Dear friends,

This comes to wish you and yours every blessing and happiness during the Advent and Christmas season. The anticipation builds as we meditate, traditionally, on ‘the Last Things’ – death, judgement, heaven and hell – and as we reflect on God’s people waiting for a Savior, on the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah, on John the Baptist who prepared the way and on Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Christ.

It is all-too-easy to get caught up in the busyness of preparation for Christmas Day and so overlook what this time is about in terms of faith. Advent-tide is about quiet waiting and not frantic rushing; it is about fasting and not feasting; it is about reflection and not hassle. ‘Jesus is the reason for the season’ as a popular car-window sticker says!

The Gospel reading for the fourth Sunday in Advent (Luke1: 39-55) presents a picture of waiting and wondering; love and support; affirmation and praise. A young woman, unexpectedly pregnant, travels all the way from Nazareth to the hill country of Judaea. She is undoubtedly apprehensive about the social consequences of her condition (cf. Matthew 1:19) and she needs a confidante. Who better than her cousin, also unexpectedly pregnant? Elizabeth and Mary greet each other and, recognizing the significance of their pregnancies, burst into praise of God. Their babies will be cousins and, more than that, friends. Elizabeth’s son will proclaim the greatness of his cousin, Jesus, whose shoes he feels unworthy to loosen; Mary’s son will mourn the death of his cousin, John, declaring him to be more than a prophet.

Mary’s Song (Luke 1: 46b-55) has occupied the minds of poets and musicians, liturgists and theologians, for centuries. That an unmarried and pregnant young woman from a rural village in an occupied country should articulate such revolutionary thinking was – and is – extraordinary.

A prayer? A vision? An aspiration? It is all of these and a statement of faith in the mighty acts of God. It is a call for justice and equality, for a place for the voiceless and the marginalized, for the hungry to be fed and for the humble to be lifted up.

Sisters and brothers, is Mary speaking to us this Advent and Christmas as we look on the world her Son came to save? The hungry still need to be fed; the powerful still need to learn humility; there are still those who are rich at the expense of others; there are still regimes which need to be brought low. How do we respond to the challenge of Mary’s Song and how may we, ‘the people called Methodist’, help bring in a world where all may have life and have it to the full (John 10.10b)? Let us reflect on this as we join with the angels singing over Bethlehem that first Christmas, ‘Glory to God and peace on earth’.

Every blessing for Advent and Christmas – and into 2019!

Gillian
Work continues toward Peace on the Korean Peninsular

The Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsular, held by the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist Church, and the Korean Methodist Church, in Atlanta Nov. 9 – 11 was hosted by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. Delegates included host participants and individuals concerned with this vital peace process.

Since the previous meetings of the Roundtable in Houston in 2016 and in Seoul in 2017, events have been tumultuous. They have ranged from a near-war situation in 2017 to the rapprochement of the Panmunjom and the Pyongyang meetings of President Moon Jae-In and Chairman Kim Jong-Un, and the Singapore meeting of Chairman Kim Jong-Un with President Trump.

The Roundtable was chaired by World Methodist Council President, the Rev. Dr. J.C. Park. Greetings were received from President Moon Jae In and from Consul General Young Jun Kim.

The gathering opened with a presentation from Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States. President Carter noted the ‘step-by-step’ nature of the process, commenting that ‘democratization and re-unification are two sides of the one coin.’ He recognised the wish of North Korea to be ‘acceptable in the community of nations’ and applauded the ‘historic’ efforts of President Moon towards a new relationship with North Korea.

Former Ambassador, the Rev. Dr. James T. Laney, spoke of his experience both as a mission partner in and, later, as Ambassador to South Korea. He observed that this meeting was ‘extraordinarily timely,’ noting that the Winter Olympics 2018 had been ‘a game-changer,’ not least through the role of Kim Yo-Jong, younger sister of Chairman Kim. He warned that ‘many things lined up against rapprochement’, with ‘a basis for distrust on both sides.’ However, many positive factors are emerging and this is a Kairos moment: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers – we must make peace happen!’

The Roundtable featured presentations from individuals and in panel form, offering both historical and theological reflection on the Korean Peninsular over the past 100 years and more. The role of countries such as China and Japan, and more recently, the United States, was noted and analysed. Noteworthy was the thoughtful and deep consideration of how past hurts should be handled and reconciliation achieved. There were stories of courageous and creative moves to bridge the divide between South and North Korea.

Bishop Ivan Abrahams, general secretary of the World Methodist Council, gives the sermon during closing worship at the Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula at Grace United Methodist Church in Atlanta. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.

The public Worship Service, offered by WMC General Secretary, Bishop Ivan Abrahams, was enriched by music and singing from a number of choirs. Bishop Abrahams reflected on issues of hurt and reconciliation. He expressed ‘hope to see a united Korea in our lifetime.’ Delegates and visitors shared in a celebration of Holy Communion.

During the proceedings, a writing group met to draft an Atlanta Statement, the agreed text of which may be found here: https://www.umcmission.org/learn-about-us/news-and-stories/2018/November/declarations-and-statement-for-peace-korean-peninsula.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, President of Global Ministries, noted that the process ‘must be owned and guided by the Koreas’, stressing that Korea cannot be regarded as ‘a strategic chess piece in a game of global politics.’ He observed that ‘our whole world has been impacted by a Korean war too long unresolved and un-ended’. Concluding that sanctions, embargoes and threats are not helpful in the current climate and that ‘good, sound, just leadership on all sides is needed,’ he noted God’s promise of ‘a future with hope.’

A concluding act of worship focused on a map of Korea and on places where atrocities had happened, stories were heard and prayers made for healing and reconciliation.

Gillian Kingston

Bishop Ivan Abrahams, general secretary of the World Methodist Council, gives the sermon during closing worship at Grace United Methodist Church in Atlanta. Photo by Mike DuBose, UMNS.
Executive Committee Meets at WMC Headquarters

The Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council met recently at the Council headquarters in Lake Junaluska, NC, USA following participation in the Korean Roundtable. They were there 2-1/2 days, which allowed for much-needed planning time, as well as taking care of other Council matters. The Steering Committee Meeting in Mexico City on August 28-31 2019 was among the topics discussed.

In addition to taking care of a number of items that needed the Officer’s attention, they took time to visit Mary Hale, widow of former longtime WMC General Secretary Joe Hale. Mrs. Hale is in assisted living but her joy and pleasantness was appreciated as she remembered and shared old times with officers she had known some time ago.

Carter commends peace efforts for Korea

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who helped avert a crisis between North Korea and the United States in 1994, has been working for peace for the entire Korean Peninsula ever since.

In his opening address at the 2018 Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula — a Nov. 9-11 event hosted by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries — Carter commended representatives of various Methodist denominations and ecumenical organizations for their own peace efforts.

“I can’t think of a more worthy comprehensive effort for the Methodist churches of the world and for the World Council of Churches together and others … than to work for peace in the Korean Peninsula and also particularly for peace between North Korea and the United States.”

During the roundtable’s morning session Nov. 9 at the Carter Center, the 39th U.S. president joined his longtime friend, the Rev. James Laney, in offering both a historic and current perspective of the situation. Laney is a retired United Methodist minister and former president of United Methodist-related Emory University.

North Korea has always demanded the U.S. deal directly with its leaders to forge a final and binding peace agreement treaty, Carter told participants. “When I was in the White House for four years I tried to accomplish this, unsuccessfully.”

But Carter was successful in 1994 when he was dispatched on behalf of the Clinton administration to meet with then-President Kim Il Sung and avert a nuclear crisis. Laney, a former missionary in South Korea, was the U.S. ambassador in Seoul at the time.

While there is reason to be distrustful, he said, “the fact is that peacemaking is not a witness to the good of peace. Peacemaking is the actual activity of making peace happen.”

While still concerned about human rights violations in North Korea, Carter said he was pleased with the progress made between Moon Jae-in, the president of South Korea and Chairman Kim Jong Un of North Korea, who have met three times in the past year.

“I am very prayerful that the recent effort by President Trump to find common ground with the North Koreans will be successful,” Carter said.

Continuing steps, said Carter, include proceeding with peace talks, forming a conference or coalition of the two Koreas, the
Carter commends peace efforts for Korea continued

U.S. and China; having the U.S. sign a complete peace treaty officially ending the Korean War and monitoring each other’s compliance with the proposed agreement outlined earlier between Trump and Kim.

In a congratulatory letter to Carter and church leaders and members, the South Korean president saluted the work of the roundtable and noted the strong United Methodist connection to his country and the Korean Peninsula.

“Right now on the Korean Peninsula, a historic window of opportunity is being opened,” Moon wrote. “Longstanding prayers and efforts by Koreans and people around the world who long for peace are coming to fruition.”

The Rev. Jong Chun Park, president of the World Methodist Council, told United Methodist News Service he appreciated how Carter and Laney shared their experiences in 1994. “And their actions were based on their faith,” he noted. “That’s why their presentation were even more powerful. I appreciate their Christian approach toward peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

A panel of speakers also reflected on the presentations by Carter and Laney and offered perspectives based on their own experiences and Christian viewpoints.

Christine Ahn, founder and international coordinator of Women Cross DMZ, talked about how political rhetoric stymies progress toward peace. “But a peace agreement could defuse tensions while serving as a security guarantee, as Laney and Carter both noted this morning,” she said.

“It is our ethical and moral responsibility to bring a closure to this war,” she told the gathering.

Hong Jung Lee, top executive of the National Council of Churches in Korea, was present when Moon and Kim signed an agreement after meeting for a third time in September.

AME Churches in Angola in danger of being closed

Over the past few months, the government of Angola has reviewed laws and procedures governing the presence of Christian denominations in the country due to the proliferation of small evangelical churches primarily from Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal.

Denominations must now meet specific criteria including being established in a minimum number of provinces and certain levels of membership in order to be recognized by the Institute for National Religious Affairs. When questioned, government representatives stated that Angola is a “lay state with no religious preference and the reforms are being done in keeping with the Constitution to normalize the exercise of religious liberty, belief, and worship”. All churches that do not meet the government standards will be closed on November 3rd with some being allowed to remain provisionally open for the remainder of the month if paperwork is being filed.

The AME Church has existed in Angola since 1996 and currently has a temporary permit to operate. The Presiding Prelate of the 15th Episcopal District, Bishop David R. Daniels, Jr. is in negotiations with the government and solicits the prayers of the Connectional Church for the Angola Annual Conference during this troubling time. Earlier this year AME Churches in Rwanda (17th Episcopal District) faced closure due to new government building codes for religious properties, but most of the churches were able to be saved.

With information from RTP News (Article in Portuguese).
Norwegian church provides communion at the harbor

By Karl Anders Ellingsen

All Saints’ Day is special for Finnsnes United Methodist Church. On Nov. 4, church members will meet the passengers of the Hurtigruten ferry with offers of communion and the opportunity to light torches for loved ones who have passed away.

The ministry began in 2017 and led to many emotional encounters as the congregation reached out to the community, offering people “a chance to see holiness in their own everyday lives.”

The Hurtigruten ferry is a commercial liner carrying goods and people up and down the long Norwegian Arctic coastline, binding small towns and fishing communities together. In November, the darkness of the Arctic winter is closing in for the people in Finnsnes, a small town far north of the Arctic Circle.

We talked with The Rev. Roy-Frode Løvland, pastor of Finnsnes United Methodist Church, about how the All Saints’ Day tradition began and what the response has been like.

What was behind this idea?

I’m not sure where the idea came from. We were having a lot of discussions about breaking out of the physical church or using alternative sites for service. We are rebuilding our church, and this gave us a good push to rethink many things.

All Saints’ Day is a day that appeals to many people, so we thought this would give us a good opportunity to offer people a chance to see holiness in their own everyday lives. And when our intentions were to serve the community, and not to recruit new members, we focused on people traveling. Our goal was to give people a place to turn their eyes to God.

How were you met by the community when you presented the idea?

We contacted the owner of the dock and got permission and instructions for where and when. We were met with only positivity. We also contacted Hurtigruten and asked them to inform the passengers. It’s a short stop on a long journey, so we were relying on good information before docking so that those who wished to participate knew to get off and walk to the right place. Their staff were very helpful and put the information on the screens all over the ship.

How did you prepare the dock?

We set up a sound system and all we needed in plenty of time.

It was not meant to be a big show. We just wanted to meet the passengers with music to welcome them. When the ship arrived, the music played and people both on the dock and on the ship stopped to listen and see. When the doors opened on the ship, I invited people to receive the Lord’s communion, with emphasis on this being open for all. A short devotion with the Lord’s Prayer was recited in Norwegian, English and German. People were also invited to light a small torch and place it in a heart-shaped area that we had prepared, in memory of their loved ones.

How did the people from the church who participated experience this?

To meet strangers with communion is an almost indescribable experience. It was obvious that this was an unexpected gift for very many passengers. They stood with tears in their eyes, receiving wine and bread listening to the Norwegian words for, “This is the body of Christ. This is the blood of Christ.” I hope something eternal was planted in their heart.

Many from our small congregation participated. They handed out torches to those that wanted to light one for their loved ones, they made a fire and made plenty of warm coffee, talked to people and helped with the communion. Since our service was moved to this place, many dressed for the cold and participated alongside the passengers.

How has this experience affected the congregation?

We almost immediately concluded that this was something we must do again and explore more. What kind of meeting places can we create in people’s everyday life? How dependent are we on recruiting new members in our outreach? What is created in these small meetings between us and people passing by in the communion? What does it create in us? How will it affect us as a church if we seek opportunities like this from now on?

This article originally appeared on umnews.org
The Churches’ Commitment to Children

A day after the World Children’s Day November 21, the World Council of Churches and UNICEF together held a celebration in the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, reminding all WCC member churches of their commitments to children: to promote child protection through church communities, to promote meaningful participation by children and adolescents and to raise church voices for climate justice.

The World Methodist Council, through its Committee on Family Life, has already agreed to work towards these aims. At the recent Celebration in Geneva, the participants were challenged to make schools a safe place for children.

There are many Methodist Schools throughout the world. For the sake of the well-being of the children, we are called to make those schools into places where corporal punishment is no longer practiced and where children are supported to explore their gifts and talents.

The keynote speaker at the World Children’s Day celebration was the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople. He reminded the audience of the fact that children suffer most under climate change. Protecting God’s creation means to care for the future of the children. Bartholomew said, “The ecological crisis is constantly escalating in the name of growth and development. Humanity remains oblivious to the global appeals for radical change in our attitudes toward creation.”

Consultation on Diaspora Churches

In an age of migration with 68.5 million forcibly displaced people, many Christians are longing for a spiritual home far from their homes. At the WMC Seoul Meeting we agreed to bring a group of people together: migrants, church leaders, those who are on the move and people from countries where migrants and refugees seek to find a new home.

Together, we will engage in a time of listening and learning on the topic “Methodist and Wesleyan Churches in the Diaspora”. We will explore possibilities for mission and evangelism and ask how “being church together” might look like. The Methodist Church in Great Britain has graciously agreed to host the Consultation from June 3-6, 2019 in the High Leigh Retreat Center near London. Please contact Geneva Secretary Rosemarie Wenner (rosemarie.wenner@emk.de) for further information.
Malhangalene United Methodist Church, an inner-city congregation in Maputo, recently partnered with the city municipality to help reduce the number of undocumented national citizens.

The congregation organized a communitywide health fair, inviting people to get identification cards, measure their blood pressure and get medical and exercise advice. The medical team also offered dental care and eye exams.

Gathering at the historical Praca da Paz (Peace Plaza), the event celebrated the peace accord signed Oct. 4, 1992, in Rome that marked the end of a 16-year civil war in Mozambique.

Members and guests of Malhangalene United Methodist Church exercise in Peace Plaza in Maputo, Mozambique, during a citizenship and health fair offered by the church and the city government. Photo by Joao Filimone Sambo, UMNS.

While the number of undocumented citizens in Mozambique is unknown, it is estimated that 15 percent of the country’s 30.8 million people lack official ID documents. These are people born in Mozambique who, because of distance and expenses, grow to adulthood without any documentation. However, when they want to enroll their children in school, get a job or travel, they need identification cards.

“Many people do not get IDs or medical checkups for a variety of reasons,” said Mauro Langa, an organizing team member. They may not have the services near their communities, misunderstand why IDs and health care are so important or find medical assistance unaffordable, he noted.

Massango said that in Mozambique, it is very difficult to get an identification card at the beginning of the year. “It is great to see both kids and parents go home with their IDs,” Massango added. “For kids, it will facilitate their enrollment in schools.”

Keith Leonel, 13, for example, traveled 15 miles from Matola Rio to renew his ID. “I am truly grateful and relieved,” he said. “At the end of October, I have to renew my registration at school, and to get the ID renewed is not an easy thing in my community.”

“More than 200 people had new IDs or had them renewed,” said Sandra Madau, a Civil Registry Office employee. “The process was smooth.” She expressed appreciation to the church for its ministry.

Some patients were advised to visit clinics for follow-up, and others received prescriptions.

Anita Guambe, a retiree from the Reserve Bank, was grateful for the exercise instruction. “I recommend that everybody should spare some minutes or even an hour daily to exercise,” she said.

This article originally appeared on umnews.org
Moldova trafficking intervention changes lives

Work in the red-light district of Moldova is heavy, challenging, and sometimes heartbreaking, but local Nazarene trafficking intervention workers get to see the power of God’s love transform women and families in ways they may never have been able to experience on their own.

This ministry includes an intervention team and a mobile medical clinic to offer counseling, prayer, HIV/AIDS testing, and other free medical services. The team has worked with many people over the years to help bring healing and provide career resources to trafficking victims. One of those victims was a single mother named Allison* who lost her children thanks to her poor health and financial situation.

About two years ago, Allison showed up at a coffee club ministry that meets every Wednesday night. While the group discussed healthy relationships, Allison waited patiently for the study to be over.

“Afterward, Allison and our team met with a translator who is specialized in trauma counseling and has worked with trafficking victims from Moldova in the past,” said Becky Sukanen, a missionary in Moldova. “Allison said she had decided to visit our trafficking intervention clinic after first meeting us through our street outreach. She wanted to know if we could take her into our program. We listened to her painful story, shared through sobs.”

Ten years ago, Allison was young and pregnant with her first child — a son. Two years later she and her husband had a second child — a daughter. When her daughter was only 2, her husband abandoned her. As the stress of being a single mother took its toll on her, Allison began having seizures. The doctors diagnosed her with epilepsy.

Because of her seizures, she lost her job as a waitress. When she turned to her mother for financial support, her mom started to sell herself on the streets of Moldova. This was the only way she could support herself, her daughter and her grandchildren. Seeing her mother reduced to such desperation only intensified Allison’s stress, turning her hair entirely grey, although she was just in her mid-20s.

Unable to see any other option, Allison also turned to work on the street for money. She hated it so much that she stopped, and they lived in the woods for a while. During that time, she decided her children would be better off in a state orphanage — an institution she dreaded but which seemed to be the best option available.

While visiting a social worker one day, Allison had a seizure. This episode led to the approval of her children’s adoption outside of Moldova.

Allison’s situation left her a childless, broken woman, traumatized and alone with a medical condition that renders her nearly unemployable. Without clear options, she had turned again to sexual exploitation as a last resort. Despite being short on trust, she responded to the hope presented by the local trafficking outreach ministry.

Recently, team members were able to locate her children. Although they will not be reunited, she was able to see photos of them, safe and living together with a family from Switzerland. When she saw the photos, she wept, happy that they were safe.

Four months into working with her, Allison came to the team and reluctantly admitted she was pregnant and panic-stricken. The staff listened to and comforted her.

Unable to face the unbearable loss of placing another child into adoption, Allison decided to keep her baby, and the intervention team walked through the pregnancy with her. She now has a healthy baby boy named Igor*.

The team held a baby shower for him, and the team’s home church donated formula, clothes, toys, and diapers for her to use until she started to get help from the government.

Next, Allison needed help financially. The team asked her about her skills and learned she knew how to sew by hand. They bought a sewing machine with money from Living Word Church of the Nazarene in Houston, Texas, and she started sewing. To make Allison’s employment sustainable, they offered to let her pay for the machine in exchange for 36 pillows or pillow covers.

“We have seen a noticeable change in Allison, who used to blame everything on God,” Sukanen said. “She now takes responsibility for her decisions and is learning and trying new ways to sew.”

“Knowing that our ministry has helped Allison, her baby, and many others to find a new future is encouraging to us and reminds us that what we do for Christ makes a difference,” Sukanen said.

This article originally appeared on nazarene.org
The Wesleyan Methodist tradition is one that has always sought to put faith into action. One way that millions have done so is by serving on a short-term mission trip. Short-term mission (STM) has been billed as a way for churches to spread the Good News to those in underserved areas of the world. The wide-spread and growing practice deploys teams that are often comprised of church members with willing hearts, ready hands, and a desire to bring about a change. Though the United States sends the most STM teams, churches from other countries send teams all over the world to work in children’s programs, health clinics, or other such ministries.

STM began as a populist movement with roots in evangelistic motivations. Many of these early teams departed home with suitcases full of Gospel literature and a burden to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. They distributed hundreds of millions of evangelistic materials in countries across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. But today most STM trips are not to such locations. Rather, they are places to where the church is already growing. Nine of the top fifteen STM destinations for American STM teams are in Latin America and the Caribbean—areas that are seeing dynamic church development. Certainly, there are needs for evangelistic work in every community. However, the idea that the STM team members are going to be the first ones to bring the Good News to “those people over there” needs to be examined further. So, here are a few points to consider when considering STM and evangelism.

Mission, by its very nature, is to be evangelistic. If you are preparing for a STM trip, be prepared to share the hope you have in Jesus Christ, when the time is appropriate. (1 Peter 3:15). In Matthew 11, John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus to ask him about the work of the Kingdom. Jesus’ answer points to the restorative miracles of his mission. Mission work efforts similarly may be occasions of faith.

Let the local church lead. The local church leaders know the community best. They will be there long before the STM team arrived. They will be there long after the STM goes back home. Let the local church community receive the recognition for what God is doing. Let them show you where and how to share faith and when to remain silent.

Know the culture. There are countless stories where well-meaning, but uninformed, STM participants did great damage to the work of ministry because of a lack of understanding of cultural norms. Take time to learn all you can about the people and communities where the STM will serve. A good place to start is something as simple as the hosts’ language. In a survey of pastors who receive STM teams, many lamented the fact that the teams failed to take the time to even learn basic phrases in their hosts’ language. A few words can go a long way!

Reverse the Process. Here’s a challenge for a church that sends STM teams: invite members of your host community to come to your church—and you pay the expenses. Find your ministry partners mission projects in your community, comfortable places to stay, and familiar foods. You may be surprised about what you learn about one another and how to reach your own community with the gospel.

There are certainly many aspects to consider when serving in mission, but these few are a good place to start. Since mission service is certainly commanded in Scripture, let’s do it right!

Rev. Dr. Rob Haynes is the Director of Education and Leadership for World Methodist Evangelism. His new book Consuming Mission: Towards a Theology of Short-Term Mission and Pilgrimage examines the STM practices from a Wesleyan Methodist missional perspective. You can learn more at: www.consumingmission.com. He can be reached at rob@worldmethodist.org.
California churches offering shelter, meals amid wildfires

More than 230,000 acres of land have been burned over the past week in two California wildfires, the Camp Fire north of Sacramento and the Woolsey Fire north of Los Angeles. Nearly 70 people have died and more than 600 are still missing. At least 12,000 structures have been destroyed and more than 52,000 people have been evacuated.

Camp Fire is the deadliest wildfire in California history with 63 deaths, more than doubling the 1933 Griffith Park Fire, which killed 29 people in Los Angeles.

Paradise Church of the Nazarene Pastor Lloyd Tremain’s home in Magalia — just north of Paradise — was included in the homes destroyed by Camp Fire. The Tremain family are currently staying with family members in Sacramento. Lloyd said it appears that the entire Paradise church congregation, apart from one family, lost their homes.

So far, the Paradise Church appears to still be standing, but the condition of the back side or interior of the main building is unknown at this time. It has been confirmed that the church’s second building, which houses the youth center and compassionate ministries, is destroyed.

Several organizations and churches have created evacuation centers to help those who have been displaced. The centers at the Chico East Ave. Church of the Nazarene and Oroville Church of the Nazarene are at capacity, housing approximately 700 evacuees in total.

The Oroville shelter is still offering meals and other services to those who are displaced even if they don’t have room to house them.

“You don’t have to stay here to get services,” American Red Cross Regional Communications Director Steve Walsh told the Chico Enterprise-Record.

The Chico East Ave. shelter has been made into a makeshift clinic since the hospital in Paradise — Adventist Health Feather River Hospital — was so badly damaged. The clinic started when four volunteers who worked at the hospital came together to serve the needs of their community.

“I’ve worked at Feather River Hospital for 11 years, and we know the patients, the types of people who have had to leave their homes,” Birgitte Randall, a doctor at the hospital, told The Sacramento Bee. “They have chronic medical needs, and they need help. We have several patients that are on psych meds, and if you go off psych meds there’s going to be a problem.”

Enough medical volunteers have gathered now to form an entire medical team.

As of Friday morning, Camp Fire is 40 percent contained and Woolsey Fire is 62 percent contained.

Prayer is requested for the Tremain family, the Paradise church congregation, those volunteering to bring relief, and the rest of the victims affected by the wildﬁres.
We welcome your press releases, articles and resources! Please contact us by the last Monday of the month at communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org if you would like your story to be included in our next edition of the First Friday Letter.

We Are On the Web

This and past First Friday Letters can be found online at FirstFridayLetter.worldmethodistcouncil.org.

The World Methodist Council’s website may be found at worldmethodistcouncil.org.

The World Methodist Museum’s website is at methodistmuseum.org.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please email communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org.

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