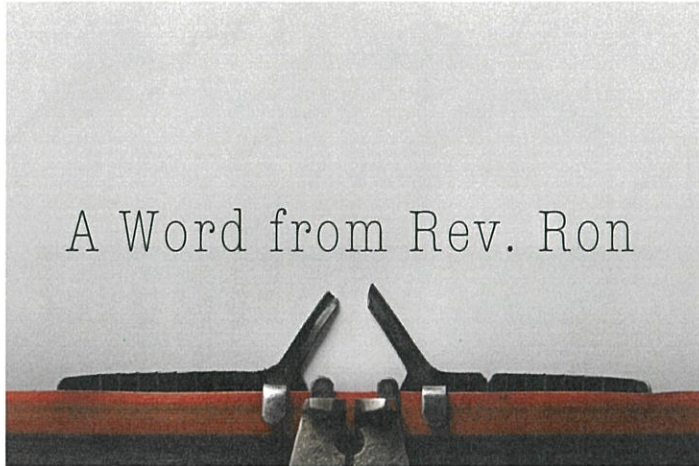


AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 2025

The Epistle

A newsletter for the community of
St. Paul's United Methodist Church



Are we Canoeing, or Climbing?

Another school year is beginning, and with it another year of ministry at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. And as we move into this new beginning together I find myself wondering: Are we canoeing? Or climbing?

In *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, author Tod Bolsinger develops an insightful analogy. He compares leading in uncertain times to the cross-continental trek of Lewis and Clark. The members of the Corps of Discovery trusted their leaders because Lewis and Clark had proven themselves in other situations, and then in the first leg of their trip they directly demonstrated their technical expertise and leadership to the Corps' members. They were seasoned explorers, well capable of making their way by rivers and over land, conquering the "technical challenges" for which they had training and experience. They weren't as expert at traversing mountain ranges, however; and when they faced the mountains, they had to learn and adapt. Bolsinger draws from their experience lessons about responding to what are called "adaptive challenges" in our world – problems our previous expertise and experience have not directly trained us for. Such challenges require learning, risking, evaluating, and (dreaded by many the most!) *changing!*

Bolsinger's book is structured around "five vital lessons that every leader of a Christian congregation or organization has to learn in uncharted territory":

1. *Understanding uncharted territory*: The world in front of you is nothing like the world behind you.
2. *The on-the-map skill set*: No one is going to follow you off the map unless they trust you on the map.
3. *Leading off the map*: In uncharted territory, adaptation is everything.
4. *Relationships and resistance*: You can't go alone, but you haven't succeeded until you've survived the sabotage.
5. *Transformation*: Everybody will be changed (especially the leader).

(Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, pages 14-15)

*Focus on the mountains ahead,
not the rivers behind.*

*Focus on continually learning,
not what you have already mastered.*

-Tod Bolsinger, p. 215

Like many of you, I have lots of experience and expertise in traditional church leadership. I know my way around board and committee structures and procedures; I know the ins and outs of worship planning and sermon preparation; I've been visiting in homes, hospitals, and care centers for over two decades; I've taught every age from wide-eyed preschoolers to sprightly elders. Many of you have been active in church over the decades and know your way around the traditional, "technical" skills that have generally been called upon in our churches in years past. Like the canoeing prowess of the Corps of Discovery, you had learned and lived out your skills in meaningful ways.

But more and more our leaders, consultants, prophets, and experts are telling us that the terrain of modern society is radically different, and the skills needed to connect with people today are not the same as those we've learned and used in the past. Gone are the programmatic church days of the past when with a *Field of Dreams*-like vision we can "build it and they will come," drawing in new visitors and Christian seekers with contemporary worship or afterschool programs or church-based events or new facilities. We are challenged to grow new skill-sets, to learn and adapt to our settings just as Lewis and Clark had to adapt to the mountains by learning from and trusting others like Sacagawea, who helped guide their Corps in the successful completion of their intercontinental quest.

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I think the first step we can pursue is listening to and learning from those with whom we would be in ministry. At our strategic planning workshops the first half of this year, our leaders identified a desire to be in more direct ministry with “families with children” in our area, and also a desire to strengthen our longstanding ministry with the food insecure. Rather than assume what ministries they want and need, however, we talked about the need to go out and learn; and we are still wrestling with how to do that. It is hard to step out of our comfort zones, out of our status quo, and to really go and learn. We like to assume we know what people want, drawing conclusions from anecdotal experience. We often stick to insider language and ideas, disappointed that we don’t get the traction we think we should. It’s hard to step out of these patterns, but with faith and perseverance, we can learn and try new things.

Your church leaders, staff, and volunteers are working to learn, to risk, and to use new means to help people connect with the love of God and our congregation. We’ll no doubt fail, but failure is the consequence of taking risk. Hopefully we’ll learn and find new ways to move forward with our mission and vision as we connect with the community around us.



What's Coming In Worship: August and September



Life Lessons from Biblical Leaders

In August and September we will be reflecting on “Life Lessons from Biblical Leaders.” Drawing from the stories of leaders like Moses, David, Paul, and others, we will discuss topics such as overcoming family trauma and self-doubt, moving forward when it is difficult, collaborating with others, and learning to express ourselves. Here are some of the weeks’ focuses:

- Jacob: Wrestling With Our Stories (overcoming family trauma / family “roles”)
- Moses: Responding to God’s Call (overcoming self-doubt)
- Moses: Surviving the Desert (moving forward when the way is difficult)
- David: Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly (facing violence, developing integrity)
- Paul: An Advocate for Collaboration

**Sunday
Worship
Schedule:
8, 9:30, 11**

We will return to our long-standing three service schedule on Sunday, August 3, 2024. We will have Traditional Services at 8:00am (with the Early Bird Choir) and 11:00am (with the Sanctuary Singers [quartet]); as well as our Contemporary Service at 9:30am, with Grace Multiplied. Please be aware that in the coming year our Church Council will more actively review and evaluate the effectiveness of our worship schedule, to discern what changes might be in the best interest of our church’s long-term health and vitality.

Fifth Sunday Family Worship

Our next Fifth Sunday Family Worship will be during the 9:30am service on August 31. We invite you to join us for a joyful romp down a yellow brick road, somewhere over the rainbow, as we reflect on biblically sound leadership lessons demonstrated by Dorothy of Kansas.





About the Practice of Holy Communion

²³ I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. ²⁴ After giving thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me."²⁵ He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me."

-1 Corinthians 11:23-25

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

-Mark 14:22-24

From the earliest first reference to the sacrament of communion in the letters of Paul, to its description in the gospels, we are given a simple order of actions that have become the foundation for the sacrament in multiple denominations of the greater Christian church. The Lord **took** bread and later wine, **blessed** bread and later wine with thanksgiving to God, **broke** the bread, and **gave** the bread and wine to the gathered disciples.

From the earliest Christian communities founded by the disciples themselves to modern churches we have re-enacted this moment, first in the context of a larger community meal and in modern times as an act of worship in our churches. This ritual reenactment invites us into the moment as a sacrament of holy mystery after the example of the Jewish seder, a special feast in which modern Jewish families re-tell the story of Exodus as though they had been directly involved.

The sacrament of holy communion, also called "eucharist" and "the Lord's supper," invite us to connect over the eons and around the world not just with Jesus and his original disciples, but with all who call themselves Christian. In the Catholic church the practice, known as "mass," is the center of every worship experience. While most Protestant churches practice the sacrament less often – a leftover from the time when an ordained clergy might only be present to lead the sacrament once a quarter or once a month – some have returned to offering it weekly.



However often it is observed, the basic steps of holy communion generally follow the same structure as Jesus' activity; this is what clergy are taught and what we strive to replicate at St. Paul's UMC:

- The officiant **takes** the bread and wine, symbolically taking and lifting them from the altar.
- The officiant **blesses** the bread and wine, generally in the context of the "prayer of great thanksgiving," an established liturgical tradition in many denominations.
- The officiant symbolically **breaks** a loaf of bread.
- The officiant and/or communion servers **give** the elements to members. Traditionally, church members come forward to "receive," as the elements – however they have been prepared – are given to them by the server(s).

The last portion of our common ritual took on greater significance to me when I was a college student and our campus pastor was serving us communion. She reminded us that we come forward to receive what Christ, represented by the communion server, is giving us. She advocated coming with open hands, that the server could break and give you a piece of the bread (this was back when we were celebrating communion most regularly by "intinction," dipping a piece of bread into the cup). Her words have stuck with me: in the physical act of opening my hands to the communion server, each time I receive I am reminded this is a gift being given to me.



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES



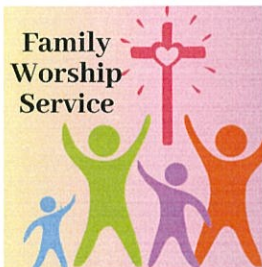
JULY 27th
9:30 - 10 am
for
Sunday School
ALL AGES!

WELCOME BACK STUDENTS, FAMILIES & TEACHERS!

We are so excited to bring you a new curriculum for Sunday School starting August 3rd! We can't wait to get started with our interactive hands-on activities for ages 3 years through 5th grade at the 9:30 am service. Join us as we Dig In to the Foundations of our Faith. If you haven't updated or confirmed your child's emergency contact information within the last month, please contact Heather as soon as possible!

THANK YOU

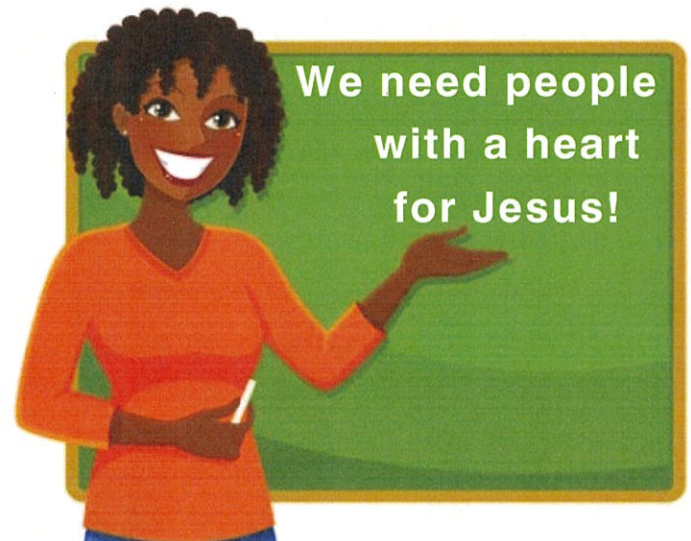
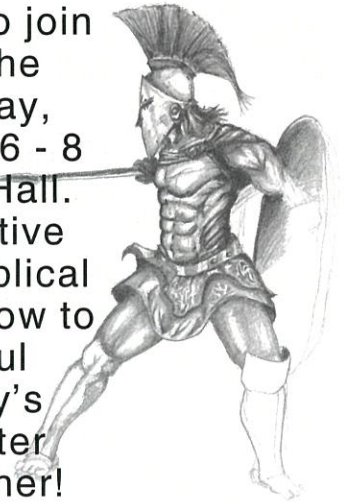
to all the volunteers who attended the Sunday School training class on Friday, July 18th! You are a blessing to all the families at St. Paul's!



SAVE THE DATE!
Sunday, Aug. 31st
at the 9:30 am
service

BOYS & THEIR MENTORS

You are invited to join us for Way of the Warrior on Friday, October 3rd from 6 - 8 pm in Brummet Hall. This is an interactive program using biblical stories to teach how to be a successful warrior in today's society. Register today with Heather!



We are still looking for a couple of big-hearted adults to teach children's Sunday School once or twice a month or serve as a fill-in teacher. Each Sunday's lesson is created for leaders to teach from their strengths and intentionally developed to reach the heart of every child. Talk to Heather to discover how **YOU** can be a part of this joyful ministry!



Shared Youth Ministry: Belong - Believe - Serve

“Probably the camping trip was the best moment from youth group. It was extremely fun.”



We asked our students to share some of their favorite moments from recent youth group events. Here are just a few of the meaningful and fun experiences they wanted to highlight!

“During youth group I had a lot of fun meeting and hanging out at the Trampoline Park, making pizzas, together, going to the Planetarium, and winning the Wesley Cup with them.”



“I always loved how positive and supportive the community was. We always have so much fun and it is a comfortable environment to be in.”



“My favorite things were the camping and baking the apple pie. Both these things were very active and fun to do.”



“I really appreciated the outings to the pool and bowling. Luis is always ready to go and do something fun with a happy attitude.”

A few upcoming local/district events that we are planning:

- **Youth Back-to-School Kickoff:** (July 27 at St. Paul's UMC): A relaxed and fun afternoon for youth in grades 6–12 with games, snacks, and connection as we kick off the new school year.
- **South District Splash Bash** (August 24 at St. James UMC): A district-wide pool party to celebrate the season with swimming, games, and fellowship for youth across the South District.
- **Escape Room Outing** (September – date TBA): We are planning a fun return to the Escape Room this fall, a favorite experience from last year that youth are excited to do again.
- **Monthly Echo the Story Discussions:** Youth will gather once a month for Bible study using the Echo the Story curriculum, exploring faith through storytelling and discussion.
- **Discussions (in September) regarding the Spring Trip and an international Summer Mission in 2026.**



Would you like to join our volunteer/leader team this year? Your insight, time, and gifts would be greatly appreciated. For more information, please email Luis at:
youthdirector@tucsonumcyouth.com



Reflections from our 2025 Annual Conference

The 2025 annual conference of the Desert Southwest Annual (regional) Conference – with the theme “A Healthy Church For A Healthy World” – met in Las Vegas, Nevada, June 12–15, with clergy and laity from every United Methodist Church in our region attending. In addition to Rev. Ron attending, our church’s elected members of the session were David Beeson and Lauren Danloe. Megan Swanson also attended, as she is the chairperson of the conference’s Commission on Communications. We’ve asked each to share some of their thoughts from the week.

AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

JEREMIAH 17:14 | PSALM 51:10

Elvis & Change in Church

Some days we have to sit in some discomfort, allowing what is challenging us to help us discern. When discomforted, we can discern what core values, principles, or experiences we value, why we value them, and how we think they are being challenged. When discomforted, we can discern where we value our own comfort and preferences over the experiences and expressions of others.

I know that I tend to be more centrist than many of my clergy colleagues in this annual conference. I choose to seek balance, and am not nearly as theologically or politically “progressive” in my expressions and teachings as others. So every year at annual conference I find myself in some discomfort, wrestling with whether my centrism is rooted in deep personal principles that value unity even in our diversity or is more rooted in what I find comfortable. For example, while I do not criticize or even disagree with our bishop’s convictions, you wouldn’t see me holding up a sign that says “No King but Jesus” for a photo op.

The very opening of our annual conference had me wrestling with some discomfort; and perhaps I was the outlier in the room. The praise and worship songs of the service were all Elvis Presley songs, led by an Elvis impersonator. Others really enjoyed the moment: even I can admit that the integration of Elvis’s gospel and religious songs into a worship service in Las Vegas seemed apropos. In conversation, many expressed how they felt Elvis’ faith expressed through the homage.



For my own part, I felt a little out of place; it felt like we were idolizing another person’s faith, presented through a simulation of that person. Perhaps if the impersonator had shared his story of how acting as Elvis helped his own faith – kind of like the way Eastern Orthodox venerate the saints in icons not as an end, but as a means to going deeper in their own relationship with Christ – the service might have inspired me more. As it was, I was left feeling a bit “meh” about the whole thing. And yet... and yet, many around me felt moved.

And this leads me, in reflection, to remember a core teaching that I learned early in ministry: The key to church revitalization and vital, healthy ministries is getting existing church members to set aside their comfort and preferences for the sake of the mission. Elvis songs by an Elvis impersonator was clearly not my cup of iced chai tea, and yet it was a perfectly drawn double shot macchiato for others. In our local churches, we often need to pursue worship or ministry initiatives that go beyond my personal preferences or comfort, and we do so because through such new means we are helping others to connect with God, faith, and Christian community in a way that is inspirational and meaningful to those with whom we hope to share Christ’s good news.

Our bishop is challenging us to pursue “healthy churches in a healthy world.” From my experience, some of the steps to health are not comfortable or my preference. I’d much rather spend an hour at a fine dinner than spend an hour exercising; but the discomfort of rigorous exercise contributes to greater health. I can’t anticipate all of the ways that we may individually and collectively be challenged and discomforted as we respond to God’s Holy Spirit to do new things to be more healthy, but I can hope and pray that we will be open to moving through the discomfort to the health on the other side.

–Rev. Ron



A First Timer to Annual Conference

On June 11, 2025, I made the long drive up to Las Vegas to attend my first Annual Conference as a voting member of the conference. For those who may not know, at Annual Conference 2024, I was appointed the chair of the Commission on Communications, which is a group of people from all over the conference who support the communications staff and volunteers of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference. Ever since I started here at St. Paul's, I've found that I have an interest in communications and how I can help the church better communicate with its members and others in the community and I was excited to help out at the conference level as well.

For those of you who are thinking "Why was a church conference held in Las Vegas?", I have an answer for you: the Desert Southwest Annual Conference encompasses Arizona and the Las Vegas area and instead of always having our conference in the Phoenix area, they have been moving it around. The 2024 conference was in Tucson, 2025 in Las Vegas, and 2026 will be in the West Valley area.



The legislation at this year's conference included 4 different constitutional amendments that came from the 2020/2024 General Conference. Those amendments included regionalization, an amendment to add gender and ability to our inclusivity statement, an amendment stating our opposition to racism, and an amendment which clarified who can elect clergy delegates to General Conference. While we do not yet know how the vote went, we should know in the fall once all of the conferences are held around the world. These amendments will work towards making the worldwide United Methodist Church more equitable.

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Making Ripples

This was my 3rd consecutive year attending the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. This year's conference was held in our northern district, in Las Vegas. I love and appreciate how family-friendly our church and the conference is: the conference's childcare enables me to attend, and my kids love the activities they get to do.

Being in Las Vegas, our opening worship music was lead by an Elvis impersonator! The worship organizers did a great job tying in some of the history of the United Methodist Church and the hymns being sung.

The theme of this year's conference was "A Healthy Church for a Healthy World, and Let it Begin With Me." Bishop Rapanut used the metaphor of a pebble being tossed into water and the ripples that are created. We may each be one person, but our actions create a ripple effect.

There were sessions geared towards working on our own individual mental, spiritual, and physical health, so that we aren't trying to pour from an empty cup. I particularly enjoyed sessions lead by Karen Lassen Oliver, director of The Upper Room Center for Christian Spiritual Formation. She introduced me to incorporating movement while praying, which I had never thought to do before! I left this annual conference inspired to be a pebble creating ripples, and I carry around a pebble from our conference table in my wallet to remind me."



-Lauren Danloe



Church Financial Update: Quarter 2, 2025

Upcoming Community Events

A key to church health is members of the church connecting with others in the surrounding community. But, we know that can be hard. So we are looking at ways to facilitate encouraging church members to follow the old Biblical advice – to not go alone! – in a fun way. In coming months we invite you to consider joining other church members to go out into our community for times of fellowship and connection. We are working on a variety of ideas to be present in our community, such as a night at the Gaslight.

You may want to mark your calendars now for some special events in October, times when we will encourage you to go out with other church members to participate in community events. These will include:

- **Tucson Meet Yourself**, Saturday, **October 18**. Find out more about this annual event that encourages residents of Tucson to meet one another at this “folklife festival” by visiting

tucsonmeetyourself.org

- **Wilcox Wine Festival**, Sunday, **October 19**, 11am–6pm. We are chartering a bus to leave from the church after a special combined service that morning. The festival features live music, artisans, craft food vendors, and more. Find out more about the twice-annual event by visiting

willcoxwinecountry.org

- **Community Trunk-or-Treat** events. We will be inviting you to help us go out into the community and participate in some local trunk-or-treat events hosted by organizations we want to connect with and/or support. Watch for more information to be announced.

Part of seeking to be a “healthy church for a healthy world” is maintaining healthy stewardship of our financial resources. Here is a summary of where we are year to date.

As of the end of June / our second quarter, our YTD income for operating expenses is down from 2024, while our expenses are up. Year to date we are still running a slight surplus in our operational expenses, but it is less than at this time last year. At the same time we have made great progress in paying off the mortgage based on your special gifts. The church has \$204,571 set aside in “designated” gifts – meaning it can only be spent for the purpose for which it was given – and a cash balance / reserve of \$158,744.

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Income	\$401,144	\$391,285
Expenses	\$359,025	\$381,255
Balance	\$42,119	\$10,030
Mortgage Balance	<u>1/1/2025</u>	<u>7/1/2025</u>
	\$225,543	\$76,196

Retire the Debt Update

While paying off a mortgage is a moving target, we are pleased to share that as of the end of June, 2025, the amount that has been promised but not yet received now exceeds the amount due on our mortgage! If you have made a commitment or pledge toward this initiative, we encourage you to get your donation in. If you haven’t made a donation, we invite you to consider making one. Your gifts now, paying off our remaining debt, will give our church a stronger foundation for ministry in the years ahead. Thank you for your support!

Re-floor the Gym Update

To date, we have received \$56,363 in pledges and gifts, approximately 1/3 of the 2024 estimate received by our church Trustees to install a new sports floor in our Life Center gym. We continue to encourage users of our facility to consider making a special gift toward this update, we anticipate evaluating new bids of floor improvements some time in the next year, and we hope to see this improvement happen in the near future.

Preschool Financial Update

The Preschool ended its fiscal year with the end of June. They had annual income of \$67,875 and expenses of \$93,684, resulting in a deficit of (\$25,809). While the Preschool has struggled to break even since Covid and is looking at alternatives to pursue sustainable operations, they do retain a year-end cash balance of \$133,087, allowing them a few more years to make the changes to sustain the preschool long-term.

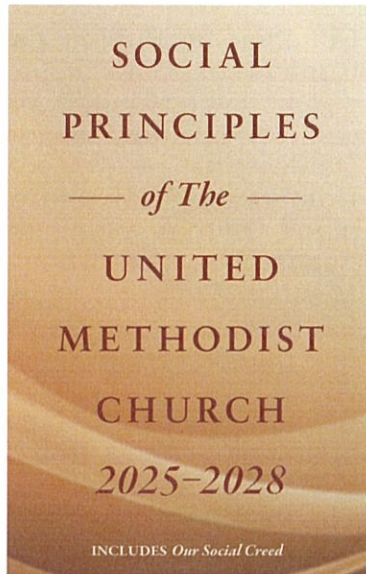
Fall Book Studies

Social Principles of The United Methodist Church

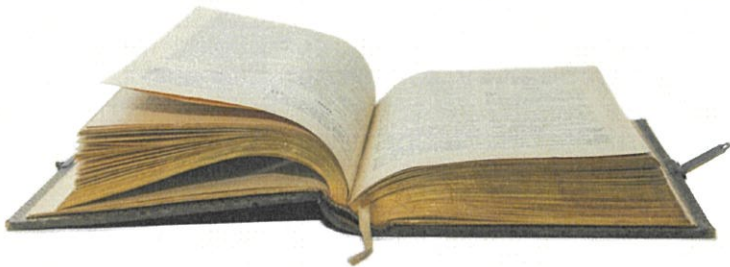
Since the denomination's first Social Creed in 1908, the United Methodist Church has maintained statements applying our Scriptural and historical Christian faith to contemporary issues and world events. These "Social Principles" are a part of our *Book of Discipline*, and were revised and renewed at Annual Conference in 2024.

The *Social Principles* are arranged into five sections:

- *Preface and Preamble*
- *Community of All Creation*
- *The Economic Community*
- *The Social Community*
- *The Political Community*



Join us to learn more! **Wednesday evenings in September at 6:30PM** (9/3, 10, 17, & 24).



Half-Truths: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say

Mark your calendar now to join Rev. Ron for a study of Adam Hamilton's book on unhelpful clichés and "myths" supposedly "from the Bible." Monday evenings at 6:30pm: October 27 & November 3, 10, 17, 24.

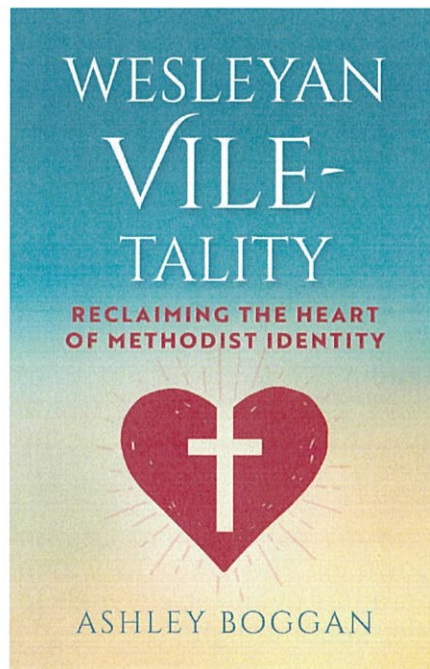
What I'm Currently Reading:

Wesleyan Vile-tality: Reclaiming the Heart of Methodist Identity

As a life-long United Methodist, I have heard more than once the stories of how our name came about, and about John Wesley's dramatic shift to outdoor preaching:

- The term "Methodist," intended as a slander, was first applied in print as a derogatory term to John and his "holy club" members while they met at Oxford, in December, 1732.
- On April 2, 1739 John wrote in his journal "I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation." Up to this point Wesley had felt that outdoor preaching was not just uncouth but almost paramount to sinful. Seeing the impact it had, bringing people to faith, changed his mind and led him to adopt the practice.

My current reading of Dr. Ashley Boggan's *Wesleyan Vile-tality* is expanding, and challenging, my notions of what these events have in common.



Dr. Boggan, who spoke at our annual conference last year (2024), notes that Wesley was, in a way, always pulled toward what the broader culture around him might have thought to be "vile." From their earliest days, when the holy club began visiting people in prison, there "was something about his call from God that pulled him toward abnormal practices, people, and principles" (23).

I'm just starting this text - though likely by the time you read this article I will have finished it! - and am appreciating new insight into old stories (framed by historical events in Wesley's life that I hadn't thought to connect with one another) and the admonition that Methodists' true identity "claims us as rabble-rousers, outsiders, and rule-benders and blatantly calls us to 'be more vile'"(7).

-Rev. Ron



continued from page 7

Legislation also included a resolution in response to the Southern Baptist Convention's Call to Abolish the Right to Gay Marriage. Not surprisingly, that resolution passed overwhelmingly. The last resolution was to have the Conference Foundation divest from fossil fuel funds which was brought to the conference by the Conference Earth Care team, which I am also a part of. We had been working on this resolution for years and are very excited to start our new project.

The conference brought to light a number of groups that I would love to see members of St. Paul's be a part of, including a Church and Society team, Camp and Retreat Ministries, SAWs Southwest, Disaster Response/Early Response Team, and Lay Servant Ministries. If you are interested in joining a conference team, please let me know.

The Annual Conference started off with a worship service led by an Elvis impersonator who sang hymns that Elvis sang, which I'm not going to lie, was cool and kinda weird at the same time.

Then we got into the business of the conference. The 3 main days of the conference passed in a blur of voting, business, and some seminars that were pretty cool, including the one about grief and how you can grieve almost anything which was called "It's More Than Death" put on by Pastor Gina Pollard.

I spent my evenings on my own, joining Lauren and her daughters down on the Strip to watch the Bellagio Fountains and I even took myself to the Mob Museum on the second night.

Overall, the conference was good and I'm glad to have gone. I will be attending the conference as Commission on Communications Chair for the next 3 years and am excited to see what we do next. If you are interested in attending conference, please be sure to let myself or Rev. Ron know!

—Megan Swanson

To Dream the Impossible Dream: Mission Project for 2025 reaches \$28,524.40!

This article was taken from the Desert Southwest Annual Conference Webpage and was written by Rev. Deanna Self-Price

It seemed impossible – for a moment. As the Mission Project for the 2025 Annual Conference Session was announced during the Plenary, an audible sigh was heard in the room. Only \$3,900.00 had been received toward a \$30,000.00 goal to feed hungry people, through local church food pantries, in Nevada! \$30,000.00 by June thirtieth was an impossible dream.

But then something happened during the Annual Conference Session in Las Vegas, Nevada. The people called United Methodist began to act. They went on-line to the donation page on the Annual Conference website. They sent notes to Conference staff with pledged contributions. They made verbal commitments with a hug or a handshake, and when it was all over, the 2025 Mission Project had reached a funding total of \$28,524.40! Only \$1,475.60 short of the goal of \$30,000.00!

In just a few short days and weeks, seventeen local churches contributed a combined \$20,522.25. Sixty-four individuals contributed a combined \$5,702.15 on-line. The Ordination Service offering, also designated for the Mission Project, garnered \$2,300.00.

Several churches participated in the challenge issued by North District Superintendent, Timote Piukala. The three largest gifts were provided by: First UMC of Tempe, AZ contributing \$10,000.00, Shepherd of the Hills UMC, Sun City West, AZ contributing \$2,985.00, and University UMC, Las Vegas, NV contributing \$2,500.00. While most of the giving was spread across all the local church food pantry sites, some churches and individuals did take advantage of the opportunity to designate a particular food pantry site to receive the contributions given.

It seemed impossible, and yet, when United Methodists get together, they dream an impossible dream and make Healthy Churches for a Healthy World by filling the shelves of a local church food pantry. They make the difference of whether a child will go to bed hungry tonight, or a senior will have to make the decision of paying rent or buying food for the week. The gifts contributed to the 2025 Annual Conference Mission Project will make such a difference in the lives of hungry people.

Thank you, to everyone who made the impossible...possible.