

CONLEY'S CONNECTION

In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Jake Owensby

I was beginning to feel discouraged the other day. Oh there's plenty of good news. Loads of compassionate people devote themselves to making this world a better place for everybody. Still, I can't help but see the persistent violence, hatred, want, and misery. It weighs on me. Maybe you can relate.

Jesus taught us to walk the way of love. He warned that this way would be hard, but promised that it would change the world. I'm all in. And yet I found myself wondering, "Are we really making a difference with all this love stuff?" That's when I remembered something that my mother used to say: "You have to take the bad with the good." When I was disappointed, flabbergasted, outraged, or frustrated, those words never failed to infuriate me. What I heard her saying was, "Calm down."

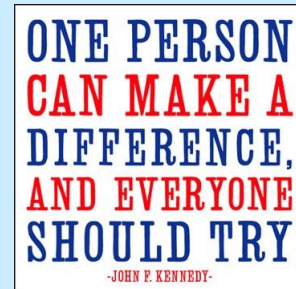
In retrospect, I've come to recognize that she probably meant to convey a lesson about life I wasn't yet prepared to receive. She tried to help me see what it means to persist in being a person committed to nurture and healing in a world bent on breaking hearts, minds, and bodies.

Speaking to his friends, Jesus said something analogous to this just after he emerged from the tomb. His friends were now people of the Resurrection in a world that still crucified people, and this is what he had to say to them: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23). We will be the people who heal and nurture, or we will perpetuate a world that returns violence for violence and wound for wound.

As I just admitted to you, sometimes I get weary and discouraged with this healing, nurturing work to which Jesus calls us. I'm a fan of closure and happy endings. It's tempting to believe that we could just eradicate the bad so that we're left only with the good. These feelings grow especially acute when it seems that violence, prejudice, greed, and selfishness are on the rise. But Jesus warns us that this is a dangerous, ultimately self-serving, and destructive illusion. In one parable he puts it like this: Some weeds popped up in a wheat field. Workers wanted to pull up the weeds, but the landowner stopped them, saying that if you try to yank out the weeds you'll just pull up the wheat along with them. (Matthew 13:24-30).

That's the Kingdom as we now know it. You have to take the bad with the good. But you do not have to resign yourself to the bad.

—*ministrymatters.com*



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AND REVIVAL COMMITTEE

Praying for Our Church

Last month Pastor Davis gave us an example of how to pray for our church using Paul's prayer for the church at Colossae (Colossians 1:9-12). As Conley's emerges from the pandemic restrictions and the effect they had on our church and ministries, many question who we are and how we best honor God. Many

want to go back to the way things were. Others look at this time as an opportunity to do things differently – to have a new attitude about who we are and what we do.

It is not important what we think or what we want. It is important what pleases God (vs. 10). As we, individually and as a church, grow in the knowledge of God, he will fill us with great endurance and patience (vs. 11). The early church gave us an example to follow. First of all they united in prayer. They sought God's will. They preached his word. They took care of his people. They did not look around to see what others were doing. They waited and watched for the Holy Spirit to move. And he did. In Psalm 130 David gives us the example of waiting and watching. The psalm says to Israel, "Put your hope in the Lord." Now he says to Conley's, "Put your hope in the Lord."

As Pastor Davis said, the disciples committed the people of God into the hands of God. God answered the disciples' prayers in a powerful way. If we earnestly unite in praying together a prayer like the one in Colossians 1:9-12, committing our people to God, God will answer our prayers for Conley's Church in a powerful way! Let us pray in one accord and wait in eager anticipation to see what God will do.

PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Good people have good things in their hearts. Matthew 12:35

Name the ten wealthiest people in the world.

Name eight people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize.

How did you do? I didn't do well either.

With the exception of you trivia hounds, none of us remembers the headliners of yesterday too well.

Surprising how quickly we forget, isn't it? And what I've mentioned above are no second-rate achievements.

These are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one.

Name ten people who have taught you something worthwhile.

Name five friends who have helped you in a difficult time.

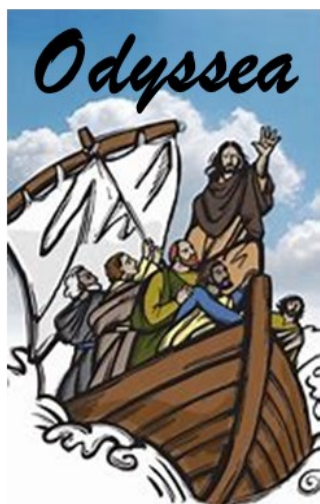
Easier? It was for me, too. The lesson?

The people who make a difference are not the ones with the credentials, but the ones with the concern.

- Max Lucado

Grace for the Moment Vol II (2006)





ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Embracing the New Normal

By Art Schmidt

Be careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. (Ephesians 5:15-17 NIV)

“This is the problem: People in a hurry never have time for recovery. Their minds have little time to meditate and pray so that problems can be put into perspective. In short, people in our age are showing signs of physiological disintegration because we are living at a pace that is too fast for our bodies.”

— Archibald Hart

Who came up with the catchphrase “Lower-Slower-Delaware”? Just take a drive around town and you’ll see that this entire area is anything but slower—people rushing to the beaches, outlets, shops, and restaurants. I like to stay busy, but there are days when I feel just the way Hart describes: my mind is going faster than my body—zooming down the information highway as my body sits idle at my desk in the church or home office.

Our goal should be balance. We know that a balanced nutritional diet is important and takes into account what our body needs to stay healthy. And likewise, a balanced life takes into account our personal needs—time for family, friends, play, recovery, and prayer with God. If we get out of balance, our inner voice will tell us to “slow down,” and we should listen...but do we?

While our society races down the information highway, we are inundated with more information than we can possibly process and have become dependent upon digital conversation. We have been conditioned to feel like we must stay informed, connected, and in touch all the time. We convince ourselves that we’re thinking faster with technology, but that’s just a fallacy. “Technology has altered human physiology. It makes us think differently, feel differently, even dream differently. It affects our memory, attention spans and sleep cycles. This is attributed to a scientific phenomenon known as *neuroplasticity*, or the brain’s ability to alter its behavior based on new experiences. In this case, that’s the wealth of information offered by the Internet and interactive technologies.” (Rebecca Hiscott, NYU, mashable.com). We are fragile beings, and our minds have far exceeded our body’s capacity, so we end up feeling overwhelmed and overlook those opportunities to recover.

Ah, but then came the pandemic of 2020—the ultimate wake-up call! The choice of slowing down was taken out of our hands and forced upon us overnight. Throughout the US, states responded with shelter-in-place orders—businesses shut down, schools closed, and churches were empty on Sundays. The dangerous nature and quick spread of COVID-19 required a strong response. Suddenly, all that we had been taking for granted for such a long time became very important. Suddenly, children were at home all day instead of in school, and parents were at home all day instead of at work. The pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives and heightened the importance of social interaction. It altered the family dynamic—spouses, parents, and children had to coexist and actually talk to one another! In the past year, the pandemic turned our lives upside down and changed not just the way we live and work, but also how we think and behave. We need to thank God for the reminder that we are not in control.

People say hindsight is 20/20, and that is true of the last year. The task ahead of us is to normalize, so let’s take a moment to pause and reflect on the past year—what have we learned? What will we take forward this year and, most importantly, the years beyond? God has made it clear that He is actively engaged in the process of making everything new...**for the old order of things has passed away** (Revelation 21:4). The “old normal” has passed away, and a “new normal” is emerging every day. Let’s accept God’s reminder as a gift that inspires us to change the way we think and apply what we’ve learned in the past year to the way we live in the new normal. Let’s **slow down**, celebrate the little things, and take time to rest, recover, and pray.

(Want more inspiration? Check out the song “What If” by Matthew West on YouTube.)

CONLEY'S CEMETERY GETS A FACELIFT

Noticed the Facelift?

Well, maybe not quite all the wrinkles have been removed, but progress is being made! If you've been over to our Thrift Shop, Chapel and Cemetery lately, you may have noticed several of those lines have been smoothed out with plans for more down the road. Continuing hard work on these stubborn wrinkles, by none other than our Cemetery **Beautification** Committee, is getting noticed.

So, if COVID-19 has kept you inside a little more than you would have liked, we're unmasking and bringing some "after" glamour shots to you!

Bill O'Brien, Facilities Manager



Conley's Chapel.



Fence line cleared from the rear corner to the Thrift Shop buildings.



Rear corner of the Cemetery.



Front of Chapel with the brick sign removed.

Looking ahead...

Plans are calling for a paver pad with a bench for reflection in front of the Chapel; a new historic style sign to complement the Chapel; replacement of the block paver walkway with paver stones matching the sitting area in front of the Chapel; removal of the stone wall and white fencing, replacing it with black aluminum fencing surrounding the perimeter; addition of a black wrought-iron arch over the Chapel entrance; landscaping to demark the cemetery from the parking lot and Thrift Store; cleaning and straightening of headstones; possible accommodation for cremation urns via a columbarium or memorial garden.

5 QUESTIONS FOR-

Louise Finn, Church Council Chair

Under the new governance established on January 1 of this year, Louise was named Council Chair. She also leads the Sight & Sound Team who produces the live-streamed Sunday service and the team that manages the church membership database. In her spare time she serves as the Cemetery Coordinator and makes sure the church computers and IT systems are running properly.



- Where did you grow up, and what's your favorite memory from your childhood?

I grew up in Bowley's Quarters (eastern Baltimore County) on Frog Mortar Creek (off Middle River in the Chesapeake). My absolute favorite childhood memory was my Dad, who raised me and taught me to be independent, to be nice but always questioning. He taught me how to sail (I had a little Sunflower sailboat), and in winter we had ice skating parties on our creek with bonfires and hot chocolate. Dad was a favorite of all my friends because he was always willing to pitch in and help us with our crazy ideas.

- When did you first come to Conley's, and what brought you here?

My first encounter with Conley's was the Thrift Shop. We bought our "vacation" home here in 2011 and loved to treasure hunt on Saturday mornings at Conley's. When we sold our home in Maryland and moved here full time from Havre de Grace, I knew Conley's would be the first church I would visit for worship services. My first Sunday at Conley's, Betty Hudson greeted me so warmly and each week thereafter, so I felt more and more welcome. Before long, I requested a transfer of my membership from Havre de Grace UMC to Conley's.

- What was your career before retirement?

I retired from Loyola University in Maryland as the Chief Information Officer in 2018. Technology always came easy for me, and helping people is a passion. So, combining these two strengths of mine into IT management positions throughout my career was a natural fit. I never felt like I worked, but was paid to do something I truly loved.

- Tell us about your family (husband, children, grands).

My husband, Charly, and I have been married 31 years. We each have children and grandchildren from our first marriages. I have a daughter and a son, both of whom live on Kent Island. I have three grandchildren: Colin 6 yrs., Ava 12 yrs., Ryan 15 yrs. old.

- What's your favorite way to relax?

Now that I am retired, I am able to pursue many of my interests; gardening, sewing/quilting, biking, kayaking, reading, taking care of my community Little Free Library, traveling/camping, genealogy, and volunteer work. This chapter in my life is really fun!

WORSHIPPING DURING THE MONTH OF JULY

**Worship with us on
Sundays at 10:00 AM
in person or online.**

**Our sanctuary is
cleaned and sanitized
every Monday in
accordance with
guidelines.**

**We live-stream
the service on Vimeo,
Facebook, and YouTube.
Links on our website.**

Produced by:



**You can make a
donation or tithe using
the online portal on
our website:
conleysumc.org**

**Thank you
for supporting our
mission and for your
faithfulness in giving!**

WHAT'S GOING ON AT CONLEY'S?

◆ Soup Kitchen Reopens

Conley's Soup Kitchen had a soft reopening on June 2 and offered guests a bag lunch for take-out only. The Soup Kitchen will reopen fully on Wednesday, July 7, 11 am—1 pm. They'll offer soup, sandwiches, chips, dessert, and a beverage. Guests will now be able to eat their lunch in Fellowship Hall. If you'd like to donate soup, there are sign-up sheets for July and August in the church narthex.

◆ New Ministry—Feeding the Flock

A group of volunteers started taking bags of food to 40 local families twice a week last month on June 18. The bags contain a sandwich, salad, fresh fruit, dessert, and bottled water or juice. They are accepting monetary and food donations. For more information or to support this ministry, please contact Cheryl Wood.

◆ Women's Encouragement Group

Our resident pastoral counselor, Richelle Marvel, is leading a group to encourage and support women that meets the second Monday of the month July through December in the church library at 6:30 PM. To register, 302-841-9794 or livewellbfit59@gmail.com. [Meeting Dates: 7/12, 8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, and 12/13]

◆ Easter—Behold Your King

This bible study group will restart Wednesday, September 8 at 6 PM in the library for the in-person study and 7:15 PM on Zoom. To register and receive more information including the link to purchase the book on Amazon, please send an email to: conleys.classes@gmail.com

◆ Love INC—Office at Conley's

Love INC (In the Name of Christ) is a national partnership of churches driven by the desire to propel all to serve and existing to partner with churches, organizations, and agencies to serve and meet tangible needs in our community. Conley's is a partner with local affiliate Love INC of Mid-Delmarva, located in Seaford and led by Susan Kent. We work closely with them to provide outreach support to those in need through our Social Concerns Ministry.

Love INC plans to open an office in our area, but until they find a location they've asked Conley's to provide space for them to use temporarily. The church council passed a motion at their June 17 meeting to provide space to the Love INC staff and designated the "Welcome Center" in the narthex. For more information, visit their website: loveincofmiddeldelmarva.org





The Israelites wanted a king like all the other countries that surrounded them. Samuel said: “You don’t know what you are asking for. You don’t want a king. A king will draft your sons and make them chariot drivers. He will have you plow all his fields and reap their harvest for his benefit. You will be put to work creating weapons and chariot parts. The women will become his cooks and bakers. He will confiscate your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards. He will take your slaves and your cattle and use them for himself. You are going to cry if you get a king.”

Be careful what you pray for because you just might get it, and when you get it, you might not want it. The people didn’t listen to Samuel. “No! We want a king.” And afterwards, they rued the day when that prayer was answered – they bitterly regretted what they had done.

Truman Capote wrote, “More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones.” Here’s an illustration: Marilyn Monroe wanted to be a star. Her quest to be a sex symbol, beauty icon, and movie star was successful, but she died of suicide on August 5, 1962, at the age of 36. Be careful what you pray for because you just might get it, and when you get it, you might not want it.

United Methodist pastors are appointed to the churches they serve. They do not pick where they go; the bishop makes that decision. Why? The belief is that the bishop, guided by the Holy Spirit, can have a better sense about where you can best serve the church than you do. Methodist pastors will have their own personal bias and don’t always see the full picture. I found placing my life in the hands of God to be the best way to live. When I graduated seminary and headed for the Northern New York Conference, there were several churches I had in mind as places I wanted to go. None of my selections was Ogdensburg, which is where I was sent. However, I had a wonderful experience in Ogdensburg, which is on the St. Lawrence River (Seaway) and the Canadian border. For example: One time, a parishioner took me on the St. Lawrence Seaway (200 feet deep) in a little skiff. His outboard motor died, leaving us powerless, and then a huge ocean-going vessel was closing in, blowing its warning horn. Somehow we survived that scary ordeal...and I learned the power of prayer! Also, I made lots of visits to Canada, had winters of abundant snow and sub-zero temperatures, and learned about the “north country,” which was a totally different place (and mindset) than I was used to in New Jersey. One day, in the middle of a brutally cold, snowy New York winter, the district superintendent from the Peninsula-Delaware Conference called and asked if I would be interested in serving a church outside of Delmar—Melson United Methodist Church. I was ready to move to a warmer climate, and Melson was a wonderful experience for me. The church grew numerically during my time there. Due to our three church league softball teams (men’s, women’s, youth) and one basketball team, the congregation was filled with young people. And all that was to a place I never heard of!

Later on, I was sent to the Queenstown-Grasonville-Carmichael Charge in Maryland. I was disappointed in the appointment to a three-church charge, but wait! As the Grasonville church grew, we made numerous updates on the facility, and also built a parsonage enabling the church to become a station church. I marveled at what God accomplished in a place I did not want to go to!

Another time, I had a church in mind that I felt was perfect for my ministry. Instead of my selection, I was sent to Millsboro. But what a great appointment that turned out to be. While there, the church outgrew its building so that we had to build a million-dollar addition. It was a time of very satisfying ministry for me and the congregation. And when it came time for retirement, I returned to Millsboro. We do not always know what is best for us.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked for the cup (of the crucifixion) to be taken away from him. But in the end, he said to God: “Not my will but thy will be done.” Those words are good for us to hear over and over again.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.” Proverbs 3:5



CONLEY'S CHURCH
33106 Jolyns Way
Lewes, DE 19958

Pastor: Rev. Dr. William Davis
E-mail: conleysumc@gmail.com
Website: conleysumc.org
Phone: 302-945-1881

Worship with us:
Sunday at 10:00 AM
(Details provided on page 6.)

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Editor/Publisher: Art Schmidt
Copy Editor: Anthony Chiffolo

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The secret of change is to focus
all of your energy not on fighting the old,
but on building the new.

— SOCRATES



In general, when looking back, you realize
that all the good things in your life are the
results of changes that occurred in the past.

Conley's United Methodist Church
33106 Jolyn's Way
Lewes, Delaware 19958

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

