

TWK Health and Wellness Initiatives Report

The Health and Wellness Initiatives Committee of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church shall provide resources and educational opportunities for support and engagement of health initiatives that 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 the Health and Wellness Initiatives Committee is also guided by the expressed ministry and outreach needs of the TWKUMC and the *Social Principles 2020 Guidelines* of the General Board of Church and Society (<https://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/social-principles-2020-607>)

We provide resources and connections to resources for overall healthcare concerns by sharing contact information for 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 Tennessee Respite Care, National Family Caregiver Month, Mental Health America, Abundant Health, and Heal the Sick Program with Wesley Theological Seminary.

The Health and Wellness Initiatives co-hosted with Scarritt Bennett Center an event focusing on mental wellness, the 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 genres. Local artists provided the music, poetry, spoken word, and visual art. Mental Health agencies and organizations were present on-site to provide resources for the in-person audience. Links were shared for the virtual audience on Facebook and YouTube in realtime. The combined in-person and virtual attendance was one-hundred and ninety-four (194). The Holiday Blues and Jazz format was designed for a capstone project by Rev. Marie C. King.

Members of our team contribute to the collaborative efforts of the Mental Health Cohort for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference by considering options and opportunities that may be available for clergy and laity.

We continue to follow the lead 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. We pray that in doing so, the ministry of Health and Wellness will not only provide resources for healing but also, in our witness, make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Marie C. King, Pastor, Health and Wellness Initiatives Chairperson
Mr. Michael Rashon Atkins, Educator
Rev. Dr. Paula Smith, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Vona Wilson, Pastor
Rev. Micah Myers, Pastor
Rev. Timothy Holton, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Cynthia Davis, Retired Pastor
Ms. Whitney Simpson, Deaconess and Author
Dr. Carlenda Smith, MD (consultant)
Mr. Joshua Shaw, Event and Community Outreach Coordinator (consultant)