



THE COCHRAN CHRONICLE OUR LIFE TOGETHER

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FROM OUR PASTOR

The specially-called General Conference of 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri, to determine a way forward for the United Methodist Church on issues of human sexuality recently concluded with members of the conference approving the Traditional Plan by a margin of 53% to 47%. Effectively this decision leaves in place the denomination's current language and laws regarding homosexual people, namely that "Homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching," same-sex weddings by our clergy or in our churches are prohibited, and LGBTQ individuals cannot be ordained as ministers. What does change is the imposition of more punitive measures against those who violate the prohibitions. Several elements of the Traditional Plan were ruled unconstitutional by the Judicial Council (the church's version of the Supreme Court), while other elements of the plan have been appealed to that council and await decisions.

Human sexuality is a divisive topic. The tenor of the General Conference's debates, employing sometimes abusive rhetoric, the narrow majorities of the votes, and general ill will illustrate that the United Methodist Church remains a deeply divided denomination. Reaction to the outcome of the conference has been predictably mixed, with progressives and several centrists lamenting the maintenance of a status quo that they believe causes harm to LGBTQ individuals, while traditionalists and conservatives cheered what they regard as an affirmation of biblical authority and Christian tradition.

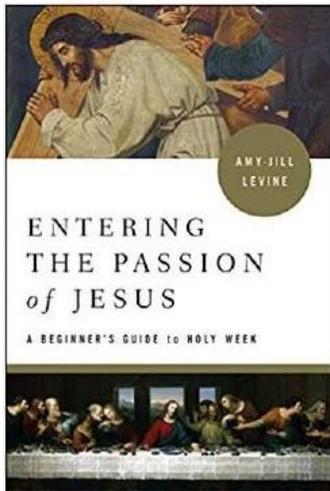
The division within the denomination is reflected to some degree among us at Cochran Chapel: some adopting a more traditional stance, others urging greater inclusiveness. This reality is a reminder that faithful Christians can—and do—read the same Bible and pray to the same God and yet draw different conclusions about what the Bible means or what God says about various issues.

For the next several months, United Methodists and other interested people and parties will debate the actions and outcomes of the General Conference. What do these mean for us at Cochran Chapel United Methodist Church? First and foremost, our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world neither changes nor stops. We will continue to worship God, study the scriptures, serve our neighbors, and share fellowship with one another. We will welcome all people who are seeking God on the same terms and with the same generous hospitality that we welcome any who come through our doors. We will keep being the body of Christ made up of many parts, each necessary, each with a job to do, each with a gift to offer. We will seek to embody unity even in the diversity of our ideas, opinions, and theological commitments. By God's grace, we will be a forgiven and transformed people, the people called Methodists.

Yours in Christ,

Jeff

ENTERING THE PASSION OF JESUS



Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week: Lenten Bible Study Opportunity

Jesus' final days were full of risk.

Every move he made was filled with anticipation, danger, and the potential for great loss or great reward.

Jesus risked his reputation when he entered Jerusalem in a victory parade.

He risked his life when he dared to teach in the Temple.

His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes, or anointed him with costly perfume.

We take risks as we read and re-read these stories, finding new meanings and new challenges.

In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. She shows us how the text raises ethical and spiritual questions for the reader, and how we all face risk in our Christian experience. A self-described "Yankee Jewish Feminist," Dr. Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies, and Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and College of Arts and Science; she is also Affiliated Professor, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge UK. The author and/or editor of numerous scholarly books and articles, Dr. Levine has appeared as a presenter in the Disciple Bible Study series. She is a member of Congregation Sherith Israel, an Orthodox Synagogue in Nashville, although she is often quite unorthodox.

A Lenten Message

“Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Those are difficult words to hear as a smudge of ash is smeared onto your forehead. True words, but difficult words. They remind us that we are mortal, that none of us is getting out of this alive. Which isn’t a chirpy, cheerful message of the sort that some “experts” say churches and preachers need to convey to a fearful, anxious, overwrought world.

“You’re going to die at some point,” just isn’t the sort of message that can be packaged in a way that sells. But that’s how Lent begins—which may help to explain why Ash Wednesday’s worship is not a traditionally well-attended service. No one wants to be confronted with their mortality, much less asked to consider their sins. But that is exactly what the season of Lent invites us to do. Lent is a season dedicated to self-examination and self-denial as we walk with Jesus on the way to the cross. Throughout Lent’s forty days (not counting Sundays), we are invited to look closely at our lives and reflect on ways in which we have failed to love God and others wholly. We are invited to think on those things that we can do without, those things that keep us from taking up our own crosses to follow Jesus. We are invited to acknowledge that we are human—wonderfully, painfully human—and to receive the assurance that our humanity is redeemed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Historically, Christians have fasted during Lent, using the practice of abstaining from some pleasure in order to concentrate on our need of God and the ways in which God is the source of all good things. More recently, Christians have adapted the discipline of fasting: rather than forsaking or giving up something pleasurable, these Christians have added doing a daily deed of justice or goodness. In addition to fasting or adding a good work, many like to pray the Psalms or read one of the Gospels. Whatever you choose, I hope you will adopt a spiritual practice or discipline that helps you to keep a Holy Lent, to remember that you are mortal, and that by believing in Jesus Christ, God promises to give you eternal life.

ASH WEDNESDAY



Ash Wednesday
March 6, 2019

Pancake Supper, 6:00 PM
Service, 7:00 PM

Join us for dinner and worship on Ash Wednesday
featuring Pastor Jeff's late mom's
famous Buttermilk Pancakes!

Please RSVP by March 4 to Sandra at 214.352.4889 or
office@cochranchapel.org

Considering an Alternative Governance Structure

In 2008, the United Methodist Church declared that the mission of the church is to "Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." We added to that our belief that "Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs."

So, how should we, the people of Cochran Chapel United Methodist Church, go about our mission? Traditionally we have sought to make disciples by inviting people to attend our worship services, take part in Sunday school or Bible study, support the church financially, and participate in some outreach effort like Cochran Kitchen or Project Transformation. And that model has had modest success.

We welcomed a few new members last year, and that is reason for rejoicing. But most of our new members were already Christians practicing their faith somewhere else. We didn't do nearly as well at making new disciples as we did at recycling existing disciples.

How, then, can we focus on making new disciples of Jesus Christ so that they can share with God and us in transforming the world? On one level, this is what personal evangelism is all about: sharing God's good news with neighbors in a way that invites and attracts them to worship, study, fellowship, and serve with us. On another level, the church needs to organize and govern itself in a way that continually fosters a sense of mission and ministry. This is especially important in a day and time where the needs for mission and the context for ministry change rapidly. The way we organize and govern ourselves now does not lend itself to being responsive to our environment. Therefore, the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development is recommending to the Church Council moving toward a simplified governance structure.

There are two significant motivations for moving to a simplified leadership model:

1. Mission – If we are going to be faithful and fruitful in our calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, then we need governance structures that will support that goal, structures that provide for representation, wisdom/experience, mission-mindedness, and flexibility.
2. Practical – As a smaller membership church of generally older members, it is becoming harder to recruit enough persons willing to fill out a full roster of church offices.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONTINUED

Filling administrative positions can have the effect of depleting energy for doing ministry. A focus on internal affairs can come at the expense of an outward-focus on making disciples. Moving toward a simplified governance model is authorized by ¶247.2 of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, which states that "When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans [of the local church], provided that the provisions of ¶243 are observed."

A simplified board functions as a unified administrative leadership body, combining the roles of the board of trustees, the finance committee, the staff-parish relations committee, and the church council.

What is the simplified board responsible for?

1. Fiduciary responsibility – Stewards the church's financial assets, including cash, investments, real estate, and human resources.
2. Generative responsibility- Plans and guides the church into its future based on discernment of God's calling and provision.
3. Strategic responsibility – Insuring that the church's plans align with its mission and vision.

How is the board accountable?

- The board meets monthly and is open to the membership for observation.
- The board hosts quarterly town hall meetings for reports and Q & A.
- The board communicates through the newsletter, pulpit announcements, meetings, etc. The membership of the board consists of nine members drawn from members with experience from these areas:
 - Trustees (2), Finance committee (2), SPRC (2), Lay leader (1), Lay member of the annual conference (1) and Youth/young adult (1)

Terms: Members serve three-year terms. Members are nominated by the committee on nominations and leadership development.

Restrictions: No two members of the same family (family of origin or family by marriage) may serve on the board at the same time.

There will be opportunities to discuss this significant change in Sunday school classes, committee/team meetings, and a congregational meeting before the matter is taken up by the church council.

Please stay tuned for further details.

NEW SERIES ON DEATH



March 26, April 2 and April 9

6:30 – 8:00 PM

We often joke that the only certain things in life are death and taxes. And we'd much rather talk about taxes than death! We need to talk about death not only because we are all going to experience it at some point but also because not talking about it can result in missed opportunities. Consider that even though 90% of people say that talking about end-of-life issues with loved ones is important, only 27% have done so and that while 60% of people claim that making sure their family is not burdened by tough decisions is important, 56% of people have not communicated their wishes. Talking about death is hard.

What if, instead of pushing away the topic, we talked about death in a way that proved non-threatening, maybe even comfortable? What would it be like to talk about your own thoughts, hopes, fears, and expectations regarding death with friends over a meal around a dinner table?

On three nights—March 26, April 2, and April 9 from 6:30 to 8:00—you and a guest are invited for dinner and discussion. During a catered meal, guests will be guided through several conversations about some significant end-of-life issues using prompt questions. Before each meal, guests will be invited to do a short reading, watch a brief video, and listen to some taped material that should aid the conversation.

Because of the cost involved and the nature of the conversations, registration for this event is required. Please RSVP to Sandra at office@cochranchapel.org or 214-352-4889 by Monday, March 11.

INSIDE THE CHURCH

Cochran Kitchen Update

In February, Cochran Kitchen:

- Served 64 guests 155 plates of food
- Distributed 50 Bags of Grace (non-perishable food items) to guests
- Provided showers for 9 guests
- Gave 36 guests bus passes
- Offered dozens of bags of hygiene products and items of clothing.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Our Next Cochran Kitchen is Wednesday, March 27th

3:00 to 4:00 PM – “dress” tables, place condiments

4:00 to 5:00 PM – set up stations (shower, clothing, drinks, greeting); wash fruit, wrap flatware with napkins

5:00 to 5:30 PM – Greet, talk with and listen to guests

5:30 to 7:00 PM (or until food runs out) – serve meals, listen to/talk with guests

6:30 PM until Meaders has been cleaned up

For more information, please contact the church office at 214-352-4889 or email office@cochranchapel.org

North Dallas Shared Ministries

March Need: Pancake Mix and Syrup



Please leave your donations under the North Dallas Shared Ministries sign in our atrium or, if you prefer not to shop, checks can be made out to CCUMC, noted for NDSM or donations can be made online.

Thank you for helping those less fortunate.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE – MARCH

Monday, March 4– **Widowed Persons Service Board Meeting** 2:00 Fellowship Hall

Tuesdays, March 5, 12, 19, 26 – **Brown Bag lunch** 12:30 PM, **KnitWits** 1:00 – 3:00 PM – all are welcome (members and non-members, knitters and non-knitters, men and women), Fellowship Hall

Wednesdays, March 6, 20, 27 – **Bible Study led by Pastor Jeff** 10:00 AM, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 6 – **Pancake Supper** 6:00 PM, Fellowship Hall, **Ash Wednesday Service** 7:00 PM

Wednesdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27 – **Choir Rehearsal** 7:00 PM

Thursday, March 7 – **North Dallas Early Childhood PTA** 9:00 AM – Noon, Meaders Hall and Educational Building

Tuesday, March 19 – **Finance Committee** 6:00; **Trustee Committee** 6:45, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 27 – **Cochran Kitchen** 5:30, Meaders Hall

Thursday, March 28 – **Reading Circle** 2:00 PM, Fellowship Hall



Taylor Lowry – March 6 (will be 19)

Martha Dempsey – March 7

Harmony Hall – March 9 (will be 8)

Suzette Foster – March 14

Jeri Cerwinske – March 16

LaJuana Garrison – March 19

Ben Gilliam – March 23 (will be 14)

our mission partners at



need help!



A team from Cochran Chapel will be sorting clothes*

Saturday, March 16 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

2875 Merrell Rd., Dallas, TX 75229

Please call Sandra at 214-352-4889 or Joe Vickrey at 214-352-2650 to let them know you'll be coming.

*The project is subject to change depending on NDSM's needs.

Looking Forward to Holy Week

April 14 - 10:15 Palm Sunday worship featuring guest soloist Jodi Crawford Wright and combined choirs

April 16 - 7:00 Stations of the Cross - a guided experience of Jesus' trial, condemnation, and journey to the cross using art rendered by previous and current members of the church (Sanctuary)

April 18 - 7:00 Maundy Thursday worship (Sanctuary) featuring guest soloist Jodi Crawford Wright

April 19 - 7:00 Good Friday worship (Sanctuary), a service of Tenebrae (shadows) retelling the story of Jesus' suffering and death through narrated scriptures, silence, darkness, and reflection

April 21 - Easter Sunday, 9:00 brunch in Meaders Hall at 9:00, 9:30 Easter egg hunt, 10:15 worship service

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES and BIBLE STUDIES

Nursery: 9:00 AM; RM 100 for children 3 years of age and younger.

Children's Sunday School: 9:00 AM: Class meets on 1st floor of Education Building for children ages 4 years of age and older.

Open Door: 9:00 AM in RM 201: Led by Neil Bickley. All adults are welcome.

Seekers: 9:00 AM in RM 201: Led by Pastor Jeff. The class will embark on a journey of intentional faith formation in partnership with the youth of the congregation. Over the next several months, we will work to learn more about each other, form relationships, ask questions and explore what it means to follow Jesus as His disciples. All adults are welcome.

Pastor's Bible Study: Wednesday mornings at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Led by Pastor Jeff. We are studying the Old Testament by following the Disciple Bible Study Fast Track series.