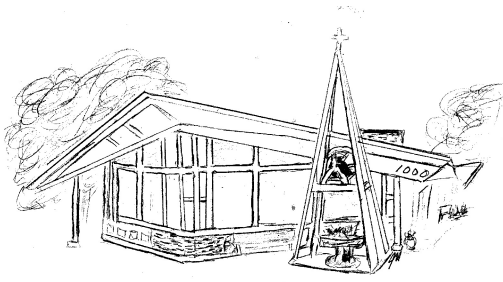


Buffalo United Methodist Church



February 2018



I Wonder

by Bishop Laurie Haller

I am sitting in a store in Jericho, waiting for our group of a hundred pilgrims while they shop. After deciding to post some pictures of our Holy Land pilgrimage on Facebook, a message appears on my phone that I am in Palestinian territory rather than in Israel and therefore do not have service. . . . Jericho, located in the disputed West Bank, has been under the administrative control of the Palestinian authority since 1994. I wonder. Will it ever be possible for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to live in peace in this land that is holy for all three world religions?

We are walking through the Via Dolorosa, the “Way of Sorrow” in the Old City of Jerusalem, and stop at each of the fourteen stations of the cross. In the Catholic tradition, these stations are a mini-pilgrimage commemorating Jesus’ last day on earth. It is a way for all Christians to experience the agony and suffering of Jesus as he carried his cross to Calvary. I can’t keep back the tears, as I remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for me. I wonder. How is God calling me to share in the suffering of others and change the world?

I am at Yad Veshem, the Holocaust Museum of Jerusalem. In the Children’s Memorial, which is carved out of an underground cavern, the names of the 1.5 million children who were murdered by the Nazis are read continuously as they shine like stars in the firmament. And in the Hall of Names, each one of the six million victims will be remembered for generations to come. I can’t stop the tears.

I am walking through the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the traditional site of the crucifixion. Since an 1852 mandate, the care of the church is shared by six different Christian denominations. Despite incidents of territorialism

among the groups, the steep stairway climbing to the lavishly decorated shrine of Calvary unites pilgrims and takes my breath away. I wonder. Jesus, how can it be that you gave up your life for me and all humans who ever lived? I offer to you all that I am and all that I hope to become. May I reflect your grace and hope in everything I say and do.

We are at Caesarea Philippi in northern Galilee, at the headwaters of the Jordan River. It is the turning point in the gospels, where Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am? They reply, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” He asks, “And what about you? Who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter says, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” From then on, Jesus sets his face toward Jerusalem. I wonder. Who is this Jesus for me? . . .

Our dinner with Palestinian families is a highlight of our pilgrimage, as we sit at table with Christians and Muslim families, who are minorities and struggle with everyday living. It can take years to get a visa to travel outside the country, yet their faith is deep.

I wonder, how can we pray for and express solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters whose freedom is so restricted. In the same way, how is God calling us to stand with all those who are labeled and objectified, whether it be African-Americans, Muslims, Jews, Christians, LGBTQ persons, Arabs, refugees, immigrants, Mexicans, or . . .

[Bishop Haller’s complete blog posting for January 22--which includes her personal photographs--can be reached by going to the UMC Connections page on Buffalo’s web site and clicking on the link to the Bishop’s Blog.]

United Methodist Women

Everyone is welcome to join us on Thursday, February 15, at 9:30 am for a brief business meeting and an interesting lesson. Chris Gochenouer will provide the program and treats. We look forward to the lesson and fellowship!



Golden Age Potluck

Please bring a friend and join us at Buffalo UMC on Thursday, February 8, at 11:30 am for good food and great conversations. Because Valentine's Day is the 14th, bring a dish to share that has some red ingredients. Place settings and beverages will be provided. Would anyone be interested in playing cards or board games after the meal?



Garfield Backpack Update Valentine Treat Bags

We will be making Valentine treat bags for the 58 backpack children. Please bring 58 wrapped candies, pencils, or other small items to church by Sunday, February 11. Thanks!



Holiday Dinner

The Holiday Dinner on January 21 was well attended. The catered meal was delicious, we had marvelous dessert options, and the gift exchange was quite memorable—though it was evident a few members had difficulty consistently knowing their right hand from their left. But everyone had a good time and already looking forward to the 2019 event.



Caroling, February 11

Mark your calendar. After the Sunday morning service, we plan to visit church members who are in care centers or homebound. We will then return to the church for soup and all the fixings.



Submit items for the March 2018 Newsletter by Wednesday, February 28 to Bob Marrs, rmarrs@coe.edu.

Annual Spring Fling

Keep your calendar open for "The Christmas Story" Spring Fling, which will be held on Saturday, April 14, at 11:30. Please bring a special lady friend in your life. Or bring as many as you would like. We all like to spend an afternoon with our "girls." The cost will be \$6 per person; reservations should be made by April 1.



Administrative Board Meeting January Notes

During the meeting on Wednesday, January 14, the following items were discussed and actions were taken:

- The large oak tree southwest of the the sanctuary will be trimmed by the end of February (cost \$500).
- A space heater with an automatic turn off has been purchased for the pastor's office.
- A sign marked **Pastor Parking** will be ordered for the handicap space closest to the new bioretention cell.
- The repair of the parking lot and the construction of the two bioretention cells have been paid for, and all the funds from the sale of the Blair's Ferry Road church have been spent. The church did receive a grant for over \$6,500 from the city of Cedar Rapids to help pay for the two rain garden biocells.
- In addition to the parking lot and bioretention cells, Board members noted other recent building and landscape improvements, a list which would include: repair and reorganization of the storage shed, capping of the old well, new church windows, painting of church building, construction of compost bins and herb/vegetable garden, improvement in lighting, removal of evergreen at NE corner of building, acquisition of Schimmel piano for sanctuary, new flower beds and planting of spring-flowering bulbs.
- For the April 7 Pancake Breakfast, the Board decided to ask for free-will donations, rather than setting a fixed price for a meal. A sum of \$200 from the donations will be contributed to the Negro College Fund. The Board will decide at its February meeting the recipient(s) for any donations above that total.



February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>I wonder. How is God calling you and me to a resurrection faith that advocates for fullness of life for all people? How is God calling us to practice our faith by caring for the very least of God's children? How is God calling us to share as well as embody the love of Jesus for all people in our world?</i></p> <p>~Bishop Haller</p>				1	2 <i>Groundhog Day</i>	3
4 8:45: Worship Service	5	6 11:30 am: Mission of Hope	7	8 11:30 am: Golden Age Pot Luck	9	10 8-10 am: Pancake Breakfast, Bertram Town Hall
11 8:45: Worship Service Post-Service Caroling and Soup Lunch	12 <i>Lincoln's Birthday</i> 9:00 am: Church Cleaning	13	14 <i>St. Valentine's Day</i> 12:00 Noon Service: Ash Wednesday	15 9:30: UMW Meeting	16	17
18 8:45: Worship Service	19 <i>President's Day</i>	20	21 4:00 pm: Administrative Board Meeting	22 9:30 am: NOOMA Bible Study	23	24
25 8:45: Worship Service	26	27	28 <i>Purim</i>	<p><i>God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.</i></p> <p>~Reinhold Niebuhr</p>		

February Birthdays

3 – Mary Lou Stepanek
4 – Luke Kelley
6 – Margie Marrs
10 – Marlene Himes

11 – Christine Gochenouer
11 – Marilyn (Marlee) Carpenter
17 – Carla Lindball
19 – Becky Durand
29 – Nancy Carter



Buffalo UMC Upcoming Dates for 2018

Feb. 8: Golden Age Pot Luck (11:30 am)
Feb. 12:- Cleaning Church (9 am)
Feb. 15: UMW Meeting (9:30 am)
Feb. 21: Admin. Board Meeting (4:00 pm)
Feb. 22: NOOMA Bible Study (9:30 am)
Mar. 29: Maundy Thursday Service

Bertram UMC Upcoming Dates for 2018

Feb. 6: Serving lunch, Mission of Hope (11:30 am to 1:00 pm)
Feb. 10: Pancake Breakfast, Bertram Township Hall (8-11 am)
Feb 14: Ash Wednesday Service, Bertram UMC (6:00 pm)

Passage from a Letter Written by Abraham Lincoln

I am much indebted to the good christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations; and to no one of them, more than to yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light He gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay. [Letter to Eliza Gurney on September 4, 1864]

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