

Fellowship Focus

Close to Our Hearts

Stephen D. Bryant, Publisher, The Upper Room

I'm writing this in late March, while "sheltering in place" and unsettled about what will happen in the next few weeks.



We at The Upper Room are holding you close to our hearts, more than ever. You are our family, connected through Christ; and we care deeply about your

wellbeing. In the midst of this frightening time of pandemic and economic slowdown, remember we are not alone. The Good Shepherd, the Risen Christ, is with us, safely guiding us through this difficult season.

Eighty-five years ago, *The Upper Room* came into being in response to

the devastating impact of the Great Depression on people and families across America. The history of our birth reminds me of how the Church has always shined brightest through crises. I truly believe that we as the body of Christ are called today in service to reach out to those who suffer illness, isolation, and spiritual loneliness due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is my prayer that we may live from our faith in God's presence, not from our fear of the unknown. Your spiritual wellbeing—the vitality that stems from our connection with God and others—is the focus of our daily intercession

and work at The Upper Room, which continues to carry on, albeit remotely. I hope you will make time for the resources below, specially compiled for spiritual care during this current crisis.

Let us never forget that we are the Easter people and that our hope is in the Risen Christ. Let us say it together: **Alleluia. Christ is risen! Christ has risen indeed!**



Resources for Spiritual Wellness

The Upper Room has created a webpage of resources to help us deal with the fear and anxiety we are experiencing during the COVID-19 crisis: upperroom.org/covid-19.

Offerings include a 30-day free trial of the daily devotional and a free e-course, "Freedom from Worry." In addition, we invite you to join us live on Facebook each day at 11 a.m. (Central Time) for Morning Prayer to be led by one of our staff members: [facebook.com/UpperRoomCenter](https://www.facebook.com/UpperRoomCenter).



"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. . . . only to take it up again."

John 10:11, 17b, NIV

See the Impact of Your Good

Your support of The Upper Room—and, in particular, of its international ed

HUNGARY



An Unforeseen Dream

"As a child, I never thought I would be spreading the good news of God by being a translator of The Upper Room. I am absolutely convinced that this tiny book helps families, friends, and others come closer to God through people's everyday experiences."

— Kovács-Csapó Anikó, a translator of *Csendes Percek*, the Hungarian edition of *The Upper Room*

INDIA



Connected as the Body of Christ

"My wife and I are encouraged to know that we are a part of the universal body of Christ, which not only meditates together but also prays for one another."

— Ruel Masih, reader of *Dhyhan Kutir*, the Hindi edition of *The Upper Room*

GREECE



A Source of Encouragement

"Epiousios Artos, the Greek edition of The Upper Room, is a source of tremendous encouragement and a unique opportunity for people to be reminded that God has not forsaken them."

— Rev. Fotis Romeos, editor of *Epiousios Artos*

NEPAL



Bringing Family Together

I have been reading Mathillo Kotha, the Nepali edition of The Upper Room, for two-three years; and it has helped me to grow in my faith. It has also brought my family together in fellowship."

— Sabita, reader of *Mathillo Kotha*

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Spotlight shines on the Spanish edition



In January, *Hoy (Today)*, one of the most prominent newspapers in the Dominican Republic, interviewed Jorge Berríos, the managing editor of *El Aposento Alto*, the Spanish edition of *The Upper Room*. In the interview, Jorge talked about the mission and contributions of the magazine, which is celebrating 40 years of publication in the Dominican.

We are proud that *Hoy* interviewed Jorge and recognized the valuable ministry of *El Aposento Alto*. When you give to the international editions of *The Upper Room*, you help support the ministry of *El Aposento Alto* in Spanish-speaking countries.



Jorge Berríos

12,500

copies of *El Aposento Alto* are printed per issue in the Dominican.

will Around the World

itions—is helping to make God’s love known to people everywhere.

The Kiswahili edition

An Interview with Judith Osanga Yanga, Director of Communications for the East Congo UMC Publishing Team

What is your hope for this new edition of *The Upper Room*?

This is the first time we have had *The Upper Room* in the eastern Congo, and it is a great ministry opportunity for our episcopal area.

What challenges have you faced in starting the Kiswahili edition?

Our number one challenge is that many people in the eastern Congo cannot read. We also live in a culture in which people want things for free, even if it is sold to them at a modest price as the daily devotional is.

What has been an unexpected joy?

The reach and depth of the prayers. Some pastors use the prayers in *The Upper Room* for their weekly services. Others use them as a part of the morning devotion on a local radio station. One pastor reflected on how it was meaningful to know that people from the Congo and beyond were praying for him.



Judith at a recent UMC conference in Nashville, TN

What can you tell us about the translation and distribution of the Kiswahili edition?

We get *The Upper Room* manuscript in French from Côte d'Ivoire, and it typically takes one-two months to translate. Since we live in a predominately Muslim area, we are creative about distributing the magazine. We give copies to hospitals, prisons, and schools. Pastors also come to our office to buy them.

Because of YOUR generous gifts to The Upper Room, the Kiswahili edition was launched last year! You made this happen.

Thank you!

Year the Kiswahili edition began: 2019

Published: twice a year in two volumes

Circulation: 301

2019 cover of the Kiswahili edition



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



Debbie with mom and family at her daughter's engagement party

Donors Make a Difference

Name: Debbie Boe

City & State: Nolensville, TN

Giving Fund: Fellowship Circle

Year of first gift: 2019

A Californian native, Debbie and her husband moved to the Nashville area to be near their adult daughter. Debbie is the Customer Relations Manager for The Upper Room and believes so much in the organization's work that she quickly became a monthly giver.

Debbie says she gives because

“The Upper Room daily devotional has touched my life and the lives of others with whom I have shared it. Giving to this fund provides me joy in knowing that others will have the same opportunity to experience God’s transforming love.”

Debbie is a friend of the development team, and we were sad to hear that she recently lost her mom. Debbie wanted to share how *The Upper Room* brought her comfort during this difficult time:

“I gave a subscription of The Upper Room to my mom shortly after I started working here. Mom enjoyed reading it, and it gave her daily hope. I usually called her on my way home from work, and many times we would discuss the devotional for the day. After Mom had a massive stroke and was in the ICU, I was kind of angry at God. Reading the daily devotional gave me strength and comfort during this time. I felt as if the devotions written on those days were meant to give me peace.”

The Upper Room invites people to create daily life with God.

To say we are living in uncertain times would be a gross understatement. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our lives in every aspect. Yet throughout centuries, the Church has shined brightest through crises. Today, we have the opportunity to offer people hope, a meaningful way to connect each day with God and others. If you would like to give to the ministries of The Upper Room, please visit UpperRoom.org/gift or call 1-877-899-2781, x7212.

TWENTY THOUSAND *thanks* IN 2020

Last year we had a record-breaking giving year.

8,740 of you gave **\$840,756** to support the ministries of The Upper Room.

To express our love and gratitude for you in a special way, The Upper Room staff is saying "thank you" 20,000 times this year to you, our donors.

EMMAUS MINISTRIES



Between the fall and spring Walk to Emmaus weekends, Emmaus Ministries focuses on leadership development. November 7-10, 2019, the Emmaus Ministries South Africa (EMSA) Annual General Meeting was held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. During this time, 13 communities from South Africa and Swaziland met to discuss business, challenges, and successes. A few days later, the Korean Emmaus Ministries community held its first Leadership Development Event (LDE) at a retreat center near Uijeongbu, South Korea.

The Upper Room covers all its ministry expenses from product sales, participants' fees, interest income, and the generous support of donors. We do not receive any apportionment funds from The United Methodist Church or any other denomination. Donations are needed to help sustain and expand the reach of our ministries so others may experience God more fully.

ACADEMY #42



Academy #42 Leadership Team L to R: Judy Holloway, Marysol Díaz, Rubén Ortiz, Mary Lou Adame, Víctor Pérez

As a part of its vision to help lead the way in forming Christian communities that embrace the multicultural, multiethnic, interfaith landscape of the 21st century, The Academy for Spiritual Formation will offer a Two-Year Bilingual (Spanish + English) Academy—the first since 2011.

Academy #42 begins August 10, 2020, at Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio, TX. Scholarships are available through the Academy Scholarship Fund and ensure a racially, culturally, and economically diverse constituency. If you've given to the Academy Scholarship Fund throughout the years, THANK YOU. If you would like to apply for Academy #42 or give to the scholarship fund, please visit academy.upperroom.org.



The Academy
for spiritual formation®