



Messenger

Uniondale United Methodist Church September - October 2022

5867 N. Main St.
P. O. Box 115

Uniondale, IN 46791

Pastor Karen Ottjes
260-228-3634

Website: www.uniondaleumc.com

E-mail: kottjes@gmail.com

 UniondaleUnitedMethodistChurch

Sunday Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School – 10:15 a.m.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, September 4 –	Communion Sunday
Monday, September 5 –	Labor Day
Saturday, September 11 –	Never Forget! -- Sunday School starts
Sunday, September 18 –	Food Bank Sunday-bring your food items
Saturday, September 24 –	Wells County UMC Cluster popsicle distribution at Bluffton Street Fair – 1 PM
Sunday, September 25 –	Kids Changing the World-bring your change
Saturday, October 1 –	Faith Circle and Men's Group 9 AM
Sunday, October 2 –	Communion Sunday-World Communion Sun
Sunday, October 16 –	Food Bank Sunday-bring your food items
Sunday, October 23 –	Charge Conference-@Markle UMC-6 PM
Sunday, October 30 –	Kids Changing the World-bring your change
Monday, October 31 –	Trick or Treat Event - TBA



September and October Birthdays and Anniversaries

September

- 6 – Mindi Herstad
- 14 – Elaine McAfee
- 24 – Kim & Sue Chaney
- 30 – Gerry & Linda Houtz

October

- 3 – Bonny Nelson
- 18 – Linda Houtz



hello fall



****Don't forget****

- * Save your pop tabs and can tabs for Riley's Children's Hospital. Collection can at the back of the church.
- * Save your change for Children Changing the World on the last Sunday of each month.
- * To sign up for CHURCH DUTIES on sheets at back table.

A Word from Our Pastor

Jim and I had a great time on our cruise around the inside passage of Alaska. We saw the awesome mountains, glaciers and learned about the history of the areas we visited. As is our habit, we selected one excursion at each of our cruise stops. We took a trip on the White Pass Scenic Railway, a narrow-gauge train built during the Klondike Gold Rush, through some of the rugged terrain near Skagway. At Icy Strait Point we took a transporter ride up a mountain top and back down watching the mountains and the waters below, and then were treated to a tribal dance and some history about the area. We spent one morning on the ship making a 360° turn in Glacier Bay while a National Park Ranger onboard explained the glaciers, the animals and the sea creatures in the area. We ended our trip with a visit to the Space Needle and the Pike Place (open-air farmer's) market in Seattle. This was an incredible vacation trip for us – enjoyably unique.

Fall is almost here and the students and teachers are back in school. Sunday School starts the second Sunday in September 11th. Madison has moved into a dormitory at Grace College. But the thing that we'll be missing most this fall is live music in the sanctuary: Samuel is doing a worship leadership internship at a church in Denver, Colorado. He's planning to be back with us for his final semester at Huntington University in January. Pray that he does well and learns a lot during this "hands on" learning time. Pray also for all teachers, students, teacher's aides, kitchen staff, bus drivers, counselors, nurses, coaches, janitors, office workers, principals, and superintendents.

If summer activities or vacations have gotten you out of your usual Bible reading and devotional routine, this is a good time to get back into it. While we may slack off on feeding our spirit by meeting together weekly in worship, God never takes a break or a vacation from desiring to have some daily one-on-one time with us to renew our spirits. God is available to us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – always and everywhere. Pick up your July – August *Upper Room* devotional guide and read the centerfold (p.40-41) article, "Kindness of Strangers." It talks about the way Christians, by their kind, caring actions, have shown others that they are valued and loved. It makes a difference in the recipients' lives as well as your own.

Take some time in the coming week to meditate on the words of this hymn.

1. Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.
2. With grateful joy and holy fear true charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and strength now love Christ in return.
6. Love can exclude no race or creed if honored be God's name;
our common life embraces all whose Maker is the same.

"Where Charity and Love Prevail," translated from 9th cent. Latin by Omer Westendorf, #549 *UM Hymnal*

Shalom, Pastor Karen <><



Committee News

EMM

Sunday school resumes on September 11. Youth Sunday school news-starting the new fall quarter of Celebrate Wonder with the mystery box. You will have to ask Allison what was in it each week! The adult class will be continuing study using the Upper Room. We will be coordinating our Trick or Treat event with the town's party. More Information later.

Faith Circle

The first meeting after the summer break will be on October 1 at 9 AM, details to follow. The men's group will also meet at the same time.

Wells County Cluster

The Wells County Cluster met on Monday, August 8, 2022, at Boehmer UMC at 6:30 PM. At the meeting the Cluster planned popsicle distribution during the Bluffton Street Fair to take place on Saturday, September 24. Each church or partner-cluster church is encouraged to collect popsicles and distribute them at a location of their own choosing to anyone who comes by and tell them why you're doing it. The Cluster also decided that during the next couple months each church should plan a helping ministry project for people in need such as at low-income housing units, women's shelter, rehab center, etc.



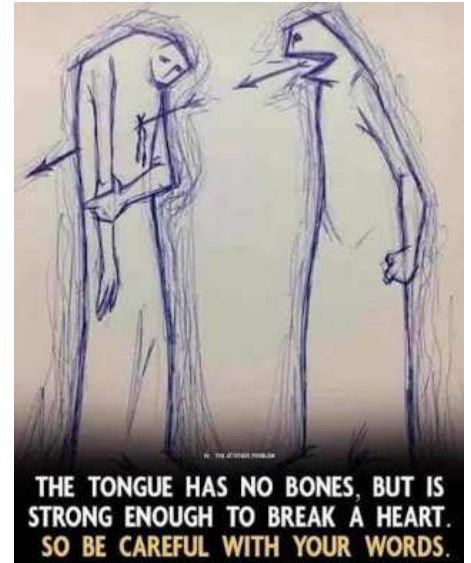
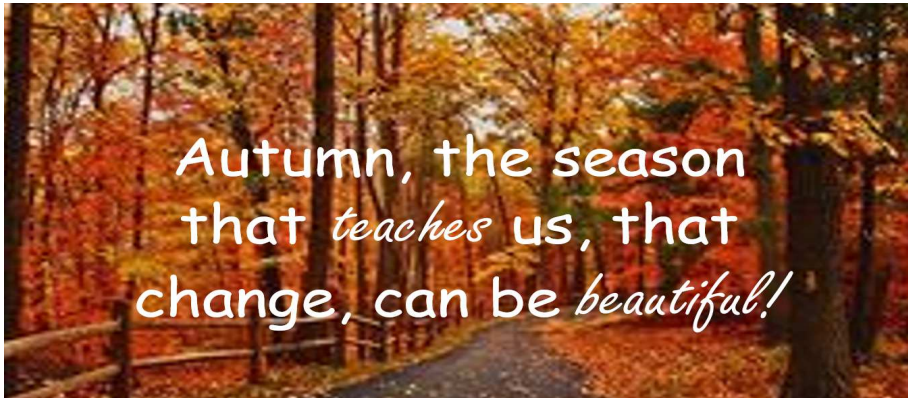
Please remember

Barb Cook
100 Caylor Blvd. Apt. #100
Bluffton, IN 46714

Gary Cook
Markle Health & Rehabilitation
170 N. Tracy Street
Markle, IN 46770

Jeanette Gilbert
Golden Apple Unit
Christian Care
720 East Dustman Rd.
Bluffton, IN 46714
Or Mail to: c/o Jill Martin
2172 E US 224
Ossian, IN 46777

Margaret Hasler
37446 Carson
Farmington Hills, MI 48331



Treasurer's Report

August 2022 Budget Summary	August Actual	August Budget	August Variance	Year to date Actual	Year to date Budget	Year to date Variance
TOTAL INCOME	3,248.46	4,667.58	(1,419.12)	32,760.54	37,340.64	(4,580.10)
TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES	2,661.12	3,834.21	1,173.09	30,609.31	31,507.01	341.12
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	587.34	833.37		2,151.23	5,833.63	



MORE ON MISINFORMATION

By Thomas Lambrecht

It is important to have accurate information about all the issues surrounding disaffiliation in order to make good decisions. Last week, we explored the information shared by UM Communications in a post called “Is the United Methodist Church really ...? (Part I).” We covered the status of our doctrinal standards in United Methodism today, the reality of separation, and whether it is likely that traditionalists will have a respected voice in a post-separation UM Church.

Today’s post deals with issues particularly related to the church’s stance on marriage and human sexuality. You can find this information in Part II of the UM Communications blog series.

Changes to the UM Church’s Stance

The UM Communications piece rightly notes that the advent of separation does not immediately change the policies of The United Methodist Church, which are set by the General Conference. However, as we noted last week with regard to doctrine, the fact that the UM Church has policies on paper does not necessarily mean that those policies are being followed.

Based on their resistance to the actions of the 2019 General Conference reaffirming the church’s traditional teachings, and in keeping with the proposed *Protocol* moratorium on complaints and charges, some bishops and annual conferences have disregarded the denomination’s stance that marriage is only between one man and one woman. They have allowed (and in some cases explicitly permitted) clergy to perform same-sex weddings and have commissioned or ordained non-celibate gays and lesbians as clergy.

The UM Communications piece maintains that the majority of U.S. annual conferences are not “ignoring or refusing to implement the *Discipline’s* statements, restrictions, and requirements regarding practicing homosexuals and same-sex weddings.” Following the 2019 General Conference, 26 annual conferences in the U.S. (more than half) passed resolutions repudiating the General Conference actions. Some explicitly stated they would not follow the *Discipline*, while at least a half-dozen conferences ordained openly gay clergy. The Iowa Conference began explicitly permitting same-sex weddings in January of this year. The Western Jurisdiction bishops publicly stated that they will not “withhold or challenge ordination based on a candidate’s gender identity or sexual orientation,” nor will they “punish clergy who celebrate the marriage of two adults of any gender or sexual orientation.” A number of annual conference boards of ministry have said they will no longer consider a candidate’s sexual orientation or inquire about their relationship status.

The UM Communications piece rightly points out that the *Discipline* does not prohibit ordination based on “sexual orientation or gender identity.” But the piece fails to reckon with the fact that this language has been used over the years as code for disregarding not only the orientation of a person, but also their practices. Boards of ministry have demonstrated that when they talk about ignoring sexual orientation, they also mean they will ignore whether the candidate is or is not in a same-sex marriage or relationship.

UM Communications points out that bishops do not punish in the complaint process, so they are not ignoring the *Discipline*. Again, the piece fails to reckon with the fact that bishops control the complaint process, deciding whether to process a complaint or dismiss it.

Whether or not a majority of conferences are now ignoring the *Discipline*, a significant number are. This has resulted in a *de facto* change in the denomination’s standards in those conferences.

Will the UM Church “drop all prohibitions related to human sexuality at its next General Conference in 2024?” The UM Communications piece states, “all of these kinds of proposals have come before General Conferences in the past. And all have been defeated, every time. At present, there do not appear to be enough shifts in the makeup of the delegations to the General Conference in 2024 to conclude that any of these proposals will pass.”

As many have noted, the margin for passing the Traditional Plan in 2019 was fairly narrow. The shift of only 28 delegates would have changed the outcome. The election of delegates in 2019 for the 2020 General Conference saw a definite shift, with an increase in progressive delegates elected in the U.S. Whether or not it would have resulted in the 2020 General Conference changing the church’s stance, it would have been a very close vote.

Looking ahead to 2024, it seems likely there will be new elections of delegates. And this time, many traditionalist members of annual conference – both clergy and lay – will be missing because they have disaffiliated. This could result in the election of a much more progressive delegation in the U.S. Maintaining the current stance of the church is not as assured an outcome as UM Communications seems to think.

Drag Queen Clergy?

UM Communications states that the UM Church is not ordaining drag queens. This comes from a situation in the Vermillion River District of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, where the district committee on ministry voted unanimously to certify

a candidate for ordained ministry who identifies as a non-practicing homosexual but preaches under the drag name Ms. Penny Cost for the purpose of evangelizing people of many sexual and gender identities.

UM Communications accurately notes there is no prohibition in the *Discipline* against a person performing in drag from being considered for ordained ministry. One might question the wisdom of having a candidate for ministry who does so, independently of whether or not it is prohibited in the *Discipline*.

The piece asserts that certification as a candidate is the beginning step of what normally is a five to eight-year process toward ordination. It states that, until a person is commissioned by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the clergy session of an annual conference, they cannot preside at sacraments or at weddings. However, a district committee can license a candidate as a local pastor, which does not require the approval of the clergy session. Licensed local pastors can preside at sacraments and weddings in the church they serve.

Given the previous unanimous support of the district committee, it seems likely that this candidate who preaches in drag could be appointed to serve a church as a licensed local pastor, while continuing the process toward ordination.

Worship of a “Queer God?”

The UM Communications piece brings up an incident at Duke Divinity School, one of the official United Methodist seminaries. A student group at the seminary led a Pride worship service in the chapel affirming LGBTQ+ identities and practices and identifying God as “queer” or “strange one, fabulous one, fluid, and ever-becoming one.” According to the article, one participant stated that God is “drag queen, and transman, and gender-fluid.”

The piece notes that a student-led service in the chapel does not necessarily reflect the official position of the seminary or of the UM Church. It identifies one of the students named in the article as a candidate for United Methodist ministry. However, two other students in the article also interned at Duke Memorial UM Church.

The issue here is not that one worship service represents the official teaching of a particular seminary. Rather, this is one example of how many official United Methodist seminaries have a climate of advocacy for affirming LGBTQ+ identities and practices that often morphs into a re-imagining or distortion of our understanding of God in line with gay categories. “Queer theology” is an academic discipline found at some of our seminaries that seeks to reinterpret Christian faith in light of the experiences of gay and gender non-binary people. “Pride” worship services have become commonplace at the various seminaries.

Students preparing for ministry in the UM Church are often enculturated into the affirmation of LGBTQ+ identities. Many of them support having non-celibate gays and lesbians in ordained ministry and the ability to perform same-sex weddings. These students become pastors who go into their churches as advocates for LGBTQ+ affirmation. The unanimous support of the Vermillion River District committee for a gay man preaching in drag is evidence for this viewpoint. After 20-30 years of this kind of education in many of our seminaries, the result is a clergy that is much more progressive than the laity of our church. These clergy have led their congregations into a more affirming stance, leading to annual conferences that have become more affirming, and eventually to the anticipated change in our denominational policies regarding the definition of marriage and the qualifications for ordination.

Traditionalist United Methodists see this trajectory as an indication that the church is on the wrong track. We do not support this direction of the church, and it is one of the reasons we believe separation is a necessary option for congregations and clergy. If the bus is headed toward a destination where you do not want to go, it may be time to get off the bus.

Our desire is not to mischaracterize The United Methodist Church or mislead anyone seeking to understand the likely futures represented by the options available. If one wants to belong to a denomination that affirms the 3,000-year-old understanding of marriage as between man and woman, the Global Methodist Church would be a likely option. If one wants to belong to a church that is increasingly affirming of LGBTQ+ identities and relationships, The United Methodist Church would be a likely option.

The underlying message of the official communications from the denomination seems to be: “nothing is going to change; traditionalists are welcome in the UM Church; there is no need to push a decision now; wait until after General Conference 2024.” Unfortunately, as I explained last week, the deadline for disaffiliation right now is December 31, 2023. It is uncertain what the 2024 General Conference will do when it comes to pathways for congregations or conferences to disaffiliate. We hope they will enact a fair and equitable pathway, but there is no guarantee. And for many traditionalists, waiting two more years will only further weaken their congregation and delay their ability to focus single-mindedly on the mission of their church.

There is no need to demean or distort what others stand for. Rather, it should be in the interest of all to accurately portray the directions taken by various denominational alternatives. These two blog posts have hopefully clarified where traditionalists stand vis-à-vis the direction that United Methodism is taking. Individuals and congregations can weigh their options in light of the available information and choose their future as the Lord leads.

Help the squirrel through the maze to find its acorns



AUTUMN



QLWEJMEDIRYAHKZBNUTCVP
 HNPGBITSCUETSORFDROSAM
 RBSAZDEPQNJVWVGXTLEKFH
 YQUILTKJFUBHOAECOLQDBS
 AKXLCVNREDIPSLMRBHUZIF
 VWDOEJAPBGZRQHFASMITYC
 MOGFTWLEVSNNBRUTNIANPHQ
 XRVRAKBZJCHILEPBUFOGWN
 TCEJRHS AUQS YGWLKOSXHDM
 DEHAGLIUMTFEBNOSRNEJPU
 SRJCIQPNOHV LUCADMEFOKT
 GAFKMJDLTUCSEONHLPBIXU
 UCRETAEWSPDFMWZIBCOHNR
 JSMTPNFCZROIFWYAQHDILUE
 IDYUNSEVAELZCRHPOKMQSB
 BZRAKEQHDMXNRESJPICETO
 EILSHYCBGUKOPTDMFLARLZ
 PFRQYROTXZWNBULASEMID
 WXBDOJHARVESTPCIOQYSNL
 LHZMSIJFWORCAQYNKB PUGX

- | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| apples | colorful | frost | pumpkin | squash |
| autumn | cozy | harvest | quilt | squirrel |
| birds | crow | hayride | rake | sunflower |
| blanket | deciduous | jacket | rustling | sweater |
| bonfire | equinox | leaves | scarecrow | trees |
| changing | flannel | migrate | season | vegetables |
| cider | foliage | orchards | spider | wheelbarrow |

