



Prayer Requests?

Email

joysandconcerns@  
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# THE WITNESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1610 PRINCE ST., CONWAY, ARKANSAS, 72034



*The group gathers with builders and families after a day building stoves.*



*The blessing of a new stove.*

## Being the Hands and Feet Group builds stoves for Guatemalan families

By Sarah Coker:

Early on the morning of Jan. 17, a band of missionaries commissioned by Conway First United Methodist Church set out to spread the love of Christ among our brothers and sisters in Guatemala.

Over the next 10 days, the team assisted in changing the lives of 20 families, explored some parts of this beautiful country, grew in fellowship, and found that they received many more blessings than they gave.

Led by FUMC's Bonnie Laycock and her able assistant and husband Steve, the group included Mary Henderson, Mary's sister Carletta Hanks from Illinois, Brad and Cheryl Bennett, Keith and Sarah Coker, Peggy O'Reilly from St. Joseph Catholic Church in Conway, and Cathy Gill from Kellar

United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

A bit of background — Many Mayan families in rural Guatemala live in very simple huts, perhaps two or three structures grouped together. These structures are often made of rough wood, scraps of sheet metal, or sometimes adobe bricks, with tin roofs. The kitchen hut features an open campfire-type cooking area on the ground or on a slightly raised platform. As there is little ventilation in the hut, smoke quickly fills the cooking area. Lung disease is the leading cause of death among the women of this population, and frequently small children suffer burns.

The solution for these families is a stove built through the guidance of the charity Stove Builders of Guatemala.

These stoves are made from concrete blocks and fire bricks, and they are topped with two cooking planchas surrounded by tile. They are more economical for the families because they use two-thirds less fire wood than the traditional fires. Most importantly, the stoves feature a concrete chimney that vents the smoke out of the small building.

Families for whom the stoves were built were selected by Guatemalan social workers prior to the trip. The cost of materials was contributed by donations from the Stove Builders organization, and the families themselves contributed the cost of labor. Trained builders from Guatemala led each build, assisted by a team of two or three missionaries.

See **STOVES** on Page 2

## Confirmation Class of 2026

Thirteen seventh-graders were confirmed in the faith on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026. They are (front row, from left) Eva Jolley, Vivian Oden, Riley Mulhearn, Abel Lemmer, Vivian Fritz, Griffin Gatlin and Owen Gaines; and (back row, from left) Sam Epps, Bella Lyon, Lila Yoder, Eli Smittle, Cale Koen and Rhett Gass.

### STOVES from Page 1

The team's unskilled labor included soaking bricks, mixing concrete, and applying mortar. Family members at each site also contributed labor, and they usually provided simple but very welcome snacks for the teams. Each builder and team completed one stove per day over five days, for a total of 20 stoves for 20 families.

In addition to aiding the stove builders, team members formed relationships with the families. Gifts brought for the children included jump ropes, coloring books, crayons, bubbles, and tic tac toe games. Each family also received Spanish-language children's books. As the presence of books in these homes is quite rare, this was an especially welcome and valued gift. Though there was certainly a language barrier between missionaries and families, there was no barrier in the laughter and smiles.

At the completion of each build, the building team and family members gathered around the new stove for a blessing. A team member or the builder offered a prayer of thanks and blessing while all laid a hand on the beautiful tile top of the new stove. The "mama" of the family was then presented with a cloth tote bag of gifts. Items inside included a wooden spoon, a pot holder, a sewing kit, several toiletry items, and a kitchen towel featuring a hand-embroidered cross and flame logo.

The team stayed in a hotel in the city of Quetzaltenango, also known as Xela. They traveled each workday to homes near the village of Momostenango, where the families lived. The team enjoyed a few days of tourism at the end of the trip, including visits to Panajachel, San Juan, and Santiago on Lake Atitlan, and an afternoon in Antigua.

One particular highlight of the trip was a morning spent in conversation with Lourdes Mroczka (the UMC Advance Missionary of Volunteers in Mission, Guatemala), Pastor Mario Mardoqueo Chanchavac, and Pastor Alejo Avila



*The mission team enjoys their first meal in Guatemala.*

(President and Vice President, respectively, of the Board of the Primitive Methodist National Evangelical Church of Guatemala). The Stove Builders team shared the value of their work, then heard about other exciting work going on to help the people of Guatemala. Pastor Chanchavac ended the session with a prayer in Quiché, his native Mayan language.

If you would like more information about the trip, take a look at the Stove Builders of Guatemala website at [www.stovebuildersofguatemala.com](http://www.stovebuildersofguatemala.com) or ask any of the team members.

Team members would especially like to thank those who donated gifts for the families, including Conway FUMC United Women in Faith, Jamie Byrd and Mariana Linck of Conway FUMC, Mary Cave of Omaha, Neb., and members of the congregations of Beebe First United Methodist Church, Kellar United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, and Dorrisville Baptist Church in Dorrisville, Ill.



# Conway First United Methodist Church

**SUNDAY, MARCH 29**

**Palm Sunday worship**  
8:30 & 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary  
9:05 a.m. in the Great Hall

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2**

**In-person worship with communion**  
6:30 p.m. in the Great Hall

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

**Good Friday Worship**  
6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

**EASTER**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 5**

**In-Person worship:**  
8:30 & 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary  
9:05 a.m. in the Great Hall

Live-streaming online at 9:05 and 11 a.m.  
Facebook and YouTube

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**

**Easter Egg Hunt**  
10 a.m. on the church grounds



## A JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK

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## Noonday Prayer on Friday in Lent

Feb. 20 and 27                      12:10 p.m. in the  
March 6, 13, 20 and 27            Sanctuary

Friday Noonday Prayer will center upon a spiritual exercise, providing an opportunity to gather together in community prayerfully to contemplate each exercise. The services will last approximately 30 to 40 minutes, and include a brief lesson from Scripture, the recitation of Psalm 11, and one congregational hymn.

## Practicing Hope in Today's World

8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 7, Fellowship Hall

Enjoy pastries and drinks when you arrive

Please bring a salad to share at our potluck lunch

"Practicing Hope" is the theme of our United Women in Faith Mission Study for 2026.

How do we find "hope" when our world seems to be in such disarray? What do we do when hope seems hard to find? What is hope in the face of neofascism? What is hope in a time of genocide? How do we imagine a future for the next generation as our planet grows hotter by the season? What tools do we have to face these hard realities? How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall?

Join us as we are led by Rev. Chad Hornsby, our own Pastor Miranda Hornsby's husband, as he leads us in this very timely study.



United Women in Faith

## MIDWEEK

### Schedule for March and April

Wednesday, March 4, 11 and 18 – Regular schedule.

Wednesday, March 25 – No MidWeek due to Spring Break.

Wednesday, April 1 – No MidWeek due to Holy Week.

Wednesday, April 8, 15 and 22 – Regular schedule.

Dinner at 6 p.m. Bible studies and activities for all ages.

Text "join"

to 833-935-8645  
to be added to our churchwide text system

Check out our Link Tree list of sign up forms and volunteer opportunities by scanning the QR Code

Linktree\*



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## In Honor & Memory

**In memory of JoNell Plafcan by:** Constance Copley

**In memory of Richard Porter by:** Jeremy Bruner

**In memory of Bob & Armilda McCormack by:** Scott &  
Teresa Harrington

**In memory of Dr. William Wells by:** Richard & Carol Clark

**In memory of Sue Kell by:** Mark & Mary Helen Mills

**In memory of Bud & Sue Hines by:** Libba Tierney

**In memory of Joe Kelley by:** Kathy & Chris Cooper

**In memory of Paul Taber by:** Jean Granger, Vonda  
Cummins

**In honor of Brenda Porter by:** Jeremy Bruner

**In honor of Kish Jones by:** Charles Pittman

**In honor of Dottie Patterson by:** Zettie Caudle, J.D. & Janet  
Gingerich, Sharon Thompson, Thea Spatz

# NOW HIRING !

Interested in joining our amazing team at Conway  
First United Methodist Church?  
Take a look at our available job postings and apply!

- Director of Ministries With  
Children and Families



Check us out at <https://conwayfumc.org/job-postings/>

## First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor -- Nathan Kilbourne  
Associate Pastor -- Miranda Hornsby  
Director, Youth Ministries -- Zach Schrick  
Director, MidYouth Ministries -- Christy Lemmer  
Campus Dir., Wesley Foundation -- Amy Shores  
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries -- Jason Saugey  
Assoc. Dir., Music (Praise Band) -- Stuart Holt

Assoc. Dir., Music (Children) -- Linda Ball  
Nursery Coordinator -- Cara Rucker  
Bookkeeper -- Libby Conder  
Supervisor, Hospitality Ministries -- Ed Spears  
Custodian -- Tim Tarpley  
Financial Assistant -- Laura Bounds  
Communications Assistant -- Colleen Holt

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES:  
8:30 & 11 A.M. - SANCTUARY  
9:05 A.M. - GREAT HALL  
LIVE-STREAMING AT 9:05 & 11 A.M.:  
[WWW.CONWAYFUMC.ORG](http://WWW.CONWAYFUMC.ORG)  
[FACEBOOK.COM/CONWAYFIRSTUMC](https://FACEBOOK.COM/CONWAYFIRSTUMC)  
OR YOUTUBE: @CONWAYFUMC