



CHARLTON

SUMMER
2024

CHIMES

COME, SPIRIT, COME
SPIRIT-BORN SPIRIT-FILLED SPIRIT-LED

When We Breathe Together

A Blessing for Pentecost Day

by Jan Richardson



This is the blessing
we cannot speak
by ourselves.



This is the blessing
we cannot summon
by our own devices,
cannot shape
to our purpose,
cannot bend
to our will.



This is the blessing
that comes
when we leave behind
our aloneness,
when we gather
together,
when we turn
toward one another.



This is the blessing
that blazes among us
when we speak
the words
strange to our ears



when we finally listen
into the chaos
when we breathe together
at last.



The Charlton Chimes

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A Message from the Pastor ...



Worshipping God in One Spirit and Accord

“You never go away from us, yet we have difficulty in returning to You. Come, Lord, stir us up and call us back. Kindle and seize us. Be our fire and our sweetness. Let us love. Let us run.”—Augustine of Hippo.

At Charlton Church, we have enough reasons to gather in the sanctuary Sunday after Sunday. This is a time of worship for God, but it is also a time to share with those who are part of our faith community. Psalm 133:1-3 tells us: **“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! ... For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.”**

Community worship is not just a part of our Christian discipleship and ministry, it is also one of its foundations. The gospel calls us to live not in isolation but in community. In this community of faith, we find the purest manifestation of God's love when we fulfill the commandment to love God above all things (worship God), our neighbor (share God with others), and ourselves (in personal communion with God).

The psalmist said, **“I rejoiced with those who said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord.”** (Psalms 122:1). Directing your steps to God's house brings joy. The writer of Psalm 84:10 says that it was better for him to spend one day in the house of God than to spend a thousand outside it.

This Pentecost Sunday, after a long period of two Sunday worship services, we will once again gather for a single service to worship God. What better day to do it than the church's birthday, the day when all those gathered in Jerusalem received the blessing of the Holy Spirit—the day when ALL of them were One in the Spirit?

Let the same spirit of joy and unity permeate this new worship experience. As we worship together, let our place of worship transform into a new Jerusalem, where the Spirit of God moves in unity. Amen.

~ Pastor Miguel

Home Builders in Faith

During the month of May, the Board of Discipleship of the UMC suggests May as the **“Christian Home Month,”** with an emphasis on **“Mother’s Day”** on Sunday, May 12. In addition, during this month of May, there are four other main celebrations: Pentecost (May 19), which marked the beginning of the Christian Church, and the presence of the Holy Spirit among those who gathered. Heritage month (Aldersgate Day – Friday, May 24) and the importance of John Wesley as the human founder of Methodism; and finally, Memorial Day, an expression of remembrance and thanksgiving for those who served the nation.

In this sermon series, we delve into the themes of 'The Family' and 'Home,' which are not just the foundation of society but also the bedrock of our church. As a 'Family-oriented congregation,' we have the unique opportunity to explore these themes in the context of our daily lives, where faith truly meets life.

Our homes, when rooted in Christian values, have a profound influence on society, school, and church. A genuinely Christian home empowers the church to make a spiritual impact on society and culture, enables the school to stimulate intellect effectively, and ensures the state's security. This sermon series, 'The Builders in Faith,' aims to explore and inspire the creation of such homes within our congregation.

The houses in which we live have many different rooms. You will find bedrooms, bathrooms, dining rooms, dens, living rooms, family rooms, closets, utility rooms, storage rooms, attics, storm cellars, and garages. Each of these rooms serves a function. In the Christian home, there are a number of rooms we build to have a solid and faithful family. Some of these rooms need to be built in our family relationships. Some of these rooms need to be cleaned in the hearts of our family members. Some other rooms need to be re-used towards a better understanding. What kind of home are we building? What kind of rooms are you building in your home?



Sunday, May 12, 2024 – **Mother’s Day [Festival of the Christian Home]**

“Building Room for Faithfulness” — Exodus 2:1-10 / Exodus 6:20

The story of Moses and his salvific method of survival helps us discover the life of Jochebed, a mother whose name is not very well known by church people. Jochebed, **Moses’ mother (Exodus 6:20), did not just “let Moses go”; Jochebed was a woman of faith, and she “let him go and trusted her God.”**

This sermon explores Jochebed's life as a woman, whose influence teaches us that there are times in our lives when we have done all we can do, we've said all we can say, there is no more, and we have to do nothing except put our faithful life in God's hands.



Sunday, May 19, 2024 – Day of Pentecost

“Building Room for Helpfulness” — John 14:15-26

The church is celebrating “Pentecost” (fifty days after Easter), a time when the presence of Jesus’ promise is fulfilled – “*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.*” As the church receives the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who is also called “*The Helper.*”

This sermon invites us to make room for the Holy Spirit's action in our family relationships as we remember that God created all from a formless earth and that the Spirit of God was present, helping, moving, and acting as He can be in our family.

Sunday, May 26, 2024 – Trinity Sunday

“Building Room for Memories” — Exodus 13:1-16

The church has a time to remember and refresh her memory. First, it is Trinity Sunday, a time to celebrate the community of God, Three in One: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose presence is constant in our Christian lives. And second, to remember Memorial Day as we honor those who died as veterans who gave their lives in sacrifice to our nation.

This sermon explores our fragile memory and our need to remember and be grateful for those who are present in our history. We easily forget the presence of the Trinity in our midst and the teachings that God is among us as a family of God.

JUNE SERMON SERIES

We All are Called

Charlton Leadership Council has approved the request for Pastor Miguel to take his vacation at one time during the month of June as a sabbatical to complete his doctoral studies. **Pastor Dann will be with us during the month as we look at several of the 'call' stories from the scriptures and consider how each of us have a call to live out in our lives.**

On Sunday, June 23, Marjorie Martin and Marleen Steele will give a presentation on the history of Charlton Church, and how, as a Church, we have been called to reach our community over the past 250 years.

On Sunday, June 30, special guest Ross Williard will share his **story of how he was called to start the program "Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg"**.

JULY SERMON SERIES

Charlton at the Movies

Movies always capture our attention. With them, we experience joy, sadness, hope, and love. Many times, movies transport us to places we could never be. In other cases, they push us to the limit, reminding us of past experiences, positive or negative. Movies allow us to look not only at ourselves but also at our society.

Stories communicate meaning and purpose. It is human nature to look for the structure and reason behind life's events. What is a story made of? Almost every good story has compelling characters. Sometimes, we identify with them, and other times, we simply wish to understand them. We support the good and do not tolerate the bad. We see the characters grow and change, and we become involved in their problems. The plot is the other component of a story. What situation are the characters in? How does it challenge and even change them? With the correct characters and plot, we always wonder what will happen next.



We also have stories; the story of salvation takes us to moments that refresh our life in Christ, and through many expressions, varied feelings, and experiences, we live the journey of faith, knowing that Jesus is in our midst.

Charlton at the Movies is a series of four sermons based on films. The series of sermons explores biblical themes through the lens of movies. God speaks to our lives in our own plots, with our own characters, in different settings. Enjoy it; let's have the popcorn ready because the show is about to begin.

Sunday, July 7 :: Encanto (2021) :: Romans 8:18-28

Encanto unfolds the narrative of an extraordinary family, the Madrigals, who dwell concealed in the mountains of Colombia in a magical house in a vibrant town called "Encanto." The magic of the Encanto has bestowed each child in the family with a **unique gift, from super strength to the power to heal... every child except one, Mirabel.** However, when she unearths that the magic enveloping the Encanto is in peril, Mirabel, the only ordinary Madrigal, ponders that she might be her exceptional family's last hope.

This sermon invites us to reflect that as God's children, we are waiting for the Father to complete our task. Trusting that God uses every circumstance in our lives for His purposes and that He has chosen us long ago to be His children.

Sunday, July 14 :: Arthur the King (2024) :: Proverbs 16:1-9

Desperate for one last chance to win, Michael Light convinces a sponsor to back him and a team of athletes for the Adventure Racing World Championship in the Dominican Republic. As the team gets pushed to the outer limits of endurance, a dog named Arthur comes along for the ride, redefining what victory, loyalty, and friendship truly mean.

This sermon reflects on the heart's intention to make plans and the Lord's rule over that planning. Committing one's ways to God with reverence is the wise way to make plans. The Lord has a purpose for everything He created.



Sunday, July 21 :: The Pursuit of Happiness (2006) :: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

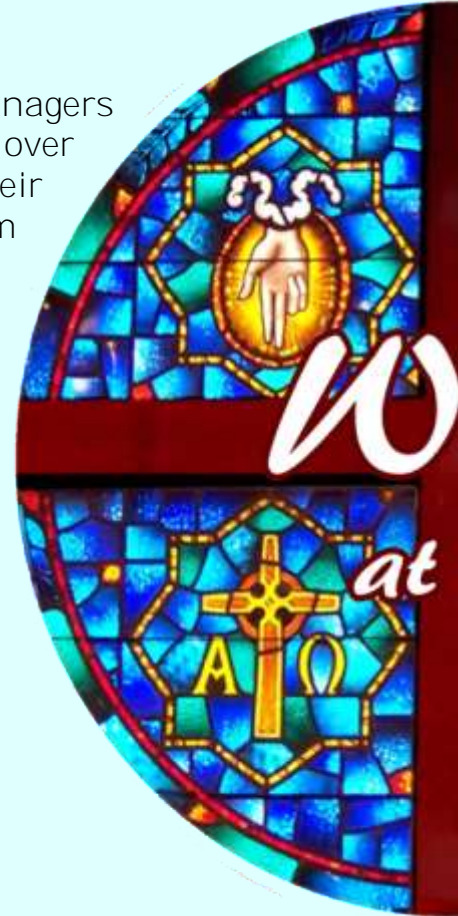
Life is a struggle for a single father and his son who are evicted from their apartment; they find themselves alone with no place to go. Even though Chris eventually lands a job as an intern at a prestigious brokerage firm, the position pays no money. The pair must live in shelters and endure many hardships, but Chris refuses to give in to despair as he struggles to create a better life for himself and his son.

This sermon explores joyfulness at all times, recognizing that our circumstances might not always result in our being "happy." Happiness is not the same thing as joy. Joy, in the Bible, involves a trusting hope in Christ, leading to an eternal perspective.

Sunday, July 28 :: The Notebook (2006) :: 1 Corinthians 13

The story is told as an idyllic summer romance between two teenagers named Allie and Noah and their challenges to prove their love over time. They not only love each other, but they have to live their romance under social pressures, indecision, and materialism during the Second World War. This story is the story of a time of dementia and old age, of love, fidelity, and perseverance despite adversity.

This sermon explores God's kind and enduring love, which sets self aside endlessly for the good of others. Christ-like love is the greatest of all virtues, and it should be the priority of every Christian.



AUGUST SERMON SERIES

Learning from the Least

If I asked you to find the book of Obadiah without searching your Bible's index, would you find it easily? Perhaps the first thing you would ask yourself is whether this book is in the Old Testament or the New Testament. After several pages of your Bible, it is very likely that without thinking, you will have to go to the index to find out where it is.

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are the famous 12 minor prophets; not very studied, preached or known. Just because they are known as minor prophets does not mean that they are less important; rather, they are shorter in length in relation to the major prophets, who include longer writings.

“Learning from the Least” is a series of four sermons that invite us to learn about the importance of four little-known books (Obadiah, Nahum, Haggai, and Zephaniah). The purpose is to explore their richness in the lives of the people of Israel and the lessons of life and faith that they bring to us today.

Sunday, August 4 :: Obadiah :: Obadiah 1

Obadiah's prophecy focuses on the destructive power of pride. It reminds us of the consequences of living in a self-serving manner, of following through on our own feelings and desires without considering their impact on those around us. This sermon explores the consequences of pride and self-serving behavior and God's judgment and triumph over those who show arrogance.



Sunday, August 11 :: Nahum :: Nahum 1:7–8

The book of Nahum, using Assyria and Babylon as examples, says that God is grieved and cares about the death of the innocent and that his goodness and justice compel him to orchestrate the downfall of oppressive nations. God's judgment of evil is good news unless, of course, you happen to be Assyria. **This sermon explores God's care for those who are suffering at the hands of others and how God becomes people's strength and refuge in challenging moments.**

Sunday, August 18 :: Haggai :: Haggai 1

The Book of Haggai, the second shortest in the Old Testament, communicates this same message: Put first things first. It was written to people like us, who would say that God must be first. But they had drifted away from this truth. They lived with misplaced priorities. Haggai assures the people that their efforts and faithfulness will be blessed. God will one day build a new Jerusalem and

live amidst his people. This sermon explores the importance of God's promises to his people when they are faithful.

Sunday, August 25 :: Zephaniah

The central theme of Zephaniah is the Day of the Lord. Zephaniah elucidates two major aspects of this theme: judgment and restoration. In both of these aspects, Zephaniah evinces many parallels to the books of the eighth-century prophets. **This sermon explores the importance of restoration and the coming “Day of the Lord”.**

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”



Acts 2: 1-4, NRSV

We sometimes take it for granted, this Feast of Pentecost. We know about the upper room, the tongues of fire, the preaching, the conversions of many ... but we are sometimes so familiar with the story that we don't recognize how incredible it is!

Pentecost (Greek for “fiftieth”) has its roots in the Jewish Festival of Weeks, the fifty day celebration following Passover. The disciples gathered in the upper room were observing the Festival of Weeks when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in a great wind, with tongues of fire.

The story tells us that “devout Jews from every nation under heaven” had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast; yet when the disciples came out of the upper room “speaking in tongues,” everyone could understand them.

Back in Genesis 11:1-9, when the Tower of Babel was being constructed, there was a “confusion of tongues” and people were no longer able to understand one another. With the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the confusion is reversed—and people are once again able to communicate with one another. The people were amazed that they could understand each other who normally spoke different languages.

In many ways the fire of Pentecost is similar to the image of God's refining and purifying fire that can be found throughout the Old Testament. As the Holy Spirit descended upon those early followers of Christ, God's refining and purifying power gave birth to the new church.

Let it be so for Charlton Church! The family of faith known as Charlton has been faithfully following where God has led for generations. And through the years, God has led us in many different directions. And while some may think we are facing uncertain and difficult days, others have a sense of great hope, feeling that God is once again using his refining and purifying power to build us up to do even greater things for his kingdom.

Let it be so for Charlton Church! Bring on the Pentecost fire!

Come, O Holy Spirit

by John Henry Newman

Come, O Holy Spirit.

Come as Holy Fire and burn in us,
come as Holy Wind and cleanse us within,
come as Holy Light and lead us in the darkness,
come as Holy Truth and dispel our ignorance,
come as Holy Power and enable our weakness,
come as Holy Life and dwell in us.

Convict us, convert us, consecrate us,
until we are set free from the service of ourselves,
to be Your servants to the world. Amen.



New Worship Schedule begins May 19

Discipleship Hour at 9:00 am

One Service at 10:00 am

On Pentecost Sunday, May 19, we will begin our new worship schedule with one service at 10:00 am. It will be great for our church family to be able to see one another as we join together for worship.

Be sure to mark your calendars for these special gatherings after worship:

Sunday, May 19 at 11:15 am

Bring a side dish to church as we celebrate Pentecost and get your Memorial Day celebrations off to a great start as we share in a picnic lunch after our first combined service. Hamburg BBQ, rolls, and beverage will be provided.

Sunday, June 30 at 11:15 am

The Faith and Fellowship Class invites you to join them for their annual Pie and Ice Cream Social following the worship service.

Sunday, August 4 at 11:15 am

Bring a side dish to church and join us for a picnic lunch after worship. Hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls and beverage will be provided.

Sunday, September 1 at 11:15 am

Bring a side dish to church and join us for a picnic lunch as our summer comes to a close. Sandwich makings and beverage will be provided.

DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

DIVING DEEPER BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Miguel invites you to join him and dig deeper into our sermon series. This is a time of study and discussion. These Bible studies are held on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am.

Our new Sunday morning schedule is a great opportunity for you to consider joining one of our classes that gather during the Discipleship Hour!

KIDS CLUB

All children in preschool through 5th grade are invited to be part of our **KIDs Club** each Sunday morning. They meet on the lower level for lessons, activities, games and crafts.

YOUTH CLASS

All youth in grades 6 through 12 are invited to join in our weekly Sunday morning small group where we explore the scriptures and how they are relevant to our lives in today's world.

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP CLASS

The **Faith & Fellowship** Class likes to share, explore and deepen their faith through Biblical study. All ages are welcome but they are mostly a 60+ group. They are a very social class with many opportunities for fellowship, both on Sundays at church and outside gatherings. The class meets on the upper level in room 15, which is the classroom directly across from the nursery.

FOUNDATION AND JOY CLASS

The **Foundation Class** and **JOY Class** plan to begin meeting together this summer. The class is comprised of persons age 60 and above, though persons of all ages are invited to join them for their time of study and discussion. The class will meet in room 14 on the main level.

JOURNEY CLASS

The **Journey Class** explores topics of interest in culture and discusses them from a Christian perspective. The class is proud of the diversity expressed within the class, as they are comprised of persons from young adult to retired, with both progressive and conservative viewpoints. They meet in the conference room, which is adjacent to the church office on the main level.

THE GATHERING

The **Gathering** is for people of all ages, from young adults to those young-at-heart. It is primarily comprised of parents with young children, coming together in an informal and relaxed atmosphere to share their spiritual journey with one another. The group meets in the parlor.

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.

You can support these missions through the Mission Envelopes and through the Noise Offering, which is collected on the fourth Sunday of the month. You can also use the envelopes in the pews; simply mark it as ‘Monthly Mission’.

Here are the monthly missions for the summer season:

JUNE — FLOW and VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This summer, we are introducing two new missions in an effort to support and make a difference in the lives of persons in our community.

FLOW, “For the Love Of Women”, is an organization in Harrisburg whose mission is to eliminate menstrual inequity by providing free menstrual hygiene products.

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program, based in Harrisburg, strives to reduce the trauma of a crime by empowering and assisting crime victims, witnesses and significant others in reconstructing their lives through advocacy, support, information and referrals.

JULY — The Center for Spiritual Formation

The Center provides a wide variety of retreats for clergy and lay persons both online and at their retreat center located in Millerstown, PA. For more information, visit www.centerformation.org

AUGUST — Someone To Tell It To

Someone To Tell It To cultivates meaningful relationships through compassionate listening and trains others to do the same. If you’re called to be a compassionate listener, visit www.someonetotellitito.org

RECYCLE BICYCLE HARRISBURG

Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg is a local nonprofit located at 1722 Chestnut Street, whose mission is to provide all residents of the greater Harrisburg area – especially those of limited means – with access to safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally friendly transportation in the form of bicycles. They collect and restore used, damaged and abandoned bicycles, using the restoration process to teach bicycle repair and maintenance to our earn-a-bike recipients. In addition to children and youth, the bikes are also distributed to adults who do not have other transportation to get to their jobs.



In the last couple of weeks, 8 bicycles were collected from Charlton Church's members and friends and delivered to Recycle Bicycle Harrisburg. Please keep this organization in mind as bikes are needed all year. If you have a bike to donate, of any size or condition, please contact the church office or Mark Malone.

MISSION TRIP REPORT

On the last full week of April about 30 volunteers from several churches in the PA and Ohio area spent the week in the Scranton area working on houses. This trip was organized by Mt. Calvary UMC, led by Penny Waltman, and sponsored by Wonders Found Thrift Store. Charlton member Mark Malone was part of the mission trip.

This was the second trip to this area as they continue to clean up and repair homes after a flash flood in the area where they received over 8" of rain in just one hour. One home they worked on, located about $\frac{3}{4}$ way up a mountain, had its block basement wall knocked down after the 'river of water' moved down the hill.

Mt. Calvary Church will be organizing another mission trip in the fall, with the destination unknown at this time. Please consider participating in this rewarding effort. They welcome people of all ages to join the work team. There are several participants in their 80's – so age is no excuse. For more information, please contact Mark Malone.

SUMMER COLLECTIONS

Please place your donations in the shopping carts located in the church lobby.

BAGGED RICE

Our Giving Grace program continues to serve approximately 85 families per month. In addition to the basic household items, we would like to provide our families with rice, which is a pantry staple for the community that we serve. We will continue to collect one or two pound bags of rice for our families. The two pound bags are preferable.

PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY

Many of the families we serve have children that will no longer be getting their breakfast and lunch at school. To assist them during the summer months, we will be collecting peanut butter and jelly to distribute as part of Giving Grace and Helping Hands program. This means we will need around 100 jars of both peanut butter and jelly each month!

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

We are in need of school supplies for the backpacks that we provide for the families of our Giving Grace program. We are collecting items such as notebooks, notebook paper, tablets, pencils, pens, rulers, colored pencils, crayons, markers, glue sticks, and other assorted school supplies. Please note we DO NOT need backpacks.

SNACK ITEMS

We will once again collect single serve snack items for our annual First Responder Appreciation Outreach. From time to time, we continue to hear how much these hospitality baskets are appreciated. We are collecting items such as individually wrapped snack crackers, cookies, nuts, chips and popcorn, candies or gum. Homemade cookies in a baggie are also a plus!

SUMMER FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

GOD'S HANDS @ WORK — First and Fourth Tuesdays at 1:00 pm

All persons who enjoy crocheting or knitting (or are interested in learning) are invited to join our fellowship in the church lobby as we enjoy some conversation as we make our individual projects.

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.

LOW IMPACT EXERCISE — Monday thru Friday at 10:30 am

It's important to keep moving ... especially for seniors who no longer are as active as they once were. Come out and share some fellowship with some Charlton friends while participating in one of our low impact exercise sessions. Chair Yoga is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Strength and Balance sessions are held on Tuesday and Thursday.

FELLOWSHIP THURSDAYS

LUNCH AND A LAUGH — First Thursday of the Month at 12:00 pm

With CHUM senior group taking their summer break, we invite everyone (and anyone) to join us for a light lunch on the first Thursday of the month. This is a great time to connect with your church family, get caught up on what's happening in each other's lives and share a laugh or two with one another. Many of our church family live alone, and they love having opportunities to share a meal with someone. So, come out and bring a smile to their face!

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.

2024 General Con

General Conference is the top lawmaking assembly of The United Methodist Church and the only entity that speaks for the denomination. It convenes every four years, with delegates from the denomination's regions around the world.

MAJOR ACTION

Regionalization Petitions Approved

Delegates approved legislation that would restructure the denomination to be more contextual in different regions served by the church. Bishop Tracy S. Malone, president of the Council of Bishops, said that "Regionalization would enable the church to be contextual in ministry while remaining connected around the mission of the church and the essentials of the faith." It would enable the church to "honor who we are as a worldwide denomination."

Regionalization represents an effort to put the church's different geographical regions on equal footing and to make the General Conference less U.S.-centric. The current central conferences and the U.S. would become regional conferences, with the same authority to pass legislation for greater missional impact.

Delegates also approved the continuation of work on a General Book of Discipline that would be brought to the next regular session of General Conference.

The regionalization legislation involves an amendment to the church's constitution. This would have to be approved by at least two-thirds of the total votes cast across all annual conferences worldwide in order for much of the regionalization legislation to take effect. If they receive the necessary number of votes, the results would be announced by the United Methodist Council of Bishops. The regionalization constitutional amendment is to be sent out 30 days after the adjournment of General Conference, which means some annual conferences could be voting on the amendment this year.

Regionalization stands as distinct from the other work of General Conference. It had been in development for many years, with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the Connectional Table collaborating on the petitions that were submitted. It received support from delegates from every region.

Conference Wrap-Up

MAJOR ACTION

Removal of Restrictive Language Related to LGBTQ People

The General Conference voted by overwhelming majorities to remove from the United Methodist Book of Discipline discriminatory language and bans related to ministry by, with and for “self-avowed practicing” gay and lesbian people. Actions included:

- Removal of the language that the “practice of homosexuality ... is incompatible with Christian teaching.”
- Removal of the ban on the ordination and appointment of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” clergy.
- Removal of language that made the ordination of “self-avowed practicing homosexual” clergy and the performance of same-sex weddings chargeable offenses.
- Removal of mandatory minimum penalties for clergy holding same-sex weddings.
- Removal of a prohibition against using United Methodist funds to support groups, activities and causes that promote the acceptance of homosexuality.
- Removal of the requirement that the General Council on Finance and Administration, the denomination’s finance agency, enforce the funding ban. Instead, the provision says the agency should ensure that church funds do not go to anything that rejects LGBTQ persons or limits the response to the HIV epidemic.
- Allowance for all clergy in good standing to be appointed across annual conference lines when their bishop can’t locate an appointment in their conference.

As they have traditionally done, conference bishops and their cabinets will consult with clergy and staff-parish relations committees to find the best appointments for both the local church and the pastor.

These changes bring the Book of Discipline back to a neutral place where one group is not singled out for discrimination. It holds space for differing opinions within The United Methodist Church by avoiding broad mandates.

2024 General Conference

MAJOR ACTION

Historic Firsts

Bishop Tracy S. Malone, resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference, became the first Black female president of the Council of Bishops on April 30, 2024.

Bishop David Wilson, resident bishop of the Great Plains Conference, became the first Native American bishop to preside over the General Conference on April 25, 2024.

MAJOR ACTION

Apportionment Percentage Decreased

In an effort to balance funding important connectional ministries through the general church budget and supporting the local church during financial challenges due to the pandemic and disaffiliation, delegates approved a compromise regarding apportionments. Conferences will shift from their current base rate of 3.29% to a base rate of 2.6% for 2025 and 2026. Then, if the apportionment collection rate is 90% or higher in those years, the base rate will increase to 2.9% for 2027 and 2028.

MAJOR ACTION

Budget Approved

Delegates approved a 2025-2028 budget of \$373.4 million. That total is contingent on collection rates being at 90% or more for the next two years. If giving is below that percentage, the budget bottom line will be \$353.6 million. The total approved is significantly smaller than the budget approved by the 2016 General Conference. Annual conferences will be asked to pay less in apportionments.

MAJOR ACTION

Disaffiliation Policy Ended, Re-affiliation Measure Approved

Delegates removed Paragraph 2553 from the Book of Discipline, ending the disaffiliation policy that was added by the special 2019 General Conference. They also required annual conferences affected by disaffiliation to develop grace-filled policies for reaffiliation of churches that want to rejoin the denomination.

Conference Wrap-Up

MAJOR ACTION

Adoption of Revised Social Principles

Delegates approved the first overhaul of the denomination's Social Principles in nearly 50 years. The Social Principles, contained in both the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions, are statements that reflect official United Methodist teachings on a wide range of topics. They are not church law but are intended to inform United Methodist witness on issues of the day with a biblical foundation.

The 2012 General Conference approved revising the Social Principles, setting in motion a process that involved input from people around the world, coordinated by the General Board of Church and Society. In addition to the language changes regarding human sexuality and inclusiveness, the Social Principles address the importance of advocating for human dignity and combating racism and other threats, caring for creation and the environment, standing against social ills, and supporting healthy community in all its forms, including economic, social and political.



SUSQUEHANNA CONFERENCE DELEGATION TO 2024 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Rev. Dr. Gary D. Weaver, Kim Shockley, John Konieczny, Dr. Milton Loyer,
Toni Oplinger, Rev. Mark F. Reisinger, Rev. Lenore C. Hosier, Rev. Dr. Kathleen E. Kind,
Rev. Rachel Keller E. Wong, Lisa Bender, Rev. Dr. Paul C. Amara, Rev. Dr. Thomas Salsgiver,
Cindy Weaver, Wesley Bealla, Christian McDermott, Rev. Jacob A. Waybright

2024 General Con

ADDITIONAL MAJOR ACTIONS

Delegates also:

- Approved a constitutional amendment addressing the denomination’s commitment to eradicating racism.
- Approved an apology to victims and survivors of sexual misconduct by clergy and lay leaders in the church. The resolution also encourages the reporting of sexual abuse and states that the abuse of power will not be tolerated in the church. Delegates also observed Thursdays in Black in recognition of violence that is perpetrated against women around the world.
- Approved an apology for the role of Methodists in the overthrow of the kingdom of Hawaii in 1893.
- Approved allowing deacons to preside at the sacraments – Holy Communion and baptism -- in their ministry contexts.
- Approved updating jurisdictional young people’s ministries, including changing the Division on Ministries with Young People to the Young People’s Connectional Network.
- Approved a new retirement plan for U.S. clergy, called Compass, which would be a defined contribution plan similar to what many corporate employers provide. The plan takes effect in 2026.
- Approved a full communion agreement with the Episcopal Church. If the Episcopal Church affirms the agreement, it will mean the denominations recognize each other as the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in with the Gospel is rightly preached and taught.”
- Approved adding two bishops for Africa, for a total of 15, and set the number of U.S. bishops at 32 – a decrease from the 39 active bishops and one retired bishop currently serving episcopal areas in the U.S.
- Adopted a new Book of Resolutions, including readopting many resolutions and approving new ones, addressing topics such as climate change, rights of farm workers in the U.S., the observance of the Children’s Sabbath, caring for Native people and opposition to racial profiling.

(continued on next page)

Conference Wrap-Up

- Adopted a resolution condemning racial-ethnic discrimination and gender-based violence against Asian Americans.
- Adopted a new Book of Resolutions, including readopting many resolutions and approving new ones, addressing topics such as climate change, rights of farm workers in the U.S., the observance of the Children’s Sabbath, caring for Native people and opposition to racial profiling.
- Approved a resolution calling on United Methodist institutions not to invest in the government bonds of countries that have been cited by the U.N. Security Council or the International Criminal Court for prolonged military occupations.
- Approved a motion to allow four Eurasian conferences to leave the denomination and form an autonomous church. [While the United Methodist Church is a national denomination, it is often identified as a US-centric church, which is problematic for these conferences located in Russia.]
- Celebrated the impact of Africa University and milestone anniversaries – the 200th anniversary of Methodist mission, the 100th anniversary of the United Methodist Building in Washington, D.C., and the 80th anniversary of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.
- Elected a new Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court, and filled positions on the Commission on the General Conference, University Senate, general boards and agencies of the church and other entities, as well as trustees to John Street United Methodist Church in New York, the oldest continuously operating Methodist church in the United States.



A Letter from Our Bishops Concerning General Conference

May 1, 2024

Dear Siblings in Christ of the Susquehanna Annual Conference,

After years of intensive and prayerful debate, the General Conference delegates from all over the world voted to remove language that prohibited United Methodist clergy from performing weddings for same-gender couples. *This change allows churches and clergy to operate according to their conscience, without consequence.*

There are some important things about this decision that we want you to know. First, *pastors have always decided who they will marry.* This is based on several factors including the couples' preparation for the marriage covenant. This has not changed. *Pastors will continue to decide who they will marry. No one will force a pastor to officiate a marriage ceremony for any couple.*

Second, churches will continue to determine what weddings are held in their church buildings. This is the decision of the local church's Board of Trustees. Further, the desires of all clergy and congregations in this matter are to be honored and not judged by others.

Specifically, the change will include new language in ¶ 419.12 Book of Discipline that states:


13. The superintendent shall not penalize any clergy from performing, or refraining from performing, a same-sex marriage service.

14. The superintendent shall neither require any local church to hold or prohibit a local church from holding a same-sex marriage service on property owned by a local church.

We know that different people have different opinions on these matters and the diversity of perspectives needs to be respected.

The delegates of the General Conference also voted to remove prohibitions that prevented a Board of Ordained Ministry from recommending a gay or lesbian person for ordination. Gay persons may enter the process to become candidates for ministry, and if approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, can now be licensed, commissioned, and ordained.

Please be assured that the Bishop and Cabinet will continue to work with churches and clergy to ensure we have the best match possible when making appointments.



We want everyone to have a VITAL ministry, not a ministry defined by conflict. We have always worked to place all pastors in appointments where they will be accepted and will be able to work in partnership with the laity to further the mission of Jesus Christ. Our commitment to the local church and the mission of Christ has not changed. Your district superintendent will continue to be your primary contact on appointment related issues.

These recent decisions at the General Conference, reinforce the primacy of God's love in our lives and the world, and add complexity to our life together as United Methodists.

We realize this General Conference decision may bring about various emotions and reactions within our congregations and the broader denomination. There will no doubt be some who are disheartened and pained by this decision as well as some who welcome it.

® As we collaborate and work together, we feel sure that we can navigate the complexity and respect one another.

The removal of the language around human sexuality returns us to the Book of Discipline that we have had from the founding of the church in 1784 until 1972 when the General Conference first added the restrictive measures into the Book of Discipline.

As United Methodists in the Susquehanna Conference, we remain committed to upholding our Wesleyan values of love, grace, and inclusivity. While we may not all agree on every issue, we are called to continue embodying the love of Christ in our interactions with one another. We invite you to strive to maintain a spirit of unity. Our unity is in Christ and therefore, it is more important than ever to engage in respectful dialogue, compassionate listening, and prayerful practice with one another.

The church is the only institution that exists for those who are not yet a part of it. It exists so others can come to know Christ. It exists to make disciples. Our communion table is open, and so are our hearts. We have important work to do — together. Without fear, and with the joy of the Lord, let's get to the work Jesus calls us to do. Let us be people who share the transforming power of Christ with the world.

In Ministry with you,

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi

Resident Bishops



What do these changes at General Conference concerning sexuality mean for Charlton Church?

At this point in time, the changes to the Book of Discipline do not affect Charlton Church. Nothing about our mission and ministry has changed. Nothing about our programming has changed. Nothing about who we serve has changed.

One of the biggest changes might be how you are responding to the actions of the General Conference. Last week, some of you felt that the Book of Discipline was faithful to the Word of God, while others of you disagreed. This week, some of you feel that the Book of Discipline is faithful to the Word of God, while others of you disagree.

It is important to remember that we are called the UNITED Methodist Church, and NOT the UNIFIED Methodist Church. As John Wesley said, *“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.”*

We understand and respect that some of our conservative members are unhappy with the recent decisions. We also understand and respect that some of our progressive members are celebrating the recent decisions.

But it is important to note that some, if not many, of our members consider themselves to be ‘centrists’ or ‘moderates’. And for them, they are pleased that now the United Methodist Church can be a place where ALL people are welcome to faithfully live out their conscience, because ultimately that’s where faith meets life.

Many persons have asked if the Charlton sanctuary can now be used for same-sex weddings. According to the Book of Discipline, it is the responsibility of the Leadership Council (who are elected by the church membership at church conference) to make that decision.

After much discussion at their most recent meeting on May 5, Charlton’s Leadership Council is taking this responsibility very seriously. They want to better understand what our church family thinks we should do. This is part of a larger conversation that the Council has been having for the last two years: how can we best use our church facility to serve God and our community. Over the next few months, they will be organizing and creating ways to communicate about this issue before any decisions are made.

BOOK DRIVE

Have too many books laying around? Bring them to church during the month of June, and our volunteers will sort them and get them to a place where they can be enjoyed by others. We'll even take your old worn Bibles ... the message contained within them is still ever-new!



Why does the church continue to keep the Community Aid Donation Bin on our property when so many people abuse it and leave items laying outside?

As a way of saying 'thanks' for hosting a bin on our site, they pay the church a few cents for every pound they collect. The church receives these checks every quarter, which are usually around \$300. This past quarter, the church received a check for \$1500! Let this be a reminder to gather up your old clothes and drop them off soon!

7th Annual

Mission Classic Golf Tournament

Friday,
August 16th

Benefits the Outreach Ministries of Charlton Church
Pick up a flier at the Welcome Desk for more info!

Vacation Bible School 2024

RUNNING THE RACE



WITH JESUS

Sunday, June 30 thru Wednesday, July 3

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

On your MARK ... Get SET ...

GO and register today!

www.CharltonChurch.org/vbs

Summer is a great time for families to spend time together, have fun and make memories. Oftentimes, extended families get together during the summer months for outings to the park, the beach or other special destinations. Here are some tips for a happy and healthy summer:

Play it safe, for safety's sake

Playgrounds and swing sets can provide children with hours of play during the warm weather, but they are also one of the leading causes of injury. When you consider using a play area, keep the following things in mind for safety's sake. Since most playground injuries are the result of falls, make sure the area under the swings or climbing equipment provides a soft landing. The landing surface material should be at least 12 inches deep and extend at least six feet beyond the equipment to prevent injury from lateral or projectile falls. Also check chains and ropes that attach swings or other climbing features. Playground equipment can be dangerous when used incorrectly. Always make sure you supervise children while they are on the playground. More than once an observant, fast-acting adult has prevented the serious injury of a child.



the statistics – according to Safe Kids Worldwide®, 47 percent of children under the age of 14 who were hospitalized for bike related injuries were diagnosed with brain injury. Children 10 to 14 had the highest death rate from bicycle head injuries. Wearing a bicycle helmet has been shown to reduce the risk of brain injury by 88 percent. Studies show that states which have enacted mandatory bike helmet laws have reduced bicycle related fatalities by 60 percent. Wearing a helmet is a good idea at any age. Make sure your helmet fits properly and use one any time you ride or strap wheels to your feet. Your brain will thank you.

Have fun in the sun

Always bring along a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more to protect your skin. Apply it 30 minutes before exposure and reapply after sweating or swimming. You may also want to consider using a UV blocking beach umbrella or other shelter. Blocking the sun's harmful rays helps prevent skin cancer.

Fired up for safety

Hamburgers, chicken and brats on the grill make easy summertime meals. Prior to firing up your gas grill for summer, give it a pre-season check. Inspect hoses, connectors and LP tanks for cracks and leaks. Check the burners for blockages. Have a professional repair problems with the gas supply. When you finally fire up your grill, always make sure it is placed on a flat surface away from other flammable structures. Never leave the grill or barbeque pit unattended when children are present. Remember, never pour gasoline, kerosene or lighter fluid on hot coals or open flames – even if your dad always did it this way!

*Reprinted with permission
from MinistryHealth.org*

Keep the bugs out

Ants aren't the only bugs that may arrive at your picnic site. Bacteria may also invade your fun if you aren't careful. Always bring enough ice to keep your meats, vegetables, salads and other food items cool and your cooler full. A full cooler maintains cold temperatures longer. When grilling foods, make sure that all meats reach temperatures that kill harmful bacteria. Though it may not be vogue to carry a meat thermometer to a picnic, it may prevent your family or friends from carrying a bout of intestinal illness home. Never place the cooked or grilled foods back on a plate that held raw meat.

Choose the right cover-up

Ah, the free and easy days of summer – the wind whipping through your hair as you careen down the hill at 20 miles per hour ... Wait! If the wind is whipping through your hair, then you are not wearing your helmet! That's dangerous! Wearing a helmet when biking, skateboarding or roller skating is a smart move. Consider

For the past two months, the students have learned about space, dinosaurs, Easter, Jesus's love, sacrifice, rebirth, spring, construction, transportation and the 5 senses. Music is incorporated in every aspect through our teachings, from singing songs, making music, learning about instruments, dancing to your own beat, and how we can praise God through music. Pastor Miguel does a fantastic job with the preschoolers on Mondays, playing guitar and singing songs with the children. The kids love it so much; it has become a very valued time for our students. Student and class pictures were taken in April, and they are adorable!



Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraisers this year. In March, the Soup Guy Fundraiser was a great success. The April Read-a-Thon fundraiser focused on the importance of reading. Students logged the amount of books read or had read to them as supporters pledged money for their efforts. During that week we had many fun reading activities, even a special reader, Clare Daher (a retired teacher and Thadeus' Grandma) came in character as Babushka to read Thunder Cake. She also brought in Thunder Cake for the students to try and a recipe to take home. Our last fundraiser for this school year with the Egg Roll Lady was a success once again.

We can hardly believe the end of the school year is so close! The students have been learning about the environment and the season of summer as well as have May Fun Days that include Hat Day, Play-Doh Day, Sports Day, and Water Day (a favorite). The celebration of growth ceremonies will be held on May 23rd and May 24th at 10am. This is a time to celebrate the children and all their wonderful accomplishments and growth! During this time the art show will be held, where students will display two of their art pieces for families and friends to view during the ceremony. We are so proud of the kids, all their efforts and growth!

Registration for the 2024/2025 school year is still open. We have a few openings in the "Ducks" two-day class and the "Turtles" 4/5-day class. The "Frogs" three-day class is full and a waitlist has been started.

Lastly, I would like to mention it is Jen's last month of teaching here at Charlton Preschool. She has provided the students and their families with many wonderful teachings, activities and support. She is a very valued member at Charlton Preschool and will be greatly missed.

We look forward to our summer break, and are excited about what lies ahead for Charlton Preschool in the fall as we continue to provide educational opportunities for the children of our community.

Kelly Wisniewski, Preschool
Administrator

You can continue to support Charlton Preschool, a ministry of Charlton Church, 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 FAMILY NEWS

A note from Kathy Hoover:

1 John 5:14-15 tells us, *“And we are sure of this, that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we really know he is listening, when we talk to him and make our requests, then we can be sure that he will answer us.”*

I have always believed deeply that God hears our prayers, and prayers are answered. Many times over the last eighteen months I have requested prayer for my neighbors infant son, Theo. Not only from our congregation, but the other neighbors in the development, my friends and my family. The following is an update from his mother to verify, Prayers are Answered! Theo's family is deeply appreciative of the prayer support he's received that has helped him accomplish how far he has come. Please keep the prayers coming!

Theo is now 18 months old, with the last 6 being at home (thank God!), and improving every day! We could see a huge difference in his development now being home and that's amazing. 7 out of 17 medications were already discontinued! He also started doing stints off the ventilator twice a day, with a 30 minute increase per session per week. We just started today with 2 sessions of 4 hours and he is doing great. He's seating up by himself now, and doing way better holding his body up without any support for several seconds. He has 4 therapists from Early Intervention, each one once a week, plus physical therapy as outpatient in Hershey. This amazing team not only helps him meet those important baby milestones, but also helps me, as a mom, guiding me through all the hard work that I keep doing the rest of the week. Of course God is the reason why Theo is with us, at home, and doing so well. He's a miracle, for sure! But without every single person who prayed for him, and still prays, we are confident the path would have been more difficult, so we thank everyone and pray that all the good they asked for, it's received back in return! Amen!

Dear Friends,

Your support is empowering change in our community! At a time when inflation is threatening a growing number of households, your generous donation of \$755 helps the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to fight back against food insecurity. You are making a difference!

Yours in Service, Joe Arthur, CEO

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent contribution of \$814 to Bethesda Mission. Through your generosity, you have tangibly impacted men, women, and children in need at our shelters, in our community and throughout the region. We can not thank you enough for contributing so generously to this ministry.

Blessings, Scott Dunwoody, Executive Director



WELCOME

We welcome **Stan and Karen Zellers**, who joined our church family through transfer on April 24, 2024.

CHARLTON CHURCH

A United Methodist Community

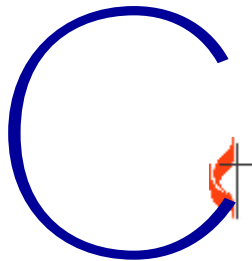
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**Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
for the Transformation of the World**

5920 Jonestown Road
Harrisburg, PA 17112

www.CharltonChurch.org



717.545.2000

office@charltonchurch.org

Office Hours are 10AM to 2PM
Monday-Thursday, Closed Fridays

Rev. Miguel Arenas

Pastor

pastormiguel@charltonchurch.org

Cell: 717-250-1012

Charles J. Kaufmann

Director of Worship and Administration

chuck@charltonchurch.org

Cell: 717-343-7975

Marianne Eagle

Office Administrator

office@charltonchurch.org

Cell: 717-329-6300

Sarah Tingley

Student Ministries Coordinator

sarah@charltonchurch.org

Cell: 610-585-7022

Sommer Garber-Storm

Custodian

Debra Hughes

Childcare Attendant

Wendy Criste

Childcare Attendant

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

Martha Brown, Al Goss, Mark Holmgren, Sue Kelly, Kay Lenge, Carrie Livingston, Mark Malone, Marjorie Martin, Rick Pritchard, Tom Schreiber (chair), Heidi Stalonis, 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