

Lakeside
870-534-6241
lakesidePB@arumc.org
Mi Casa
870-850-0142

Reverend Judy Rudd
Senior Pastor
501-607-0889
judy.rudd@arumc.org

Linda Schultz, Administrative Assistant
lakesidepb@arumc.org

Rebecca Phillips, Coordinator of Congregational Ministries
rebeccalumc@gmail.com

Carolyn Hamilton, Church Treasurer
lumcfinance@outlook.com

Geraldin Alfaro Mondragon, Coordinator of Missions and Family Ministries
micasa.hispanicministry@gmail.com

Vanessa Hernandez-Valdez, Mi Casa Hispanic Ministry Assistant
micasa.hispanicministry@gmail.com
870-850-0142

Ann Tibbs, Director of Music
Plumeria "Plum" Harris
Nursery

Edith Valdez Castro, Custodian

Humberto Solis, Security



If you are a Facebook user, like us at <https://www.facebook.com/LakesidePB/>

Lakeside Messenger
Lakeside United
Methodist Church
1500 Olive Street
Pine Bluff AR 71601

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The Lakeside Messenger

Lakeside United Methodist Church, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601

Volume MMXXII, Issue 4, January 25, 2023



In November 2022, Bishop Laura Merrill was elected as a United Methodist Bishop and assigned to the Arkansas Annual Conference. She was born in San Antonio, Texas. Both her father and grandfather were Methodist ministers, and she was deeply affirmed by the local Methodist churches they served. Her son is a post-graduate student and her daughter is an under-graduate. Bishop Merrill served 13 years in the local church before serving as both a District Superintendent and Assistant to the Bishop.

Below is an interview with Bishop Merrill conducted by Amy Ezell, the Arkansas Conference Director of Communications, from a "person in the pew" perspective.

Amy: What are your main priorities for your time as the Episcopal Leader in the Arkansas Annual Conference?

Bishop Merrill: My priorities will surely change over time, but right now I want to get to know the conference. Churches—clergy and laity—and their communities, as well as the character of the conference as a whole. I look forward to traveling to different parts of the state and learning about the important initiatives that Arkansas United Methodists are already committed to, which are impacting our communities in important, tangible ways. And I look forward to charting a course together for what's next.

As I learn, I'll be joining the ongoing disaffiliation journey and process in Arkansas, which I know has been distressing and exhausting to many of our people. We need to tend to our spirits and our relationships during this time, to restore the fabric of our connection. I hope we can help each other remember that it is the love of God that gives us life and keeps us faithful.

Amy: What are you most looking forward to about living in Arkansas?

Bishop Merrill: I am very excited about discovering the natural beauty of the state, which I've experienced only a little. And I'm already feeling at home among the open hearts of the people I've met. We have hard things we'll need to accomplish, but I'm encountering in so many places a spirit of willingness and hope for the future.

Amy: Do you mind sharing your call story with us? How did you determine that God was calling you into ministry?

Bishop Merrill: I'm one of those who started out very clear that I wasn't going to be a pastor. My daddy and my mama's daddy were both preachers, and I took a path instead as a young adult into missionary and peace with justice work, in South America and on the US-Mexico border. But I did find my way into seminary, where the call into the worship life of the church and a fascination with the study of scripture finally got the best of me. I decided to seek ordination, and it's been a fascinating life ever since. I've found myself in different settings and roles, always challenging me to grow as a person who trusts Jesus and loves his people. Nearly all of it would have been impossible for me to imagine back in my 20s, yet God has been so good to me, and I'm grateful to find myself where I am, here with you.

Amy: What do you see as your greatest challenge as a Bishop of the United Methodist Church?

Bishop Merrill: I'm sure the list of challenges is actually much longer than I know! For now, one of the top challenges for me is to help us navigate the path of disaffiliation, while keeping our eyes on our longer-term work, learning how to employ who we are and what we have in the service of transformational love in our communities. This chapter of the church's life is a difficult one, but maintaining our focus on fruitful ministry beyond this moment is the way we'll get through it.

Amy: Do you plan to push for any updates of the disaffiliation process in Arkansas? Do you plan to address the untruths swirling?

Bishop Merrill: We are looking at ways to update and share good information about the UMC, celebrating the strengths of this denomination. I want to communicate that there's room in this church for people of different perspectives who all want to live as joyful disciples of Christ. And we will follow a path of clarity, respect, and integrity as we move through this transitional time in the life of our church.

(continued next page)

What's Happening @ Lakeside United Methodist Church

Wednesday, January 25

9:30 LAAF
3:00 Coffee with the pastor
5:30 Mid Week Manna
6:00 Young Disciples meet
6:00 Tutoring & ESL

Thursday, January 26

Friday, January 27
Office closed

Saturday, January 28

Sunday, January 29
8:30 Chapel Worship
9:15 Sunday school
10:30 Sanctuary Worship

Monday, January 30

Tuesday, January 31

Wednesday, February 1

9:30 LAAF
10:00 Food Prep for Distribution

Wednesday, February 1 cont.

10:30 Staff Meeting
3:00 Coffee with the Pastor
5:30 Mid Week Manna
6:00 Young Disciples meet
6:00 Tutoring & ESL

Thursday, February 2

9:00 Mobil Food Distribution
5:00Pik Up Food Distribution

Friday, February 3

Office closed

Saturday, February 4

Sunday, February 5

8:30 Chapel Worship
9:15 Sunday school
10:30 Sanctuary Worship
4:001 Trinity Village Vespers

Lakesiders, having promised to be loyal to Jesus Christ through The United Methodist Church and to do all in our power to strengthen its ministries, live out our promise by God's grace together—participating faithfully in the ministries of Lakeside United Methodist Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

Amy: This week, another bishop has left the United Methodist Church. Are you committed to staying United Methodist?

Bishop Merrill: I wouldn't be here if I weren't committed to and hopeful about the future of the United Methodist Church. I am grateful for the way we have traditionally made room for people who don't agree on everything, but who do hold the power of the love of Christ in common. That's been part of our identity for a long time, and I hope we can continue to be that kind of church, together.

Amy: In closing, Bishop Merrill, how can we best support your ministry? And any last words?

Bishop Merrill: My ministry is one that I hope will support the lives of our churches and their people, and whatever we hope to accomplish together will need to be rooted in the basics of our life of faith. Make space to reflect on the goodness of God and your own gratitude for the grace that surrounds you. Gather regularly with fellow Christians, in the community of the Holy Spirit, to hear the word, break the bread, and sing the songs of the faith. Pray with hope and an open heart, to know how Christ would have us serve in his name in our communities. And act with love toward those whose lives touch yours.

I also covet your prayers for me and for us together. I look forward to meeting the United Methodists of Arkansas and continuing this road into God's good future!

(arumc.org website)



SEE INSERT



Sunday, January 22, 2023
 8:30 Chapel Worship - 13
 9:15 Sunday School - 21
 10:30 Worship - 53
 Online Worship -

Our Weekly Service at Church

Sunday, January 29, 2023

Senior Pastor: The Reverend Judy Rudd; **Liturgist:** Claire Campbell

Director of Music: Ann Tibbs; **Children's Moments:**

Sermon Title: Why Do My Prayers Go Unanswered?

Sermon Series: Why? Making Sense of God's Will

Scripture: 2 Cor. 12:7-10

Flowers: ; **Ushers:** Steve Dobbins, Joe Coles,

Rob Wyatt, Bobby Wyatt, Roy Whitaker, Ken Kesterson

January 30 Brass Polishers: Susan Coles & Deborah Whitaker

January 30 Counters: George Mitchell & Deborah Whitaker

All services are available on Facebook or Facebook Live.

Join us online for worship at:

<https://www.facebook.com/LakesidePB/live/>:

Check out what is happening at Lakeside on our website

www.lakesidepb.org

SUMMARY OF JANUARY 10, 2023

LEADERSHIP BOARD ACTIONS

- New Leadership Board members, Kimberly Mercado Brown, Linda McNulty and David Nixon were welcomed. Melissa Young was recognized as the new Staff Parish Relations Vice-Chair.
- Up to \$8400 for 7 food distributions was approved from the Lakeside Mission Fund.
- Town hall meetings for the Board to provide information and respond to comments and questions about the Board's work and activities were scheduled for February 12th, July 16th and November 10th in 2023.
- The hiring of an assistant custodian was approved.
- Replacement of the Wesley class heating and air unit at a cost of \$11,000 and repairs to the church bus at a cost of \$6132 were both approved
- The 2023 budget was discussed but tabled until the February meeting.



Help us keep our Blessing Box stocked...

*Donate non perishable food items, preferably with pull tabs for easy opening.

*Donate toiletries, blankets, gloves, hats, hand warmers, and socks.

*Ask to be added to the blessing box schedule by calling Linda La-Clair at 870-329-7753; Pick a day of the week, once or twice a month to stock the Blessing box.



Our supply of tuna has gotten very low. We are asking you to donate cans of tuna to be delivered each month to Neighbor to Neighbor, any brand will be fine. We also thank those of you who are so faithful to give to this cause. Lakeside has been donating to this cause for many years, let's not stop now!



Have you seen the Prayer Cross in the elevator lobby on the first floor? Tie a piece of colored yarn on the cross (provided in small baskets) for a prayer you prayed.

Tie a white piece of yarn on the cross (also provided) for your prayer answered.

Speaking of yarn, Thank you to all who donated colored yarn for this project. We have enough for several years!



We Still Need Altar Flowers! If you enjoy the beautiful flowers each week in our worship services, then please call Linda at 534-6241 and sign up for a Sunday to provide the flowers. Open dates include January 29, February 5, 19 & 26, March 5, 12, & 26.

Lakeside UMC will hold the first meeting of the Women in Faith (formerly UMW) on February 6 at 10:00 in the Great Hall at Trinity Village Lodge. I hope as many of you that can come will attend as we revision how we will now look. Refreshments will be served.



United Women in Faith

Sandy Bobo
 President

Neighbor To Neighbor

Soups \$10 qt.



Chowders & Gumbos \$15 qt.

2023

SOUP SALE

WHEN: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9
 9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

WHERE: **Neighbor to Neighbor (Pantry Door)**
 1419 S. Pine St.

