



The Courier

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2020

Court Street United Methodist

COVID-19 from a Biblical Perspective

As a pastor, I have had many come to me with concerns about how COVID-19 can and should be approached. In addition, I have received numerous suggestions from various ministry, medical and governmental sources offering guidelines to adapt what eventually may bring a resolve to this tragic worldwide situation. I thank God for those in the medical science field who are searching for a solution to COVID-19. I am also grateful for political leaders who are attempting to provide direction that will keep the general citizenry informed, calm and peaceful. But I realize that those of us who are in pastoral ministry have a great responsibility before God to provide the spiritual leadership necessary to guide America through this tragic circumstance. Certainly, there is no lack of secular advice being given as to how to approach COVID-19. But I believe the ultimate approach should be from the biblical perspective that presents God's way of dealing with this issue. One passage of Scripture to consider is Psalm 91, which teaches how God takes care of his own. To summarize the psalm, we are told that those who belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ dwell in the inner sanctum of the presence of God, who protects them as a mother bird cares for her young under her wings. The promise is that no evil shall befall them because God will keep them in all of their ways. Through God's grace, love and mercy, He will "set them on high" and show them his salvation that involves the deliverance through whatever may come their way. This applies to COVID-19 and all other trials of life. Realizing God's promise to provide for his own as taught in Psalm 91, and then trusting God to keep his Word, as he always does, will erase the greatest of all fear, anxiety and panic in the hearts of the deeply concerned. So how does one get to the place of trusting God and seeing his provision? Perhaps remembering the following facts about God will help.

- God is in control. So depend upon him to do what is right.
- God has a purpose. So watch for him to work.
- God will provide. So trust in him to deliver.
- God has a mission. So declare his truth abroad.
- God has a remedy. So praise him for what he will do.

Even though there is a lot of advice being given in the world as to how to approach COVID-19, the sooner one focuses on who God is, what God expects and how God works, and then is convinced of the fact that God causes, allows and directs all things according to his sovereign plan, the more one will experience the strength, hope, peace, comfort and confidence that only God can provide.

~ Pastor Bill Burleigh

CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON GOD AND NOT THE CIRCUMSTANCES



Musical Musings

QUARANTINE EDITION

Restoring Congregational Song: John Wesley's Directions for Singing for Today

Enjoy this edited article written by Randall McElwain in May. The full article can be read at:

<https://holyjoys.org/restoring-congregational-song-john-wesleys-directions-for-singing-for-today/>

During an evangelistic campaign in New York, the boat on which Phoebe Palmer was traveling began to sink. When she and her companions broke into song, a fellow passenger exclaimed, "There are Methodists here!" The "people called Methodists" have always been famous for their singing, particularly congregational singing.

Because singing was so important in Methodist worship, John Wesley published "Directions for Singing" to encourage singing that "may be the more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others." He understood that not only *what* we sing but *how* we sing is important and was concerned that this important element of corporate worship would not be disregarded or approached lightly, as was often the case in churches of his time. Sadly, many churches today suffer from the same careless congregational singing that troubled Wesley. In some churches, congregational singing has all but been replaced by choirs or praise teams, to their detriment. How then can this problem be addressed? Perhaps the same, simple "Directions for Singing" Wesley gave to Methodists in the 18th century can help us reinvigorate congregational song today.

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

Because most 18th century worshipers learned songs by rote, Wesley limited the repertoire of tunes to a relatively small body. Each tune served several hymns. Today, this instruction highlights the importance of building a familiar hymn repertoire through frequent repetition. If we want people to sing, we must sing songs they know. This is not a plea to sing only old songs. We need both new and old. We should encourage songwriters to proclaim holiness in the musical language of today, while we also preserve the hymns of our heritage. Worship leaders can plan medleys combining the best of the old with the best of the new, and thus help our people to learn the new while preserving the old.

2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them...

Because Wesley understood that laymen learn their doctrine from hymns, he was careful to protect against unauthorized changes. If worshipers sang wrong doctrine, they could very well soon believe wrong doctrine. We should have the same care today for preserving the truth of our hymns. While we may need to update the language of an old hymn, the theologically sound message must be carefully preserved.

3. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a single degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

Anglican music belonged to the choir and organist; there was little room for congregational participation. Rather than leading the congregation in song, the choir performed for the congregation. The same problem soon developed in Methodist societies. Visiting the church at Neath, Wesley complained that "twelve or fourteen persons kept it [the singing] to themselves and quite shut out the congregation." Like Luther before him, Wesley wanted to return song to the people.

4. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sang the songs of Satan.

John Wesley agreed with Isaac Watts, "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God, but children of the heavenly King may speak their joys abroad." Children of the heavenly King should express our Christian joy in enthusiastic singing. Wesley and Watts believed that every believer should sing joyfully "and with good courage." Congregational singing is often a reasonable barometer for the enthusiasm of the church for worship. Enthusiastic singing in itself does not prove spiritual life, but congregations that sing "as if they were half dead" very often are, in fact, half dead.

5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound. “Sing modestly” serves as a balance to the previous direction, “Sing lustily.” Worshipers should sing “with good courage” but should also “unite [their] voices together.” *Congregational singing should reflect the unity of the church. When the church sings, it sings as one body.*

6. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow...

Because congregational singing expresses the church’s unity, Wesley encouraged singers to give attention both to unity of sound (Direction V) and to unity of tempo (Direction VI). When the church is singing “Arise My Soul Arise” slower than I like it, I must slow down. When they are singing “I Want a Principle Within” faster than I like it, I must speed up. The give and take of congregational singing reflects the mutual submission that marks a unified church.

7. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing... In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Wesley’s instruction, “sing spiritually,” is the cornerstone of congregational singing. Wesleyans have long associated congregational singing with true spirituality. Nineteenth-century Methodists in New York cited a decline in congregational singing as evidence of a loss of spiritual fervor in their region. They believed that a church that does not “sing spiritually” has lost its revival spirit.

Augustine confessed that he was sometimes tempted to pay more attention to the beauty of the singing than to the truth of the song that was sung. Wesley shared Augustine’s fear that worshipers might give more attention to the beauty of a song than to its content. Wesley valued beautiful singing, but this beauty was not an end in itself. Hymn singing is a spiritual, not merely aesthetic, exercise.

Since singing is a spiritual exercise, we should often ask, “Is what I am singing true? Is what I am singing true *in my own life?*” If it is not true, I should stop singing it! If it is true in principle, but not true in my own life, I should align my life with the truth I am singing. As Wesleyan people, we should continue to see congregational singing as a spiritual exercise. When we sing songs that teach sound doctrine, encourage spiritual growth, and testify to genuine spiritual experience, congregational singing can become a means of grace for the church. Let onlookers recognize us by our song, “There are Methodists here!”



Lunch at Westminster

Lunch with members living at Westminster-Canterbury will resume soon.

In the meantime, reach out to our lunch buddies with a phone call or email to let them know you miss them and are thinking of them.



OCTOBER’S ADULT BIBLE STUDY CLASS

CONTINUE TO READ LESSONS WEEKLY

October 4: “Our Mysterious but Approachable God”

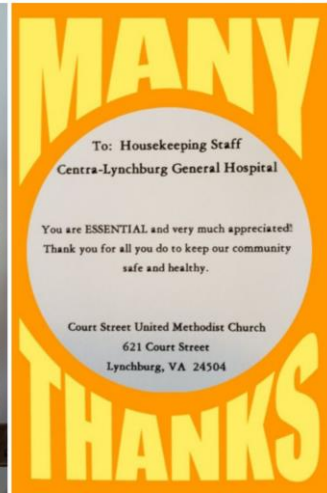
October 11: “Choose Today”

October 18: “Food for Our Souls”

October 25: “One With Christ and One Another”

“VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL” is now available on our [WEBSITE](#)

BASKETS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS



THE LYNCHBURG GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING STAFF was pleasantly surprised when Court Street dropped off a goodie basket and a card that said “*You are Essential and very much appreciated. Thank you for all you do to keep our community safe and healthy*”. After enjoying the basket of snacks, they called the church office and wanted to let everyone know how grateful they were for the treats and the fact someone was thinking of them.

Baskets were also delivered to the staff at R.S. Payne and the Firefighters at station 1. A big **THANK YOU** to the members who took on this project.



PARKVIEW CAFÉ SENDS THEIR THANKS:

Dear Court Street Members,

Thank you so much for your generous donation to the Parkview Café. Because of your donation we will be able to send several hundred hot meals home in our to-go dinners. The neighbors are so grateful to be able to come and get a hot meal. They are usually waiting in line when we open the doors on Wednesday nights.

I hope we will see you at the Mission after the Covid. Blessings to each of you! The way you serve others makes such a difference, and you are appreciated so much!

Faithfully,

Justine Kiger, Parkview Café Director



Birthdays and Anniversaries

| October Birthdays | October Anniversaries | November Birthdays |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Jeb Haley October 01 |  | Gina Wright November 01 |
| Charles Sweeney October 05 | | Chiswell Logan November 06 |
| GiGi Sweeney October 05 | | Landen Larkin November 10 |
| Addison Johnson October 08 | | Phyllis Coleman November 11 |
| Libba McCraw October 09 | | Megan Straw November 12 |
| Caroline McCraw October 09 | | Nada Sweeney November 12 |
| Pat Haley October 10 | | Cornell Thompson November 18 |
| Karen Hudnall October 13 | | Jodi Center November 19 |
| Susan Leazer October 16 | | Julia McConnell November 21 |
| Irby Hudson October 22 | | |
| Charles Thaxton October 22 | | |
| Robin Hudson October 23 | | |
| Anne Quillian October 28 | | |
| Karl Speer October 29 | | |

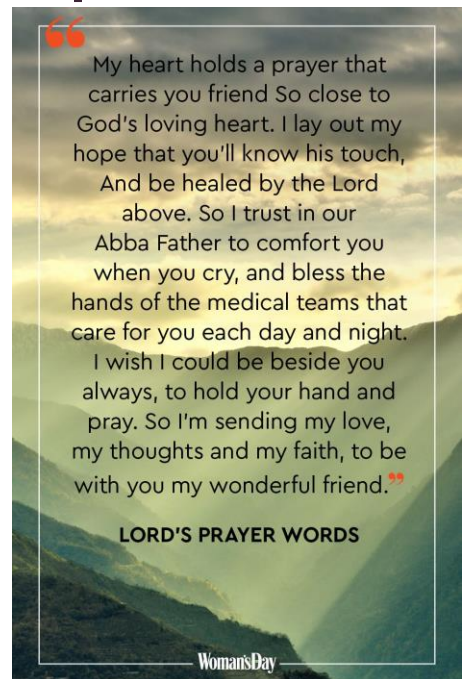
PRAYER CONCERNS

All Men and Women serving in the Military

- Travis Dean Burleigh – 7425 Snowy Owl St., N. Las Vegas, NV 89084
son of Shelley and Rev. Bill Burleigh

SICK (Church members*)

- *Harriette Cash – 252 Lynwood Drive, Madison Heights, VA 24572
- *Noel Draper - 501 VES Road Drinkard 619, Lynchburg, VA 24503
- Susan Dwyer – sister of Rev. Bill Burleigh
- *Christopher Lilly – 1705 Rivermont Ave. Apt 8, Lynchburg, VA 24503
- *Chis Logan - 5325 Hickory Hill Drive, Lynchburg, VA 24503
- *Phil Ripley – 60 Jill Alison Circle, Ormond Beach, FL 32176
- *Alicia Speer – 1815 Rivermont Ave #68, Lynchburg, VA 24503
- *Robert Tyree – 1404 Brookville Lane, Lynchburg, VA 24502
son of *Mary Tyree, brother of *Debbie Chaffin
- *Church members*



~ We send our love and sympathy to Anne Langley and family in the passing of her husband, Bruton on Wednesday September 2nd.

Gifts to the church

To the General Fund in Memory of:

Eleanor Pillow by:
Anne Langley, Anne McDaniel

Patsy Cundiff by:
Anne McDaniel

Elaine St. Vincent by:
Kathy Mason

Bruton Langley by:
Bill Puckett

Update on Capital Campaign:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Campaign Goal | \$300,000 |
| Promised as of 9/30/20 | \$248,981 |
| Balance needed to reach goal | \$51,019 |
| Received to Date | \$210,516 |
| Received since last update | \$150.00 |
| Elevator fund | \$10,328 |

Court Street UMC
621 Court Street
Lynchburg Va. 24504



In worship, praise and ministry, we respond to God's call by reaching out to all people with light, hope, and a vision of God's love.

COURT STREET UMC WEBSITE: www.courtstreetmethodist.com

EMAIL: 621courtstumc@gmail.com

PHONE: 434-845-3427

Please contact the church office at:

621courtstumc@gmail.com or (434) 845-3427 on or before Wednesdays to have events and notices posted
on the church website.

