



Buffalo United Methodist



January 2020

1000 30th Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

The Zeal of Coming Clean

by Bishop Laurie Haller

What a glorious privilege it was to spend last week in Cambridge, England as part of a training around Reflective Supervision. There were nineteen of us [and] the training took place at Wesley House . . . founded in 1921 as a Methodist theological college at the campus of the University of Cambridge on none other than Jesus Lane!

Wesley House is a member of the Cambridge Theological Federation, which is a consortium of eleven theological institutions, comprising over three hundred students from twenty-five countries, with the University of Cambridge conferring the degrees.

Our hope was to learn from our Methodist brothers and sisters in Britain a different way of supervision of clergy, a collaborative process between supervisor and supervisee. Reflective supervision is a means of grace that includes both support and accountability. This sacred conversation is directed toward the well-being of clergy, the good of those they serve, and the health of the Church. . . .

Last Tuesday evening, our group had the privilege of eating dinner at nearby Westminster College, founded in 1899 as a theological college for the Presbyterian Church of England and part of Cambridge University. What a joy it was to share in this Advent time with our ecumenical friends. As we explored the chapel of Westminster College, we were led to a stained-glass window of John Wesley, a beautiful symbol of the ecumenical relationship we have with our Presbyterian friends. . . .

After a wonderful banquet, which included foods uniquely British, Dr. Andrew Stobart, who is the Director of Research for Wesley House, gave a talk

about John Wesley's sermon, "On Zeal." Wesley begins the sermon with a scripture from Galatians 4:18, "It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing." Zeal is usually described as a passion or enthusiasm for something. When we are zealous, we are motivated, energized, or committed to a particular cause.

Then Wesley sets the stage, "There are few subjects in the whole compass of religion, that are of greater importance than this. For without zeal it is impossible, either to make any considerable progress in religion ourselves, or to do any considerable service to our neighbour, whether in temporal or spiritual things. And yet nothing has done more disservice to religion, or more mischief to mankind, than a sort of zeal which has for several ages prevailed, both in Pagan, Mahometan, and Christian nations. Insomuch that it may truly be said, pride, covetousness, ambition, revenge, have in all parts of the world slain their thousands; but zeal its ten thousands."

How interesting that John Wesley clearly differentiates between zeal that does great good and zeal that can cause great harm. It is misplaced zeal for the wrong things that has resulted in untold suffering and grief in our world over the centuries. Wesley called it "inhuman persecution."

Dr. Stobart focused his remarks on Wesley's phrase, "comparative divinity," which Wesley uses to describe how we can best live with zeal in love of God and neighbor. Comparative divinity helps us to differentiate how we practice the Christian life. Stobart called it a "topographical map of grace."

The outer ring of the circle is a zeal for “the Church” and the communities in which we live and practice our faith. Wesley speaks of the necessary zeal a Christian should have for the church in general and their own society in particular. Our prayer should be that this circle keeps ever growing, enlarging its borders to embrace more and more of God’s world.

The next ring consists of what Wesley calls “works of piety,” means of grace which include prayer, fasting, scripture reading, and the Lord’s Supper.

The third ring toward the center of the circle is “works of mercy,” acts of kindness and generosity that are even closer to the heart of God. Wesley writes, “Even reading, hearing, prayer are to be omitted, or to be postponed, ‘at charity’s almighty call’; when we are called to relieve the distress of our neighbour, whether in body or soul.”

The fourth ring Wesley calls holy tempers, which include “lowliness of mind, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, contentedness, resignation unto the will of God, deadness to the world and the things of the world, as the only means of being truly alive to God. For these proofs and fruits of living faith we cannot be too zealous.”

In the fifth and final ring, we arrive at the heart of our zeal as followers of Jesus Christ, which is nothing more than love. Wesley writes, “It is most sure, that if you give all your goods to feed the poor, yea, and your body to be burned, and have not humble, gentle, patient love, it profiteth you nothing. O let this be deep engraved upon your heart: ‘All is nothing without love!’”

In Romans 12:11, the apostle Paul writes, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” (NIV) During this season of Advent, I yearn for a deep personal faith that is zealous to “come clean” about my failure to perfectly reflect the grace of Jesus Christ in my words and actions. I also pray that this zeal will be reflected in my giving as well as my loving and serving. As we prepare our hearts to receive the Christ child once again, may there be a zeal deep in our all of our hearts for sharing Christ’s love, saving souls, and coming clean through acts of justice, mercy, and love.

[This is an abridged version of the Bishop’s posting to her blog *Leading from the Heart*.]

United Methodist Women

Come join us on January 16 at 9:30 am. Marlene Himes will provide the lesson and the treats. Everyone is welcome.

January Special Offering

Human Relations Day strengthens United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth.

Kudos and More Kudos

- We were blessed to have many visitors attend the Advent Taizé Service on December 5. The worship altar was beautiful with all the lit candles, everyone appreciated Margie organizing the music and singing the soprano solos, and Gloria did a wonderful job reading the scripture and leading the prayers. The evening was concluded with marvelous refreshments, made possible by Buffalo’s outstanding United Methodist Women.
- Thanks to the ladies who helped pack the Christmas Eve treat bags. In addition to the anonymous candy contributions, the apples and oranges were compliments of Fred and Marlene, and the peanuts were donated by Fred, Marlene, Hep, and Eileen.
- The poinsettias on the altar during the Advent Season were donated by Gary and Judy Hackney—who also have earned the congregation’s special appreciation for monitoring the church sinks and toilets after nearby repairs, which did necessitate some on-site mopping. No more rusty water.
- And, finally, thanks to Barb Crawford’s family and their donation of children’s books for the Little Library.

Spic and Span Ladies Cleaning Date

Come join us on Monday, January 13 at 9 am to clean the church for the New Year. No special skills, training, or certification is required.

Neighborhood Potluck

The first potluck luncheon of the new year will be on Thursday, January 9, beginning at 11:30 am. There is always plenty of food and good conversation.

January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>"Mark's Gospel is a relentless story about Jesus' announcement of God's righteous kingdom and the acts that accompany that proclamation. . . . Jesus banishes demons, teaches about God's kingdom, and challenges religious and political structures harmful to human well-being."</i> -Wesley Study Bible			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4
5 Worship Service (8:45 am) Christmas Dinner (Noon)	6	7 Mission of Hope: Assist Bertram UMC with noon meal	8	9 Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 am)	10	11
12 Worship Service (8:45 am) Conversations on Mark (10-11 am)	13 Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning (9:00 am)	14	15 Administrative Board Meeting (4:00 pm)	16 UMW (9:30 am)	17	18
19 Worship Service (8:45 am)	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Worship Service (8:45 am) Conversations on Mark (10-11 am)	27	28	29	30	31	

January Birthdays

6 – Charlotte Stanford
 8 - Ward Seufferlein
 14 – Hep Hentrich
 14 – Nancy Lacy
 22 – Sheryl Arnett

January Anniversaries

1 – Hep Hentrich & Eileen Kaplan

The Gospel of Mark

- Mark is almost certainly the oldest of the four gospels, probably composed by the year 70 a.d., about 40 years after Jesus' crucifixion.
- It is likely that the author had served as a scribe for Simon Peter in Rome.
- Mark's gospel is the shortest of the four gospels and was as a primary source for the gospels of Matthew and Luke.
- Mark stresses fast-paced action over speech.
- Mark was written for Gentile readers not familiar with Judaism, the Aramaic language, or Palestinian geography.
- The disciples in Mark's Gospel are frequently portrayed in ways that demonstrate their inability to understand Jesus and his message.
- Although Jesus is certainly the dramatic hero in this gospel, he often seems reluctant to bring attention to his ministry, typically portraying himself not as the Messiah but as the "Son of Man."
- While the gospel includes some parables and teaching of Jesus, the primary emphasis is on Jesus as an exorcist and miracle worker and on his crucifixion.
- Mark has no genealogy, no nativity scene, no Sermon on the Mount, no portrayal of the resurrected Jesus.

<p>For more information on Buffalo's Ministries, visit the church's website: buffalounitedmethodist.weebly.com/</p>
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Buffalo Calendar

Upcoming Events

January 5: Christmas Dinner (12:00 noon)
January 9: Neighborhood Potluck (11:30 am)
January 12 & 26: Conversations on the Gospel of Mark (10-11 am)
January 13: Monthly Meeting of the Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning Crew (no previous experience required)
January 15: Administrative Board Meeting (4:00 pm)
January 16: United Methodist Women (9:30 am)
March 26: Lenten Taizé Service (7:00 pm)
March 28: Pancake Breakfast
June 11 & 12: Annual Rummage Sale
July 25: Ice Cream Social

Buffalo UMC Mission Statement
*A welcoming fellowship reaching out
and caring for the community.*

Conversations on the Gospel of Mark

For two Sunday mornings in January and two in February, our morning worship services will be followed by a sequence of four informal conversations on the Gospel of Mark.

These sessions, led by Bob Marrs, will focus on gaining a better understanding of the gospel's portrait of Jesus—and the potential relevance of Mark's gospel to our own lives. The discussion sessions will require no preparation; however, participants might enjoy spending a few minutes prior to each session reading Mark's text. The gospel is very readable, full of fast-paced dramatic action.

Each of the four meetings will be self-contained, not requiring attendance at previous sessions. Our basic plan will simply be to read passages from Mark's gospel and discuss possible interpretations. There will be no exams or required term papers.

Sessions will be organized according to the following schedule of readings:

Jan. 12: Gospel of Mark, chapter 1

Jan. 26: Mark, chapters 2-5

Feb. 9: Mark, chapters 6-10

Feb. 23: Mark, chapters 11-16

Hot drinks, fruit juice, and a few modest refreshments will be provided.

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