

Lake Deaton HAPPENINGS!

The Official Newsletter of Lake Deaton United Methodist Church



Highlight

A Thank You Letter:
p. 08

Top Story

A Journey of Purpose:
p. 06

May 2026 | Issue 55

www.lakedeatonumc.com

PASTOR'S CORNER

Which Hat do I Need?

Women—we are wonderfully unique, each one created with care and purpose...

Some days we love one outfit, and the next day... not so much. One moment, we feel we must wear those shoes; a few hours later, it's a completely different pair. We move everything into one purse, only to switch it all into another. Why? Because that purse just feels right with this outfit and those shoes. For many of us, that's part of the simple joy of being creative and expressive. For others, it may feel like a chore—and that's alright, too.

What about hats? We have one for sunny days, one for rainy days, and one for when it's just plain cold. Then comes the question... is it the right color? Does it match the shoes? Truly, how do we manage it all?...

By God's grace, we do—and we do it well!



We often hear that a woman's life can be compared to the many "hats" she wears. Over the years, we have worn many—daughter, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and dear friend. Each role has come in its season, some more natural than others. Yet, through it all, the Lord has faithfully equipped us for each one.

I must admit, I sometimes feel like I am a better grandmother than I was a mother. My answer to my grandchildren is often, "Sure, why not? Of course, you don't need a nap right now!" (Ha ha.) But in truth, every season has shaped us. Each role has stretched us, taught us, and drawn us closer to the Lord. We may find ourselves praying with a niece or nephew, offering gentle guidance to an adult child, or simply sitting beside a friend who needs a listening ear. One lesson that becomes clearer with time is the value of humility—of keeping a teachable spirit. While some seem to move effortlessly between life's roles, others find it takes more intention. Even so, we can choose to approach each day with a willing heart. As Proverbs 18:15 reminds us, "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out." What a blessing to know we are never too old to grow in wisdom, never beyond learning, and never finished being shaped by God.

As we continue this journey, may we seek His wisdom daily—wisdom that helps us love well, extend grace freely, and walk humbly with one another. Not striving to always be "right," but desiring to be Christlike in all we do. This month, as we reflect on the women who have touched our lives, may our hearts be filled with gratitude. And as we move forward, may we do so with joy, faithfully wearing whatever "hats" God has placed before us. May you be filled with His love, His peace, and His abiding joy.

Leida

Grow Night Continues!

CLASSES

Wednesday, May 6: "Spring GROW Special Celebration." Click [HERE](#) to register.

Marking the "Coleman Oaks Thrift Shop One Year Anniversary."

Dinner is at 4:45pm - Cost is \$12 - Menu: Homemade lasagna, veggies, garlic bread and dessert.

The program begins at 5:30pm.

THE SENIOR CHALLENGE SERIES

- o Organize your understanding of retirement challenges and renew your enthusiasm. Click [HERE](#) to sign up.
- o **"How to Move Forward without your Mate"**
- o Facilitator: Bob Jorden
- o **Wednesday, May 13, 5:30pm - 6:30pm in Classroom 1.**

HOW TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES AT LDUMC

- o A walking tour to locate emergency equipment (AEDs, First Aid, Fire Alarms) and discuss emergency preparedness. Click [HERE](#) to sign up.
- o Facilitator: Paula Labonte
- o **Wednesday, May 20, 3:30pm - 4:30pm (gather in Church Lobby).**

TINY HANDS, FULL HEARTS

On March 25, 2026 our family welcomed Nina, and with her arrival, life has become both fuller and beautifully unpredictable. We are deeply grateful for the gift of her life and for the many prayers, messages, and kindnesses we have received from this church family. In the pictures we're sharing, you'll see a few honest glimpses of these early days—Luna and Nina wide-eyed together, already learning what it means to be sisters; Thais holding both girls with the quiet strength (and visible exhaustion) of a new mother; Nina asleep in the peaceful stillness that newborns somehow carry; and one of me, trying to look composed, but clearly running on very little sleep.

April has been a time of stepping away from the usual rhythm of ministry to be present at home. I've been on parental leave, learning again the sacred, humbling work of caring for a newborn—nights that blur into mornings, routines that shift daily, and moments of joy that make the tiredness worth it. As we move into May, I will begin returning gradually, easing back into responsibilities while still holding space for this important season with our family.

We ask for your continued prayers—for strength and rest in these early months, and especially for Luna, as she navigates this transition into life as a big sister. She is doing beautifully, but like any child, she is learning what it means to share attention, space, and love in new ways. We trust that, with time and grace, this will become a source of deep joy for her. Thank you for walking with us in this season—with your prayers, your encouragement, and your understanding.

Lucas 



A WILDLY WONDERFUL EVENING: JUNGLE SAFARI DINNER CELEBRATION

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our unforgettable Jungle Safari Dinner in honor of our incredible volunteers! The evening was filled with laughter, energy, and a true sense of appreciation for the people who give so much of their time and heart.

We hope everyone had a fantastic time stepping into the safari spirit. From the moment guests arrived, the atmosphere was vibrant and immersive. The creative decorations transformed the space, and our talented photographers captured so many amazing moments that we'll treasure for a long time.

A special thank you goes out to our dedicated staff. Your hard work behind the scenes made this event seamless and truly special.

The night wouldn't have been the same without our brave volunteers who took to the dance floor and fully embraced the fun with their incredible safari costumes. You brought the theme to life! Congratulations to all of our winners, including those recognized for Best Safari Costume, Best Dancer, and the table that impressed us all with the most correct trivia answers.

And of course, we can't forget the food—absolutely delicious! The unique setup, with sandwiches beautifully displayed at the center of each table, added a fun and interactive touch that everyone enjoyed.

It was truly a night full of fun, connection, and celebration. If you'd like to relive the memories, be sure to click the "We Love Our Volunteers" button below and visit our website's blog page to view all the fantastic photos from the evening.

We Love Our Volunteers

Thank you again for being part of such a special event—we can't wait to see you at the next one!



Visit our website's Blog page to view all the images at:
<https://www.lakedeatnumc.com/blog>

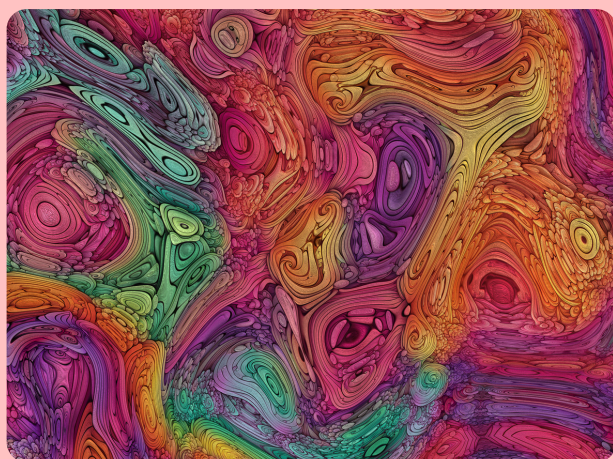


GRIEF SHARE

Thursdays through June 4

For those who are walking the journey of grief either recently or feel they need some help, we want to tell you we are here for you.

Lake Deaton continues to host Grief Share sessions through June 4 at 1:30pm in CR 5/6. It will be helpful to commit to at least three sessions. All are welcome whether you attend Lake Deaton or not. If you have a friend that has had a recent loss, invite them to come. Books can be purchased for \$15, and if the cost is prohibitive, please let the church office know.



HEALING PRAYER SERVICE

Every third Tuesday of the month.

Our next service will be on:

Tuesday, May 19 at 4:00pm in CR 1

“MASTERPIECE”

Who are you in Christ?

Discover some of the qualities that God claims for you.

“For we are God’s masterpiece.” ~Ephesians 2:10a

COFFEE AT THE LAKE WITH PASTOR JIM DIVINE - APRIL 2026



A JOURNEY OF PURPOSE: HOW JULIEÄNNÄ AND KEN FOUND THEIR CALLING:

By Maria Arias

We Love Our Volunteers!

Wherever you see JulieÄnnä, you're likely to find her husband, Ken, close by—serving at events, helping in the kitchen, supporting ERT efforts, or stepping in wherever an extra hand is needed. Together, they have become a familiar and faithful presence in the life of LDUMC.

Their journey to the church began in February 2014, when friends from their hometown of Erie, Pennsylvania—Debbie and Mark Mancos—invited them to visit while they were in the area. At the time, JulieÄnnä and Ken were winter residents, staying only four months each year. Curious, they attended a service held in a recreation center, unaware that this simple invitation would mark the beginning of a lasting connection. During that first season, JulieÄnnä even joined what was then a one-person praise team.

For a time, the couple continued their travels across the South, never lingering too long in one place. Along the way, they found themselves quietly asking, "Is this all there is?" The answer came in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In the face of devastation, they discovered a deeper calling—one rooted not just in movement, but in meaning. They realized they weren't simply seeking sunshine; they were searching for purpose.

What began as occasional volunteer work soon became a defining part of their lives. From Moss Point to

Galveston to Tuscaloosa, disaster recovery efforts shaped their path and their identity. With a touch of humor, they were affectionately known as "disaster recovery junkies" and "nomads," following the need wherever it led. It wasn't the chaos that drew them in—it was the hope they witnessed when someone showed up to help.



Eventually, JulieÄnnä and Ken traded their motorhome for a permanent home in The Villages, drawn by the opportunity to stay active and engaged. After joining LDUMC, they became part of a small group led by the Eylers. It was there that a pivotal moment occurred. During a visit, Pastor Jim asked each person to share their previous career. When JulieÄnnä mentioned her experience as an event coordinator for a Fortune 500 company in Houston, he immediately saw an opportunity. With calendar in hand, he set a meeting for the very next morning—and the rest is history. That conversation led JulieÄnnä to step fully into her role as the church's



Event Coordinator, a position she continues to fill with energy and enthusiasm. (Just ask the Journeymen, who jokingly advise others not to make eye contact if they want to avoid being recruited!)

Beyond her many contributions to church life, JulieÄnnä is also a creative spirit. She has published eleven poems and is currently working on three books. In her spare time, she enjoys oil painting, quilting, traveling, and writing. She is the proud mother of two children, Tim and Karen, and grandmother to three beloved grand-puppies.

As you move about the church, you're almost certain to encounter JulieÄnnä's warm smile and willingness to help. Be sure to stop by the office to say hello—or better yet, consider volunteering for one of the many events she so passionately brings to life.



"Don't Make Eye Contact... Unless you Want to Volunteer!"

BLOOM BOOK CLUB

Join us for our next Book reading... **we meet the third Monday of each month (May 18) at 10:30am in CR 2.** All are welcome!

Contact Mary Kay Fritts at mkfritts63@gmail.com.



CARD MAKING CLASS

Our next scheduled class will be, **Wednesday, May 6.** The Card Making Ministry meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 1:00pm to 3:00pm in CR 4. Come and be part of an amazing group! Contact: Teresa: tnburgesse@comcast.net or Kathy: kmskatrina@hotmail.com

BLOOM LUNCH BUNCH - TUESDAY, MAY 19

Come out and socialize at our next **Lunch Bunch event of 2026 on Tuesday, May 19 from 1:00pm to 3:30pm at Belle Glade Country Club.** Order from their menu and pay for your meal. You are responsible for your own transportation. Save-the-dates for our next BLOOM Lunch Bunch events: Tuesdays - June 16, July 21, August 18 and September 15. RSVP to Suzi McGinnis at: mnsmcginnis@gmail.com.

STYLE WITH A PURPOSE: HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL FASHION SHOW

Last month, the women of Lake Deaton UMC gathered for a truly special occasion—"The Most Beautiful One," our Annual Fashion Show benefiting Coleman Oaks Thrift Store and Coffee Shop. Held on Tuesday, April 14, the event brought together fashion, friendship, and a shared spirit of generosity.

From the moment guests arrived, there was a joyful energy in the room. Attendees were treated to a delightful lunch featuring Chef John's homemade lasagna, Italian vegetables, garlic bread, and a crowd-favorite peach cobbler. Whether enjoying the delicious meal or bringing their own lunch, everyone shared in a warm atmosphere filled with laughter and connection.

The highlight of the day was, of course, the fashion show itself. Beautiful outfits—many sourced from our very own Coleman Oaks—were modeled with confidence and charm, inspiring everyone to see the value and style that can be found right within our community. The event was more than just a showcase of clothing; it was a reminder that beauty comes in many forms, especially when paired with purpose.

Guests also enjoyed fellowship, fun surprises, and prizes, making the afternoon both lively and meaningful. Many attendees brought donations to support Coleman Oaks, helping ensure that the thrift store and coffee shop can continue serving others in the community.

The Most Beautiful One was not just about fashion—it was about coming together, supporting a meaningful mission, and celebrating the beauty of giving. Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, and contributed to making this event such a success, especially our amazing models!



Click [HERE](#) to visit our Blog Page and view all the images.



EARLY RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING CLASS (ERT)

**Saturday, May 9th - 8:30 to 4:30pm in CR 5/6
(Lunch will be provided.)**

The Early Response Team assists homeowners whose homes have sustained damage from storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. The Team is predominantly dispatched to areas in Florida. The class will provide attendees with training and certification so they will be able to be deployed during the next disaster response.

Please contact Jim Hull at: Jimdiane2015@comcast.net or 616.218.2571 to register for the class or with any questions.



ERT is in need of volunteers to do dry walling. Please contact Jim Hull at 616-218-2571.

A THANK YOU LETTER...

Dear Jan and Volunteers,

From Gladys and Karen to the Sonrise Respite Team: 4/5/26

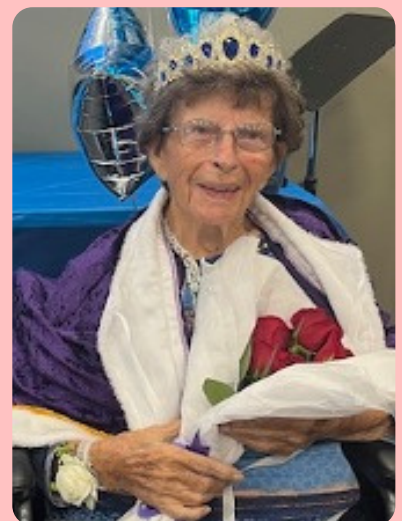
My mom, Gladys, and I have been privileged to be a part of the wonderful Sonrise family for the past 4+ years. Sonrise is called a respite program, but it is so much more. My mom has always called it her Sunshine Club, which is true! Every Monday upon arrival, she was welcomed with smiles and warm greetings making her feel like an honored guest.

Each week was full of creativity with fun and unique themes and lovely decorations. She always enjoyed the delicious meals and exciting entertainment. The Christmas party was always a special and heartwarming event. Fortunately, we have our treasured photo albums so we can remember all the wonderful moments we have shared. Also, providing a caregiver support group is a priceless service for an often overwhelmed family member. Having a one-to-one volunteer to participant ratio is essential. Ellen and Gayle were her "partners" for all four years. They are now our dear and cherished friends.

I need to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you for the incredible care and support you provided each week. Your kindness and patience brought comfort to both my mom and me. She felt accepted as she was, since you treat each participant with respect and dignity. Knowing that my mom was in a safe, understanding and compassionate environment gave me peace of mind while I enjoyed some free time. Your warmth and dedication create a place where people feel valued and protected. Your Christian love shines through as you consistently put "feet on your faith".

We love you,

Karen and Gladys



WE NEED YOU ON THE TEAM

GRAPHICS • CAMERAS • STAGE CREW
EASY TO LEARN. REAL IMPACT.

Help everyone see and hear the message clearly.
No experience needed — we'll guide you step-by-step.

JOIN THE A/V TEAM

Contact SDecanio@LakeDeatonUMC.com or Church Office
Come sit with us this Sunday — no pressure.

Save the Date & Pack A Snack!

- Bring a Shelf Stable Snack (ie: granola bars, pudding cups, fruit snacks) For Sumter County Schools
- Receive A Fill Up Bag That Will Save You \$ Here Throughout The Year!

Date May 2, 2026 10-4
Location Coleman Oaks Thrift Store
130 S. Commercial St.

Clothing Sale!
Fill Up Our Bag For Just \$5!

How Can You Help Coleman Oaks?

Click Here For Our Amazon Wishlist

We Can Always Use Gift Cards To Sprouts or Sam's Too!



Looking for a way to shine your light at Lake Deaton UMC?

Love working on the computer? We're looking for someone to create a weekly slide deck of the scheduled activities at Lake Deaton. This could be as simple or as fancy, as you'd like to make it. If interested, please contact Kari Diaz at: kdiaz@lakedeatonumc.com.

"HOW TO READ MUSIC"
Wednesday, May 6
10:00am and 3:00pm
In Choir Room - CR 3

Have you ever wanted to learn how to read music or improve your singing skills? Here's your chance! Join us for a fun and easy one-hour class, "How To Read Music," where you'll learn the basic steps to reading music in a simple and approachable way. No prior experience is needed—this class is designed for anyone who wants to get started! If you've been thinking about joining our Celebration Choir (which meets every Thursday at 4:00pm), this class is the perfect place to begin! Come discover how easy and enjoyable learning music can be—we'd love to have you join us! Contact Kenn Mann for details at: kmann@lakedeatonumc.com.

MINISTRY FAIR

Featuring Connections, Men's, Kitchen, Residing Hope and Stephen Ministries

May 2 & 3 - Before and After Services



Lake Deaton UMC will once again be celebrating the many ministries that our church family participates in and supports. This upcoming MINI-MINISTRY FAIR will showcase the Connections, Men's, Kitchen, Residing Hope and Stephen's Ministries. **Join us before and after services on Saturday, May 2nd and Sunday, May 3rd.** This is a great way to learn more about Lake Deaton, get better acquainted with your Lake Deaton family and also to find a really "great fit" for your considerable talents and gifts.

If you are a Ministry Team Leader looking for volunteers or wanting to build more awareness of your specific Ministry, this is an ideal opportunity for you as well! See you at the fair!

JOIN OUR CRICUT CLASS AND UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY!

Ready to master your Cricut and unlock its full potential? Dive into the wonderful world of crafting with our engaging Cricut Class! We'll explore all the amazing things your machine can do, from intricate designs to personalized projects.



Wednesdays, May 6 - May 27
2:00pm - 3:30pm in CR 5/6

Come join us and expand your crafting horizons!
We can't wait to see what you create!

Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

SINGLES/SOLOS GROUP

The Singles/Solos will meet on **Thursday, May 21, at 5:00pm in CR 5/6** to hear a presentation by Deborah Wolkhamer regarding in-home support which would allow seniors to remain in their homes. Please invite anyone you feel would benefit from hearing about this program.

For questions, text Liz Schweers
850-247-9489

ONGOING CLASS WITH THE PASTORS

Join Pastor Jim and Pastor Loida in our Ongoing Journey through the New Testament. Read five chapters a week and join us for fun discussion. All are welcome!

Pastor Jim: Tuesdays, 8:00am in CR 1

Pastor Loida, Thursdays, 2:00pm in CR 1

NEW STAFF AT LAKE DEATON UMC



We're thrilled to introduce the newest member of our team! Please join us in ex-tending a very warm welcome to Lawrence Benn, our new Facility Tech. Lawrence officially joined us on Friday, March 27th, and will be a familiar face around Lake Deaton on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. He's stepping into a crucial role, helping to ensure our facilities continue to run smoothly, especially over the weekends. If you see him around, please take a moment to say hello.

Welcome Lawrence!

Grow with Us in 2026!



Lake Deaton

United Methodist Church

Saturdays at 5:00 PM
(with translation for the Hearing Impaired.)

Sundays at 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM

6500 Wesleyan Way, Wildwood, FL 34785

Tel: 352-571-4665

info@lakedeatonumc.com

Office Hours: Mon-Thur: 9 to 4:30 & Fri: 9 to 1 PM

www.lakedeatonumc.com

2026 MAY

Worship Services:
Saturdays at 5:00pm | Sundays at 9:00am & 10:45am

Happy Mother's Day!

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

READ: Luke 21-24; Acts 1

					1	2 Thrift Store "Gift of Snacks" 10am to 4pm (at the Thrift Store) Ministry Fair (before & after service)
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READ: Acts 2-6

3 Ministry Fair (before and after services) Discover Lake Deaton: after service in CR 1	4	5	6 GROW Night - Thrift Store Anniversary 4:45pm - CLC. Cricut Class 2pm in CR5/6	7 Grief Share - 1:30pm in CR5/6	8	9 ERT Training 8:30am-4:30pm in CR 5/6 Prayer Bees - after service
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READ: Acts 7-11

10 <i>Mother's Day</i> Prayer Bees - Need prayer? After service stay seated.	11	12	13 Cricut Class 2pm in CR5/6	14 Grief Share - 1:30pm in CR5/6	15	16
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READ: Acts 12-16

17	18	19 Bloom Lunch Bunch - 1 to 3pm at Belle Glade CC Healing Prayer - 4pm in CR 1	20 Cricut Class 2pm in CR5/6	21 Grief Share 1:30pm in CR5/6	22	23
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READ: Acts 17-21

24 Pentecost (wear red) <hr/> 31 Fifth Sunday	25 Memorial Day - Church Office Closed.	26	27 Cricut Class 2pm in CR5/6	28 Grief Share 1:30pm in CR5/6	29	30
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Sports & Recreations - For Details Visit www.lakedeatonumc.com/recreation

Mondays:

- Cardio Drumming - 8:30am
- Women's Golf - 9am
(except 5th Monday)
- Bone Builders - 10am

Tuesdays:

- Cardio Drumming - 5:30pm (except 2nd
Tuesday of every month)
- Pickleball - 7:30am (CE), 9:30am (W) and
12:30pm (Adv Beg)
- Walk Away the Pounds - 3pm
- Nine & Dine Golf - 5:00pm

Thursdays:

- Line Dancing - 1:30pm
(CE)
- Pickleball - 4:30pm (CE)

Fridays:

- Pickleball - 7:30am (CE)