



Wholeness for our Clergy, Congregations, and Communities

March 2017 Newsletter

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Dear Claudia,

Once again we find ourselves in the season of Lent, that forty-day period between Ash Wednesday (March 1 this year) and Easter (April 16) viewed in the church as a time for spiritual discipline that leads to the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. It's a time for prayer and fasting a time for study and reflection, a time for worship and introspection.



Frederick Buechner describes Lent this way:

After being baptized by John in the River Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness where he spent forty days asking himself what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves.

What *does* it mean to be *ourselves* as followers of Jesus anyway?

I received an email from a friend who is reading C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* for his morning devotional time, and this morning he read these words from that thought-provoking little book:

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Most of us are not really approaching the subject [of Christianity] in order to find out what Christianity says: we are approaching it in the hope of finding support from Christianity for our own views.

That's a statement worth pondering. How many of us approach Christianity in a way that asks what it expects of us? How many of us on a daily basis go to God in prayer and ask God to show us what God wants us to learn, to say, to do, to think, to accomplish, to share, to sacrifice, to forgive, to let go of, to hang on to, to risk on that particular day? How many of us base the daily decisions that we make on our identity as a follower of Jesus?

Jesus is clear in his invitation to follow him. How often do we really consider - I mean *really consider* - what it might mean truly to follow Jesus?

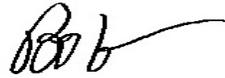
Buechner suggests six questions for us to ask ourselves during Lent as a way of getting at the heart of what this season - and the life of faith - is all about:

- If you were to bet everything on whether there is a God or whether there isn't, which side would get your money and why?
- When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore?
- If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less?
- Of all the things you have done in your life, what is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember?
- Is there any person in the world, or any cause, that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for?
- If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?

Unsettling questions? For me they are. Nonetheless they are questions worth spending some time with, questions that have to do with life and death, with values

and priorities, with what's really important in this journey called life. To answer these questions is to begin to understand who we are, who we are becoming, and what we are failing to become. It is to wrestle with what it means to follow Jesus.

Grace and Peace,



Bob Bushong
District Superintendent
East Central District

A Message from Alice Williams, District Lay Leader

I like to read and wish I could devote more time to reading. Book stores, especially ones with old books, are a secret delight for me. And while a fan of e-reading, I have to admit I still like physically holding a book or magazine in my hands - guess I'm just old school. Recently, Rev. Jorge Acevedo gave me a copy of the book he and Rev. Wes Olds recently wrote, "A Grace-Full Life." It is a very easy read on the forms of grace that would be a good read for any Christian. We Methodists believe in the Wesleyan notion of 3 forms of Grace (prevenient, justifying and sanctifying) but we sometimes overlook a 4th form of Grace called Glorifying Grace. The book does a good job with all 4 forms.



Don't worry, I'm not going to try to explain these 4 forms of grace here - get the book, it explains them well. I am immensely grateful for how God provides HIS amazing and wonderful Grace to us all without us knowing or being deserving of it. In "A Grace-Full Life" there is a wonderful reminder that we need to set aside dedicated time to study the word and to allow God to speak to and be at work within us through the Holy Spirit. Sadly, if you are like me, dedicating a block of time each day to do this can be a challenge, even though I know how vital it is. So this Lent, instead of giving up something I've decided to exercise a little self-discipline and make time for study each day. Maybe some of you will join me in this if you're not already!

In the book, Pastor Jorge and Pastor Wes use a simple acronym to help with devotional study, it's referred to as **the S.O.A.P. method**:

S - Scripture. Read scripture each day and allow yourself the ability to be open to the Spirit's calling as you read. Allow and look for a verse or two that really speaks to you.

O - Observation. Write down what you observe about the reading in its Biblical context and then put yourself in the verse--what does it say to you specifically or what reactions does the verse/s cause in you specifically??

A - Application. Write as many ways you feel this verse applies to you or how you can apply this verse in your life.

P - Prayer. Spend a few minutes just talking with the Lord about how this verse speaks to you. Ask God to help you apply the learnings you gained from the scripture you read.

Something tells me this Lent will be a little better if I do some Spring cleaning of my soul by devoting a little time to S.O.A.P.!

Grace upon Grace upon Grace upon Grace to you and yours!

-- Alice

Thank YOU



The District Staff would like to thank the staff and volunteers of First UMC Oviedo for their hospitality at the 2017 Leadership Training Event. They have once again shown us how to do hospitality!

We are thankful to Bishop Ken Carter who was our Keynote Speaker and to all of our facilitators and worship leaders. There was a workshop for everyone!

A big thank you to everyone who gave up their Saturday morning to come out to fellowship, learn and take part in the Leadership Training Event.

Save the Date: **Called to Serve 2018 will be February 3, 2018!**

Register Now for a Free CV Webinars

**Thursday, March 9; 6:30 pm Central:
The Church Audit: You Can Do This!**

Presenter: Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship and Connectional Ministries

Every congregation needs to do a church audit, but it doesn't have to be a big expense or an insurmountable obstacle. There is a great Local Church Audit Guide, available free for United Methodist churches that will take you through it step by step. Going through the process builds confidence among you financial leaders and projects transparency to your donors. Join us as we explore the tools that can make this process easier than you thought.



CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

**Thursday, May 11; 6:30 pm Central
Offering Electronic Giving: What Are You Waiting For?**

Presenter: Ken Sloane, Director of Stewardship and Connectional Ministries
Electronic giving is not the future of charitable giving, it is the present reality. If your church is not offering this as an option for those who attend your church, you are missing out on generous giving. If there have been obstacles to making this option available to your church, we will talk about them in this webinar.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

FUMCH Puts New SPARK in Resident Life



A New Name Brings Normalcy

When I began as the Chaplain for The Florida United Methodist Children's Home in July of 2016, I found myself immersed in



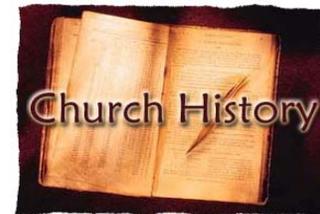
unfamiliar language. There are acronyms to describe agencies and therapeutic programs, titles for social workers and certified staff, and, of course, all of the lingo to describe places and things on campus. But there was also this word, "normalcy." The Children's Home makes a point of giving our children and youth the opportunity to live as normally as someone can in a group home setting. Normalcy became important for me when I took 30 of our youth to Warren W. Willis summer camp for a week this summer.

While we were at the camp, It quickly became apparent that there was one question our residents could not answer as "normally" as their peers: "What church do you go to?" This question always led to an explanation about life circumstances that no other youth had to share. Saying you're from the Children's Home comes with the burden of explaining why. Many of our residents skirted this question by saying they were from a church in Deltona. One afternoon during our week at camp, I was sitting with the director of another conference ministry when she said, "Your group should have a name. They shouldn't have to be the kids from the Children's Home." She was right. This was a normalcy issue. (To continue reading, please click [HERE](#).)



Church Historian Contact Information is Needed

All local church historians depend on their keen sense of probing and asking questions to get a better glimpse into the history of their church. They do an awful lot of reading and perusing a plethora of files and documents and photographs - sometimes taking days or weeks or months. It's very much like detective work, and that's okay because - if truth be known - they really love every minute!



Well, after doing quite a bit of our own investigative work, the **Florida Conference Archives & History Commission** would like to contact church historians directly but *we do not know who you are or have your contact information.*

We would love to be able to communicate (by email) directly with all church historians. There are many reasons why, but the most important is the fact that our Conference will be celebrating its 175th Anniversary in 2019 and we want to plan a whole year's worth of spectacular events, exhibits, celebrations and FUN!

Please help us in this endeavor by letting your Church Office know that you would like to be your church historian. Once Nominations determines who the Historian will be, the Church Office will enter your information into the Church Dashboard. We will (finally!) know who you are and what church you represent. After that, we promise to be in touch.

Thanks, and I can't wait to get to know you better! For additional information, please contact me.

Anita Campbell
 East Central District member representative and chair
 FLUM Commission on Archives & History
 (386) 734-9224
Anita.campbell2468@att.net

Theology Workshop

Saturday, March 11; 9:30am-3:00pm; First UMC, Orlando



"What's Going On?: Marvin Gaye, Reconciliation and Encountering Jesus in Troubling Times"

A free one-day workshop about Christian reconciliation and living out alternatives to the destructive conflict and social divisions that fragment our world is being offered by [First United Methodist Church of Orlando](#), 142 East Jackson Street, on Saturday, March 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Guest speaker Dr. Claudia May, Ph.D. is an author, lecturer and associate professor of Reconciliation Studies at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. May is a specialist in reconciliation studies and African American, Black British and Caribbean literature and popular culture, as well as Biblical studies, multi-ethnic and cultural expressions of faith and Christian Hip Hop. She is the author of *Jesus is Enough: Love, Hope, and Comfort in the Storms of Life* and a lecturer at Duke Divinity School's Summer Institute on Reconciliation.

Advance registration is available at nuclass.org/tw. For more information call the church office at (407) 849-6080.

Central Florida Church Network Web and Social Media Presentation

Thursday, March 16; 12:00-1:30pm; Church on the Drive, 1914 Edgewater, Orlando

Our speaker will be Dawn Fleming, Executive Director of Marketing and Connect at St. Luke's UMC and co-founder of "Wendy Lee Events, Marketing and More." Dawn will help us understand ways churches can use the web and social media and how we can take advantage of this marketing avenue. We will learn about the importance of analytics and how to interpret them to help move our churches to the 21st century communication opportunities. For more about Dawn, click [HERE](#).



Make plans to attend and invite anyone you think would benefit from this topic. We can't wait to see you there!

RSVP to Cynthia at cmcinvale@churchonthedrive.org by Monday, March 13th at 4:00 p.m. Lunch is free for first time guests and \$8.00 for all others.

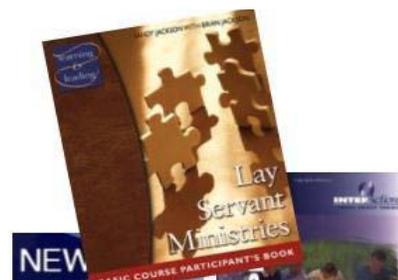
The luncheon is held at Church on the Drive (formerly College Park Baptist Church), 1914 Edgewater Drive, Orlando, FL 32804.

Lay Servant Ministries Weekend of Learning

March 24 & 25, 2017 - Christ Hispanic UMC

A Weekend of Lay Leadership Learning . . . Servant Leadership Equipping Encounter

Join host Rev. Miguel Velez, Jim Boesch, Lynn Campbell, Rev. Ana Velez, and Lennie Burke, for this dynamic two-day training. Choose one of five Basic LSM and Advanced LSM courses taught in English and Spanish:



- Basic Lay Servant Ministries (English)
- Basic Lay Servant Ministries (Spanish)
- Fruit of the Spirit (English)
- Peacemaking: Resolving Everyday Conflict (English)
- Advanced Lay Servant Ministries (Spanish)



To download a brochure and registration form, click [HERE](#).

The F.A.I.T.H. Coalition: Righting the Wrongs in Volusia County *March 27, 2017, 6:30pm - Peabody Auditorium*



Righting the Wrongs in Volusia County

Did you know a Volusia County elementary student was arrested for possessing an old fashioned pencil sharpener? Did you hear about the local student who sleeps in the bed of a work truck each night because he is homeless? Did you know your Volusia tax dollars support a walk-in clinic for those without adequate insurance at Halifax Health?

The work of doing justice is a Biblical mandate, but completely overwhelming for

one person or one church to do alone. In Volusia County, justice is being accomplished by a coalition of over 30 interfaith and ecumenical faith communities, together known as F.A.I.T.H. (Fighting Against Injustice toward Harmony). F.A.I.T.H. has been active for years, and consistently corrects injustice, works with elected officials, holds officials accountable to promises, and gives voice to the voiceless.

Every year F.A.I.T.H. holds their Action Assembly. This is a public event to which all F.A.I.T.H. congregations, the public, and the media, are invited. The Action Assembly is the most important night of the year for our Justice ministries. It is when F.A.I.T.H. congregations recreate Nehemiah's "Great Assembly" in scripture by gathering the community together to address public leaders and ask them to act on issues of injustice in Volusia County. This year's Action Assembly will be held on Monday March 27, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Peabody Auditorium, 600 Auditorium Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32118.

F.A.I.T.H. churches include: Bethune-Cookman University, Coronado Community UMC - New Smyrna Beach, Tomoka UMC - Ormond Beach, and Stewart Memorial UMC - Daytona Beach. Additionally, Dr. Bob Bushong will be attending to support.

[Click HERE](#) to learn more.

Questions?

Email Jessica Robillard at jessica@thedartcenter.org or Rev. Brian Johnson at brian.johnson@tomokaumc.org

Reports Due March 31st



As a reminder, the following five reports are due into the district office by March 31st. Please mail all reports together to the district office: East Central District 2221 Lee Road, Suite 21 Winter Park, FL 32789

Report	Committee Responsible
Child Youth Protection Policy	SPRC
Fiscal Responsibility & Management Policy	Finance
Employee Conduct Policy	SPRC
Adoption of Employee Conduct Policy	SPRC
Annual Parsonage Report	Trustees

The following two reports are submitted online - do not send a hardcopy to the district. You can locate them on your church dashboard under forms.

Report	Committee Responsible
Fund Balance	Finance
Disaster Recovery Resource Survey	Disaster Coordinator or Trustee

Explanation of reports

- 1. Child/Youth Protection Policy adoption.** Review & renew annually. Submit a signed copy of the Annual Child/Youth Protection Policy to the district office. Should the policy undergo major revisions, submit a complete copy to the District.
- 2. Fiscal Responsibility & Management Policy.** Financial Controls, Policies, and Procedures - Review & renew annually. Once in compliance, submit a signed copy of the one page Annual Review and Renewal Document to the District.
- 3. The Employee Conduct Policy Adoption.** FL Conference Revised Local Church Policy last revised April 2015. Review and renew annually. The Employee Conduct Policy above is for clergy and local church employees to complete. Submit the signed clergy copy to the East Central District. Copies of the local church employees forms should not be submitted to the office, but should be filed in their employee file in the church office.
- 4. Adoption of the Employee Conduct Policy.** Adopt the revised ECP and submit a signed copy of the Adoption Agreement to the District.
- 5. Annual Parsonage Report.** Review & renew annually. Submit a signed copy of the Annual Parsonage Report to the District.

You can find instructions and other pertinent information by clicking the link(s) above or clicking on [Calendar of Reports](#) accessed on the Florida Conference website.

Please submit copies, originals should remain in the church office. For assistance, please do not hesitate to email Betty Sims: flumc-ec2@flumc.org.

Run 4 Life 4 Miler

May 20, 2017; 7:00am; Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Enterprise



The 7th Annual Run 4 Life 4 Miler is May 20th at The Florida United Methodist Children's Home. This 4 Mile Event takes you through the FUMCH and Enterprise. The goal of this race is to bring awareness to mental health/depression issues and to raise money for programs providing support to those in need. All race proceeds will go to FUMCH and other local suicide prevention programs.

Run or walk...come join us on May 20th! We would love for you to sign up as part of the **East Central District of the United Methodist Church team**. Click [HERE](#) to sign up!

Mission Trip for Senior Citizens

October 28 - November 4 - Baldwin, LA

Would you like to go on a mission trip-one that doesn't require a passport, shots, or hard labor? A team is being formed to travel by bus to Baldwin, LA. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has a large Depot there where supplies donated by churches are prepared for shipment to disaster areas. The dorm and dining hall facilities on campus can handle up to 200 volunteers a week who do jobs on campus and in the community.



The First United Methodist Churches of Orlando and Winter Park have sent teams during the last fifteen years. Folks work all year making cloth school bags and collecting specified items for the kits and flood buckets warehoused at the Depot. Fabric and sewing equipment are available for making school bags.

If you would like more information about becoming a team member, taking on a project of collecting items the team can take to the Depot, or having a program about this opportunity for service and fellowship, please call Sue Cepull at 407-859-0468 or email at sue@cepull.org.

Around the Conference

Register Now for the Florida Five Day Academy: March 5-10, 2017

REGISTRATION is open for the Florida Five Day Academy! The Florida Five-Day Academy For Spiritual Formation publishes a brochure for the upcoming Academy. To download a copy, click on the following link:

[2017 FIVE-DAY ACADEMY BROCHURE](#)

12th Annual Native American Ministry Gathering

April 21-23, 2017; Life Enrichment Center; Fruitland Park, FL



Please join us at the Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland Park, FL, on April 21 - April 23, 2017, for our 12th Annual Native American Ministry Gathering. Everyone is welcome. This is a Christ-centered, culturally-relevant event where you will learn and be blessed by what God is doing among and through the Native American people. Great music, teaching, workshops and fellowship are on the agenda.

The event is free, but you must register to attend and purchase meals and lodging, if you desire. Attend for a day or for the whole weekend. Special guest speakers



will be Terry and Darlene Wildman, pastors of the Northport Indian UMC in Traverse City, Michigan. Registration deadline is April 7. You can obtain a registration form at www.flumc.org/nativeamericanministries. For more information, contact Ed Taylor at 352-409-3368.

Early Response Team Training

May 5 - 6, 2017; Warren W. Willis

Early Response Team (ERT) are self-contained teams who enter a disaster zone at the invitation of local emergency management officials. ERT's offer a Christian presence and are trained to provide various types of physical, emotional and spiritual assistance to disaster survivors. ERT's are registered with the Disaster Recovery Ministry of the Florida Annual Conference, and Disaster Recovery coordinates team placement with emergency management to help where it is needed most after a disaster.



Note: Basic Disaster Ministry Training is required before taking ERT Training. [Click HERE](#) for more details and to register.

LEC Family Programs



Want to help create meaningful experiences for your church's families this year? Want to encourage your parents to be more active in their kids' spiritual lives? Be sure they know about [LECFamily programs!](#)

[Dad and Me Weekend](#) - April 21-23, 2017

[Grandparents and Me](#) - June 19-22, 2017 & July 10-13, 2017

[Family Camp](#) - July 7-9, 2017 & July 14-16, 2017

[Mom and Me Weekend](#) - September 15-17, 2017

Questions? Email Rev. Melissa Cooper Melissa@lecfamily.org.

Warren W. Willis Retreats & Summer Camp

Check out Warren W. Willis for many opportunities to reflect and fellowship.

[Confirmation Retreats](#) - March 10-12, & March 24-26

[Created By God](#) - April 28-30

[Summer Camps](#) - June - August

[Plan your own retreat!](#)



FUMF Now Accepting Applications for 2017 Sinclair Scholarships

Deadline: March 20, 2017



The Florida United Methodist Foundation is now accepting applications from first-year, college-bound United Methodist students for the 2017 Sinclair scholarships, and we need your help to spread the word.

Applicants must be full and active members of a Florida United Methodist Church, have a record of church and community service, and have a grade point average of 2.5 or higher or academic

performance that indicates ability to succeed in college. They must also be planning to attend a Florida or United Methodist college or university this fall.

Scholarship awards range from \$2,000 to \$3,000 and are renewable for up to three additional years for students who remain in good standing. **The deadline to apply is March 20.**

A [scholarship application](#) and other required forms are available for download on the foundation's website. [Click HERE](#) to download a promotional flyer to share with your church or eligible student. More information is available by contacting Nadara Brock at nbrock@fumf.org or 866-363-9673, ext. 7113, or visiting www.fumf.org.

Below are several stories related to the scholarship, providing more information about how they benefit and support students:

[Scholarship recipients are driven, thankful](#)

[Sinclair Scholarship recipients offer hope for the future](#)

[Scholarship helps make dream of college a reality](#)



Apply Now for UMC FCU Scholarships for College Bound Students

The Florida United Methodist Connectional FCU is once again offering scholarships to 17-35 year-old college-bound students in our connection. Four winning applicants, one from each of our four conferences - Florida, North Georgia, South Georgia and Alabama-West Florida - will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. [CLICK HERE](#) for complete rules, an application, and full essay submission criteria. **Deadline for submission is April 28, 2017**



Applicants must be a credit union member in good standing. Eligible credit union members are: 1) members of the United Methodist Church in this conference, 2) employees of a United Methodist church or agency, or 3) an immediate family member of a UMC FCU member.

For additional questions, contact the Marietta, GA branch at 800-282-9368 or the Lakeland, FL branch at 866-687-2126.

Sponsor a Pastoral Internship for 2017!

Do you serve a church committed to shaping the next generation of pastoral leaders?

Here are the quick facts for hosting an Intern:

Internship Dates:

Monday, May 29, 2017, through Friday, August 4, 2017



Intern Training Day:

Friday, May 26, 2017 (students and supervising pastors)

Intern Reflection Day:

Monday, August 7, 2017 (students only)

Hours:

30 hours/week as scheduled with supervising pastor

Housing:

Provided in congregant's home, if needed

Salary: \$3,000.00 (\$1,500 host site, \$1,500 Office of Clergy Excellence)

[Click here](#) for a more detailed program description or to read an extended [article](#) on the Conference website.

If interested, please email or mail an intern job description for your church.

Please feel free to contact the Office of Clergy Excellence if you have any questions about the program. Thank you!

Holly Finley at hfinley@flumc.org

Rev. Sara McKinley at sara.mckinley@flumc.org

Summer Pastoral Ministry Internship Program



ARE THERE YOUNG ADULTS IN YOUR CHURCH WHO WANT TO EXPLORE PASTORAL MINISTRY?

If so, please [Click HERE](#) for the application for the 2017 Summer Pastoral Ministry

Internship Program and encourage them to apply!

Please feel free to contact the Office of Clergy Excellence if you have any questions about the program.

Holly Finley at hfinley@flumc.org

Rev. Sara McKinley at sara.mckinley@flumc.org

District Calendar of Events

[Click Here for a Printable Calendar](#)

March

March 18: UMW Day Apart; 10:00am-1:00pm; Palm Coast UMC

March 23: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due March 2)

March 24 & 25: Lay Servant Ministries Weekend - Christ Hispanic UMC

April

April 1: FUMCH Day on Campus

April 4: District Leadership Team Meeting - 4pm - District Office

April 14: District and Conference Offices Closed for Good Friday

April 27: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due April 6)

May

May 18: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due April 27)

May 20: Run4Life4Miler - 7:00am; FUMCH, Enterprise

May 29: District & Conference Offices Closed for Memorial Day

June

June 8 - 10: Annual Conference - Buena Vista Palace Hotel & Spa, Orlando
June 15: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due May 25)

July

July 4: District and Conference Offices Closed for Independence Day
July 13-16: Mission U; Bethune-Cookman University; Daytona Beach
July 14 - 15: Candidacy Retreat, Lakeland

August

August 17: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due July 27)

September

September 4: District and Conference Offices Closed for Labor Day
September 8-10: UMW Conference Spiritual Retreat; LEC, Fruitland Park
September 21: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due Aug. 31)
September 23: "Mission Sampler;" Sanlando UMC, Longwood
September 26: District Leadership Team Meeting - 4:00pm - District Office

October

October 19: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due Sept. 28)
October 21: UMW District Annual Meeting - First UMC, Clermont

November

November 4: UMW Conference Annual Meeting; Lakeland
November 10: District and Conference Offices Closed for Veterans Day
November 23 & 24: District and Conference Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

December

December 21: dCOM 9:00am-4:00pm Asbury UMC, Maitland (materials due Nov. 30)
December 25: District & Conference Offices Closed for Christmas



East Central District, (407) 636-9240, 2221 Lee Road, Suite 21, Winter Park, FL 32789

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