

Weekly Newsletter

MAY 9, 2024

*"Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive
it? I will make a way in the
wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

Isaiah 43:19

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

A New Thing!

By all accounts, this has been a watershed event at our United Methodist General Conference this quadrennium, which met in Charlotte, NC from April 23–May 3. As you might remember, our General Conference (GC) is the only body that can set official policy and speak for the global denomination called The United Methodist Church. It is comprised of elected delegates from United Methodist Annual Conferences from all over the world, and convenes every four years, or should. A specially-called GC was held in St. Louis in 2019 in an effort to resolve the contentious issues relating to human sexuality that have plagued our denomination since exclusionary language was added to our Social Principles in 1972, declaring the practice of homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching.

The results of that specially convened 2019 General Conference were more conservative and punitive than anyone foresaw, appalling many who felt strongly that the exclusionary theology was unjust. Conferences, churches and pastors all over the world began responding with acts of defiance to the UMC Discipline. The fissure in our Connection grew so wide, that it became apparent that we could not continue as we were. The most traditional group withdrew from our denomination in 2022 to form a new one, the Global Methodist Church (GMC). Our denomination lost many churches in the next two as each has had to decide individually whether to stay in our United Methodist Connection, or disaffiliate, some joining the GMC and others becoming independent.

The resulting representation at this year's General Conference was decidedly composed of liberals and moderates who favored change. The delegates overwhelmingly approved four changes to church law intended to remove restrictions aimed specifically at LGBT+ people.



- The half-century-old statement declaring “the practice of homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching” was deleted from our Discipline and Social Principles.
- The longtime ban on “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy was lifted, opening the door to qualified LGBT+ persons to be approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and be licensed, commissioned and ordained effective immediately.
- The ban against clergy performing same-gender weddings was lifted. The decision to officiate same-gender weddings will fall to each individual church and its clergy.
- The ban against United Methodist churches financially supporting any ministry or agency that supports the LGBT+ community was also lifted.

In addition, a revised booklet of Social Principles was introduced including all these changes, (and changes relating to other topics), and was passed as well.

Other major changes having to do with ending the disaffiliation process, changing our polity to allow for regional conferences (you will hear more about that at this year’s Missouri Conference), sacramental rights of Deacons, and progress toward full communion with the Episcopalian Church were passed.

To those who have long prayed and worked for change of this nature in our denomination, the work of this General Conference has been met with jubilation. We acknowledge that there is also grief for the heart-rending schism our denomination has experienced. In all, we praise God for doing a new thing among the people called United Methodists, opening our church doors wider for more of God’s children to come in and be fully celebrated as the beautiful and sacred persons whom God created them to be.

You can hear a message from our Council of Bishops at the end of General Conference at this link: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/bright-hope-for-tomorrow-bishops-message-after-general-conference>

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Grace & peace +

PASTOR SHARON

PRAYER CONCERNS



Derek Redmore; Denny Sarich; Seira Stuart; Ellen Hendrickson; Bev Mesey; Byron Long (Cindy Andrews); Marian Junge & Ellie Klein (Marcia Kennon); local, state, & national politics; and for peace in the world & on college campuses.

THANK YOU...

for all the cards and prayers. I know that always helps to make me feel better.

**Love,
Sharon Wersching**

to everyone that came out to support our youth for trivia night. It was huge success and they had a blast hosting you. We brought in over \$2000 towards our mission trip this summer!! We could not have done this without your support!

Amanda Furbee

Confirmation

Sunday

May 5, 2024





COME JOIN US!

Wild Wednesday

RESCHEDULED DATE

WEDNESDAY 5/22 AT 5:30 - 7 PM

Food - Games - Fun

AS WE CELEBRATE FAMILY!

FAMILY COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES
AND WE ARE EXCITED TO CELEBRATE THE
DIVERSITY OF FAMILY TOGETHER!



Please register your children or ask for more information by emailing directorchildren@websterum.org or call 314-961-4133 and leave a message.



THE MONDAY CLUB FUNDRAISER

MAY 13, 2024
6:00 TO 7:30 PM
DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 PM

PLEASE JOIN US AT
37 SOUTH MAPLE AVENUE
WEBSTER GROVES 63119

ENTER THE DOOR ON CEDAR

The Buckhannon Brothers will entertain us with music from traditional Americana and a few surprises. The musicians play mandolin, guitar, piano, and drums.

A free will offering will be taken to support the work of Epworth. Checks should be written to The Monday Club of Webster Groves. Donations are tax deductible.

Epworth's main campus is located in Webster Groves with additional locations in Normandy, Tower Grove, and South Grand. Their vision is a world in which every youth experiences life in all its fullness. More information will be available at the concert.

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LINDA AT
linda-guth-stangl@live.com



Please Help the Volunteers In Mission Team Collect Lotion & Household Cleaner

The Team has learned from Midwest Mission that two items they need for kits are in short supply, so the final collection will for body/hand lotion and liquid household cleaner will be this Sunday, May 12. We will deliver the collected items to Midwest Mission when we do our volunteer service there May 13-16.

The specific sizes needed are 8-10 ounce size bottles only of lotion---any kind for body/hands--- AND 56-80 oz. size bottles ---no spray bottles---of Household Cleaner (such as Mr. Clean, etc.).

Thank you for your generosity!
The V.I.M. Team

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

All articles and submissions must be sent to secretary@websterum.org by Monday at 5pm to be in that week's newsletter.