



The Methodist Messenger

MARCH 2018

Whiteville United Methodist Church

Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Communion Service - 6:30 p.m.



HOLY WEEK 2018
PARTICIPATE IN
THE CENTRAL EVENTS OF
THE STORY OF THE WORLD!

Palm Sunday, March 25

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Palm Sunday Service of Worship in the Sanctuary

Wednesday of Holy Week, March 28

12:00 noon Community Lenten Service of Worship
in the Sanctuary

and Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m. Service of Holy Communion in the Sanctuary

Thursday of Holy Week, March 29

6:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service of Worship
in the Sanctuary

Good Friday, March 30

6:30 p.m. Good Friday Service of Worship
in the Sanctuary and Neighborhood

Easter Day, April 1

6:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service at St. Mark AME Zion Church

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Easter Service of Worship in the Sanctuary

PASTOR'S PEN

AN UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON A WAY FORWARD

On the evening of February 20, lay leaders, lay members of annual conference, and pastors of United Methodist churches in the Harbor District gathered at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church in Wilmington. We had been invited to Wilmington to learn about the continuing work of the Commission on a Way Forward. Bishop Hope Morgan Ward addressed the assembly. So did several laity and clergy who will be attending the special called 2019 General Conference in St. Louis, MO: Mr. Eston Brinkley (Harbor District Co-Director of Lay Servant Ministries and Lay Speaker Coordinator) and Mr. Gary Locklear (Conference Lay Leader), and Rev. Elizabeth H. Hood (Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church) and Rev. H. Gray Southern (Capital District Superintendent).

This event accomplished three (3) objectives. First, it sketched the process, which will decide on a way forward for The United Methodist Church, that is now underway and will continue through General Conference 2019. Second, it outlined the Commission on a Way Forward's and the Council of Bishops's three (3) models of ways forward for the denomination. And third, it invited people to discuss the various models that are now on the denominational table and to

provide feedback to Bishop Ward. In the following paragraphs, some detail will be added to these three accomplishments of the evening.

First, regarding the process that is now unfolding, we were reminded of the following. Throughout the process, the Commission on a Way Forward (or the Commission) serves the Council of Bishops (or the Council). The Commission will give its final proposal to the Council. The Council will edit the proposal and submit it to General Conference. Before General Conference convenes in February 2019, the Council's proposal will most certainly be reported, discussed, and debated across The United Methodist Church. On February 23-26, 2019, General Conference's 864 delegates will gather in St. Louis to consider, discuss, debate, and vote on the proposal from the Council of Bishops. General Conference will adopt it, or amend and adopt it, or amend and reject it, or reject it, or reject it and adopt a different proposal. From February 2019 onward, leadership and implementation will become the challenges facing The United Methodist Church.

Second, regarding the provisional models for ways forward that have been promoted by the Commission and the Council, I will simply quote from the 11/07/18 press release from the Council: *"One sketch of a model [Model I] affirms the current Book of Discipline language [on human sexuality] and places a high value on accountability.*

"Another sketch of a model [Model II] removes restrictive language [which reads: "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching." (Paragraph 161G, The Book of Discipline [2016])] and places a high value on contextualization [that is, different ministries for different contexts or places]. This sketch also specifically protects the rights of those whose conscience will not allow them to perform same-gender weddings or ordain LGBTQ persons.

"A third sketch of a model [Model III] is grounded in a unified core that includes shared doctrine and services and one COB [Council of Bishops], while also creating different branches that have clearly defined values such as accountability, contextualization and justice.

"Each sketch represents values that are within the COB and across the church.

"Each sketch includes [a] gracious way of exit for those who feel called to exit from the denomination."

Third, regarding the discussion of each of the three models, every table in the evening assembly [which seated 2-8 people, as I recall] was asked to respond to the question, "How does this model help us to achieve our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world?" After several minutes of table-talk on each of the three models came several minutes of questions-and-comments from the floor and responses from the platform. Also, a written response --

to each question, from each table -- was to be handed to the platform at evening's end. All the written responses, from all eight (8) districts of the North Carolina Conference, will contribute to a summary conference report that will, in short order, be forwarded to the Council of Bishops.

QUICK COMMENTS FROM THIS PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

1. The word opinion was repeated often during this event. Well and good. Individuals, laity and clergy, have plenty of opinions about most everything. (I have too many!) However, the Church has teaching -- teaching that she receives from the Bible and the apostles, that she does not create -- on some matters.
2. If a United Methodist calls Church teaching on human sexuality a "matter of opinion," he/she reveals that he/she dissents from the universal Church's unanimous, nearly-2,000-year-old, basic teaching on sexual morality. The United Methodist Church has room for those who dissent. But they are in dissent; they are not just expressing opinions; they are expressing opinions that contradict historic Christian teaching.
3. With five (5) conference leaders on the platform that night (all of whom did their best to appear to be neutral about the matters at hand), the question -- Who speaks for The United Methodist Church? -- cried out for an answer. And the answer was and is: General Conference. And only General Conference.
4. The three models noted above were originally presented to the 2016 General Conference and have been reworked by the Commission. Because the 2016 General Conference passed a petition for the Council of Bishops to establish a Commission on a Way Forward, the legislative packages for all three models were set aside, and not considered, by General Conference. But those packages have been brought back by the Commission and remade into the three models.
5. In 2016, Model I was called the Covenantal Unity Plan (CUP). It would have strengthened the covenant to maintain church unity and traditional church teaching. In 2018, Model I seems to be favored by most evangelicals and traditionalists. (And it seemed to be supported by most of those gathered on that evening in Wilmington.)
6. In 2016, Model II was discussed as "the local option." It would ask clergy, congregations, conference boards of ordained ministry, and even annual conferences to declare their position on matters related to marriage and ordination. In 2018, Model II is promoted by Uniting Methodists, which is led (in part) by Rev. Adam Hamilton of Kansas City.
7. In 2016, Model III was proposed by Dr. Chris Ritter and was known as a jurisdiction-based plan. It would involve a common bureaucracy at the top of the denomination, and three jurisdictions (or branches) that could be chosen by clergy, churches, and other bodies. In 2018, Model III appears to be supported by people

who more than anything else want to create space between contenders, to lessen tension, in the church. 8. It is interesting to note that the Council of Bishops does not easily get its way with General Conference. For example, its proposal that established the Commission on a Way Forward barely passed the 2016 General Conference. Furthermore, in the past, some of the Council's favored plans for denominational reorganization and renewal have been turned down by General Conference. So, anything -- anything! -- can happen at General Conference 2019.

A LAST WORD

What you are thinking is correct. When we joined the Methodist Church or The United Methodist Church, this is not what we signed up for. That said, this is what is now before us.

I believe that through all this discussion and debate, God is calling The United Methodist Church to grow up, to get more serious about being the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ in the post-modern world. Furthermore, this is a great opportunity for all United Methodists, laity and clergy, to grow in our trust in, and our obedience to, Christ.

Working through the challenges now facing The United Methodist Church together is not particularly enjoyable. However, it is what providence has given us. And who was it that said everything, in the Church, had to be enjoyable?

Continue faithful, to Christ and His Church, for the sake of the world.

In Christ,
Pastor Paul

A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
VIVIAN JONES BERESOFF
Whiteville United Methodist Church
March 3/Saturday/2:00 p.m.
A reception with light refreshments in the Fellowship Hall will follow the service. All are invited to attend.

BLOOD DRIVE

Many thanks to all who came out to donate or volunteer in other ways. While many who anticipated donating had to cancel due to sickness, others responded when called to "walk in." We completed the drive with 44 pints given, just two short of our goal.

– Peggy Huffman, Chair

UNITED METHODIST MEN

A word of thanks to Ricky Bullard (Bullard's Meats in Cerro Gordo) for his help in supplying the delicious steaks for the UMM Annual Valentine Dinner.

Our next meeting will be held at Joe's Barbecue in Whiteville on Thursday, March 1, at 6:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT 2018
Whiteville United Methodist Church
Worship at 12:00 Noon
Lunch at 12:30 p.m.

March 7/Wednesday of Lent III
Dr. Joseph D. Washburn, Pastor
First Presbyterian Church
Whiteville, NC

March 14/Wednesday of Lent IV
Rev. Justin DuBose, Pastor
Missionary Alliance Church
Whiteville, NC

March 21/Wednesday of Lent V
Rev. Andy Anderston, Pastor
Father's Cup Overflow Ministries
Little River, SC

March 28/Wednesday of
Palm Sunday/Holy Week
Rev. Bob Hankins, Interim Pastor
Hallsboro United Methodist Church
Hallsboro, NC

(Revised)

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Come join us at our next meeting on Monday, March 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor.

In March three Mission Studies (Climate Justice, Living in Covenant Community, and Missionary Conferences in the USA) will be offered. Join us on March 3 at Harbor UMC in Wilmington or on March 10 at Mt. Moriah UMC in Clinton -- or come twice and take two studies. – Debbie Sellars, President

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

The Youth are selling God's Creation calendars as a fundraiser for their ski trip. Reduced prices are: Wall calendar/\$3, pocket calendar/\$1. Stop by the Church Office to purchase some! – Heather LaMora

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 nd	Hunter Diefes	20 th	Katie McLam
5 th	Leanne Lancaster	21 st	Margaret High
	Matthew Farmer		Bill Brooks, Jr.
7 th	Elizabeth Gibson	24 th	Sydney High
13 th	Ethan Barnhill	25 th	Crystal Gore
16 th	Emily Williamson	29 th	Carolyn Hankins
		30 th	Nan Leggett
			Paul Stallsworth



Whiteville United
Methodist Church
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Whiteville, NC 28472

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Mission Statement of Whiteville United Methodist Church

As people of the body of Christ, we will gather for and be strengthened by Word and Sacraments, participate in loving fellowship, grow in discipleship, and serve our community and the world in Christ's name.

The Whiteville United Methodist Church Service of Worship is broadcast on WTXY 1540 AM from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Also it is available online at www.wtxy1540.com: **click on "Church Services" in the upper heading, and then click on "Click to Listen Live" next to "United Methodist Church of Whiteville"** at 10:00 a.m. to hear the complete audio of the service.

Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Layton Dowless, Custodian

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Pastor