First Friday Letter

The World Methodist Council December 2021

Greetings from the Vice President

Beannachtai na Nollag daiobh - blessings of Christmas to you! With this greeting in Irish, I pray that you may have a joy-full and happy Advent and Christmas with those who mean most to you. We hold in prayer those who are facing Christmas without someone they love - may you find comfort and peace.

Millions of people will spend this Christmas time on the move, fleeing from the effects of climate change and from the terror of war and civil unrest. We pray for those in refugee camps where there is little, if any, way of protecting themselves and their families from Covid-19; for those trapped in the freezing cold on the border of Poland and Belarus in central Europe; for the Rohinga people and others in Asia and the Middle East fleeing persecution on account of their ethnicity and religion; for those in regions of Africa whose livelihoods have been threatened by desertification and drought; for those on the Mexican/US border...

The image of the Holy Family fleeing the wrath of Herod for the safety of Egypt is found on a number of the great High Crosses in Ireland. Centuries old, these crosses were erected at monasteries and other such places round the countryside. Carved into the stone are Biblical scenes and stories, images which continue to remind those who view them of the things of the faith*.

One of the most beautiful of these crosses is the Cross of Moone in Co. Kildare. The ninth century stonemason carved his 'take' on Joseph with Mary and Jesus and the donkey, placing it between a crisp carving of five bread rolls and two fish and a depiction of God hovering over the young men in the fiery furnace. Why did he choose these particular stories? Was he sending a message that, in times of persecution, danger and need, Immanuel, God *is* with us?

Here, many of us will light a candle in a window of our homes on Christmas Eve. Though this custom has its origins in a sad period of Irish history when priests were on the run from the then-authorities, it was also said that it was a sign to the Holy Family that they would be welcome to stay awhile on their journey and rest. Perhaps we might take time this Christmas to light a candle, to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts and homes and to ask ourselves for whom else we might shine a similarly welcoming light…

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! / Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, / Risen with healing in his wings.

Blessings for Advent and Christmas,

Gillian

*Google 'Irish High Crosses' for more.

Click here for Bishop Ivan Abrahams Christmas Greetings from the World Methodist Council in Bethlehem

Flight into Egypt Moone

Second Episcopal District Holds Joint Ordination

Sixty-nine ordinands *prepared to receive their orders*

In 2019, The Rt. Rev. James L. Davis, Presiding Prelate of the 2nd Episcopal District, cast the vision for a district-wide ordination service to take place in May of 2020. The three-day event would be complete with renowned musical artists, bishops from across the African Methodist Episcopal Church Connection, and some of the 2nd Episcopal District's best preaching. The affair was set to occur at Ebenezer AME Church, and each conference was asked to commit to sending hundreds of people to participate in what would certainly be a "Legacy Celebration."

Inspired by the spirit of connectional ministry, the aim was to gather the five conferences in a single, coordinated effort to celebrate those who would be ordained and give reverence to the significance of ordination. In addition, Bishop Davis sought to create a moment that would inspire our clergy to remain committed to the journey of ministerial practice.

Unfortunately, in March of 2020, the world went into quarantine, and almost 100 candidates' ordination was postponed. For the next year and a half, amid mounting questions and uncertainty, the three-day Legacy Celebration became a traditional, hybrid worship service that maintained its distinction as the largest ordination service in the history of the AME Church. While we were unable to manifest the original vision, the underlying intent was evident in the redesigned service— "to create an unforgettable moment for those to be ordained. It may not happen today, but I hope some of these folk will look back and have this experience revive them and give them what it takes to help them go on just a little further and a little while longer," said Bishop Davis.

Separated by an empty pew and two to three on an occupied pew, 69 ordinands prepared to receive their orders. The service opened with the processional of bishops and presiding elders who sat to the far right of the pulpit and altar space. While the music and ordination took place in real-time, those who led the service in prayer, statements of occasion, and collective readings were viewed on-screen.

A former bishop of the 2nd Episcopal District, the Rt. Rev. Adam J. Richardson preached "Oh For a Closer Walk With God" from Psalm 91:1-2. It was a powerful reminder that our public lives are evidence of our private practices. All that we are and all that we do should reflect the relationship we cultivate with the God we serve.

Following the preached word, itinerant deacons and elders were ordained ten at a time in order of conference affiliation. Five bishops, including the first woman to be ordained bishop in the AME Church, The Rt. Rev. Vashti M. McKenzie (Retired), laid hands on each diaconate ordinand. Those to be ordained Itinerant Elders were ordained by all five bishops and two elders of their choosing. As the service came to a close, the newly ordained Itinerant Elders were gifted new bibles, an AME lapel pin, a keepsake program signed by present bishops, and a meditation chime.

Though in-person participation was capped at 350 people in Reid Temple, thousands watched online and celebrated across various media platforms. Those in attendance included Bishops Vashti Murphy-McKenzie, Jeffrey N. Leath, Adam J. Richardson, and John H. Bryant; the 2nd Episcopal District presiding elders, and a host of district officers, pastors, and supporters of individual ordinands. It was truly evident that the 2nd Episcopal District is thriving together.

Story and photo by John Thomas III

Editor, The Christian Recorder

May His Light continue to shine

"Stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near" Luke 21:28

I had been filming for Advent at the WI'AM Conflict Restoration Centre, which is situated in the shadow of the separation wall in Bethlehem. Its founder Zoughbi Zoughbi was sharing some reflections and afterwards we sat beneath the walnut tree with the staff, sipping sweet chai tea. A couple of Belgian tourists (a rare sight) were looking at the many art works displayed on the 25 ft wall. After joining us for tea, they explained they had visited the Church of the Nativity and wanted to view Banksy's artwork on the separation wall. After hearing about the work of the Centre, they left with instructions where to find Banksy's artwork.

In case you've not familiar with Banksy's work, he is a famous but anonymous graffiti artist who creates his art in public places. He started out in his home town of Bristol in the 1990s, but now his artwork is seen all over the world and sells for millions at auctions. His art delivers political messages on contemporary themes. He has many installations in Bethlehem; the 'Armoured Dove', is opposite WI'AM under the gaze of the looming military watchtower. The Dove has its wings wide open and carries an olive branch in its beak: the symbol of peace. It is wearing an armoured vest with a target on its chest. Banksy has, for over a decade, displayed many pieces across the West Bank and Gaza, highlighting the reality of life for Palestinians living under occupation. He has used his work in a positive way seeking to attract tourism especially to Bethlehem. In 2017 he opened the unique Walled Off Hotel a few meters from the wall, and described it as having 'the worst view in the world'.

The hotel is unique and has many of Banksy's art throughout the rooms. Thousands visited and stayed pre-covid, creating job opportunities for the locals. Banksy recently sold one of his paintings 'Mediterranean Sea View' for £2.3 million, donating the proceeds to the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation Hospital. A place I know well and where I had a stent procedure. He continues to donate to hospitals in Bethlehem by selling his art, bringing hope and light to those in need.

In December 2019 a new art piece was installed in the hotel, the 'Scar of Bethlehem' showing the nativity scene below the separation wall. On the wall is what appears to be a pierced blast which has created the shape of a star. Banksy called it a "modified nativity". The words 'love' and 'peace' are written in English and French, with three wrapped presents. During lockdown locals staged a surprise exhibition of 20 photographs by locals of Banksy's work in Manger Square as a thank you for his support and contribution to tourism.

In the reading from Luke, Jesus warns his disciples to read the signs of the times. He told his disciples when you see these signs: nations rising against nations, earthquakes, famines, "stand up and lift up your heads" Zoughbi shared that Palestinian followers of Christ continue to 'watch' and 'wait'. To keep their trust in the one who was born in Bethlehem who brings light into darkness. That the words of Jesus this Advent "stand up and raise your heads" is an inspiration to keep looking towards the Light of Christ. Banksy is able to read the signs of the times and stand up using his art to speak out against injustice, using his gift of art to bring hope and light.

As we journey through Advent towards the nativity 'watching' and 'waiting' may we remember the message of the 'Scar of Bethlehem' and hold on to the 'star of Bethlehem' our Lord Jesus Christ. May His Light continue to shine in us bringing love, peace and hope.

Shine on, shine on star of Bethlehem
Shine as on that night
Shine on, shine on star of Bethlehem
Teach us to show your light (Garth Hewitt)

Christmas blessings to you and yours from Bethlehem
Angleena Keizer
Mission Partner in the Holy Land

If you would like to pray and act on what you have read here please see some helpful resources here A prayer for peace in Israel and Palestine — Embrace the Middle East (embraceme.org) and the recent Christian Aid Report 'Where is Palestine' here

Faith-Sharing Movements

What will it take to effectively help Wesleyan/Methodist emerging leaders around the world build faith-sharing movements?

This is the BIG question we have been praying and dreaming with God about over the last year at World Methodist Evangelism. And we'd like to invite you to join us in our praying and dreaming because the stakes our very high when it comes to emerging leaders. We are absolutely convinced that the world is in desperate need of young men and women called to offer a better vision of hope for their lives and their communities.

I am excited to share some of the vision with you our global family. More specifically, we'd like to share a few shifts we are making in response to this great challenge:

1- From "one-off" events to a formation journey: Over the years we have hosted wonderful gatherings creating opportunities for leaders to connect and learn with others from different backgrounds, cultures, and traditions. These events have been very fruitful for participants, many of whom are renewed and even transformed by their experiences! However, effective leadership development happens through an intentional process and strategies which include, but are not limited to, single events. Our leadership development process will seek to identify emerging leaders (through relational and institutional networks), to connect leaders (through Metanoia events around the world), to equip leaders (through ongoing accountable cohorts), and to encourage leaders (through online events, new initiatives, and strategic partnerships).

2- From centralized community to a "network of networks": The task of helping leaders build faith- sharing movements is not one we believe God has called us to undertake alone! Instead, in this next season of ministry with emerging leaders, we are being challenged to multiply our efforts by connecting and partnering with networks of leaders around the world who share in our key values and purpose. We will collaborate, share resources, and learn from those networks. Additionally, we hope to expand our reach and our ability to identify emerging leaders through these key relationships.

3- From western-driven to cross-cultural team-driven leadership: Finally, as we begin to enroll people into this journey, and as our networks develop and grow, we hope to build teams of talented young leaders with passion for evangelism and mission, as well as unique cultural perspectives. As the center of the Wesleyan/Methodist movement continues to shift from the global north/west to the global south/east, we don't want to miss out on the opportunity God is giving us to collaborate with and to learn from our sisters and brothers from different parts of the world where the Church is flourishing.

Taking Our First Step To kick-start this new season of ministry with emerging leaders, we are gearing up for the first of several regional Metanoia gatherings, beginning with Metanoia Europe from August 29th to September 4th in Durham, UK! We hope this inspires you to consider if God may be calling you to partner with us on this journey. Here are a few ways you can participate:

- If you are an emerging leader or know someone who would be a great fit for Metanoia, please email us and help us connect;

- Pray for this new season of ministry for Metanoia and our global emerging leadership initiatives. This kind of work can only be done with persisting prayer;

- Give generously to enable a global new generation of high-capacity Christian leaders to participate in this life changing journey.

Story and photo submitted by J. Paulo Lopes, Director of Emerging Leadership for World Methodist Evangelism

metanoia

Metanoia Europe 2022
29 August-4 September
Durham, UK

We Believe in Climate Justice

From the 1st to the 12th of November, the Climate Justice for All team attended COP26, the UN's climate change conference, in Glasgow. Over the two weeks, some of the team attended the Blue Zone after being accredited by the UMC in America. The Blue Zone was where the actual negotiations occurred. As well as being able to view some of the negotiations, the team were able to explore the world pavilion, a space where countries and territories showcased what they are doing to tackle climate change through events and panels. The pavilion served as a brilliant way to connect with the global community and learn from others.

The team were involved in other events in Glasgow. Some attended the Green Zone, which also hosted panel discussions and talks, from civil society groups, NGOs and businesses. Faith for the Climate and Christian Aid invited some of the team to speak at their own panel events, which allowed for interfaith dialogue on environmental issues. The team was also invited to attend the ecumenical service at Glasgow Cathedral, at which Maima also read a prayer. After the service the team joined the Young Christian Climate Network to speak to John Swinney, the Deputy First Minister of Scotland, about the role young people have played in church action on climate change.

The CJ4A team also held their own events at Woodlands Methodist Church. Jessica held a talk on climate change and gender in Zambia, Irene spoke about youth activism in Italy, and Camila talked about renewable energy in Uruguay. Maima held a Talanoa evening, where people from the Pacific shared their experiences of climate change in their local communities. The whole team also worked together on CJ4A LIVE, a livestreamed service that took place over 12 hours at the weekend. This allowed us to share the stories we had gathered over the past year, as well as content created by our volunteer network. The event included song, prayer, short films, live discussion, educational talks, and reflective sermons on environmental issues. The event was broadcast live on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, and people tuned in from all six continents and at least 18 countries.

CJ4A will release its final set of worship resources on the 6th of December. These will be a compilation of resources contributed by volunteers, including a short film on the impacts of climate change in Bangladesh, an eco-reflection from Pakistan, and a music video for CJ4A's official theme song, created by a team in Zimbabwe.

Story and photo submitted by the CJ4A Team

Climate Justice For All Team, pictured left to right: *Jessica Bwali - Zambia, Irene Abra - Italy, Camila Ferreiro - Uruguay, Maima Vaai - Fiji, Mollie Pugmire - United Kingdom, Shamiso Winnet Mupara - Zimbabwe and James Appleby - United Kingdom*

Apply for the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission

The Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission is seeking applications for new Methodist members for a new dialogue round beginning in 2022. The Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission is the official theological dialogue body between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church. The commission has a long and accomplished history of fostering greater understanding internationally as Methodists and Catholics seek unity in Christ through faith, mission, and sacraments.

The 16-member commission has eight Methodist members and eight Catholic members. The commission meets in-person each year, usually in October, for a week-long meeting that is marked by joint prayer, conversation and dialogue, and friendship. The commission selects a theme each cycle as the focus of their work and, historically, produces a comprehensive theological report which bears the fruit of dialogue. The next dialogue round will last approximately five years. The first meeting of the next round is tentatively scheduled for 2-9 October 2022.

Persons interested in serving as a Methodist commission member should be:
- Fluent in English as English is the official language of the commission
- Conversant in Wesleyan theology
- Willing to travel internationally and attend all meetings
- Able to write papers or theological texts
- A member-in-good standing of a World Methodist Council member church

The commission is seeking a diverse pool of nominees who engender the diversity of the World Methodist Council. To apply to be a member of the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission, please send a letter of interest and CV to the Rev. Matthew A. Laferty, director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome, at director@meorome.org by 18 January 2022. Please contact Rev. Laferty if you have any questions.

Book Review: "Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice"

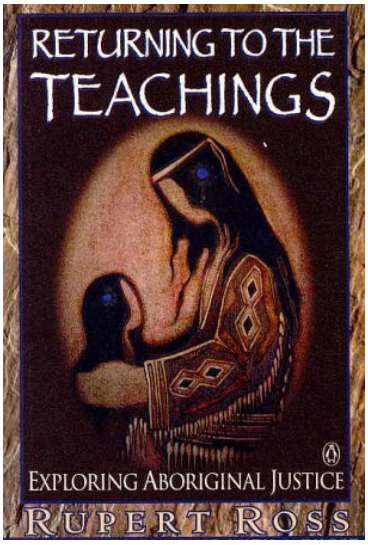
Rupert Ross is a retired assistant Crown Attorney for the District of Kenora in remote northwestern Ontario, Canada. He learned, through interaction with and assistance of Aboriginal teachers that his interpretations of the behaviour of Aboriginal victims, witnesses and offenders, in and out of court, were in fact, "misinterpretations". In his initial book, ***"Dancing with a Ghost"***, Ross explores aboriginal approaches to justice and to visions of life which shape them.

"Returning to the Teachings", also a bestseller, had taken "Dancing with a Ghost" further in that Ross accepted a three-year secondment with Justice Canada, travelling between the Yukon and Cape Bretton Island, exploring the vast Aboriginal preference for "peacemaker justice". Ross' interaction with and interpretation of Ojib and Cree First Nation communities could be described as "Thick Study". Thick Study as described by cultural anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, is a description of human social action that describes not just human physical behaviours, but also their context so that it can be better understood by an outsider.

On his three and a half years' sabbatical since writing "Dancing with a Ghost", Ross recalls the words of a justice proposal in a remote Oji-Cree community in northwest Ontario: "Probably one of the most serious gaps in the system is the different perception of wrongdoing and how to best treat it. In non-Indian community, committing a crime seems to mean that the individual is a bad person and therefore must be punished ...The Indian communities view a wrongdoing as a misbehaviour which requires teaching or an illness which requires healing.

"The relational concepts of aboriginal language, lacking in Western languages like English and French, show opposite understandings for the Aboriginal that cannot be pushed aside. Ross says "if you can only 'speak of 'justice' in one way, you cannot be expected to 'do' justice in any other way".

Ross concludes with a delightful anecdote. At an Aboriginal Justice programme he was teaching in Alberta quoting the Western rule of evidence, the "Hearsay Rule". The course leader was Leroy Little Bear. Ross mentioned that the rule dated all the way back to the time of Sir Walter Raleigh's demand that anyone who had an accusation to make against him had to "say it to my face" in open court. When judges agreed that was the end of "gossip" in court and the beginning of face-to-face confrontation and challenges between offenders, victims and witnesses. Leroy casually raised his hand and enquired from Ross "Could you remember when that rule of evidence was made?" Ross replied "I guess it was over 300 years ago." Leroy replied "Oh, I see. So it's a fairly new rule for you, then. Can you tell me, how is it working out?"



Keith Vermeulen wishes all readers and their families a blessed Advent Season and joyous, Covid safe and Happy Christmastide.

Working Together in Mission – Witness, Education and Service

An audience of about 80 people attended a webinar jointly organized by the World Methodist Council and the Salvation Army on 20 November.

Salvation Army General Brian Peddle and the WMC General Secretary Ivan Abrahams both challenged the participants to take up the Wesleyan call to holiness and to witness Christ in the current age Looking back to the dialogue with the Salvation Army which ended 2011, the Methodist co-chair Rev. Paul Chilcote said: "Talking with Salvationists was like a reunion with cousins around the table." He highlighted that the report which was adopted 2011 is "action oriented", underlined by the remarks of Lieut. Colonel Karen Shakespeare, who was one of the Salvationists in the dialogue team. She said: "We have learned that entering into partnerships sometimes allows us to more fully and effectively serve with love and compassion, teach the truths of the gospel clearly, and work to bring about God's mission in a wounded and broken world."

According to the theme of the dialogue report: "Working Together in Mission: Witness, Education, and Service", we were introduced to a joint work with migrants at the Mexican/US border. "We put the learnings of the dialogue into action before we knew that there was a dialogue", Bishop Felipe de Jésus Ruiz Aguilar from the Methodist Church in Mexico said. Together with the Salvation Army, Methodists distribute food and clothes, offer legal assistance, and accompany those who got stranded at the border. He and Major Gerardo Ortiz were convinced: "We can do more because we work together." Rev. Glen O'Brien from the Uniting Church in Australia serves as researcher at an institution of the Salvation Army, Eva Burrows College in Melbourne. He reported of several colleges and universities where the WMC member churches and the Salvation Army are cooperating in the field of Theological Education.

An inspiring example of witnessing the faith is "Oasis Recovery Church" in Sheffield, UK. Andy Parkinson and Paul Huggins, both working within the Salvation Army, told us that the cooperation with the Methodist Church and other partners bears fruits: People feel at home at Oasis: "We all need recovery, …not only from substances, but from all areas of our lives including the effects of COVID-19." Oasis proves: Creating one congregation with members of different churches is possible, if there is a common vision and a commitment to build up the kingdom of God, not just a denomination. The webinar was organized to recall the dialogue and share best practices for working together in God's mission. The recording will soon be made accessible, f.e. via the WMC YouTube account.

Story submitted by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner

The European Methodist Council Offers Support

The highest Synodal Assembly of the United Methodist Church in Poland has released a statement appealing to Christians and other people of good will to provide help for those in need on the Polish Belarusian Border, stating that as Christians and Polish citizens, "we cannot remain silent when we see how a part of our country has become a place of humanitarian crisis affecting men, women and children, and among them also the sick and traumatized."

They call on "members and sympathizers as well as all people of good will to engage in initiatives to support the victims of the humanitarian crisis on the Polish borders and to pray for those whose duty it is to ensure security and peace in our homeland."

As members of the European Methodist Council we offer our full support to the United Methodist Church in Poland for the release of this statement and for their call to prayer and action. Additionally, we support our church members in the countries bordering Belarus - Poland, Latvia and Lithuania - as they seek to help those who have been impacted by this crisis.

We invite Methodist, Wesleyan and United Churches in Europe to join with our member churches in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania in prayer. We ask the governments in the countries bordering Belarus to give access to the Red Cross to provide support for victims. We appeal to the European Union to make every effort to solve this situation.

The European Methodist Council Statement from the United Methodist Church in Poland Appeal of the United-Methodist Church in Poland regarding the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border.

Acting under the authority of the Annual Conference of the United-Methodist Church in Poland, meeting in Warsaw on October 28-31, 2021, on the issue of taking a stand on the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border and the area under the state of emergency, as the executive body of our highest synodal assembly, we appeal to our fellow believers, as well as to all people of good will, to persevere in common prayer for overcoming the current crisis and, if necessary, in the spirit of the teachings of our Master - Jesus Christ, to provide the necessary assistance to those in need.

As Christians and citizens of the Republic of Poland, we are far from entering into the competencies of state bodies responsible for the protection of the Polish population and our borders. However, we feel responsible for the common good, which is our homeland and the whole world, therefore we cannot remain silent when we see how a part of our country has become a place of humanitarian crisis affecting men, women and children, and among them also the sick and traumatized.

According to the social teaching of our Church, as expressed in the Social Principles, we consider all people to be members of God's family. Therefore, as Christians for whom the Word of God is the guideline for life, we cannot turn our backs on people in need of help.

The United-Methodist Church in Poland, faithful to the Gospel and to the brotherly love between people that flows from it, asks its members and sympathizers as well as all people of good will to engage in initiatives to support the victims of the humanitarian crisis on the Polish borders and to pray for those whose duty it is to ensure security and peace in our homeland.

Warsaw, November 17, 2021

Story and Photo by European Methodist Council

“Love Gifts” include rice, sugar and fish sauce

Advent is all about God in Jesus, clothed in human flesh, coming into our world for the salvation of humankind. We often call this the Incarnation. Jesus came into our broken world, felt our hurt, ate our food and walked in our shoes so that we might relate to him on a human level. Through that relationship, Jesus introduces to us the grace, beauty, and invitation that is the Kingdom of God. Although the Advent took place some 2000 years ago in Bethlehem, Jesus continues to reveal the goodness of God’s Kingdom through his church made up of his disciples. We are called to go to all peoples to build true bridges of relationships. Through those relationships, Jesus continues to reveal the goodness of God’s Kingdom.

From the beginning of June until the beginning of October, most of this country we live in was in complete lockdown because of a surge in COVID-19 infections. Most business were closed, public transportation ceased, even travel between regions was forbidden. Everyone was ordered to stay at home in the hope that the infections could be managed. For those who were able to work from home and still earn a salary, it was difficult and frustrating but not impossible. However, for those whose businesses were forced to close and for the workers who relied on those jobs for their livelihoods, four months of lockdown was devastating. The poor were especially hard hit. They had to make impossible decisions between rent or medicine and food.

This is where a United Methodist congregation close to a major city sprang into action. They collected donations from their members and added more with funds from the Global Ministries’ mission initiative. They bought the most necessary foods to distribute to those so harshly affected by the lockdown. They called the bags consisting of rice, sugar, oil and fish sauce “Love Gifts,” and they went out to deliver the gifts in hard-hit areas. There were no vaccines yet, so they were laying their own safety on the line. They had to request permission from the local authorities to implement this program, but by God’s grace, permission was granted, food collected, and vehicles found to acquire and deliver the food. As they were organizing the trucks full of food into bags for distribution, even their neighbors, who were not members of the church nor even Christians, started to come and help pack and distribute because they knew where the food was going. Soon, word spread that this congregation formed a place where the poor and suffering could find help.

Friends, Advent is about God in Jesus Christ crossing all barriers to come into our world and proclaiming the goodness of God’s Kingdom. We celebrate and honor that by crossing barriers ourselves to share the goodness of God’s Kingdom.

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’” John 20:21 (NIV)

The Rev. J. Park and his wife T. Park began missionary service this year in Southeast Asia. J. Park is the country director for the United Methodist mission and T. Park serves as the coordinator for Christian Education.

Neighborhoods outside Ho Chi Minn City *were greatly affected by COVID-19 lock-downs. Shops and businesses were closed and livelihoods were severely affected. Thu Duc UMC collected and delivered food and other household supplies to neighborhoods. PHOTO: J. PARK*

Methodists deliver emergency food *and other necessities to families strained by COVID-19 lockdowns. Church members donated food, supplies and more supported by a grant from Global Ministries’ mission initiative. PHOTO: J. PARK*

Photo credits: Perkins School of Theology/ R. Hipps

Please send press releases, articles and resources! Submissions should be a page or less (500-700 words), edited and ready to publish. Contact us by **Friday, December 17** at communications@worldmethodistcouncil.org if you would like your story to be included in the January edition of the First Friday Letter.

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 Council's Conference website is at worldmethodistconference.org.

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About the First Friday Letter

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