

Order of Worship
May 5, 2024 – 6th Sunday of Easter

Announcements and Prelude

Call to Worship – Matthew 4:18-22, Calling the First Disciples

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ *Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

Hymn *I Need Thee Every Hour* #397

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Old Testament Scripture Reading

Reading Through the Bible in 2024!

Search the Scriptures – Week 18, Proverbs - Song

Sunday – Proverbs 1, Introduction to Proverbs

Monday – Proverbs 3, Benefits of Wisdom

Tuesday – Proverbs 9, Wisdom and Folly

Wednesday – Ecclesiastes 1 & 2, Life Seems Meaningless

Thursday – Ecclesiastes 3-5, God Gives Life Meaning

Friday – Song of Songs 1 & 2, My Lover is Mine

Our Favorite Hymns *Take Time to Be Holy* #395

Gloria Patri [#70] and **Apostles’ Creed** [#881]

Offering & Doxology – #95

Scripture Reading – John 21:15-24, Jesus Reinstates Peter

¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

¹⁶ Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

²⁰ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

²² Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” ²³ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

²⁴ This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

Sermon

Pastor Paul

May 5, 2024
6th Sunday of Easter

A Priceless Conversation:
Spotlight on Peter & Jesus

*Then Jesus said to Peter,
“Follow Me!”
John 21:19*

Hymn

O Jesus, I Have Promised

#396

Benediction

General Conference Report

Please See Message from African Delegates [Insert]

Midweek Bible Study & Prayer

10 am Wednesday at Poplar Valley

Finishing The Pilgrim’s Progress by John Bunyan
Starting Sing to the Lord: Music in the Bible
Today in the Word, May 2024

Stroudsburg Soup Kitchen

2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 12 at Stroudsburg UMC

The Stroudsburg Soup Kitchen has been serving about 85 people each Sunday, and has not been able to line up anyone for May 12, Mother’s Day. I agreed to take it on, and would welcome anyone from Poplar Valley & Cherry Valley to help with preparation, desserts, serving, and cleanup. We’ll be serving open face turkey sandwiches with gravy, corn and dessert. Please let me know if you would like to help. Thanks! Pastor Paul

The meal is served at 2:00 p.m., so we will be at Stroudsburg UMC at 12:30 p.m. to set up. We’ll be cooking and carving the turkeys and wrapping up preparation at Cherry Valley on Saturday, May 11 at about 2:30 – 3:00 p.m., if you’d like to help at that time.



*Jesus said to Simon Peter,
“Simon son of John, do you love me?”*

Then he said to him, “Follow Me!”

John 21:15, 19

Poplar Valley United Methodist Church

poplarvalleyumc.info

Cherry Valley United Methodist Church

cherryvalleyumc.info

I'd like you to be aware of the *Message from African Delegates* that was presented outside the Charlotte Convention Center yesterday afternoon [May 2, 2024]. There was singing, praying, and a public reading of their statement.

Here is what African delegates want the United Methodist Church, the people of Africa, and the rest of the world to know:

We speak as Africans, representing the majority of African delegates and, we believe, the vast majority of United Methodists in the thirty-five annual conferences in Africa.

We have loved The United Methodist Church. We have been grateful for The United Methodist Church. We have joyfully served The United Methodist Church. But now our hearts are troubled.

The postponed 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church has changed the United Methodist definition of marriage - not because the Bible has changed. But because western culture has changed. At this Conference The United Methodist Church has chosen to follow what pleases man instead of what pleases God.

Many African delegates are not here. They desired to be present and had planned to attend. But they were not invited by the Commission on General Conference in time to receive their visas. Over 70 of us from Africa are not present. That is roughly 25% of our delegates. Ten months ago we began sending letters and emails and making phone calls, alerting

the Commission on General Conference and some of our bishops that there was a problem. Many of these communications never received a single response. It felt as if we were not valued or wanted.



At a past General Conference, we Africans were told that we spoke too loudly and that we should close our mouths. After another General Conference a bishop said we Africans need to grow up and think for ourselves. At this conference many of us were not even provided with the documents we needed to be present.

One mainstream UMC leader wrote that The United Methodist Church should be willing to lose Africa to fulfill its progressive agenda. It is hard for us to believe we are valued as true brothers and sisters

within The United Methodist Church. It is difficult to trust that we are seen as equal partners.

The United Methodist Church has changed the definition of marriage. It now defines marriage differently from what God created it to be in the beginning (Genesis 2:18, 23-25). It has changed the definition of marriage from how Jesus described it in Matthew 19 as one man and one woman.

In Africa we do not believe we know better than Jesus. We do not believe we know better than God. We do not believe we know better than the Bible.

We must now return to Africa and tell our people that The General Conference did not listen to us, does not value us as partners, and is willing to lose us to pursue its liberal western agenda.

In his sermon to this General Conference, a UM bishop stated that if we cannot get on the UMC train and embrace its destination, we should leave. But what do we do when the train has run over us and left our hearts bleeding with sorrow and pain?

We want the UMC to hear. We want our people in Africa to hear. We want the world to hear. We do not accept a change in the definition of marriage, and we will never accept marriage as anything other than one man and one woman, no matter what the *Book of Discipline* says. We are devastated now to be part of a denomination that officially contradicts the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexual morality. We return to Africa with important decisions to make regarding the future.

Still, we go home full of hope, confident in Jesus, standing on the word of God, and determined to contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. We return to Africa where the church is growing, nonbelievers are coming to faith and disciples are being made for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. To God be the glory! Amen!

Signatories:

Rev. Dr. Jerry P. Kulah, Head of Delegation,
Liberia Annual Conference

Mr. Prosperous Tunda, Delegate,
East Congo Annual Conference

Rev. Dr. Danjuma Judi, Delegate,
Nigeria Annual Conference

Dr. Yeabu Kamara, Delegate,
Sierra Leone Annual Conference

Mr. Ginford Dzimati, Delegate,
Zimbabwe Annual Conference

Important Decisions Yet to Come

Important decisions have been made by The United Methodist General Conference. And in response, as our African sisters and brothers have indicated, United Methodists "back home" have important decisions to make about their future with the UMC.

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