



*The Methodist Messenger*  
OCTOBER 2018  
Whiteville United Methodist Church



Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Communion Service - 6:00 p.m.

2018 HOMECOMING  
WHITEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
\*\*\*  
October 14, Sunday  
\*\*\*  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
10:00 a.m. Service of Worship with  
Rev. Bill Boykin Preaching  
11:15 a.m. (or so) Homecoming Feast in the  
Fellowship Hall  
\*\*\*  
PLEASE INVITE FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO ATTEND!

2018 CHARGE CONFERENCE  
WHITEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
\*\*\*  
October 22, Monday  
6:30 p.m.  
Parlor  
\*\*\*  
Church Council members are encouraged to attend, and  
all members and friends of the congregation  
are invited to attend.

STANDING WITH THE CHURCH CATHOLIC (UNIVERSAL)

"Pastor, what do you think the special, called 2019 General Conference should decide about the issues facing The United Methodist Church today?"

"And what do you think the 2019 General Conference will decide?"

First, a personal word. I do not respond to these questions with special knowledge or extraordinary insight. I am a sinner saved by God's grace, who happened to discern a call to ordained ministry, got through divinity school, and somehow made it through the ordination process of the North Carolina Conference. God's forgiving and transforming work has come to me, through the years, mainly through The United Methodist Church -- especially through the Word preached, the Sacraments offered, the doctrine proposed, the fellowship entered. Nothing special, nothing distinguished, here. Just very ordinary.

When ordained elder on June 7, 1981, I was presented a Bible (RSV) with this hand-written inscription: "Take thou authority to read the Holy Scriptures in the Church of God, and to preach the Word. Amen." Bishop William R. Cannon, the Raleigh Area's resident bishop at the time, signed his name under the inscription. What appears below is an attempt to respond to what the Church has asked of me.

WHAT SHOULD THE 2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE DECIDE?

The operative word in the first question is should. What should the 2019 General Conference do?

I think the next General Conference should at least maintain, or perhaps strengthen, The United Methodist Church's

current teaching on human sexuality. That teaching has been proposed, debated, amended, and adopted by past General Conferences. It is now published at Paragraph 161G in The Book of Discipline (2016, pp. 112-3). While declaring "that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God" and "that God's grace is available to all," this teaching (which can be called a Social Principle) also states that "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching." Unfortunately, this teaching, as it now reads, singles out homosexual practice as the only sexual sin. That is far from reality. That is why this pastor suggests above that this teaching could, and should, be strengthened -- that is, made more consistent with reality, written in a way that proposes sexual fidelity and declares all departures from that fidelity as sins, and therefore made more faithful to the Gospel.

Current United Methodist teaching, while unnecessarily focused exclusively on homosexual sin, is still consistent with the Bible's witness on human sexuality. Read plainly (as John Wesley might have said), the Old Testament and the New Testament clearly prohibit homosexual behavior among the People of God. But most importantly, Jesus' teaching on marriage (Matthew 19 and Mark 10) -- which draws from Genesis (chapters 1 and 2) and which directs St. Paul (Ephesians 5) -- places sexual expression solely within the covenant of one-man-one-woman-one-flesh marriage.

This Biblical witness on human sexuality has been preached, taught, and practiced by the Church and the churches for nearly 2,000 years. Often the Church's constant preaching, teaching, and practicing on human sexuality have opposed and challenged society's moral norms. The book title -- Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition (edited by S. Donald Fortson III and Rollin G. Grams, B & H Academic, 2016) -- says it briefly and best.

Reinforcing the Church's Tradition, reason discerns complementarity beautifully and constructively embodied in the marital-covenantal union between one man and one woman, in the union's sexual expression, and in the union's childbearing and childrearing. Reason also notes how sexual activity outside traditional marriage is often harmful to people involved, especially to those who are least resourceful and powerful.

Finally, Christian marriage blesses a man and a woman with the covenantal binding in which they (and their children) can experience flourishing, and growth in sacrificial love that reflects God's love on Calvary's cross. Those who remain single and refrain from sexual expression also experience growth in such sacrificial love.

The Church catholic (universal) has always been dedicated to preaching, teaching, and ordering its

life according to the Word of God. So, The United Methodist Church is dedicated to preaching, teaching, and ordering its life according to the Word of God. Therefore, to keep The United Methodist Church living into faithfulness, the 2019 General Conference should adopt the Traditional Plan.

The Traditional Plan is the only plan that would, if it is approved by General Conference 2019, maintain The United Methodist Church in teaching what the Bible and the Church's Tradition plainly propose on human sexuality. Also, if adopted by the next General Conference, the Traditional Plan would:

- \*preserve the Biblical and Traditional understanding of marriage,
- \*secure the high moral standard on human sexuality for the clergy,
- \*strengthen disciplinary responses to those proven to have violated the church's teaching and order, and
- \*allow clergy who, and congregations and annual conferences that, cannot abide by this doctrine and discipline to leave the denomination without punishment.

Again, this pastor thinks the 2019 General Conference should adopt the Traditional Plan. Why? Because only the Traditional Plan abides by the Word of God, by Biblical-Traditional teaching. The Word of God should guide General Conference, and General Conference's decisions should faithfully guide The United Methodist Church in the way of faithfulness.

Bottom line: The Word guides the Church. The Church does not guide the Word.

#### WHAT WILL THE 2019 GENERAL CONFERENCE DECIDE?

Now the operative word is will. What will General Conference decide?

This is a question related to prediction and to church politics. And when it comes to predictive politics in the Church, this pastor is notably lacking. Even so, I will venture the following guess.

I believe that the special, called 2019 General Conference will pass the Traditional Plan. Evangelical-orthodox delegates from around the world (especially from the southeastern and southwestern United States, and from Africa) will join together, form a majority, and vote in sufficient numbers for the 2019 General Conference to adopt the Traditional Plan. (Abiding by the next General Conference's decision will be a great test for the denomination.) The One Church Plan, which is favored by denominational elites (most bishops, many seminary types, many board-and-agency executives, and many high-steeple pastors), will capture the votes of "centrist" delegates who want to satisfy as many United Methodists as possible and who want maximal missions maintained. The Connectional Conference Plan (and the Simple Plan) will attract the several remaining votes.

That is my guess. And it is only a guess.

## WHY RESPOND TO THESE QUESTIONS?

Well, first of all, I am responding to these questions because a few have asked me to explain what I think and why.

Also, you, all members and friends of Whiteville United Methodist Church, have a right to know what this pastor thinks about these pressing denominational matters.

In addition, as the appointed pastor of the Whiteville Church, I have a responsibility to propose what I think. In another word, I have a responsibility to be transparent.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that the above responses will assist you in thinking through, with prayer and study and conversation, the matters at hand.

What this pastor thinks about the matters before The United Methodist Church will not directly influence the 2019 General Conference in making its decision on a denominational way forward. Even so, as the pastor of a local church, I am obligated to offer an honest word, and to encourage thought and conversation among us, on The United Methodist Church and human sexuality. This I have attempted to do.

Thank you so very much for your patience in reading to the end of this commentary.

In Christ,  
Pastor Paul

## THE GOSPEL OF GOD AS HISTORY, PROCLAMATION, DOGMA

Dr. Carl E. Braaten has much to teach the Church and all Christians. For example, in his book Either/Or: The Gospel of Neopaganism (Eerdmans, 1995), he writes: "One thousand nine hundred and sixty-three years ago by our calendar a young Jewish rabbi by the name of Jesus died in Jerusalem under the authority of Pontius Pilate. He died the excruciating death of a criminal on the cross. That is an objective historical fact. Indispensable to the gospel is the fact that at the beginning of the Christian faith stands the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, his preaching of the kingdom of God, his intimate sense of being his Abba's Son, his way of accepting social outcasts, his table fellowship with sinners, and finally his obedient suffering and death on the cross. All that is concrete historical stuff, the granite foundation of the Christian faith.

"A generation later this same person, Jesus of Nazareth, was singled out as one whom God raised from the dead. Shortly after the shocking death of this righteous rabbi from Nazareth, Jesus became the messianic subject of the missionary proclamation of the apostles. The core of the kerygma [early Christian preaching] is thus a narrative of God acting -- full of

talk of resurrection, exaltation, and enthronement -- setting in motion rich unfolding of christological [doctrine-of-Christ] confessions of Jesus as Lord and Savior, Jesus as Messiah and Son of Man, Jesus as the Logos [Word] and Son of God. This is the christological stuff that fills the earliest apostolic kerygma.

"Then about three centuries later the bishops assembled at Nicaea confessed the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ as 'God from God, Light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.' And in the middle of the next century (451 A.D.) the Council of Chalcedon coined the dogmatic formula '*vere Deus et vere homo*' [truly God and truly man]. This Christ, true God and true man, born of the Father before all time, in these last days is born of the Virgin Mary 'for us and for our salvation.' All of this is the wonderful language of doxology and dogma.

"This brief sketch shows the trajectory of the gospel of God moving from the historical Jesus to the kerygmatic [preached] Christ to the dogmatic confession [or creed about Christ] equating Jesus with God. The whole gospel of the church rests on this christological tripod -- these three interconnected legs of history, kerygma [preaching], and dogma [creed], of Jesus of Nazareth as the risen Lord and as God's only begotten Son. When one of these legs is removed, broken, or shortened in the life, worship, and witness of the church, the door of hospitality opens to pagan spirituality and alien ideology. This is what is happening in American Christianity today and in some trends of theology." (p. 9)

## RISE AGAINST HUNGER

The Rise Against Hunger event scheduled for September 29 (a Saturday) was cancelled. A new date for this meal-packing event will be scheduled later.

## UNITED METHODIST MEN

The WUMM meeting for October is scheduled for Thursday, October 4, at 6:30 p.m. at Joe's Barbecue for an opportunity to plan programs for our upcoming meetings. We invite all the men of our church for good food and fellowship.

– Brad Crowell, President

Remember that  
the Wednesday Evening  
Services of Holy Communion  
have been moved  
from 6:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Again, Communion begins at 6:00 p.m.

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

A planning meeting for Operation Christmas Child (OCC) will be held on Tuesday, October 9, at 6:00 p.m. in the Parlor. OCC Collection Week is from Monday, November 12, to Monday, November 19. I am working this year and I need help from our church to make sure that our collection hours are covered. During this meeting we will discuss training for the volunteers that will be collecting shoe boxes from the community. Last year, we took in almost 2,000 shoe boxes. We have to keep detailed records of where all the shoe boxes originated, and also pack OCC cartons and record how many shoe boxes are in each carton. These are just a couple of the responsibilities that we, as an OCC Drop Off Location, are responsible for during collection week. Thank you for all your support and help with this ministry. Please contact Wendy Hood at 910-840-1527.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Preparations are being made for our annual Homecoming which will be on Sunday, October 14, at the Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

Suzanne Hall and her youth Sunday School Class are distributing printed invitations to church members to this special day that can be shared with friends and family by postal mail or, better yet, by hand delivery. These cards are also available in the Narthex on Sundays. We encourage everyone to spread the word so others can plan to share this day with us. This year we are fortunate to have Reverend Bill Boykin, a former pastor of WUMC, as our guest speaker.

We welcome all visitors to join us for a covered-dish meal in the Fellowship Hall after the Worship Service.

The Worship Committee will meet again on Thursday, November 1, at 5:00 p.m. in the Pastor's Study.  
– Betty Gray, Chair

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

We have had a wonderful start of the school year with the youth of our church! We have joined forces with the youth group from First Presbyterian Church in Whiteville. Our first meeting was hosted by a family from First Presbyterian at Lake Waccamaw. We swam, tubed, celebrated a birthday, ate lunch, and fellowshiped the afternoon away with our new friends. Everyone had a great time. Adults and youth alike were blessed for it! The very same group of youth and adults volunteered to clean yards of elderly folks after the storm.

We look forward to our next meetings to be hosted by our church on Sunday, October 14, and October 28 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. We will provide food and the devotion/activity for these two Sundays. Please

help spread the word about the exciting new changes to our youth group and invite your friends to join us! Thanks to everyone who supports us through prayer and deed. You are helping to provide our youth with the tools needed to make sound, spiritual life choices.

– Heather LaMora

## HANDBELLS

Rehearsals will be held every other Sunday afternoon from 4:30 - 5:45 p.m., coinciding with UMYF meetings. We are now meeting in the classroom across from the Fellowship Hall and invite any interested ringers to join us October 14 and 28. Please contact Heather LaMora with any questions at 910-770-1157.

## NURTURE COMMITTEE

The Nurture Committee met on Monday, August 20, to work on our portion of the budget for 2019. We also discussed coming events in the fall season, especially Homecoming. We hope everyone has weathered the storm with God's help and that our community is able to heal physically and mentally! May we all experience a renewed strength of spirit as summer winds down and fall activities resume. Our love to all of you!  
– Debbie Conway, Chair

### "UNITED METHODIST POLITY" A Lay Servant Ministry Advanced Course

October 27/Saturday  
9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Epworth United Methodist Church  
Clinton, NC

Please register at the Harbor District website.

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Ralph Huffman      |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Benjamin Deans     |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Eric Pait          |
|                  | Gina Deans         |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> | Vickie Pait        |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | Kenneth Smith      |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | John Kennedy       |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> | Jan Avant          |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Gus Cothorn        |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> | Wayne Overcash     |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> | Debra McGougan     |
|                  | Frank Walters      |
|                  | Nathan Diefes      |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | Katie & Emory Ward |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> | Peggy Huffman      |

October 2018

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY | SATURDAY   |
|--|---|---|---|--|--------|--|
|  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4<br>6:30 p.m. UMM/Joe's Barbeque                      | 5      | 6  |
| 7<br>9:00 a.m. Sunday School<br>10:00 a.m. Worship   | 8<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>6:30 p.m. UMW<br>7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts                               | 9<br>9:00 a.m. Basic Computer/Fellowship Hall<br><br>6:00 p.m. Operation Christmas Child Meeting/Parlor<br>7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts | 10<br>9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor<br><br>6:00 p.m. Holy Communion<br>7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal | 11<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>6:15 p.m. Bible Study | 12     | 13   |
| 14 <i>Homecoming Sunday</i><br>9:00 a.m. Sunday School<br>10:00 a.m. Worship:<br>Rev.Bill Boykin Preaching<br>11:15 a.m. Homecoming Feast<br><br>4:30 - 5:45 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal<br>6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Youth | 15<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br>11:00 a.m. Sunshine Circle/Fellowship Hall<br><br>7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts | 16<br>9:00 a.m. Basic Computer/Fellowship Hall<br><br>7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts  | 17<br>9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor<br><br>6:00 p.m. Holy Communion<br>7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal | 18<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>6:15 p.m. Bible Study | 19     | 20   |
| 21<br>9:00 a.m. Sunday School<br>10:00 a.m. Worship  | 22<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>6:30 p.m. Charge Conference/Parlor<br>7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts         | 23<br>9:00 a.m. Basic Computer/Fellowship Hall<br><br>7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts  | 24<br>9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor<br><br>6:00 p.m. Holy Communion<br>7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal | 25<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>6:15 p.m. Bible Study | 26     | 27<br>9 a.m. - 5 p.m. "UM Polity" at Epworth UMC/Clinton |
| 28<br>9:00 a.m. Sunday School<br>10:00 a.m. Worship<br><br>4:30 - 5:45 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal<br>6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Youth   | 29<br>10:00 a.m. Exercise<br><br>7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts   | 30<br>9:00 a.m. Basic Computer/Fellowship Hall<br><br>7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts  |   |  |        |  |

Greeters: 7<sup>th</sup> - Linda and Wayne Overcash; 14<sup>th</sup> - Florence Marlowe; 21<sup>st</sup> - Ann Pait; 28<sup>th</sup> - Ann Worthington; Alternates - Peggy and Ralph Huffman.

Soundboard Workers: 7<sup>th</sup> - Suzanne Hall; 14<sup>th</sup> - Lynne Inman; 21<sup>st</sup> - Darryl Diefes; 28<sup>th</sup> - Terry and Kathy Simmons.

Acolytes: TBA



Whiteville United  
Methodist Church  
902 Pinckney Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

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

Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant  
Monday-Thursday/9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.\  
12 noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch

Mr. Layton Dowless, Custodian  
Monday-Friday/7:30-12:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer  
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

Office (910) 642-3376  
email: [wumc@whitevilleumc.org](mailto:wumc@whitevilleumc.org)  
website: [www.whitevilleumc.org](http://www.whitevilleumc.org)  
Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Pastor

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.