

PURPOSE
STATEMENT

*"We are disciples of
Jesus Christ
committed to making a
difference in the
community and in the
world through service
and invitational
outreach."*



The Messenger

First United Methodist Church, Chatham

From the Pastor

August 2025—Vol. 29—Issue 8

Things are Changing

*"The grass withers and the
flowers fall, but the Word of
the Lord stands forever."*

1 Peter 1:24

*Excerpts from the Bible and The
Earth Gospel follow:*

"Things are changing
everywhere today. Many of
us have weathered these
changes before, or other
significant shifts in your life.

"A number of folks talk
about significant shifts in their
marriages as they retire and
grow older, with all the comp-
lications that age brings.
Others have had their lives
upended by divorce or death
or mental illness or addiction
or health changes or job
losses, or any number of
huge life transitions. Things
change, nothing remains for-
ever. The grass withers and
the flowers fall. Relationships
shift.

"And here's the thing—if
my sense of well being gets
hitched to the circumstances
of life, we are in deep trouble.
If our sense of well being gets
hitched to the state of the
nation, we are in deep trou-

ble. If our sense of well being
gets hitched to anything other
than the God who made all
creation, whose spirit blows
through our lives, who so
loves this messed up world in
spite of ourselves, we are in
deep trouble. Because every-
thing, everything including our
skin and bones, is frail and
transient.

BUT. . .

"The word of the Lord
stands forever. The word of
God, the promises of God,
Jesus, the word made flesh,
stands firm. We can count on
God with us, the Spirit blow-
ing steadily in our lives and in
this world, in the midst of
change, in the midst of grief,
in the midst of pain, in the
midst of loneliness.

"When our lives are not
what they were, God is still
the solid ground that we stand
on, even when all that we
thought we were sure of is
pulled out from under our feet

"May you take off your
shoes and plant your feet
firmly on God's Holy Ground.
It's there. Right where you
are. Stand firm, and may God
be with you."

Blessings, Pastor Sonny

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

08-06—Barb Natarelli
 08-09—Bernie Powers
 08-12—Peter Farber
 08-13—Jane Powers
 08-20—Ginger Murray
 08-22—Marilyn Johnson
 08-31—Pastor Sonny

SUMMER ACTIVITIES AT FUMC

COME ENJOY OUR DELECTABLE

LOBSTER ROLL LUNCHESES

EVERY FRIDAY IN AUGUST,

11:30—1:30

VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME

BROWNIE BAKERS ARE NEEDED

37th ANNUAL ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13

9:00—4:00

**(If heavy rain, the Fair will be
held the following day.)**

THE FUMC THRIFT SHOP . . .

IS OPEN WEDNESDAYS

THROUGH

SATURDAYS,

11:00—2:00

**THE CHATHAM GUILD OF PAINTERS . . .
WILL EXHIBIT ON OUR CROSS STREET LAWN**

9:30—5:30

ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

THURSDAYS: AUGUST 7, 14, 21, 28

FRIDAYS: AUGUST 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

SATURDAYS: AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

A Biblical Perspective on Security, And Justice will Bring Lasting Security, Weavings, XXI: 5, James McGinnis

“As implied in the words of Dr. King, this global solidarity strategy is rooted in the Jewish and Christian vision of shalom. Shalom denotes social wholeness, the well-being of all, one community embracing all creation. Shalom comes only to the inclusive, embracing community that excludes no one, especially the orphans, widows, strangers/aliens. The blessings of shalom are either shared by all or enjoyed by none. Security is either enjoyed by all or it will eventually be enjoyed by none.

“Again and again, God stressed through the Hebrew prophets that lasting security is based on justice and cannot be achieved by fortifications, horses and chariots, and military alliances (see Hosea 7:8-12; 10:13-14; Isaiah 30:1-18; 31:1-3). In stark contrast, the Hebrew Prophets used captivating images of genuine security and peace such as the ‘peaceable kingdom’ of Isaiah 11:6-9. To expose, the lie of security through domination, the prophet uses the image of the lion and lamb lying down together, with a little child to lead them. A second captivating image is Micah’s, in which everyone has their own vine and fig tree, and all live in peace, unafraid: ‘He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid...’ (Micah4:304).

“As Jim Wallis points out in his excellent commentary on the Micah passage and the whole issue of security in a post-9/11 world, people will be unafraid and nations will beat their swords into plowshares only when everyone has a piece of the global economy, their own vine and fig tree. As long as wealthy individuals and nations refuse to correct the increasing disparities between rich and poor,

(cont'd. on page 5)

Rio Texas Conference

Ways to help Texas flood relief

SAN ANTONIO — The Rio Texas Conference has set up a platform for people to give online directly to flood relief in the Texas Hill Country. The Conference also has compiled resources for people needing immediate care. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) also continues to use financial donations to respond to needs around the U.S.



“Workers search through debris at Louise Hays Park in Kerrville, Texas, on July 6 after catastrophic floods over the 4th of July weekend killed at least 95 people, including 27 campers and counse-

lors at nearby Camp Mystic.” The Rev. Amanda Banda, Rio Texas Conference, took this picture.

“Shortly after midnight July 4, leaders of First United Methodist Church in Kerrville got word that the Guadalupe River was rising rapidly and people needed shelter. So the church quickly opened its facilities — including its ministry *Light on the Hill*, a former retreat center that now serves as a hub for social services. Among those who came were families from across the country waiting to learn the fates of loved ones at Camp Mystic, the Christian camp swallowed by floodwaters. By July 6, grieving church members and visitors gathered in the stained-glass-lit sanctuary to worship God and seek God's comfort. ‘You can just feel the heaviness in this space,’ said Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, who joined the church for Sunday services. ‘And at the same time, we know that we serve alongside a God of hope, a God of possibility, a God that never leaves us or forsakes us, a God that always promises to be with us.’

“The Texas Hill Country — known for its natural beauty and typically peaceful waters—has long been a place where people have come each summer to grow in faith at various religious campgrounds across the area.

“The 99-year-old Camp Mystic, while not United Methodist related, is special to many in the

Kerrville congregation. During his Sunday sermon, Pastor Payne grappled with the terrible news that Dick Eastland, the beloved director of the Christian girls camp, had died while trying to rescue campers from the raging waters.

“Rev. Melissa O'Donnell, the church's associate pastor, asked for prayers for [the] church staff to know how to comfort families who lost children or other loved ones at Camp Mystic.

“Beth Palmer, the church's outreach director, said the hope of Christ has been central to the church's response to all in need. ‘It's the foundation [and] focus of everything that we're doing,’ she said. . .when you have lost everything, and when you feel like there's nowhere to go, and all hope is lost, that is where our hope comes from.’

“As the rescue operations turn into relief operations, the Kerrville congregation's *Light on the Hill* ministry will become a staging ground for National Guard and other first responders. Throughout the long grieving and recovery process, Harvey said she and other United Methodists in the region will hold onto God's promise ‘as we walk alongside these people here whose hearts are broken alongside ours.’ She asked that people continue to pray. Referencing Methodism founder John Wesley's last words, she said, ‘We know, even in moments like this, God is with us.’”

“Banda started July 1 as the director of communications for the Rio Texas Conference. Hahn is assistant news editor for UM News. Contact them at (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umnews.org.”

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United Methodist Communications:

“For 85 years, UMCom has shared stories of grace, courage and connection. As we celebrate this milestone, I'm inviting you to join the movement that makes it all possible. With a gift of \$25/month, you'll be part of our new **Storytellers Society** that equips churches to communicate with clarity and compassion, trains faith leaders in storytelling, and tells the stories of hope unfolding across our worldwide connection. It is an effort to grow consistent, sustaining support for the next 85 years of Christ-centered communications.

With hope, Connor Prusha, UMCom & UM News



HAITI IS ONCE AGAIN SAFE FOR TRAVEL!

“If the above statement caught your attention, it shocked me and many others. But this is the assessment of the Department of Homeland Security which now paves the way for the deportation of more than 520,000 Haitians currently living in the United States under TPS (Temporary Protective Status) and the Humanitarian Parole program. The statement includes the following: ‘The Secretary determined that, overall, country conditions have improved to the point where Haitians can return home in safety. She further determined that permitting Haitian nationals to remain temporarily in the U.S. is contrary to the national interest of the U.S. Haitian nationals returning home are encouraged to use the U.S. Customs and Border Protection CBP Home app to report their departure from the United States.’

“Meanwhile, the State Department issued a travel warning in September 2024 that remains in effect to this day. It lists Haiti as the most serious ‘Level 4’ travel advisory, which the agency defines as ‘do not travel’. Not to mention that flights to Haiti are severely restricted, and to particular locations only. The advisory includes this: **‘Do not travel to Haiti due to kidnapping, crime, civil unrest, and limited health care.’**

“It goes on to cite crimes involving firearms, robbery, carjackings, sexual assault, and kidnapping. It warns that US citizens have been hurt or killed, or targeted for kidnapping for ransom. Protests, demonstrations and roadblocks are unpredictable and often damage or destroy infrastructure. Mob killings by the public (vigilante response) have increased against those suspected of committing crimes. More than 1.3 million persons have been displaced by gang violence, unrest, and lack of access to basic necessities. We have been in contact with Rev. Ralph Denizard, Petionville Circuit Super-

intendent, who has been meeting with displaced families from Furcy. A number of them have relocated to the Petionville area and are attending Frere church on the Frere campus, which housed the earthquake response volunteer teams.

“On another note, in my conversation with Pastor Ralph I asked, ‘What do you preach to your people in the midst of this situation?’ In summary, my words, he said: It is difficult. People are going through hard times. We preach resiliency and faith in the midst of all that is going on. He commented, ‘Our people are very resilient.’ That we know. He talked about the importance of community, church community, mutual support, and said they, the leaders, must be strong for the people, ‘even if we cry in our pillows at night.’ He said that the church is growing. They had a wonderful Pentecost Sunday and sometimes just preach from the lectionary as a matter of routine, a semblance of order in the midst of chaos. He was on his way to Puits Blancs, which some of you may have assisted in repairing the school and church, post-earthquake. And he expressed his gratitude for the support provided by you, the people of Mountains of Hope.

“If you have any questions about the situation in Haiti or Mountains of Hope, please contact me at tvencuss@gmail.com or 860-324-1424. If you are able to provide support for the work of Mountains of Hope, funds may be sent to the Frontier Foundation, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606. Please make checks out to The Frontier Foundation and indicate MHH – Emergency Response. There is also a donation link on the website—mountainsofhopeforhaiti.org. You will receive an immediate acknowledgement.

Bondye Bene Nou, Tom and Wendy

Rev. Tom Vencuss
- UMCOR/FLUMC Early Response Trainer
- Mountains of Hope for Haiti

(“...*Perspective on Security*” cont’d. from page 2)
they will never ‘live in peace and unafraid.’ Nor will the poor. Everyone must have a place at the table, or none will eat in peace.

“Sometimes in dramatic deeds, such as providing manna in the desert, God revealed to the Hebrew people, and now to us, this sharing / justice way to security. When God’s prophetic Word and saving deeds weren’t enough to convince the Hebrew people of the truth of the covenant—trust in God and in the power of love, and God will take care of you—God sent Jesus to show us the way to security and peace.

“The words and deeds of Jesus witness to this basic truth of God’s way of shalom. Jesus wept over his city of Jerusalem and over his people, lamenting ‘if this day you only knew what makes for peace’ (Luke 19:42, NAB). The things that make for peace are loving one’s enemies, living simply and sharing with others, forgiving everyone. Again and again, Jesus broke down barriers of race, class, gender, national origin and religion, and ate at the table of everyone. No one is excluded, Jesus taught in word and deed, in the kingdom—or ‘beloved community’—of God.

“But we must be willing to give up our privileges and risk losing our lives in the service of this good news (Matthew 10:39), challenging the forces of privilege and domination and standing with the victims of these forces for the first shall be last and the last first (see Matthew 19:30) and those who lose their lives will find them (true security).

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Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Resources

“Citizens of Massachusetts, congratulations! Your energy efficiency programs ranked in the top two in the nation for the past 10 years. Massachusetts offers some of the best energy rebates and incentives in the country. [The following] guide will help consumers, businesses and municipalities find information on the energy efficiency and clean energy (renewable) rebates, incentives, and programs available today.

“**Mass Save** is the Commonwealth’s nation leading energy efficiency program provider. Below is a list of included services for home owners of single family homes and up to 4 units in a multi-family property. For Municipal utility energy programs, visit **NextZero; participating municipal utilities listed here**, or contact utility directly.

Rebates & Incentives: heating and cooling, lighting and appliances, weatherization, building or renovating a home, financing, and additional special offers.

Income Eligible Programs: based on your household income, find out if you are eligible for no-cost or discounted energy efficiency services.

Residential New Construction: promotes the construction of energy efficient homes in Massachusetts. Incentives for single- family homes and multi-family homes (**3 stories or less**).

Renovations & Additions: provides incentives for including energy-efficiency upgrades in renovations and/or additions to existing homes. Incentives for upgrading single-family or multi-family homes (**3 stories or less**).

Time-Dependent (Demand Response) Program: Through Mass Save, homeowners, renters, or small business owners can earn incentives from ConnectedSolutions by using their connected devices to help reduce electric use during periods of high energy demand. Earn a \$25 enrollment incentive, and a \$20 annual incentive for every thermostat connected to a central air conditioner.

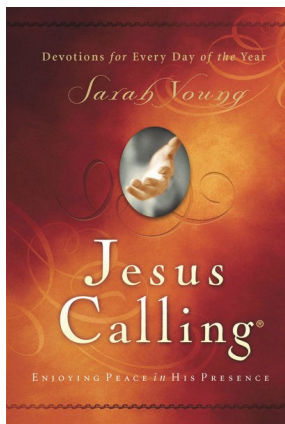
Mass Save also has an **On-Line Free Home Energy Assessment** tool. Consumers can also find a **shopping guide** on Mass Save for lighting, equipment, appliances, electronics and recycling programs.

Home Energy Assistance Programs: state run income eligible programs including fuel assistance (LIHEAP) and weatherization (energy efficiency). See the **Energy/Utility Bill Assistance Section** of this guide for more information on available assistance programs.

Salvation Army Good Neighbor Fund: assists income eligible consumers with utility bills. Information on 2021-2022 Guidelines and applications is available.

Many more items can be found at:
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-energy-rebates-incentives>.”

I am encouraged by Massachusetts’ track record. All that we residents do to work toward energy efficiency does not negate what large corporations do not do to help. They have made the consumer feel it is our job to take care of the climate, when they contribute the most to climate change! (ed.) ###



This daily devotional has been a remarkable gift to my faith. Each reading centers on words spoken by Jesus in the bible. The author, Sarah Young, creates the readings as though Jesus is having a personal conversation with me (you). I read it aloud to keep my mind focused. Bible passages relating to the topics follow the conversational readings. (ed.)

“Jesus Calling is your yearlong guide to living a more peaceful life. The Jesus Calling® devotionals have impacted over 46 million lives.”
The New York Times

“By spending time in the presence of the Savior with the much-loved devotions in *Jesus Calling*, you will:

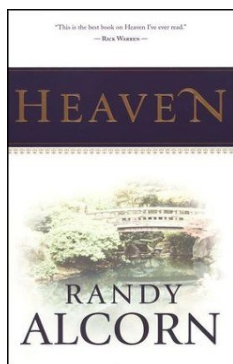


- **Feel comforted by words of hope and encouragement**
- **Be reassured of Jesus' unending love for you**
- **Receive gentle guidance based on Scripture**
- **Strengthen your faith with Scripture verses**
- **Connect with Jesus further with reflection and meditation based on God's Word.”**

“Young (who died in ‘23 of a disabling condition) was an American author known for her contributions to Christian literature; she was an advocate of contemplative prayer and has been described as one of the most successful Christian authors in history.” *Wikipedia*



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When I heard about *Heaven*, I thought, *I'd like to see what this book is about*. Well, at first I was taken aback by Alcorn's interpretations and his assertion that he is right. I don't believe that anyone knows exactly what our afterlife will be like. However, I read on and started to think, *this is as possible as any other interpretation*; and found I was reading the book as a novel. I became interested in others whom Alcorn quotes who have similar interpretations, among them C.L. Lewis (whom I have never read!). I recommend *Heaven* to you—it's fascinating reading! (ed.)

**[Written in 2004, it is subtitled] “Biblical Answers to Common Questions. *Heaven* states the kind of questions [most of us have probably asked]. [Included in Alcorn's] answers [are] bible passages. [He] tackles questions like “What is Heaven going to be like?” “Will we really have bodies?” “Will animals be there?” “Will we get bored?” “Will we recognize our loved ones?”**

**“In the most comprehensive and definitive book on Heaven to date, Alcorn invites you to picture Heaven the way Scripture describes it—a bright, vibrant, and physical New Earth, free from sin, suffering, and death, and brimming with Christ's presence, wondrous natural beauty, and the richness of human culture as God intended it.**

**“God has put eternity in our hearts. Now, Alcorn brings eternity to light in a way that will surprise you, spark your imagination, and change how you live today. This is a book about real people with real bodies enjoying close relationships with God and each other, eating, drinking, working, playing, traveling, worshiping, and discovering—on a New Earth—Earth as God created it. Earth as he intended it to be.”**

***Eternal Perspective Ministries***

| Sun                                                                 | Mon                                                                                          | Tue                                                                                                                                  | Wed                                                                         | Thu                                                                                                                                                                           | Fri                                                                                                                                                                         | Sat                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                     |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>1</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br><b>11:30-1:30</b><br><b>Lobster Roll Lunch</b>                       | <b>2</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| <b>3</b><br>10am Worship/ Communion.                                | <b>4</b><br>6:30 pm<br>ACA Group (for children of alcoholics) meeting in the Heberton Room.  | <b>5</b><br>8:30-9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall<br>9:30am—<br>Meditation Group                                          | <b>6</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                        | <b>7</b><br>8:30-9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall<br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Artists on Lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                | <b>8</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br><b>11:30-1:30</b><br><b>Lobster Roll Lunch</b>                       | <b>9</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                  |
| <b>10</b><br>10am Worship<br><b>POT LUCK LUNCHEON</b>               | <b>11</b><br>6:30 pm<br>ACA Group (for children of alcoholics) meeting in the Heberton Room. | <b>12</b><br>8:30-9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall<br>9:30am—<br>Meditation Group                                         | <b>13</b><br><b>9—5 Crafts Fair on the lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open | <b>14</b> Crafts Fair Rain Date<br>8:30—9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise<br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Artists on Lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br>5:30 Finance & Trustees | <b>15</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br><b>11:30-1:30</b><br><b>Lobster Roll Lunch</b>                      | <b>16</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                 |
| <b>17</b><br>10am—Worship                                           | <b>18</b><br>6:30 pm<br>ACA Group (for children of alcoholics) meeting in the Heberton Room. | <b>19</b><br>8:30-9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall<br>9:30am—<br>Meditation Group<br><b>SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b> | <b>20</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                       | <b>21</b><br>8:30—9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise<br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Artists on Lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                                  | <b>22</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br><b>11:30-1:30</b><br><b>Lobster Roll Lunch</b>                      | <b>23</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                 |
| <b>24</b><br>10am Worship<br><br>-----<br><b>31</b><br>10am Worship | <b>25</b><br>6:30 pm<br>ACA Group (for children of alcoholics) meeting in the Heberton Room. | <b>26</b><br>8:30-9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise in Fellowship Hall<br>9:30am—<br>Meditation Group                                         | <b>27</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                       | <b>28</b><br>8:30—9:30am<br>Osteo Exercise<br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Chatham Artists on Lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open                                                  | <b>29</b><br><b>9:30-5:30—</b><br><b>Chatham Guild of Artists on lawn</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open<br><b>11:30-1:30</b><br><b>Last Lobster Roll Lunch for the season</b> | <b>30</b><br><b>9:30-5:30</b><br><b>Last Chatham Guild of Artists showing on the lawn for the season</b><br>11-2<br>Thrift Shop Open |



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