



## *The Methodist Messenger*

APRIL 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.



### PASTOR'S PEN

#### RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS: THE CONVERSATIONALIST

Rev. Richard John Neuhaus (RJN) – rambunctious youth, serious student (of theology and culture), Lutheran pastor, civil-rights advocate, anti-war (without being anti-American) activist, pro-life witness, writer of countless articles and books, then Catholic priest, friend of Popes, advisor of Presidents, and editor of *First Things* (a monthly journal on religion and public life) – had a very full life and wide-ranging ministry. Dying in 2009, he left behind cabinets full of letters and papers.

On March 7, The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC formally received ninety-one boxes of his letters and papers to be archived for future reference and study. On that afternoon, in the university's Heritage Hall of Father O'Connell Hall, a symposium on Richard John Neuhaus' Christian witness in American public life was held. Its three parts – RJN and the Church, RJN and the American experiment, and RJN in the public square -- featured distinguished panelists such as Dr. John Garvey (Catholic University president), Dr. Gilbert Meilaender (Valparaiso University), Dr. Rusty Reno (*First Things*), Mr. George Weigel (biographer of St. John Paul II), Dr. Robert Wilken (formerly of the University of Virginia), as well as many others. Following brief presentations by the panelists, comments and questions from the audience were fielded. The conversation that afternoon was extraordinarily rich -- for a reason.

One of the major themes that emerged from the symposium was Rev. Neuhaus' skills in conversation. He listened to others, and he listened carefully. And he talked. Man, could he talk! Friends once gave him a prank birthday gift -- a toy set of dentures that could be wound up and placed on a flat surface, so it would clatter, shutting, opening, and moving across the surface -- to rib him about his talkative nature. Since he always had so much to say, it was amazing that he could quiet himself to listen so carefully to others.

Rev. Neuhaus' extraordinary conversational ability was on full display during the many conferences for scholars that he hosted. Convened to discuss topics related to religion and public life (which cover practically everything, from Biblical interpretation to St. Augustine to Reinhold Niebuhr to public moral discourse to public education to American democracy to natural law to the law to the moral issues of the day), such conferences would involve 10-30 sitting around a table and discussing big ideas for a day or two. Rev. Neuhaus, serving as moderator who varied his style "from Carl Rogers (a psychologist/counselor) to Attila the Hun (a feared military leader)," as he used to put it, did a masterful job of keeping the conversation on point and lively. Every so often, he would pause and briefly summarize an exchange that perfectly captured what was being said by several participants.

Rev. Neuhaus could engage all people in conversation. Race, gender, and age made no difference to him. He talked with his allies, and he talked respectfully but honestly with those who fundamentally disagreed with him. He navigated the waters of the diversity that counts (that is, the diversity of ideas) and spoke with representatives of the National Council of Churches, the Moral Majority, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Vatican.

It is no secret that Rev. Neuhaus never did earn a doctoral degree in theology or another discipline. And yet he willingly took on, in person or in print, the most powerful intellectual players of the era -- e.g., Richard Rorty, the famous philosopher who taught at Princeton, Virginia, and then Stanford. Sure, Neuhaus had taken a few sociology classes at Washington University in St. Louis; otherwise, he was mostly self-educated. Yet he was not one to be intimidated by the high and the mighty.

Despite all of this, Rev. Richard John Neuhaus was a man for Christ and a man for others, a man of the Church and a man of the People of God. He gladly spoke with those who received Holy Communion from his hand at the early-morning masses over which he regularly presided. He was especially good at conversing with young people, as they discerned a possible call to ordained ministry or another call to vocations in this world. He helped empower the young for lifetimes of faithful ministry and service. He always had the time to take a phone call, to pause to answer a question, to talk over coffee or lunch, to converse.

(continued on next page)

In this glorious Season of Easter, we focus on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the crucified One, was raised from the dead by God the Father and God the Spirit so that we might have new life, abundant life. That new life, which transformed the man named Richard John Neuhaus, was glimpsed often in his thoughtful (in both senses of the word) conversations with others. For that, I am grateful.

In Christ,  
Pastor Paul



Richard John Neuhaus  
1936-2009

### MUSICAL BLESSINGS

If you have attended the numerous worship services held at WUMC in February and March for our congregation and our community, you were blessed by musical offerings from a variety of members and guests. We are indebted to many singers from different churches and organizations who helped us present inspiring anthems during the Carolyn T. High Preaching Mission. Many thanks to Gus Cothorn for filling in for Nan on Maundy Thursday, to Geneva Ashley for volunteering to serve as pianist for three of our Wednesday noon Lenten services, and to Ann Suggs for playing for the final one. Rev. Eddie Fort from First Baptist, Sydney Munn and James Marley from St. Mark's A.M.E. Zion Church and other soloists made our Lenten season more meaningful as meditative messages were offered in song and instruments. To God be the Glory! — Nan Leggett

### UNITED METHODIST MEN

The Whiteville United Methodist Men will meet on Thursday, April 5th, at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall with a sub sandwich dinner and then Bill Ball will be doing our program on Forestry. Please make plans to join us for good food, program and fellowship. Looking forward to seeing you there.  
Thanks,  
Brad

### OUTREACH

The Outreach Team met just after the request for support was received from Mozart Adevu. For several years our church has supported Mozart and his work with Sustainable Agriculture in Africa. It was decided to send \$300 from our Mission Projects budget funds for Selma's tuition. In addition, an anonymous donor gave \$700 toward her costs. She sent this note of appreciation to the congregation.

*Dear Friends of Whiteville United Methodist Church,*

*Greetings from Ghana and in the name of our Lord Jesus.*

*My name is Selma Adevu and I am the 24-year-old daughter of your missionary, Mozart Adevu.*

*With great excitement, my Dad delivered news of your willingness to support in cash towards the fulfilment of my lifetime dream of becoming a Medical Doctor. Following my admission into the Graduate Entry Medical Program of the University of Ghana Medical School, we as a family have been overjoyed and extremely grateful to God for this opportunity to fulfil my dream of becoming a Pediatrician.*

*Because of the high cost of tuition, which is about \$6,300 a year, Dad appealed to a few individuals and churches for support and has informed me about the timely and generous donation of \$300 from the Whiteville UMC towards the payment of my fees.*

*I want to use this opportunity to thank you for your gracious support and also to thank God for the many ways in which He has used the Whiteville UMC to bless Dad and his work as a missionary.*

*May the Lord who rewards good deeds bless you all of Whiteville UMC and your families because of your kindness.*

*With a grateful heart,  
Selma Adevu*

### YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Thanks to everyone who donated to our Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday! We used the money to purchase cleaning supplies for the Families First shelter. We have been very active this Lent season by attending the Ash Wednesday Service, discussing different ways to observe Lent, doing service projects and praying. We are planning a trip to Carowinds in May to attend the Christian Music Day. We appreciate everyone's prayers and support of the Youth in our church, especially as we prepare for Youth Sunday. — Heather LaMora

## A Lesson in Reconciliation

The General Board of Church and Society has concluded the spring 2018 meeting of the Board of Directors, which occurred March 15-18. For the first time in the agency's history, the board met outside of the United States in Berlin, Germany.

General Secretary, Susan Henry-Crowe, opened the meeting with a reflection on "crossings." Crossings from east to west and south to north, from poverty into possibility and war into peace. Henry-Crowe challenged the board members to consider what 12 million United Methodists might be able to accomplish if working together for justice and peace.

Meeting in Berlin offered the board opportunities to engage with German United Methodists, learn of their ministries with refugees and migrants, and worship together.

Retired German Bishop Rosemarie Wenner led the board on a tour of the Berlin Wall and shared insights about the Church as a tool for reconciliation and peace. The board gathered in the Chapel of Reconciliation, which sits in what was known as the "Death Strip" between East and West Berlin when the city was divided. The chapel sits on the site of the destroyed Church of the Reconciliation, which was separated from its parishioners when the Wall was erected and stood "in the way" of Soviet desires for complete control. A German guide shared that it is "sometimes important for the Church to interrupt the way the world is moving."

A panel highlighting perspectives from non-governmental organizations, local United Methodist churches, and a Syrian refugee herself, gave the board some context for the current state of the migration crisis in Germany and in Europe. This panel was an opportunity to learn from churches ministering with migrants and hear from those directly impacted – either migrants themselves, or those working to aide migrants in adjusting to a new life.

Board member Lanella Smith of the North Carolina Annual Conference questioned what the board might learn from these tours and take back home, "If we built more bridges and less walls then what are the possibilities?"

Taking inspiration from the Chapel of Reconciliation, Bishop Hope Morgan Ward reflected at the conclusion of the meeting on her desire for the Church to be "in the way" of injustice in our world.

"This experience in Berlin served as a beautiful opportunity for the board to be inspired by what the Church has done and is doing in Germany," offered Susan Henry-Crowe. "As we struggle around the world to address conflict and crisis, we have been shown examples of compassion, justice-seeking, and reconciliation. I hope that all board members will take back what we

have learned and apply it in their own contexts." (The full article can be found at [www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/a-lesson-in-reconciliation-638](http://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories/a-lesson-in-reconciliation-638).) -- Carolyn Hankins

## OUTREACH

The Outreach team will provide a meal for youth, congregation and guests on Wednesday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. To share fellowship together and invite those who come to the Food Pantry on Wednesday morning, the meal is an opportunity to celebrate God's love. Vickie Pait and Carolyn Hankins are likely to serve Quiche Lorraine, salad, rolls, beverage and dessert. The largest challenge for those preparing food is knowing how many guests might attend. If you plan to come, please let Kathy Graham, Vickie, or Carolyn know to include you/ your family on the list.

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women will meet in the Parlor at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 2. Part of the work of Families First in dealing with abuse involves children. Vickie Pait has asked Patches McQueen, Child Protection Supervisor at DSS, to present a program from her perspective in reality and efforts of prevention for abuse of children. Vickie has a full evening as she opens with a devotional and helps give time for fellowship and discussion over refreshments.

## NURTURE COMMITTEE

We have been busy with decorating for the Valentine's Dinner, hosting the reception following the Memorial Service for Vivian Beresoff on March 3rd, scheduling the six Lenten lunches, and a bereavement dinner for the family of Sybil Geary. I would like to thank the members of the committee for their willing service! I would also like to thank the crew chiefs for all of the Lenten lunches. The food has been delicious and the attendance has been great! The crew chiefs are: Shirley Kennedy, Margie Rabon, Suzanne Hall, Carolyn Hankins, Sandy Turner and the Nurture Committee. The chiefs and their helpers have all done a great job!

-- Debbie Conway, Chair

### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4<sup>th</sup> Frank Hamilton  
Phyllis Merritt  
11<sup>th</sup> Sue Wells  
Sarah Meares  
17<sup>th</sup> Sue Gore  
23<sup>rd</sup> Robin Gilmore  
Jimmy Oakley  
26<sup>th</sup> Eric Power  
Ryleigh Owens



**Lifewatch**  
Taskforce of  
United Methodists on  
Abortion and Sexuality

P.O. Box 306, Cottleville MO 63338

03/15/18  
SPECIAL REPORT:  
Human Sexuality Proposal

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 507  
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## A PROPOSAL TO REPLACE PARAGRAPH 161G) HUMAN SEXUALITY IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE (2016)

The Lifewatch community offers, to The United Methodist Church and especially to the 2019 General Conference, the following proposal as a possible replacement for Paragraph 161G) Human Sexuality found in the 2016 Book of Discipline.

Our stubborn hope is that you will read the following proposed teaching on human sexuality, and that it might sufficiently engage you to fully support it, totally reject it, be prompted to compose your own replacement proposal, or be emboldened to write an article, blog, or letter that supports reconsidering Paragraph 161G as it currently reads. In other words, under God's providence and guidance, you can use the following proposal to help more fully prepare The United Methodist Church for the 2019 General Conference.

**Thank you, in advance, for reading, considering, and responding to the following proposal.**

## A PROPOSAL TO REPLACE PARAGRAPH 161G) HUMAN SEXUALITY IN THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE (2016)

**161G) Human Sexuality**—Because the Sexual Revolution is now undermining Christian teaching on human sexuality and harming countless unsuspecting people, the Church is compelled to propose its teaching with Biblical clarity.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus speaks about marriage: “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” (Mark 10:6-9, also see Matthew 19:4-6, and NRSV here and below)

In His statement on marriage, Jesus is guided by “the beginning of creation.” (Mark 10:6) He draws twice from Genesis. First, from Genesis 1:27: “male and female he created them.” And second, from Genesis 2:24: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.” To teach on marriage, Jesus reaches back to God’s creation of humanity as male and female, and to what God intends for humanity (which is “fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness”). Furthermore, Genesis asserts: “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply....’” (Genesis 1:28) And, “God saw everything he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31a)

In His statement, Jesus indicates (among other things) the covenantal context—the marriage of a man and a woman—for sexual relations. In marriage, two people are united by God to become one. The gift of unity God gives is embodied in the marital act; that is, the union of souls is reflected in the union of bodies. This one-flesh union is so powerful and creative that it can beget a child (or children), whom the mother and father can welcome, protect, and raise.

In his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul claims the union of husband and wife is a reflection of the union of Christ and His Church. Paul writes: “‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.” (5:31-32)

Therefore, the Christian understanding of marriage and sexuality is established at creation. It is revealed in Genesis, reinforced by Jesus Christ, and depicted in Gospel terms by St. Paul. This Biblical witness to marriage, which runs throughout the canon, grounds the Church’s understanding of human sexuality.

Because of this Scriptural witness, the Church through the ages preached, taught, and practiced that sexual expression is reserved for husband and wife within the covenant of marriage. For 2,000 years, this teaching, proposed and observed with God’s grace, has been essential in helping sustain Christians in discipleship, holiness, and true freedom. This teaching has assisted Christians in rightly loving God and neighbor. The Church through the ages has also preached, taught, and practiced that sexual activities outside the marital covenant—for example, adultery, pre-marital sex, pornography-related sex, homosexual practice, and others—are indeed sins (and “incompatible with Christian teaching”); they are sins (among all other sins) for which Christ died, and for which forgiveness and freedom are available through the Gospel.

The Church’s sexual morality is considered too rigorous and even mean-spirited by many in some contemporary societies. This is not new. This has been the case since the apostolic era of the Church. However, often in spite of great cultural opposition, the Church has lovingly proposed its sexual morality to its members as a witness to the world. The Church through the ages has persisted in this difficult task because she considers this teaching to be not only faithful to the word of God, but also good for the people challenged by it and transformed by it. When this teaching is observed, marriages are strengthened; children are welcomed and nurtured; the weak are protected; the strong restrained; and all tend to flourish. When not observed, marriages are threatened and destroyed; marriage as an institution suffers; children are neglected; and the powerful generally have their way with the less powerful.

God’s faithfulness is known by God’s people through the ages and throughout the world. Because of God’s faithfulness, our faithfulness to the covenants we make—baptismal and, for many, marital—is possible.

*You are invited to respond to Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Lifewatch Editor  
902 Pinckney Street/Whiteville, NC 28472/910.642.3376/ paulstallsworth@nccumc.org.*



Whiteville United  
Methodist Church  
902 Pinckney Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 38  
WHITEVILLE, NC

**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](http://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.

Office (910) 642-3376

email: [wumc@whitevilleumc.org](mailto:wumc@whitevilleumc.org)

website: [www.whitevilleumc.org](http://www.whitevilleumc.org)

Rev. Paul T. Stallworth, Pastor