

B.J.U.M.C TOWER BELL

May 2022

PASTOR MATT ENZLER



Believers Joyously Unified in Mission with Christ

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TOWER BELL TABLE OF CONTENTS

PASTOR MATT'S DESK	3 - 5
DECREASE UTILITY COSTS	6
CHURCH CLEAN UP: THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP	7
NURTURING FAITH IN YOUNG CHILDREN	8 - 11
ALTAR FLOWERS	12
WESLEYAN UNDERSTANDING OF GRACE	13 -16
SERVE THE WORLD THROUGH MISSIONS	17
GOD'S COOP FOOD PANTRY	18
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH (formerly UMW) EVENTS	19 - 21
POSTPONING GENERAL CONFERENCE MAY BE A GOOD IDEA	22 - 23
ADULT SMALL GROUP STUDIES	24
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY	25
BOOK GROUP	26
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	27
INVITE YOUR FRIENDS	28



FROM
THE
Pastor

Dear BJUMC Family,

April Showers bring May Flowers. This adage is as old as time. The passing of the seasons is symbolic of many things, and provides us great opportunities to reflect on change. In another article here in the Tower Bell, the Wesleyan theory of grace is broken down into three parts. I think the Wesleyan theory of grace is a beautiful homage to the notion that April showers bring may flowers.

In order for faith to grow, a seed must be planted. There must be a planter. Whether that planter is God or another person, the seed must be planted. The parable of the Sower has many interpretations, but it also speaks a lot about our need to be prepared to handle the seed. I invite you this season to ponder, are you preparing the soil in yourself, your family, your friends, to truly receive the Word of God on your heart? In preparing the soil, we have to make sure the soil has nutrients, is situated in a place that gets the right balance of sun, shade, water, is out of harm's way, and is ready to grow. What does that look like in your world? How are you preparing the soil in your children? Are you living the gospel, are you participating in ministry and mission projects? Are you doing family devotionals or prayer times? Do you make it a point to talk about faith around the dinner table? Do you even have a family dinner table?

Once the seed is planted, it needs watering. It will germinate and begin to grow. Truly, the old dies, and new life comes into being as the seed transforms from a seed into a plant. The shell of the seed is destroyed as new life takes over. In order for the plant to continue to grow, it will need regular watering, and the

right amount of sun. Though many people “come to faith,” for some, it doesn’t really stick. It was a fleeting expression, an emotional experience they had in their 20’s at a college retreat somewhere, but that time has come and gone. In order for your faith, our justification, to continue to grow, to actually become a plant, a stem, and later on, to have a bud, it must continue to eat up those nutrients. How do you continue to nourish your faith? Is your faith something that was once healthy and vibrant, but now has dwindled? What can you do to make sure it is properly “nutritioned”, like pouring miracle grow on a seed? The bible encourages you to do those things which you did when your faith was new, when it was vibrant. It also encourages us to step out in faith, to try new things. The remedies are endless. What are you doing to make sure your plant, or, your faith, doesn’t dwindle and die?

Finally, there is a reward for those who stay the course, a beautiful flower. There are a multitude of flowers out there, each one beautiful in their own way. There are a multitude of believers out there, each one beautiful in their own way. Each one brings something to the meadow, a new color, a new fragrance, a new texture. Our diversity helps to beautify us. In terms of grace, this is like sanctification, our walk towards perfection. It is both an individual walk, and a communal walk. Flowers are gorgeous in their own right, and displays of bouquets or meadows, or gardens also have their own appeal. Our walk towards sanctification isn’t over once we come to faith, it comes through the life long walk with the Lord. It is the last step. If we die before we bud, we are still a wonderful plant, and worthy of the Lord, but our life in this world may not have been a brilliant, as bold, as beautiful.

Friends, April showers bring may flowers is a great analogy for our walk in faith. I encourage you to read the article in this Tower Bell about the Wesleyan theories of grace. Then, ask yourself, the following questions:

- 1) How am I tending to the soil of those around me? Am I preparing the soil to receive the seed? Is my soil (my faith) full of the proper nutrients it needs to help me flourish?
- 2) As a believer, am I growing strong, do I have a real faith in the lord? Will I burst out of this seed that is planted in my heart, and grow into new life? As for my family, friends, children, how can I help them come to that moment of germination when they change? What do they need in order to be truly transformed by the Word of God?

3) Am I continually walking with the Lord? Am I bearing good fruit? Am I Producing a multitude of flowers? Or is my faith dwindling, a stem with no rose, a tree with no fruit? What can I do to get back on track and make sure I am walking towards perfection, that I may be beautified by the Lord?

Friends, may the grace and peace of the Lord be with you this spring. I encourage you to take a walk, perhaps in a garden, and ponder these things in your heart.

Pastor Matt

PARTNER WITH THE TRUSTEES TO DECREASE OUR UTILITY COSTS

Let's all join together to lower our utility costs which have dramatically increased.



Please do not turn up the heat or the air conditioning without consulting with a Trustee, Pastor Matt, or Doug Kreiss.



Also, please remember to turn off the lights when leaving a room.

Each one of us can make a difference!

THANK YOU!

Your Trustees

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK ON
CHURCH CLEAN UP DAY!**

On April 30



Thanks to all that came out to help clean up the church grounds and cemetery on Saturday and to those who worked at alternate dates. In the Narthex we will post a list of tasks that still need to be completed. Please continue to share your talents and help if you can. Many hands always make lighter work.

Questions? Contact Rena 908 872-9443 rena.thorsen@gmail.com or any of the Trustees.

8 ways to nurture faith in young children

By Laura Buchanan



It's never too early to begin sharing faith practices with our children. "Helping kids to know God's love and to know that God loves them is a really foundational concept that little ones, even from diapers, can be taught," says the Rev. Kathy Pittenger, Children's Initiatives Coordinator for the [Michigan Conference of The United Methodist Church](#).

The Rev. Joanna Cummings, pastor with children and families at [East End United Methodist Church](#) in Nashville, Tennessee, agrees, "I believe that children are spiritual beings and I believe that they have a lot to show us about who God is." Weave faith formation into the everyday

Nurturing faith in babies, toddlers and preschoolers is not only meaningful, it can also be a lot of fun. It is possible for your busy family to incorporate this important work into day-to-day life, you just have to find the spiritual practices that work best for your unique family.

Cummings and Pittenger share these practical ideas:

- **Evaluate your daily rhythms** Identify transitions and pauses where you can add prayer, discussion and Scripture to your routines. For example:
 - Write or print prayers and hang them above the changing table as a reminder to pray in those moments together.
 - Keep a stack of conversation starters in the car. Ask questions that have no “correct” answers, such as, “I wonder what it would have been like to see Jesus walk on the water?”
 - Use meals, naptime and bedtime as opportunities for reading Bible stories and sharing prayers.
- **Pray in different ways** Explore a [variety of prayer practices](#) to find options that your child most enjoys. As they grow, try new ones to meet their changing needs. The Lord’s Prayer and the Doxology: Repetition is helpful for children. Saying the same prayer over and over is fine; in fact, it can bring familiarity and comfort.
 - Body prayer: Use movement to express a prayer.
 - Take a walk: Head outside to marvel at God’s creativity and give thanks for it.
 - Artistic prayer: Ask your child to draw what they’d like to say to God.
- **Read, play and learn** Reading a story Bible, such as the [Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook](#), brings Scripture to life through illustrations and approachable vocabulary. Also consider [board books](#), [snuggle time books](#) and books focusing on [prayers for families](#). Since children learn through play, finger puppets or interactive tools can help make story time fun and memorable. Check out free [Digital Faith Formation Playlists](#), created by Pittenger and her team, which include readings, questions, prayers, music, activities and more. **Resourcing parents for faith formation**
- **Model your faith** Our kids learn from us by watching us. As you lead the way in prayer, Bible study, engaging in worship, talking about God, serving others, being part of a faith community and exploring spiritual practices, children will want to join you. They’ll come to expect these components of your routine and they will begin to incorporate them into theirs as well. Kids might even remind you to complete a forgotten activity or suggest a new one.

- **Welcome hard questions** It's okay to not have answers to big questions, to say, "I don't know – let's try to find the answer together," and then turn to a pastor, resources or friends to help you unpack challenging topics. After all, parents are on a spiritual journey of growth, too, and it's great for kids to see you learning alongside them. For preschoolers, answer questions with one in return: "What do you think?" This will encourage them to lean on their spirituality and prior learning to draw conclusions, discover other topics they wonder about and generate further conversation.
- **Offer a blessing** Saying a blessing over your child at a key point in the day, such as before preschool or at bedtime, can help them connect deeply with you and with God. Hold or make eye contact with your child to create a special moment. Cummings shares this with her baby: "I bless you as you grow, bless you as you go, I bless you as you play, I bless you today." Pittenger shares this with her school-age children: "God bless my children and help them to grow bigger and stronger and wiser and more in love with God and all people every day."
- **Help others** Engaging in community service can be an excellent way to bond as a family, and it provides an opportunity to talk about loving our neighbors, being a Jesus follower and living out our faith. Projects such as sorting items at a food bank are often appropriate for volunteers of all ages. Participating in an advocacy effort related to a social justice issue that your family is passionate about is a powerful way for kids to see that their voice matters and that they can make a difference on behalf of others.
- **Find connection** Being active in a faith community helps children see their role in the body of Christ. Including young children in worship services broadens their understanding of church and what it means to praise God. It's also important that kids know they can trust and learn from adults other than their parents, whether they be Sunday School teachers, grandparents or family friends. As an added bonus, the community provides parents with a support system as you seek ideas and resources from pastors, church staff and other families who are in a similar life situation.

**Encouragements for parents:*

“[Parents] may not be the expert on all things theological, but they are the expert on their kids. We don’t have to have all the right words or all the right answers,” says Pittenger.

Cummings shares, “Parents, give yourself grace. You are loving and nurturing the faith of your child in the middle of a season that’s really difficult and challenging, especially for young families. Anything that is intentional about sharing the love of God, about sharing the story of God, or even just sharing your faith with your child in conversation is really impactful.”

Laura Buchanan works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications.



ALTAR FLOWERS

Anniversary? Birthday? In memory of? Special thank you or occasion?

Why not sign up to donate flowers? The 2022 Flower Chart is available on the Narthex Sign Up wall. Reserve your date as soon as possible for any week available during the year. Order forms are available on the wall. To reserve a date and complete an order call or email Nancy Sweazey at 908-766-6368 or sweazeyn@gmail.com.

A Wesleyan understanding of grace

Kenneth L. Carder



At the heart of Wesleyan/Methodist theology and practice is a profound understanding and vital experience of *grace*. While John and Charles Wesley shared an understanding of grace deeply rooted in Christian teaching and tradition, they provided distinctive emphases, which came to characterize Methodist teaching and preaching. Grace, as understood, experienced and proclaimed by the United Methodists and others in the Wesleyan tradition, remains as relevant and transformative in the 21st century as in the 18th century.

GRACE: GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER

John Wesley defined *grace* as God's "bounty, or favour: his free, undeserved favour, ... man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that 'formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul,' and stamped on that soul the image of God, and 'put all things under his feet.' ... For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand."

The Book of Discipline defines grace as "the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit." Grace pervades all of creation and is universally present. Grace is not a gift that God packages and bestows on us and creation. Grace is God's presence to create, heal, forgive, reconcile and transform human hearts,

communities and the entire creation. Wherever God is present, there is grace! Grace brought creation into existence. Grace birthed human beings, bestowed on us the divine image, redeemed us in Jesus Christ and is ever transforming the whole creation into the realm of God's reign of compassion, justice, generosity and peace.

In his sermon "[The Scripture Way of Salvation](#)," John Wesley summarized his understanding of the work of grace in saving and transforming human existence. Wesley describes three movements or expressions of grace to create distinctive emphases for living fully in response to God's creating, healing, reconciling and transforming activity.

PREVENIENT GRACE: GRACE THAT GOES BEFORE

One dynamic or expression of God's grace is prevenience or "preventing" grace. *Prevenient grace* includes, according to Wesley, "all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed 'natural conscience,' ... all the 'drawings' of 'the Father,' the desires after God, ... that 'light' wherewith the Son of God 'enlighteneth everyone that cometh into the world,' showing every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God;' all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every child of man." While taking the seriousness of human sin and brokenness seriously, Wesley believed that God's grace prevents the total destruction of the divine image in us.

Prevenient grace is present in all creation — in the natural order, in human conscience, in the relationships and heritage into which we are born. Love of family, the Christian community, the sacraments, creation itself, the pangs of guilt, the pull toward a vision of what can be are all expressions of God's prevenient grace.

Wesley described prevenient grace as the porch on a house. It is where we prepare to enter the house. Grace may also be compared to a journey. The desire to embark on the trip, the road or trail, the vehicle in which the journey is to be made and the map to be followed are all givens or gifts. The beauty of the landscape, the mind and eyes that conceived the journey and perceive its beauty, even the explorer who blazed the trail are all unmerited gifts — grace!

JUSTIFYING/SAVING GRACE: DOORWAY INTO NEW IDENTITY, NEW CREATION

Prevenient grace prepares us for *justifying grace*. "Justification," said Wesley, "is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and ... our acceptance with God." Justifying grace is the assurance of forgiveness that comes from repentance, from turning toward God's gracious gift of new life. It is being reconciled and realigned with God and the acceptance of God's atoning act in Jesus Christ.

Wesley considered justification, or justifying grace, as the doorway into the house of God's salvation. God reconciles us to Godself, adopts us into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, bestows upon us our identity as beloved sons and daughters and incorporates us into the body of Christ, the church.

Realizing our identity and worth as being rooted in the one to whom we belong is the essence of justifying grace. To accept that identity is to enter the doorway into a whole new existence. It is an identity we can never earn, nor can it be taken from us.

Continuing the analogy of the house, justifying grace is the doorway and the process of walking through it. The door is open with a welcome sign on it. If grace is compared to a journey, there comes a time when the traveler packs the bags, joins the guide and sets out toward the destination. That is justifying grace, turning toward a new future.

SANCTIFYING GRACE: GRACE PERFECTING US

Wesley's understanding of grace moves beyond forgiveness and acceptance of our identity as beloved children of God. God's goal for humanity is the complete restoration of the divine image and the conformity of all creation to the image of Jesus Christ. Sanctification (from *Sanctus*, holy) denotes the process by which the believer is made holy and whole in response to justification.

The Book of Discipline states: "We hold that the wonder of God's acceptance and pardon do not end God's saving work, which continues to nurture our growth in grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are enabled to increase in the knowledge and love of God and in love for our neighbor." If prevenient grace is the porch of the house of grace and justifying grace is the doorway, *sanctifying grace* represents the rooms in the expansive dwelling of God's presence with and purposes for humanity.

Wesley affirmed that God's grace seeks nothing less than a new creation in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Sanctifying grace is God's freely given presence and power to restore the fullness of God's image in which we are created. Wesley talked about sanctification in terms of Christian perfection by which he means entire "holiness of heart and life."

As *The Book of Discipline* affirms, "While the grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as 'prevenient grace,' continues in 'justifying grace,' and is brought to fruition in 'sanctifying grace.'" God's unmerited favor is before us, is present with us and is ever working to restore the divine image and transform the entire cosmos into God's reign in Jesus Christ.

GROWING IN GRACE

Grace involves both gift and response. Our identity as sons and daughters of God is God's gift to us. Living in the world as redeemed children of God is our gift to God. Justifying grace reconciles us to God, incorporates us into the body of Christ and sets us on the journey toward wholeness. Sanctifying grace continuously forms us in the likeness of Christ and sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, our actions and our relationships.

Wesley affirmed that God's grace is universally present in all and irresistible in none. Although God's presence and power to create, forgive, reconcile and transform are universally and persistently present, we can resist God's gracious presence and work in us and the world. The freedom to say "no" to the invitation to be reconciled and transformed remains. Contrary to the Calvinists of his time, Wesley affirmed that we can lose our responsiveness to grace and thereby "backslide" or shut ourselves off from God's grace. Still, God's grace remains steadfast, ever blessing, sustaining and beckoning us toward wholeness and salvation.

In other words, we grow in Christlikeness as we open our lives to God's presence and power at work in us and the world. Growing in grace and discipleship cannot be done within our own strength. The One who invites us on the journey toward the fullness of grace accompanies us and supplies our needs. The God who liberates us and gives us a new future enables us to live toward that new creation by providing means by which we can grow in grace.

The early Methodists devoted themselves to pursuing holiness of heart and life by practicing the "General Rules for the United Societies." Continuation in the societies required that the members demonstrate their desire for salvation, "First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind. ... Secondly, by doing good: by being merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, ... Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God" (*The Book of Discipline 2012*, 78-79).

The Methodists gathered in small groups of classes and bands to "watch over one another in love," to support one another in growing in grace by avoiding evil, doing good and practicing "means of grace

Additionally, John Wesley identified "Christian conferencing" or Christian conversation, as well as acts of mercy and compassion, as means of growing in grace. All of these are gifts by which we grow in friendship with Christ. Through them, we express our devotion and open our lives to the presence and power of God to transform us and the world. They become means by which we are nourished in grace and grow in love for God and neighbor.

CONCLUSION

The fullness of the Wesleyan understanding and experience of grace is expressed beautifully in the beloved hymn of Charles Wesley, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling":

SERVE THE WORLD

The Food Bank of Somerset County



Please remember that donations of food for The Food Bank of Somerset County may be placed in the Pete Ebbe collection bin located in the church Narthex just beside the door leading into the Sanctuary. Right now the most needed items are as follows: Jelly, Cooking Oil, Cereal, Rice (2lb bag), Spaghetti (specifically), Tuna, Toothpaste,

and Cat Food.



K.I.D.s - Kindness in Donations

This month we would like to bring your attention to an upcoming United Methodist mission trip to Costa Rica's Rice and Beans Ministry that will be led by Sam Perez in June. Eleven people representing seven churches have committed to participate. Since our church will not be traveling there this year, we ask you to consider supporting this team and Rice and Beans Ministries with a financial donation. All monies received will be used to purchase bags of food that will be delivered to communities in need while they are there. At present the cost of a food bag is \$16. Your donation may directed to Linda Cargo via the church office. Please make checks

payable to Bishop Janes UMC with a notation of Rice and Beans Ministry. Muchas gracias!!

GOD'S COOP FOOD PANTRY NEEDS YOU



God's Coop Food Pantry in Bernardsville, a local mission financially supported by BJUMC and our United Women in Faith, is currently looking for volunteers to help hand out food bags on Wednesdays (6:00-8:00pm) and Sundays (6:00-7:00pm). Please contact Linda Cargo at cargoph@aol.com for more information and/or if you would like to be placed on our volunteer list. Individuals are required to be vaccinated for Covid.



United
Women
in Faith

MAY UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH GATHERING

Come join us on Tuesday, May 10th at 11:30am when we will meet at the picnic area at the Leonard J Buck Garden in Far Hills for lunch, UWF planning discussion and an afternoon stroll through the gardens. Bring a sandwich/lunch. Dessert and beverage will be provided. If you would like to meet at the church to carpool, need a ride, or have a question, please contact Linda Cargo, at 484-433-1558. Rain date: Wednesday, May 11th



The Leonard J. Buck Garden is a 29 acre woodland rock garden created by Leonard Buck, a trustee of the New York Botanical Gardens in the 1930's and now operated by the Somerset County Park Commission. It features planted rock outcroppings and woodland trails lined with naturalized bulbs, ferns, shade perennials and drifts of delicate wildflowers. The garden is especially appealing in spring, during peak bloom, offering a wide variety of native and cultivated azaleas and flowers.

UMF CALENDAR for MAY

All United Women in Faith events, circles and ministries are open to all members and youth of BJUMC, friends, and the community.

Mondays at 9:00am, Walk and Talk will meet at Harry Dunham Park, weather permitting. We meet in the parking lot off Liberty Corner Road and walk for about one hour. Open to all!! Contact person: Barbara Conca, conca@optonline.net

Tuesday, May 10th at 11:30am, Picnic lunch, planning discussion and afternoon stroll at Leonard Buck Garden in Far Hills.

Tuesday, May 17th at 5:30pm New Circle will meet for dinner at Plaza Tikal on Quimby Lane in Bernardsville. Join us for a time of food, fellowship and fun. All are welcome. Contact Linda Cargo, cargoph@aol.com for more information.



United
Women
in Faith

Tuesday, May 24th at 9:30am, Grace Circle will meet at the home of Gloria Walker, 14 Valley View Drive, Basking Ridge. Contact person: Gloria Walker, ghwalker1046@gmail.com

Tuesday, May 24th, 7:00pm, Hearts2Hands Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet in the Youth Room. Contact person: Linda Cargo, cargoph@aol.com. All are welcome to join us. Supplies provided. No experience is needed.

Questions about United Women in Faith

Are we still a part of the United Methodist Church?

Yes! We are still the only official women's organization of The United Methodist Church and our corporate name will remain United Methodist Women.

What do we call ourselves now?

We call ourselves United Women in Faith. We have a new logo on our new website and other materials are available there to help us with the changes.

How were these decisions made?

Our new programs are fruits of research the national office conducted over the past quadrennium along with prayerfully seeking to discern the time for our organization. The member elected United Methodist Women board of directors, with input from the program advisory group, has guided the organization throughout this process. They have conducted surveys, focus groups and interviews with more than 24,000 United Methodists and women of other denominations and Christian traditions. The changes and programs are data-informed and tested to address the needs and life stages of current members and new women.

Will these changes impact my and my local unit?

All of our traditional structures on the conference, district and local levels—circles included— remain intact. New tools and programs are additional options available to you and your unit to help you better nurture current members, recruit new members into the organization and manage your unit's finances.

Can we remain members, stay connected and join another local unit if our church leaves The United Methodist Church?

Yes. United Methodist Church membership has never been required for United Methodist Women membership. Bylaws changes allow for women to be involved and be leaders in our organization even if they become affiliated with another denomination. Our new name captures this inclusivity.

Where can I learn about all of the changes underway in our organization?

Response Magazine articles and other free downloadable resources available on the website e-store under Member Resources will give you an overview of the changes underway.

What do these changes have to do with “new wineskins?”

United Methodist Women—now United Women in Faith—is again saying yes to being part of what God is doing in the 21st century by creating new ways for women today to gather for faith, sisterhood and action for women, children, and youth. In other words, we are making new wine and new wineskins to fulfill our role in God’s mission today. We tap Jesus’ use of the metaphor in Mark 2:22 to explain the need for change to help us share with members the new tools, programs, and exciting changes on the horizon for our organization.

Why the rebranding?

Brand is a term most often associated today with commercial marketing, but in reality, everyone has a brand. Brand is just a term to describe what people can expect to experience when they encounter you. “Branding” are the things we do—our look, our actions, our messages—that help let people know who we are and what we consistently deliver.

Rebranding United Methodist Women means we are clarifying the way we tell our story and updating our programs, resources and outreach efforts so that it is easier to see who we are. Research showed us that our values, our commitments, and the work we do in the world is attractive to many women who are not yet members, including women of diverse ages, racial ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and life stages. Our welcoming new brand will highlight who we are.

Postponing General Conference may be a good thing

Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr.

April 22, 2022 | WASHINGTON (UM News)

Key points:

- **Our human need for control often outruns our ability to wait in prayerful discernment.**
- **Key moments in Methodist history provide a broader view of the denomination's current situation.**
- **While today's issues are important, they are not at the heart of what Jesus taught — nor do they overshadow John Wesley's abiding passion for sharing the good news.**
 - Many appear to see the postponement of the General Conference to 2024 as a bad thing. It may be, but chances are just as great that it will be a good thing. Time seems to help when we seek to discern God's will on difficult issues.
 - John Wesley's last sermon, preached one week before his death, was from Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (KJV). You recognize this passage from a portion of Isaiah critically influential for New Testament Christians struggling to understand the unfolding meaning of the coming of Christ for their lives.
 - Our human need for control often resists the need to call upon the Lord and wait for the veil of uncertainty to lift. Our need for certainty invariably outruns our waiting in prayerful discernment. Are decisions now, when we see in a mirror dimly, better than waiting? Let's look back at other pivotal moments in Methodist history to see.
 - For example, what if the 1844 Methodist Episcopal General Conference, in which Methodism split north and south, had been postponed?
 - Does anyone think that after the United States divided over slavery, over 600,000 died in a war about slavery, and slavery was outlawed that the church would have divided for the formation of a more slavery-accommodating denomination?

- Or, what if the 1939 Uniting Conference that approved a racially segregated church structure had been postponed to 1969? Does anyone think that in 1969 Methodism would have established a segregated jurisdiction for African Americans?
- Some talk about the anguish and uncertainty of delays. It depends on your perspective. What about the anguish in 1939 of the 47 African American General Conference delegates who all voted against the exclusionary plan or abstained? When the conference rose to sing in celebration, “We Are Marching to Zion,” those 47 delegates remained seated. Some wept, including one of the most admired Methodists of her time, Mary McLeod Bethune.
- People on differing sides seem to consider this time of delay as a time of such uncertainty that it immobilizes energy for mission. Some disaffiliating churches said the debate had become a distraction from their mission. Really? Churches are likely to be distracted from their mission when their leaders are. Most churches put their mission far ahead of issue debates.
- After the turmoil of the 2019 General Conference spread rapidly, some bishops immediately scheduled meetings to hear concerns. At one event, a bishop asked the laity and clergy gathered what had happened in their churches in the two weeks since the General Conference. After some silence, people told many stories of their continuing ministries but not even one had let the recent actions of General Conference delegates keep them from their mission tasks.
- Ministry goes on. And pandemics, authoritarian regimes and atrocities of war have a way of putting into perspective our denominational struggles.
- Yes, in these present moments I think time is helping many United Methodists put things in a broader view. Even some whose views align with those calling for division recognize the difference between what they are hearing and the grace-filled, loving and open Methodism they cherish.
- It’s not that the contentious issues of today are not important. They matter but are not the heart of what Jesus taught. John Wesley always feared that secondary things would overshadow Wesley’s abiding passion that all come to know the love of God revealed in Christ. I pray that we attune ourselves now to the grace we know in Jesus Christ and to Wesley's passion for spreading that good news to all.

ADULT SMALL GROUP STUDIES

May 2022

Spring 2022 Adult Small Group Studies

Our adult small group study program continues this spring. Due to the current state of the pandemic, we will be holding these programs through a hybrid approach of in-person and remote via Zoom.

Our gatherings are held on ***Sunday mornings from 11am until 12 noon***. We hope that you can join us as we continue on our faith journey together. To join us online, the link to all of our classes can be found by clicking [HERE](#), or on the Bishop Janes website (www.bjumc.org) or Midweek Minute.

Here's what we have in store for the remainder of this year:

- ***What's So Amazing About Grace (April 24 – June 12)***. This study by Philip Yancy looks at grace; what it is, why it is so precious, and how to integrate it into your life.
-
- We hope you'll consider joining some or all of our small group discussions. If you have any question, please contact Ted Schroeder at dotcschroeder@yahoo.com, or Kevin Dresely at ddresely@comcast.net.

WELCOME ALL Membership Directory Update



Have you ever tried to contact someone from Church and could not find their phone number? Good news, Cheryl Beyer, Welcome All Team Chair, is updating our Membership directory. and asking for your help in updating your contact information for our directory for the use of our church family

Please provide all of your current contact information, names, phone numbers, email addresses, address, cell phone numbers and names of family members in your household.

All of your information is needed for our church records but **we need your authorization for what contact information you would like put in the directory.** Please confirm that you want all, some or none of your contact information in the directory.

Please respond as soon as possible with your current information to help us to accomplish this task in a timely manner.

Thank you!

Cheryl Beyer contact information:

Cheryl@uniquewire.com

908 672-6220

BOOK GROUP

If you like to read and discuss books, join the BJUMC Book Group. It meets monthly, usually on the 2nd Thursday of the month from September-November and January-May at 7:00 p.m. in classroom 3 /4. Members suggest which books are discussed- all types and genres are considered. New members are welcome! Below is our selection for May. The meeting will be held on Thursday, May 12. Please bring book suggestions for the fall. Contact Janet Kaefer at jbkaefer@optonline.net for additional information, or to add your name to the email distribution list for Book Group. Happy reading!



May 12, 2022: American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins (led by Tami Lane)

Jeanine Cummins's *American Dirt*, the #1 New York Times bestseller and Oprah Book Club pick that has sold over two million copies.

Lydia lives in Acapulco. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while cracks are beginning to show in Acapulco because of the cartels, Lydia's life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. But after her husband's tell-all profile of the newest drug lord is published, none of their lives will ever be the same.

Forced to flee, Lydia and Luca find themselves joining the countless people trying to reach the United States. Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?

September 15, 2022: TBD

October 13, 2022: TBD

November 10, 2022: TBD

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Over the last year or two, our church has switched from a staff led model to a volunteer led model. We still have a lot of things around the church which need volunteers, in order to maintain our ministries. Most Ministry teams have modified a lot of their programming to make them more volunteer friendly. As a church, we uplift and thank all of our volunteers for the work they do to make this a wonderful place to worship, fellowship, and be a part of the body of Christ in Mission!

Just a few of the places we need more volunteers:

- ***AN URGENT NEED FOR ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS TO RUN THE SOUND DESK AND HELP WITH OUR WORSHIP***
- **Counters**
- **Sunday School Volunteers for September**
- **Family Ministries Team (Event Planning and execution)**
- **Local Missions Teams: Foodbanks, Contact/Service Team, Evergreen Cemetery and more!**

Share with your Friends!



Inviting your friends to church has never been easier. With so many options to choose from: daily devotions, worship services, small groups, all you have to do is share the link with a friend.

- “Liking” is different from sharing. We appreciate the likes, it makes us feel all warm and fuzzy inside, and lets us know people appreciate our work, but sharing is a way you can profess your faith, and invite others to join you. It’s really that simple!
- To share just click the **share** button on the Facebook post, and it will be on your page, so your friends know what your interests are. It’s a simple way of sharing your faith. No longer can you say, “I don’t have the words,” all you have to do is click the **share** button, and you’re done. It’s that simple