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*REACHING OUT, GROWING CLOSE, CHANGING LIVES THROUGH JESUS CHRIST*

## **The Beacon July/August 2018**



### **Office Hours**

Monday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm

### *From the Pastor's Desk . . .*

NOTE: Our custom during the summer is to have a combined newsletter for July and August and to release the September edition near the end of August. Have a good summer!

### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018**

In this issue of the *The Beacon*, I am going to use my 'From the Pastor's Desk' article to give you a review of what happened at Annual Conference 2018. First, I want to thank my dad for taking me to the The Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel which is a great hotel and place for us to have annual conference. Our three-day conference was a yawner as we took no votes until the last day where we approved the budget, passed or tabled various motions, and so on. It was the contentious executive session (the clergy-only meeting) that brought any excitement or purpose to our being there and because it went on and on it required us to have a second meeting at the end of the first day of the conference, ending after 11:00 pm (which got in the way of me watching the Capitals game!). We also, of course, have the ordination service, the memorial service for deceased clergy and lay members, Bible study, and worship. The vast majority of our time during business sessions is focused on greeting guests and listening to presentations. As I and many others observed, the conference seemed almost lifeless this year with the exception of the executive session and one other presentation, which might in part explain why it was fairly lifeless. You can go to our conference's website and read a news article from the conference staff that reviews what went on and also see some pictures of the festivities. So I will focus on the only real important part of the conference which indeed did bring it life.

As most of you are aware, The United Methodist Church for quite some time has been struggling with the issue of homosexual sex and whether or not it is sinful. In fact, since 1972 at every General Conference, and during my 30+ years of going to Annual Conference every year, we argue about homosexual sex. What is interesting about this is our Book of Discipline is clear that a self-avowed practicing homosexual cannot be ordained as a minister and the self-avowed practicing homosexual lives his or her life in a way that is incompatible with the Christian life. Up until we allowed same-sex marriage in this country, the call to all clergy to be faithful in marriage or celibate in singleness took care of this. The only option to have sex is with a person of the opposite sex that you have married. For the third year in a row our Board of Ordained Ministry has tried to get one or two people in the process to be ordained who are married to someone of their own gender. Our judicial

council has ruled that the Board of Ordained Ministries cannot ignore this issue, must ask about it, and if someone is married to someone of the same gender they are considered to be a self-avowed practicing homosexual and are ineligible for ordination or to enter the process.

Everyone at conference who cared to know was aware that we had two candidates for ministry who are married to people of the same gender. (Remember it does not matter how you feel about this, the job of the conference is to enforce the rules of our church.) The Board of Ordained Ministry who has the job of screening these people knew they were married to people of their own gender and yet did not mention it and presented them as ready to enter the process. A friend of mine, Rev. John Rudisill, went to the microphone to object which resulted in our Bishop having to rule that the two candidates could not go forward (a correct decision). She made it clear though that she is pro-gay and thinks the rules are wrong. The worst part of this whole kabuki dance was how the pro-gay forces, the chair of the board, and others made it sound like my friend John, and people like him and me who think the rules should be enforced, are the bad guys. The two candidates knew they were in violation of our rules, the Board of Ordained Ministry knew they were in violation of our rules, the Bishop knew what they were doing and yet they had not been stopped from moving forward; and so we stopped it.

Something is very wrong with our clergy and conference leadership when something like this is allowed to get this far when it wasn't a secret and clearly, as the Bishop eventually ruled, it was against our rules that every clergy person has promised to uphold. The solution is simple to the pro-gay forces--get our rules changed and then proceed. Until then, though, they should honor the promise they made to God and the church to uphold the rules of our church. This year at Annual Conference our Board of Ordained Ministry clearly did not honor this promise, but praise be to God that our Bishop did. When a portion of our church undermines our covenant, breaks rules, tries to conceal what they are doing it should be no surprise at the level of dysfunction of our denomination and at the lack of trust between the local church and the conference, clergy with clergy and so on. I believe it was Jesus who said that a house divided cannot stand. So what are we to do?

This leads me to the other way homosexuality dominated our annual conference and that is we heard a presentation on the Commission on the Way Forward. In February 2019, the General Conference will have a special session to discuss three proposals on how our denomination will go forward. I believe that their recommendation will have to be voted in 2020 and take effect on January 1, 2021. (I could be wrong, but I believe that having a special session is very unusual.) One of the three proposals is that we will not change our current stance on self-avowed practicing homosexuals. (Which is the traditional biblical position and I challenge anyone to find a pro-gay passage in the Bible. I can find several passages that condemn homosexual behavior and many, many texts that supports marriage between a man and a woman.) The second one is to allow Annual Conferences to completely normalize homosexuality in our denomination allowing self-avowed practicing homosexuals to be ordained and for same-sex weddings to be held in our churches. Other Annual Conferences might choose a different course, but all Annual Conferences will be free to decide. The third is the proposal the Council of Bishops has recommended and our own Annual Conference voted 310-233 to support, is one where we will remove the language on self-avowed practicing homosexual lifestyle being incompatible with the Christian faith and remove the language prohibiting the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals and prohibiting same-sex weddings from being held in our churches. Note that no church or pastor will be forced to do something they personally disagree with, but for all intents and purposes, The United Methodist

Church will be not simply allowing, but advocating this in our denomination. (I also wonder how long this provision of protection will be upheld, not long I fear.)

As we go forward in this process, at some point as a church we will have to discuss where we will be in this new 'One Church' or whatever the decision is, how it will work, and what it means for us as we wait to see if it will be adopted. I simply ask for you to pray for The United Methodist Church as it goes through this process and that God's will be done.

The Bible study portion of the annual conference was okay, but the second of the two sessions was poorly attended. The speaker repeated herself in the second session covering the same ground as the first session. It was more preaching than study with the exception of the two times we were told to talk for one minute with someone sitting near you. We have had much better Bible study leaders in the past.

One final observation about the conference. This was the most classical dominated, at times almost operatic, the music and singing has ever been at conference. Not a complaint or praise, just an observation. I did read a whole book while at Annual Conference which is my goal every year to make sure I get something out of my time spent there. I read the book, What are they saying about the Apocalypse and I enjoyed it. (Yes, another book to help me prepare to teach my Revelation class.) It is essentially a review of the major scholarship on the Book of Revelation, a kind of insiders review which will help guide me to and through the other books I am reading on Revelation. Finally, I want to thank my dad for coming and getting me to take me home from conference. Always my favorite part of the conference!

If you have any questions about Annual Conference I will be happy to try and answer them.

Your fellow servant of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ,

*Glen*

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## **MISSIONS CORNER**

The Missions we are highlighting this month are: India & Martha Lydia Circle

***International Outreach Support.*** In addition to all the great missions that our Cedar Grove congregation supports locally, we also are proud to provide our support in sharing God's Word and love to other areas of the world through our support of the Lannings and their church planting efforts in India. We are pleased to support this wonderful mission and we ask that you continue to pray for their efforts in making new disciples for Christ.

***The Martha Lydia Circle.*** This women's group gets things done! They support the church in so many wonderful ways! They hold soup, bake, craft, vendor, and yard sales throughout the year. They faithfully donate their time and money to the church's events, missions, youth trips, and many worthy causes! They lead and serve in a caring, generous Christ-like way. The Martha Lydia Circle meets the second Monday of the month at 10:00 am in the Church parlor. For information, please contact Linda Keiffer at 410-867-8302 or by email at [lskeiffer@comcast.net](mailto:lskeiffer@comcast.net).



## CHURCH NEWS

**Nominations Committee:** Depending upon when our Charge/Church Conference is scheduled this year, the Nominations Committee might start its work this summer. As always we will have vacancies to fill on the various committees of the church: Trustees (building/grounds/safety), SPRC (issues involving the pastor and staff), Nominations (nominating people to serve on committees and leadership positions), Sunday/Sanctuary (to keep the sanctuary stocked and staff the various supporting jobs like usher, greeter, nursery, etc.), and Mission (outreach into the community, nation, and world). If you have an interest in serving on one of these committees, please let Pastor Glen know. We currently have a vacancy on the Trustees and on the Sunday/Sanctuary Committee and if you are interested you can start serving on these committees as soon as you are elected by the Church Council. All the other positions will not start until 1/1/2019. We elect people to 3-year terms. If you have any questions about any of this please contact Pastor Glen.

**Scripture Readers on Sunday mornings!** It has been great having some different voices read the Scripture on Sunday mornings. We would love to have even more voices. If you are interested there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and if you do sign up we will send you the reading electronically or inform you over the phone as to what the reading is. If you find the reading to be too difficult (length or hard to pronounce names) you can always let Pastor Glen know you have changed your mind. So please sign-up.

**New Members Class:** If you are interested in joining the church please let Pastor Glen know.

The **Tuesday morning Bible study meets at 10am** and is studying the Gospel of Luke and if you would like to come please do. We have usually 15-17 people present and have room for more. If you have any questions contact Pastor Glen.

Yes, the rumors are true! **The once a month Bible Study will study the Book of Revelation** during the September 2018 to May 2019 period (this can be your first lesson... it's the Book of Revelation, not the Book of Revelations). This class will study every chapter of the book, look at all the various ways of understanding it including how it has been understood through the history of the church, learn the meaning of words like *pre-millennial*, *eschatology*, *apocalyptic*, *mid-tribulation*, *rapture*, and other such words that get bantered about in discussions of this book. We will also look at what Jesus says in the Gospels about His return, the impact of the Old Testament on the Book of Revelation, and other important topics. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex and you can sign-up to attend either the Monday morning 10am class (always held on the Monday the day before the third Tuesday of the month) or the Tuesday evening class at 7pm (always the third Tuesday of the month). If you have any questions about this class, please contact Pastor Glen.

**Note: If Christ returns before the first class, the class is cancelled!**

**Family Movie Night is going Old School** for July & August:

- Friday, July 13 at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. *Showing:* "The Goonies."
- Friday, August 10 at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. *Showing:* "The Princess Bride."

Movie night is FREE and all ages are welcome! As always, our movie night snack bar will be open selling pizza, popcorn, candy, and sodas. Everything is \$1.00 or less. If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Crine at [sweetbooboo16@aol.com](mailto:sweetbooboo16@aol.com).



### Need for Sunday Help - Sandra Burns

Are you interested in getting to know your Cedar Grove Church family better? How about helping Jesus spread His word or performing some of His works? Sign up today to provide support before or during church services. The Sanctuary/Sunday Committee was established to provide an opportunity to show your support for your Church and let people get to know each other better. These Committee Leaders are available to help you fulfill the following duties:

Greeters - Alice Rohrer  
Nursery - Debbie Huffman  
Ushers - Randy Smith  
Sanctuary - Ida Mae Williams, Marjorie Johnson, and Sandy Burns

Signup sheets are located in the Narthax. Please contact us if you have any questions. I can be reached at [sandraburns87@gmail.com](mailto:sandraburns87@gmail.com), 410-867-7897, or 301-792-9091.

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### Reestablishing our "Handyman" Members - Vicki Marsh

In times past, I have been told that we had an in-house list of members ready and willing to assist those in need of small home repairs. I see a need for renewing of this project.

We need to establish a list of members willing to assist our senior members with small home repairs such as: gutters cleaned twice a year, leaf raking twice a year, fixing loose shingles, yard weeding, electrical lights repaired, nail pops, touch up painting, and window repairs to name a few.

I am requesting that those interested in adding their name to a "HandyMan" List contact me, Vicki Marsh at 410-867-0967 or at [vicki.marsh@AOL.com](mailto:vicki.marsh@AOL.com). I'll be waiting to hear from you. Your church family needs your help. I can coordinate the helper with the "helpee" with time and place where you would be needed and what assistance would be required. You will not be contacted by anyone but me as the coordinator. I will arrange a date and time beneficial between both parties.

This is a long overdue program and the need is great. So, choose to help your senior church family.



## **BOOK CORNER**



### **Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation**

Arthur Wainwright Wipf & Stock 1993 293pgs

As I prepare to teach the Book of Revelation in the once a month Bible study starting in September, I am reading plenty of books on the topic in preparation. Wainwright's book came highly recommended as a book to prepare for such a study so I bought it and read it. It is important to first know that while the book is about interpreting the Book of Revelation, it is a history and catalogue of techniques that have and are used to interpret the Revelation. So this book doesn't take you through chapter by chapter, verse by verse and tell you what they mean according to Wainwright, rather it is a book that traces the history of how people have approached the topic, the whole book, and portions of the book over history.

Since the notes, Bibliography, and indices begin around page 231, just about the first half of the book (to page 107) tells the story from the time of the earliest Christians to today and the different ways people have interpreted the book. The book covers a huge number of interpreters and you will quickly see the many different ways the Book of Revelation has been approached and understood. Who is the Anti-Christ, for example, has been interpreted by some as being the Pope, a Roman emperor, Adolf Hitler, and so on. What will cause the end? It was popular at one time to think it would be a nuclear exchange between the USA and the USSR. Consider the four horsemen of the Apocalypse traditionally understood to be war, strife, death, and famine. One medieval interpreter, based on the colors of the horses, said the white horse is the pope (who rivals Jesus for loyalty), the red horse the cardinals (who wore red), the black were the Dominican Monks (they wore black robes) and the gray horse was the Franciscan Monks (they wore gray).

The second section of the book addresses different critical techniques to interpret the Book of Revelation and is about one fourth of the book. It will introduce you to the historical critical, mythological, literary, and social science approaches. Finally, this section considers how theology can inform the way we look at the book.

The last section of the book before a brief conclusion considers the Book of Revelation and its impact on the church, nations, culture, spirituality, and worship. Also this section shows how the book has been used in attempts to transform society.

I would like every Christian to read this book and realize how many ways Revelation has been and can be interpreted. Now this is not the book to read if you want to systematically go through a study of the Book of Revelation. In the next newsletter, I will probably briefly review three or four books for you to consider if that is what you are after. (For those of you who can't wait, I just finished reading Merrill Tenney's dated (1957) Interpreting Revelation which has a 60-page commentary on Revelation along with excellent chapters about the language, symbolism, theology, and different interpretive approaches to the book. Tenney has a definite preference for what he thinks is right but is open to the other views and is fair in his analysis of them.)

These two books together would give you an excellent preparation for the class or for your own study of Revelation.

*Pastor Glen Arnold*

# FREE BREAKFASTS

## FOR KIDS IN DEALE, CHURCHTON, WEST RIVER & SHADY SIDE THIS SUMMER!!

- WHAT:** Breakfast Club has been serving kids in South County for 10 summers!
- WHEN:** Parents can schedule to pick up a weekly breakfast bag on **Wednesday evenings** (5.30-7pm) starting on Thursday, July 5 (due to the Independence Day holiday) - Wednesday, August 22, 2018
- WHERE:** Cedar Grove United Methodist Church in Deale
- WHO:** All kids/families who are in need of a nutritional breakfast over the summer months
- HOW:** No forms to fill out or qualification/proof needed! For more information, please call 410-867-7417.

Just give us your name, phone # and the # of kids in your household and we will have your bag waiting for you! (We will also provide back-to-school backpacks, so if you'd like those, then we will just need the first name and grade your child will be entering)

**OTHER LOCATIONS:** Mt. Zion UMC provides daily breakfast distribution June 18-Aug 17 (Mon-Fri) in Lothian - for more information, please call 410-867-4035

