

The background of the cover is a photograph of a stone archway in the foreground, decorated with crosses and grapevines. In the background, a large stone building with a prominent blue dome and a golden cross on top is visible under a blue sky with white clouds.

CHARLTON CHIMES

SPRING
2024

A SPIRITUAL
PILGRIMAGE

From Holy Land to Holy Living

A Message from the Pastor ...



From Golgotha to Life – A Lenten Reflection

“Those who passed by derided Jesus, shaking their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’”

Matthew 27:39-40

It seems that time is passing faster and faster in front of our noses. We have Christmas, New Year, Epiphany, and Ash Wednesday, which this year coincides with Valentine's Day on February 14. Then, we officially enter Lent, and we continue with Holy Week and Easter. The list of religious and secular festivities continues.

The rush of our world infects us and poses a danger of being blinded by numerous attractive stimuli. Christmas isn't over yet, and we already have Valentine's chocolates. We haven't finished Valentine's Day, and there are St. Patrick's Day decorations. St. Patrick's Day is not over, and we have chocolate eggs waiting on the supermarket shelves. It can happen to us like the blind man of Bethsaida, who, in a first attempt at healing, responded to Jesus: *“I can see people, but they look like trees walking”* (Mark 8:24).

We know that something is moving around us, but we barely put a face at it. We live in a forest of shadows, which walk and dance at the same pace and envelop us to such a degree that, even when called to pay attention by others, we are not able to do so because we have become affected by the inability to see others. The rush of the world and of our society does not really allow us to stop and enjoy, meditate, observe, and learn from the time we are in, nor from those who are by our side.

Sometimes, we fight for justice; we want to change everything in this world, but experience tells us that we cannot change our fellow human beings with speeches or arguments. History demonstrates that centuries were squandered in futile attempts to change others through violence. This has been a mistake in history. Only if man changes from within will others change.

Many go through life as if they were passing through Golgotha (*the place where Jesus was crucified*), where people passing by insulted Jesus on the cross, shaking their heads and saying

indifferently, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matthew 27:40)

During this season of Lent, we are called to constantly move from Golgotha to life and embrace those around us—those who are suffering and those who experience pain. It is being compassionate and looking at others with mercy—that is, with the heart. Today, we remember many of our Charlton people who have been glorified in the presence of the Lord, and we do not do it like those in Golgotha; we do it with pain but also with hope.

Why? Because we do not stay at Golgotha, but we wait with faith for the stone to be removed—that stone that tells us that Christ has risen, that Christ has defeated death. The invitation at this time of Lent is not to stay in Golgotha but to continue our pilgrimage towards the garden. That garden speaks to us of life, of an eternal life, which is manifested in the saving act of Jesus. Christ lives. Indeed, He lives. Hallelujah!

He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!

*He walks with me and talks with me
along life's narrow way.*

He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!

You ask me how I know he lives?

He lives within my heart.

Alfred H. Ackley



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A Spiritual Pilgrimage

From Holy Land to Holy Living

“[Jesus] said to the [the disciples], “Take nothing for your journey, no staff; nor bag, nor bread, nor money – not even an extra tunic.” (Luke 9:3 NRSV)

Many Christians long to one day have the opportunity to know the Holy Land. Some others have been there and shared their experiences and feelings with this sacred place. First, walking where Jesus walked and preached takes us to the life and ministry of Jesus on earth in a visual and tangible way. Secondly, because being there, bathing in the waters of Jordan, among other biblical places, is irrefutably a time of spiritual recollection and renewal of vows with God.

When we read the Bible, we discover not only Jerusalem but many other small towns and villages that were part of Jesus' pilgrimage. Some of them are iconic in our study of the sacred scriptures, such as Bethlehem, while others take us to unfriendly places, like Samaria, or painful places, like Golgotha. But even in all of them, there is a pilgrimage, not only biblical but also spiritual.

“A Spiritual Pilgrimage: From Holy Land to Holy Living” is a series of nine Lenten sermons based on the book *“The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi”* by Kathie Lee Gifford and Rabbi Jason Sobel. This series invites us to tour some places where Jesus ministered. Each one of them brings us a life lesson in our own pilgrimage as Christians, in a sincere search that, by meditating on what Jesus did in these places, they are also part of our own pilgrimage towards a holy life.

If you have not been to the Holy Land, let this pilgrimage lead you to know some of the deepest aspects of Jesus' ministry for your own life of holiness. If you have been to the Holy Land, let this biblical pilgrimage lead you to remember those moments that allowed you to meditate and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024 — 1st Sunday in Lent

“Bethlehem: The Starting Point” :: Luke 2:1-7

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small town about six miles south-southwest of Jerusalem. Bethlehem was important as the birthplace of King David, who lived a thousand years before Jesus. In this town, the Messiah, a descendant of David, would be born. However, there were expectations that the Messiah would be a godly military leader like David, who would drive out the foreign oppressors who controlled the Holy Land.

Bethlehem is our first stop on this pilgrimage, the place where everything in Jesus' life on earth begins. Our spiritual lives also have a place where our spiritual pilgrimage begins, a place that is often the least expected. This sermon explores the importance of Bethlehem not only as a biblical place but as a spiritual place on our pilgrimage. What is that spiritual place that began your pilgrimage?



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024 — 2nd Sunday in Lent

“Nazareth: A Safe Place” :: Matthew 2:13-23

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt for several years and stayed there until it was safe for them to return to their homeland. When they returned, they settled in Nazareth, located eighty miles north of Bethlehem, and Jesus lived there until he began his ministry at the age of thirty.

Nazareth is our second stop on this pilgrimage. This is a place where not much is known about the life of Jesus, a place that, although it seems to be unknown due to untold experiences, is still transformed into a safe place to live. This sermon explores the importance of Nazareth in our own spiritual lives. It is a place that, in our spiritual pilgrimage, becomes the safe place where we find refuge, peace, strength, and comfort. What is that spiritual place that brings security to your pilgrim life?

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024 — 3rd Sunday in Lent

“Capernaum: Giving Testimony” :: Luke 4:42-44

The village of Capernaum became Jesus’ headquarters at the beginning of his ministry. Capernaum sits on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. Because it sits on a significant trade route, this village made sense as a central point for a ministry that involved traveling around the Galilee region, visiting synagogues, teaching and healing, casting demons, and preaching.

Capernaum is our third stop on this pilgrimage. The Bible states that five of **Jesus’ disciples hail from this small town** (*Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew*). This shows us that Jesus began his ministry by testifying to who he was. This sermon explores the importance of Capernaum as the place for witnessing and testifying about Christ. Our spiritual pilgrimage always allows us to testify to others and show who we are as Christians. Have you found the Capernaum in your life? The place where you testify to who you are as a child of God?

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024 — 4th Sunday in Lent

“Galilee: A Place of Mission” :: Matthew 4:23-25

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake, fourteen miles long and seven miles wide. The Jews of Jesus’ time lived on the western side of the lake, while the eastern side was largely populated by pagans whom the Jews considered unclean. Jesus carried out most of his ministry from women to non-Jews, and the lake itself was a place of mission for Jesus.

The Sea of Galilee is our fourth stop on this pilgrimage. In this geographical area, Jesus was able to develop his ministry, not only among his people but also among those who were culturally, religiously, and socially different. This sermon explores our own Sea of Galilee, that place in which we can develop our spiritual pilgrimage as Christians, not only towards those who are Christians like us but among those who are different. Have you found your place of mission?



SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024 — 5th Sunday in Lent

“Samaria: Revealing Our True Selves” :: John 4:1-26

Samaria is a province located between Galilee (to the north) and Judea (to the south). It was inhabited by a population that was not "purely" Jewish in its origins. However, Jesus gave his grace even to the Samaritans, who were despised. One of the most well-known parables around this region is the one about the good Samaritan.

Samaria is our fifth stop on this pilgrimage. Jesus, in a city called Sychar, next to Jacob's well, interacts with a Samaritan woman, to whom he offers Living Water while she reveals her true identity. This sermon explores our own encounter with Jesus—that Samaritan moment when Jesus reveals to us who we really are and makes us live repentance and new life. What kind of experience have you had at Jacob's well with Jesus?



SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024 — Palm Sunday

“Mount of Olives: Place of Preparation” :: Mark 11: 1-11

The Mount of Olives in Jesus' day had olive groves and small villages like Bethany and Bethphage. The road from Bethany descends steeply to the Kidron Valley and then climbs again toward the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus experienced the triumphal entry among people shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”

The Mount of Olives is our sixth stop on this pilgrimage. This mount, where the garden of Getsemani is located, was always a place for prayer in Jesus' ministry. On this occasion, this mount becomes a place of preparation for his triumphal entrance to Jerusalem. This sermon explores the importance of preparation in our spiritual pilgrimage. We prepare for big things, challenges, and new opportunities, and we always need that time to organize, plan, and get ready. How do you prepare spiritually for the big challenges of life?

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024 — Maundy Thursday

“Jerusalem: A Time of Communion” :: Luke 22:7-13

The old city of Jerusalem from Jesus’ day covers only about 220 acres—less than a square mile. It was easy to walk across Jerusalem in those days, and it was even reasonable to walk from Bethany on the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem and back in a day. Jesus went to celebrate the Passover meal with his disciples, **but it was also a crucial moment before Jesus’ crucifixion.**

The City of Jerusalem is our seventh stop on our pilgrimage. It is an important place where Jesus was on several occasions, but this was a different visit; it is a time of eating, drinking, and singing. Even though this became almost like a farewell party for a friend, it has a deep meaning in the salvific act of Jesus on the cross. This sermon explores the importance of our communion with Christ, a communion that goes beyond our prayers and worship experience and into a more sacramental relationship with Him. How do you experience communion with Christ on your spiritual pilgrimage?



FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024 — Good Friday

“Golgotha: When Darkness Seemed to Prevail”

John 19:16-30

Golgotha, also known in Aramaic as the place of the skull, was a hill outside Jerusalem where Christ was crucified, as ordered by Roman and Jewish customs. It was a place of pain, suffering, and death.

Golgotha is our eighth stop on our pilgrimage. This place represents where darkness seems to prevail and where the tears and pain of Jesus' crucifixion become more latent. This sermon explores the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross through the eyes of our spiritual pilgrimage, where it seems that darkness prevails in the midst of suffering. How does Golgotha speak to your life in times of distress? Where do you find light and peace in those times?

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024 — Easter

“The Garden: See and Believe” :: John 19:41-42; 20:1-10

The Garden Tomb was a place where the body of Jesus was buried. It was in a garden and in a new sepulcher or tomb which never had a dead person placed in it (John 19:41). It was located outside the then-current walls of the city of Jerusalem, possibly close to Damascus Gate.

The Garden Tomb is our last stop on this pilgrimage. It was owned by a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea. It was dug into a rock and had a large, round stone door that could seal the entrance, which made it very difficult to remove it. However, on that first day of the week, the stone is rolled away, and Jesus conquers death. This sermon explores the resurrection as the basis of our faith as well as our own pilgrimage through the resurrection of Christ in him, who is a pilgrim of faith. What are the stones that Jesus has removed from your life that gave you freedom?



WHAT'S NEXT???

We typically share the sermon series that will be offered during the Eastertide season—from Easter to Pentecost. And while we have a list of possible sermon series, we want to hear from YOU!

Is there something that you think would make an interesting sermon series?

Is there a particular part of the Bible that you would like to explore in a worship setting?

We encourage you to share your ideas by writing them on the Connection Card on Sunday morning, or by sending a note to the church office.

LENT AND EASTER WORSHIP

ASH WEDNESDAY MEAL — February 14 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm

On this Valentine's Day, we remember that "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son". Join us for a soup and salad meal prior to our Ash Wednesday service.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP — February 14 at 7:00 pm

The congregation of Mt. Calvary UMC will once again join us at Charlton for our annual Ash Wednesday worship service. Rev. Jim Copulus will be preaching.

LENTEN LUNCH — Wednesdays at Noon, February 21 thru March 20

Join us at Charlton for a light lunch and time of devotion as we "Journey with the Psalms". Each week we will explore the psalms to discover how they relate to our lives today.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE — March 28 at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Join us for worship as we celebrate the sacrament of holy communion and remember Jesus' words to 'do this in remembrance of Me'.

GOOD FRIDAY — March 29 at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Join us as we reflect on the crucifixion, death and burial of our Lord Jesus.

HOLY SATURDAY PRAYER VIGIL—March 30 from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm

Stop in for a time of meditation and prayer in the quiet of our sanctuary.

EASTER WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS — March 31

Sunrise Service at 6:30 am, held at the pavilion of Mt. Calvary UMC, 175 N. Fairville Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17112. Pastor Miguel will be offering the message.

Worship at Charlton Church — 9:00 am and 11:00 am

Join us in the sanctuary as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

SPRING SMALL GROUPS

BIBLE STUDY with THE PASTOR

Pastor Miguel invites you to join him during the Lenten season to dig deeper into the previous Sunday's sermon. This is a time of discussion and prayer. These Bible studies will be held on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am.

LATTE AND LAUGHTER

Debbie Livingston and Kathy Hoover invite the women of Charlton to join them for a time of fellowship and study that will meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am through June. Bring a friend!

WHAT EXACTLY IS A SMALL GROUP?

Small groups take many different forms. They can be Bible studies as listed above. Sunday School classes are small groups too. So is God's Hands @ Work, our knitting and crocheting group. Small groups are just that ... gatherings of people for a specific purpose. Sometimes that purpose can be educational, such as a Bible study or Sunday School class. They can be mission oriented, such as God's Hands @ Work. They may be fellowship focused, such as our Men's and Women's Luncheons and our monthly Meet'n'Eat.

If you would be interested in helping to start a new small group ... whether it is to participate in a mission or just to gather and play cards, contact the church office and let's have a conversation on gathering like-minded people for Christian fellowship and support.



HELP NEEDED!

We are looking for individuals willing to serve as a 'online host' for our worship services to help our online guests connect with our church family. If this is something you may be interested in, please contact the church office.

X L E N T X

The word LENT has roots in both Old English and Germanic terms for 'springtime', and is a season of soul searching and repentance, considered by some to be time for a "spiritual spring cleaning of the soul". It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism. By observing forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

Lent is an excellent time to practice the Spiritual Disciplines of reading the Scriptures, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and reflection. There is a reason these are called Spiritual "Disciplines". They require a commitment of time and of effort. The Spiritual Disciplines are practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It requires action and not just a 'state of mind'.

There has always been a temptation to amend these practices by updating them and giving them a new twist. And while some great ideas may have come from this thought, we are highly encouraged to practice them in the same manner that Jesus himself made them a part of his life. But if you do want to try something different this Lent, we remind you of this Lenten prayer, which encourages us to transform our perspective by making a change in our daily habits.

A LENTEN PRAYER

Give up harsh words:	use generous ones.
Give up unhappiness:	take up gratitude.
Give up anger:	take up gentleness.
Give up intolerance:	take up patience.
Give up pessimism:	take up hope and optimism.
Give up worrying:	take up trust in God.
Give up complaining:	value what you have.
Give up stress:	take up prayer.
Give up judging others:	discover Jesus within them.
Give up bitterness:	fill your heart with joy.
Give up selfishness:	take up compassion.
Give up being unforgiving:	learn reconciliation.
Give up words:	fill yourself with silence, and listen to others.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF SCRIPTURE READING

We are once again suggesting that you read the gospels during this season of Lent. In this schedule, it is suggested that you take a break from the schedule on the Sabbath. You may want to consider reading them from a translation of the Bible that you may not normally read. For example, you might use The Message, the Common English Bible or the Contemporary English Version. If you would like to borrow a different version of the Bible, please see Chuck Kaufmann, or you may find several versions online at www.biblegateway.com. Before you begin your reading, take a moment to clear your mind from the demands of daily living. Then offer a prayer, asking God to open your eyes to the reading of these holy scriptures, that you may experience them in a new and fresh way.

Wednesday, February 14 — Matthew 1-3

Thursday, February 15 — Matthew 4-6

Friday, February 16 — Matthew 7-9

Saturday, February 17 — Matthew 10-12

Sunday, February 18 — Sabbath break

Monday, February 19 — Matthew 13-14

Tuesday, February 20 — Matthew 15-16

Wednesday, February 21 — Matthew 17-18

Thursday, February 22 — Matthew 19-20

Friday, February 23 — Matthew 21-22

Saturday, February 24 — Matthew 23-24

Sunday, February 25 — Sabbath break

Monday, February 26 — Matthew 25-26

Tuesday, February 27 — Matthew 27-28

Wednesday, February 28 — Mark 1-3

Thursday, February 29 — Mark 4-6

Friday, March 1 — Mark 7-9

Saturday, March 2 — Mark 10-12

Sunday, March 3 — Sabbath break

Monday, March 4 — Mark 13-14

Tuesday, March 5 — Mark 15-16

Wednesday, March 6 — Luke 1-3

Thursday, March 7 — Luke 4-6

Friday, March 8 — Luke 7-9

Saturday, March 9 — Luke 10-12

Sunday, March 10 — Sabbath break

Monday, March 11 — Luke 13-14

Tuesday, March 12 — Luke 15-16

Wednesday, March 13 — Luke 17-18

Thursday, March 14 — Luke 19-20

Friday, March 15 — Luke 21-22

Saturday, March 16 — Luke 23-24

Sunday, March 17 — Sabbath break

Monday, March 18 — John 1-2

Tuesday, March 19 — John 3-4

Wednesday, March 20 — John 5-6

Thursday, March 21 — John 7-8

Friday, March 22 — John 9-10

Saturday, March 23 — John 11-12

Sunday, March 24 — Sabbath break

Monday, March 25 — John 13-14

Tuesday, March 26 — John 15-16

Wednesday, March 27 — John 17-18

Thursday, March 28 — John 19-20

Friday, March 29 — John 21

Saturday, March 30 — 1 Corinthians 15

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

As all married couples know, communication is key to the success of any marriage. In fact, communication is essential in any relationship. And it's the same in our relationship with God. Prayer is how we communicate with God ... not only sharing the thoughts of our mind and heart with our Lord, but also being open to hearing his voice in our own life.

Jesus talked about praying to God many times throughout his ministry. However, it is very important to note that he never said "**if** you pray"; he said "**when** you pray". Jesus even gave us a model to use in our prayer life, which we now call 'The Lord's Prayer'. We keep a flier entitled "**Living the Lord's Prayer**" in the lobby.

We would also like to remind you of two ancient forms of prayer that are being rediscovered and finding popularity in today's culture that may enrich your prayer life this Lenten season.

The Prayer of Examen

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It is a time of thankful reflection of where God is in your everyday life. If practiced at the start of the day, you would reflect on the previous day; if practiced at the end of the day, you reflect on the events of that day. There are 5 basic steps in The Prayer of Examen. Another method of using the prayer would be to do steps 1 thru 4 in the evening as you review the day, and then do steps 1 and 5 in the morning as you prepare for the day ahead.

1. Ask God for his light and grace to guide your prayer, that you may reflect on the day with God's eye, and not merely your own.
2. Give thanks for all the blessings that you can see throughout your day.
3. Review the day, taking careful note of any thoughts or actions that come to mind. Reflect upon your interactions with others. Were there moment you wish you could change? Were there moments you would like to happen again?
4. Ask forgiveness for those things you may have said or done that you may not be pleasant in God's eyes.
5. Seek God's guidance for the day ahead. As you've thought about negative reactions to events of the previous day, consider how you might react in a more positive manner. Consider if you need to make amends to someone in your life. If you reflected upon a positive experience that lifted your spirit that day, consider how you can make that a part of your day-to-come as well.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is a Latin term which means "divine reading", which incorporates the reading of scripture into our prayer life. For many people, prayer has become a virtual "wish list" of what we would like God to do for us. We have become quite good at talking to God. But we have not developed a discipline for listening to God in our prayer time. Lectio Divina is a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. While there are many ways of practicing Lectio Divina, here are 4 basic steps.

1. Read the Scripture. Then read it again slowly and deliberately. You may want to then read it once again, this time reading it aloud. If desired, you may wish to read it in a different version. The object is to read and re-read the Scripture and allow it to sink in and claim your focus.
2. Reflect upon it. Take note if there were any words, phrases or portions of the Scripture that stood out to you as you read it. If so, review those sections again.
3. Respond to what you have read; let the Scripture inspire your heart to speak to God.
4. Rest in the Word. This may be the most difficult part of the practice. Be still and be silent. Listen to what God may have to say to you this day.

The Jesus Prayer

The 'Jesus Prayer' is an ancient form of prayer that is often used to gain focus and peace in one's life. It is a short, rhythmic prayer based on two scriptures: an exhortation from Paul found in Romans 10:13 ("Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved") and the story of the tax collector found in Luke 18:13 ("But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'")

To pray the Jesus Prayer, you simply sit still. As you take in a deep breath, you pray "Lord Jesus, Son of God." Then, as you slowly exhale, pray "have mercy on me, a sinner." You are encouraged to focus on your breathing as you repeat this prayer each time you breathe in and out. The repetition of the prayer will help calm your mind and prevent it from wandering. This creates space for the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart to the presence of God with you.

A variation of the 'Jesus Prayer' is called the 'Breath Prayer'. You follow the same steps of focusing on your breathing in and out as you pray phrases that speak to you at that particular time of your life. For example, you might pray 'Lord God' or 'Loving Father' as you breathe in; and then 'give me peace' or 'forgive me' as you breathe out.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Of all the Spiritual disciplines, fasting is probably the least understood. Similar to Jesus' words on prayer, he never said "if you fast"; he said "when you fast". This means that fasting is not just for Roman Catholics ... it is a spiritual discipline for anyone who wishes to grow closer to God.

The first premise of fasting is to think less of oneself, even to the point of making a sacrifice, in order to focus on God. Jesus told us that when we fast we are not to make a show of it like hypocrites do. A fast is different than a hunger strike; a fast is an act of devotion to God, while a hunger strike is a power play and a way of attracting publicity. So, if you're serious about practicing a Lenten fast, don't go about bragging that you're giving up chocolate or soda for Lent. Remember, fasting is not about your giving up something so that you would be physically healthier in the end; it is about sacrificing something as an act of commitment to grow closer to God.

It is important to note that a fast is a disciplined diet and not a total abstention from food. During a religious fast, you still eat, but in a disciplined manner. Fasting and sacrifice does not mean putting your health at risk. Fasting can take on many forms, and only you can decide what is best for your spiritual and physical health. It may be as simple as refraining from dessert, more involved such as giving up one meal a day, or as intense as abstaining from food for 24 hours every week.

Fasting goes hand-in-hand with prayer. Fasting allows us to sacrifice a part of ourselves and allows us to concentrate on something more important than our physical needs ... that of our relationship with God. So when you "give up" that dessert or meal, spend that time in prayer.

While the Biblical concept of fasting concerns food, there are other methods of fasting. Again, the practice of fasting is not about becoming physically healthier. It is about becoming **spiritually** healthier. It is about the discipline and sacrifice that you are making in order to grow closer to God.

Our fast-paced and digitally-connected world has changed how we live our lives. While some of this has enhanced our lifestyles, not all of it has been positive. It seems the more "connected" we are with technology, the less connected we are with each other. You may decide that it is time to take a digital fast. You can decide that a cell phone does not need to be answered every time it rings. (Some people remember the time that if you called someone and they weren't home, you had to wait until another time to reach them!) Perhaps you may want to refrain from checking your email after a certain time. Some of you may want to go as far as to observe a "digital Sabbath", a day of your choosing to set aside and "unplug" from technology. What would it be like to live a day without email, cell phones or the internet? What would it be like to spend that day with family and friends ... or better yet, in prayer?

Remember, the purpose of fasting ... in whatever form you choose to observe it, is to become spiritually healthier and to grow closer to God.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF ALMSGIVING

Another time-honored Spiritual Discipline is almsgiving. The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on “almsgiving,” which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity.

Almsgiving is a word that is rarely used today, but it is something that is part of the life at Charlton Church. The support of missions, both locally and world-wide, has been central to the life and ministry of our congregation for decades. In addition to mission trips and local projects, Charlton has continually financially supported a wide variety of program through our monthly missions, special offerings and spare change collections.

If you would like to make Almsgiving part of your Lenten discipline, you may want to consider how you can better support the Giving Grace and Helping Hands programs at Charlton which provide assistance to those in need within our greater community. You may want to prayerfully consider making a sacrificial offering during Lent. For example, forego eating out and donating that money instead.

THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF REFLECTION

Being a ‘Christian’ literally means being “Christ-like”. In ‘church talk’, we even say that we need to be ‘imitators of Christ’, to live as Christ lived.

Today, the expression often asked is “What would Jesus do?” The answer to this question can be easily found in the Gospels.

Prayer and fasting were an integral part of Jesus’ life. What would Jesus do? Jesus went up to the mountain and prayed all night. When was the last time you prayed for half an hour? Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When was the last time you skipped lunch to spend time with God?

During this Lenten season, let us prayerfully consider the ways we can be Christ-like to improve our relationship with God.

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY – March 24, 2024

The crowds that gathered when Jesus entered into Jerusalem shouted ‘Hosanna’ with great enthusiasm. They were excited because they saw the promise of a great future in the life of this teacher who befriended the poor and challenged the rich and powerful. But in a few short days, those voices would be drowned out by the cries of “crucify him” by those who sought to silence the traveling rabbi. As you consider these voices, which do you most identify with? The voices of those who praised Jesus for challenging the status quo or those who were afraid of the changes Jesus was calling for?

Lord Jesus, I want to be one of those who sing Your praise, but I admit that sometimes I am challenged by the changes You ask me to make in my life. Help me, Lord, to see beyond myself and what I am comfortable with, and give me strength and wisdom to grow in my discipleship. Amen.

MONDAY – March 25, 2024

God chose to speak to Moses through a thorny and fiery bush. Think about that for a moment; the Ten Commandments, a central doctrine of the Jewish and Christian faith, was spoken into being through thorn and fire. And while we live very blessed lives today, we acknowledge that our lives are also filled with many thorny moments and fiery experiences. And it is in the midst of these difficult times that God can speak to us today. Let this be a reminder to us all that we should always be listening for God, especially during challenging days.

Holy God, thank You for being with me during these difficult days when so many things seem to be going wrong. Gracious Lord, calm my heart and help me to hear Your voice in the midst of the dark days so that I may follow Your light. Amen.

TUESDAY – March 26, 2024

In the parable of the sower, the story shares how the seed was thrown onto good soil, but also on rocky ground and among thorns. This should remind us that we should live our lives spreading kindness and love in every circumstance ... even with those we may not like or who make us uncomfortable. We should show kindness and love, and then let God bless our offering and nurture it into something beautiful.

Gracious God, You have showered Your love on me so lavishly; help me also to extend Your love and care to all I come into contact with, and may my life be transformed by the experience. Amen.

WEDNESDAY – March 27, 2024

Just as Paul experienced a ‘thorn in his flesh’ and saw it as a means to draw closer to God, let us also consider those things in our lives that cause us pain and discomfort. How can we move past these ‘thorns’ and find ways to use them that will bring us closer to God?

Lord Jesus, give me the strength and fortitude to not only endure the difficulties of life, but to thrive in spite of them for Your glory. Help me see beyond the pain and discomfort to focus on those things which are help me to be a better disciple and witness of Your love. Amen.

DEVOTIONS

MAUNDY THURSDAY – March 28, 2024

Have you ever considered what it would have been like to sit around the table with Jesus and his disciples during that Passover meal? A careful reading of the gospel accounts reminds us of all the things Jesus shared and taught during that meal. And one of his greatest teachings was done without words as he got on his knees to wash the feet of his disciples. This simple act was then followed up as he encouraged them to have a servant's heart. Take a moment to read John 13: 1-20 and consider how these words speak to your life.

Lord Jesus, as I reflect upon Your life and teachings, I hear Your call to love God and neighbor, and to grow the humble heart of a servant. This goes against everything that the world wants: the newest, the bigger, the best. Open my eyes to the power and strength of what it means to live as a disciple, following the example of Your servant heart. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY – March 29, 2024

Today's devotion is up to you. Take some time today and meditate on this day through the eyes of those around Jesus. What did his mother Mary experience? What were the disciples thinking? How did Martha and Mary react to the brutal torture of their friend? What was going through the mind of Pilate as he contemplated his part in what was happening? What was the range of emotions that the centurion experienced as he stood at the foot of the cross?

Jesus, Lord and Savior, words cannot express the sadness and utter despair I feel when I think of all You willingly endured. This can only be balanced by the gratitude I have knowing that You sacrificed Your life so that I can experience the forgiveness of my sin. And so I pray, thank You. Amen.

HOLY SATURDAY – March 30, 2024

The experience of COVID turned our lives upside down. All was not right with the world. We felt like we were suspended in time, waiting for things to change, hoping for light to break through the darkness. Is this a shadow of what the disciples experienced the day after Jesus died? How did the experience of that day of sadness ... that day of shadows ... that day of fear and anxiety ... prepare the disciples for what was to come next?

God of surprises, I have the luxury to know what was coming after the burial of Jesus. Calm my heart, that I may experience anew the stillness of transformation that is life changing. May this day strengthen me for the journey ahead. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY – March 31, 2024

This is it. The waiting is over. Life overcomes death. Love wins. The crown of thorns that pierced and tore open the flesh causing blood to stream down the face of Jesus is transformed into a crown of glory beyond our imagination. The cries of Hosanna, which means 'Lord, save us', have been answered.

Risen Christ, may Your resurrection power flow through me, transforming me into the new creation You desire me to be. Alleluia. Amen.

MONTHLY MISSIONS

Charlton Church has always had a heart for missions, with a long history of supporting programs and missionaries in our local community and around the world. Here are our monthly missions for the spring season:

MARCH — United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR)

As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Committee on Relief assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need. UMCOR is often one of the first disaster response teams that show up whenever there is a need worldwide.

APRIL — Helping Hands of Charlton Church

The Helping Hands program at Charlton Church continues to operate as a drive-thru. Each month, approximately 85 families receive some basic food items for their pantry to help their food dollars go just a bit further.

MAY — World Vision

Charlton Church supports two children through World Vision. Narek is a 11-year-old boy from Armenia and Dieulene is an 9 year-old-girl from Haiti.

HELPING HANDS COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI DINNER

The Leadership Council has been discussing the desire to resume our Helping Hands free meal for our community. Now that Giving Grace operates as a drive-thru, it would not be safe to hold the meal at the same time as the distribution. Therefore, it was recently decided to hold a free Community Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, May 4 from 4 pm to 6pm. We have only scheduled one of these events so that we can determine if it is a successful venture before we schedule additional community meals.

Be on the lookout for more information about this event in your Sunday bulletin, as we will need your assistance to make this event a success. But until then, be sure to mark your calendars and save the date:

FREE COMMUNITY SPAGHETTI DINNER
Saturday, May 4, 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

SPRING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

MEN'S BREAKFAST — Wednesdays at 7:00 am

All men are invited to join us for breakfast and fellowship each week at the Perkin's Restaurant on Linglestown Road, off I-81 Exit 77.

CHUM 55+ LUNCHEONS — Third Tuesday of the Month at 12:00 pm

All persons age 55 and over are invited to our monthly luncheon at Charlton Church, which is held at Noon on the third Tuesday of the month. Following the lunch, an informational or entertainment program is presented. If you have not been to a CHUM gathering lately, we encourage you to come out and join us for this time of fellowship. If you are in need of a ride, please contact the church office.

FELLOWSHIP THURSDAYS

PRAYER BREAKFAST — First Thursday of the Month at 9:00 am

Question: What does our church, our country, our schools, our communities and our families all have in common? The Answer is: They are in need of prayer! As the song says, "If we ever a-need the Lord before, we sure do need him now!"

Everyone is invited to join us on the first Thursday of the month as we share a light breakfast and then join our hearts as we offer our prayers. Come and join your church family as we bring our joys and our concerns to God!

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LUNCHEONS — Second Thursday of the Month at 12:00 pm

The Women's Luncheon rotates location each month, so please sign up on the Connection Card. The Men's Luncheon meets at JoJo's Restaurant on Allentown Boulevard.

HOT TOPIX DINNER DISCUSSION — Third Thursday of the Month at 6:00 pm

Join us each month as we share a meal together and share our thoughts on how the news of the day intersects with our faith journey.

MEET 'n' EAT LUNCHEON — Fourth Thursday of the Month at 12:00 pm

Sign up on your Connection Card or call the church office to RSVP for this monthly fellowship luncheon at a local restaurant.

Easter Egg Production

Mondays
8am — Noon



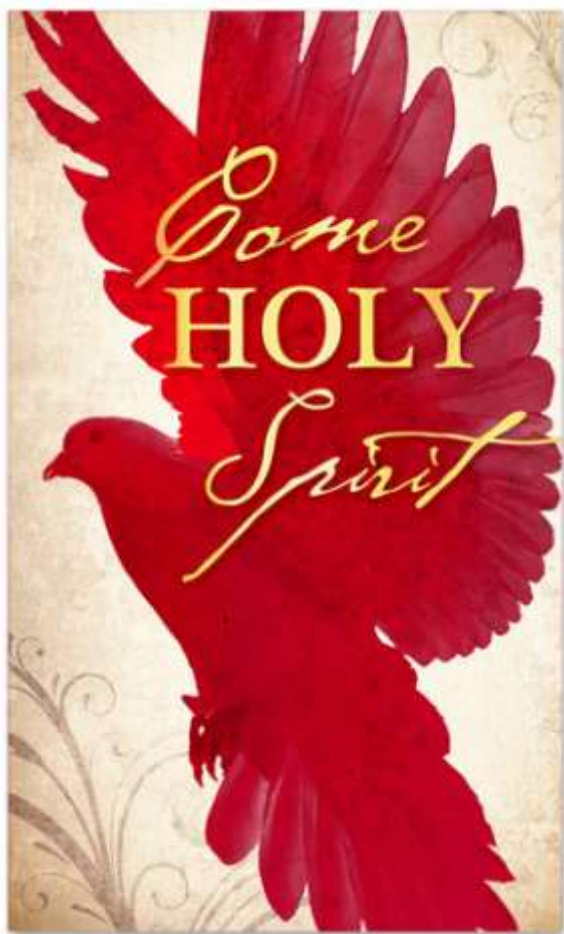
Everyone is invited to join in our annual Easter Egg project. There's a job for everyone! This is not only a great time of fellowship, it's also an opportunity to help raise funds that help us support the mission and ministry of Charlton Church. Come when you can, as the production takes all morning to make our famous candy eggs. If you've not participated before, we encourage you to give it a try!

PENTECOST

Sunday, May 19, 2024

**Join us for ONE service
at 10:00 am**

**Then stay after worship for a
GOSPEL BRUNCH
with special music by our
Worship Arts Ministry**



SERVICE DOGS AT WORK!

This is a friendly reminder that Darlene and Tom Furlong often bring along a furry friend to church with them. The Furlongs are trainers with Susquehanna Service Dogs and bring their canine friends to church as part of their training, which is to learn how to behave in all types of situations.



It is important to remember that when you see one of these dogs, they are “on duty”. And their job when on duty is to IGNORE everyone except for their handler. This is very important for a service dog. In this way, they can truly provide the assistance that is needed to their “person”.

It is vitally important that parents and other adults remind the children to keep their distance from these service dogs, unless they have been given permission to pet them. Children should learn that it is never a good idea to go up to a dog that belongs to someone else. This can be quite dangerous. This is also a great lesson for them about how dogs and other animals can be used to help people with special needs.

All kids are invited to join us for our

Easter EGGstravaganza

Games ... Activities ... Crafts ... Snack ... and More!

Saturday, March 23 at 10:00 am



Register online at: www.CharltonChurch.org/kids

A Beginners Guide to General Conference

by Heather Hahn, *United Methodist News*, reprinted with permission

The United Methodist Church has no pope.

But it does have a General Conference — the only body that can set official policy and speak for the international denomination.

General Conference brings together lay and clergy delegates from four continents whose decisions will affect how millions of United Methodists do church for years to come.

Think of the two-week gathering as a combination of a United Nations General Assembly, a U.S. congressional session and a time of rousing Christian worship.

The coming General Conference, now scheduled for April 23-May 3 in Charlotte, North Carolina, comes at a particularly momentous time.

General Conference typically gathers every four years. But because of the COVID pandemic, the assembly could not meet in 2020. That means the last regular session was in May 2016 — nearly eight years ago.

In the interim, the denomination has seen a quarter of its U.S. churches depart under a disaffiliation policy that began in 2019 and expired at the end of 2023. What comes next for the international denomination will be largely up to General Conference itself.

Here are answers to frequently asked questions about the big event.

What does General Conference do?

General Conference is the denomination's highest legislative body. As such, it has the authority to make revisions to the denomination's Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions.

The Discipline is the denomination's governing document that contains its doctrine, constitution, church law, rules of organization and procedures. The Book of Resolutions contains the denomination's positions on current social issues. Resolutions expire after eight years unless General Conference readopts them.

General Conference approves the four-year budget allocating apportionments — shares of church giving — for denomination-wide ministries around the globe. General Conference also sets the formula used for apportioning the budget to annual conferences, the denomination's regional bodies.



In addition, the assembly approves theological statements on subjects such as baptism and communion. The coming General Conference will consider adopting a theological statement on the United Methodist understanding of church titled “Sent in Love.” [*A copy of this statement can be obtained in the church office.*]

General Conference also elects members of the Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court; members of the commission that plans General Conference; and some members of other denomination leadership bodies.

The Judicial Council will be on hand throughout General Conference to weigh in on questions about General Conference actions including whether legislation is in line with the denomination’s constitution.

Who can propose legislation to General Conference?

The Book of Discipline states that any United Methodist organization, clergy member or lay member may submit a General Conference petition — basically the United Methodist equivalent of a bill before a legislature.

All told, the coming General Conference has received 1,099 total valid petitions — including 352 new petitions submitted since General Conference’s delay in 2020.

Where can people see what legislation is under consideration?

The Advance Daily Christian Advocate contains the petitions and reports that will be before delegates. The Advance Daily Christian Advocate is available in PDF form.

People also can subscribe online to the Daily Christian Advocate at DailyChristianAdvocate.org. The website includes the proposed legislation and will include the daily proceedings. General Conference delegates and first reserves receive free access to the site. Others may access it for a one-time fee of \$49.99.

Who votes at General Conference?

The coming General Conference plans to have 862 voting delegates — half clergy and half lay.

Of the elected delegates, 55.9% are from the U.S., 32% from Africa, 6% from the Philippines, 4.6% from Europe (including Russia) and the remainder from concordat churches that have close ties to The United Methodist Church. General Conference organizers are working to help delegates obtain the needed visas to attend. Interpreters will support this multinational and multicultural body in 10 languages. Written materials will be available in the four official General Conference languages: English, French, Kiswahili and Portuguese.

How are the delegates chosen?

Annual conferences — the denomination’s regional bodies consisting of lay and clergy voters from multiple churches — each elect an allotment of delegates. The United Methodist Church’s constitution requires that laity elect the lay delegates, and clergy elect their fellow clergy.

The United Methodist Church’s constitution also mandates that each annual conference gets at least two General Conference delegates — one lay and one clergy. Beyond this mandatory minimum, conferences are allotted their delegate slates using a formula based on their lay and clergy membership numbers. The delegation allocations for the coming General Conference in Charlotte are based on the membership data available in 2017, well before the COVID pandemic upended so much of church life.

Most annual conferences also elect reserves who participate in General Conference as needed to assure that each annual conference is fully represented throughout the session.

The denomination currently has 53 annual conferences in the U.S., and 80 annual conferences in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. But at the time of delegate elections in 2018 and 2019, two U.S. conference mergers had yet to take effect. That means the four legacy conferences involved in those mergers will each seat a delegation in Charlotte.

What is the role of bishops at General Conference?

United Methodist bishops have a limited role during the assembly.

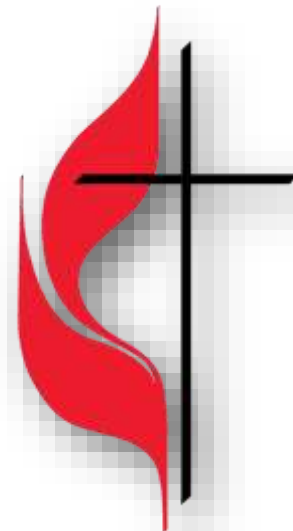
They preside at General Conference sessions but do not have voice or vote. This means they cannot make motions or advocate for positions from the floor.

Bishops do preach during worship. South Carolina Conference Bishop L. Jonathan Holston also will deliver the episcopal address on behalf of the Council of Bishops.

However, bishops usually know well the delegate experience. Many previously served as delegates themselves before their election to the episcopacy.

How often do those attending join in worship?

General Conference opens and closes with Christian worship. Worship services also open each day’s proceedings, often with bishops preaching. On April 28 — the Sunday of General Conference — delegates and others at the gathering are encouraged to attend services at local United Methodist churches. Charlotte is home to multiple United Methodist congregations.



How does legislation become church law?

The first stop for legislation under consideration at the coming General Conference is one of 14 legislative committees or the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. The standing committee is a permanent General Conference committee that deals with matters pertaining to church regions in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

Petitions approved by committee then move on to the full body of delegates for possible further revision and a vote.

The Book of Discipline requires that all petitions must receive a vote in their assigned committee and all legislation approved by a committee must receive a vote by the full General Conference plenary.

Delegates routinely pray over their decision-making. They are to vote based on their own conscience as moved by the Holy Spirit.

What percentage of votes does legislation need to pass?

Most legislation requires only a simple majority of General Conference delegates to pass.

Amendments to the denomination's constitution require a two-thirds vote of the General Conference followed by a two-thirds aggregate vote of the lay and clergy members present and voting in the annual conferences.

Changes to the denomination's doctrinal standards, which includes basic Christian tenets such as belief in Christ's resurrection and the Trinity, require at least a two-thirds vote of the General Conference followed by three-fourths aggregate vote of the lay and clergy members present and voting in the annual conferences.

The United Methodist Church has never altered its doctrinal standards before, and no proposals before the coming General Conference seek to alter them.

When does newly passed legislation take effect?

Legislation approved by the coming General Conference will become effective Jan. 1 next year, unless otherwise specified.

However, amendments to the denomination's constitution only take effect after the Council of Bishops certifies their ratification. In practice, that means any new amendment will not take effect until the bishops meet in spring 2026.

Heather Hahn, assistant news editor for UM News

A Christmas Covenant

One of the pieces of legislation being presented at the 2024 General Conference is entitled “The Christmas Covenant”. This proposed legislation, if adopted, will be the greatest change to the organizational structure of our denomination since its founding in 1968.



What is the Christmas Covenant?

The Christmas Covenant was conceived during the Christmas season of 2019 after that year’s tumultuous **special** General Conference. It came from General Conference delegates and other leaders from the central conferences — church regions in the Philippines, Africa, and Europe outside the United States. Christmas is important because it was during the Christmas Conference in 1784 that the Methodist Episcopal Church, the predecessor of The United Methodist Church was created.

What does the Christmas Covenant Do?

It keeps The United Methodist Church intact by restructuring the church into regional conferences. Churches outside the U.S. – Philippines, Africa, and Europe – are already in regional conferences. This legislation would make the U.S. a regional conference with five jurisdictions. The role of U.S. jurisdictions within the Regional Conference would remain essentially the same.

How would the Christmas Covenant Work?

1. The Christmas Covenant would maintain our vital United Methodist doctrinal standards (Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith), Social Principles, General Conference, General Agencies, Judicial Council, and Council of Bishops. The General Conference would continue to meet to consider changes to those areas of the Book or Discipline.
2. Vitally, it would maintain or even enhance the unity of the church for global mission. It would strengthen the connection between United Methodists around the globe in a new, more equitable way.
3. It would extend the regional conferences’ ability to adapt the Book of Discipline by giving them equitable legislative power to adopt policies, and practice ministry and mission in their own unique contexts to the U.S. This already exists in the Philippines, Africa, and Europe, and has proven to be an effective tool for them.

4. It would eliminate the vestiges of colonialism that exist by having a U.S. dominated denomination in a world where Methodism is growing outside the United States. It puts all United Methodists on an equal footing.
5. The change of the name of conferences outside the U.S. will undo the negative connotation associated with the term “Central” (i.e., the Central Jurisdiction segregated Black churches and clergy in the United States for many decades). This is another step towards ensuring equity.

In the United States, the five jurisdictions – Northeastern, Southeastern, South Central, North Central, and Western – would continue as a single Regional Conference. Jurisdictions would continue to elect bishops and set conference boundaries within the U.S. Regional Conference. The Susquehanna Conference would continue to be in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. The Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference has already endorsed the Christmas Covenant and recommended that it be adopted by the 2024 General Conference.

The U.S. Regional Conference would convene, as the regional conferences in other areas of the world meet to consider changes to their regionalized Book of Discipline. The U.S. Regional Conference could adapt the Book of Discipline to fit the unique aspects of ministry in the United States.

So ... what does this really mean? What's the bottom line?

In our current structure, churches outside the United States (organized into ‘central’ conferences) are allowed to adapt the Book of Discipline to the context of the mission and ministry of the church in their geographical area. The only part of the Book of Discipline that cannot be altered is our doctrinal standards.

This means that the churches within the United States are the only churches within our world-wide denomination that are not allowed to adapt the Book of Discipline in any way.

The proposed Christmas Covenant would make two major changes.

First, it would change the term ‘central conference’ to ‘regional conferences’.

Second, it would classify the churches in the United States as a regional conference. This would then allow the US regional conference to adapt the Book of Discipline to the context of the mission and ministry of the church within the United States. Again, the only part of the Book of Discipline that cannot be altered is our doctrinal standards, such as our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith.

THE GREAT BIG CHARLTON CHURCH PRAYER EVENT



Join us as we cover our General Conference in prayer!

April 23, 2024 — May 3, 2024

We want our Charlton Church family to join with our brothers and sisters around the world as we keep the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church in our prayers. Several events are planned for this effort.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23 @ 7:00 PM — WORSHIP SERVICE

Join us in the sanctuary at Charlton Church for a time of worship and prayer as the General Conference convenes. We will pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and inspire the bishops, clergy and lay delegates as they begin their work together.

PRAYER GATHERINGS

Join Pastor Miguel and the Leadership of Charlton Church for meditation and prayer, as we continue to lift the work of those gathered from around the world to plan for the future of our denomination. Prayer gatherings will be held twice a day throughout General Conference:

A time of prayer will be held on Facebook Live every day at 10:00 am. Simply 'like' our page on Facebook and join us for this time of prayer.

Gather in the sanctuary for a 30-minute time of prayer each evening at 6:00 pm.

PRAYER BREAKFAST — Thursday, May 2 @ 9:00 am

Join us for a time of fellowship and breakfast, followed by a presentation about the work of the General Conference. We will bring everyone up to date with what has been happening at General Conference. We will watch video clips from their worship times, as well as some of their discussions. We will then conclude with a time of prayer.

Holy and Loving God, just as the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for 40 years, our church has been having its own desert experience. Be with us during this difficult time as we discern where You are leading us. Give us strength and courage for the journey. Grow in us the wisdom to see each other as You see us. Guide us as we discern how we all may be faithful to Your gospel and the life You have called us to live as Your disciples in the world today. This we ask in the name of Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Over the past couple of years, we have often described the financial health of our church as a rollercoaster, with many ups and downs. Thanks to the faithfulness of our congregation, we can say that 2023 was more like a kiddie-rollercoaster rather than the Comet at Hersheypark.

Here are some important facts about our 2023 finances:

- We ended the year with our income exceeding our expenses by \$20,000.
- We fully paid our Shares of Ministry, which is our commitment to support the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church around the world.
- We started 2023 with a mortgage balance of \$99,000.00, and ended the year with a mortgage balance of \$55,826.88.

As reported in the last newsletter, it is important to note that the estate gift received by the church helped us land in a good position at the end of 2023.

And while the proceeds from the sale of the 5910 property helped to pay off our 2024 Shares of Ministry, the bulk of those proceeds have been set aside to help secure our general fund and to establish our new Building Maintenance Fund.

A portion of those proceeds have also been designated to fund a “Dollar-for-Dollar” match campaign for debt reduction. Any dollar given towards debt reduction will be doubled using these funds until the mortgage is paid off.

Charlton’s Leadership Council continues to focus on the financial health of our congregation and best practices to follow as we strive to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted to us.

The Council recently approved the 2024 budget, which can be found on the following two pages. Even with inflation and an increase in programming, the 2024 budget is 2.55% less than the 2023 budget.

As always, the Leadership Council greatly appreciates the continued faithfulness of our congregation as they support the mission and ministry of Charlton Church. Please continue to keep our church in your prayers, that we will continue to follow where the Spirit leads as we strive to be good stewards of God’s blessings.



CHARLTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2024 BUDGET

		2023 Budget	\$ Change	2024 Budget	% Change
401 EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES					
401.01	Children's Sunday School	400.00	-100.00	300.00	-25.00%
401.02	Youth Sunday School	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
401.03	Adult Sunday School	700.00	0.00	700.00	0.00%
401.04	Vacation Bible School	100.00	100.00	200.00	100.00%
401.06	Gifts (Bibles for Graduates/Promotion)	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
401.09	Small Groups	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00%
	TOTAL Educational Ministries	1,700.00	0.00	1,700.00	0.00%
402 WORSHIP					
402.01	Worship Supplies	800.00	0.00	800.00	0.00%
402.03	Worship Programs	300.00	-50.00	250.00	-16.67%
402.04	Offering Envelopes/Coin Folders	400.00	0.00	400.00	0.00%
402.05	Upper Room Devotionals	300.00	100.00	400.00	33.33%
402.06A	Sanctuary Choir	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%
402.06B	Handbell Choir	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
402.06E	CCLI/CCVI Licensing	450.00	25.00	475.00	5.56%
	TOTAL Worship	3,800.00	75.00	3,875.00	1.97%
403 WITNESS AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS					
403.01	Community Organization Support	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
403.02	New Ministry Opportunities	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
403.03	Communications and Advertising	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
	TOTAL Witness & Outreach	1,300.00	0.00	1,300.00	0.00%
404 FELLOWSHIP AND PROGRAMMING					
404.01	Children's Ministries	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00%
404.02	Youth Ministries / Retreats	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00%
404.03	Young Adult Ministries	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00%
404.04	Hospitality	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
404.05	Kitchen Supplies / Dinners	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%
404.06	Senior Adult Ministries	1,000.00	500.00	1,500.00	50.00%
	TOTAL Fellowship & Programming	3,750.00	500.00	4,250.00	13.33%
405 UMC CONNECTIONAL SYSTEM					
405.01	World/Conference Benevolence	14,034.00	-2,097.42	11,936.58	-14.95%
405.02	Connectional Ministries (UMC)	20,899.00	-3,134.81	17,764.19	-15.00%
405.03	Conference Clergy Support	22,502.00	-3,375.16	19,126.84	-15.00%
	TOTAL UMC Connection	57,435.00	-8,607.39	48,827.61	-14.99%
406 ADMINISTRATION					
406.03	Postage Expenses	2,750.00	-500.00	2,250.00	-18.18%
406.05	Office Expenses	2,500.00	500.00	3,000.00	20.00%
406.06	Telephone	2,000.00	100.00	2,100.00	5.00%
406.07	Copier Equipment	5,000.00	-500.00	4,500.00	-10.00%
406.08	Accounting Expenses	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
406.09a	Information Technologies	600.00	400.00	1,000.00	66.67%
406.09b	Information Technologies Subscriptions	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00%
	TOTAL Administration	17,350.00	0.00	17,350.00	0.00%

CHARLTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2024 BUDGET

		2023 Budget	\$ Change	2024 Budget	% Change
407 STAFF MINISTRIES					
407.01A	Pastor's Salary	52,179.00	1,565.00	53,744.00	3.00%
407.01B	Pastor Pension Contribution	2,106.00	543.00	2,649.00	25.78%
407.01D	Pastor Pension Defined Benefit	5,950.00	0.00	5,950.00	0.00%
407.01E	Pastor Housing Allowance	0.00	30,440.00	30,440.00	
407.01F	Pastor Accountable Reimbursement	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
407.01G	Pastor's Health Savings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
407.01H	Pastor Social Security (7.65% House/Salary)	3,992.00	119.00	4,111.00	2.98%
407.01I	Pastor Health Insurance	16,500.00	0.00	16,500.00	0.00%
407.01J	Pastor CEU	750.00	0.00	750.00	0.00%
407.01K	Pastor Dental/Vision	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00	0.00%
407.10	Staff Salaries	105,550.00	2,500.00	108,050.00	2.37%
407.11	Pulpit Supply/Guest Speaker	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%
407.13	Annual Conference Registration Fee	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%
407.15	Payroll Taxes (employer's share)	7,500.00	0.00	7,500.00	0.00%
407.16	Payroll Expense	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
	TOTAL Staff Ministries	200,277.00	35,167.00	235,444.00	17.56%
409 CHURCH PROPERTY					
409.01A	Capital Improvements – 5920	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00%
409.01B	Repairs/Maintenance – 5920	15,000.00	-6,000.00	9,000.00	-40.00%
409.01C	Snow Removal	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
409.02	Custodial Supplies	800.00	200.00	1,000.00	25.00%
409.03	Organ/Piano Tuning	1,000.00	260.00	1,260.00	26.00%
409.04A	Insurance	17,000.00	0.00	17,000.00	0.00%
409.04B	Gas	14,500.00	500.00	15,000.00	3.45%
409.04C	Electric	15,550.00	1,450.00	17,000.00	9.32%
409.04D	Trash/Recycling	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	
409.04E	Sewer Rental – 5910/5920	1,400.00	-750.00	650.00	-53.57%
409.04F	Water	2,100.00	500.00	2,600.00	23.81%
409.04G	Storm Water Management	2,400.00	-100.00	2,300.00	-4.17%
409.05	New Capital Equipment	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
409.07A	5910 Property Expenses/Taxes	2,750.00	-2,750.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.07B	5910 Trash/Recycle	250.00	-250.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.08A	Parsonage Rent	25,500.00	-25,500.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.08B	Parsonage Gas	1,400.00	-1,400.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.08C	Parsonage Electric	2,000.00	-2,000.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.08F	Parsonage Water	750.00	-750.00	0.00	-100.00%
409.08G	Parsonage Phone/Internet	1,800.00	-1,800.00	0.00	-100.00%
	TOTAL Church Property	112,200.00	-35,390.00	76,810.00	-31.54%
411 DEBT REDUCTION					
411.03	Loan Principal Payment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
411.04	5920 Mortgage Interest	4,000.00	-2,000.00	2,000.00	-50.00%
	GRAND TOTAL BUDGET	\$401,812.00	-\$10,255.39	\$391,556.61	-2.55%

CHARLTON PRESCHOOL



It is with great joy that we are able to announce that Mrs. Kelly Wisniewski has been hired as our new Preschool Administrator. Mrs. Wisniewski will work with our teachers and aides to ensure that Charlton Preschool will continue to offer the excellent program for the children of our community that we are known for.



One of the easiest ways you can help support Charlton Preschool, a ministry of Charlton Church, is by purchasing gift cards for Giant Foods or Karns Foods. You may purchase gift cards on Sunday mornings at the Welcome Desk or in the church office. Checks should be payable to Charlton Church.

CHURCH CAMP CHANGES LIVES

Susquehanna Conference has several camps that provide a wide variety of programs for children and youth.

Chuck Kaufmann recalls how life-changing church camp was for him. The first time his mother dropped him off at camp, she didn't think she'd get away without him because he was crying so much. But when she returned a week later, he was hiding behind a tree because he didn't want to go home. That was the first of many church camping experiences for him.

For more information about the various camping programs, go to www.suscrm.org Charlton Church will help pay camping fees while funds are available. Contact the church office.



IN SYMPATHY

The sympathy of the church family is extended to the entire Sheetz family upon the death of Charlie on December 1, 2023.

The sympathy of the church family is extended to Don Hacker and family upon the death of Jane on December 4, 2023.

The sympathy of the church family is extended to the Petricone family upon the death of Andrea on December 7, 2023.

The sympathy of the church family is extended to the Chubb family upon the death of Phoebe on January 14, 2024.

The sympathy of the church family is extended to Bette Baker and family upon the death of Bob on January 25, 2024.



Thank you, Charlton Church, for the kind words of support, prayers, and condolence cards regarding my mother's recent hospitalization and passing. You have truly been a blessing.

Thank you again,
Mark Holmgren

A heartfelt Thank You to my Charlton Church family for all the prayers, cards, and hugs at the recent passing of my long and faithful husband Bob. He will be missed greatly, not only by me, but I am thinking by the family at Charlton too. Please continue to hold us close for a while longer, it is a tough road to follow; however, with God's guidance and your faithful prayers, we will travel together.

Bette Baker

Thank you for the beautiful flowers and thoughtful gift in recognition of my time at the preschool. Charlton Preschool will always hold a special place in my heart. I look forward to following the continued success of the ministry.

Trish Wagner

I want to thank the Charlton Church family for the beautiful flowers and generous gift card! My years of working as treasurer of the preschool were a privilege for me. I enjoyed working with the directors, Marjorie, Trish, and Jen, and the dedicated staff of aides that gave their best when serving the children. My work was also made easier with the help of Marianne in the church office. Working at the preschool is more than a job, it is a mission of love. May God continue to bless the ministries of Charlton Church!

Your brother in Christ,
Phil 'Skip' Bower

CHARLTON CHURCH

A United Methodist Community

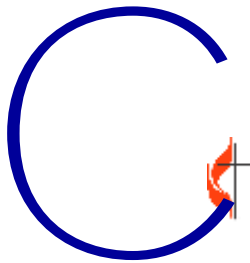
Where Faith Meets Life



**Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
for the Transformation of the World**

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Sommer Garber-Storm

Custodian

Debra Hughes

Nursery Attendant

Wendy Criste

Nursery Attendant

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

Martha Brown, Al Goss, Mark Holmgren, Sue Kelly, Kay Lengle, Carrie Livingston, Mark Malone, Marjorie Martin, Rick Pritchard, Tom Schreiber (chair), Heidi Staloni, Marleen Steele
Marcy Miller serves as Council Secretary.

Want to keep up-to-date on what's happening at Charlton Church?
Be sure to 'like' our page at www.Facebook.com/charltonchurch