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2020 Theme
“Changing the World With ACTION”

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.
~ Peter 4:10

Services at United Methodist Churches are on hold until we hear from Bishop Bob that they may be opened for services with some restrictions. Stay tuned...

https://dscumc.org/

Want the latest news from Bishop Bob and the Desert Southwest Conference? Read the Desert Southwest Newsletter online at:
https://dscumc.org/newsletter/
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
DESERt SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE
WEST DISTRICT
LOCAL ORGANIZATION CALENDAR

Desert Southwest Annual Conference (church) Cancelled

Mission u Cancelled

Cactus Patch Articles Due August 15, 2020

West District Annual Celebration October 3, 2020
Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church, 13658 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West

West District Training with Conference Officers October 23, 2020
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 8051 E. Broadway Blvd., Tucson 85710

Desert Southwest Conference United Methodist Women Annual Meeting October 24, 2020
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church

Western Jurisdiction Meeting
At this point, this event is still up in the air; when plans are finalized, Western Jurisdiction President Judi Nibbelink will notify the membership. It is tentatively being planned for some time in September.

Cactus Patch Articles Due November 15, 2020

Please send Cactus Patch articles to Cheryl Buchholtz: westsecBuchholtz@yahoo.com.

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<tr>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>WHEN REPORTS ARE DUE</th>
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<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>Memorial List</td>
<td>District Membership Care Coordinator</td>
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<td>Your local organization’s officers information for new directory</td>
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<td>Living the Charter for Racial Justice Reporting Form</td>
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<td>Dec. 31</td>
<td>Outstanding Local Organization Form</td>
<td>District Education for Mission Coordinator</td>
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As I sit here I do not even know how to begin. For 2 months all activities have been at a standstill. Event planning seems almost futile because we don't know when this will end. Jurisdiction has been rescheduled for September but there is no guarantee we will meet then. Mission u for 2020 has been cancelled. We hope by October we will be able to go ahead with the District Annual Celebration. In the meantime, I hope all of you in your local units have been staying connected with each other. You can always keep in touch either by phone calls, emails, text messages or sending cards. There are also many technical ways such as zoom etc. The main thing is do something. Not only will communication help your attitude but the one you reach out to.

This is a good time to be reading some of the great books from the reading lists. I hope to see Christine handing out many more certificates next year at the Leadership Development training meetings.

I want to thank you for completing your census for 2019 online. I haven't heard from National yet to know exactly how well we did in reporting. Many of you responded to me to let me know you had completed reporting. Some of you even sent me your figures and I was happy to enter them online for you. This is one little task that needs to be done each year after January 1st. Now the reporting is only done online at unitedmethodistwomen.org. After answering the few questions asked you just have to hit the submit button and you get a reply: You have completed your census. It is so easy. As I have said numerous times I am here to help. All you have to do is ask.

You have all been in my prayers. I hope you are healthy and maybe not too bored with this "Stay at home" business. Hope to see all of you soon.


Colleen Becker, West District President

Check out the world maps indicating the various missions supported by United Methodist Women. They make a great display on United Methodist Women Sunday. https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/maps/mission-maps
COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

So, what have you missed more than anything else during this time of chaos? As for me, I have missed my friends and family - and those daily and weekly contacts. Our small faith group meetings have also been suspended - so what can we do about that, right here, right now?

Nothing is more important right now than communication. It is much more than calling family and friends - it is remembering to send a card, an email or a phone call to those people that you know live alone and don’t have interactions with anyone during the course of a day. It is a friendly note stuck to the mailbox or a sticky note on the door to the UPS, Post Office driver or the Amazon Prime delivery person.

Check on those friends and neighbors to see if they need anything - especially if you are going to the store (wearing your mask). Let people know that you are listening to them and that you care. While you may not be able to change things, you can express knowledge of their challenges as well as compassion for their struggles. Acknowledge these, allowing for people's discomfort.

As far as our United Methodist Women connections, read and share the West District United Methodist Women's Cactus Patch newsletter and make sure your fellow Methodist sisters are reading the Desert Southwest United Methodist Women's newsletter online. The latest information will be there as well as any changes. So, let’s all do our part to COMMUNICATE! Blessings, Cheryl

westsecBuchholtz@yahoo.com  623-979-2410

Newsletter Reminders:

• Do not send me the article in PDF format because I can’t edit or make corrections in PDF format.
• Always spell out UMW (United Methodist Women) or DSC (Desert Southwest Conference. (This is a request from National.)
• District officers - please do not put local church news in your officer article. Put local unit news in an article about your church.
Dear United Methodist Women,

It has been a scary and strange year so far to say the least. I pray you are well, healthy and safe. I know many of us had to cancel fund raisers and events over the past few months. We will weather this frightening time and I’m sure we, being the courageous and inventive women we are, will find new ways to Continue in our mission work. The West District Finance team was able to meet this month and we developed our draft budget for 2021. It still is a little rough, but we’ll have it ready for votes and approval at our meeting in June.

Stay well, stay tuned and stay connected.

Your sister in Christ,

Michele Justice
SGBD2@outlook.com
Treasurer
West District United Methodist Women

Any woman may be a member of United Methodist Women by choosing to become involved in our organized mission movement and may join by committing herself to the PURPOSE through participate in meetings, prayer, giving, study, action or service. (The president of the unit is the only one who must be a member of the United Methodist Church.)
So much has changed since my last article. The Nominations committee was to have met just as meetings were suspended but should be able to meet in June (hopefully in person with social distancing guidelines in place). I anticipate we will be busy.

One thing I am sure of is that many of our members, and some of the officer’s circumstances have changed. Mine have. I went from working for the same company for twenty four years to a new job in a different industry. I am in the fifth week training from; done mostly over Zoom meetings.

Last article I mentioned that one of my passions is the continuation of a strong United Methodist Women organization; that has not changed. Therefore, remember that each and every one of you are part of Nominations. Please don’t forget to be on the lookout for future officers. If you are interested in becoming more involved let myself or one of your officers know. I would love to hear from you. Let’s continue to step out in Faith to ensure UMW continues for another 150 years.

As a reminder the Nominations Committee members are Helen and Pam Jackson, Janet Rummel, and Paula Sallas.

Blessings,
Vicki Keel
Chair of Nominations
Email vkeel55@gmail.com

This is a list of West District Positions on the Leadership Team. We ask that you prayerfully consider serving in one of these positions in the future.

President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chair of Nominations (CON), Secretary of Program Resources

Mission Coordinators
Spiritual Growth, Membership Care, Education for Mission, Social Action, Communications Coordinator (Cactus Patch editor), and the Committee on Nominations
Linda’s latest book review:

2020.4.23 Book Reports

Lately, I have read UNClobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality, by Colby Martin, and Messy Spirituality, by Michael Yaconelli. Colby Martin enthusiastically mentioned Messy Spirituality in his UNClobber book, so I went ahead and ordered a used paperback, out of curiosity. Both books are semi-autobiographical, telling about their real-life experiences, so they are relatively easy to read and relate to.

In UNClobber, Martin tells about his convictions, his true inner beliefs, changing on whether God welcomes homosexuals or not. The result of Martin being honest about his beliefs was his becoming out of sync with his East Valley Arizona mega-church, losing his job, and eventually founding a new, welcoming church in California.

Martin presents an intensive study of the scriptures that have been cited to indicate God’s stance on the issue. Those scriptures are: Genesis 19, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10. These have been historically referred to as the Clobber Passages. The gist of Martin’s study is that the original language had no words meaning “homosexual”, and the Bible cannot be said to condemn homosexuality as an orientation. It most certainly condemns rape, sexual molestation, religious orgies, prostitution, sex slaves, and exploiting people for sex. We can all agree on that. Loving, committed, mutually honoring and respecting relationships are an entirely different thing from predatory behavior.

Messy Spirituality looks at the myth of Christian flawlessness, of people being afraid to show their imperfect and true selves. We all want to be better than we are, but we shouldn’t feel compelled to pretend we are more perfect and spiritual than we are. Hiding and pretending do not encourage spiritual growth or good human connections. God can use you just as you are. He knows all about you and loves you anyway.

*Thank you, Linda for sharing your book review. It certainly encourages us to use our “down time” to expand our vision of difficult issues. ~ Cheryl
Psalm 31:16 Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

So, the local libraries are closed. But many are still doing online reading options. For example, my local library (Glendale Public Library) allows you to renew (or apply) for a library card on their webpage and then access their e-books from home. So, even from home, you can use the local library to help you with your United Methodist Women’s Reading Program.

Many of our local libraries are connected to the Libby app. It allows you to check out books online, through the app. If the library has a copy of one of our great books in Libby, you could read it online in one step. The convenience of having the book on the e-reader is nice to have and has been really helpful as we have sheltered in place. In addition, you can also get the audiobook versions. Check with your library to see if they have audiobooks available online.

If you are reading United Methodist Women’s titles from 2015-2020, they count no matter where or with whom you are reading. So, if you read to your family or read to relax, be sure to pick up a book from the list. So, how to access the lists? Well, the 2020 list is available as a digital magazine. They also list the previous years on the reading program website.

If you do order books through Amazon, please remember to visit smile.amazon.com, Amazon’s charitable giving page, and select “United Methodist Women” as your charitable organization. For all eligible purchases made on smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% to United Methodist Women. Remember, you only need to read 5 books to get the first certificate. Don’t forget to read Response Magazine too.

Participating in the Reading Program is a wonderful way to build community and form friendships around books. Right now, I am reading “Tough Cookies: Leadership Lessons from 100 Years of the Girl Scouts” by Kathy Cloninger. It is from the 2015 reading list.

I would love to hear what books you are reading. Don’t forget to keep track of your reading.

God bless you and keep you safe.
Your Sister in Christ
Christine Jones
Minding our Members: Membership Care

United Methodist Women West District

Barbara Kelton  minebk@outlook.com

Membership Care...now just what does that mean to us today in light of the state of our nation? As we continue to stay safe and mindful of others, this is also a good time to remind each other to “stay in touch” and take the time to learn about the resources available for our membership.

https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/
National site with information for every member

https://www.umwonline.org/home
Learn how to create an online profile and how this site can be useful.

https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/members-leaders/responsibilities
Learn more about the roles and responsibilities of local, district and national leaders

https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/member-resources
Membership resources

https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks
Monthly conversations with United Methodist Women; inspiring/informational

https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/worship
Worship services

Our own Cactus Patch newsletter is the way we keep membership informed about West District United Methodist Women activities. The local units are also encouraged to share their own activities with others. Read every issue to keep up on the latest. Past issues can be found online at: https://dscumc.org/united-methodist-women/

Scroll to the bottom of the page and select West District tab.

Your Sister-in-Christ,
Barbara Kelton

THE PURPOSE OF THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.
Inspirations: Spiritual Growth
United Methodist Women West District Spiritual Growth
Jen Kistler
jenkistler@cox.net

Hello Faithful and Beautiful Sisters!

I hope this finds all of you well and adjusting to this fearful and trying time. As I have walked through this with you, I have had the 23rd Psalm running through my head. This is the Psalm that I have turned to in my most trying times. When it read this, I am uplifted by God’s gifts of grace and mercy. I am reminded of his great love for all of us.

So please take the time to read it with our current situation in mind.

As we climb back from this scary, shadowy time, we must remember that God has blessed us throughout, and continues to love and guide us.

Blessings to all!

Love, Jen

---

PSALM 23
A Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
1 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.
2 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
3 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
4 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
5 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

"GOD, my times are in your hands."
( Psalm 31:23 )
The latest newsletter from the United Methodist Women National Organization
(FYI in the event you have not see the latest information from the United Methodist Women National Organization)

Here are some opportunities for inviting our members to stay connected. Please share the announcement and actions alerts.

**Announcement:**

**United Methodist Women Connects Members During COVID-19 Crisis With “For a Time Like This” Campaign**

United Methodist Women’s “For a Time Like This” campaign helps women connect with their faith and one another in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic through Facebook, other social media platforms, the United Methodist Women website and more. Visit unitedmethodistwomen.org/blogs/for-a-time-like-this for prayers, devotionals, activities (including mask-making), news about the frontline service of national mission institutions and international ministries, resources, and ways to connect with other United Methodist Women members while we’re “sheltered in place” at home.

The campaign also includes special editions of Faith Talks podcasts on COVID-19-related topics such as coronavirus, faithfulness and online worship, grief, paid leave/sick days in the age of covid-19, and more.

**Campaign Action Alerts**

**Mass Incarceration**

People who are incarcerated in jails, prisons, immigration detention centers and juvenile justice facilities are at heightened risk from COVID-19. This is especially true for medically vulnerable people: the elderly, those who are immunocompromised, sick or pregnant. Contact your governor today to urge your state to reduce the number of incarcerated people through the swift release of individuals who pose no threat to public safety and yet are themselves at great medical risk if COVID-19 enters the prison system: https://p2a.co/Jvxf2cE.

We’ve had about 300 people take action, but we’d love to have more, so please sign here if you have not yet done so.

**Climate Justice**

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which began on April 22, 1970, after a horrifying oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, triggered a national bipartisan response to the issue of environmental degradation. On that day in 1970, in a moment of rare political alignment, 20 million people across party lines engaged in public demonstrations in support of a healthy environment. Since then, thousands of Christians have honored Earth Day during weekend services and participation in community-wide celebrations. Fifty years later, as we continue to experience and witness the harmful effects of our reliance on fossil fuels, the concern that inspired the first Earth Day observance is still a priority issue before us today.
Here are three things you can do right now:

1. First, use your unique voice as a United Methodist Women member and person of faith to urge Congress to implement a moratorium on water and energy utility shut-offs and prioritize people-focused economic relief in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. As United Methodist Women, we believe that we have an urgent responsibility to love the Earth and all its communities, and as we respond to this crisis, we have the opportunity to forge a just recovery that creates healthier, more equitable and more just communities that reflect God’s kin-dom.

2. Second, register for United Methodist Women’s Just Energy for All 101 three-part webinar series taking place on April 23, May 7 and May 21. Join these webinars to learn more about what just energy centered on justice and equity means, why United Methodist Women is committed to advancing just energy for all and how your United Methodist Women unit, district or conference can be involved.

3. Third, visit our website for five ways you can participate in Earth Day 2020 that connect with United Methodist Women’s Just Energy for All campaign. We also encourage you to join our climate justice e-mail list and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to receive updates on actions that you and your United Methodist Women unit, district or conference can take to advance climate justice at the local and national levels.

Let’s Take Action…Now!

During this time of distress, we have been learning how important and powerful it is to communicate and use the various forms of technology. United Methodist Women has a Facebook page and we have been asked to sharing our own faith stories. By doing this, we are honoring United Methodist Women who have put faith, hope and love into action. So far, there haven’t been very many entries published to this page – so I challenge the members of West District of the Desert Southwest Conference to write their faith stories and share them to this page. We never know which of our stories will strike a meaningful chord with a reader. So let’s make an impact on others by sharing our stories. They needn’t be long – just write from your heart about the organization which means so much to so many.

https://www.facebook.com/DSCUMWomenLegacy/photos/a.1708604092715288/1708604099381954/?type=3&theater
What’s Going on in the Neighborhood?

New Song United Methodist Women

To say the past few months have been a challenge for everyone is an understatement. Each of us have been through our own time of change and readjustment to the new “normal” that has been thrust upon us. The United Methodist Women of New Song Church are no different. But, we have continued to serve in whatever capacity we are able.

In March, before the virus, Sally Hamill and her husband Bill were able to present a program on Race Relations and Violence. The program was thoughtful, insightful and well received. It was opened to all church members as well as United Methodist Women members. It explored the participants different views and thoughts on the roots of violence in our society. The program ended with a call for a future study on the subject by church members.

But then the virus hit and everything came to a halt. This did not stop our members, though. We continued to stay in touch and plan for future events—even with the probability of cancellation. As a result of the ongoing unknown factors, we regrouped and simply found other ways of sharing through our circles.

Our quilting circle found its calling as the group made facemasks for church members and others. Our card group, Dabblers, sent cards to shut ins and those at our local assisted living center, and our prayer shawl group shared shawls with the assisted living center also.

So even though we had to slow down, we were not halted—just sidetracked. We continue to plan, pray and look forward to getting back to that part of our purpose that says we "develop a creative, supportive fellowship and expand the concept of missions....".

Overall, that is exactly what we have done, and with continued prayer and support we will continue to do.

Submitted by Kimi Ivey
It’s been a unique and trying time for all of us, but God will prevail and we will get through this.

Since we can’t attend meetings in person, it’s been a challenge to stay in touch. Prior to this virus, Sherry Lehl, the leader of Naomi Circle (craft circle), as part of our devotion time, had been reading some pages from *100 Things God Loves About You* by Tama Fortner. Sherry is now emailing these to all of our members. It has been well received and keeps us in touch. Abigail Circle (reading circle) has eight active readers at this time (there may be more who are reading at their summer home).

As I am sure everyone else feels the same way, we are very anxious to get back to “normal.” We miss the in-person contact and sharing. Let’s face it, we miss our friends. Just remember, when we get to go back to church, we have to get out of our pajamas (giggle).

God bless you and keep you safe.
Mary Barefoot
Secretary

Even in these times of isolation, the women of Lakeview have been Mission Active. Recently. The Lakeview Ladies have made over 100 masks for Banner Hospital, 150 masks for UMOM, 22 lap quilts for UMOM, 3 crocheted baby blankets for UMOM and a collection of miscellaneous toys for the children of UMOM.

Submitted by President Susan Briner

- Way to go Lakeview Ladies. - you truly demonstrate

  **FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE IN ACTION.**
“United Methodist Women is a creative, supportive fellowship. United Methodist Women members comfort and act and bring people together, and I have no doubt that in these past few months you’ve leaned on your creativity to offer your support and endless faith, hope and love in action. I hope you have taken care of yourselves.” These are the words of Tara Barnes, editor of United Methodist Women’s “Response” magazine.

And yes, our Unit is being creative and supportive behind the scenes as we are not able to join one another and be together for luncheons and circle meetings. May is a month that we give financially to a special program “Prayer and Self Denial” Our members stepped up and although there was no presented program we collected almost $200. The recipients of this year’s program will be the United Methodist Women’s Mission Institutions of which our own Wesley/Golden Gate Communities Centers will benefit.

We also answered the plea of the Navajo Nation’s “Dig Deep” water program. It is a company that is hauling water to those who have no running water. 100% of the donations go directly to getting them clean water. We donated $300.

There has been much in the news about the CO9VID19 virus and recognition and protection of those who are incarcerated. The national UMW office asked the local units to contact their legislators and governors about this issue. Members of our Unit did just that. Some of us joined a podcast “Faith Talks on COVID 19 & Incarcerated Loved ones on May 7th.

We will feel better when we can be together in person again, but for now we pray for strength, wisdom and love enough to make the right decisions to take care of one another especially those we’ve come to call vulnerable populations.

Sandy Bradley, President United Methodist Women

Eva Ndavu, our West District Vice-President, is making masks for the Navajo Nation - they have a great need. I am sure that she will share information on how to get these delivered to the Navajo Nation for distribution.
Prescott United Methodist Women
Submitted by Karon Keeler, President
Cactus Patch article May 15

Prescott United Methodist Women celebrated our 150th Birthday “Weekend” on Saturday, February 15 at the 5:00 pm service and on Sunday, February 16 at the 9:00 am and 10:30 am services. We were so pleased that Rev. Beth Rambikur was able to be our guest speaker. (Beth is a daughter of one of our Unit members and she grew up in this church!)

Our theme was “Casting Our Nets” and we made a net with fish attached with some of our mission affirmations and goals on it. As our own Rev. Patti Blackwood led us in our installation, we responded with “With God’s help, we will cast our nets so that women, children and youth will realize hope and love in their lives” as we cast our net out to the congregation.

We celebrated after the 9:00 am service by serving a happy birthday cake during coffee fellowship time. (By the way, our church is also celebrating our 150th birthday this year!) We set up a display in the narthex of the church with the map of the missionary sights around the world, set out flyers about membership, had copies of Response Magazines on hand, and put up a tri-fold display about our reading club “Hooked on Books” which is based on the United Methodist Women Reading Program. We meet once a month at the mall in the food court. (Until the COVID 19 virus showed up, that is.)
Thank you to the members of Prescott United Methodist Women for sharing this special experience with the members of the West District United Methodist Women,

Trinity United Methodist Women
Local United Methodist Women visit Conakry, Guinea, West Africa

Trinity United Methodist Church, Phoenix sent United Methodist Women Pres. Elaine Baldridge and Vice Pres. Deb Herrmann off to the capital of Guinea Africa, Conakry with prayer in a service before their departure. Pastor Stephen presented them with a cross, made by a longtime member, for Aaron’s family and 2 hand crosses to give to people we met while there, as discerned by prayer. (Guinea is one of the poorest countries in Africa, with minimal health care, extremely low life spans & literacy rates)
Elaine's son Aaron, daughter-in-law, Courtney and grandchildren, Olivia 7, Ruthie 5 and Ezra 3 have been there for over a year working in medicine and education through a small Christian agency, Hope Ignited, along with their partners, Adam & Rachel Jamison and their young son, Quillen, 4. The women are pediatricians, Adam is a pastor and engineer and Aaron is educator, doing research on improving access to education and literacy and managing both families' day to day needs. (Aaron grew up at Trinity and was involved in youth activities there and at the district and conference before heading to college).

Their overall goal in the 5-10 years they have committed to being there is to work with the community in ways that have locals running their own medical care, social services and businesses and to establish the first pediatric center in the country, train doctors and pastors, find ways improve literacy and to work side by side with local folks to leave all of the work in their hands.

Our main focus was to help care for the 3 Baldridge children, and Quillin while they were on a 3-week school break, allowing the adults to continue with their various responsibilities. In addition we were able to experience the culture, see their work first hand, help with some of the prep to open a new clinic, get to know people working in medicine, education, business and sharing their faith from Guinea, the US and other parts of the world.

From Deb:

Arriving in a major capital of 3 million people in the night under crazy driving situations was the beginning of an opportunity to bless both the Baldridge and Jamison families while being challenged ourselves. As missionaries they appreciated the most that we would take the time to come and to see their daily lives. (P.S. We do not pray enough for our missionaries.) The doctors, Courtney & Rachel, have a variety of challenges every day just getting the basics for the children they see. We also saw the preparation of an old space next to a church which was changed into a clean and welcoming space as a clinic in the 3 weeks that we were there. I found the first challenge to be getting used to the 88 degrees temperature with 80-90% humidity. Air conditioning in one room was sporadic and not always having the availability of a fan made us appreciate any cooling! In Guinea, as I had seen in Malawi, many homes are behind large walls with gates and guards. We were on the third floor of an all cement home with the kitchen being on the first floor. Looking from the balcony, at times I felt a little claustrophobic but I believe you all would know that feeling, by now, during this Covaid-19 time. Unlike Malawi, the population spoke French so we had to rely more on the Baldridges and Jamisons (including the children) to assist us.
It was such a blessing for me, Elaine, to go to Guinea with Deb to see family and to learn first hand about their work, the people they are serving and the challenges and joys of living and working in one of the poorest third world countries in the world. I had picked up "something" in travel and was sick the first week, it was an additional blessing for all that Deb spent extra time with the kids, especially Ezra in the midst of potty training! Deb and I have shared work, church and family life for 40 years and this was an amazing time to share it all in this very special place and time. We left here on Feb. 12 and returned to a pandemic world on March 5.

Sharing stories of all we saw and learned would take a book not just this article. For now I would like you to know how much it meant to me to see firsthand what it takes day after day for these young couples just to keep things running and safe where they are and still reach out to the various communities there...the babies & children's health needs, moms and dads trying give their children food and shelter each day, those who have gone to the US and other places for their education and have returned to help their home country, the small but growing Christian community of missionaries doing everything from medical, small businesses for women, providing living spaces for visiting workers of all types to training local doctors, educators and pastors. Guinea is more than 95% Muslim and those Christians working there not persecuted and their skills and kindness seem welcomed.

Aaron's focus (in addition to keeping the family safe, fed, healthy & growing spiritually) is to work on education of all types. To that end he hopes to do research that finds what works best in these culture(s) to improve the literacy and life of these wonderful people. To work effectively with the government he may need to have a doctorate so he is also working on that. To build the needed pediatric center, which would have clinic, teaching, training and living space for visiting workers, prayer is needed for discernment in the obtaining the land needed. They covet all of our prayers now, as they are also confined to their place but are still reaching out by providing rice and work for locals in making soap and face masks.

Please feel free to contact Deb and Elaine to share stories and let us know if you would like emails and other info forwarded to you regarding the work and lives of the Baldridges and Jamisons, working in Guinea (You can learn more from the Hope Ignited web site as well.) You can also contact us at carlbaldridge@cox.net (Elaine) or Deb dherrmann4@gmail.com or leave a message at Trinity (602-973-1276)