

Buffalo United Methodist

July 2018

1000 30th Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa



All in Unison, Act with the Most Perfect Harmony

by Bishop Laurie Haller

On April 7, 1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their Corps of Discovery set out in canoes into territory few white persons had ever entered. Lewis wrote in a letter to President Thomas Jefferson that day, "I can foresee no material or probable obstruction to our progress and entertain therefore the most sanguine hopes of complete success... At this moment, every individual of the party is in good health, and excellent spirits; zealously attached to the enterprise, and anxious to proceed; not a whisper of discontent or murmur is to be heard among them; but all in unison, act with the most perfect harmony. With such men I have everything to hope, and little to fear."

The Iowa Annual conference last week was sweet, inspiring, draining, encouraging, challenging, and humbling. Why do I have everything to hope for the future of The United Methodist Church and little to fear? Because of our call to "all in unison, act with the most perfect harmony" in fulfilling the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. [What follows is an abridged list of the Bishop's memories "imprinted" on her heart.]

- Colorful doors hanging on the back walls of the stage of Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines beckoned us to walk into God's future together, wherever that leads the United Methodist Church.
- A delegate offering me a hand drawn picture with a quote from John Wesley, "What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."
- Another delegate passing me a note through our Diakonos teenagers serving as pages, which included these paraphrased words, "I want to say thank you to

my pastor and congregation for encouraging and creating an environment which houses many, many, many differing views on many subjects and issues on all points of the spectrum... I am so proud to be a part of such a diverse, challenging but loving congregation that is a model for how to be effectively in worship together, despite our deeply held differences, for the sake of Christ and our calling to serve all people... We need to figure out how to live together well."

- Sitting on the edge of a canoe with second-grader and kid preacher Kinnick Driscoll, who prayed for us at the end of the opening service, "Thank you for our worship day and night. Thank you for making this a holy conferencing, not a kind of arguing conferencing. Help us to recognize you more and to show courage when making decisions about the church."
- Standing room only at two workshops around how United Methodists can respond to the mental health crisis in Iowa.
- Sunday afternoon's dialogue with four delegates to the 2019 called General Conference and Bishop Bruce Ough, one of our preachers. We discussed the work of the Commission on a Way Forward and the Council of Bishop's recommendation of the One Church Plan.
- Laying hands on the heads of five clergy who were ordained elders and then having the privilege of washing their feet. "If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet." John 13:14
- Receiving the gift of extra time on Monday morning, which enabled us to have an "open mike"

opportunity where anyone who wished could speak their heart to our denominational impasse around human sexuality. Speakers had up to 90 seconds, and there would be no arguing or rebuttals. What we experienced was a perfect harmony of generosity and depth of spirit that filled the hall as forty people were able to speak. . . [Here is a sample of open mike comments.]:

- “We are finally getting to where we can be transparent.”
- “After many years, my niece told me that she was a lesbian and said, ‘I could not tell you before because you are a Christian. I was afraid you would stop loving me.’”
- “I am concerned that the One Church Plan will become the ‘do as you please’ option.”

- “I pray that we can hold close what we have in common rather than focus on what divides us.”
 - “The primary question we should be asking is not, ‘Are you LGBTQ, but are you bearing fruit for the reign of God?’”
 - “I am bisexual. I am afraid that my mother will lose her job because of me.”
 - “What if we only had only option and we had to find a way forward? Then we would all have to grow up and be God’s people.”
 - “Did Jesus ever exclude anyone?”
- And are we yet alive? Indeed, we are, when we “all in unison, act with the most perfect harmony.” With such courage, conviction, humility, and grace, United Methodists have everything to hope and little to fear!

[Posted on June 18, 2018 by Bishop Haller; the complete blog posting is at <http://www.lauriehaller.org/>.]



United Methodist Women

On Friday, July 20, we will journey to the New Melleray Abbey for a tour and lunch. Please let Sheryl Arnett know if you plan to attend.

Golden Age Potluck

July 12 at 11:30 am is the date for the Golden Age Potluck. Come join us!

Annual Rummage Sale

Thanks for all the donations for the rummage sale and bake sale, enabling us to take in over \$1,000. A special thanks to the volunteers who helped price items, set up before the sale, worked on the sale days, and cleaned up after the sale. And a special, special thanks to Marlene for preparing the lunch. Everyone enjoyed the hot dog lunch, which included some radishes and strawberries from the Buffalo garden.

Special Offering in July

Rural Life Sunday celebrates the rural heritage of the United Methodist Church and recognizes the ongoing crisis occurring in rural areas of the nations and world today.

June Administrative Board Meeting

- For the rummage sale’s noon luncheon, we had fresh radishes and strawberries from the church garden. To ensure later harvests, weeds can be pulled any time.
- The prep work for exterior painting has begun; we just need some dry weather so the work can be completed.
- The Board voted to have new, larger gutters installed on the east side of the church. The Board met during a heavy downpour, and it was evident that the current gutters could not handle the rain water coming off the roof. Fortunately, a good percentage of rain water on the parking lot was flowing into the new 30th Street bioretention cell.

Conversations on the Parables

Schedule for final conversations on the parables:

July 5: The Parables of Mark

July 12: The Parables of Matthew

July 26: The Parable of the Sower in Three Gospels

Each conversation begins at 9:30 a.m. and we finish by 11:00. Everyone is welcome; it’s not necessary to have attended prior sessions. No preparation required; modest refreshments provided.

Building a Congregation

At the Iowa UMC Annual Conference in Des Moines, one session was led by Rev. Christian Coon, founder of the Urban Village Church in Chicago. Pastor Coon identified a variety of techniques they have used to get the word out about their urban ministry. Here are some of the suggestions that might be appropriate for Buffalo:

- Flyer the heck out of your community. Just because the first 19 flyers did not work, does not mean the 20th one won't.
- Say yes to funerals and weddings. Make your space available for a wide variety of events that may not necessarily involve members of your congregation.
- Have members of the congregation participate in community organizing training (amosiowa.org).
- Hand out stuff (for example, distributing "You Are Loved" valentines on Valentine's Day).
- Participate in street festivals—or start your own neighborhood street/parking lot festival.
- Make sure your church can be located on the "Find-A-Church" directory.
- Keep your website updated.
- Get on Instagram.
- Get on Yelp. Pastor Coon indicated that in Chicago Yelp was the #1 way in which prospective members discovered the Urban Village Church.
- Maintain an active presence on Facebook.
- Pray on Twitter. There are opportunities to respond to people's prayer requests on Twitter.
- Collect for mission work and let your town know about it.
- Be in parades. Use the parades to hand out free stuff and interact with the crowd.
- Organize small groups that meet outside your church. Don't feel that events must be held in your church building.
- Engage in one-on-ones with community leaders.

- Set up a table at your Farmer's Market with recipes that have your church information on them.
- Start an Open Table (dinners in homes where members invite friends).

During the presentation, Pastor Coon frequently reminded his audience that most efforts will not produce immediate, observable results. Be prepared to fail. And yet, often in unexpected ways, a tactic will work. So keep trying, keep working, keep experimenting, keep the faith.



Website and Bison Blog

In recent months we have been averaging about 70 different visitors each week to the church's website, a notable increase from a year ago with 35-40 visitors per week. The data do not indicate where the visitors reside so our readers could be from anywhere in the world. Nor do we know which pages people open—though we do know that recent visitors are opening more pages per visit. The website's busiest day this year was on June 18, when we had 19 different visitors initiating 181 page views, an average of over nine views per visitor.

The Bison Blog is the website's most frequently updated page—with one or two new postings per week. Most Bison Blog entries are pieces on current and occasionally controversial religious, spiritual, and moral/ethical issues. For example, two postings in June have focused on recent remarks by Attorney General Jeff Sessions defending the Trump Administration's Zero Tolerance border efforts. Sessions quoted from the 13th chapter of Romans, where Paul states that every person is subject to the governing authorities and "those authorities have been instituted by God"—a passage frequently used in the 19th century by defenders of slavery. If you do read something on the blog you find disturbing, inspiring, thought-provoking, enlightening, or down-right wrong, please consider posting a comment on the blog or sharing your thoughts with Bob Marrs, the blog's maintenance man.

One Day in Des Moines

What follows are some notes I jotted down while attending the Saturday, June 9 session of the 175th meeting of the Iowa Annual Conference in Des Moines. These comments are not intended to be comprehensive. They are simply a sequence of observations on events as they occurred.

- We were welcomed at the entrance of Hy-Vee Hall by a Methodist greeter, shaking hands with folks as they arrived, assuring everyone we were at the right place, at the right time.
- Received my badge from Ann Zeal and realized she used to work in the same building at Coe where my office was located. Although I feel like an outsider coming to this conference, the Iowa Methodists have done an effective job making me feel welcome, an impression further enhanced when I see Mary Fredericksen, confirming the location of our assigned table #33 at the front of the enormous hall.
- Normal conversation is difficult as we are “serenaded” by a church band composed of 2 trumpets, 2 guitars, a drum set, an electronic keyboard, and a singer/clapper. They are very skilled but also aggressively upbeat, rhythmic, and loud. It’s impossible to tune out their “Lift up your voice and shout.”
- In the front of the hall is a large dais over which hang twelve brightly colored doors (two of which might be fences), symbolically reminding us about our motto of open hearts, minds, and doors. The Bishop will later call upon us “to knock on closed doors.”
- Using her gavel, Bishop Laurie Haller calls the conference to order. Not only is her voice effectively amplified throughout the hall but her image and transcribed words are also available on two enormous video screens and several smaller monitors.
- The Bishop’s opening sermon begins with reference to the Lewis & Clark voyage of discovery, and Lewis’s great passage: “With such men I have everything to hope and little fear.” The Bishop recounts their 1805-07 expedition, the trip eventually taking them off the map, going into a world of mountains where their canoes were of no value. Bishop Laurie emphasizes that the United Methodist

Church has a similar problem: how to go forward without a map.

- The Bishop suggests that Jesus probably never used a map—as far as we know—and like Lewis & Clark he entered into his mission with much to hope and little to fear.
- The Bishop shares with us four lessons from Tod Bolsinger’s book on Christian leadership, *Canoeing in the Mountains*:
 - The world in front of you is not like the world behind you.
 - No one is going to follow you off the map unless they trust you on the map.
 - In uncharted territory, adaption is everything.
 - You can’t go it alone . . . you must move beyond the sabotage of the naysayer.

The Bishop asks all of us: are we ready to go off the map?

- In these situations I love watching the sign language people; one of the signers is particularly expressive in the facial expressions, gestures, and sharp precision of his signing.
- The benediction is delivered by a young man, just having graduated from the second grade. He did an excellent job reading his prayer.
- The sermon was followed by a 15-minute break, which included a two-minute video encouraging everyone to do some simple physical exercises.
- On the video screens the tech crew put up twitter postings. One twitterer posted a comment with regard to the UMC’s proceeding without a map: “What about the Bible?” followed by the hashtag #heresy#UMC. Is someone accusing the Bishop of preaching heresy? I wonder what it would be like if during all church services, congregants were encouraged to post for public display their observations on a sermon as it was being delivered?
- Our first legislative session. Each delegate has an individual voting keypad for recording our vote. Within 20 seconds, over 1000 votes are recorded and the results posted on the video screen. That’s pretty sweet. ~Bob Marrs, Lay Delegate

[The remainder of Bob’s report on a day at the Annual Conference will be posted to the Bison Blog on Buffalo’s website.]



Open Hearts.
Open Minds.
Open Doors.

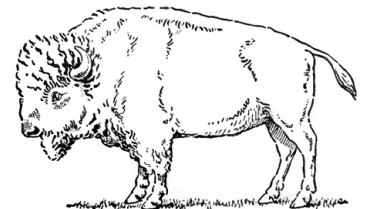
The People of the United Methodist Church

July 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:45 am: Worship Service	2	3	4 Independence Day	5 9:30 am: Conversation on the Parables	6	7
8 8:45 am: Worship Service	9 9:00 am: Church Cleaning	10	11	12 9:30 am: Conversation on the Parables 11:30 am: Golden Age Potluck	13	14
15 8:45 am: Worship Service	16	17	18 4:00 pm: Administrative Board Meeting	19	20 UMW Trip to New Melleray Abbey	21
22 8:45 am: Worship Service	23	24	25	26 9:30 am: Conversation on the Parables	27	28
29 8:45 am: Worship Service	30	31	<p>“With such men I have everything to hope, and little to fear.” ~Meriwether Lewis, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson (April, 1805)</p>			

July Birthdays

Fred Himes: born on a hot, 31st day of July in the 1930s. Everyone else in the congregation chose to have their birthdays and wedding anniversaries in a different month of the year.



Buffalo UMC: July Events

July 5, 12, & 26: Conversations on the Parables,
9:30-11:00 am

July 9: Church Cleaning, 9:00 am

July 12: Golden Age Potluck, 11:30 am

July 18: Administrative Board Meeting, 4:00 pm

July 20: UMW journey to New Melleray Abbey

Bertram UMC: July Events

July 3: Mission of Hope, Preparing/Serving
Lunch, 11:30 to 1:00 pm

Primary Election Bake Sale

During the election on June 5, we received \$80 from the donated baked items. Thanks to the bakers who supplied the tasty treats!

Buffalo United Methodist Church

1000 30th St

Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Ice Cream Supper

Saturday, August 4

Come join us for supper from 4 to 7 pm. Pies and cakes will be needed for dessert--plus beans, potato salad, etc. A sign up sheet will be available soon, giving everyone an opportunity to volunteer and help make this another successful Ice Cream Supper.

National Night Out

Tuesday August 7

Three nights after our Ice Cream Supper we can gather with our neighbors on August 7 (6:00 to 8:00 pm) for fellowship, games, cookies, and lemonade. During last year's event local police officers and fire personnel stopped by for a visit. If you know of anyone who has a talent to share, we would be glad to have them perform.

