchard

Carolyn and I took a break from church activities and journeyed to Turkey. Below is a picture of sunrise in the Cappadocia region taken from the hot air balloon we were in! Traveling always reminds me that humankind shares so much in common. We were able to visit a Mosque and share prayers with an Imam, visit Ephesus and experience the rich history of the people and places of Turkey. We were reminded again - there is no them, only us - one big messy human race that inhabits this planet.

Thanks to all for positive responses regarding our church finances. I am hopeful as we move forward in this transition time with our church and our facility. Loveland Preschool is largely moved into their new space and getting ready to welcome students in August. Take a look at all the work that has been done!

For those looking for summer reading I would highly recommend *Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr. If you need a beach read, this is not the book. I have found the book to be challenging, enlightening, and refreshing.

Peace.



WHAT ARE YOU READING? LISTENING TO? WATCHING?

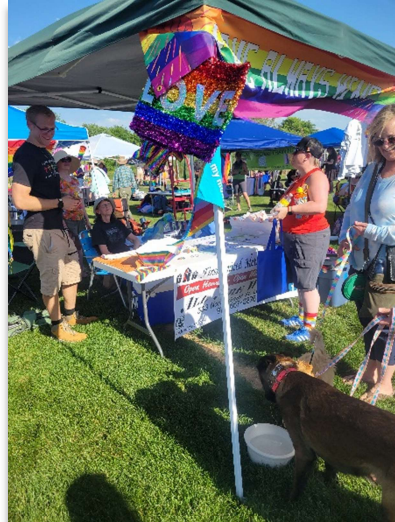
This is a space where you can recommend a book, podcast, movie, and so on.

FUMC has a lot of curious learners who love to share about the things that are feeding them!

In this issue, Lee was actually planning to recommend *Falling Upward* by Richard Rohr. Charlie's recommendation is a coincidence...or is it? Maybe God really wants you to read it!

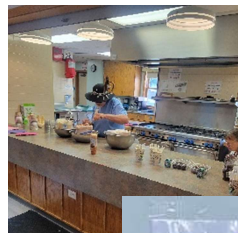
Share your recommendation to Pastor Lee at lee@fumcloveland.com!

Our church was proud to have a booth at Loveland Community Pride, where we handed out free popcorn and water to help everyone stay cool and refreshed. We were joined by our friends from All Saints Episcopal Church and Namaqua Unitarian Universalist Congregation, along with many other wonderful groups and businesses. It was heartwarming to hear visitors share how glad they were to see us there—many even mentioned personal connections to the Methodist Church. Despite the heat, the day was filled with joy, laughter and fun. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who made this day possible and helped us show God's love through hospitality and presence.



Community Night Out

Our 2nd year as host for Loveland's Community Night Out was fun! We welcomed our neighbors for some free ice cream and a bounce house and art project for the kids. Although turn out was lower than last year, we had fun riding in the cherry picker and visiting with officers, first responders and other Loveland personnel that stopped by. Thank you to all the volunteers that made this happen!



Annual Conference Recap and Reflections

The 2025 Annual Conference of the Mountain Sky Conference was held at St. Andrew UMC in Highlands Ranch on June 11-14. Revs. Lee and Leslie, along with Matthew Utley and Ben Clegern, were in attendance. Here are some updates and reflections from Revs. Leslie and Lee.

Rev. Leslie writes:

After I started seminary and the process for ordination, I had a clergy mentor tell me, “Put off going to Annual Conference (AC) as long as you can.” Now that I have been attending Conference for several years, I have experienced both the wisdom, and the error, of that advice. Annual Conference can be a LONG three days of business meetings from morning until late in the evening, with exhausting and sometimes contentious, or at least tense, debates over issues.

However, at the same time, Annual Conference offers time for meaningful worship, excellent preaching and teaching, growth and learning, and a feeling of having an important voice in shaping the vision and direction of both the UMC Mountain Sky Conference and the global United Methodist Church. AC reminds me that we are a part of something bigger and special; that we are not alone in our ever-striving to be an impactful church and a vital witness to the mercy, grace and love of God through Jesus in a very complicated world.

Rev. Dr. Val Jackson began Annual Conference by delivering the message for this year’s memorial service. She began and ended her message by quoting the lyrics from the Charles Wesley hymn, *A Charge to Keep I Have*. “*A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky. To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill: O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!*” Using the text of God passing the mantle from Moses to Joshua (Joshua 1:1-6), she honored our saints...MSC clergy and their spouses...who have passed to eternal life in the past year. While honoring those pastoral saints who have passed before us, she also reminded us that, like them, we have a charge to keep. A witness to share. A world to help transform with God’s love. And, we have God’s command and reassurance to Joshua to rely on: “*Be strong and courageous.*”

“We don’t need to be strong and courageous,” Rev. Jackson said, “if we simply continue to do the same ‘ol, same ‘ol. We don’t need strength and courage and bravery if all we do is continue with the status quo. All we need for that is rote memory. To be strong and very courageous is a charge to keep we have in order to move the church forward. The church is the one called to bring God’s kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. But we must be strong and very courageous.” The memorial service ended with this benediction: Plant with hope, water with grace and trust God for the harvest.

As meaningful and powerful as this and our other worship times were, still we had business to conduct. The days were long, but there was no tension. We were a body of clergy and laity sharing a vision and heart for justice, equity and a passion for the UMC to be a powerful presence of God’s transformative love through Jesus Christ in the world. Our voting reflected this vision, for the Mountain Sky Conference and for the global UMC.

The AC body voting began with four pieces of legislation which were passed last year at General Conference 2020-2024 and require affirmation through the votes of each annual conference in order to become ratified into church polity. Arguably, the most significant of the legislation will impact the organizational structure of the UMC, changing from a conference-centric structure to a regional structure. Regionalization will allow for effective and relevant contextual ministries and a spiritual solidarity that embraces unity in diversity. It will also

create equity across the global Church without privileging one region as the center and others as peripheries, as the current structure tends to do. Regionalization is not about pulling the church apart; it is about growing up as the body of Christ.

Another significant piece of legislation that required a ratification vote of all annual conferences dealt with the UMC stance against racism. If passed, our UMC constitution in the Book of Discipline will specifically name racism as an issue in the church and the conference and commit to its eradication from our corporate life throughout the United Methodist Church. This legislation signified a growing consciousness within the UMC around racial equity, encouraging people to better see one another in the fullness of humanity. The final results of voting on the four ratification issues will be announced at a later date, once all annual conferences have voted.

At a conference level, AC delegates tackled, among other things, important issues that acknowledge and give voice to the oppressed, marginalized, victimized and voiceless. A resolution was passed to publicly condemn actions of genocide in Gaza and the West Bank...with a call for peace in the Holy Land. Approval was given for establishing a Queer/LGBTQIA2S+ Matters Committee designed to bring the beloved inclusion and opportunity legislated at General Conference 2020/2024 into fruition across the Mountain Sky Conference. Another resolution was passed regarding missing and murdered indigenous persons that commits the Mountain Sky Conference to raising awareness regarding the MMIP crisis.

Bishop Kristin Stoneking made the critical point that we are, as the church, living in an exciting time; but we're also living in a critical time as a church. If we're really going to become a Beloved Community, then we must be a church where *all* belong. If this is to become "heaven on earth", we must all get on board...even though we may see things through different theological and political lenses.

Rev. Lee writes:

Leslie's words sum up well the relationship I have with AC. It's tiring, there are emotional ups and downs, and I'm always so glad we get to do this every year. It is when I am most reminded of the value of our Methodist connectionalism, Wesleyan roots, and our particular faith tradition. We hear what other churches are experiencing—a lot of similarity, but also new ideas and inspiration. During one of the presentations about new ministries being started in local churches, the presenter said "We have to stop counting butts in pews and go to where the people are." And while this is not a new concept (Leslie and I have both said this), I recognize how challenging this shift in thinking can be! Seeing a full sanctuary has been a sign of "success" for so long. Yet, at AC I heard about congregations who have made the shift and found new life in doing so. There are so many similar stories to FUMC's as well: churches revisioning their space, clearing clutter, and remodeling so that it can be used by community members and groups to balance the cost of having the building while giving new opportunities to others.

During the opening worship we celebrated the lives of the MSC clergy and clergy spouses who died since the last AC, and it was a sorrowful reminder of how many FUMC members have joined the ranks of the great cloud of witnesses this past year. During the service, we stood in honor of Helen Hengl, Joyce Plants, and Jed and Dolores Pancoast, and while they were not members of the MSC, we remembered in our hearts the lives and service of Rev. Reuben Wilbur and Rev. George Franke as well.

The theme of this conference was “Beloved. Belong. Becoming.” Bishop Stoneking said in her address that “As long as someone feels that they don’t belong, we aren’t beloved community.” And, the idea of *becoming* was highlighted in a powerful way for me. Speakers talked about the “past as prologue,” that the past is important yet isn’t the future for us. The Church is becoming more than it has been because it’s needed more than ever, as there is so much injustice, loneliness, and despair. I love the idea that not only the Church, but each of us, is always becoming—we are in a process of moving into who we are meant to be next.

The presentation leading to the ratification vote on the racism statement that Leslie mentioned was also powerful. This was a discussion among a panel comprised of clergy leaders and the conference’s co-lay leaders. It was stated that per our baptismal vows to “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves,” doing nothing about racism that still exists in our systems and society is not okay. This is what it means to be *anti-racist* as opposed to being merely *un-racist*. Rev. Betty Nguyen, the conference’s Superintendent for Advocacy and Community Engagement, encouraged us to be curious about racism, asking ourselves “What do I not know or understand?” and then seeking to learn. She also emphasized that healing happens for all of us when we face racism and work toward healing, not just racial minorities, as we stand together in solidarity and truly see and affirm one another.

We did good work at AC, and the work is not done. But as Bishop Painit (resident bishop of the Davao Episcopal Area, Philippines), who was this year’s “guest Bishop,” said, “I am proud to be a Methodist. It’s not a convenience, it’s a conviction.” I agree!

To review the petitions and legislation and their results, go to:

www.mtnskyumc.org/petitions-elections-legislationAC2025

This will not include the results of the ratification votes. Those votes are combined with the votes taken at all annual conferences held this year, and the result will be provided at a later date.

Introducing Pastor Matthew!

At the 2025 Annual Conference of the Mountain Sky Conference, Matthew Utley was licensed as a local pastor. This is a proud moment! But what does it mean? (*continued on p.12*)



The closing worship service at Annual Conference is when candidates are licensed, commissioned, and ordained. Shown above are all of those who are being licensed as a local pastor for the first time. Why are some wearing a robe and others are not?

It's purely a matter of personal preference!

A licensed local pastor (LLP) is someone who has met the requirements to become licensed as a pastor and, following approval by the District Committee on Ministry (DCOM), is licensed by the Bishop. It is a license that is conferred by the Bishop for one year in one setting, and confers all the responsibilities and authority as an Elder, but only within the charge (church) to which that person is appointed. There are many clergy who, for various reasons, choose not to go through the ordination process and serve their whole career as an LLP. But there are also candidates for ordination who become licensed in order to be appointed as a pastor while they are working toward ordination. This is the case for Matthew. He has been appointed to serve ¼ time as the pastor of Spirit of Hope UMC in Englewood. He will still be with us as a staff member in his role as youth coordinator too. But he is a pastor only at Spirit of Hope; he is not appointed as a pastor at FUMC. Clear as mud?

So, what happens next in his process? When he has completed all requirements to be “passed on” from DCOM, he will then be in the hands of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). The first step at that point is to be approved to be commissioned as a provisional member of the Order of Elders. Once he is commissioned, he can be called Reverend. But he is not fully ordained until meeting the remaining requirements and meeting with the BOM for a minimum of two years as a provisional member, possibly more. Then, when he has been recommended by the BOM for “ordination and full membership in the Order of Elders,” he will be ordained by the Bishop.

In other words, Matthew will get plenty more practice being on stage before an audience alongside his colleagues and the Bishop. Don't worry Matthew, you got this! And congratulations, Pastor!

UMC Social Principles

In each issue of The Insight, we will share information from the wider United Methodist Church. Perhaps because of the recent Annual Conference, and all that is going on in our nation and around the world right now, the UMC's Social Principles are on the mind. From the Preface to the Social Principles: “The Social Principles are not church law. Instead, they represent the prayerful and earnest efforts of the General Conference to speak to issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation that is in keeping with the best of our United Methodist traditions.”

These are guiding principles for us to reflect on as we wrestle with the multitude of difficult and complicated issues present in our world. In an introduction to the Social Principles found online, there is an excerpt taken from *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church 2020/2024* that states:

“Taking an active stance in society is nothing new for followers of John Wesley. He set the example for us to combine personal and social piety. Ever since predecessor churches to United Methodism flourished in the United States, we have been known as a denomination involved with people's lives, with political and social struggles, having local to international mission implications. Such involvement is an expression of the personal change we experience in our baptism and conversion.”

To read the UMC's Social Principles, go to www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/what-we-believe/our-social-positions. For a printed booklet of the most recently updated Social Principles, order online at Cokesbury.com and search for *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church 2025-2028*.