



The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

November 2009



Celtic Cross, Holy Island, Northumberland

Faithful to Share the Good News

Our recent trip to England—specifically Yorkshire, Durham and Northumbria—put me back in touch with the grand scale of God’s provision and purposes.

Christianity came to Britain with the Roman invasions, beginning in 71 AD. It was one of many religions practiced by the multi-ethnic Roman legions, and there is evidence of a mingling of religious symbolism on early burial monuments. We don’t know the state of the Christian church in Britain from about 400-600 AD, or whether there was a formal church, but during the 7th century missionaries were sent from Ireland to Northumbria (northern England), to re-Christianize the people. The light of Christ came against the powers of darkness. Preaching crosses—the great standing crosses of Celtic imagery—were erected to mark the places for congregations to gather to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

Many of us have our roots, genealogically and religiously, in these ancient cultures. As we contemplate Central UMC’s place in God’s story, it is helpful to remember the struggles of the faithful in other times and places. And God’s faithfulness. There have been many ebbs

and flows of faith; times of faithfulness and corruption; building up and destruction. For example, King Henry VIII ordered the destruction of the great monasteries of England so the wealth of the church could be consolidated into the royal coffers.

Christianity came to our country with the first settlers, who were seeking freedom of religious expression. We have experienced several “Great Awakenings” in the United States, and Christian values have influenced our national values. Nevertheless, we are not a “Christian nation.” Some worry about the decline of the church and Christianity in this era of change.

It may be helpful to admit that we live in a post-Christian era. Christians are once again called to be like those early missionaries from Ireland to Northumbria: risking everything to represent Christ to those generations who have no knowledge of Him. We are surrounded by many religions, many belief systems, and many cultures. But this is not so different from other times and places where God has been powerfully revealed.

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Perhaps this is a time to hold in mind the larger picture of what God has done, what God is doing and what God can and will do: regardless of our individual survival or success, regardless of national policy, regardless of denominational decline or growth, God’s purposes will prevail.

Let us give thanks to God for calling us to be a part of what God is doing to restore, heal and transform all creation through Jesus Christ.

God continues to call faithful people to share the good news of God’s gift of salvation through Jesus Christ and to demonstrate the new Kingdom way of living, with peace, love and justice. We are part of something much, much bigger than ourselves.

Let us give thanks to those who have gone before us—the great cloud of witnesses, the saints of the church—who have kept the faith, so that we might believe. Let us also give thanks to God for calling us to be a part of what God is doing to restore, heal and transform all creation through Jesus Christ.

The community of faith called the church, whether large or small, persecuted or triumphant, is still the presence of Christ in the world. We don’t know what the next 20 or 50 or 100 years will bring, but those are relatively short periods of time when compared to the whole of God’s work in the world. Let us be faithful to share the light and love of Christ in our time and place.

In Christ, Pastor Stephanie



CHARGE CONFERENCE
Wednesday, Nov. 11
7:30 p.m.

All are invited to participate in this annual meeting as we celebrate this year’s achievements and look forward to next year’s ministries.

Church Council members comprise the voting body of the Charge Conference, but all members and friends are welcomed!

**UNITED
METHODIST
STUDENT DAY**



Sunday, Nov. 29

Like many things, college costs continue to rise. Thanks to United Methodist Student Day, people in our annual conference – perhaps even members of your family—have a chance to attain higher education. Students attending United Methodist and other accredited colleges and universities receive scholarships and loans. Participating annual conferences receive 10 percent of the offering for merit-scholarship awards to students of their choosing. (Offering envelopes will be available for those desiring to contribute to this program.)

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverley Streets, Staunton, VA.

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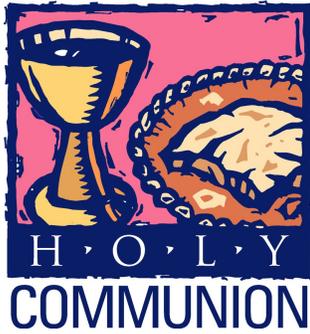
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The Central Connection Editor: Agnes Campbell

IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Resident Bishop. Charlene Payne Kammerer
District Superintendent. Kathleen Overby Webster
Pastor..... Stephanie M. Sault
Pastoral Assistant..... Daniel K. Purdom
Retired Missionary Professor..... Hunter P. Mabry
Professor MBC..... Kenneth A. Beals
Minister of Music/Organist..... Sherry von Oeyen



AN ACT OF CELEBRATION

One of the great blessings of our worship service is the opportunity to celebrate Communion on a regular basis. Weekly Communion is not the norm for most Protestant churches these days and it is something that we should remember to not take for granted. It is one of the things that make Central

Church special! While we don't want to begin to take this act lightly just because we do it so often I also believe that we shouldn't take it too seriously. By this I mean that we need to be aware that in the act of Communion we remember a RISEN Christ. So, while we certainly need to participate in a respectful manner we need to also remember that this is an act of celebration! We should be full of joy at a time like this. Certainly there is a place for introspection and repentance in the act but at the same time there should be room for joy and smiles and even humor. The Jesus that we remember in this ritual is ALIVE and well. After all, that's why we're all here. So let's celebrate this miracle together!

In Christ,
Dan Purdom, Pastoral Assistant

MUSIC NOTES

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

How sad for a young boy to have to grown up without a dad. Robert Robinson had to because his dad passed away when Robert was only eight years of age. As soon as he was old enough, he got a job as an apprentice to a barber. Because of the hardship of having to be the breadwinner for his widowed mother and himself, his formal education was limited. However, his knowledge was varied and extensive because he spent many hours in study.

Robert Robinson was born in Norfolk, England, in September, 1735. As he grew older, he came under the influence of that great evangelist, George Whitfield. He became convicted of his terrible, sinful ways. On December 10, 1755, Robinson could not escape from a particular phrase used by Mr. Whitfield in one of his sermons: "Oh, my hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come!" Robert was wondrously converted and became a minister of the gospel; first, in a Baptist church,



Robert Robinson
1735-1790

then in a Methodist church, and later in other denominations. Then, unfortunately, he became altogether unstable and unhappy. Some would call it "backslidden."

He found himself one day the fellow passenger of a young lady on a stagecoach. It is reported that she began to sing to break the monotony of the trip. And what did she sing?

*Come, Thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;*

*Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;*

*Praise the mount—I'm fixed upon it—
Mount of Thy redeeming love.*

She asked him what he thought about the song, and his startling reply was: "Madam, I am the unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago; and, I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, if I could feel now as I felt then."

Prayer: Lord, help us to never stray farther than your fingertips; that every morning and every evening we may come close to your heart.

from *Devotionals from Famous Hymn Stories*
by Lindsay L. Terry

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION STUDY

by Luz de Tablan,
UMW President



This article is in response to the suggestion of Dr. Hunter Mabry that we hold or conduct a School of Christian Mission in our church. During our recent Church Council meeting, Atty. Benham Black, the Chair of Outreach Ministry, urged the United Methodist Women to consider the possibility. It would be really nice if we can do this kind of outreach, since only a few members of our church attend the annual School of Christian Mission. Held every year at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center (VUMAC) in Blackstone, it is offered by the Virginia Conference Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Women. Each year different studies are offered, studies of countries of the world, important social issues, such as health care, racial justice, and topics concerning personal spiritual growth, environment, globalization, human rights and other mission issues.

The School of Christian Mission offers a way to strengthen our local and global connection with people in the mission field, the missionaries, other mission staffs and the recipients of these mission services like the adults, youth and children of our community as well as in the world. The mission studies help us all reach across differences to create community among us of all races, classes and ages. It also helps us put the things we have learned into action, to be mobilized to address and respond to today's needs as we stand on the ground of yesterday's accomplishments. Will you not be glad if our church will be part of this ministry? It will also help us to get involved to share our faith, hope and love in action to so many marginalized people in our community and around the world.

The School of Christian Mission also helps mobilize women and men for passionate advocacy and compassionate action—to follow Jesus more closely. It will be good if our church members will be encouraged to support this program with their attendance. We know that many members of our

church family already seem to have a “full plate” of activities. But God will make it possible to participate in this exciting ministry if we only work together and support each other for God's glory and honor.

I'm hoping to get input from the Circle members and other interested members of our congregation. Could this possibly be a part of our church outreach ministry? One of the goals of Nurture Ministry is to create a program that will involve other churches, and this School of Christian Mission might be one of the programs that we can consider. Dr. Mabry and Dr. Esther Mabry are experienced missionaries, and with their expertise, the plan to hold a School of Christian Mission here in our church will be possible.



ATTENDING CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

Steve and I recently began attending Wesley United Methodist Church . This church was the first Methodist Church in Singapore, founded in 1885 by the Revs. William Oldham and Dr. Thomas Thoburn. It was first known as The English Church until the government granted the church a piece of land at Fort Canning. Here the church has stayed, through various restorations and struggles. It was used, for example, as an ammunition depot during WWII and was badly damaged. Today, the church has grown to accommodate 6,000 members. I saw all types of people there—Asians, Indians, and Europeans.

When we arrived at 9:30 for the English traditional service, we were welcomed by the staff of ushers. A lady quickly took us under her wing and insisted that we sit with her. She was from Singapore but was married to a Belgian minister and Bible translator. They had both lived all over the world and her husband is employed as the director of the nurture and discipleship. I soon learned that this

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church has eight full-time pastors (two are women!). There are services, both traditional and contemporary as well as English, Filipino, and Chinese services all day long. Children attend Sunday school during service time.

They have built on to the old sanctuary with sky lights dividing the sections. Where we sat we looked at a TV screen to hear the pastor and see the choir. The service was ordered differently than ours at Central but otherwise, it was the same. I knew all the hymns. There is a paid person who says the prayers and instead of a bulletin, you receive a booklet at the door highlighting all the different services, pastor sermon notes, all the prayer groups, men's groups, women's groups, and youth activities going on just that Sunday and throughout the week. I was overwhelmed.

Their mission statement is also in a book form—it's that long. They call the unchurched the "Yi". They also refer to them as the pre-believers. I thought that was a great attitude.

We were there on Communion Sunday and so we were right at home when they asked us to take communion. There were hundreds of people there and yet they led everyone bench by bench up to the altar. That took a while. For offerings they passed a red velvet sack instead of a plate.

I didn't see The United Methodist Men mentioned, only Men in Christ. They also have breakfasts! There is a large YMCA building nearby that I believe they had a big part in building. The Youth have their activities and Sunday School there. There didn't seem to be any adult Sunday School offered on Sunday. Instead, you could attend Disciple courses, prayer classes, marriage classes, Raising the Children courses, and other Bible studies. I was so amazed!

Well, naturally, I couldn't sit by and not get involved. You know me. I've already volunteered to help out in the library. Maybe I'll find someone there who can teach me Chinese. I'm going to need it.

In Christian Love,
Donna Huffer

LOOKING AHEAD

Annual Christmas Dinner

**Sunday,
December 6**



The schedule for the day includes Morning Worship, Christmas Program, and Covered Dish Lunch. Watch for additional information—but please mark your calendar now!

HARPSICORD CONCERT

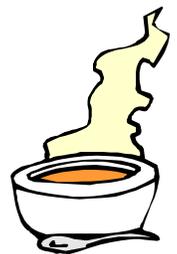
Saturday, November 21

On Saturday, November 21, at 7:00 p.m. Central UMC will host a harpsichord recital in the sanctuary. The performer is Carsten Schmidt, a professional musician from Staunton and New York. He performed in the Staunton Music Festival this past August. He will play three partitas by J. S. Bach. They present traditional Baroque dances. There will be a reception in the Fellowship Hall following the program. Tickets may be purchased at the door. (General \$18, Seniors \$15, Students \$8). Come and have a pleasant evening of music.

LESSON LEARNED

Some time after Eddie Rickenbacker and his companions were rescued while floating for 21 days on a life raft in the Pacific Ocean, he was asked, "What is the biggest lesson you learned from that experience?"

"The greatest lesson I learned," he answered, "is that if you have all the fresh water you want to drink and all the food you want to eat, you ought to never complain about anything."



If you have those basic things, give thanks for them this Thanksgiving Day...and every day.

Give Thanks



Sing a prayer at your Thanksgiving meal—or any meal!



(sung to the tune of "Kum Ba Yah")

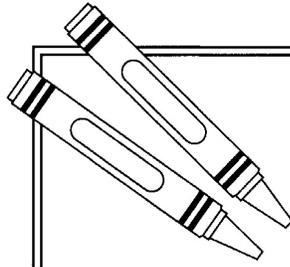
For our food, O Lord,
we give thanks.
For our homes, O
Lord, we give thanks.
For our families,
we give thanks.
O Lord,
we give thanks.



For our friends, O
Lord, we give thanks.
For our earth, O
Lord, we give thanks.
For each night and
day, we give thanks.
O, Lord,
we give thanks.



—Marie Senften



Just for

KIDS

Ephesians 5:19b-20

“ Fill in the blanks using the code below.

Musical notation for Ephesians 5:19b-20, consisting of 15 lines of music with blank spaces for letter insertion.

CODE	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	o	d.	d	d.	d.	o	d.	d.	d.	d.	p	p.	p	p.	p.	p	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f
																										

“Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

