

# New Beginnings

Then the crowd asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"  
Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."  
John 6:28-29 N.I.V.

Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish

May 2017



## Pastor's Corner

Pastor Mel Nielsen  
pastormel1@hotmail.com  
cell: 1-815-922-9161

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Matthew 5:17-20 (N.I.V.)

After completing the recent Bible study, I was reminded of how many faithful and gifted people we have in this parish. I am speaking to those people who have shared in the many Bible Studies I have offered over the years. I need your help in two ways.

The first is your active nurturing within the church. This is not only the responsibility of the pastor, God has gifted others to do this work of teaching and instructing. I am praying now that God will call one of you to be the leader of a small group this year. I can help you find curriculum that helps you with preparation and your level of teaching ability. Our denomination was built on the strength of lay lead small groups and Bible studies.

Personally, I have heard the call to form a beginners Bible Study for many in this parish and community. There is more information on the back page of this newsletter. The second way I need your help is to begin inviting those who feel their Bible knowledge is lacking.

I have heard the following statement, as many of

you have, "*I can't go to a Bible Study, I don't know as much as the other people, and I don't want to be singled out as a dummy*" Not too many students are equipped to teach on day one, there must be a starting point. Everyone who knows anything about the Bible started at point zero. Meaning you knew about zero on day one.

The Bible can be very intimidating for many. It is not just another book, it contains unfamiliar imagery with the modern world, it uses language that is uncommon, it speaks of miracles which many cannot equate their daily lives with. It changes style quickly from historical narrative to poetry to prophecy. Achieving Biblical knowledge can seem to be a daunting task, but it is not impossible. Look where you are today!

The second way you can help me is to get this information to those who need to hear it. Share the advertisement with someone who could benefit from this small group study. You know your neighbors and family better than I do, I imagine you just had a name pop into your head. I need for you to invite that person to come.

I promise no tests, no financial cost, no being called on to answer complex theological questions! I also promise to work slowly and deliberately to make sure the information is easy to understand and uncomplicated. My hope is that in just a few weeks of class the Bible will not seem so challenging or difficult to understand. My hope is that this class will give people confidence to sign up for more Bible studies in the future. My hope is to help people better understand the concepts spoken from the pulpit. My hope is that people will have their lives enriched by the teachings of the ancient prophets all the way to Jesus, our Messiah.

There should be no reason for you to fear teaching a small group. There should be no reason to fear this course. There is no reason to fear inviting someone to join. God be with you!

-Pastor Mel

## *Parish NOW Committee Report*

The Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish's NOW Committee met on Tues., Apr. 11 at 7 p.m. in the Bonfield Evangelical Upper Room. President, Joyce Cochran, opened with prayer and after minutes were read and approved the group got down to old business.

They reviewed the recent Lenten services which focused on sharing around the table. Many good comments were made about the structure of the services and having the meal worked in between the messages. The group also mentioned the Confirmation and Baptism services which were held at all the churches on Sun., Apr. 9. Pastor Mel commented that, *"It was a busy day but also joy filled and exciting."*

Other old business was discussing Holy Week services which Grand Prairie UMC will be hosting. Pastor Mel gave a report on the progress being made for the preparation for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Sunrise services. Vacation Bible School was the next topic. Jenny and Joyce Cochran reported that VBS will be held July 10-14, 6-8:15 p.m. at The Bonfield Evangelical Church.

The parish 4th of July Float is being planned and those interested in participating in the planning and building of the float are to watch the bulletin for upcoming meeting dates which are forthcoming.

Pastor Mel had three items for new business. The first was a reminder of The Rev. Ed Weston's visit on Sat., May 20 & Sun., May 21. Weston will be speaking to a smaller group on Sat., in the Upper Room, 6 p.m., at Bonfield Evangelical about stewardship and financial planning for churches and individuals. On Sun., Weston will be speaking about the Pastor's Aid Society and Benefit Fund which helps offset the cost many clergy and spouses incur at the time of retirement. Many cannot afford housing and medical care.

His second item was how to spend the remaining funds left over from the Homecoming services. Funds were collected in a variety of ways to help pay for the cost of speakers and singers. A motion was made and seconded that a plan should be taken to the Ad Board about using those funds to hire entertainment for the upcoming Thanksgiving services. A few individual

## *Bonfield Evangelical NOW Committee Report*

The Bonfield Evangelical NOW Committee met on Tues., Apr. 11 at 6 p.m. in the Upper Room of the Evan church. As a larger group they discussed Bishop Beard's service. Each part of the committee then gave reports. Nurture Committee reported first with Angie Kirk giving a detailed account of plans they are looking into.

They are looking into ways to help make the Salvation Army barrel more noticeable and help members understand the constant need of placing food in that barrel. Also discussed was updating the children's bags which are given to children during the service; working with the established greeting team on planning and function. The church positions list has been updated and is near completion. It will be posted when the work is done. Pastor Mel has asked that gifts for Mother's Day, Father's Day and other holidays be suspended and instead that money be given to a mission like the Baby Fold. He noted that those in the church have no real need compared to the suffering of others. Kirk also mentioned a joint service in the park for all three congregations, she was asked to present her idea to the full NOW Committee.

Pastor Mel asked the Nurture Committee to begin planning for family movie nights in the Upper Room. He noted that since there is a new flat screen T.V. with a DVD player and a microwave for popping corn that those be put to use in nurturing the whole parish. The committee will look into the Parish's CVLI license to see which movies are available for public viewing. Dates and times will be forthcoming.

The Outreach Committee reported next. Donna Diefenbach gave a report of their work. They have been working on the possibility of delivering cookies or other treats to shut-ins. A date of May 1 was used as an example of a good day to deliver outreach to members who can no longer make it to church. They also spoke about a Church Homecoming/Anniversary next year where all past members are invited back for a special day of worship and fellowship. The Outreach also mentioned putting a suggestion box somewhere in the church for members to give their ideas.

## *Youth Group Leads Sunrise Service At Grand Prairie UMC*

The Bonfield/Grand Prairie Youth Group led the 6 a.m. Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 16, 2017. They were under the leadership of Parish Youth Director, Jennifer Druse, with help from Trevor Workman. Each member spoke about what the crucifixion and resurrection personally means to them.



Photo by Debbie Nielsen

**Pictured front row, L-R, are: Isabelle Lowey, Trevor Workman, Jennifer Druse and Becca Coffman. Back row, L-R, are: Kiley Lockwood, Kamden Lockwood, Nikki Meyer, Gretchen Brinkman and Justin Ruckman.**

## *Fellowship Breakfast*

The next Fellowship Breakfast has been scheduled for Tue., May 2, 2017, 8:30 at IHOP in Bourbonnais. Come enjoy a great breakfast and even better fellowship with other church members and friends. This is a good way to get to know other people who worship God in the Bonfield area. You do not need to be a member to attend. Everyone is invited.

## *Thank You*

Dear Pastor Nielsen and friends at Bonfield UMC.

Thank you so much for your thoughtful and gracious gift to me of buttons. They are beautiful! And how kind of you.

I am sorry I was unable to be with you to celebrate your dedication. I look forward to the time I can visit your church.

Sincerely  
Mrs. Melissa Beard  
(Bishop Beard's wife)

## *Upcoming Worship Schedule*

*The following is a tentative schedule for May 2017 worship.*

**(Readings & message may change without notice.)**

### **May 7**

Ascension Sunday  
"Is God Enough?"  
Altar Color - White  
OT: None  
NT: 1 Peter 2:19-25  
Gospel: John 10:1-10

### **May 14**

5th Sunday of Easter  
"Out of the Darkness"  
Altar Color - White  
OT: None  
NT: 1 Peter 2:2-10  
Gospel: John 14:1-14

### **May 21**

Guest Speaker Ed Weston  
Preacher's Aid Society and Benefit Fund  
Altar Color - White  
OT: TBA  
NT: TBA  
Gospel: TBA

### **May 28**

7th Sunday of Easter  
Memorial Day Sunday  
"The New Commandments"  
Altar Color - White  
OT: None  
NT: Acts 1:6-14  
Gospel: John 17:1-11

### **June 4**

Pentecost  
"Your Personal Spirit"  
Altar Color - Red  
OT: None  
NT: 1 Corinthians 12:3-13  
Gospel: John 7:37-39



# There is POWER in PRAYER

Pastor Mel invites you to join in praying for the following names and causes.

## **Friends and Family Close to Home**

### Nursing Home

Heritage Village..... Vi Morse

Manteno Veterans..... Bob Grob, Byron Warren

### Assisted Living

Butterfield..... Bernice Schultz, Mel Brinkman family

Harvest View..... Warren Cochran, Roscella Piper,  
Randy Riegel

River North..... Ruth Ohrt

Westwood Oaks..... Fostine Schwark, Don Mau

At Home..... Jan May, Jackie Wagner

## **From Our Church Bulletin**

Adams Family, Kurt Boesen, Charles Brinkman, Jr., Shirley Brunner, Dennis Bushman, Joann Coffman, Tyler Coffman, Sue Coons, Ron Cordes, Jean Dunn, Dennis Hertz, Butch Lambert, Janice Logsdon, Allen Messer, Sheila Neuby, Dorene O'Connor, Merle Penrod, Kevin Reiniche, Rob Reiniche, Randy Riegel, Richard Wildman, Pam Wilking, James Vilt., Sr.

## **Compassion International Kids**

Latif Korogo..... Burkina Faso

Maria Clara Maciel Da Silva "Clara"..... Brazil

Dayava Sanchez..... Columbia

Witney Juarez..... Guatemala

Shan Toppo..... India

Junior Okwii Barasa ..... Kenya

Genesi Marisol Martinez Vasquez..... Honduras

Samuel Juda Lopez Miranda..... Mexico

Mohini Ahirwar..... India

Cinthia Yolany Carranza Aguila..... Honduras

Sonaton Soren..... Bangladesh

Yeferson David Ortiz Cortez..... Colombia

Nevada Eric..... Rwanda

Anielka Carolina Garcia Roque..... Nicaragua

Schekinah Jean Louis..... Haiti

Salome Vicente Melo..... Mexico

Benjamin Sewu..... Ghana

Lucky Hubiagbe..... Ghana

Rebeca Callapa..... Bolivia

## **Other requests**

Bishop Frank Beard, D.S. Leah Pogemiller, Nueva Jerusalem, Inner City Violence, State Budget, President Trump and his new cabinet, First Responders, Missionaries, Military.

## *Carol Erazmus Completes Basic Lay Servant Training*

Carol Erazmus, of the Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church has graduated from the Basic Lay Servant Course. She attended course at Bradley Wesley under the direction of District Superintendent, Leah Pogemiller and District Lay Leader, Terry Ralston. She was one of 13 Lay Servants to complete the basic course for 2017.



Photo by Debbie Nielsen

**Carol Erazmus**

## *Book Club News*

The Book Club has scheduled it's next meeting for Tues., May 16, 6:30 p.m. at the Parsonage, 225 Country Lane, Bonfield.

The new book is Eve by William P. Young. Reserve your copy now through your local library or purchase a copy through your favorite bookstore. If you need help acquiring the book, please contact Debbie Nielsen, 309-397-9121.

Attendees are to read the book and then come to the meeting ready to share in thoughtful discussion about the topic and enjoy fellowship and treats.

## *Sunshine Circle Report*

Eight ladies of the Sunshine Circle met in the Upper Room of Bonfield Evangelical UMC, Apr., 20. President Donna Diefenbach opened with prayer. Jan Green was hostess and presented the lesson on stress. Her decorations and theme were "Don't worry, be happy". She read scripture from John 14 and Matthew 25. She discussed ways to recognize stress. She closed with prayer and played the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy".

Business meeting followed. Roll call was answered by naming one thing that made you happy today. Easter lilies were given to Jan May and Darlene Charter. Plans are in the making for the annual garage and bake sale on June 2 & 3rd. Breakfast and lunch menus will remain the same as last year. Items for the garage sale may be brought to the church after May 14. As you do your spring cleaning, bring those unwanted items for the sale. We are looking for baked goods for the bake sale as well.

Anyone who wishes to help in any way with the sale should call Donna Diefenbach 815-932-6108 or Ardis Messer 815-932-0180. More details will be available next month. A decision was made to give \$150.00 to the youth for their mission trip. Meeting was adjourned.

Green gave each lady a beautiful sack to fill and give to a shut-in or anyone they feel needs it for May day. Refreshments were served and each member received a gift.

## **HELP WANTED**

### **Garage Sale & Bake Sale**

**Bonfield Evangelical UMC**

**343 E. Smith Street, Bonfield**

The Evan UMW and Sunshine Circle are seeking good used items for the Rummage Sale on June 2 & 3. They are also requesting donations of baked goods for the bake sale.

**You may begin dropping of items for the garage sale at the church after May 14**

### **MENU:**

*Breakfast* - Biscuits & Gravy, Cinnamon Rolls, Breakfast Surprise, Coffee, Milk & OJ.

*Lunch* - Walking Tacos, Pork Burgers, Hot Dogs, Chips, Soda & Water

# **Spaghetti Supper**



**Fundraiser for  
Youth Mission Trip**

**Sun., June 4**

**Bonfield Evangelical  
Fellowship Hall**

**4-7 p.m.**

**The Bonfield Youth Group is hosting a  
Spaghetti Supper to support their trip to  
Rockford Urban Ministries in late June.**

**\$8-Adults;**

**\$5-8 years old & under**

## *May Birthdays*

May 1.....Craig Brinkman  
 May 3.....Michelle Kuipers  
                     Cheryl Bauer  
 May 4.....Nancy Wagner  
                     Jennifer Pangle  
                     Sharlene Nottke  
                     Jennifer (Pangle) Yahyapour  
 May 5.....Vi Morse  
                     Victoria (Skinner) Rice  
 May 6.....Dawson Pastorel  
                     Cynthia (Morse) Clemans  
                     Laine Elizabeth Gagnon  
                     Erika Svenkeson  
 May 7.....Jamie (Fecke) Sikes  
                     Kerri (Scholl) Robinson  
 May 8.....Jackie (Hertz) Wagner  
                     Harold Pfeiffer  
 May 9.....Jennifer (Trumble) Werner  
                     Aiden Shannon  
 May 10.....Mary (Kirchner) Schroder  
 May 11.....Traci Davis  
                     Jonah Vaughn  
 May 12.....Cade Fecke  
                     Delores Ohrt  
 May 13.....Meagan Peters  
                     Christopher Wells  
                     Paiton Cordes  
                     Sandy Jackson  
 May 14.....Myron Riegel  
                     Mark Adams  
                     Gwendolyn Meyer  
                     Allen Pfeiffer  
                     Kim (Sinks) Meztka  
 May 15.....Zoe Tapp  
                     Marty Alrandi  
                     Kimberly Metzka  
 May 16.....Sandra (Rice) LaMore  
                     Samuel Shimmin  
                     Kenny Mitchell  
 May 17.....Aimee (Meyer) Simbeck  
                     Denise (St. Germaine) Schlenz  
 May 19.....Joe Ohrt  
                     Dennis Hertz  
                     Martha (Scott) Bouk  
 May 20.....Johnny A. Schultz  
                     Katherine (Buckman) Mecklenburg  
 May 21.....Garret Kohl  
                     Mary Ann (Foltz) Jensen

                    Heather (Kirchner) Thurston  
 May 22.....Jeremy Bauer  
                     Roan Shannon  
                     Jason Sauer  
                     Walter Pieszka  
                     Gretchen Brinkman  
                     Danielle (Frye) Dahn  
 May 24.....Angela (Kuipers) Kohl  
                     Aidan Gagnon  
                     Rodney Graf  
                     Kristina (Eggenberger) Brunner  
 May 25.....Ryan Howard  
 May 27.....Larry Wood  
                     Esther (Riegel) Kirchner  
                     Ruth (Wildman) Kingsland  
 May 28.....Scott Vaughn  
                     Carol (Ziemer) Buente  
 May 29.....Brian Norton  
                     Jeffrey Morse  
                     Meri Bauer  
                     Kelly (Donovan) Buente  
 May 30.....Clair Dau  
 May 31.....Shila Kingsland  
                     Eric Dahn  
                     Joshua Friese

Please notify the church office of any names and birthdays which need to be added, removed or corrected. Office number 1-815-802-9805.

## *April Memory Verse*

For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.  
 Lamentations 3:22-23

## *Thank You*

I would like to thank all my family, friends and church family for all the prayers, cards and visits during my recent surgery and recovery.  
 Thank you, Bart Durbin

## Mar. 2017 Attendance

	<u>2/5</u>	<u>2/12</u>	<u>2/19</u>	<u>2/26</u>
Evangelical	44	30	36	46
First	13	12	17	15
Grand Prairie	38	30	45	50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>111</b>

# M A Y 2 0 1 7

	<b>Mon., May 1</b>	<b>Tue., May 2</b>	<b>Wed., May 3</b>	<b>Thurs., May 4</b>	<b>Fri., May 5</b>	<b>Sat., May 6</b>
	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m.	I-HOP Fellowship Breakfast 8:30 a.m. Prayer Shawl @ First Church, 7 p.m.	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m. MAG Meeting at Streater UMC 10 a.m.	Evan UMW Breakfast @ Evan Upper Room 9a.m.		Charge Conference Online Training @ Bourbonnais Grace 10 a.m.
<b>Sun., May 7</b>	<b>Mon., May 8</b>	<b>Tue., May 9</b>	<b>Wed., May 10</b>	<b>Thurs., May 11</b>	<b>Fri., May 12</b>	<b>Sat., May 13</b>
	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m.	Ad Board Meeting @ Grand Prairie, 7 p.m.	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m.			
<b>Sun., May 14</b>	<b>Mon., May 15</b>	<b>Tue., May 16</b>	<b>Wed., May 17</b>	<b>Thurs., May 18</b>	<b>Fri., May 19</b>	<b>Sat., May 20</b>
	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m.	Book Club @ Parsonage, 6:30 p.m.	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m. Community Lunch @ Lion's Hall VBS Meeting @ First, 6 p.m.	Sunshine Circle @ Evan, 6:30 p.m. First UMW @ First Church, 7 p.m.		Finance Seminar presented by The Rev. Ed Weston @ Bonfield Evan's Upper Room, 6 :00 p.m.
<b>Sun., May 21</b>	<b>Mon., May 22</b>	<b>Tue., May 23</b>	<b>Wed., May 24</b>	<b>Thurs., May 25</b>	<b>Fri., May 26</b>	<b>Sat., May 27</b>
Special Guest Speaker The Rev. Ed Weston from Preacher's Aid Society and Benefit Fund, all 3 churches	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m.		Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m.		March 2017 Newsletter Deadline	
<b>Sun., May 28</b>	<b>Mon., May 29</b>	<b>Tue., May 30</b>	<b>Wed., May 31</b>			
	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m.	Fold Newsletters @ Evan, 8:30 a.m.	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m.			



Photo by Debbie Nielsen

## *Parish Gains Four New Members On Confirmation Sunday*

The Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish celebrated a special Confirmation Sunday on Apr. 9. Four new members joined their individual congregations through confirmation.

Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church welcomed Skylar Simbeck, pictured top left, through baptism and confirmation. Grand Prairie United Methodist welcomed Mary Grace Brinkman, pictured middle left, and Bonfield First saw Kamden Lockwood and Isabelle Lowey become members as seen in the pictured bottom left.



Photo by Debbie Nielsen

The new members completed an 18-week confirmation course with several members of the congregation sitting in as mentors.

Each new member was presented a Bible from their churches along with other gifts and cards. Pastor Mel said, "You could feel the excitement in the air at all three churches for this special celebration." He asks for your continued prayers for these young people and their faith journeys.



Photo by Debbie Nielsen



**The Rev. Ed Weston**

***Special  
Financial  
Meeting  
Planned With  
The Rev. Ed  
Weston***

Pastor Mel in conjunction with the Pastor's Aid Society and Benefit Fund has scheduled a special finance meeting with the Rev. Ed Weston. The meeting is scheduled for May 20, 6:00 p.m. in the Upper Room at Bonfield Evangelical, 348 E. Smith Street, Bonfield.

Anyone in the church is welcome to attend but this will be specifically of interest to those who chair or sit on any of the financial boards of the churches or parish. Treasurer's, Finance Chairs, Administrative Board Chairs, SPPRC members, Auditors, Trustee Chairs and Lay Leaders should find this information very helpful and informative.

Edward R. Weston has a BS in Business Administration, a Masters of Divinity and a Masters of Business Administration. He has 43 years of local church work, including numerous building and fund raising campaigns. He also holds the Executive Certificate in Religious Fund Raising, Planned Giving, and Major Gifts from the Indiana University Lilly School of Philanthropy.

In addition to his local church work, Ed was instrumental in the development of the United Methodist Village Retirement Communities in Godfrey, Illinois. He has served in many different capacities on the Board of Directors including: chair of the Board for 6 years, member of the master sit planning committee, development of the apartment complex, rent assisted unites, the Licensed "Weston" Assisted Living Center, the villas and the seven homes currently on campus. Ed also serves as a Trustee for McKendree University in Lebanon, IL.

Rev. Weston is available for consultation on different methods of making tax deductible gifts to PASBF, including Charitable Gift Annuities, IRA's, Stocks, Life Insurance, Wills and Estates.

Please let Pastor Mel know if you are planning to attend.

***Manteno Veteran's Home  
Member's Personal Needs List***

The Manteno Veteran's Home is in need of personal items for some of the veteran's who reside there. Please do not donate directly to any unit, department or resident, but, please bring all items to the Volunteer Office located in building S-2. If you have any questions, please call the Volunteer Office at 815-468-6581, ext. 259. Please do not bring the items to any of the churches as there is nobody responsible to deliver the items, unless you want to volunteer then please contact Pastor Mel, 815-922-9161.

**Personal Care** - (Due to infection control policies, all personal care items must be NEW.) Hair cream/dressing for men; roll-on deodorant; NEW electric razors; pre-electric lotion; aftershave; body lotion; Fixodent tablets or Polident Denture cream; Efferdent denture tablets; toothbrushes; combs; hairbrushes; cologne for men and women; facial tissue; railroad or diabetic socks; sweatpants M. L, XL, XXL, XXXL.

**Snacks/Food** - (Please do not donate expired food or nearly expired food items. They cannot be served to the veteran's.) Fresh bananas and grapes; small boxes of raisins; individual packages of chips or pretzels; soft granola or cereal bars; reg. or decaf. coffee; candy - sugar free and no nuts; cookies - sugar free and no nuts; small candy bars - no nuts; Hawaiian Punch; packaged crackers and cheese; cases of soda - diet and reg.; sugar free gum.

**NOTE:** The veteran's home CANNOT accept homemade or independently prepared refreshments. Food items brought in for a party will need to be purchased through a commercial vendor due to Public Health guidelines.

**Entertainment** - Greeting cards (NEW), Batteries - AA, AAA, C, D; magnifying glasses; postage stamps - forever value; Wireless headphones for TV use; word search & crossword puzzle books; men's wallets and change purses; stationary & envelopes.

**Misc.** - Paper plates - varied sizes; 6 oz. foam cups; paper towels - rolls; fabric softener; napkins; PLASTIC forks, spoons and knives.

Donated items will be shared with Illinois Veteran's Home residents first but may be shared with other charitable organizations which help provide support to our veterans.

## *Way Forward Group Ponders Structural Changes To UMC*

By Heather Hahn

April 10, 2017 | UMNS

The 32 members of the Commission on a Way Forward are getting down to the business of doing what their name says — helping a denomination deeply divided over homosexuality move toward some sort of future together.

That future could end up looking very different than how The United Methodist Church operates at present.

“After meetings of building relationships and team building, the commission is now delving deeper into its intended task — finding a way forward for the church,” said Mazvita Machinga, commission member and a dean at United Methodist Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

“There is high optimism that a way forward will unwind itself as the team works together,” she added. The multinational commission held its third meeting April 6-8 at the United Methodist Building in Washington. Just as was true with its first two meetings, the commission’s third gathering was closed to reporters.

The commission, authorized by General Conference 2016, is looking at new ways to be a global church where many United Methodists view the practice of homosexuality as a sin while many others view restrictions on LGBTQ individuals as sinful.

The Rev. Thomas Lambrecht likens the work to putting together a puzzle. The group has laid out pieces on the table and is trying to figure out how the pieces might fit together. The challenge is the group has no set picture or diagram to go by.

“We’re acknowledging that there are deep-seated differences in the church, and there are parts of the church that are not able to live together in a closed connection,” Lambrecht said. “So we are looking at ways to loosen the connection. What form that might take, we don’t know yet.”

Matt Berryman agreed with Lambrecht’s assessment. “What we’re contemplating is loosening the connection in the face of conflict over whether there needs to be uniformity of practice and belief around LGBTQ people,” Berryman said.

Scott Johnson of Upper New York cautioned not to get too carried away with the idea of “loosening the

connection.”

“I think there is no question we still see a connected United Methodist church,” he said. “We’re working toward unity.”

The group brings together clergy and laity from nine countries and of diverse perspectives. At least three members, including Berryman, are openly gay. Still others, like Lambrecht, have long advocated for maintaining the bans on same-gender unions and “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy.

“We are trying to think about and model the new behaviors that will help leaders who deeply care about the church to see new forms and structures that will allow for differing expressions of the global church,” Florida Area Bishop Ken Carter, told UMNS. He is one of three bishops who is moderating the commission’s work.

The group is not only looking at a way through the impasse around homosexuality but also how to increase vitality of local churches and strengthen the church’s mission.

According to a press release about the meeting, the commission members indicated they are leaning toward a simpler structure “with clearer processes for decision-making and accountability.”

The Rev. Tom Berlin, lead pastor of Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon, Virginia, said the commission still doesn’t know what “simpler” would look like.

“We just have a sense that it’s a lot more complicated than it needs to be,” he said. “That’s why you are hearing people say, ‘simpler’ and ‘looser.’” Berlin added that in his experience, The United Methodist Church is “a denomination that likes the tension of different perspectives.”

Commission members also discussed what connects them together. They heard from Houston Area Bishop Scott Jones, chair of the denomination’s Committee on Faith and Order, who specifically highlighted what United Methodists share in common. His committee has put together the document “Wonder, Love and Praise,” which explores how United Methodists understand what it means to be the Church.

Jones reminded the group of three distinctive

**PLEASE SEE “WAY” ON PAGE 11**

## WAY

(Continued from page 10)

convictions that bind United Methodists. The church believes the saving love of God is “meant for all people,” is “transformative” and “creates community.” Alice Williams, a commission member from Florida, said Jones’ presentation really resonated with her.

“For me, moving forward as I think about this work, those will be three things that will be my touchstones,” she said.

The commission met less than a month before the Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court, will hold a hearing related to last summer’s election of Mountain Sky Area Bishop Karen Oliveto, the denomination’s first openly gay bishop.

Commission members stressed that whatever the Judicial Council rules, their work continues. The commission moderators plan to release a separate statement on the church court hearing.

David Field, a commission member from Switzerland, noted that the Judicial Council’s decision would use the denomination’s present Book of Discipline. In contrast, the commission is looking at the Discipline with an eye toward possible revisions.

“I remain hopeful that we will find a positive way forward that will release the church to focus the time and energy we have spent fighting each other on mission,” he said.

The commission’s next meeting will be July 17-21 in Chicago.

For any of its proposals to become reality, the commission needs the assent of General Conference delegates. Bishops are considering calling a special General Conference in 2019.

“Reprinted with permission from United Methodist News Service and the author, Heather Hahn.

### *Prayers Appreciated*

Pastor Mel encourages you to continue praying for the Way Forward Committee. There are 32 members made up of clergy and laity. They are in desperate need of God’s discernment and guidance.

## *Visiting The Sick*

It used to be that when a church member went into a hospital or nursing home, the pastor would automatically make a visit. Not so much these days.

Because of privacy laws, hospitals and nursing homes cannot call the pastor unless the patient/resident asks specifically to have them called.

A church member may be too ill to make a request and the family of that patient may decline a visit from the pastor. Sometimes the patient really doesn’t want company because they just don’t feel up to conversing. At other times the patient is very private and not comfortable with the pastor seeing them in a compromised condition.

I need your help when you are ill. Please inform the hospital, nursing home and/or your family that you want a pastoral visit. Please do not expect a visit if you have reached out to me in this way. Riverside will inform me, but sometimes it takes a week for them to make contact, sometimes after the patient has already gone home.

If you have upcoming surgery, don’t expect that someone else will inform me, I need to hear from you, 815-922-9161.

## *Mission Trip To Rockford Urban Mission Planned*

The Bonfield Youth Group is planning their annual mission trip. This year the youth and adults will be traveling to Rockford, IL to work at the Rockford Urban Ministries. They will be leaving after church on Sun., June 18 and return in the evening of June 23.

The cost for this trip is \$200.00 per person. A fundraiser to help offset the cost of this trip is being planned for June 4, see page 5. Any youth aged 7th grade and up or adults are welcome to attend. Anyone who would like to support the youth and their mission efforts can make a donation by check made out to the Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish, mail to P.O. Box 66, Bonfield, IL 60913. If you need any more information, please contact Pastor Mel at 815-922-9161.



## Are your kids ready to Soar High with God's Amazing Love?

Hey kids! Are you ready to take an awesome adventure alongside some of your favorite Bible heroes and discover the qualities that make us truly heroic in God? VBS Hero Central uses epic music, spectacular science, crafty crafts, heroic recreation, and fantastic Bible stories to help you discover your strength in God!

**When: July 10-14, 2017**

**Where: Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church  
348 E. Smith Street, Bonfield, IL 60913**

**Time: 6-8:15 p.m**

**Ages: Pre-K - 6th Grade**

For more information call 815-802-9805 or email: [bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net)

**\*\*\* ALL forms also available on the Parish Website and Facebook pages \*\*\***

**Website: [www.bonfieldgrandprairie.org](http://www.bonfieldgrandprairie.org)**

**Facebook page: Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish**

### VBS Volunteer Registration July 10-14, 2017

Volunteers must be age 13 or older (NO Exceptions)  
Anyone younger than 13 will be a VBS participant

**Before VBS, I would like to help by:**

- Praying
- Preparing craft materials
- Helping with administrative tasks
- Planning decorations
- Decorating classrooms
- Building sets
- Planning publicity

**During VBS, I would like to help in one or more of the following areas:**

- Group:  Helper
- Crafts:  Helper
- Snacks:  Helper
- Games:  Helper
- Music:  Helper

**Age Level Preference**

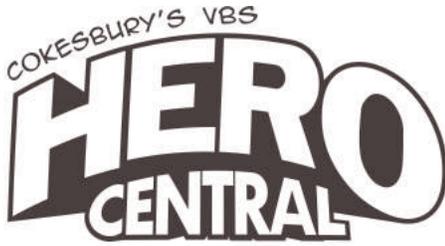
- 3-5 years  6-12 years  Wherever needed most

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Days Available \_\_\_\_\_ Every night Y / N Certain days (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please scan and email this form to: [bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net) -OR- Mail this form to VBS Registration c/o Dana Dittus, P.O. Box 66., Bonfield, IL 60913



# Register me for Hero Central!

July 10-14, 2017; 6-8:15 p.m.

Ages: Pre-K - 6th Grade

Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Church

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male Female Birthdate \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Grade completed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person picking up and dropping off your child \_\_\_\_\_

Name of home church \_\_\_\_\_

Food allergies Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_

List \_\_\_\_\_

Medical concerns Y\_\_\_ N\_\_\_

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

PHOTO RELEASE APPROVAL: I hereby grant The Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish and specifically the Vacation Bible School leadership permission to take photographs of \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) to be used in photo displays, websites and other materials the parish creates. \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent or legal guardian signature).

Please scan and email this form to: [bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net)  
Or  
Mail this form to VBS Registration c/o Dana Dittus  
P.O. Box 66  
Bonfield, IL 60913

## *First UMW Report*

The First Church United Methodist Women welcomed its shepherdess, Thelma Webber, and the Herscher UMW to the first meeting of the year on April 20. The Herscher group opened with devotions and reports from Response magazine and the Prayer Calendar. Pastor Mel said a special prayer in memory of Irma Jean Berghouse which honored her for many years of service to the UMW.

Carol Webber presented a compelling program based on the book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* which through powerful symbolism draws correlation's between Jesus' crucifixion and the lynching of African Americans. Members read short passages from the book which they then tied to the Bible or to other events related to the injustices suffered by many blacks.

Each group held its own business meeting afterward. Many thank you letters were read from those receiving monetary gifts at Christmastime. The group decided to sponsor one camper from the youth group as the group plans to visit a Rockford mission in early June. Other business involved finalizing plans for the year, including dates for the chicken supper and Christmas potluck.

## **PARISH**

**(Continued from page 2)**

members will work with Pastor Mel to find entertainment for the service.

His third was reporting that he is planning a beginner's Bible Study for new people to the faith. He has heard many feel they do not have much Bible knowledge and are hungry to learn and grow in their faith.

Angie Kirk, from the Evangelical church, added to new business with a proposal that the 3 churches gather for a joint worship service in the park during the summer. A date was mentioned and plans are underway to secure that date with the village.

President Cochran talked about how we each church can give more attention to Pentecost Sunday. Many ideas were presented such as asking all to wear red or adding other elements to worship to highlight the day. Anyone with ideas should contact the pastor.

David Dayton closed with prayer.

## *Prayer Shawl Ministry*

The Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish Prayer Shawl group continues to knit and crochet and pray. They always welcome anyone who would like to join to come to the next gathering on May 2, 7 p.m. at Bonfield First United Methodist Church. They have lots of yarn, good fellowship and even instruction if you would like to learn.

If you know an individual in need of a prayer shawl or pocket prayer shawl, please contact Donna Voigt 815-939-0346; Dana Dittus at 815-263-0783 or Pastor Mel.

## **EVAN**

**(Continued from page 2)**

Stacey Alrandi represented the Witness Committee and reported that work had begun on choosing the 5 missions which Evan supports a part of being a 5-Star Church. She also reported on the work being done in inviting children and their parents to Sunday school. She and Pastor Mel have been talking about the need for a beginner's Bible Study for adults who want to learn more about God, the church and the Holy Bible. Pastor reported that he has ordered some materials to review and will announce soon some dates and times for this much needed class. He reported his plans to the full NOW Committee.

## *Our Thanks*

The family of Irma Jean Berghouse is sincerely grateful to everyone who sent beautiful floral arrangements, brought food, and gave memorials. We also appreciate the thoughtful cards, notes, and kind words from so many friends and relatives. We are truly blessed to be surrounded by many supportive people and our loving families at this time. Your expressions of sympathy will be remembered forever!

Kim, Jill, Suzanne, Marti, and families

## *Evan UMW Report*

Seven members of the Bonfield Evangelical United Methodist Women met at the home of Esther Marcotte. Christine Meyer gave the lesson on the group's yearly Call to Prayer and Self-Denial. This is an annual observation during which members reflect on the Gospel of Christ, pray together, make an offering to a mission connected to women's, children or youth health issues.

Imagine being a young girl and missing up to 2 months of school each year or dropping out of school because you can't afford or have no access to the sanitary hygiene products. This is happening in many parts of the world giving boys an advantage in education. Some of this, 'Call to Prayer and Self-Denial,' offering will be used to educate young women in all aspects of feminine health and help prepare hygiene kits.

Business meeting opened with roll call. Minutes were read and treasurer's report was given. A motion was made and seconded that the group give \$200.00 to the Bonfield/Grand Prairie Youth Group mission trip fund.

Meyer announced upcoming events. Festival of Quilts show was held at Urbana on Apr., 7 & 8. Spring meeting was held on Apr., 22 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Kankakee. On May 4 the group will hold it's annual breakfast at 9 a.m. at the church's

Upper Room.

Sue Callois, the group's Shepherdess, will be the guest speaker. May 10 will also be the night the group serves a meal at the Gift of God Street Church.

Nancy Jennings, President of the Vermilion UMW, is asking for pictures of activities from the group for conference purposes.

Joyce Riegel read an article from Response Magazine called, New Experience of God. Meeting adjourned. Refreshments were served.

## *Sincere Thanks*

This year while we were in Florida, I had a 9-day retreat in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit at a hospital in Port Charlotte. What a roller-coaster ride! I'm so grateful to be able to still enjoy life on this earth.

Just knowing that you all were back home praying for me made things so much easier. It's a comfort to know that we can count on our Savior and each other through whatever life brings.

Thank you all for your thoughts, card and prayers. "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God!" I don't know where I'd be without my God, my husband, Pastor Mel and all my caring, praying family and friends.

With love ~ Linda Meyer



- **Activities for Children and Adults**
- **We Love to Welcome New People!**
- **Songs, Games, Bible Lesson and Potluck**

## We're Taking Sunday School to the Park!

Bonfield park

**Sun., May 21**  
**9:30 a.m.**

Plan to bring a potluck dish and lawn chairs

Meat and beverages will be provided.

In case of inclement weather we will meet at the Bonfield Evangelical Church, 348 E. Smith Street, Bonfield.

Bonfield / Grand Prairie Parish  
prayerful Box 66  
Bonfield, IL 60913

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Bonfield, IL 60913

May 2017



## Does the Bible Confuse you?

**Pastor Mel is scheduling a Beginners Bible Class.**

This small group is intended for those who are new to Bible Study.

If attending church, Sunday school or other classes held by the church gives you anxiety because you think, “I don’t know enough!”

***Then this is the class for you.***

*We will move slowly from the beginning - with basic information about the Bible, it's authors when certain books were written and why. Feel free to bring your questions about Jesus!*

**Bible from Scratch Classes begin Soon - Sign Up Now!**

**Classes begin Monday July 17 at the Pastor's house,  
225 Country Lane, Bonfield • 6:30 p.m.**

There is not cost, Pastor Mel will supply all materials.

Bibles will be available if you do not have one.

Please let Pastor Mel know by Friday, June 23 so he knows how many will attend.

**Call 815-922-9161 for more information or to sign up!**