

CIRCUIT RIDER

The Newsletter of Asbury United Methodist Church

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Jean Evans, Editor



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 2022

Peace and blessings to you all.

I am just completing my first two months among you. In the midst of moving and meetings I have been able to get out and visit with a few of you. I am starting to learn your stories both individually and as the entity known as Asbury. I am honored by your willingness to share who you are. So let me tell you something about myself.

I was born in Jamaica, Queens. I was the youngest of four: Faith, Johnny, Nancy, and me. We had a dog, Bum, and a cat or two. My father modeled a life where you cared about your neighbor bringing home people for holiday dinners who otherwise would eat alone, and rebuilding the newsstand on the corner for the blind man who operated it. My mother gave me a great love of reading, a passion for knowledge, and learning.

My father developed lung cancer when I was about 11. We moved to Richmond Hill and then my father died before my 14th birthday. By that time my oldest siblings had moved out and I was sent to live with my father's sister, Aunt Clara, in Bloomfield, New Jersey. A difficult year followed living with a friend's family in North Newark. In the summer heading into 11th grade my sister Nancy came to get me and we both moved in with the Barton family.

Charles Barton was a pastor within our conference who had known our family for many years. By this time they were living in Mt. Kisco. When I now speak of my brothers and sisters it is of them that I am speaking most often. They are Martha and her husband Joe, retired teachers in San Antonio; Carol, who worked for UMW, and her husband Fred who is retired from the IT department at Jazz at Lincoln Center and living in Manhattan, and their two adult children Russ and Sarah (both now married); Stewart, a programmer for Hitachi Metal, and his wife Ruth, a retired teacher, who can be found in Larchmont and at music festivals; and Susan Lee who is a conference associate for the Friends General Conference and who has returned to her favorite town, Richmond, Indiana, to live. I have a blood sister Faith, who is a retired pastor in California, and a brother Johnny last seen in Germany.

Those who have come to church may have met my husband, Glenn, retired from wood floor restoration and installation. On my first Sunday at Asbury my daughter Stephanie Parsons was here. She is living in Highland, New York, worships at New Paltz United Methodist Church, and

works as a behavior analyst with the Center for Discovery. Stephanie's family is in Texas where her father is a local pastor. She came into our lives about 14 years ago and has graced us with being her New York family.

Glenn has three brothers: Richie in St. Augustine, Florida, Barry and Christine in New Jersey, and Evan and Mary in New Hampshire.

I am looking forward to sharing more about who I am as we continue to meet and talk. I hope you will make some time for me. Please sign up on Sunday for the following week or call me to set a time.

May God continue to guide us all as we look to grow more and more into the people God made us to be.

Peace,
Pastor Bette

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Change in Covid Policies

At the Administrative Council meeting on August 30 held with both in-person and Zoom attendees there was a lengthy thoughtful discussion of our current Covid policies. This discussion touched on the recent change to CDC guidelines for social distancing and the current recommendation for individual mask-wearing where community transmission is high or a person is considered at high risk of severe illness. Following this discussion a motion was made and approved to withdraw our current policy of mandatory mask-wearing during worship and instead make mask-wearing optional per individual choice. Similarly, a motion was also made and approved to eliminate our current system of every-other-row pew seating. Going forward mask-wearing and social distancing during worship will both become your own individual choices.

We recognize that there may be significant differences of thought on these issues and hope that we can all be respectful of individual decisions.

NEW MEMBERS NOTICE

We will be taking in new members on Sunday, September 18. Please join us in worship as we recommit ourselves in this service.

If you would like to become a member of Asbury United Methodist Congregation, please contact Pastor Bette at 518-231-1396 or pastorbette@gmail.com.

ONE RED PAPER CLIP

Mark 4:30-32

Jesus also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

On Sunday, September 18 we will be bringing this parable to life starting with a small paper clip. You will receive one in worship (or call so we can arrange to get one to you). You are invited to take the clip and TRADE it with ANYONE for something BIGGER and/or BETTER - you decide what you consider bigger or better.

Keep TRADING UP and bring your final item on Sunday, October 23 for a blessing. Your item will be auctioned off on Saturday, November 12 along with all those brought in. Proceeds will be used in the ministries and missions of Asbury.

We will have a poster in the church where you can track your trades. Join the fun - write your name and your first item on a Post-it Note and add it to the poster. As you Trade up record your trades and add them to your list.

With whom can I Trade????? Your next door neighbor, your nephew or niece, the person in front of you in the supermarket, your boss, your teacher, your employee, your BFF, a total stranger who answers your ad.* (*Advertise on Facebook, Craigslist, Nextdoor, put up a flyer, send an email - or something else!!)

Still confused - ask Pastor Bette

ALTAR FLOWERS

With the return to in person services we are again accepting requests for altar flowers. A flower chart for requests is hanging on the wall near the pastor's office in the education building or you may contact Gloria Laemmel at 914-271-8712 or at gwlml@verizon.net to place a request. The cost for two vases is \$42.00. For payment, please make your check out to Asbury UMC with a note in the memo section saying altar flowers and send it to the church to Gloria's attention.

ASBURY AT CROTON VILLAGE-WIDE TAG SALE

Asbury will be participating in the Croton Village-Wide Tag Sale on Saturday, September 17. We will set up on the front lawn along with the Treasure Chest. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Gloria Laemmel at 914-271-8712 or Barbara Whipple at 914-271-5095. Please do not leave donations outside the church doors. We will not be selling large furniture, linens, books, electronics, clothing or toys.

We will need a team to help sort and price items, set up tables on sale day, help with the sale and clean up at the end. To offer help please contact Gloria Laemmel or Barbara Whipple at the above numbers.

THE POP-UPS RETURN

The Asbury United Women of Faith (formerly called United Methodist Women) will hold their seasonal Pop-Up Holiday Shops again this Fall. The first shop will open on October 1 on the front lawn during the Croton Fall Festival held at Vassallo Park. The Treasure Chest will also be open that day. If you have new or gently used fall décor items, including for Halloween, and/or Christmas items you would like to donate please contact Barbara Whipple at 914-271-5095 or Gloria Laemmel at 914-271-8712.

OPEN ARMS FOR REFUGEES - Updates

In January *Ossining for Refugees* was organized to help settle refugees in the local area in conjunction with HIAS and Catholic Charities. Asbury Administrative Council, on behalf of the congregation, agreed to support the organization. It has since grown to an organization of over 75 volunteers and renamed to *Open Arms for Refugees*. They have helped settle four households: a young Afghan woman trained as a legal aide who spoke little English and who is now employed in the legal profession; an Afghan family with two little girls who are now settled in Cold Spring and supported by UMC Cold Spring volunteers; a Columbian mother and two teenage boys who finally obtained asylum status after waiting two years in Ecuador; an Afghan woman with a master's degree in electrical engineering.

It is expected that additional refugees will be settled in the future. Donations are welcome. For information on volunteering and/or donating visit the website ***OpenArmsForRefugees.org***. For more information, please contact Cynthia Plater.

LIFE UNDER THE TALIBAN

Three of the four resettlements supported by *Open Arms for Refugees* are from Afghanistan. Two media pieces inform us of the world our newest neighbors left behind but still care deeply about.

In *Taliban Rewind the Clock* the New York Times (August 12, 2022) chronicles the broad loss of rights. An excerpt: "Girls are barred from secondary schools and women from traveling any significant distance without a male relative. Men in government offices are told to grow beards, wear traditional Afghan clothes and prayer caps, and stop work for prayers. And music is officially banned, and foreign news broadcasts, TV shows and movies have been removed from public airwaves. At checkpoints along the streets, morality police chastise women who are not covered from head to toe in all-concealing burqas and headpieces in public."

In *Afghanistan Undercover* (Frontline, August 9, 2022, 54 minutes) Afghan journalist, film maker and author Ramita Navai digs even deeper into the persecution of women across Afghanistan filming in-person interviews of Afghan women and of Taliban leaders.

Links to each of these compelling pieces can be found in News & Needs at OpenArmsForRefugees.org.

BISHOP URGES HOPE, CARE IN ‘UNTENABLE’ TIMES

“It is time for a new model and a fresh way... We must begin to pray and discern and work internationally for a way to “bless and send rather than fight and rend,” a way that, for the sake of the mission of the church, we bless one another as we head in different directions.”

In his State of the Church Episcopal Address, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton urged the gathering to focus on loving and caring for one another and the world as the work is done to create new pathways and possibilities for the denomination. He was clear in stating that the UMC is in an “untenable” situation... a situation that you cannot hold and that we have failed in our attempts to stay together. Trusting in legislation to resolve the differences has proved fruitless. “The problem with legislation is that we are putting our emotional and spiritual lives in the hands of a system that is broken,” Bickerton said. “It’s time for us to find a way forward and explore seriously what it means to “bless and send rather than fight and rend” for the sake of the mission of the church, he said.

Bickerton noted that his annual pilgrimage to England with the ordination class took on new meaning this year amid the current state of the church. “Perhaps we need John Wesley more than we ever have,” he said. “I am convinced that most of what developed as Wesleyan theology grew out of Wesley’s own struggle with life and ministry... I like to say that John Wesley was a resistor.” He reminded the gathering of the question in the baptismal liturgy, “Will you resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? That is a critical question for anyone in pastoral leadership, whether you are a layperson or a clergy person,” he said.,

In his resistance, Wesley found new places and controversial ways to proclaim the gospel, even when barred from his home church. “John Wesley had to resist the call to conform to standard church practices in order to give birth to a new movement,” Bickerton said. And the growth of the movement was greatly fueled by Wesley’s intertwining of personal and social holiness.

The bishop believes that the UMC is suffering a crisis of personal holiness and is in “need of a new conversion from the things that are killing us to the things that are giving us life.” He also believes that the church is experiencing its own version of a crisis of social holiness—one that is centered on the word “resistance.” Some are resistant to conformity, and yet others resistant to conflict—just wanting all this church conflict to go away.

“But the clear reality is this: It will not go away,” the bishop said. But he admitted there is no “snap of a finger” fix in a multi-billion-dollar institution with 12 million members. “I believe that as soon as this time next year, we will begin to see those potential pathways emerging,” the bishop said. “Pathways that have as a common core a care for one another and a passion to have as few victims on the side of the road as possible. “...I believe that there is a pathway that is emerging, something that we can look forward to as a way of stopping this endless fight of judgment, skepticism and accusation in this untenable situation.”

He urged members to return home and find ways to live out the conference’s mission, vision and core values in spite of the current circumstances. Those statements answer the “why” questions of

the care, love and service that the NYAC is to offer the world. The next steps that the bishop detailed were:

- The formation of cooperative parishes throughout all of the districts that will focus on training leaders and engaging in deeper more intimate conversations about a way forward in the NYAC. (Each church has been assigned to a cluster and those designations are listed in the appointment books.)
- Next Steps roundtable meetings will gather 35v leaders from across the theological spectrum, beginning next week. This group will discuss how to “create models or expressions of how we live out our various viewpoints in venues that are safe, non-judgmental, and focused once more on the mission of the church.”
- Work across the connection of the church to create alignments of similar thought with other annual conferences. “Re-alignments will be necessary, especially here in New York because our small numbers will not lend themselves to sustainable models in any expression.”

Until that happens “we need to go about our work here with civility and grace, knowing that there is something in the not-too-distant future that will enable us to live out our various callings...” The bishop called on the gathering to proclaim that even in the midst of discouraging and confusing times that God will indeed prevail and hope will endure. “... Let us love and respect one another in the meantime...do the job of fulfilling your calling and mission...show then that we have the capacity to love God and love others so deeply that not even the discord and the division within our church can ultimately deter us from being the difference makers in places where we are called to serve,” the bishop said.

THE HISTORY CORNER

September brings us the autumnal equinox and chrysanthemums, that hardy flower of fall with a wide variety of flower sizes, pedal layers, and colors.

Chrysanthemums are native to China and we know they were cultivated thousands of years ago and referred to in texts in 1,500 B.C. In A.D. 400 one of China's greatest poets, T'ao Ch'ien, wrote, "The fall chrysanthemums have lovely colors, I pluck the pedals that are wet with dew." He did not pick the flower solely for aesthetic purposes but he continues on to describe dropping petals in wine for an infusion believed to increase longevity. Today in Korea you can purchase wine infused with mum pedals to increase longevity. For centuries all chrysanthemums were yellow and the Chinese kept working to create hybrids of other colors, though it took until the Tang dynasty (618-902) to develop a white variety. In Japan the imperial seal is a chrysanthemum and the institution of the monarchy is called the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Chrysanthemums were brought from English gardens to America by Col. John Stevens in 1798. He planted them in Elysian Field in Hoboken, New Jersey, a public garden along the shores of the Hudson River, across from New York City where New Yorkers could go for a pleasant outing to escape the confines of city living. Some of us may remember the corsages of a large chrysanthemum adorned with ribbons of team colors women were given to wear to football games in the 1950's and 60's. Those chrysanthemums were for many years labeled as "football mums".

A THOUGHT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

"Large public protected areas were the backbone of America's conservation strategy in the 20th century and they are still important. But monuments and parks are not enough. To safeguard all our species, all our ecosystems—and to make sure that they have the resources and space to adapt as the climate continues to warm—we need to do conservation everywhere. On private timberland. On farms. In cities."

—National Geographic, September 2022

PRAYER

God, help me to know that nothing can defeat me if I keep myself humbly in contact with you. Grant me the greatness of soul to confront my problems intelligently and courageously. For this I thank you. Amen

—Rev. Norman Vincent Peale

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>SEPTEMBER 2022</p> <p>ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</p> </div>				1	2 Treasure Chest 10:00am – 4:30pm	3 9:00am - UMM Breakfast 9:30am - UMM Meeting Treasure Chest 10:00am – 4:30pm
4 11:00am Hybrid Worship in person at Bethel Chapel or via Zoom or phone	5	6	7	8	9	10 9:00am - UMM Breakfast 9:30am - UMM Meeting 9:30am Sally Read Book Club via Zoom
11 11:00am Hybrid Worship in person in Sanctuary or via Zoom or phone Jan Peek - Serve Dinner	12	13	14	15	16	17 9:00am - UMM Breakfast 9:30am – UMM Meeting 9:30am UMW Conference Call via Zoom Tag Sale on front lawn 10am- 4pm
18 11:00am Hybrid Worship in person in Sanctuary or via Zoom or phone	19 Salvation Army Lunch 10:30am	20	21	22	23	24 9:00am - UMM Breakfast 9:30am – UMM Meeting
25 11:00am Hybrid Worship in person in Sanctuary or via Zoom or phone	26	27	28	29	30	1 OCTOBER Fall Pop-Up 12noon – 6pm Treasure Chest Open 12noon – 6pm