

HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Rev. Marie C. King, Chairperson

Health and Wellness Initiatives of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church shall provide resources and educational opportunities for support and engagement of health initiatives which are holistic (focused on the whole-person) and therefore multifaceted.

The Health and Wellness Initiatives Committee recognizes that individual, local, regional, and global healthcare concerns are multifaceted: physical, mental, spiritual, environmental, financial, and political, which requires advocacy for equity, justice, human, and socio-economic rights. The ministry work for Health and Wellness Initiatives is also guided by the expressed ministry and outreach needs of the TWKUMC and the Social Principles 2020 of the General Board of Church and Society (<https://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/social-principles-2020-607>).

Health and Wellness Initiatives co-hosted with Scarritt Bennett Center and Steal Away Women, a Holiday Blues and Jazz Worship Service and resources event. This worship service focused on healing and resources for individuals and communities facing holiday blues and depression. Music for the worship service was from the blues and jazz genre. Mental health agencies and organizations, state and national, were present onsite to provide resources for the in-person audience. Links were shared for the virtual audience on Facebook and YouTube in real-time. Some attendees came to the worship service specifically seeking assistance for mental health because of depression and PTSD. The combined in-person and virtual attendance was around 150.

We provide resources for overall healthcare concerns by sharing connections to individuals, agencies, organizations, website links, and communication resources that are also shared on the TWKUMC website. Our primary focus has been resources for mental health, depression, and suicide prevention. We have also shared resources and information for National Family Caregiver Month and Mental Health America.

Our team has partnered with Steal Away Women, a ministry founded to focus on wholeness and well-being for women through being refreshed, restored, and renewed. Workshops and retreats were provided in 2021 for women (clergy and laity), United Methodist and ecumenical.

Our team has contributed to providing resources for updates on COVID-19, COVID variants, and the COVID vaccine. Three members of the committee have participated in the focus group to design the *Guidelines for Churches During COVID-19*.

We continue to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to be flexible to the needs of the community we are called to serve. As members of the body of Christ, as Christian ministers, we are called to use our God-given gifts to teach, preach, and heal. As members of The United Methodist Church, we seek to, "Do all the good we can, by all the means we can, in all the ways we can, in all the places we can, at all the times we can, to all the people we can, as long as ever we can." We pray that in doing so, the ministry of Health and Wellness will make disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marie C. King, Pastor, Health and Wellness Initiatives chairperson

Michael Rashon Atkins, educator

Dr. Carlenda Smith, consultant

Rev. Dr. Paula Smith, pastor

Rev. Dr. Vona Wilson, pastor

Rev. Micah Myers, pastor

Rev. Timothy Holton, pastor

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Davis, district superintendent

Joshua Shaw, event and community outreach coordinator

Whitney Simpson, deaconess and author