

Bethesda Beacon

A publication of Bethesda United Methodist Church

www.Bethesdaum.com

February 2019



**Bethesda United
Methodist Church**

3608 Midland Road
Guyton, GA 31312
Phone: (912) 728-3332
Fax: (912) 728-5801
Email: Bethesdaumc@planters.net
Pastor: Rev. David Cott

Special General Conference

On February 23-26, delegates from United Methodist annual conferences around the world (including our own South Georgia Annual Conference) will gather in St Louis for a special, called General Conference. General Conference is where the “big business” of the United Methodist Church gets done. Normally General Conferences are held every four years, the next one being scheduled for 2020. At the last General Conference, in 2016, the need arose for this special called conference to deal with one specific issue.

When the UMC was established in 1968, it was the generally accepted understanding that homo sexuality was not compatible with a Methodist interpretation of scripture. There were few references to homosexuality in our Book of Discipline (our “rule book” which governs all UMC’s) because of that understanding. Starting at our first General Conference in 1978, some delegates started to work for a new understanding of scripture and homosexuality and the right of practicing homosexuals to be become ordained pastors. This actually resulted in more restrictive language and rules in the Book of Discipline. Through the years, this debate has continued and grown. At the General Conferences of 2012 and 2016 the debate threatened to stall the entire work of the conference, and some people worried about a division within the denomination. After the US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, this also became an issue in the debates, with some UMC’s wanting the right to perform such marriages.

In 2016, the delegates of the General Conference voted to ask our bishops to provide leadership on this issue. The Council of Bishops decided to form a committee to research and discuss the issues, and suggest a plan to address these issues that would keep the church together. The Commission on a Way Forward worked on three possible plans and last summer offered them to the Council of Bishops. The Bishops have given these plans to the called General Conference to discuss this month.

The One Church Plan was supported by the majority of Bishops. It would remove language from the Discipline relating to homosexuality and allow each annual conference to make their own decisions about ordination of pastors, and allow each individual church and pastor to make decisions about same-sex weddings.

The Traditional Plan would keep the restrictive language and strengthen the enforcement of the churches rules. At the same time it would also allow churches, pastors or annual conferences, who wished to leave the denomination to do so while keeping their properties. If departing churches wished to continue a financial connection with the UMC, (their pastors’ retirement accounts for example) they would be able to do so.

The Connectional Conference Plan would divide the denomination into three parallel branches; traditional, progressive, and centrist. While each branch would determine how they run their own conferences, they would share our world-wide boards, such as finance, missions, education, etc. Unlike the One Church and Traditional Plans, this would require a 2/3 vote instead of a simple majority and would take several years to implement.

There are several other plans that have been submitted to the General Conference from individuals and groups that will be discussed. The hope is that the General Conference will decide on a plan that will unite the denomination while reflecting God’s will for our church. PLEASE keep this General Conference in your prayers this month!

On March 9, an informational session will be held at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center where our South Georgia delegates will be present to talk about the outcome of the called General Conference. After that session, we will be having a meeting of our own here at Bethesda on Sunday, March 17th at 4:00 p.m., where we can discuss this more in-depth and answer any questions.

As our bishop Lawson Bryan has said often, “Stay Calm. Stay Connected. Stay the Course.” and continue to pray for our church, our conference and our denomination. If you have any questions or concerns before, during, or after the General Conference, please feel free to contact me at any time.

God’s Blessings!
Brother David

Thoughts for February 2019

John 15:1- 4 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

A local gardener told me several years ago to prune my rosebush in February, so I did, and have done so every year since. I could not believe how much that spring pruning would help the plant's foliage and flowering. I have learned to prune pretty severely, but I also know that I cannot cut all the limbs....the bush has to have a way to get water and nutrients from the roots in order to live.

In the same way, we must remain in Christ, bearing His fruit and serving Him. Remaining in Him means remaining true to His words, His commands and His teachings. It is a connection -just as the plant's limb is to its root.

February 23-26, 2019 are very important dates in the UMC. There will be a special session of the General Conference to discuss the plans presented to the Council of Bishops from the Commission on A Way Forward. This commission was charged with finding a way for the UMC to remain unified while addressing the issues of Human Sexuality. (for more information see <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/bishops-propose-plan-for-way-forward>.)

Please be in prayer for this special session, especially for all the delegates from the South Georgia Conference. Remember all persons involved – both clergy and laity.

I am planning to conduct 10 days of prayer beginning February 16 and going until the end of the session. To be a part of this prayer team, email me at jdwilhelm@planters.net. If you prefer text, give me your cell number. You will receive a prayer on email or text each morning

The primary prayer that you can pray is the command of Jesus: "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." No matter what the outcome of the session we must all remain true to Christ.

Diane Wilhelm,
Prayer Ministry Coordinator and Lay Leader

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Saturday Feb. 16th at 2:00pm</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Baby shower for</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Jordan & Brandon Dickerson</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Social Hall</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It's a boy!</i></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Happy February</p> <p>Anniversary Wishes:</p> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">3rd</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Ray and Anita Kessler</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">57 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">7th</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Jerry and Jana Fox</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">11 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">14th</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Randy and Glenda Stapleton</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">27 years</td> </tr> </table>	3rd	Ray and Anita Kessler	57 years	7th	Jerry and Jana Fox	11 years	14th	Randy and Glenda Stapleton	27 years
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Attn: Cotton Tops (aka Seniors)

We will be going to Carey Hilliard's on Feb. 14th at 11:30am.

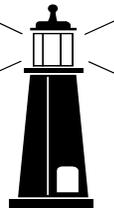
Please RSVP to Teresa Pierce by Feb. 10th also if you need a ride please let Teresa know

MARCH 2019

Newsletter

Deadline is 2/19/19

Please turn in all announcements, articles, or other information turned in by this date. Thank you!!



Prayer list:

- Our Pastor
- All Ministries at Bethesda UMC
- Military
- Leaders of America
 - Jack Adams
 - Carolyn Bannister
 - Samantha Billeiter
 - Woody Brewster
 - Justin Cox
 - Reid Crosby
 - Irma Davis
 - Lula Dixon
 - Jason Duboise
- Kem & Linda Dugger
- Harry & Reba Edwards
 - Emmory Ely
 - Ethan Ferguson
 - Benji Hall
 - Tony Hickman
 - Betty Hinely
 - LouDean Hinely
 - Ashley Helme
 - Geraldine Jenkins
 - Pam Jernigan
 - TJ Kessler
 - Mike Lance
- Samantha LeNeave
 - Harold Long
 - Jake Long
 - Kevin McDaniel
 - Clay Morgan
 - Clayton Morgan
 - Scott Morgan
 - Caroline Morton
 - Royce Nease
 - Allen Perry
 - Zeke Rahn
 - Brenda Saxon
 - Connie Shuman
 - Abby Smith
 - Alice Smith
 - Irene Stanford
 - Bobby Wadsworth
 - Joyce Wadsworth
 - Judy & Dale Wolfe
 - Alma Zettler
 - Bernard L. Zipperer
 - Dwight Zipperer
 - George Zittrauer
 - Marilyn Zittrauer

February 3rd 'Souper Bowl' for Manna House
Donations of Soup or other Canned Goods (boxes in the office & social hall)

- Happy February Birthday Wishes**
- 3rd Joann Conaway
 - 6th Reba Edwards
 - 7th Carol Morgan
 - 7th Fay Kessler
 - 10th Wren Pratt
 - 11th Kristen Zittrauer
 - 12th Glenda Stapleton
 - 14th Buddy Grayson
 - 16th Matt Wadsworth
 - 17th Jackie Waters
 - 18th Darlene Shaw
 - 19th Tommy Sexton
 - 20th Marion Dean
 - 22nd Becky Lively
 - 23rd Wendy Zittrauer
 - 24th David Wadsworth
 - 26th Rusty Zittrauer
 - 28th Gary Pierce

Committee Meetings

Feb. 3rd Building Committee Meeting at 11:15am

Feb. 10th Children's Committee Meeting at 11:15am

Please mark your calendar and make plans to attend!

Campground BBQ
Feb. 2nd 10am-2pm
Bethesda serving 11am-12pm

Plates are \$8
See Tammy Saxon for tickets

Please sign up for Altar Flowers, the calendar has several available Sundays, please let me know what date you would like.

United Methodist Women Hope Landry Circle

No Meeting this month.

Meetings are:

April 23rd, August 27th and October 22nd at 7:00pm Social Hall

Bethesda Women's Association Meetings @ 7:00pm

*Feb. 19th Hostesses: Joann Conaway & Anita Kessler
Program: Shirley Shearouse*

*Mar. 19th Hostesses: Jackie Waters & Debbie Smith
Program: Brenda Saxon*

Mark your calendar for **March 10th**

Family Fun Day at the (Campground) Tent

Watch for more information!!

If you have someone you want to add or remove from the prayer list please send me an email, call the office or leave a note on my desk.

Thank you, Linda

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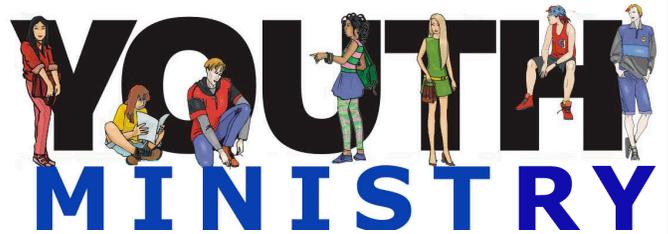


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by worshipping,
winning
fellowshipping,
discipling
and serving**

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Bethesda UMC Youth

We invite all youth (grades 6 - 12)
to join us for the following



FEBRUARY 2019

Saturday, February 2	Campground BBQ 10am-2pm (Bethesda serves 11am-12pm) (Bethesda youth will also wash coolers after the BBQ – probably 2-3pm)
Sunday, February 3	No UMYF
Wednesday, February 6	Bible study 6:30-7:30pm
Sunday, February 10	UMYF-Cell phone scavenger hunt 4:30-6:00 pm
Wednesday, February 13	Bible study 6:30-7:30pm
Sunday, February 17	Worship/Lunch/PHP (bring \$ for lunch and ice cream)
Wednesday, February 20	Bible study 6:30-7:30pm
Sunday, February 24	UMYF-Trampoline park-time TBA (bring \$ for admission & food)
Wednesday, February 27	Bible study 6:30-7:30pm

"MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU!"

Questions?? Tammy Saxon / Jennifer Granat