

CONLEY'S CONNECTION

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

GOD OFFERS RELIEF

A Message from Pastor Bill Davis

*Day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
Psalm 32:4-5*

It's hot! Summer 2021 has been one of the hottest anyone can remember. This is why the 32nd Psalm recently caught my eye as I was studying for a sermon series on these ancient songs. We know how the psalmist was feeling; we all know what it's like to be sapped by the summer heat. The psalm tells us that sin has a similar effect on our spiritual life. It drains us of our joy, it makes us want to huddle under the cover of shadows, it weakens our faith. The good news is that God offers relief.

An old proverb says, "You cannot appreciate the shade of a tree unless you sweat in the sun." The psalm writer was able to appreciate the refreshing forgiveness that is found in God because he was willing to bring his own weaknesses and failures into the light...hot and uncomfortable as that was. In reading about the great Methodist songwriter Charles Wesley, I recently came across another song of praise inspired by God's forgiveness. Wesley wrote a hymn he called "After a Relapse Into Sin." It is in our hymnal under the title "Depth of Mercy," and it expresses beautifully the Methodist message of God's grace offered to all people.

In his book "Historical Notes on Hymns and Authors," Joseph Belcher tells a story related to this hymn. An English actress took a break from her hectic schedule in London by vacationing in the country. While out for a walk one day, she was drawn to a little church by the sound of the congregation singing. The words to "Depth of Mercy" struck a chord in her heart, and she procured a hymnal so that she could read the lyrics again. The offer of God's grace convicted her and inspired her to turn away from her wild lifestyle. However, she was pressured into one last leading role in a new play. As she prepared to make her entrance on opening night, the words of the hymn kept going through her mind, and she could not compel herself to perform. Finally, she was forcibly pushed out onto the stage. Standing in front of the packed crowd, all she could do was sing, "Depth of Mercy! Can there be / Mercy still reserved for me? / Can my God his wrath forbear, / Me, the chief of sinners, spare?"

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*"No matter
how dried up and
burned out we may
feel sometimes,
Living Water
is always
available."*

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STRATEGIC PRAYER **SPARC**



AND REVIVAL COMMITTEE

Praying for Our Church

Our days are filled with distractions and discouragements that draw us away from God. Some days it may be only for brief moment, and other days it may be more. God calls us to “*be still and know him.*” (Psalm 46:10)

SPARC is giving us an opportunity once a month to gather in his sanctuary, in his presence, to seek him and his peace, individually and together, and to pray for ourselves, others, and Conley’s Church in a monthly prayer service. The first service was held July 21 with ten people coming together in prayer. There was a time of inviting the Holy Spirit through scripture, song, and praise, followed by times of silent reflection and repentance. Also, there was a time of intercession for personal needs and healing with anointing with oil at the altar for those who wished it; and a special time of focused prayer for Conley’s Church.

This is a great opportunity to see the Holy Spirit move in Conley’s Church; to see what he, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, will do. To him be the glory! (Ephesians 3:20-21) Future prayer services are scheduled for August 25, September 22, October 27, November 24, and December 22, 2021, at 6:30 pm.

God Offers Relief *Continued from page 1*

It was reported that the audience rose to their feet in hushed reverence as she sang from the heart. And there was not a dry eye in the crowd as she concluded with the hymn’s affirmation: “*There for me my Savior stands, / Holding forth his wounded hands; / God is love! I know! I feel! / Jesus weeps and loves me still!*”

No matter how dried up and burned out we may feel sometimes, Living Water is always available. God loves us still! May Paul’s prayer for the church in Ephesians 3:18-19 be our prayer for Conley’s: that we “have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—so that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Amen.

- *Pastor Bill Davis*

THRIFT SHOP NEWS

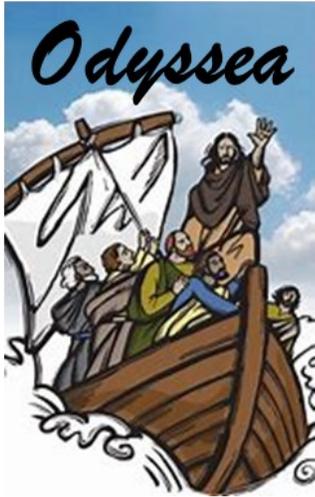
Sally and I want to give a great big thank you to our staff and volunteers who showed up every day during the past few weeks of 90+ degree weather. Without your support we would not have been able to keep the shop open and functioning so well.

We have had two successful months with sales, so we were able to assist several families and our regular charities with donations. Donations continue to be strong. We are currently booking pickups two weeks in advance. Now we just need to sell several of the in-stock sofas. Come check out the super prices and maybe take one home with you.

Please keep all of us in your prayers.

- *Pat Vogt*

thank
you!



ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Facing Poverty in Our Backyard

By Art Schmidt

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. (Proverbs 11:24 NIV)

The OPR (Overall Poverty Rate) estimates that 10.5 percent of Americans (34 million) were living in poverty in 2019, with declines from the year before under each demographic or characteristic measured, consistent with trends over the past decade. The SPM (Supplemental Poverty Measure) is a broader measure of poverty and estimates 11.7 percent of Americans (38.2 million) are considered poor.¹

Now that the Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act—that forgave payments retroactively to March 13, 2020—ended on June 30, millions of people are expected to become homeless across the nation, in our state, and in our county. It's true, many poor and homeless people have become impoverished through the course of their lives by making bad decisions and aligning themselves with the wrong people, but so many have become poor through no fault of their own—by unexpected life-changing events such as the loss of a job, serious illness, or death in the family. Some cannot help themselves due to emotional or mental health issues. Some cannot be helped because they refuse to be helped. As Christians, what should our response be?

The Bible clearly teaches compassion for those in need. The good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 tells the story of how a man traveling to Jericho from Jerusalem was mugged, robbed, and left for dead. A priest passed by the man and ignored him. But then a Samaritan, considered an outcast in that society, saw the man as a person in need and showed compassion. He paid for the injured man's lodging at his own expense until the man recovered. After preaching to the crowd in the wilderness, Jesus said, "I have compassion for these people, they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat." (Mark 8:2 NIV)

Compassion is a hallmark trait of Christianity in action. Christians serving their community is the reason why most of our universities, hospitals, and rescue missions were built by people of faith. As we consider the homeless population here in our backyard, we must extend a helping hand as best we can and remind them that God loves them in spite of their difficult situation.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to social holiness—putting the love of God into action—which moves us to seek out and do all that is possible for the good of our neighbors. As we continue to develop the "We Are Conley's" campaign, intended to attract new members, the church attributes we have identified confirm that putting the love of God into action is what we do here at Conley's.

"As a church, we are called to support the poor. To begin to alleviate poverty, we support such policies as adequate income maintenance, quality education, decent housing, job training, meaningful employment opportunities, adequate medical and hospital care, humanization and radical revisions of welfare programs, work for peace in conflict areas and efforts to protect creation's integrity. We put faith and love into action that opens hearts, opens minds, and opens doors through active engagement with our world."²

Well, we are in the summer months when things typically seem to slow down, but not here at Conley's. Our church is in an important time of transition—a new church is emerging—and we see our critical ministries re-viving in the aftermath of the pandemic. Our soup kitchen has fully reopened, the UMW has gathered and started to plan this year's Fall Festival, the Kairos and Mission Teams will be gathering to begin planning for the future, and the Sunday morning Adult Bible Study will resume soon. This is an exciting time at Conley's!

Let's continue to put the love of God into action...together!

¹ <https://www.americanactionforum.org/research/poverty-in-the-united-states/>

² <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe>



The newly formed **Mission Team** met on June 24 to reorganize from a Mission Committee to a team of volunteers with a heart for missions.

We meet to discuss how Conley's can best support United Methodist missions locally, nationally, and internationally. Conley's tithes its weekly offerings to missions, and that is what makes up our budget. We are incredibly careful to honor that trust and constantly monitor those funds. Visiting missionaries receive a free-will offering from our congregation. Meetings are held quarterly and as needed.

We will be looking for new mission areas to support because we lost many of our missionaries due to COVID restrictions. The church currently supports Cape Henlopen Food Basket, Kairos Inside of Delmarva, Kairos Outside Delmarva, Kairos Torch of Delmarva, Red Bird Missionary Conference, and United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Mark your calendars for the First Annual Kairos Songfest being held on October 2. Local church bands will be performing, along with Kairos Inside graduate testimonies and Kairos Outside guest testimonies. All are invited, and a free-will offering will be taken. Look for more information in the near future.

We will be collecting items for the Seamans Center October 24 thru November 21. The list of items will be posted online and in the Conduit soon. The tub will be in the narthex to collect items. We look forward to participating in this ministry again this year.

If you have a heart for missions and would like to join us, our next meeting is August 26 at 1 pm in the mission room. This is a special meeting to discuss mission areas. Our quarterly meeting will be held September 23 at 1 pm.

Please pray for your Mission Team and all the missions Conley's supports. When you are finished, please pray again. God loves to hear our prayers, and we can all pray.

Marie Van Der Wall, Mission Team Leader

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)



5 QUESTIONS FOR-

Marie Van Der Wall Conley's Mission Team Leader



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

I was born in Mechanicsburg, PA, and grew up in Harrisburg, PA. My favorite childhood memories took place at my grandma's house. We would watch *Sing along with Mitch*, *Gunsmoke* and *The Laurence Welk Show*. Not my favorites, but it was grandma's house. Sometime in the middle of the show during a commercial she would get up and go into the kitchen. She would come back with a snack for my sister Sandy and me. You never knew what it would be: a banana, a popsicle, a piece of dried beef, or crackers. No matter what it was, it was always given with love.

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

My husband retired from the ministry in 2013, and we needed to find a church family. We thought we would try several churches in the Millsboro area and see what fit us best. The second or third time we came to Conley's, Ann Hurley invited James to sing in the choir, and I was drawn to the strong mission atmosphere at the church. We were hooked and never did try another church. Conley's is family.

◆ **What was your career before retirement?**

I was a stay-at-home mom until my youngest started school. I started working part time for the USPS after that and ended up serving 27 years as postmaster at several locations in Delaware. The postal service was good to me, and I always get my hackles up when someone calls it "snail mail" or "junk mail." I have been provided a particularly good pension from that mail.

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

James and I have been married for 26 years. We have what James likes to call a blended family: two girls from me and two boys from him. Nicole (48), Valarie (42), and Scott (35) live in Delaware, and Jay (38) lives in New Mexico. We have five grandchildren, Torin (23), Caelan (20), Lydia (18), Hannah (8), and David (5).

◆ **What's your favorite way to relax?**

I am the State Chapter Chair for Kairos Prison Ministries International. That keeps me pretty busy; we like to say Kairos is our retirement job. I also enjoy playing golf, gardening, walking, mowing the lawn, and riding my bike. Every day is a blessing from God and a new experience.

WORSHIPPING DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST

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?

◆ Late Summer Bible Study Series

This Lectionary Bible Study series will be held on Thursdays for 8 weeks **August 5** through September 23. The group will meet in the Missions Room at 10 am. For more info and to register, contact Connie Paulson (302-644-1615 or wesconnie55@gmail.com).

◆ Women's Encouragement Group

Our resident pastoral counselor, Richelle Marvel, is leading a group to encourage and support women. The group will meet on Monday, **August 9** at 6:30 pm in the library. To register, 302-841-9794 or livewellbenefit59@gmail.com.

◆ Church Council Meeting

The monthly council meeting will be held on Thursday, **August 19** at 6:30 pm in the library.

◆ Prayer Service

Our monthly prayer service provides a contemplative time to lift up prayers of praise, repentance, petition, and thanks. All are invited to come seek healing, direction, and peace in the presence of our God who hears the prayers of God's people. This month's service will be held on Wednesday, **August 25** at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary.

◆ New Church Sign

Bill O'Brien, our facilities manager, presented a proposal to the Church Council at the July meeting to replace the current church sign that's in the field adjacent to Route 24 with a larger and more legible sign. He shared a drawing with the council, and they agreed to proceed with the purchase and installation of the new sign. The council also agreed to conduct a "New Sign Fundraiser" to defray the cost, with a goal of \$12,000. Ad-Art Sign of Georgetown will design, fabricate, and install the new sign. Lighting and landscaping will be added after the sign has been installed. More information will be provided as we move forward with this project.



A little bit of recent Conley's Church history:

When Pastor Bill Davis arrived, we had two Sunday morning services. After much deliberation, the decision was made to go to one 10:00 service. This change allowed time for an 8:30 am Adult Bible Study. I volunteered to lead that study. The plan was simple: we just asked everybody to bring their Bible, and we would read through a book, beginning with the Gospel of

Mark. After Mark, we moved to the challenging Book of Revelation. However, then the COVID pandemic hit, and the Bible study time in the library abruptly halted. The class was a great success, averaging 30 people per Sunday.

Now, with COVID subsiding, the Adult Bible Study is set to resume. It will begin on Sunday, September 5 at 8:30 in the library. We will begin by reading the Gospel of John. Please consider being a part of this ongoing class. Here is why:

1. Understanding—you do not need to be a Bible scholar to get something from this Adult Bible Study. We will simply read the Bible and discuss it. Since the Bible is the Word of God, every time we open its pages we will receive a blessing, as well as new thoughts and new understandings.
2. Fellowship—this class is heavy on fellowship. With all the new people coming to Conley's, there is no better opportunity for church people to talk and get to know one another. There is no better way to become fully integrated into the life of the church than through this class. You might even make a friend. Last year two single people attended, and now they are married!
3. Preparation for worship—this Bible study, just prior to worship, enlivens your senses and gets your spirit ready for praising God. Immersing yourself in the Word and then entering the sanctuary makes for a much more spiritual Sunday morning experience.

In seminary, we read a book entitled *The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church*. The opening story in the book told of someone wanting to study the Bible who went from church to church only to find that none of them offered a Bible study. I vowed in seminary that I would never serve a church that did not offer a Bible study and followed through on the promise throughout my 37 years of active ministry.

While this quote from the book is a bit heady, I think it is worth your while to read it:

"...the fading of the Scriptures from the consciousness of the church weakens and then ruptures the continuity of the church of today with the church in which it had its origin, so that it no longer remembers the word that called it into being or the purpose that alone justifies its existence. There is no stronger evidence of the subtle forces in life that resist God than the speed with which a church that no longer hears the Scriptures finds itself transferred from the service of God to the service of itself and its members, turned inward upon itself rather than outward toward the world. We call the church the body of Christ, but it remains his body only insofar as it is open, responsive, and obedient to his mind and spirit as they confront us ever afresh in the witness of Scripture. Let the Scriptures cease to be heard and soon the remembered Christ becomes an imagined Christ, shaped by the religiosity and the unconscious desires of his worshipers."

Come the weeks you can. But it is vital for the church to immerse itself in the Scriptures. I urge you, I beg you, please attend Adult Bible Study. It will be good for you; it will be good for our church. Just show up on September 5 with your Bible at 8:30 am in the library.

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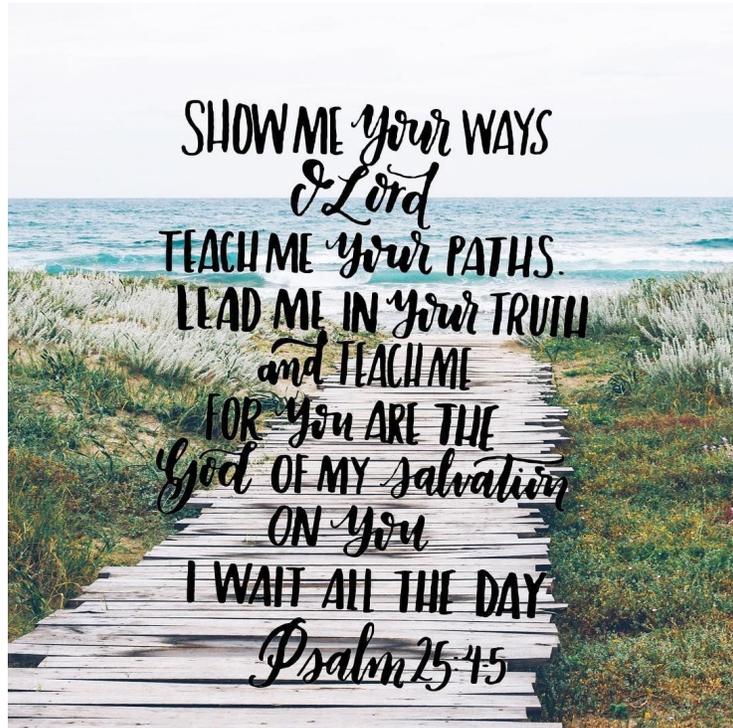
Worship with us:
Sunday at 10:00 AM
(Details provided on page 6.)

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

