

Good Friday afternoon, New South Family. Welcome to the 37th edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending March 27, 2020.

-----The Critical-----

Announcements

1) Annual Conference, 2020: As per the direction of our Bishops, we will not be meeting personally for Annual Conferences this year. After much discussion with our Board of Administration, we will instead work with all delegates to formulate a plan for conducting business electronically. Pastors, watch for a note from Timothy Thomas, Conference Administrator, to gather information so we can proceed to deal with necessary conference business. We plan to have an ordination service as soon as we are able to meet together personally.

2) An Important Communique from FM Headquarters:

Legal Considerations - COVID-19

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation continues to change by the minute. With each confirmed case and each updated death count comes new guidance, new advisories, and new regulations from federal and state officials.

Church Law & Tax quickly mobilized to help churches, pastors, and leaders navigate this uncertain and trying moment. In the past week, we've built a collection page of our [coronavirus coverage](#)—free to the public during this crisis—containing new content addressing key issues and questions now confronting churches. For instance:

A [brief explanation](#) from senior editor Richard Hammar on how to assess legal liabilities, insurance coverage, and church business meetings;

[First Amendment considerations](#) regarding government regulations of public gatherings;

[Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA) changes that directly affect churches and religious organizations;

Guidance on handling charitable contributions made to [now-cancelled mission trips](#); and

Ways to use [technology effectively](#) to keep worship services and church office operations moving forward.

More pieces dealing with legal, tax, finance, and employment matters will go live soon, too.

This is an unprecedented moment in our lifetimes. It's easy to feel overwhelmed, discouraged, and fearful. Yet situations like these often spur unexpected opportunities for ministry. Our goal is to educate and empower you to lead with confidence—to move past fear, as 2 Timothy 1:7 teaches, and instead lead with power, love, and self-discipline.

3) For Pastors and Churches Interested in Affiliating with the Free Methodist denomination, the World Ministry Center has set up [this new web site](#) with lots of information about the process.

4) An Opportunity: Pastor Ben Sigman and Timberlake Church are offering to provide online content (Sunday worship, message, children’s material) and coaching for churches that are interested. This would be for churches that don’t have the capacity to produce online content or for churches that would like to supplement their own content. Everything will be FM branded (not Timberlake) and free to FM churches. Attached to this e-mail is a fact sheet that provides more details. At this point, Timberlake is simply trying to gauge interest (please respond to the email in the fact sheet.) I believe they will schedule a Zoom call to dialogue with all pastors/churches that express an interest. (Details are attached.)

5) New Book of Discipline: Pre-orders for the 2019 Book of Discipline are open now! Many have been anticipating the release of the 2019 Book of Discipline for the Free Methodist Church - USA. The 2019 Discipline contains all updates approved by the delegation at the 2019 General Conference. This is an essential resource for our Annual Conferences, churches, pastors and leaders.

The Book of Discipline presents the history, theological roots, and contemporary global mission of the Free Methodist Church - USA. It is our ecclesiastical and organizational manual containing the common constitution of the global Free Methodist Church, and is a contemporary expression of how the FMCUSA organizes itself for effective ministry under the Holy Spirit.

The 2019 Book of Discipline is available in both hard cover and soft cover editions. Click [HERE](#) to pre-order your copy from the LIGHT + LIFE BOOKSTORE today! Delivery is anticipated to be by March 31st.

Church of the Week: Murphy FMC with Pastor Tim Huff

Conference / Superintendent’s Calendar (all times eastern)

March 31-April 1:	Global Overseers Team (GOT) – Zoom
April 4:	MEG subcommittee interviews, Jackson, KY
April 9:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
April 11:	FMH&P – Gallatin #1 of 2
April 18:	FMH&P – Gallatin #2 of 2
April 27:	ABS (Area Bishop and Superintendents) - Zoom
May 14:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
May 29-30:	New South Annual Conference - Zoom
June 8:	ABS – Indianapolis (Zoom?)
June 15-20:	NSC Teen Camp
June 11-14:	NSC Family Camp
June 22-26:	NSC Kids’ Camp
August 9-11:	ABS – Baltimore
August 25-28:	Starting Strong for new pastors - Indianapolis
September 23-25:	New Room Conference, Nashville, TN

And now...

-----The Important-----

Resources, Articles and Attachments

1) Some Updates about how our churches are ministering in these strange days:

From Pastor Tim Huff (Murphy): “As we do a free lunch every Tuesday for the community, we served nachos to twenty some people today by taking to go boxes and canned drinks to their cars IN THE RAIN! The

volunteers (and their 4 kids) who came to help were very happy to be reaching out to people who wanted a free lunch. Since they prepared food for more, and one of the volunteers lives in subsidized housing, he took leftovers in to go boxes to give out to those who live there. Yes, it is more blessed to give than to receive! Since the 4 adults serving really didn't need our help, Tim entertained the 4 older (middle school) kids, and I entertained the kindergarten girl. We were blessed!"

*Please send me a paragraph on the sorts of things your church is doing. We'd all love to hear good ideas for ministry in these days.

2) An Important Reminder in These Days: What is the Church...Really?

Many people today understand the church as a building, but this is not a biblical understanding of the church.

The word "church" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is defined as "an assembly" or "called-out ones." The root meaning of church is not that of a building, but of people. It is ironic that when you ask people what church they attend, they usually identify a building. Romans 16:5 says, "Greet the church that is in their house." Paul refers to the church in their house—not a church building, but a body of believers.

The church is the body of Christ, of which He is the head. Ephesians 1:22–23 says, "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." The body of Christ is made up of all believers in Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until Christ's return. Biblically, we may then regard the church in two ways, as the universal Church or as the local church.

The universal Church consists of everyone, everywhere, who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13). This verse says that anyone who believes is part of the body of Christ and so comprises the universal Church.

The local church is described in Galatians 1:1–2: "Paul, an apostle . . . and all the brothers with me, to the churches in Galatia." Here we see that in the province of Galatia there were many churches—they had a localized ministry and were scattered throughout the province. They were local churches. A Baptist church, a Lutheran church, an E-Free church, etc., is not the Church, as in the universal Church; rather, it is a local church, a local body of believers. The universal Church is comprised of everyone who belongs to Christ. Members of the universal Church should seek fellowship and edification in a local church.

In summary, the church is not a building or a denomination. According to the Bible, the church is the body of Christ—all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Local churches are gatherings of people who claim the name of Christ. Members of a local church may or may not be members of the universal Church, depending on the genuineness of their faith. The local church is where believers can fully apply the "body" principles of 1 Corinthians chapter 12—encouraging, teaching, and building one another up in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3) The Blessings of Knowing Our Inadequacy – Charles Stanley

1. Our inadequacy drives us to God.
2. It relieves us of trying to do the work of God in our own strength.
3. It forces us to live our lives and do His work in the grace of the Holy Spirit.
4. It provides God the privilege of demonstrating what He can do with so little.
5. It frees God to use us up to our potential.
6. It allows God to receive the full glory for His work.

7. It enables us to walk in contentment and quietness of spirit.

“We wait in Hope for the Lord; He is our help and shield. In You our hearts rejoice, for we trust in Your Holy Name. May Your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in You.” – Psalm 33:20-22

Job Openings

At this point, we have a pastor or interim pastor in every NSC church, although those interim situations are, well, interim. We will have at least two pastoral openings this summer. Contact me for details.

Remember too that [if you click here](#), you will find job opening listings at FMC Human Resources.

March/April Birthdays (*that we know of)

Roger Ryan – Pastor, Fountain Square Ministries, Bowling Green (KY), March 27

Neil Anderson – Professor, Asbury University, Wilmore (KY), April 19

Joe Ritter – Pastor/Planter, Waynesville (NC), April 22

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This Sunday I continue a series on the letters to the churches of Revelation with the letter to the church at Sardis, Revelation 3.

Quote: *God never said that the journey would be easy, but He did say that the arrival would be worthwhile.* - Max Lucado

Joke: Three bills were having a conversation:

The five-dollar bill bragged, "I've been everywhere you can imagine--grocery stores, restaurants, casinos, church... You name it and I've been there."

The ten-dollar bill agreed, "I've been to all those places too."

The hundred-dollar bill asked, "What's a church?"

OK, one more funny thing today...we need funny things.

A fellow, Kurt, in our church came into the office today, and as we talked, I said something like, "Strange days, aren't they?" He replied, "Reminds me of living through World War 2...very similar mood."

I put this interaction in a note to the Wilmore congregation. In reply, another member of Kurt's generation wrote, "I've had the same thoughts as Kurt, except back then, we stood in line for food and gasoline, but never toilet paper!"

Blessings on your weekend and day of worship.

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