

January 2024

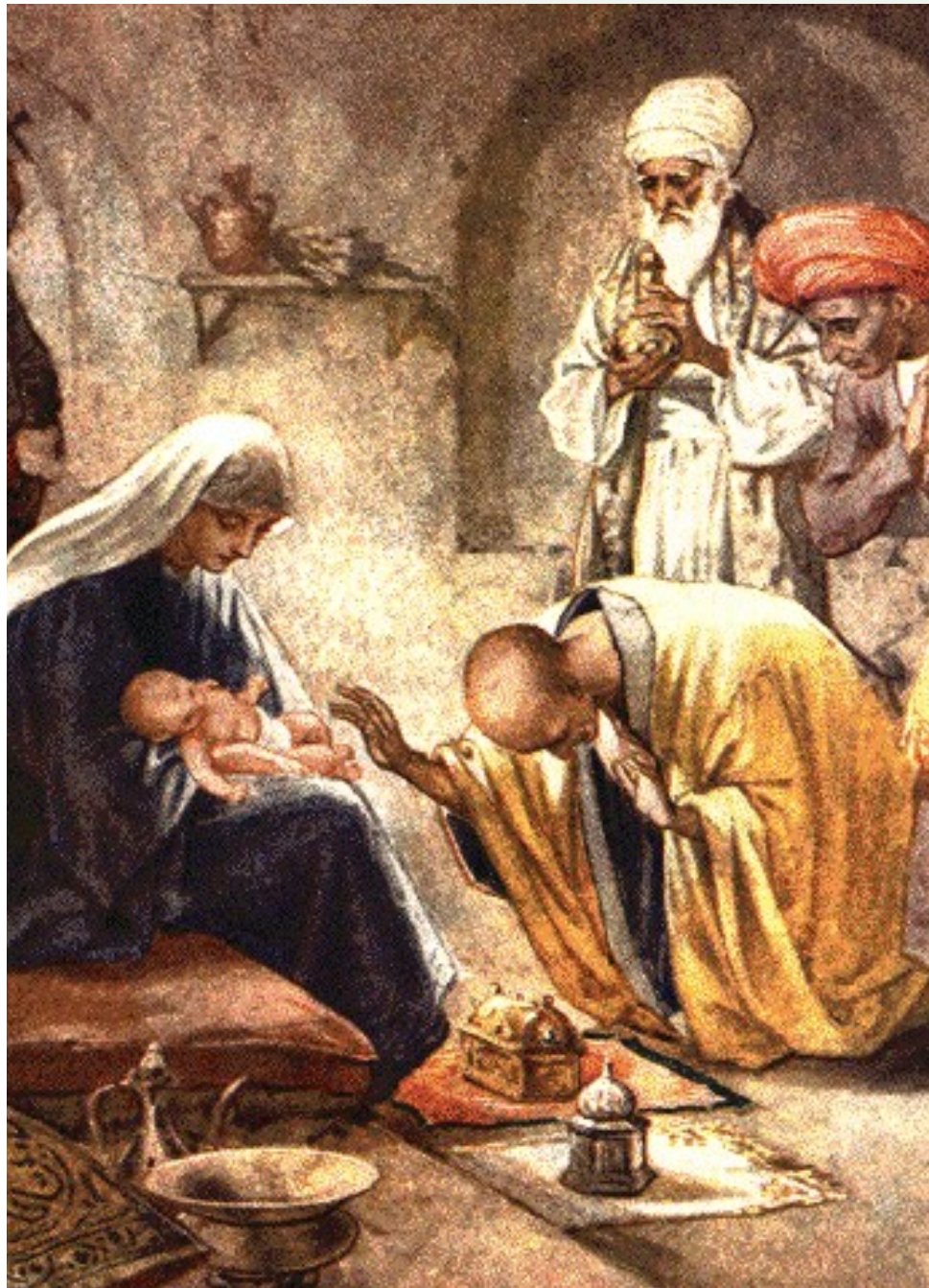
Conley's United Methodist Church

THE CONNECTION

In essentials, unity

In non-essentials, liberty

In all things, charity



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Special Points of Interest

- Poetry, Prayers, and Words of Wisdom
- Notable Days in Jan.



The Pastor's Pen

a word from Pastor Bill Davis

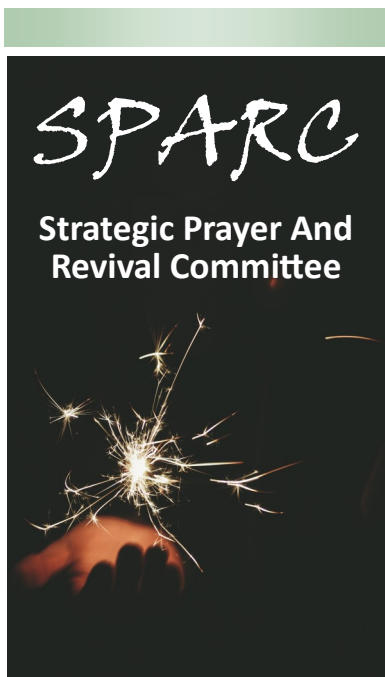
*I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.
Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.
But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,
I press on toward the goal to win the prize
for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:10-14*

With the start of a new year bearing down on us, I was reading about New Year's Day traditions around the world. In Rome, there is a tradition of throwing things out. Literally. Throwing things out the window. The saying, "Out with the old, and in with the new" is dramatically illustrated. A safety tip for travelers: if you are ever in Rome on New Year's Day, stay alert to falling objects. In Chile, some families usher in the new year in the company of deceased loved ones by sleeping in the cemetery. A village in Peru features a New Year's Eve festival where neighbors, co-workers, and even family members engage in fist fights with one another to settle their differences. This makes them "even" as they begin a new year.

There are many unique rituals used to observe the arrival of a new year in communities around the world, but my favorite comes from a city in Mexico. Leading up to midnight, the central square is filled with throngs of people, bands, and vendors who sell--in addition to the typical souvenirs and food--cheap clay plates. Each plate represents a regret. As the bell of the great cathedral on the square tolls in the new year, the people smash their plates by throwing them full force against the wall of the cathedral. Old grudges, old fears, old resentments, old prejudices, old sins . . . cast them off! Smash them to bits against the wall of faith and be done with them.

As you know, the Christian New Year began with the First Sunday of Advent. I like that as people of faith we begin our new year with a sense of excitement and anticipation, looking forward to the coming of Jesus. I also like that the world's New Year always falls somewhere around Epiphany. Epiphany emphasizes revelation and discovery; fresh perspectives and renewed visions. What a great theme for the start of 2024! What does God have in store for us in the days to come?

You've heard the expression, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." It calls us to face the future with hope and determination. It is the attitude that Paul models for us in the passage above, and to which all people of faith are called. We are able to face the future unafraid and full of hope because we know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering. May we at Conley's strain toward what is ahead in the assurance of Emmanuel - God is with us.



Why is Prayer Important?

Season of Waiting

The Christian life is one of seasons of waiting. Christmas is over. The Advent wait to celebrate Christ's birth is over. We enter another season of waiting; waiting to celebrate his resurrection when he went to heaven to prepare a place for us. On Easter we rejoice in his resurrection and begin the wait in hope for the time to come when he returns to take us to be with him. We follow the yearly calendar and the cycle of waiting begins again. We are reminded that God also waits. He waits for people to see His glory, to admit they are lost without Him, to say yes to His love. He waits, "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). While we wait we are called

to do what Jesus did; to pray, to worship, to love, to serve, to feed, to clothe, to teach, to care and to wait in hope in God's time.

Patient All-knowing, Omniscient God, the Christian life is one of seasons of waiting. The Israelites waited for the Messiah to come. When the time was right, He came and left to prepare a place for us. (John 14: 1-6). During Advent we wait for Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' coming. We wait for Easter to celebrate his going. Then we begin the wait in hope of Your return. The year goes on and the cycle of waiting begins again. We are called to wait in hope. We become impatient and sometimes question Your plan – Your timing. Forgive us our impatience and weak faith. You in Your almighty wisdom knew we would be weak and impatient so You sent Your Holy Spirit to abide with us and guide us and strengthen us. While we wait, Father God, strengthen and guide us by Your Holy Spirit to do what Jesus did. Lead us to pray, to worship, to love, to serve, to feed, to clothe, to teach, to care and to wait in hope, in Your time. In everything we give thanks and glory and honor to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he comes in the clouds of heaven.

John Wesley





*Call to me
and I will answer you
and tell you great
and unsearchable
things that you
do not know!*

~ Jeremiah 33:3 ~

Congregational Prayer Walk Sunday, January 14th Following the Worship Service Lunch Provided

The following is an excerpt from "A God Corrected Vision", an article by Melvin Amerson of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary:

"Where there is no vision, the people will perish," Proverbs reminds us. Vision is one of the five human senses, but is also one of the guiding forces in the lives of believers and congregations. Often, when vision is limited or impaired, individuals or churches limit themselves to familiar areas and practices.

Loss of focus or visual acuity can cause challenges. For individuals, vision challenges can often be corrected or improved by prescriptive eyewear or surgery. In the church, limited vision can adversely influence ministry, programming, growth, and financial resources. With congregations, it is usually more difficult to detect loss of vision. Unfortunately, fear and complacency are two of the major causes of poor vision in congregations. Is it not ironic that both individuals and congregations periodically need to have their vision checked?

Over a period of time, we all need new God Corrected Vision. Churches with little vision tend to struggle to maintain viable ministry. Corrected vision provides congregations with a new lease on ministry. God will correct or re-focus our vision if we seek and discern God's will for us. With new vision comes discovery of new mission fields and ministry opportunities.

It is true that where there is no vision, the people perish. It is also true that where there is a Godly vision, the people flourish.

Conley's Vision Team enthusiastically agrees that "God will correct or re-focus our vision if we seek and discern God's will for us." Therefore, we have been earnestly seeking God's will and want our church family to join us in this. We have planned a church-wide prayer walk to follow our worship service on Sunday, January 14th. Members of the Vision Team will lead all who choose to participate to pray at the "four corners" of our church; options to pray indoors or outdoors will be provided. Handouts will be made available so that those who cannot attend may still participate when they are able; the handouts will also encourage everyone to continue in prayer for God's guidance (prayer is not a one-time event!). At the conclusion of the prayer walk, we will provide lunch and encourage everyone to talk about any inspirations they may have.

In the meantime, we request that you pray for the Vision Team, and we encourage everyone to make prayer for God-given vision for Conley's a regular part of your prayer life. We have found it helpful to pray that God will inspire us in three general areas: ways to use our **physical** facilities/land to further our ministries, ways to build **relational** connections within our church family and with our community, and ways to nurture **spiritual** health and growth for all.

Greetings from the Missions Team



Did you know?

Conley's distributes 10% of all income from church offerings to local, national, and international missions programs.

Seamen's Center of Wilmington, a 501(c)3 non-profit, opened its doors and hearts to mariners arriving in the First State on January 1, 1990. Founded by a diverse group of individuals from the maritime, business and religious communities and sponsored in part by the Port of Wilmington Maritime Society, the Center was designed as a non-denominational mission dedicated to offering all seafarers ar-

riving in Delaware a haven from the isolation of life aboard a merchant vessel.

The dedication of the SCW corps of volunteers touches the lives of thousands of seafarers with a commitment to personal, practical and spiritual assistance.

Federally mandated port security regulations prohibit vetted seafarers from walking on Port property; and once again SCW volunteers have risen to the challenge of assisting mariners by providing them escort services on and off of Port property.

In response to the needs of the seafarers and the Center, folks from all walks of life in our surrounding community help to assure that the mission is accomplished through their volunteerism, contributions and participation in SCW programs.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Seamen's Center of Wilmington, Inc., is to meet the needs of the seafarers who visit the Ports in the State of Delaware. Our goal is to make their time in port a rewarding one by providing personal, practical and spiritual assistance. A warm welcome is extended to ease the pain of loneliness and isolation and to offer a respite from the hazards of the sea.

Source: scwde.org/about-scw

Evangelism Team News

Living Out Our Faith In 2024 (by Jerry Pawlikowski)

I picked up something along the way concerning the ways of faith. A former Pastor of mine, Pastor Walt Edmonds at Damascus MD UMC, told me something many years ago that has stuck with me. What he said was this - **if we aren't moving forward in our faith journey we are moving backward.** Evidently, as far as God is concerned, there is no neutral gear or park, only drive or reverse. But we can and often do slip up, fall back a bit, in our Christian walk...don't we?

Let's look at some of the things that I believe it takes to live out our faith and keep moving forward in our faith journey.

A recent on-line article by Jordan Sears titled "5 Easy Ways to Live Your Faith" (at <https://www.dayspring.com/articles/5-easy-ways-to-live-your-faith>) has some good suggestions including:

- 1) **Be a friend.**
- 2) **Use your gifts.**
- 3) **Radiate positivity.**
- 4) **Show your gratitude.**
- 5) **Do your best.**

Looking at this deeper, I raise four issues that together, can give us HOPE in living out our faith. That is hope, as in H...O...P...E:

H is for Humility.

A humble heart, a focus on others not ourselves. Remember how Jesus humbled himself at his birth at a stable and on the cross at his death. Christ modeled servanthood throughout his life. He humbled himself by washing the feet of His 12 disciples before the Last Supper. But he also challenged us when he told us in John (13:14-15): ***"So you also should wash each other's feet. I did this as an example for you. So you should do for each other like I did for you."***

O is for being Open.

For this new year we should be open to new possibilities. Opening ourselves up to new or different ways of living out our faith. As written in Mark 9:23: ***"All things are possible to him who has faith."***

P is for Prayer.

Prayer and faith are intertwined. As written in Matthew (21:22): ***"And all things, whatever you make request for in prayer, having faith, you will get."***

Be in prayer and meditation. Watch for God's response. Read God's word. Paul says in Romans 10:17 – ***"So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."***

And E is for Embrace.

God calls us to embrace, that is, to fully accept and hold onto our faith. To embrace Christ as our light in this fallen world.

As Christ said in John (12:46): ***"I have come as a light into the world, so that no one who has faith in me will go on living in the dark"***. And then in John (14:1): ***"Let not your heart be troubled: have faith in God and have faith in me."***

And as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17: ***"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"***



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Evangelism Team News

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Part of loving ourselves is discovering who God wants us to be and then seeking to become that person. **That person shouldn't be based on our own whims, but instead on God's will for our lives and who He is calling us to be.**

We can all probably think of someone who has graced our lives and modeled a strong faith to those around them. That someone special in my life was the Scoutmaster of my Boy Scout Troop, Troop 33 in Liftwood Delaware during the late 60s and early 70s - Robert A. Smiley. Along with having 10 children, he was an unassuming man, humble and giving. He was someone we could depend and lean on during our tumultuous teen years. A wise man who people put a lot of faith in. However, he also put a lot of faith in us youth and in the process built up our self-esteem, confidence, and character. To me he modeled Christ as someone to put our faith in, and a foundation for faith to preserve and grow.

How is your faith journey going?

Let's look back at this past year.

- How did it go? Was it a stroll in the park or a rocky hike?
- Do you think you moved forward or backward?
- How and where did God speak to you?
- Did God speak to you through someone's touch, by what you heard, by what you saw, or by what you felt through your heart?

Now, let's look to the future.

- What opportunities lie ahead in 2024 for you to grow and nurture your faith?
- How can you nudge yourself along and not fall back along your faith journey?
- How can you move closer to Him and His will for our lives to do as Christ would want you to do?

Remember what John wrote (3:16): ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."***

Whoever believes in Him, should trust in Him, and have faith in Him. A faith that is hopefully being lived out and moving forward every day to its fullest so we can confidently say as Paul did when he wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:7): ***"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith."***

Dear Lord help us today and during 2024 to **always give you what rightfully belongs to you – our lives and our faith in you**, in Jesus name. Amen



SOCIAL CONCERNS

The Latest from Conley's
Social Concerns Team



Feeding the Flock

Looking back over the past year I am amazed to think that we have served about 15,000 meals and our outreach continues to expand. We have made new friends and have been able to help some of our clients with clothes and other things from the Thrift Store. A number of our families were on the Angel Tree this year and we were able to welcome one of the women, to our UWF Christmas Tea.

We received the year end report from the Historic Lewes Farmer's Market which supplied us with fresh produce, dairy and meat from April through December. It certainly was a huge help to us in controlling cost of meals. We received an astonishing \$15,544.25 in product. At this point we have been notified that we will be part of the grant program in 2024 and 2025. We are looking forward to continuing this partnership.

Bob Marx will be meeting with David Rutt after the first of the year and we will hopefully be able to finalize our non-profit status. This will enable us to apply for assistance through grants to help defray more of the cost of meals.

In the month of January, we will only be providing lunches on Mondays. This is due to the fact that one of our regular staff is having surgery. During this time, we will be evaluating some possible changes to our program and locations in the Millsboro area.

I thank everyone for your support through both the giving of your time and finances. You have allowed this ministry to keep expanding and serving.

Feeding the Flock wishes all of you a Happy, Healthy and Blessed New Year.

Cheryl Wood



Solitary religion is not to be found . . . The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social religion; no holiness but social holiness. Faith working by love is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection.

(From John Wesley's intro to "Hymns and Sacred Poems.")

NEWS from CONLEY'S THRIFT SHOP



As we say goodbye to 2023 and hello to 2024, we want to look back at some of the highlights of 2023. Your Thrift Shop was very active in the local community. We assisted ladies from What is Your Voice/ Pearl House with furniture and household items to furnish 4 new dwelling units. We donated numerous furniture and decorative accessories to Oxford House to assist them in opening several new homes for men and women in recovery programs. We donated over \$35,000.00 to local charities including Conley's Camp Hope, Feed the Flock and Family Assistance programs. Many families asked for and received clothing and furniture items. We gave over 700 bags of usable clothing to Christian Store House, Higher Ground and God's Way. The biggest and best part of our mission is to minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of our guests. We are happy to pray with those in need, to assist with community help programs, listen when you need to talk, give hugs and offer encouragement.

2023 has been a banner year for us. Our preliminary numbers show that we will exceed last years grand total by about \$40,000.00. WOW!!!! We are excited to share this news with our Church Family. Thanks for your continued support and prayers.

We will celebrate with our staff and volunteers with a Thank You luncheon on Monday, January 15th at noon at the Ocean Grill in Longneck.

Be sure to stop by the Thrift Shop and tell everyone thanks. There are over 45 men and women volunteers that give of their personal time and talents to make your Thrift Shop the best in the area

Did you know?

Conley's Thrift Shop donates 10% of all income to local charities.



Ending the Year on a High Note!

All of us at Camp Hope wish to thank you, the Conley's congregation, for helping to make our Christmas Party for our Campers such an incredible success! We were amazed at the quantity, variety, and deliciousness (!) of the cookies, candies, and other goodies donated for the event. Not to mention the financial donations which allowed us to give each child such a nice selection of gifts. As eight-year-old Aria said, *"You guys did all this for us!"*



The children were delighted by everything we had planned for them. It would be hard to pick a favorite part of the party. We started the day by bringing them into the Sanctuary to talk about the birth of Jesus and the true meaning of Christmas. They really soaked in this information; with some reporting that they had never really heard the Christmas Story.

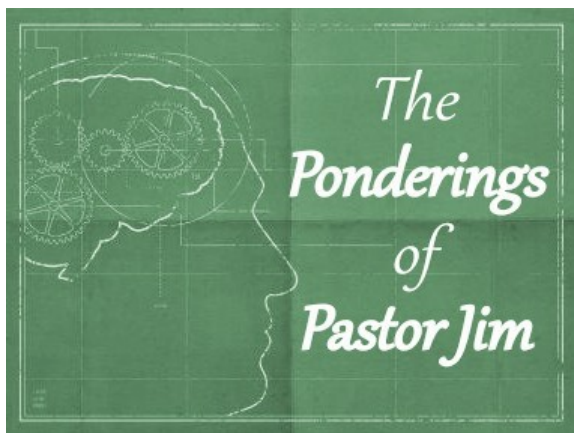
After that, the fun began! In addition to a wonderful lunch (including a Nativity cake), they enjoyed games, singing, and opening gifts. The best part was probably when they dressed each other as Christmas trees. The fake snowball fight was pretty good, too! Although, they really enjoyed singing along with Steve Daddona and his repertoire of Christmas songs



I'd like to thank each one of the Camp Hope team members for such a great year – so much work was accomplished by this special group of people, each playing their unique role. We have built a sustainable day camp experience for vulnerable and disadvantaged kids; we made the Camp Hope dream come true!

And, we now have a strong foundation for the future of Camp Hope, bringing so many blessings to children in need. I think that - in many ways - the team and our Conley's supporters were more blessed than the kids themselves! Don't hesitate to join us in some way in 2024. What do they say... *It's a wonderful life!*

Karen Lessey, Camp Hope Director
All praise and glory to God!



Two of our grandchildren, Hannah (age 11) and David (age 7), were over at our house. I was playing, and singing with, music on Alexa: “New York City” by John Lennon and “Big Apple Dreamin” by Alice Cooper. This led to a conversation about NYC. Hannah wanted to see the Statue of Liberty, while David wanted to ride the subway. So, I said, “Why don’t we go to New York City?” And we found a day to do so. During the Christmas season.

Marie and I awoke early, at 5:00 A.M. We proceeded to drive to our daughter Valarie’s home on Thompsonville Road in Milford. Six of us took off to NYC: Valarie, her husband Steven, and the two grandchildren.

Valarie drove us to Hamilton, New Jersey where we enjoyed a hearty breakfast at Cracker Barrel. At Hamilton station we boarded a train into NYC. After a 90-minute ride, we arrived at Penn Station and immediately took a subway to the Staten Island ferry. David’s favorite part of the trip was the subway rides. During the ferry ride we had spectacular views of the Statue of Liberty, as well as Ellis Island. At Ellis Island my grandparents came to America from the Netherlands after the devastation of World War II.

At Ellis Island my grandmother was given an extremely painful smallpox vaccination. Unable to understand much English, she was moved along the intake line and asked if she received her smallpox vaccination. All she heard was “smallpox vaccination” and she cried out “No No No!” The officials therefore thought that she didn’t get the inoculation and a second painful shot was administered. It happened several times and her arm was scarred and had ugly holes at the injection site for the rest of her life. I saw her scarred arm many times.

We ate lunch in Staten Island and then headed back to Manhattan. I was quite moved by the Statue of Liberty and spent much of the time on the ferry with my hand over my heart thanking God for the life he had given me. It was Hannah and David’s first time seeing the statue and they were in awe. We also had a prolonged view of One World Trade Center, the rebuilding that took place on the site of 9/11. It is now America’s tallest building.

Back in Manhattan, we took the subway to 42nd Street. We walked through Times Square overwhelmed by it all and saw the location of the New Year’s ball drop. Rockefeller Plaza was next. We watched the ice skaters and saw the beautiful lighted Christmas tree. Also, we couldn’t miss the FAO Schwartz toy store. During the entire day we encountered street performers, as well as the homeless.

It was time to head home, so we took a subway to Penn Station where we found the train that would take us back to Hamilton. The train station was packed with tourists. We arrived back in Delaware at 11:00 P.M. It was a full and blessed day in New York City.

January? In a hurry to *move-on* from the Christmas Story? **Not so fast.**
Verily - behold the miracles underfoot of that 'special' day, in yet other ways.

CHRISTMAS DAY 'KIDS'

"revel too, in this Miracle"

We first saw her there,
in the barn yard, a mother goat, pregnant where,
by cracked barn-wood stable we'd pass strolling in our way,
just prior the eve, of that 'Revered-At-Birth' Holy Day;

then by chance, we'd later another time around
to much joy to our amaze, there we'd found,
her 'birthing' during our absence amid the hay
had been given its full and wondrous way;

her *two* 'newborn *kids*', aglow, O how splendid a sight
in silky soft, long drawn coats, one tan, the other, off-white,
long oval-cupped ears 'n thimbles for horns we could see,
cloven-hoofed, and faces made for later goatees;

both shadowed mama best they could in their spindly legs
with wobble 'n step like disabled pirates in their wooden pegs,
I believe **THE** kid, marked with Manger, Star, and Field-lit tree,
revels too, in this Miracle; added to His, we wondrously celebrated, all three!



***You will have joy and gladness,
and many will rejoice at his birth.
For he will be great in the sight of the Lord....
Luke 1:14-15 (NASB)***

***"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn?
Do you count the months till they bear?
Do you know the time they give birth?
They crouch down and bring forth their young;
their labor pains are ended.
Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds;
they leave and do not return.
Job 39:1-4***

By: Ron Starich

New Year—-New You



How many resolutions have you made over the years hoping for a different outcome in your life? I know I've made so many that I can't remember even one that I've kept more than a week. I bet that even you can say the same thing.

You can't become a "new you" by your own resolution to change or do better than last year. It may take shape for a little while, but sooner or later than we care to admit, we slip back into old habits.

Through the years, I found a resolution that is sure to work if you follow this lead.

Make a resolution to become a friend of Jesus. It's a strong give and take relationship. He does most of the giving and you do most of the taking. Jesus is there when you need him and there when you think you don't.

How can anything surpass this arrangement?

All He asks for this resolution to be permanent is for you to invite him into your life.

You'll be so satisfied that another resolution will never be necessary.

Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.

James 4:8

A man that has friends, must show himself friendly and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24

By: Sandie Wysocki

Epiphany Reflections

Epiphany

Many of us were introduced to Epiphany through the familiar silhouetted-image of Three Wise Men bearing gifts as they followed the Great Star by night. In some cultures, Epiphany is known as the *Day of the Kings* (*Día de los Reyes*). It is also known as Twelfth Day or Twelfth Night, reflecting an old custom of giving a gift for each of the days from December 25 to January 6 for the 12 days of Christmas. The day has special meaning for a number of reasons. Several branches of Christianity celebrate the birth of the Christ Child on January 6 or January 7.

The word *epiphany* means *appearance* or *manifestation*. Popular usage likens *epiphany* to words such as *eureka* or *aha!* Use of this word by some English speakers conjures images of having a light bulb turned on, or of being able to see something that was once hidden from view. The texts for the Sundays after the Epiphany dramatize the many ways that we people came to understand who Jesus was, through his baptism, the miracle at the wedding, or through that bodacious declaration in his hometown synagogue! But, this ever-widening circle of revelation began ‘outside the circle’ of Judaism, so to speak, with the Magi.

Who were the Magi?

Many versions of the Bible refer to them as the *Wise Men*. We often forget that these Magi or Wise Men were non-Jews. Older sources suggest that they were priestly descendants of one of the tribes of the Medes known for their knowledge of the stars (astronomy) and their ability to interpret dreams.

What can we learn from the Wise Men?

First, the Wise Men began their journey because of their beliefs.

It was a common belief that when a world leader like a king was born that a special stellar phenomenon would appear in the sky. The Magi saw something that convinced them that they had seen the long-awaited sign. Historians tell us that the Jews, the Romans, and the Persians were all watching the skies about that time, looking for signs of the birth of an extraordinary king. A few years before, around 11 BC, Halley’s Comet had been seen. There were other stellar phenomena, including a bright star, Sirius, which appeared brightly in the daytime instead of at night. The Wise Men saw the star and began their journey.

May God give us all inspiration for this year’s journey.

Second, the Wise Men were willing to follow what they had seen into unknown territory.

Their journey took them outside their country and their comfort zone. The Wise Men risked the consequences of disobeying Herod, who was known to behave as a madman when provoked and returned to their country by another way.

The Christian journey is often an off-road excursion.

Third, the Wise Men were committed to the journey—wherever the star might lead.

The Wise Men set out to find a newborn King by following a star and ended up in finding a baby born to young, relatively poor parents! Not exactly what they expected and not exactly what befit their dignity as priests.

In this coming year, may we look to heaven for guidance and comfort and may we accept God’s blessings in whatever forms we find them, just as the Wise Men accepted that their long, expensive journey led them to a baby born to young, inexperienced parents who lived on the poor side of town.

Finally, the Wise Men brought gifts.

They did the thing that people in the East or in Africa or in India would do when visiting royalty. They brought gifts.

Gold was the kind of gift that you brought to a king
Frankincense was the kind of gift that you would bring to a priest.
Myrrh was given to someone who was about to die.

On This Twelfth Day, or Three Kings Day, otherwise known as Epiphany, think of the gift that you will offer to God in the coming year. The gift of time? The gift of your talents? Your service in the community? Your witness and testimony? The gift of undying love and devotion?

Their greatest gift comes to us in the form of a realization. The Wise Men were the first Gentiles to recognize that Jesus belongs to everyone. Good news is for everyone, not just a select few.

Star of wonder, Star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, Still Proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light. **Amen.**

Source: Discipleship Ministries

We Need Your Help For The Conley's 2024 Lenten Devotional (by Jerry Pawlikowski)

Lent is a time of preparation, self-examination, and reflection as we journey towards the cross and the risen Lord.

I have helped compile and produce Lenten and Advent devotional books at other United Methodist Churches. Now as a member of Conley's Evangelism team I proposed to Pastor Bill and he agreed that we do a 2024 Lenten Devotional at Conley's as **a way for us to come together as a community of faith to share our testimonies and other stories of our Christian faith with others.**

You may choose to share or write about anything!

For example:

- What does Lent mean to you?
- A testimony of your Christian faith.
- A story of some personal experience where you saw or felt God at work.
- Your favorite Bible verse or passage and reflect on its meaning for your life.
- Some insight or lesson you learned that stuck with you from one of Pastor Bill's sermons.

Be as creative as the Holy Spirit inspires you to be but **contributors should focus on a single point, using no more than 200-300 words to illustrate the point with a personal story, an anecdote, a conversation, an interesting fact, or some engaging question.** And please provide a relevant Bible verse and a brief closing prayer.

Please submit all devotions during January to Sandy in the church office or at any Sunday church service or email them directly to me (at gjpawlikowski@verizon.net). **But please submit your devotionals by no later than Tuesday, February 6th** in time for us to compile and distribute the Conley's 2024 Lenten Devotional on Sunday, February 11, just before Ash Wednesday on February 14. Please contact me (at 610-207-7139) if you have any questions.

Thanks for your time and prayerful consideration!



Worship With Us This Month

Worship with us on Sundays at 10am. You may join us either in-person or online. Our worship service is livestreamed on Vimeo and Youtube; links are provided on our website.

When joining us online, please check-in using the “Connect Card” located under the worship tab at the upper left corner of our homepage — we want to know you’re worshipping with us!

The “Connect Card” may also be used to submit prayer requests and/or praise reports during our worship service or any time.

You may give your tithes and offerings to the Lord through the church via the “donate” button at the lower right corner of our homepage.

Thank you for your faithfulness in giving — we believe God is doing great things through the ministry of his church!

What’s Happening

On-Going Weekly Events

Sunday

Adult Bible Study taught by Rev. Jim Vanderwall in the Library, 8:30-9:30am.

Youth Sunday School-9am, led by Jess Mastriana. Jan. 14, confirmation class will begin.

Monday

Choir practice in the Choir Room, 6-7:00 pm.

Bell Ringers practice in the Fellowship Hall, 7:00-8:00pm.

Tuesday

Over 50 Yoga in the Fellowship Hall, 10:30—11:45am. Bring your own mat and bottled water. Cost is \$10 per session, cash only.

Wednesday

Soup for the Soul provides free lunch and fellowship in the Fellowship Hall, 11am-1pm. Contributions are welcome; sign-up sheets are in the narthex.

Adult Bible Study Led by Susan Davis, 6:30pm in the Missions Room. Resumes for Lent.

Thursday

Adult Bible Study - in the Missions Room, 10-11:30am.

Praise Team practice in the Sanctuary, 5:30-6:30pm.

Happening This Month

The Trustees meet Tuesday, Jan. 2nd, 6:30pm, in the Library.

Prayer Walk-January 14th, after worship service, followed by lunch.

The Church Council will meet Thursday, January 18th, 6:30pm in the Library.

United Women in Faith-

Opportunities to Be a Blessing

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Join Conley's Sight and Sound Team!

We are in need of people on Sunday mornings to operate the soundboard, screen projection computer, and livestream computer. Are you computer literate; are you willing to learn? Our friendly Sight and Sound Team will train you so that you can take a turn in this ministry that supports Sunday worship.

Conley's is in Need of a Communion Steward

This ministry opportunity requires coming to church a half hour early on the first Sunday of the month to set up the elements for Holy Communion.



ON-GOING OPPORTUNITIES

Greeters

A friendly welcome at the door makes a great first impression—both for new comers and regular attenders. Help get people ready for worship with a warm welcome to all and helpful directions to visitors.

Ushers

You can help worshipers by directing them to open seats and bringing a microphone for prayers and praises, and providing helpful directions as needed.

Contact the church office if you would like to serve your Conley's Church family in any of these capacities; 302-945-1881

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

if it is serving, then serve;

if it is teaching, then teach;

if it is to encourage, then give encouragement;

if it is giving, then give generously;

if it is to lead, do it diligently;

if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

ROMANS 12:4-8

**Conley's United
Methodist Church**

began as a Methodist society in 1800 and was incorporated as a Methodist church in 1838.

Our Mission:
To make disciples
of Jesus Christ.

Notable Days in January_____

1st New Year's Day
15th Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Conley's United Methodist Church

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Lewes, Delaware 19958

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www.conleysumc.org

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

