



Bethany

United Methodist

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2018

PASTORS' REFLECTION

This month's reflection from me is going to be a little different. I wanted to take some time to update you on a matter of importance for the whole United Methodist Church.

Every four years United Methodist's from around the world meet at General Conference. General Conference is the highest legislative body in the UMC and is the only body that can speak for the church. It sets budgets and priorities for churchwide agencies and makes changes to Book of Discipline (BOD).

In 2016 General Conference met in Portland, Oregon. As had happened in conferences past many resolutions related to human sexuality were brought before the body. The BOD states that homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian faith and that the church should not ordain any self-avowed practicing homosexuals. It also forbids UMC Pastors from performing a same-sex wedding. For some, this language is extremely hurtful and for others, this language is simply biblical. It looked like things would again come to a head at General Conference, and there was even fear that a split would occur.

Amid these contentious debates, with more legislation on the issue pending, the delegate body asked the Council of Bishops to lead and come up with a plan on how to move forward. The Bishops met and came back the next day with a plan that tabled all legislation on human sexuality, called for a commission to be set up by the Bishops to study the issue and make recommendations, and for a special session of General Conference to be called to respond to those recommendations. This measure was passed after a very close vote.

After General Conference concluded the Bishops went about the work of setting up the commission called The Commission on the Way Forward. Thirty-two members that represented the diversity of the UMC, in race, location, gender, and theological position were assembled. They have met over the past seventeen months for prayer and discussion.

This past winter three rough plans began to immerge from the commission and were shared with the church as a whole and the Bishops. Those plans were...

- 1) The Traditionalist Plan- The language of the BOD stays the same but there is enhanced consequences for those who break the Discipline (Over the past number of years various pastors, Annual Conferences, and Jurisdictions have at times broken the Discipline and performed same-sex weddings, ordained gay clergy, and consecrated a gay Bishop. Depending on the area, response to these actions has varied. This plan would put an end to those discrepancies.)
- 2) The One Church Plan- The restrictive language in the BOD is removed and Annual Conferences, Clergy, and churches would decide what to do. Annual conferences would decide who they would ordain and clergy would decide who to marry. Those who wanted to ordain and marry LGBTQ persons could and those who did not want to as a matter of conscience would be protected. No one could force anyone. This would be another factor in the appointment process (i.e. the Bishop would not assign and affirming clergy to a church that was not ok with a same-sex wedding).
- 3) The Multi-Church Plan- This would align the Methodist Church into three distinct 'theological' Jurisdictions (Traditional, Moderate, Progressive) with some shared services (perhaps UMCOR, or Pensions, etc.). However, each group would have its own Bishops and Council of Bishops. This would involve a large number of BOD changes and changes to structure and organization.

These plans were shared with the Bishops. They asked questions and reflected on them with Commission members. And after a time of discernment, the Bishops put forth the recommendation of the One Church Plan.

This plan will go before the Special Called General Conference that will happen in February of 2019. There will also be any other plans or legislation that is "in harmony" with the purpose of this General Conference (that could be one of the other plans or perhaps a totally different plan, but they must be dealing with how to handle this issue).

There are still many questions. At the point of me writing this, we have not seen the official plan that will go before the delegates. We have also not seen the completed report from the Commission on the Way Forward. Due to the global nature of the church, it was decided to wait to release everything until it could be translated into the various languages of the UMC. That should be completed on or around July 8, 2018.

The Bishops have invited everyone to be in prayer for this process. Each day between the times 2:23 and 2:26 please pray for this Special General Conference (it is meeting Feb 23-26, that is why those particular times).

My goal in writing all of this is to keep you informed. You may have questions, so please reach out to me if you do. I will continue to pass along information as I get it. There will also be a time this fall on September 27 from 6:30-8:00 to meet with the Bishop in a town hall setting to discuss concerns and questions.

Again please do not hesitate to ask questions or share concerns. And please be in prayer about this process and the future of the United Methodist Church.

July Worship

Sunday, July 1, 2018- Mark 5:21-43 "Belief and Unbelief"

Sunday, July 8, 2018- 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 "Weakness"

Sunday, July 15, 2018- VBS Sunday

Sunday, July 22, 2018- Guest Speaker- Boris Baxter, Development Director @ Jubilee Ministries

Sunday, July 29, 2018- Guest Speaker- Jennie Speck

Pastor Jared and Liz will be on vacation July 20-24 and at Pocono Plateau July 29- August 4.

Annual Conference Update

The Eastern PA Annual Conference was held June 14-16 at the Greater Philly Expo Center in Oaks, PA. If you have never been to one, it is a little hard to describe. It is a cross between a church service and a business meeting. This year 27 resolutions were brought before the body for the 500+ delegates to decide. These were mixed with times of worship, a celebration of person and ministries, and remembrance for clergy and laity that passed since last year's conference. Resolutions forgiving back apportionments, condemning gun violence, condemning kids being taken from their mothers at the border, were passed. Two resolutions dealing with human sexuality were defeated as the body waits on the outcome of the Special 2019 General Conference. More information can be found on the Eastern PA Annual Conference website or by talking to Pastor Jared.

Currently, Bethany UMC does not have a lay delegate to Annual Conference. The UMC is a connectional church. There is value in conference and decisions made there that affect our church. If you would be interested in serving in this role or finding out more information talk to Pastor Jared.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

VBS UPDATE

Can't believe Bible School will soon be here. There are a few things for our snacks we will be needing. If you would like to help, there will be a basket with slips of our needs on the information table. Pick up a slip and return it to the church by July 8th.

We really appreciate everyone's help. If you have any questions, call

Vicki Smith 717 838-5665

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Caring Cupboard Sunday is July 8th. Please bring your donations of non-perishables and toiletries. All donations are greatly appreciated.

Mark your calendars for our Annual Church Picnic- Sunday August 5th 2018 at the Annville Church of the Brethren Pavilion. Anyone who can provide a ride for those that might need it should let Pastor Jared know.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Greeters/Ushers: Paul & Karen Leicht, Jim Floyd

Scripture Readers:

JULY 1: Pastor Stoltzfus
JULY 8: Ed Kaylor
JULY 15: Pastor Stoltzfus
JULY 22: Guest Speaker
JULY 29: Guest Speaker

Sound System Operators:

JULY 1: Seth Schell
JULY 8: Barry Smith
JULY 15: Dick Lasher
JULY 22: Don Brubaker
JULY 29: Seth Schell

JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 1- David Finney	20 - Lory Walborn
1- Michael Reigle	23 - Sarah Miller
3 - Brittany Dunlop	24 - Lisa Harman
3 - Gerald Marcocci	25 - K. Byron Light III
8 - Melba Shenk	29 - Helen Lutz
14 - Kristel Wisor	31- Carissa Smith



