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## Musings from the Blue Couch

Dear Shepherd of the Valley Family and Friends,

In both of my careers I have had the privilege of counseling people who are in conflict with one another. Whether it is couples, friends or family members, or as a certified mediator, I have even mediated groups of people. In every context I have found one truth. When people come to me with various arguments, I have found that after some deep exploration there is always a deep seeded issue that needs to be addressed. In every occasion the arguments are a symptom of some deeper brokenness in the relationship.

Recently I have been thinking and the reality is that while it is true that we are in dispute around the issue of full inclusion for LGBTQ people, the reality is that the issue that divides us is a much deeper issue, biblical interpretation. In the 1960s Yale University professor of Wesleyan Theology Albert Outler developed the concept of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral based on his study of how John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, interpreted scripture. Outler wrote:

His (Wesley's) working concepts of doctrinal authority were carefully worked out: they were complex and dynamically balanced. When challenged for his authority, on any question, his first appeal was to the Holy Bible, always in the sense of Article VI of the thirty-nine articles. Even so he was well aware that Scripture alone had rarely settled any controverted point of doctrine....Thus, though never as a substitute or corrective, he would appeal to the "primitive church" and to Christian tradition at large as competent, complimentary witnesses to 'the meaning' of this Scripture or that....But Scripture and tradition would not suffice without the good offices (positive and negative) of critical reason. Thus he insisted on logical coherence as an authorized referee in any contest between contrary propositions or arguments. And yet this was not enough. It was, as he himself knew, the vital experience of assurance of one's sins forgiven that clinched the matter.

Thus we can see in Wesley a distinctive theological method, with Scripture as the pre-eminent norm but interfaced with tradition, reason, and Christian experience as the dynamic and interactive aids in the interpretation of the Word of God in Scripture”

Eventually the quadrilateral was adopted into the Book of Discipline and became our prescribed method for biblical exegesis. This remains true today. However Evangelical Methodists have come to dispute the authority of the quadrilateral, leaning more toward Martin Luther’s understanding of “sole scriptura,” scripture only, which has led to a more literal interpretation of the bible. And if we read scripture literally, we have to be honest and say that in fact the Bible does support many edicts that we know today are abhorrent, the keeping of slaves, the submission and abuse of women, the justification of war, racism and of course the rejection of LGBTQ people.

But here is the thing. The founder of Methodism was very clear that bible is not just to be read but it is also to be interpreted. John Wesley said that we approach the scripture illuminated through our reason, our experience and our tradition. This is what we now call the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

Understanding that the controversy in our church is rooted in our different approaches to biblical interpretation rather than inclusion versus exclusion is an important distinction. The reality is, while our current argument is about who is welcome into full participation in our church, what is really at stake is how we will read the bible in general and how we will apply what we read to issues far beyond this one subject. It is also important because it is simply not fair to make the LGBTQ community the scapegoat of what is a far greater problem.

So the question becomes what can we do right now when we are in a holding pattern waiting in hope for what’s next? I would like to suggest that one of the most important actions we can take is to

engage in some form of biblical study, whether that is on our own or joining one in church. As followers of Jesus who also are Methodist we are right now discerning our future. It is important that whatever future we choose be grounded in our connection with the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The only way for us to do that is by studying our scripture the John Wesley way. To that end I would like to recommend a series of books called “Exploring the Bible” by Anne Robertson. They are short, funny and an easy read. These books will help you apply reason, tradition and experience to your understanding of the Bible. The website for the books is [exploringthebible.org](http://exploringthebible.org). As I said before we are in a holding pattern waiting in hope of what comes next. Let’s make sure that while we are waiting, we are preparing ourselves for what God will do with us in the future.

PK

## Golden Cross Sunday

May 5<sup>th</sup> is Golden Cross Sunday, a time to recognize how we can help our less fortunate elders in United Methodist assisted living and health care centers, including Aldersbridge Communities (formerly United Methodist Elder Care) here in Rhode Island. Your gift will help needy Aldersbridge residents with rent, services, meal supplements, medical and rehabilitative devices, therapeutic interventions, even social hours and special celebrations. Aldersbridge is a non-profit operating four facilities: independent and assisted living at Winslow Gardens and skilled nursing and rehabilitation at Linn Health and Rehab, both in East Providence, and assisted living at Arbor Hill in Providence and St. Germain Manor in Woonsocket.

There will be envelopes in the pews on May 5<sup>th</sup> for your check (payable to “Aldersbridge Communities”) or cash donation. You can also give directly through the Aldersbridge website ([aldersbridge.org](http://aldersbridge.org), selecting Golden Cross as your giving preference so we can track your donation), or use the Shepherd of the Valley mobile app.

## Upcoming Events

### Rummage Sale

The United Methodist Women will have their spring rummage sale on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. Items can be dropped off during the week. No TVs or large furniture items please, and preferably spring and summer clothing along with household items. Help setting up during the week is always appreciated.

### Wednesday Day Bible Study

This group meets Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. in the Hope Room. We are currently looking at the Bible itself. Who wrote it? Why is it structured the way it is? This group is open to all! Join us!

### Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH)

WISH will be continuing with our study of the book of Acts. There is no study book; we are reading the chapters and then having a discussion. We meet Wednesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the church.

### Scituate Art Festival

Yes, October is months away but it will come up quickly! If you are interested in leading this important fundraiser, please see Pastor Katherine.

### Mother's Day Cake Sale

The United Methodist Women (UMW) will hold the Annual Mother's Day Bake Sale on May 12th in Fellowship Hall after worship service. All donations go to scholarships for children attending Camp Aldersgate. Camp Aldersgate has always been an important mission for our UMW. Last year we raised more than \$400 from this sale. Please sign up to bake your favorite dessert, or come find an easy dessert for the special mother or mother figure in your life. See you in Fellowship Hall!

### United Methodist Women (UMW)

The UMW will meet on May 16th at 11:00 a.m. A business meeting is first on the agenda. We will finalize our calendar of events for 2019 and any other business happenings on our docket. The program for that day will be with Sandy Knapp,

Pastor Katherine's intern. She will talk to us about her plans for the future, where she hopes to be in five years in her church life, informing us of what her life consists of today, and her hopes and plans in the days that lies ahead of her.

Everyone is invited; please plan on attending this meeting as we all get to know Sandy a little better. Remember to bring your lunch. Drinks and dessert will be provided.

### Family Friday

Our next Family Fun Night will be May 31<sup>st</sup> starting at 6:00 p.m. It will be Family Night In with a cookout and games. Dinner is provided for all so come enjoy a relaxing evening with families! Any interest in hosting or cooking, please let me know! It is a great way to get involved with our family ministry program. This will be our last Family Fun Night until the fall so please join us, even us if you haven't come all year!

Lisa Marciniak

### Last Day of Sunday School and Church Picnic

The last day of Sunday School will be June 2<sup>nd</sup>. After worship, we will have our annual church picnic at the parsonage to celebrate the end of Sunday School. There will be a sign-up sheet for food to bring. All are welcome!

### Regular Meetings and Events

*Editor's Note: Our church has many meetings, classes, and fellowship opportunities that occur on a regular basis. Please check the list below for the schedules of programs or opportunities you might be interested in. If you have something you'd like included in this section, please email me at [belllomb@cox.net](mailto:belllomb@cox.net), call me at 944-9668, or leave a note in the Circuit Rider mailbox at church.*

*Hannah Bell-Lombardo*

- Monday Morning Prayer Group: We gather for prayer in the Hope Room at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.
- United Methodist Women (UMW): The UMW meets on the third Thursday of the month at 11:00 a.m. See article in this section for more details.

- **Knitting Ministry:** The Knitting Ministry meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 in the library. Our projects include prayer shawls, baptismal shawls, preemie and chemo hats, and sweaters for World Vision. Even if you can't attend the meetings, you can always knit at home. If you have questions, please call Sue Kizlinski at 401-527-8702.
- **Women in Spiritual Harmony (WISH):** WISH meets Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the church. See information on our current study in the "Women in Spiritual Harmony" article. All women are welcome.
- **Wednesday Day Bible Study:** This group will be studying the Bible, Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. in the Hope Room. See the article in "Upcoming Events."
- **Wednesday Wisdom Seekers Study Group:** This group meets Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Hope Room. This group will resume meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Hope Room, topic to be determined. Come and be surprised!
- **Men's Fellowship Breakfasts:** This group meets at the Phenix Square Restaurant at 6:00 a.m. May's meetings are on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. All men are welcome.
- **Signing Choir:** The Signing Choir rehearses on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome to join—no signing experience needed!
- **Family Sunday:** The first Sunday of each month is Family Sunday where our children serve as ushers, greeters, Communion stewards, and liturgists. If you have children who are taking part in the worship, please arrive by 9:00 a.m. so we can run through the bulletin and review our "jobs" for the day.

## Music Notes

Many thanks to the wonderful singers who made the Easter service so special. We are still looking for new members (both musically and not-so-musically inclined) and welcome you to join us. We rehearse after worship each Sunday following Coffee Hour. No need to read music!

Steve Haunschild



## Help Wanted

### Holiday Market and Appraisal Fair

We need various volunteers (all booth chairs and a helper for each, basket and bow volunteers, set up and break down teams) for a total of about 25-30 volunteers. Don't let this big number scare you! There are opportunities to volunteer for only 4 hours and up to 2-3 Sundays/Saturdays depending on the role. Specific signup sheets with detailed role explanations and time commitments will be available shortly for you to look over and determine if you want to or are able to help. If we don't have enough volunteers, we will not be able to hold this important fundraising event.

### Fellowship Hour Sign-Up

Hosting Fellowship Hour is a great time to promote fellowship in the church. You don't have to provide anything elaborate—just some goodies and coffee (and help/instructions are available for the coffee-making). Simply sign up on the list in Fellowship Hall.

### Ushers

Ushering is a great way to make our members and guests feel welcome. New signup sheets are available for your use—sign up for the Sundays you're available. No need for a weekly commitment.

## Caring and Sharing

### Shepherd's Pantry

Our food pantry continues needs all the basics, including boxes. We can use tuna, pasta, spaghetti sauce, cereal, fruit, soup, vegetables, and crackers. Since many of our clients have health issues, we can use healthier food options, including gluten-free and lower sodium/fat free items. Toilet paper is needed as well. Many thanks for your continued donations and cash gifts for the support to help our neighbors in need.

### Shut-Ins

The Nurture-Outreach Ministry Team has a new shut-in list posted on the bulletin board next to the kitchen. Please think of these important members of our community and send them a card, or better

yet, stop by for a visit. If there's anyone you know who needs a visit, let one of the team members or the church office know and we'll add them to the list.

### **Fellowship Hour Thank You**

There is not a lot to say about how important fellowship hour after church is until you look around and see everyone visiting and connecting during this time. A special thank you goes out to all our Sunday Fellowship Hour hosts and hostesses who provide the goodies and make this time possible. All should step up to the plate and take a turn. Feel free to have a friend or family member help you out—volunteers are needed and help showing how everything is done is available.

### **Facebook**

PK invites you to “friend” her on Facebook.

### **Save Your Pop-Tabs!**

We are continuing to collect your pop tabs—there's a box in the kitchen for them. These tabs go toward helping with food, supplies, and utilities for the Ronald McDonald House in Providence. The House provides a home-away-from-home for families of critically ill children. Without these donations, the House would not be able to provide for the families. Thank you for the tabs and if you have any questions about donations, please contact Sue Dyl.

### **Blood Pressure Measurement**

We are able to check blood pressures in the office. Check with Pastor Katherine.

*Summer*  
(June, July, and August)  
*Circuit Rider*  
*Information due*  
*May 12*

## **Office Notes**

### **Annual Giving**

If you would like a box of envelopes or would like to sign up for EFT giving, please contact the church office. Pam can help get you started!

### **Upcoming Event?**

If you have an upcoming event or are hosting coffee hour and need supplies, please check what we have in the kitchen and storage area. If something is missing, let Pam know if we need to order something at least two weeks ahead of time.

### **Sunday Bulletin Announcements**

Just a reminder that your “short” announcements for the Sunday bulletin must be submitted to the office not later than the Tuesday before you'd like them to appear. Call the church office (821-8217), leave a note in the church office mailbox, or email [office@sovumc.org](mailto:office@sovumc.org). Thank you!

### **Church Program Drop-offs**

Are you dropping something off for Open Table, the food pantry, or another mission project or event? Please put a label on your items/boxes so we can ensure they end up in the proper place. If you put it in the clothing closet (next to the sanctuary), please leave Pam a note so she knows it's there.

### **New Email?**

Be sure to let us know any changes in your email address so we can be sure any electronic communications reach you. Let the church office know of any email, phone, or address changes by email ([office@sovumc.org](mailto:office@sovumc.org)) or leave a note on Pam's desk.

### **SOV Mission Statement**

We are Shepherd of the Valley United Methodist Church, a multi-generational Christ community seeking to sing God's spirit into the world by inviting all, serving all, loving all.

Shepherd of the Valley  
United Methodist Church  
604 Seven Mile Road  
Hope, RI 02831

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
West Warwick, RI  
PERMIT 1

DO NOT FORWARD—CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED  
TIME VALUE—DO NOT DELAY

MAY, 2019 CIRCUIT RIDER

## On-line Giving: Try it, you'll like it!

Go to SOVUMC.org and select "Give now" in "Giving," or download the "GivePlus" app on your phone



(Mobile app example)

## Mother's Day



Sunday, May 12<sup>th</sup>  
Fellowship Hall  
following worship  
**Bakers and buyers wanted!**  
(Proceeds to fund Camp Aldersgate  
scholarships)