



February 2019

Langley United Methodist Church Newsletter

An Advocating, Greening, and Reconciling Congregation

Special General Conference, 2019

General Conference is the legislative body of the United Methodist Church; it is the body that makes 'laws' for the entire international church. Normally, it meets every four years. Since General Conference of 1972, each succeeding General Conference has been dominated by heated debate on the issue of the inclusion of LGBTQ persons. General Conference 2016 created a special commission and took the unprecedented action of scheduling a special General Conference which will take place in St. Louis, Feb. 23-26, 2019. The commission has come up with three different plans; the task of GC 2019 is to decide which of the three, or some combination thereof, will become the 'law' of the UMC.

Some conservative UM groups have threatened to leave the church should the decision not be to their liking. On the other hand, should the decision go their way, they would become the enforcers of strict 'laws', like no LGBTQ clergy, no same-gender marriages, etc., etc. This raises the possibility of the church splitting, or schism. With that possibility will come considerable media coverage; seems like controversy attracts readers and viewers. Most likely we will be in the news later this month.

Follow the events of this special conference February 23—26 in St. Louis by visiting:

www.greaternw.org/gc2019

You can live stream!

So, the question that might well come to your mind is: How will all this affect Langley United Methodist Church? My opinion is this: Nothing will change in the inclusive way we have operated officially as a Reconciling Congregation for over 10 years, and for that matter for many years prior to our becoming a Reconciling Congregation. We have LGBTQ members who have participated as full and equal members, including marriage. We have a reputation within the community as being a fully inclusive church; the marriage ceremony of Jim and Bruce drew a huge crowd, well beyond our membership. In addition, we are located in a state that had marriage equality before the Supreme Court's decision that made that the law of the land. In addition, we are in an Annual Conference that has openly gay clergy and even well-publicized same-gender clergy marriages. And, we are part of the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC that has an open lesbian as one of its six bishops.

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However, we are in a minority within the entire UMC, which is an international church. United Methodism is growing rapidly in Africa; the Philippine UMC has large numbers. Estimates are that around 40% of the delegates, 850+ this year, to the Special General Conference are from outside the U.S. Put that together with the fact that the vast majority of U. S. delegates are from the more conservative southeast and south central (read Texas), we indeed do not have much voting power. For example, our Annual Conference has just two voting delegates, one clergy and one laity.

Nevertheless, despite what may happen at the special General Conference, I'm convinced that this church will remain the same as it's been for years, fully inclusive of LGBTQ persons. We have been called by the God of all to be "the light of the world. A town (church) built on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14)

Larry Fox

For the United Methodist Church - The Way Forward . . .

At the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2016, after more than 50 years of conflict about the inclusion of LGBTQ persons in our denomination, the decision was made to raise a group of people who would help bring direction to the struggle. In nine meetings over 17 months, 32 United Methodists from around the world engaged in conferencing to offer the church a way forward from its theological impasse over human sexuality. The Commission on the Way Forward has suggested three directions for the future of the UMC.

During the **Adult Forum** time on **February 3rd and 10th**, we will review the three proposals that will be considered during the Special General Conference to be held February 23-26 in St Louis. All are invited to a two-week study of this important decision for our denomination. Join us in the **Fireside Room, at 11:00am.**

Paul Morris

February 3

COMMUNION

CIVILITY FIRST

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

February 10

Isaiah 6:1-13

Psalm 138

1 Corinthians

Luke 5:1-11



February 17

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Psalm 1

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Luke 6:17-26

February 24

Genesis 45:3-1, 15

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

On February 23-26 there will be a special session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to discuss proposals concerning language about human sexuality in the *United Methodist Book of Discipline*. This is an international body, drawing from places that have very differing views of human sexuality. The Commission on A Way Forward has proposed the “One Church Plan,” which would remove the language, “the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching,” and would allow for Annual Conferences to ordain LGBTQ individuals and would allow pastors to perform same sex weddings. There is also a “Connectional Church Plan” which would involve much reorganization of the United Methodist Church, and a “Traditionalist Plan” which would strengthen and enforce the prohibitions on same sex marriage and gay ordination. For more information on the General Conference see, <https://greaternw.org/gc2019/> and <http://www.umcom.org/news/q-a-2019-special-session-of-the-general-conference>



On February 3 and 10 Paul will lead the Adult Forum on a discussion of these plans.

I’ve watched the church struggle with issues of human sexuality for years. I attended a session of General Conference in Baltimore in 1984, saw the conference vote down an inclusive petition, and watched as LGBTQ folk gathered around the balcony and sang “Jesus Loves Me.” One of my personal goals was to serve a Reconciling Congregation that dared to challenge the church’s narrow thinking and offer love to all. I’ve been blessed to serve two Reconciling Congregations!

I really don’t know what the outcome of this special session of the General Conference will be. I will be watching and praying. The United Methodist Church is very divided on this issue, but the bishops of the Western Jurisdiction are supportive of a welcoming approach to human sexuality. Bishop Karen Oliveto is the first openly lesbian bishop in the United Methodist Church, serving the Mountain Sky Area. Our Bishop Elaine Stanovsky has long worked for a more inclusive, welcoming church. Read her blog, “My Walk with Jesus and his LGBTQ Followers.” <https://greaternw.org/category/blog/>

A few years ago there was this publicity campaign for the UMC: *Open hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*. We need to live up to this, welcoming all of God’s people. Langley UMC will continue to be a Reconciling Congregation, expressing God’s amazing, all-inclusive love to everyone. I trust that God’s Spirit of Love will guide us through these days.

On a lighter note: Star Words. On January 13 I invited people to take a star. Each star had a word on it, and often that is the word we need to think about. My word was “passages” which is perfect as I travel toward retirement. I continue to love this work and this congregation. I know the cabinet is looking for the next pastor for LUMC and that pastor is going to have an amazing time here. There are so many passages on life’s journey. Let us mark the moments as we walk the paths of love.

What word did you get? How might it shape your life this year? If you didn’t get one there is a basket of stars on the information table. Draw a star—don’t peek—and see if that word might guide you this year.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary".

**A Celebration of Laurie Julian’s life will be in the Fellowship Hall
on Saturday, February 9 at 2pm**

Special Offering for Ryan's House on February 10

Although officially founded in January 2010 as a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization, Ryan's House for Youth originally began ten years earlier with a unique vision: to support and help homeless and at-risk youth achieve their highest potential both physically and mentally, as well as academically. This goal is best accomplished by supporting the whole child. Whether it's providing basic human needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, or simply being there with a little encouragement, Ryan's House for Youth can do it.



By creating the Ryan's House for Youth Host Home Program, students, ages 12-24 who have experienced difficult circumstances in their home life, are able to pursue their academics, leaving behind the barriers that would otherwise hinder their ability to thrive. They may even be able to achieve the same level of education as many of their peers, some even to excel. These barriers may consist of inadequate nourishment, lack of adult support and mentoring, appropriate clothing and, of course, a safe place to sleep at night. Ryan's House For Youth Drop-In Center provides a place where adult mentors can support students (ages 12-24) and their education. Mediation staff are on site to help these youth mend the broken pieces that once separated them from their families, and Case Managers are available to help access all needs such as medical, food cards, counselors, tutors, legal help, etc. The Emergency, Short-Term and Transitional Housing on Campus is specifically for youth ages 18-24 to provide housing while finishing up college, working a job (part-time or full-time) or just getting back on track.

<https://www.ryanshouseforyouth.org/about-us.html>



Council Notes

Church Council-Looking Up!

On January 19th the Church Council began its second year under the Single Board Governance structure. At this meeting we welcomed new members, participated in a Bible Study, discussed our Mission, Vision and Core Values based on the meeting last October, Safe Church policy, financial issues, and ways to address the shortfall. We will be meeting three more times this year.

In the next few months we will:

- Develop a Ministry Team for updating our Safe Church Policy for a more media centered congregation and world
- Continue to be part of the housing shortage solution with both Habitat for Humanity and THINC (Tiny Houses in the Name of Christ)
- The Finance Team was heartened by the increase in pledges, but concerned by a decrease in overall funding. They will provide quarterly giving reports to current givers
- We also discussed an adopt-a-bill concept to see if it would work in our situation
- End our missionary support to Lyda Pierce and Paul Jeffrey since they are retiring

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please speak to any council member or myself!

Grace and Peace, Candy Ramsey

Finance Update



Although we are considerably short (\$25,000) of receiving pledges to cover our yearly expenses, the Church Council decided to conditionally approve the budget for 2019. It was decided to take this “leap of faith” because we believe that our congregation wants to continue to reach out to the community the way we always have. If we fall short of raising the additional money, we do have savings to cover the deficit, but it would leave us with little cushion for the future.

This shortfall is primarily caused by the losses we experienced last year through death and people moving away. Anticipated expenses are actually a little less than last year.

You might be asking “What can I do?” Well, here are a few thoughts....make a pledge if you haven't; pay your pledge in full by the end of the year (about 25% of the pledges made are not fulfilled); turn off lights when you leave a room; pay a bill for the church; donate supplies – copy paper, stamps, toilet paper, paper towels for the kitchen; help with getting the parsonage ready for the new pastor; conserve water as best you can when washing your hands. I am sure there are many ways each of us can help if we just think about it.

There will be weekly information in the bulletin about how we are doing financially. If you have any questions you can ask Matt Todd or myself. We will be preparing quarterly statements on your giving to keep you informed. Online giving is an easy way to pay every month with no hassle. See Eve if you need help setting it up.

Rosemary Martin, Finance Chair

Memorial Garden

There is renewed interest in developing a Memorial Garden in the courtyard! This area is currently overgrown and occasionally used as a contemplative place or a quiet area for eating lunch. It is also used by church members and musicians during workshops and perhaps others.

Should we simply install a plaque for remembering loved ones or take it to another level? The first step is to envision the area, investigate options for the design and bring the proposal to the Board of Trustees.

Darlene Houlihan is willing to be the head of this short term Ministry Team! If you are interested in revitalizing and developing the Memorial Garden please contact her at (360)331-2373, no emails please.

HELP Wanted: Memorial Service Volunteers

Linda Tuck and I are the regular funeral ladies but we need a variety of people that we may call on to help us serve punch, pour coffee, prepare food at the request of the bereaved (requests vary) and then clean up, do dishes, and store or distribute left-overs. The UMW ladies have grown older and fewer and we are reaching out. We need to gather a list of men and women who would be willing to help us so that we know whom we can call. Linda and I consider this our ministry to our friends and neighbors and it is often very rewarding.

If you are willing to be part of this ministry, please contact me (fred@whidbey.com) or sign up on the info table at church.

Thank you, Harriet O'Neal



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Thursday, February 14
10:30 am Fireside Room

Start Valentine's Day with a special presentation on "**Jesus and the Love Languages**" from Lay Pastor Emma Donohew. She spoke on this topic at last year's UMW District meeting, and I thought you all would enjoy it. Emma serves in Bellingham currently to form a new Methodist faith community, and she facilitates a weekly conversation group, Pub Theology, that meets in local brew pubs. She was married last year; her husband works at a shipyard in Anacortes.



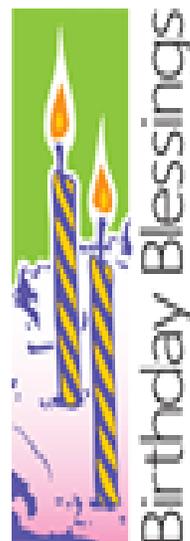
Emma will explore with us Jesus's use of love in his ministry, and how it relates to our own communication styles that help us hear God's call and love better in our lives. **Everyone in the church is invited to attend and start your day with a good dose of love!**

Nancy Waddell, nancyw@whidbey.com

Mark Your calendars! Next UMW meetings are on March 14 and April 11, with interesting programs planned. We'll take May off, and have our picnic in June when we will give our Mission Recognition pin. Hopefully this will keep us a bit more connected than last year. Details coming via email.

Thanks to everyone who helped get our new kitchen counter installed!

5. Gail Jiles
8. Andrea Loeser
9. Jeff Clark
9. Loren Imes
10. Stig O. Brandfors
13. Greg Gilles
14. Roger Barr
15. Flannery Friedman
16. Dave Anderson
16. Austin Drake
17. Roy Benson
17. Gail Pierce
19. Bayley Gochanour
26. Sharon McDaniel



2018 Cookie Walk donations made to fulfill our ministry to women and youth:

\$400 - The HUB, Helping Hand

\$300 – Good Cheer, Ryan's House

\$100 – CADA, Friends of Friends, Mary's Place, NAMI (Mental Health), SW Homeless Coalition, WI Nourishes

\$50 – Family Resource Center

\$2,050 **THANK YOU!**

WESPATH

by Julia Frisbie, Associate Director, Northwest United Methodist Foundation

If you're a clergyperson with a pension, or if your church has long-term investments with the Northwest United Methodist Foundation, chances are that your investments are being managed by [Wespath](#). That's the investment arm of the United Methodist Church.

This is one of the perks of being part of a global denomination. Just like [UMCOR](#) allows us to do more in the mission field than any of our churches could do alone, Wespath allows us to pool our money and have a bigger positive impact in the markets. Here are three ways Wespath helps us use our money for good.

Avoid: Our money is not invested in alcohol, tobacco, pornography, gambling, weapons, or private prisons. These exclusions are in line with our United Methodist Social Principles. Wespath also avoids investing in coal, because of the financial risk it poses in the emerging low-carbon economy. Due in large part to pressure from our own annual conferences, Wespath now gives our account holders [the option to divest](#) from fossil fuels and the so-called Palestinian conflict companies.

Engage: Through formal requests, proxy voting, and shareholder resolutions, Wespath both encourages and, when required, puts pressure on companies and policymakers to do the right thing. Our pooled \$23 Billion in assets give us more clout than any of us would have alone. Together, we advocate for: board independence and diversity; performance-based executive compensation; robust audit and control practices; appropriate shareholder rights and transparent reporting; the transition to a low-carbon economy; and identifying and mitigating human rights risks.

Invest: It's not enough to avoid the bad stuff and question the questionable stuff. We also need to invest in the good stuff. Through Wespath, we have:

\$1.5 Billion managed by women and/or minority-owned firms.

More than \$2 Billion in our [Positive Social Purpose Lending Program](#). This includes investments in renewable energy for developing nations, and the construction of 52,000 affordable housing units here in the US!

More than \$700 Million in low-carbon energy solutions.

Hearts & Hammers Spaghetti Dinner ~ Friday, February 8 Fellowship Hall *All you can eat only \$5*

H&H is a local non-profit organization that brings together a community of local volunteers to help repair and rehabilitate homes of those who are physically or financially unable to do the work alone. From its humble beginning in 1994 (at this church) it has grown to an organization with more than 400 volunteers working on an average of 40-50 homes throughout the Central and South Whidbey community. Come have a wonderful meal with all your friends and support this organization.



February

Fri. 1	Men's Prayer Breakfast	7:30am	The Braeburn
Sun. 3	Pub Night	TBA	TBA
	Sacred Harp Singing	3pm	Fellowship Hall
Mon. 4	OFFICE CLOSED every Monday		
Tue. 5	Women's coffee breakfast group every Tuesday	9:30am	Clover Patch
	Adult Spiritual Formation mtg	10am	Fireside Room
	Trustees mtg	4:30pm	Fireside Room
Thu. 7	Choir rehearsal every Thursday	7pm	Sanctuary
Fri. 8	Hearts & Hammers benefit Spaghetti dinner	4:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Sat. 9	Laurie Julian's memorial	2pm	Fellowship Hall
Sun. 10	Special Offering Sunday & Graham Johnson's farewell	9:30am	Sanctuary
Tue. 12	Bible Study	10am	Fireside Room
Wed. 13	Page Turners	1pm	Fireside Room
	Women's Gathering	7pm	Prayer Room
Thu. 14	United Methodist Women	10:30am	Fireside Room
	Thursday book Club	2pm	Fireside Room
Fri. 15	Men's Prayer Breakfast	7:30am	The Braeburn
Tue. 26	Bible Study	10am	Fireside Room

Worship at 9:30am
 Nursery available
 Sunday School for
 youth and kids at 9:45
 Fellowship Time
 following worship
 Adult forum at 11am

Office Hours:
 Tue.- Fri. 9 – 2:00



*"Followers of Jesus
 on a journey of love"*

Langley United Methodist Church

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Pastor Mary Boyd

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