

HANNAH'S HOPE

Rev. Trina Bell Morrison, Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Memphis Annual Conference,

I bring you this report on behalf of the staff and Board of Trustees of Hannah's Hope as we are living in uncertain times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are completing our 17th year of ministry with pregnant women in crisis and their vulnerable children and prospective adoptive families.

The past year was an unusual one during which greater than 90% of our pregnancy clients were able to make parenting plans for their babies. While we celebrated with each one as they began a new chapter of their life with a precious baby, we, as an organization, had to aggressively change our business model and increase our fundraising efforts. This was necessary because our pregnancy clients are never charged fees and when adoption plans are not made, agency revenue from adoption fees is severely impacted. This new reality coming on the heels of losing approx. 75% of our grant monies from the Memphis Annual Conference just as we were required to assume financial responsibility for clergy pension costs resulted in the agency using almost all of our reserve funds in 2019. Our Board of Trustees is diligently working to increase fundraising efforts to reduce the budget shortfall so that we do not have to cut client services.

In late February 2020, just before the pandemic began to impact us in West TN, the JOY Circle (a UMW group from Germantown UMC) hosted the most successful fundraiser in Hannah's Hope history! Leap With Hope (held on Feb. 29!) was a wonderful evening of great food, entertainment and an exciting Silent and Live Auction with approximately 150 in attendance to sustain the ministry of Hannah's Hope.

I want to share with you some important facts about the ministry of Hannah's Hope:

- ❖ **HH provides 2000+ hours of counseling and/or case management to vulnerable mothers and their children per year**
- ❖ **HH has supported an average of 60 women / year over the past 10 years as they have made parenting plans and close to 100 women making parenting plans this year.**
- ❖ **HH has provided extraordinary levels of support for 15 children with special needs and ensuring that they have ongoing services through the federal Adoption Assistance program.**
- ❖ **HH has provided \$160,000 in fee assistance to adoptive families making adoption affordable for people all across the economic spectrum.**

We are proud to be a growing, loving ministry dedicated to the healing of God's children (pregnant women, families seeking to adopt, and children who need to be adopted) through adoption and pregnancy counseling. Our ministry is focused on "Engaging the Mission Field" and we live out the mission statement of the Annual Conference as well by "offering Jesus Christ to a hurting world" on a daily basis.

We are so thankful for the individuals, UMW Circles, Sunday school classes, and congregations who support the ministry of Hannah's Hope through contributions to the Circle of Hope initiative and by filling Baby Bottles of Hope. It is only with this support that we are able to provide birth mother care bags for our clients after they give birth, provide free counseling to pregnant women in crisis situations, offer free consultations to couples seeking to discern whether God is calling them to adopt and stand in the gap for children in need of a new, forever home. We also appreciate each one of you who has taken the time to add a link to the Hannah's Hope website (www.hannahs-hope.org) and our Facebook page to your church website so that we may better connect with those who need us around the conference.

May the Grace and Peace of Christ be with you all...

Lakeshore Camp and Retreat Center

Rev. Gary D. Lawson, Sr -Executive Director

The last couple of years have been occasions for reflection for me. I celebrated 25 years of service in 2017. Lakeshore had its 70th anniversary in 2018, and in 2019, Vickie and I celebrated 25 years of being married and living the camp life. We have raised children and watched as Lakeshore alum have celebrated their weddings, raised their own children and brought them back here. We are well into our fourth generation of families who call this place their second home. It is a legacy I am proud to be a part of, and it doesn't show any sign of slowing down.

Last year was another great year at the 'Shore. 2019 brought a record number of both resident and DayShore campers during the summer and full Junior/Senior High retreats. Five (5) young persons were baptized and four others had life-changing, formal reaffirmation services during the season. By last August, all 18 of our DayShore spots for 2020 were filled. We hadn't even wrapped up Summer 2019! We are not quite ready to expand to a third team, but we are actively thinking about the future of the program. This will be its fifth summer, and we have been thrilled to watch it grow to over 800 children and youth.

Many of our summer camps and retreats are so full, we have had to reevaluate how we use our space to make sure every one of our guests feels welcome and has a seat in the dining hall. Through your support of the last two fall campaigns, we were able to turn the conference center office into a hospitality area, providing additional small group space and a coffee station away from the combat zone of flying gator balls during indoor recreation periods. We added additional rocking chairs on the front porch and around camp to create more spaces for fun and serious conversations to take place. We are continuing to give the conference center a facelift inside and out, replaced the center walls on each floor with movable walls that open wide and many other fun and exciting things.

As the legacy of this holy ground continues, and we prepare for the fifth generation, we will continue to be conduits of the important work we do here, pivoting and adding opportunities as we go. We are able to do this lifegiving and life-changing work because of you—because you send your kids here, because you come here yourselves, and because you support this ministry with your time, talent and treasure. Many thanks to the Memphis Conference for all the years of support, for being part of the family business, and continued support as we move into a new covenant partnership with Cedar Crest Camp and Beersheba Springs Assembly offering service to the new Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference.

REELFOOT RURAL MINISTRIES, Inc.

Rev. Robert Craig, Executive Director

The mission statement of Reelfoot Rural Ministries defines how the organization seeks to live out the command of Jesus Christ to, "Love our neighbor." The mission statement is: *"Following Christ in building relationships, we provide resources and offer hope to our Reelfoot Lake neighbors."*

The work of Reelfoot Rural Ministries is succinctly defined in this brief purpose statement; *"Restoring Hope, One Relationship at a Time."* This is how the staff and volunteers at RRM seek to offer Christ to a hurting world. While our "neighborhood" includes the counties in northwest Tennessee and southwest Kentucky around Reelfoot Lake, our primary focus is to love our neighbor one relationship at a time.

Over the past year, the staff and board of Reelfoot Rural Ministries have been prayerfully seeking God's guidance in how to best adjust ministries to meet needs and build relationships. In recent weeks, ministry has changed and will remain different in the near future. In the months to come, we will continue to discern needs and how best to match available resources with current needs to most effectively impact the communities we serve. We are also in a prayerful visioning period for how to best be in ministry with the asset of the former East Dyersburg UMC location, particularly with children and neighborhood outreach. While obedience to God may result in a different look and feel to some services at RRM, our supporters and clients can rest assured that RRM will continue the work of "Restoring Hope, One Relationship at a Time" on behalf of Christ and the Church. Large expansion of services in our dental ministry and ReelHOME rehab have taken place over the past year. This has resulting in a large increase of dental patients served, dentures delivered, and homes made safer and more accessible.

Reelfoot Rural Ministries serves in all four focus areas of ministry for the Memphis Conference.

Investing in Young People: Each ministry at RRM impacts children and young people in some way. However, we specifically seek to invest in young people through our day care, school supplies drive, backpack buddies, the annual toy store, and the home rehabilitation/community service ministry. The service projects help young people to gain skills for life as well as experience in serving the world in the name of Christ. The day care center in Tiptonville, Tennessee, serves some two-dozen children each day. This ministry provides love, education, encouragement, and three meals per day for children. The goal of the center is to prepare the children to succeed in primary school and to know that they are beloved children of God. Parents are assured that the children receive quality care by the three star rating provided by the state of Tennessee, but the children's personal growth and health are even better evidence of the quality of care. The families we serve are from various life stages, ranging from single parents in school or just starting employment, two parent households, and grandparents. Any family in our area can receive childcare, but preference is given to the working poor in the service area. In the days of social distancing, RRM has expanded feeding for students in Obion and Lake Counties. We will continue to feed over 500 students, five meals a week through the end of the school year.

Engaging in the Mission Field: We seek to engage our mission field daily through the variety of ministries in which we are involved. These ministries include: Tenne Butler Day Care, School Supplies, Christmas Toy Store, Lake County Imagination Library Sponsorship, Food Distribution Center, Emergency Services, Dental and Oral Hygiene Clinic, Vision Clinic, Special Needs Home, Lake County Backpack Buddies, ReelHOME-Home Rehabilitation Work Camp Ministry, Emergency Financial assistance, and the RRM Thrift Store.

Creating and transforming lay and clergy leaders along with growing fruitful and faithful churches are both areas of focus that are enhanced through the multiple volunteer opportunities at Reelfoot Rural Ministries. When individuals and groups come to RRM to volunteer, whether for a few hours, for a few days, or for a weeklong work camp, they are changed by the work of the Holy Spirit. This experience allows the individual, groups, or churches to grow closer in relationship with God, one another, and with the people they are serving. This causes transformation that strengthens personal relationships with Christ, thereby strengthening the local church in relationship with one another for ministry opportunities in that church's own neighborhood.

United Methodist Neighborhood Centers of Memphis

This year has been a time of major service and major challenges in the now-113-year history of United Methodist Neighborhood Centers of Memphis. Adapting to a severe economic crunch, we completed divestiture of ownership of properties and have Miriam Child Development Center and our administrative offices at Good Shepherd United Methodist Church.

Through our new "Star Ministries" approach, we have partnerships with four other UMC's and three additional missional locations. The churches are Longstreet, Asbury, St. Luke's and St. Matthew's. The other sites are Fishes and Loaves in Binghampton, Caregivers Center in Mason and Good Samaritan Outreach in downtown Memphis.

The current Covid-19 crisis has struck us very hard, but we are hopeful for new life and service out in the future, and are seeking to be helpful with emergency food aid even during the pandemic. We are in prayer for our Memphis Conference and all our churches as we persevere through this unprecedented time.

Very special THANKS are due to our two primary employees. They are Rev. Iletha Washington, serving as Program Director, and Ms. Mozell Starks, our Financial Officer. YOUR prayers and generous support are so very appreciated during this crisis. Let us never forget "the least and last" among us!

Dr. Mark Matheny,
UMNCM President

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNITED METHODIST FAMILY SERVICES

Timm Fair, Chair

Western Kentucky United Methodist Family Services (WKUMFS) is a 501(c)(3) Foster Care Support Agency of The Memphis Conference of The United Methodist Church. Its ministry aligns perfectly with the Memphis Conference Mission; especially *offering Jesus Christ to the hurting world, one neighborhood at a time*. The Holy Scriptures in **Proverbs 31:8-9** NLT says: *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.*

The oppression of children entering foster care comes primarily from neglect or drug abuse by their birth parents. There are nearly 9,900 children in foster care in the state of Kentucky. WKUMFS engages this mission field in The Purchase District by establishing connections with social workers and foster parents as it prays for and serves these hurting children.

WKUMFS' Mission is threefold: 1) Provide for the care and maintenance, support and education of foster children and foster families. 2) Transform local churches by informing them of the ever-present need for foster parents, respite parents, and adoptive parents. 3) Develop foster children into good citizens of the community through experiencing the love of Jesus Christ.

The WKUMFS Board of Trustees consists of volunteer laity and clergy from local area United Methodist Churches along with Purchase District and Memphis Conference Connectional Ministry leaders.

What Can Local United Methodist Churches Doing to Help?

When congregations are inspired and equipped to help foster and adoptive families: Every child is cared for, every family has hope, congregations are strengthened, and communities are healthier and safer.

Trinity UMC (Graves Co.) hosts a Fall Festival and an Easter Egg Hunt on their grounds for the foster children and foster parents. Lone Oak UMC hosts bi-monthly training meetings for the Paducah area foster children and foster parents. There are several ways congregations can get involved: begin a Prayer Initiative, start a Supportive Care Group, hold an Adoption/Foster Care Awareness Event, host a Local Child Placing Agency Training or Special Event, begin a Bags of Love ministry, or donate to WKUMFS.

Improving the life of foster children is the measure of success. The Kentucky Foster Care program measures success against its permanency goals. They are 1) return to birth parent, 2) permanent relative placement and 3) adoption. There are over 200 children awaiting adoption in Western Kentucky. Foster parents often adopt their foster children after bonding with them. Jesus described the final judgement in **Matthew 25:40** NLT "*And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!*"

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Mary Lou Wurth, president

Each year, the United Methodist Women members prepare for faithful living and action by participating in MissionU studies. Mission Studies are offered each year - a geographic, topical, and spiritual growth study. These studies motivate, inform, and enrich our community and others to global ministry. Local leaders are trained to lead one of these three mission studies through the organizational MissionU program offered around the conference and the country. Those leaders, in turn, are able to lead mission studies in their local and district groups or for anyone wanting to learn more about one of these mission studies. In addition to the three adult studies, the United Methodist Women has two specially prepared, one for children and one for youth. The youth study for 2019 was "Marked: on a Mission Journey with Jesus in the Gospel of Mark". The 2019 children's study was "Meeting Jesus through the eyes of Mark". The adult studies were: Spiritual Growth-"Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship Topical- "What about our Money? A Faith Response. Geographic- "Women United for Change: 150 years in Mission".

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church and the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church speak to human issues confronting the world from a biblical and theological perspective. Each year the National office/ board of directors of the United Methodist Women select several social issues for special focus. the 2019 issues were:

1. Just Energy for all (Climate Change)
2. Interrupting the school- Prison Pipeline
3. A living wage for all: Economic Inequality
4. End Maternal and Child Mortality: Maternal and Child Health.

United Methodist Women are encouraged to take action by doing the following:

- A. Education of others: Share with other people the skills necessary to effect social change. This is one of the fundamental steps toward construction of a just society.
- B. Political Action: This includes actions such as letters to elected officials, vigils, public prayers, acts of protest, voter registration and radio and television ads.
- C. Social and Economic Action: This can take several forms, from boycotting or refusing to buy a product to participation in rallies, marches, and public demonstrations.
- D. Issue Advocacy: advocate for changes in unjust laws and regulations that relate to specific social issues.
- E. Advocate to end violence toward women in conflict zones and in their homes: work with local and state governments to protect survivors of human trafficking and bring their perpetrators to justice. Speak out in partner with homeless and those losing their homes due to foreclosure. Organize forums with elected officials.
- F. Get Involved in media literacy in your community. Monitor media messages and images. Advocate for fairness in news coverage, equal representation of women and wholesome television entertainment. Work with local environmental groups to protect the earth, create green spaces and support sustainable development. Serve others by working in soup kitchens, food banks, community gardens, and meal delivery programs.
- G. PRAY: Prayer is one of the most powerful sources of support and change in our lives. Let the power of prayer support each of us in our actions for justice.