



What comes to mind when you think about freedom? Many think of having freedom by living in the United States of America. That is definitely on the minds of most at this time of year. However, the ultimate freedom comes from our Lord! However, there is so much more involved in freedom. God tried to give freedom from the very beginning of human life. God gave freewill to Adam and Eve at Creation.

Unfortunately, freedom has been abused and neglected from the very beginning, so we find ourselves always seeking freedom, but not always making the best decisions in order to gain it. We also don't seek the right kind of freedom. It is usually thought that freedom is being able to have full control over our own lives. This type of freedom is never really possible because of the original purpose for human life.

But there is great hope of true freedom. We find this in Romans 8:19-21 CEB, "The whole creation waits breathless with anticipation for the revelation of God's sons and daughters. Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice—it was the choice of the one who subjected it [Satan]—but in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay [sin] and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children."

Satan works in our lives to create the frustration that exists in our lives, and provides all the evil influences that bombard us. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to help us to fully understand the kind of freedom that we need, and to accept Christ into our hearts in order to have the true freedom that God has intended for us.

It is a blessing to enjoy many of the freedoms that are provided within our country, and we must continue to work to maintain those freedoms. However, some of the freedoms that are present are not good for us. We need to be cautious in what we allow to influence us; including media, technology, politics, beliefs, temptations, etc. We are reminded in Romans 6:20-23 this: "When you were slaves of sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have the consequence of a holy life, and the outcome is eternal life. The wages that sin pays are death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is True Freedom!

Blessings,
Pastor Ruthie



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021

Bishop Tracy S. Malone presided over the 52nd session of the East Ohio Annual Conference. This year's theme was *Christ Alive in Us!* and the guiding scripture was Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV): *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

The services, celebrations, and business sessions were broadcast live from the John S. Knight Center in Akron June 16-19. Held virtually again this year due to ongoing pandemic, 624 registered clergy members and the 577 registered lay members viewed conference and voted remotely. The virtual experience was better this year than last, however, there were still some difficulties; one being that some of our local delegates because of a power outage in the Rittman, Marshallville, Creston, Sterling, and some of Seville area, which occurred on Friday for much of the day.

Some of the adaptive ministries of East Ohio Conference pastors, congregations and faith communities were highlighted throughout conference in the form of Christ Alive in Us! videos that focused on creative ministry partnerships, missions, youth, camps, spiritual formation, community outreach, and racial justice. *(This is copied and adapted from Rick Wolcott's report.)*

There is much more available on the following link to give you a full detailed account of the conference, including pictures and videos.

<https://eocumcnews.com/2021/06/19/east-ohio-annual-conference-2021-christ-alive-in-us/>

More details will be shared in the August Points to Ponder.



This cup reminded me of my husband! Many of you know that he retired this year at Annual Conference. He has been a license pastor since he was 17 years old. He has service a church as a pastor since college graduation. After serving 2 Friends Meetings [Quaker churches], Cuba & Martinsville, during seminary for 3 years; he served United Methodist churches for 41 more years. You might think that after that many years that he would be excited to relax and enjoy some time off. However, that was not his thought. He had already planned to serve a church part-time if God made one available. As of July 1st he will be pastoring Sterling UMC. He is an inspiration to me in what a pastor truly is!



Joys



APRIL LYNN WAS BORN TO ADAM & MEGAN (HENNIE) BIROW ON JUNE

Pastor Ruthie - health is continuing to improve

Pastor Don - test results were good

Concerns

Dave R. - recovery from fall Scott R. - tests & upcoming procedures

Damon W. - continued recovery from injury Pam H. - health

Butch & Nancy Mc. - health & test results

Niles & Rita B.

Irene H. - back pain

Pastor Ruthie & Pastor Don Trigg - health for both, and during their move

(Their addition is still not done, so they are living with their daughter and family.)

Harry & Nancy B. - health for both

Pauline R. - health

Nina (Pam H's sister-in-law's mother) - comfort & peace

Our sympathy to the family & friends of:

Richard Winkler

Carol, Dawn Hennie's friend

Nancy Mcmillan's brother



July

1st - Dale Stahl

8th - Nancy Booth

13th - Tina Richards

15th - Danny Keifer

20th - Lisa Hartman

25th - Bailey Toss

28th - Irene Hopton

2nd - Eleanor Yoss

10th - Matt Seiler

14th - Sandy DiMascio

16th - Dana Dysinger

24th - Ty Ramsier

27th - Bob Hartman



July

1st - Joe & Holly Staley

14th - Brent & Sarah Edington

11th - Mike & Debbie Knapic

29th - Butch & Nancy McMillian

Mary's Meanderings - July 2021

This year we celebrate the 245th 4th of July in America. Thank God for the bravery and sacrifice of our forefathers and thank God for our freedom. Sam Houston, American politician (1793-1863) said "Independence is declared; it must be maintained."

Jesus had some things to say about freedom. "If you remain in My word, then you are truly My disciples. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." John 8:31-32. But are we free to do as we selfishly please? NO, we are free to do what the Word says and free to serve God. And how do we serve God? By serving others. "Truly I say to you, as you have done it for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you have done it for Me." Matthew 25:40.

We are blessed to live in a nation based upon rights guaranteed to everyone. It has not been perfect and we seem to be facing enemies from within and without our country. But we must always remember John 8:36 "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." It's a choice we make. We have the freedom to choose our destiny. We can be slaves to sin or set free by Jesus Christ.

So celebrate the 4th of July as John Adams intended, the great anniversary festival with parades, shows, games, sports, bells, bonfires and fireworks. Especially this year as we are slowly recovering from the enormous challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.



**A burgler broke into a home and was stealing things when a voice said,
"Jesus is watching you."**

**The burgler looked up to ask who said that? Me, Moses, said the parrot.
"Who names a parrot Moses?" said the burgler. "The same person who
called that 150lb Rotweiller behind you, Jesus."**

Fireside Chat



From the Finance Chair

Remember the song the praise team leads us in "Oh happy day"? Well this is such a day! I am happy to report that our Flood Bucket Offering was very good and we were able to send over \$300.00 to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center which is enough to fill at least 4 buckets worth of cleaning supplies. That means that Noah and each of his sons could have had one to clean up with after God washed those sins away in the big flood. Thank you to all who were able to help

Until next month,
Martha Baillis, Finance Chair

Trustee's Corner



Items since last month:

- Lots of effort by Trustee's & volunteers to clean-up outside of church!
Trimmed trees out front – Sandy
Weedeated around church, sign, poles, trees, pavilion –
Lee, Betty, Sandy
Spread 8 yards of mulch; Dana, Robin, Brett, Heather,
Chad, Martha, Bruce

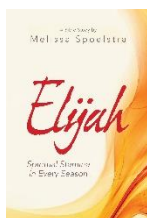
Women's Bible Study



Join us for a great chance to learn more about God's Word
and a wonderful time of fellowship!

We meet on Thursdays with a choice of:
10:00am in person led by Pastor Ruthie,
or 6:30pm led by Sara Ullman and Betty Winchell.
Contact Pastor Ruthie or Betty, if you need books.

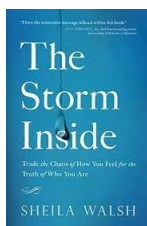
Here are the studies that are coming through 2021 and the beginning of 2022.
Yes, the schedule is already set!



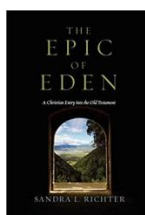
Elijah: Spiritual Stamina in Every Season by Melissa Spoelstra
July 8th-Aug. 19th (6 sessions)



Chasing Vines: Finding Your Way to an Immensely Fruitful Life by Beth Moore
Sept. 2nd - Oct. 21st (6 sessions)



The Storm Inside:
Trade the Chaos of How You Feel for the Truth of Who You Are
By Sheila Walsh
Nov. 3rd - Jan. 20th (8 sessions)



The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament
By Sandra L. Richter
Feb. 3rd - April 21st (12 sessions)

Consider joining the Women's Bible Study group.
It is a great opportunity to grow in your spiritual
walk with the Lord, plus the fellowship.

Think About It

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.
When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.
Opportunity may knock once, but temptation hangs on your
front door forever.

Quit griping about your church, if it was perfect, none of us could belong.

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.

He who angers you, controls you.

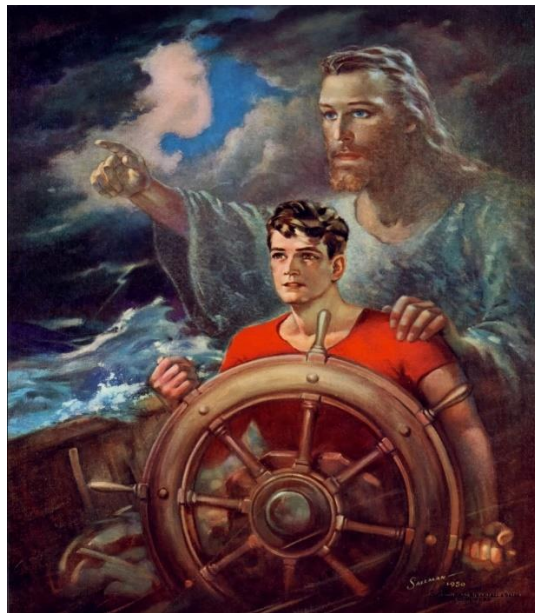
The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

The Will of God will never take us where the Grace of God will
not protect us.

We don't change the message, the message changes us.

Peace starts with a smile.

If God is your co-pilot, give Him back the controls!



Pray with Boldness and Confidence

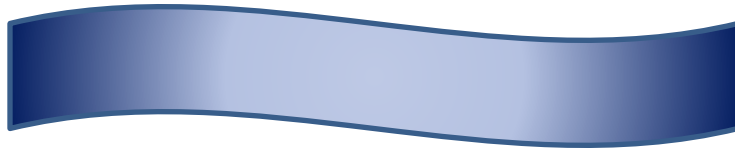
Prayer opens the windows of heaven and touches the heart of God. It is a beautiful and powerful privilege that brings many changes in both circumstances and people. Prayer is often the difference between confusion and clarity, hurt and healing, defeat and victory, and even between life and death.

There are many ways to pray, but the best way is to pray boldly and effectually. God loves you and He doesn't want your communication with Him to be vague and unclear. He wants you to come to Him fearlessly and confidently, being specific in your prayers.

Exercise the liberty and privilege of prayer today, fully expecting to receive the promised help just when you need it.



Thank you to everyone who continues to support the funding & volunteering for the food pantry. Our June Food Pantry, we had 13 families (0 new), 34 people and 16 sets of bags given out. If you hear of anyone needing food, please have them call the church office to come pick up a food supply during office hours, or they can contact Pastor Ruthie to set up a different time to pick up. Our next Food Pantry will be Wednesday, July 21st, 4 - 5:30pm.



Once a man was asked, "What did you gain by regularly praying to God?"
The man replied, "Nothing...but let me tell you what I lost: Anger, ego,
greed, depression, insecurity, and fear of death."
Sometimes the answer to our prayers is not gaining but losing; which
ultimately is the gain.



“Kind hearts are gardens,
Kind thoughts are roots,
Kind words are flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits.
Take care of your garden and keep out the weeds.
Fill it with sunshine, kind words, and kind deeds.

~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow