

# CONLEY'S CONNECTION

In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity.

*A Message from Pastor Bill Davis*

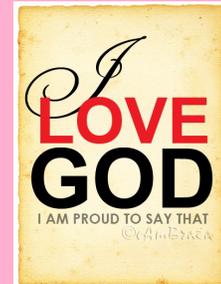
***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.***

Matthew 22:37-39

A catalogue of children's Valentine's Day party invitations recently arrived in the mail. Looking at the familiar cards, I was immediately transported back to childhood parties at church and school featuring cupcakes and candy hearts and an overload of pink and red decorations. Of course, it wasn't that long ago that we were receiving invitations to Christmas parties, and soon it will be St Patrick's Day, and so it goes... a never-ending parade of invitations.

Holiday parties, family gatherings, and backyard barbeques with friends all bear witness to a simple truth: people are happiest in community with one another. This is not to say that community comes easily. A humorous Valentine card states, "As long as we've got each other...we'll never run out of problems." C. S. Lewis put it more seriously: "Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal...lock it up safe in the casket of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable." Building community is not only difficult - sometimes it is painful. It requires both the willingness to work and the courage to risk. Yet, despite all its trials and tribulations, we all yearn for community; it is not possible to be fulfilled and lonely at the same time. God created us to love and to be loved. And God's pronouncement in Genesis, "It is not good for the man to be alone," is as true now as it was at creation.

We serve a God of invitations. Adam and Eve were invited to walk with God, Abraham to be a conduit of divine blessing, and Moses and the Israelites to pursue a new way of living. Jesus invited the disciples to follow, Peter to be restored, Thomas to be convinced, and everyone to be forgiven. In the passage above, Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to love God and to love others. I believe this is not only the greatest commandment, but also the greatest invitation. Jesus is not merely commanding us to live an obedient life, he is inviting us to live a blessed life. For it is in loving God and others that we find joy and peace. Love is not always easy, but it is always worth the effort. As our society celebrates love throughout this month, may it serve as a reminder that Christ invites his followers to celebrate God's love at all times.



*How priceless is your  
unfailing love, O God!  
People take refuge in the  
shadow of your wings.*

**Psalm 36:7**

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AND REVIVAL COMMITTEE

## Why Is Prayer Important?

*Pray continually; Give thanks in all circumstance, for this is God's will for you in Jesus Christ.* 1Thessalonians 5: 17,18

Worry can do a lot of things to you. Prayer can do a lot of things for you. The answer to every problem is Jesus. He alone holds all the answers. Through prayer we have unlimited access to God's unlimited power. Jesus is at the right hand of God interceding for us. (Romans 8:34) . We may not know when or how God will answer but our faith tells us he will answer. He always does. As soon as we begin to pray, God begins to answer. (Daniel 9:23). He may not answer the way we wish but when we submit to his will we are blessed. Because we believe in the awesome sovereignty of God we can pray with confidence and not fear the future. Our God, the one and only true God, has the power and desire to answer our prayer, meet our needs and change our lives. We can be encouraged that during our trials our Lord is praying for us. Why is prayer important? Prayer is the tool that keeps us going.

**Heavenly Father, You are our God who sees us and hears us. You know and care about our needs. It is Your will that we pray, whether in times of plenty or times of want. Your scripture tells us You hear and answer, and yet it is not always our first response. Forgive us for our reluctance and lack of faith. We get impatient and let our concerns control us. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit. When anxiety overcomes us sit with us. Hold us by Your right hand and lift us up. Calm our spirits by Your Spirit. When we cannot say the words, hear our heart prayers and answer them. While we wait may we ever praise You knowing nothing is impossible for You. You always work things for our good. Thank You for the gift of prayer. In the faithful name of Jesus Christ who intercedes for us, Amen.**

## CONLEY'S RINGERS

We have a new musical group—*Conley's Ringers*—that formed in the spring of 2022 and started rehearsing last fall. The Ringer's first formal performance was held during the worship service on Sunday, January 8 and the song selection was "Silent Night." The group is directed by Alyce Amussen and includes: Nancy Lank, Lynn Silicato, Sandy Shipe, Gwen Michel, and Jean Carpenter.





## ODYSSEA: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

### Scales of the Faithful

By Art Schmidt

*For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.* Matthew 7:2 NIV

He who believes in Jesus Christ shall not be judged—unbelief is a force that condemns the unbeliever to eternal judgement, and he shall not enter the Kingdom of God. Ah, but scripture also tells the *believer* to be very careful not to judge others lest they will be judged with equal measure.

If we are totally honest with ourselves, we'd have to accept the fact that we tend to judge others far more often and too quickly than we would want to admit. How easy is it to do? Well, if we were able to end each day by reading a transcript of our thoughts and words, we would be very surprised how frequently we say or think judgmental things. Sometimes it seems judgmental thoughts pop into our heads automatically no matter how hard we try to prevent it. Our “blink” kicks in and we tend to “sum-up” a person at first glance. Have you ever noticed someone you don't know walk into church on a Sunday dressed in a manner that you think is inappropriate for a worship service? “Look at how that person is dressed!” Isn't it more important that they were there to worship than how they're dressed? God won't care, so why should we?

In his book, Blink, Malcolm Gladwell reveals his viewpoint of human judgement: “The reality is that we go through our daily life instinctively judging people within the first two seconds of contact no matter whether we know them or not.” As the book title proclaims, Gladwell labels that process – when our mind makes a series of conclusions about a person based upon our instinct, sight, and experience in about two seconds – as “blink”; our mind quickly passes judgement, and we react accordingly. Gladwell then justifies those instant conclusions by calling them powerful, important, rational, and often accurate. But when are those snap judgments good and when are they not? Could we be wrongfully misjudging people? According to Gladwell: “Less is more. The less we know about a person, the better our initial judgement will be.” I'm not sure I would agree with that. Have you ever formed an opinion about a person only to discover you were wrong after you got to know them?

As faithful members of Conley's, where we practice Radical Hospitality and profess Open Hearts, and Open Doors, we strive to maintain our outreach approach and grow in our faith. For example, our Feeding the Flock ministry has opened our doors to the homeless in our community and offered them food and other services. Our other ministries like Kairos and the Summer Camp for underprivileged children have augmented our church's outreach. What better way to show the love of God than to welcome and extend a helping hand to those less fortunate and in need. To love God is to love people. That's the message from Conley's and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Oh Lord, teach me to feel another's woe, to hide the fault I see; That the mercy I show to others, also be shown to me. Amen.*—Alexander Pope

### GOD IS LOVE ☩

Love is blind, the phrase runs. Nay, I would rather say, love sees as God sees, and with infinite wisdom and infinite pardon. —Ouida



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm\\_Gladwell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_Gladwell)

Malcolm Gladwell is an English-born Canadian journalist, public speaker, and author of five New York Times bestsellers. Blink was published in 2005 and explains how the human unconscious interprets events or cues as well as how past experiences can lead people to make informed decisions rapidly.

## Grace to Good Works

Relying on God's grace is perhaps the most important component of Christian faith. Yet, there is considerable concern and misunderstanding among Christian believers about the connection between God's grace and good works.

While biblical texts clearly describe we are saved by grace alone, confusion remains about the place of good works. Though we affirm we are saved by grace alone, we find good works to be a tempting functional alternate means of gaining God's—and perhaps others'—favor.

What is the role of good works in Christian life? How do good works contribute to our salvation?

John Wesley offers helpful perspective on the role of good works. Wesley actually struggled for much of his early life and ministry with the role and place of good works in salvation. Wesley goes as far to say there are no good works until after justification, at salvation's beginning. For Wesley, any good work prior to one's acceptance of God's justifying grace can only function as a futile attempt to earn God's grace

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”* (Ephesians 2: 8-9 NRSV)

God offers grace to all. Grace is the free gift of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* describes grace as: “By Grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit. The restoration of God's image in our lives requires divine grace to renew our fallen nature.”

A Christian's good works follow one's justification and demonstrate a grateful response to God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. According to John Wesley, works of mercy “whether they relate to the bodies or souls of [people]; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavoring to awaken the sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to succor the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death.”

When Christian believers practice good works, we respond to God's love by accepting the biblical invitation to love God and neighbor.

Source: [www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/11437](http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/11437)

## However Cold the Winter

By Garnett Ann Schultz

*“Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”* Job 37:14 KJV

**However cold the winter,  
I find the golden sun.  
However dark the night hours,  
The dawn is sure to come.  
Though storm clouds often gather,  
There still is peace to lend,  
And when the storm is over,  
A rainbow 'round the bend.  
However cold the winter,  
The spring will melt the snow,  
And then the Maytime flowers  
Will set the world aglow.  
The ever changing seasons  
Have so much to impart,  
And somehow each in turn it seems  
Lends laughter to my heart.  
The beauty of the autumn,  
The summer's magic bliss,  
And each December snowflake  
Is like an angel's kiss.  
Each sunrise—every sunset  
Has so much warmth to bring,  
However cold the winter,  
It always ends in spring.**



## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear Conley's Church Family,

As most of you know, there has for many years been an ongoing debate in The United Methodist Church (UMC) regarding issues of sexuality and the marriage and/or ordination of LGBTQ persons. In recent years, this debate has reached the point where the UMC is seriously considering dividing into two or more Methodist denominations. In light of this, many congregations are considering disaffiliating from the UMC...and some have already done so. The Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the UMC, of which Conley's is a member, offers a "discernment process" that assists churches to inform members of all the issues and options pertaining to this decision. After months of discussion and prayer, Conley's Church Council decided to take advantage of this offer.

Members of Conley's should have already received a letter from District Superintendent Joseph Archie inviting them to an Informational Conference to be held in Conley's sanctuary on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, at 3pm.\* This Informational Conference is the **first step** in the discernment process. Following the conference, the **second step** will be a four-week Bible Study taught at Conley's on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm, beginning March 1<sup>st</sup> and concluding March 22<sup>nd</sup>. I will teach the study using curriculum provided by the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. Following the study, the **third step** will be a Church Forum conducted at Conley's by Rev. Archie on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, at 1pm. The forum will lay out the guidelines for holding a vote and allow people to ask any further questions they may have. The **fourth step** will be a Church Conference at Conley's on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1pm, at which time the vote will take place. NOTE: disaffiliation requires a two-thirds majority of those voting.

To be clear: **no decision has yet been made** beyond the decision to call the congregation together to seek to discern God's will for our church. When the time comes to make a decision, every member of Conley's UMC will be able to cast their vote in person.

The decision to enter the discernment process was not made lightly. Your Church Council understands that there are differing views within our congregation. Indeed, it is for this reason that a thorough and thoughtful discernment process is important—we want to ensure that every member of our congregation has accurate and current information and is afforded the opportunity to have their voice heard. Participating in this process empowers Conley's United Methodist Church to make an informed decision.

So, what do we do in the meantime? "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near! Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition and with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

Simply put: keep on being the church. This is an important decision...but not so important that it should be allowed to hinder the much more important call of God to love and serve one another and our community. In obedience to God's Word, let's commit to being a non-anxious presence in our community and in our denomination, remaining in the peace of God that outmatches every earthly challenge. Let's continue in conversation with one another—with gentleness and respect to all, let's each endeavor to increase our understanding of the issues and of those who hold differing viewpoints. Finally, let's earnestly pray for our denomination and our church; may God's will be done in all things.

Peace,  
**Pastor Bill Davis**

*\* If you are a member of Conley's UMC and have not yet received the District Superintendent's letter, please contact the church office to confirm your membership status.*



# DID YOU KNOW

**...that Valentine's Day is the second most popular day of the year for sending cards?**

Christmas is the first most popular day for sending cards, but 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged each year. In Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet it is said that they lived in Verona Italy. Every year thousands of Valentine's Day cards are sent to Verona addressed to Juliet. The oldest known Valentine's Day card is on display at the British Museum in London. It's dates back to the 1400's.



Cupid is the son of Venus, the Roman God of love and beauty, and is said to be the symbol of valentines. The heart is associated with Valentine's Day as it is considered the source of all human emotions. A red rose is a favorite flower of Venus. For this reason the red rose is also the symbol of Valentine's Day. All over the world, over 50 million roses are given for Valentine's Day each year. Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are the biggest holidays for giving flowers.

California produces 60 percent of American roses, but the vast number sold on Valentine's Day in the United States are imported, mostly from South America. Approximately 110 million roses, the majority red, will be sold and delivered within a three-day time period. One single perfect red rose framed with baby's breath is referred to by some florists as a "signature rose," and is the preferred choice for many for giving on Valentine's Day, anniversary, or birthday. Approximately 73% of those who buy flowers on Valentine's Day are men and only 27% are women.



The symbol of the ribbon, which often adorns modern-day Valentines, is rooted in the Middle Ages. When knights competed in tournaments, their sweethearts often gave them ribbons for good luck. Girls of medieval times ate bizarre foods on St. Valentine's Day to make them dream of their future husband. 220,000 is the average number of wedding proposals on Valentine's Day each year.

Richard Cadbury invented the first Valentines Day candy box in the late 1800s. More than 35 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolate will be sold for Valentine's Day.



On average, men spend double the amount of money as women spend for gifts on Valentine's Day. The average amount a man spends is \$130. At least 9 million people buy gifts for their pets on Valentine's Day.



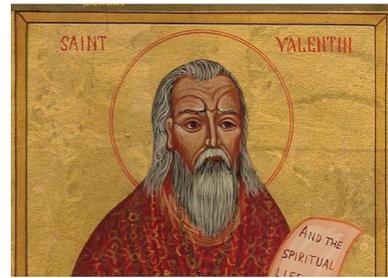
Pope Gelasius declared February 14, St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. In 1537, England's King Henry VII officially declared Feb. 14 the holiday of St. Valentine's Day. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes.

In the United States, 64% of men do not make plans in advance for a romantic Valentine's Day with their sweethearts.

 <https://www.theholidayspot.com/valentine/facts.htm>

## VALENTINE'S DAY & CHRISTIANITY

Valentine's Day began as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine. The feast was first established by Pope Gelasius I to honor one or two saints named "Valentinus" for being martyred on February 14.



February 14 is when we celebrate Valentine's Day. Although some enjoy it as the celebration of love, others reject it as a materialistic commercialized holiday. Valentine's Day started with a connection to Christianity but there is a lot of information to wade through to find the truth. The details within the stories connecting it to Christianity are difficult to prove. Nevertheless, Valentine's Day is connected to Christianity, but not solely.

Valentine's Day began as Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine. The feast was first established by Pope Gelasius I to honor one or two saints named Valentinus for being martyred on February 14. Those familiar with this connection believe there to be a single man, but there were actually three saints bearing the name Valentine or Valentinus. Two were from Italy and one was from Africa. Two were clearly beheaded, while the third one's *martyrdom* is only "supposed" by some.

One Valentine's story is that he was a temple priest who was imprisoned for ministering to Christians when they were being persecuted by the Roman empire. While in prison, he fell in love with a young woman (possibly the jailer's daughter) and sent her a *farewell note* (from "Your Valentine") before his execution. One version of the story states that the young woman was blind, and Valentine healed her, while other stories leave that part out.

Another Valentine's story says that he was beheaded for performing secret weddings when Emperor Claudius had outlawed them for young soldiers. And yet another story: Valentine was a priest who was arrested, but instead of being put in jail, he was put into the custody of an aristocrat named Asterius. After hearing Valentine speak, he challenged him about the validity of Christ. He bargained with him to heal his for Asterius to believe. Valentine healed her and they all got baptized. After Emperor Claudius II found out, he had Valentine killed. With the difficulty of determining which details are true, it's no wonder they can be found all mixed together, giving us the idea of a single person.

Whatever Valentine's Day means to you, it's a great opportunity to celebrate love, whether it be for family, friends, lovers, or neighbors because Jesus said that people would know us by our love.

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* (John 13:34-35).

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16).

*And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony* (Colossians 3:14).

*I found the one my heart loves* (Song of Solomon 3:4).

*Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised* (Song of Solomon 8:6-7).

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing* (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.* (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

*Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law* (Romans 13:10).

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Source: <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/holidays/what-is-valentines-day-and-is-it-connected-to-christianity>.

# Ministry in Motion!



## SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES

### **Kitchen Notes**

The health department requires that each person who works in the kitchen fill out a new health form each year. Blank forms can be found in the kitchen or contact Cheryl Wood.

### **Soup for the Soul**

Beginning in February, Dale Kehrer will be overseeing the Soup Kitchen. If you have questions, please contact her. Her home phone is 302-644-0614 and her cell phone is 302-245-4123.

Soup and Dessert makers are always needed. You can sign up on the clipboard in the Narthex. Soup makers need to make at least **1 gallon** of soup.

### **Feeding the Flock**

We continue to serve the apartments in Millsboro on Monday and Friday, as well as the Community Resource Center in Rehoboth on Mondays and the Higher Ground House on Saturdays. This is approximately 200 meals per week.

Obtaining non-profit status for this ministry is still in the early stages. While this is in process, we are planning to replace the garden by the picnic pavilion with a temporary, raised bed garden in the area by the pavilion by Short's boat yard. You may have noticed the red flags in that area as well as some wood under the pavilion that has been donated. This new garden plot was approved by the church council at their monthly meeting on Thursday, January 19. We are hoping to enhance our meals with produce from the garden.

We always appreciate your financial support of this vital ministry as well as your willingness to volunteer with meal preparation and delivery. Thank you!

*- Peace! Cheryl Wood*

***Note: Please DO NOT put food on the outside kitchen steps or porch.***

Serving   
from the  
Heart

## Greetings from the Mission Team!

First and always, we thank you for your generous giving to missions.

At our first meeting of 2023 the team made the decision to continue supporting the following:

Cape Henlopen Food Basket, Missionaries Edwin Ramirez and Finda Quiwa, Redbird Missionary Conference in Kentucky, United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR) and Kairos Inside, Outside and Torch of Delaware. Our undesignated funds were given to the CYC Summer Camp at Conley's this year.

If you have an interest in missions and would like to serve on the Mission Team, please let us know.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8*

Grace and Peace,  
Marie Van Der Wall  
Mission Team Leader



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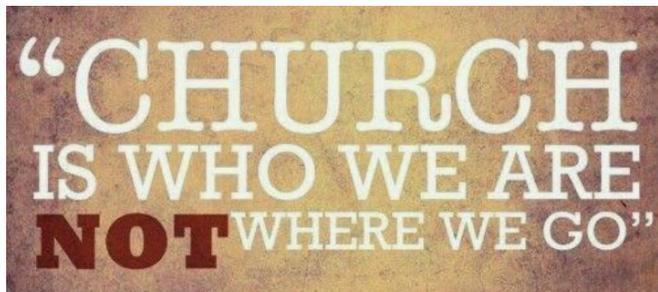
## What People Look For In A Church

There are many choices out there for people looking for a new church. Susan, my fiancé, and I started attending Conley's this past Advent. Three things that have most appealed to us at Conley's have been the friendly and welcoming people, a connection to Pastor Bill, and the use of a blended worship service, incorporating both traditional and contemporary elements.

Unfortunately, many people feel they have better things to do than attend church on Sundays. I recently read an article in The Guardian – *“Losing their religion: why US churches are on the decline”* ([www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/22/us-churches-closing-religion-covid-christianity](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jan/22/us-churches-closing-religion-covid-christianity)). It states that as the US adjusts to an increasingly non-religious population, thousands of churches are closing each year – probably accelerated by COVID.

That article is sad but true. It's also true that churches have to attract new members to survive. Susan and I are looking forward to participating in a new member class in February and join Conley's UMC. We look forward to getting to know you and continue growing our Christian faith at Conley's!

- *Gerald (Jerry) Pawlikowski*



## CLEANING UP CHRISTMAS

*“things of display year after year, re-hashing...again”*

Cleaning up Christmas? *Again?*

Large jig-sawed plywood cut-outs, lawn ornament Manger pieces, colored flood lights inside tin reflectors, *green* extension cords ‘n timers. It was time to retire ‘n re-box the trappings of Christmas, so up to my cramped attic yet again, yet *another* year.

Maneuvering the dimly lit, cave-like place, I became transposed - wondering about *Mary*... ‘cleaning up’ her Christmas amid a flickering flame: the umbilical cord, the babe’s face, wiping off the remnants: blood, mucous, the cloth from her garment, wrung in some nearby bucket or trough - dabbing his face, so dear.

These *same* things, came insight upon me, would also be HIS *hallmarks, talismans of this babe’s later life and sojourn of service:*  
**the cloth:** washing of feet; **the mucous:** gal spat in his face;  
**watery tears:** sweat beads of His Passion; **the outpouring “of blood ‘n water”:** His pierced side, never making plea.

My own fatigue now set in, all this shuffling to storage, these ‘things of display’, year after year, I, re-hashing again the ‘worth’, of the ‘*up ‘n down*’ of Christmas trimmings. Though of *this* I have no question: only **this** babe’s life, cleanse US, all OUR inequity!

*And a leper came to Him...and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*  
*Matthew 8:2-3 (NASB)*

*Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*  
*1 Corinthians 6:11 (NASB)*



Source: The book “A Fall Of Words” by Ron Starich



One of the joys of my life is being a volunteer cashier at Conley's Thrift Shop. My regular shift is Tuesday morning. Over the years I have come to see the wonderful ways God works through this ministry.

- Virtually everything we sell has been donated to us. In that sense all sales are 100% profit. And there is a steady stream of good quality donated goods to sell!
- The money we make is all used to support local ministries – including the mortgage on our church building.
- The staff is top notch. I cannot lift up one employee or volunteer over another because each one has a unique role in the overall operation.
- The low-cost items we sell help everyone stretch their budget dollars – but it is particularly a helpful place for the working poor to shop.
- Jokingly, I say that the thrift shop supports widows and orphans. But really, I am simply quoting James 1:27 – “Religion that is pure and undefiled is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction.”

On January 9, I officiated at a funeral at Conley's Chapel for Shelia McCall – age 78. She worked at Old Landing Golf Course for 31 years where she managed the Pro Shop and restaurant. Before the golf course closed, a group from Conley's regularly had breakfast there after the Sunday church service. Following the chapel service for Shelia, her casket was wheeled to her burial plot in Conley's Cemetery. The graveside service concluded as we interactively read I Corinthians 13.

In the 8:30 Sunday School class I teach, we are reading through the Gospel of Luke. During one class, the words of Jesus in Luke 6 seemed particularly difficult to absorb. A lively discussion ensued. You are invited to join the fun every Sunday!

Luke 6 (excerpts)

- If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. From anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. If anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.
- If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid. Lend, expecting nothing in return.
- Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye but do not notice the log in your own eye?
- Do not judge!

Three of our Sunday School class members are receiving prayers for healing: Barbara Joseph, Alyce Amussen. and Judy Parson.

I am still serving the Lord at age 70, after 10 years of retirement from pastoral ministry – preaching, doing funerals, performing weddings, teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, moving mountains, counseling, thrift shop cashier, and baptizing! During one weekend in January, I had funerals on Thursday, Friday, Monday, and Tuesday. Amazingly, I still found time to fit in 18 holes of golf in some balmy January weather.

**God is good – all the time.**



## WORSHIPPING DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

Worship with us on  
Sundays at 10:00 AM  
in person or online.

We live-stream  
the service on  
Vimeo and YouTube.  
Links on our website.

Produced by:

CONLEY'S  
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## WHAT'S GOING ON AT CONLEY'S?

### ◆ Sunday Morning Bible Study

Pastor Jim Van Der Wall leads this group every Sunday morning at 8:30 am in the Library. No class on Sunday, January 1.

### ◆ Conley's Bell Ringers

Rehearsal Mondays 7:30-8:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.  
The January 2 rehearsal will be held at 5 pm.

### ◆ Over 50 Yoga Class

Tuesdays 10:30-11:45 am in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own mat and bottled water. \$10 per session (cash only please).

### ◆ Soup for the Soul

Wednesdays at 11:00 am—1:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. The sign-up sheets are in the Narthex.

### ◆ Thursday Morning Bible Study

The study group meets on Thursdays at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall. The first study series this year runs for seven weeks Jan 12—Feb 23 and the focus for weeks 3-7 will be on Max Lucado's 3:16, "The Numbers of Hope." The Lenten series will follow and run for five weeks Mar 2—30 and focus on Max Lucado's "He Chose the Nails". Hard/soft cover books and study guides are available on Amazon and other resources. Karen Lessey leads the studies and for more information, call/email her: 302-448-9924, karenlessey@icloud.com

### ◆ Disaffiliation Informational Conference

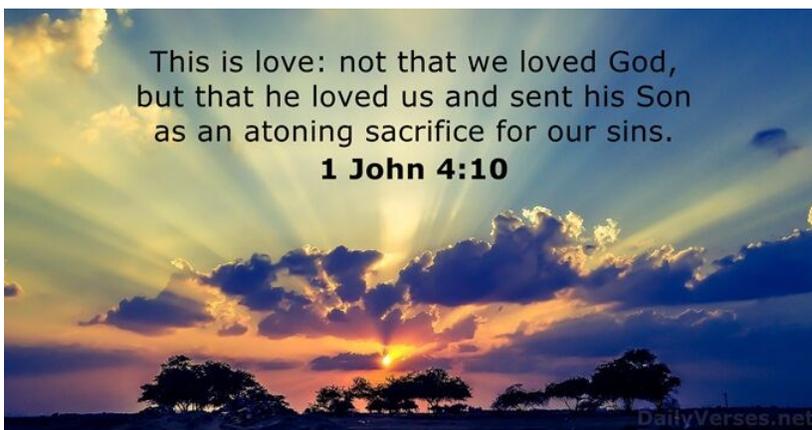
Will be held Saturday, February 4, 3:00 pm in Conley's Sanctuary.

### ◆ Church Council

Will meet on Thursday, February 16, 6:30 pm in the Library.

### ◆ Conley's UWF

Dinner at a local restaurant (TBA) Friday, February 17, 6:00 pm.



# CONLEY'S THRIFT SHOP

Sally and I want to express our thanks to everyone who made 2022 a great year. It was trying at times, but always rewarding. We were able to assist many people with free furniture, clothing, and household items. We made a lot of new friends and acquaintances.

On Monday, January 16th, we held our Volunteer Appreciation/State of the Union Luncheon at the Ocean Grill in Long Neck. Thirty-seven of our volunteers enjoyed a time of fellowship and a great lunch provided by the Thrift Shop. We did a few housekeeping reminders of how to do and not to do some things and gave special kudos to several of the volunteers for going above expectations during the year.

If you are considering redecorating, please keep the shop in mind as you dispose of your used furniture. We can arrange a pickup usually within 5 to 7 days' notice. Regular donations are accepted on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays from 10 to 2 and Saturdays from 9 to 1. Some days we reach our donation limits and have to close early. It is always best to come by noon if possible. That way you won't be disappointed. Also please remember if it is below 35 degrees, we may not open the donation center. It isn't safe for our staff to be out in the cold for extended periods of time. Please call the shop at 302-945-5566 to check before driving over.

We are looking for a couple additional volunteers, If you have 3 hours a week that you could spare, we would love to chat with you. Please stop by the Thrift Shop and talk with Pat or Sally. To stay updated on the Thrift Shop, like and follow us on Facebook.

Please keep us in your prayers.

- Pat Vogt

Conley's Thrift Shop  
Volunteer Appreciation/State of the Union  
Luncheon at the Long Neck Ocean Grill—  
January 16, 2023



thank you!



**CONLEY'S CHURCH**  
33106 Jolyns Way  
Lewes, DE 19958

**Pastor: Rev. Dr. William Davis**  
E-mail: conleysumc@gmail.com  
Website: conleysumc.org  
Phone: 302-945-1881

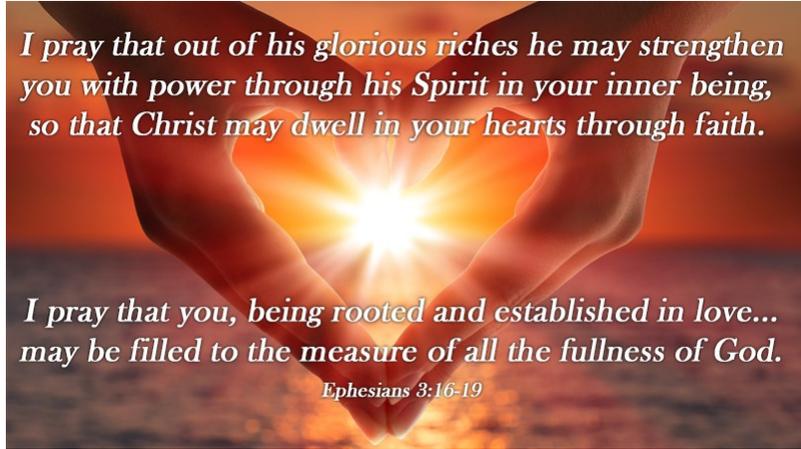
**Worship with us:**  
Sunday at 10:00 AM  
(Details provided on page 10)

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**Editor/Graphics: Art Schmidt**  
Copy Editor: Judy Parson

**March Issue Deadline:**  
February 20

 *Happy*  
*Valentine's Day*



**Conley's United Methodist Church**  
33106 Jolyn's Way  
Lewes, Delaware 19958

PLEASE  
PLACE  
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HERE

