### Susanna Wesley UMC

3900 George Washington Memorial Hwy. Ordinary, VA 23131

> Mailing Address: P.O. Box 39 Hayes, VA 23072

### **Sunday Services**

Traditional at 8:15 a.m. Contemporary at 10:30 a.m.

Office number 804-642-7551

www.susannawesleyumc.org

office@susannawesleyumc.org





As we enter March and approach spring it should be a time of rejoicing. After all, the first day of spring is **Monday**, **March 20**, **2023**, **at 5:24 p.m. EDT**. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, this is marked by the arrival of the Vernal Equinox (otherwise known as the "First Point of Aries"). Whew! That's a lot of information. But it is hard to rejoice when there is a struggle taking place in our denomination that is similar to the divide we see in the politics of our nation.

We're splintering! That is probably the most accurate statement you will hear about what is taking place. Churches our disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church with some joining the Global Methodist Church or other groups such as the Free Methodists or the Association of Independent Methodists, just to name a few. They are not splintering because of an action of the General Conference, but in anticipation of perceived actions that may or may not take place.

Why are we splintering? Because of the struggle within the United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, e.g. LGBTQ. If you are not aware, the 2020 General Conference postponed this conversation to 2024. Churches are leaving in anticipation of the 2024 General Conference and the possibility of removing statements within the Book of Discipline or making other drastic changes concerning ordination. The Wesleyan Covenant Association, founded within the Virginia Conference and the voice of the conservative movement, launched the Global Methodist Church on May 1, 2022, breaking from a planned separation due to the General Conference delay. But it is more complicated than what I can express in our limited newsletter. After serving our community over these past 32 months, I can say this is not on the minds of 95% of our members, but I share this because we all need to be aware of the splintering that is taking place.

Continued on page 2

### **Upcoming Services**

Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>
8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
Scripture: John 3:1-17
Message
Go from your Country
Learning to Live Inside Out

Sunday, March 12<sup>th</sup>
8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
Scripture: John 4:5-42
Message
Give Me Water
Learning to Live Inside Out

Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>
8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
Scripture: John 9:1-41
Message
In the Presence
Learning to Live Inside Out

Sunday, March 26th 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Scripture: John 11:1-45 Message Who Could Stand Learning to Live Inside Out

### Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> Palm Sunday

8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

Message

This is the Day

In Awe of Grace

My focus has been to be the community Christ calls us to be as part of the Body of Christ (His church). As I study and meet with fellow pastors, I've started a notebook containing many of the articles I've collected, which are from all sides of the discussion. They're interesting, informative, and sometimes disheartening. You have heard me say Methodism was never meant to be a denomination. It was a movement bringing individuals into communities or classes to go deeper in their faith. It is a method that we have gotten away from. For those in small groups you learn about Christ, His teachings, and the call He has for us to come into relation with one another. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." John 3:17. It is through Him we are reminded of God's love for everyone: broken, righteous, perfect and a sinner.

I share this because it has become a reality for our conference. A special session of the Virginia Annual Conference was held on February 18, 2023. Based on paragraph 2553 of the Book of Discipline, 34 local churches requested to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church over matters of human sexuality. Conference membership approved 33 for disaffiliation, with one held over because of property and gifting considerations. The splintering has begun.

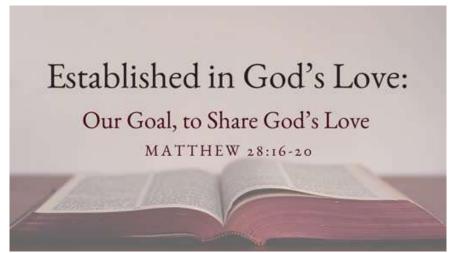
There are also local meetings sharing information about disaffiliation being held. I ask you to be wary of information shared in non-sanctioned meetings, because sometimes the information presented is tainted and not totally true. This doesn't mean there isn't some useful information presented, but even the smallest misinformation can taint anyone who is seeking to affirm their position rather than pursue a better understanding of the issues. It is the few that taint the many, just as the few Bishops and others in our denomination who have over time tainted the core beliefs of our denomination in very specific circumstances. There have dissatification in how they were punished. But again this does not taint the whole body. Disobedience that is contrary to our Methodist heritage needs to corrected.

I grieve over the division that is taking place in our own denomination, just as I grieve over the division in our politics. The notebook in which I have collected articles is available for anyone who wants more information. I have included on page 12 of our newsletter an article by my respected former professor Rev. Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr., who is also the founder of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. In his commentary, Rev. Dr. Weems talks about the disobedience that has taken place within our denomination since its inception.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" John 3:16. As the scripture says, God loves us all. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34. When we say He loves us, but we don't show love for another, then we have failed in His command.

For more information about the disaffiliation process and what is happening, go to the UMC website or Google Ask UMC (<a href="https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-should-united-methodist-congregations-know-about-disaffiliation">https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-should-united-methodist-congregations-know-about-disaffiliation</a>) along with our conference website (<a href="https://vaumc.org/">https://vaumc.org/</a>). There you will find articles on what is taking place.

Finally, as you Pastor, though troubled by the splintering, I am filled with joy as we approach spring. When I reflect on the heart of our community I see God's love spreading outward into the community that



surrounds us. Continue to seek and live by the two commandments – love God and love your neighbor. Most of all, as I have been reminded by so many, continue to be the hospital for the sinners of this world. Susanna Wesley is a community of love and compassion for our fellow travelers in this life. It is a judgement-free zone where we help one another, listen to one another, and pray for one another.

**Pastor Tom** 



### **Saturday**

March 4th

Breakfast at 7:30 – 8:15 a.m. Workday begins at 8 a.m. and lasts to around 1 p.m.

### We are focusing on the outside

Yes, were having a workday to clean-up around the outside of the church. There are several projects we are working.

- Playground removal of concrete at base of each swing, removal of broken tops
- Install a new LED light over the storage shed
- Clean-up of bushes on kitchen side and removal of the roots and stumps left from the bushes and trees on the rear driveway side
- Clean-up of branches on the large cedar tree at the education wing side door to give clearance for security cameras
- Preparation of a prayer garden using native plants in the rear of our property
- Removal of the Holy Trees and other bushes at the front and side in preparation of the planned landscaping.
- Possible painting of our speed bumps on the side road
- There will be many small and large tasks, so come and help as long as you are able

### Help us make your church welcoming

### **March Calendar**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	1	2	3	4
Sunday Services Traditional 8:15 a.m. Small Groups 9:30 a.m. Contemporary 10:30 a.m. Children's Church 10:45 a.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours  Food Pantry Pick-up 9:30 a.m12 p.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours	Youth Worship 6-8 p.m.	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sunday Services Traditional 8:15 a.m. Small Groups 9:30 a.m. Contemporary 10:30 a.m. Children's Church 10:45 a.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours  10 a.m. Prayer Group  7:15 p.m. Mission Outreach Team Mtg.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours Youth Bible Study 6-7 p.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours  Food Pantry Pick-up 9:30 a.m12 p.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours	Youth Worship 6-8 p.m.	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Sunday Services Traditional 8:15 a.m. Small Groups 9:30 a.m. Contemporary 10:30 a.m. Children's Church 10:45 a.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours 10 a.m. <b>Prayer Group</b>	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours Youth Bible Study 6-7 p.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours  Food Pantry Pick-up 9:30 a.m12 p.m.  Leadership Board 7 p.m.	9 a.m2 p.m. Office Hours	Youth Worship 6-8 p.m.	Women's Bible Study 9 a.m. Fishes and Loaves 3 p.m.
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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26	27	28	29	30	31	1
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John 15:12: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you

The church office hours are Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.





# **2023** Objective **200** Boxes!

Remember all those t-shirts everyone dropped off. They are being cut up and woven together to make 200 jump ropes to be included in the boxes we are preparing for the children.





INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF THE KING'S DAUGHTERS AND SONS

### York River Circle of King's Daughters and Sons

#### Offering a Chance to Win an Easter Dinner for 12!

Easter is Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. One lucky name will be drawn April 4<sup>th</sup> and will be notified that day. Tickets are \$15.00 each. In addition to winning a delicious Easter meal for 12, including ham, cheesy potatoes, vegetables, salads, rolls, dessert, tea, plus an Easter table runner and napkins, your support goes to helping the Children's Hospital of King's Daughters, as well as areas in Literacy and Autism, local organizations like the

Boys and Girls Club, Mattaponi Healing Clinic, just to name a few. The food can be picked up at the Coleman's Crossing Clubhouse

on April 8<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. If you aren't planning to have 12 people at your Easter table, what a wonderful time to share with your neighbors and friends or donate a meal to someone else. Susanna Wesley Church members who are also members of this circle include Pastor Tom, Kim, Vicki Wolz, Barbara McDermott, Phyllis Russell, and Goldie Rowe.

If you are interested in supporting this worthy cause by purchasing a ticket, see Rita Gary in the office or ask Pastor Tom. RAFFLE TICKET FOR EASTER DINNER FOR 12— \$15

Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Vegetables, Salads, Rolls, Dessert, Tea

PLUS Table Runner & Napkins!

Drawing on Tuesday, April 4, 2023. Winner will be notified immediately.

Dinner pick up at the Coleman Crossings Clubhouse, 7027 Coleman Crossing Ave.,

Hayes, on April 8 at 2 p.m.

ALL FUNDS SUPPORT THE YORK RIVER CIRCLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL KINGS DAUGHTERS AND SONS AND ITS PROJECTS.

The York River Circle of King's Daughters and Sons thank you in advance for your support.

### Chair Yoga Classes



LeAnn Rigau has contacted the church about holding Yoga classes at our church. They would be open to members and the community that surrounds us. The Leadership Board has given the okay, as we are seeking to allow more organizations and activities to use our facilities. LeAnn has come up with a plan. She has proposed we begin with chair yoga which would allow a larger group of our members and those in the community to participate. For many, this will be a good way to ease into regular yoga.

Her proposal: She will offer a 6-week session, 1x/week for 1 hour. Folks would sign up and pay with check or cash. 20% of the fee goes to the church to pay for utilities. She would also make a drop-in price if someone did not want to commit to 6 classes.

When: Monday's at 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. Cost: \$60.00 for the 6-week session. \$12.00/class for drop in.

Participants will need to sign a release form for health and medical safety and protection.

If you are interested, a sign-up sheet is located in the Atrium on the Welcome station tables. Stretching is one the best things we can do as we get older and Yoga provides many health benefits without the impact on our bodies.

### **Feeding Ministries Update**

### **Food Pantry**

We are pleased to report the new freezer is installed and filled with frozen meats for those in need. A wonderful blessing happened right after the freezer was installed. A donor stopped by asking if we could use a small chest freezer. We said yes and it was dropped off and is now in use also.

Bobby Scarborough, Cindy Wong and Randy Long have made the trips to the Peninsula Food Bank to obtain frozen meats, fresh produce, boxed and canned food. Due to the increasing demand they are out of many food items. We are blessed with many donors who are dropping off food items. Our Super Bowl Sunday Food Drive brought in over 500 pounds of canned and boxed food items.

### For the month of February 2023

### Amount of Food Received and Distributed

Number of pounds of food received:

978.51

Number of pounds of food distributed:

1,388.3 lbs.

#### **Number of Individuals Served**

**34** Children (0-17)

48 Adults (18-64)

**46** Seniors (60+)

**8** of whom are Veterans

### **Fishes and Loaves**

64 hot meals were delivered this past Saturday to shut-ins in our community as part of Meals on Wheels. We want to thank all the volunteers that support this ministry, including the cooks, packaging help and the drivers who deliver. Bobby Scarborough was the cook this time. In his excitement, he grabbed our largest pots and made an abundance of the meal he was preparing. 16 meals were shared with the Guest program along with enough meals that were frozen to be shared with our food pantry clientele. Praise God!

### Food Pantry Needs>>> - We Need your help

- Feminine products, wipes
- Canned Vegetables
- Canned Meats (Tuna, Spam, etc.)
- Rice
- Breakfast Bars/Granola
- Diapers, formula, etc.
- Pasta
- Dry/Boxed/Canned Milk
- Cereal/Oatmeal
- Soups/Stews/Ramen
- Condiments (Mayo, Ketchup, etc.)
- Pasta Sauce
- Jelly/Preserves
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Canned Fruits
- Canned Beans
- Paper Towels/toilet paper

If you or someone you know needs food, please call 804-642-7551 on Monday to be put on the list for food pickup at SWUMC on Wednesday from 9:30-noon. The volunteers will bring your bag to your vehicle.

#### NOTICE

Susanna Wesley is now an official partner with the Peninsula Food Bank. This has allowed us to purchase many of the basic need items at a lower cost. **It does not eliminate the need for support**. The Food Bank is not able to provide all the food items we need. Please continue to support our food bank as we highlight the items we cannot obtain.

Thank you and blessings, Bobby Scarborough

### Prayer Chain >>>

### To Activate the Prayer Chain:

Call any of the individuals listed during the time indicated. The first person to get the prayer request will call the Pastor and the next person in line. If no answer, the first person will continue down the list until actual contact is made with a prayer chain team member. The second person will contact the next person in line until all prayer chain team members have been contacted and the chain is complete.

#### **DAYTIME: 7AM - 5PM**

• Phyllis Russell (804) 684-5143

Joyce Neville (804) 815-2089

• Louise Quinn (804) 693-2192

Julia Scarborough (804) 642-4525

Deborah Wilson (757) 784-2451

#### **EVENINGS: 5PM - 11PM**

Vicki Barnes (804) 642-0760

Barbara McGlohn (804) 384-1693

• Goldie Rowe (804) 824-7377

#### **NIGHTTIME: 11PM - 7AM**

Phyllis Russell (804) 684-5143

Sonnie Leonard (804) 815-2864

• Marsha Germek (804) 815-3639

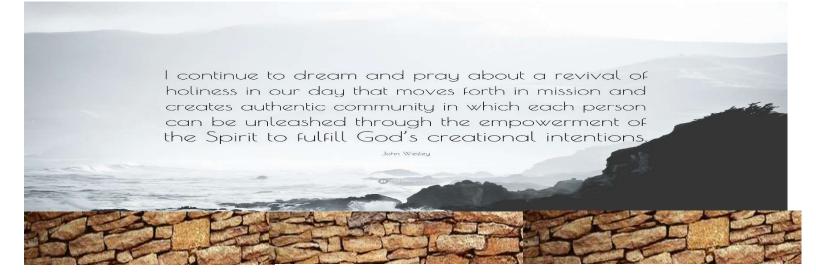
Church Office: (804) 642-7551 Pastor Tom Tipton: (703) 307-6892

#### Please keep the following in your prayers:

• Our brothers and sisters in Christ with unspoken prayers •Those who have COVID, Flu, RSV or are caring for loved ones •Those who struggle with unseen addiction, health and mental health issues • Those with cancer and other health conditions for healing and strength • Our Food Pantry and the increasing need we are experiencing • E.C.H.O. Ministry •G.U.E.S.T Program • Mike Hansen loss of his mother (Ann) and now his father (Jim), Debbie's family, Vicki Barnes •Clifford Beach • Raymond & Judy Church •Sondra Colbert's mother •Diane Cox—has breast cancer •Gary Creighton—medical tests •Marvin Fanton • Nancy Fanton—cancer has returned •Lynda Fairchild—continued recovery from mini-stroke •Jim Germek's family •Ben—loss of his mother • Karen Peabody (Mike Hansen's sister) • Patty Hanson for the loss of her father • Lois Hensley & Tipton as they heal and gain mobility from knee replacement •Keith Hoban • Jimmy Huff •Angela•Jeff& Scott Leiffer • Rev. Gary Livermon •Barbara Lyon • Phil Lyliston (Pastor Tom watches over him) • People of Ukraine • Sara—has cancer • Susie Price has Pulmonary Fibrosis and has had a hard time breathing the past month •Mark & Curtis Rice • Betty Roan &son who has cancer •Anita Robbins • Charles Rowe •Goldie Rowe—awaiting test results • Diane Schultz healing from kidney cancer • Linda Triolet & family • Don & Deborah Wilson • Lorrie Wolstoncraft

### If you have a need, feel free to fill out our request form.

You can also leave prayer requests by calling or emailing your Prayer Team at <u>prayer@susannawesleyumc.org</u>, or contact the church office at (804) 642-7551.



### **Worship Service Updates**



## Traditional Worship Service 8:15 a.m.

Our group of singers is growing. Barbara has been over joyed and our

services are being blessed with their voices. Were on our way towards trio or quartet and then larger for special occasions.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

## Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Join our Praise Team



### Practice Wednesday's 6:30 p.m.

Are being blessed with the voices of our children



#### For more information

Contact: Crystal Tucker-Oberlin Director of Contemporary Music Cell: 804-824-8939 (phone or text)

Proverbs 17:17: A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity



### **Sunday Mornings after first service**

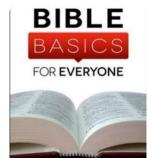
9:15-9:30 a.m. Social time, Classes start at 9:30

### **Bible Basics Community Room (Room 4)**

Led by: Karl Miller

Join our **Adult Small Group** as we explore the 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter.

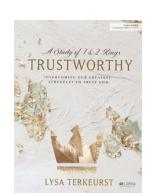
Lively discussion guaranteed: comfortable, & prayer-driven



### Bible Explorers! Room 7

Led by: Kim Tipton

Join our Adult Small Group as we explore in this 6session study of 1 & 2 Kings, join Lysa Terkeurst in Israel as she honestly reveals the places of distrust in her own heart while exploring the deeply applicable Scriptures that will teach us how to truly trust God.





## Young Adults Decision Room Room 3

Led by: Pastor Tom Join Pastor Tom as we read James letter to the church and discuss its implications on our lives.





### Student Ministry Small Group (Room 5)

Led by Sebastian Brock and Joanne Fary
The youth are invited for a lively discussion of topics
that relate to the challenges of life and our faith.

### Children's Church



#### During 2<sup>nd</sup> Service Room 2

Led by a team of facilitators on a rotating basis

### **Weekday Small Groups and Gatherings**

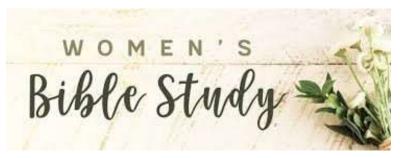


### **Bible Study**

Tuesday's 6–7 p.m.

### **Student Ministry Worship**

Worship Center Friday's 6–8 p.m.



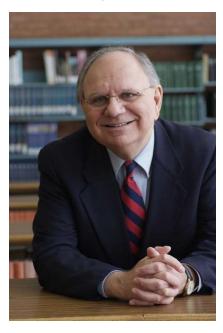
### with Rev. Carol Bookwalter

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month Beginning February 18th 9 a.m.–Noon in the Community Room



#### Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr.

Feb. 6, 2023 | WASHINGTON (UM News)



#### **Key points:**

- Defiance of rules passed by General Conference is nothing new for the people called Methodist.
- Examples include violation of prohibitions against slavery, women clergy, smoking and, these days, rebaptism.
- The Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr. questions why defiance of church restrictions related to homosexuality is seen as different from those examples and a reason for church separation.

The Rev. Lovett H. Weems Jr.
Photo courtesy of Wesley Theological Seminary.

#### Commentaries

*UM News publishes various commentaries about issues in the denomination. The opinion pieces reflect a variety of viewpoints and are the opinions of the writers, not the UM News staff.* 

During denominational debates on homosexuality, some have repeatedly complained that General Conference legislation is ignored or violated by many. Some who are disaffiliating say they are tired of "increasing disobedience."

History shows us that ignoring General Conference legislation did not begin with the issue of homosexuality. Such resistance has a long history. This article highlights historical examples from United Methodism and its predecessor bodies when clergy, laity, bishops and conferences rejected, through their actions, legislation passed by the General Conference.

#### Historical Examples

**Slavery:** The Christmas Conference in 1784 condemned slavery as an "abomination" and required all members holding slaves to set them free or withdraw from the Society. There was immediate and massive disobedience.

**Women Lay Representation**: Women were not allowed as General Conference delegates in 1888 when the Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pittsburgh and Rock River Conferences of The Methodist Episcopal Church elected women delegates despite the prohibition of their action. The group of five, <u>including Frances Willard</u>, the most prominent Methodist woman of the time, were denied seating.

Women Clergy Rights (United Brethren): The 1857 United Brethren General Conference prohibited women from being licensed to preach. Union Biblical Seminary was founded as the denominational seminary "under the control of the General Conference" in 1869. When classes began, women were admitted on the same basis as men with all seminary offerings available to them. Despite prohibitions against licensing women to preach, the Pleasant Valley quarterly conference issued a license to Maggie Thompson in 1874. In 1876, her name was submitted to the committee on applicants of the Indiana Conference, along with the names of nine men. She was approved.

Women Clergy Rights (Methodist Protestant): The Methodist Protestant General Conference in 1870 disapproved the ordination of women. In 1875, the Kansas Conference ordained Pauline Martindale as elder. Anna Howard Shaw, the second woman to graduate from Boston University School of Theology, was ordained by the New York Conference of The Methodist Protestant Church in 1880. In 1884, the General Conference rescinded her ordination as "out of order." The annual conference ignored the action, and Shaw continued to serve and be recognized by that conference. In 1889, Eugenia St. John was ordained elder by the Kansas Conference.

Clergy Performing Marriages for Divorced People: From as early as 1884, most United Methodist predecessor groups forbade clergy from performing marriages for divorced individuals who had a living former spouse, except for the innocent party in the case of adultery. Calls for increased enforcement and increased penalties indicate that pastoral situations led clergy to violate this restriction. In 1928, the Methodist Episcopal Church retained the language about divorce but gave the final decision about performing weddings to the pastor. However, the more restrictive language for clergy performing wedding ceremonies continued in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church until the formation of The Methodist Church in 1939 when the Methodist Episcopal language from 1928 was adopted.

**Racial Equality.** In the 1960s, many white Methodist churches still refused admittance of Black people to worship, a practice forbidden since 1884. One prominent confrontation came on Easter Sunday 1964 when a biracial group including two Methodist bishops, James K. Mathews and Charles Golden, was denied admission to Galloway Memorial Methodist Church in Mississippi. It was common in those days for churches to pass racial exclusion policies with total disregard for official denominational policies and beliefs.

**Clergy Smoking.** Beginning in 1880 by action of General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (and continued in The Methodist Church), those approved as clergy had to promise to "abstain from the use of tobacco." In 1960, the abstinence was continued but moved from a question to be answered to a statement of the requirement, before ending in 1968. In some cases, the bishops who asked the questions were smokers themselves.

#### Contemporary Examples

**Rebaptism**. It is interesting that the "no pastor shall re-baptize" prohibition is literally next to the prohibition on conducting same-sex ceremonies in the Book of Discipline. Conversations with bishops and district superintendents indicate that the frequency of reports coming to them regarding baptism practices by pastors at odds with the Discipline (rebaptism as well as refusing to baptize an infant) are far more common than reports regarding pastors performing same-sex ceremonies.

**Open Itineracy.** Today there are still congregations who refuse the appointment of a woman as pastor and who refuse the appointment of clergy of a different race from that of the congregation in explicit violation of church law.

#### What Does This Mean?

The purpose of this article is neither to justify nor condemn these violations. It is to document disobedience on a range of issues to show that universal compliance with General Conference decisions has regularly been violated throughout our history. Such actions occurred well before legislation related to homosexuality appeared and has taken place across a wide range of subjects.

Why are some broken rules easily tolerated while others, as in the case of homosexuality, bring the denomination to the brink of schism? There likely are various reasons that include what is happening in the

larger society as much as what is happening within the church. Timing is surely a factor. Issues such as slavery, women's clergy rights and lay representation are issues that once divided Methodists but no longer do so.

As with all rule-making bodies, the General Conference has power to act only to the extent that those actions carry with them sufficient credibility and moral authority to be accepted. When that is not the case, those in the United Methodist traditions have responded in one of several ways. The most common response has been some type of rejection, resistance and advocacy for change. Such defiance occurs on a continuum from statements of opposition to outright disobedience of the rule.

The point of these illustrations is not that General Conference actions are meaningless and that violations do not matter. Both are important. In some cases, the violations are inconsequential and are properly ignored. At other times, General Conference actions strike at the heart of who we are and are rightfully enforced. But, as history shows us, there are those times when the violations are examples of tendencies to overreach and control beyond the moral consensus of large segments of the church.

However, when one claims that some of those mandatory actions are truly necessary because of the doctrinal, theological and moral consequences of disobedience, it is hard to justify selecting only one, homosexuality, for such intricate and detailed enforcement mechanisms. Legislation must rest on a broadly shared consensus that it is necessary, right and consistent with John Wesley's passion that all come to know the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. For many, the actions of General Conference on homosexuality do not meet these minimum criteria of being necessary, right and grace-filled.

This article draws from "Methodism's History of Rejection of General Conference Actions on Issues Other than Homosexuality" by Lovett Weems, Methodist History, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2022, Copyright © 2022 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. Used by permission.

Weems is distinguished professor of church leadership emeritus and senior consultant of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

