

Bishop's message

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Beloved: In this transitional season within The United Methodist Church, I join the Council of Bishops in proclaiming it is time to "Reclaim, Revive and Renew."



Let us **Reclaim** our calling and identity as Wesleyans. We are a people called to deep study of the holy Scriptures and fervent prayer. Through that living word we open our hearts to joyfully worship God, serve all of creation and love without condition. (John 13:35)

Let us **Revive** our belief in the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 13:13) Let's revive our belief in one another and the power of God to use us to transform a broken world.

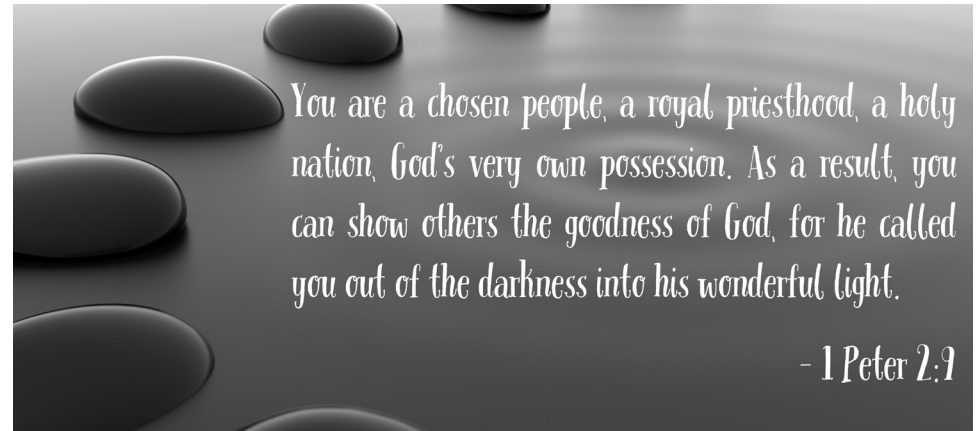
Let us **Renew** our commitment to reach out with joy and enthusiasm to all who need the saving grace and love of Jesus Christ, our commitment to meet the needs of a hungry and hurting world. (Matthew 28:19-20)

This is the time for The United Methodist Church to leave behind old behaviors that are the very antithesis of the new creation and embody God's new life of light and love. As we look toward Pentecost, we embrace a radical hope that begins with letting go and then grasping our new life together through the power of The Holy Spirit. Together, we will transform the world! It is time.

The Bulletin

Join us as 100 percent of our congregations become 100 percent vital and thriving

Advocates of Outreaching Love



One of the defining traits of United Methodists is "the ministry of all believers." Every lay person is a minister, called to use their gifts in ministry. In the workplace, the home, classroom, marketplace, and everywhere one goes, there are opportunities to witness to the wonder and love of God. Conference leaders look back to the beginning of church in the United States, when Methodism was like was "like a burning fire shut up in people's bones." It ignited a new world.

In 1776, 2.5 percent of the population in this new nation was Methodist. By 1850, that number grew to 34.2 percent of Americans were Methodist. That's one in every three people!

And that growth has been attributed to the laity. In colonial times, all of the denomination's pastors could fit into a small meeting house. It's 10,000 members, in class meetings and in profound faith, built and led a church.

Today, the church is at a new crossroads, and its laity are called to thrive in ministry -- expressing God's love to all they encounter.

Join us at the Table

In June, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling winds up the first season of her podcast, *Thursdays at the Table*, with a conversation with the Rev. Willie Jennings, author of *The Christian Imagination*. You can listen to the podcast at www.pdcbbc.org/thursdays-at-the-table.

Thursdays at the Table features lively and intriguing conversations with a variety of thought-leaders in the church. Here's just a taste of some of the conversation:

“Politics and religion are two sides of the same coin. ...To read the biblical text in the Gospels is to read a political story.”
– Dr. Shively Smith

“My calling is to thrive in the awareness that I am called by God to express God's love.”
– Rev. Tod Bolsinger

“What we are witnessing now [about racism] is not a system that doesn't work, but a system that is doing exactly the work that it was designed to do.”
– Rev. Joel Goza

“All of us are gifted by God. ... Please bring your gifts to the table.”
– Rev. Stephanie Moore Hand

“We're being called as a church, as a denomination, to be stepping out of fear and stepping into faith.”
– Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón

“The challenge we are in the midst of entering into is, ‘what is God calling us, not only to do, but to be?’”
– Rev. Willie Jennings



Happy 320th Birthday, John Wesley!

This month, we remember the birthday of John Wesley, Methodism's founder, who was born June 28, 1703, in England.

Five facts about Wesley:

1. The term “methodist” was originally used to mock Wesley and his friends in the Holiness Club because of their dedication to following a method for growing closer to God. But he adopted it for good.
2. In his ministry, Wesley rode far enough on horseback to circle the earth 10 times. He rode 250,000 miles to personally spread the Gospel through relationships.
3. John Wesley coined the term “agree to disagree.” Wesley had serious theological differences with another popular pastor named George Whitefield. He reflected on these differences in a memorial sermon for Whitefield by saying: “There are many doctrines of a less essential nature. ... In these, we may think and let think; we may ‘agree to disagree.’ But, meantime, let us hold fast the essentials. ...”
4. Methodism grew from four to 132,000 members in Wesley's lifetime. Methodism began with a group of four friends at Oxford. When Wesley died in 1791, he left behind a movement with 72,000 members in the British Isles and 60,000 in America.
5. Wesley's last words were, “Best of all, God is with us.”

