

January 2026

Conley's United Methodist Church

# THE CONNECTION

In essentials, unity

In non-essentials, liberty

In all things, charity



Lewes, Delaware

## Inside This Issue

The Pastor's Pen .....	2
SPARC .....	3
Missions .....	4
Evangelism .....	5
Social Concerns .....	6
Thrift Shop News .....	8
Camp Hope .....	9-10
Ponderings .....	13
What's Happening .....	16

## 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 want to take this opportunity to thank all who contributed to the pastor's Christmas gift this year. It is always a blessing; a tangible help as we close out the old year and a source of reassurance and encouragement as we launch into the new. Susan and I are truly grateful for your generosity. Thank you!

*The time came for the baby to be born, and [Mary] gave birth to a son, her firstborn.*

*She swaddled him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified! But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid.*

*I bring to you good news of great joy for all people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you:*

*You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

Luke 2:6b-12

In his classic work, "Mere Christianity," C.S. Lewis writes, "our desires are not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us." Christmas invites us to examine our desires and our tendency to be satisfied with tepid cravings, to settle for low hanging fruit when God offers something that would fill our soul to overflowing.

In the Bible, the psalmist addresses this issue with a question: "Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth conspire and the rulers mutter together against the Lord and against his anointed one" (Psalm 2:1-2). This recalcitrant characteristic of humanity breeds unworthy desires and misplaced hope. We plot and plan and build our lives on the shifting sands of prosperity, politics, and personal achievement. When times are uncertain and anxiety levels rise, we instinctively look to human authorities for safety. Financial security, celebrity influencers, political leaders, career success, and even our own perceived proficiencies become the lords of our lives, ordering how we spend our time and energy. But Psalm 2:4 tells us that "the one who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord scoffs at them." The Lord is not a mocker; the divine laughter is not because God is demeaning and dismissing humanity; but because God knows something we don't. Something that makes it impossible to be unsettled by all the conspiring and muttering. Something that renders ridiculous the conceited conspiring of the nations and their rulers.

In verse 7 of the psalm, God speaks up: "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." The Lord promises that peace will be born into the world. Literally. A child will be born. This messianic prophecy is fulfilled in the passage above (one of the readings from our Christmas Eve service). Our true security lies in the advent of the promised Son. Not in the machinations of worldly rulers. Not in Caesar's ability to number the people and move them from one location to another (Luke 2:1-3). Not in the armies of empire. No, not in any earthly power, but in "a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

In the shepherds we see a model of spiritual awakening. Living in the dark, they are keeping watch—doing their best to manage their circumstances. They are ordinary people laboring within the system of human governance and trying to do what is "right" as best as their limited vision enables. Then they are confronted with glory. And they are afraid. But when they hear the proclamation that God's deliverance is at hand, they choose to believe. Their belief leads them to the great discovery: God's answer to the terrors of the world is the gift of himself. There is no need to be afraid anymore.

The new year commences while the church is still celebrating Christmas (this year, New Year's Day fell on the eighth day of Christmas). The story of Christ's birth invites us to make Christ our desire as we consider our journey into the year ahead. The shepherds call us to believe the gospel message so that our restless hearts may find rest in Jesus. When we are tempted to place our hope in nations, rulers, laws and authorities, or any other vainglorious thing of this earth, the humble manger reminds us that our security lies not in any earthly king, but in the King of kings who took on flesh for us and for our salvation. The baby who receives the Father's blessing, "You are my Son," offers to make us God's children, too. "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). May our desire this year be nothing less than his glory.

Prayers for a blessed and happy New Year, from the Davis family to you and yours!



## Why is Prayer Important?

Happy New Year, Everyone! As we enter 2026, let's go together with our minds and hearts focused on Jesus. Resting in Him and trusting in His plans for us, allow Him to guide us, rather depending on our own plans. There aren't many days between our Christmas celebrations and preparing ourselves for what lies ahead in the new year. Maybe bask in the joy a little longer of what Christmas brings – the wise men are still on their way - and allow that to carry you into and through this next year. The Christmas decorations that we may be packing away now, will be brought out once again before we know it! Instead of worrying about resolutions or new goals – things of this world, let's begin the new year with our minds set on things above. Casting our cares and laying our burdens down for Jesus to handle, shedding the extra weight of anxiety and worry, and stepping into 2026 with Christian contentment. Joyful in all circumstances, in struggles and celebrations, we are never alone when Jesus is in our hearts.

Heavenly Father, as we step into each new day in this coming year, we are grateful that you are always with us. Please, Lord, continue to fill us with

your presence and peace. Help us understand that we can continually depend on You and lasting contentment is found as we abide in You and Your promises. Father, we ask that You help us find joy in all circumstances this coming year, when we face times that are more challenging remind us, You're there, and Lord, let us see You in all our celebrations so that we can give You thanks. Help us emulate Your light and the joy You give so that others may also be drawn into Your peaceful presence. Thank you, Lord, for loving us unconditionally, for your mercy and grace. You are our hope and source of contentment in this weary world. God, we love you and praise your Holy Name. Amen.

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### Forget Elf on the Shelf



**Jesus wants Ewe in a Pew**

*"Let me do all the good I can, to all the people I can, as often as I can, for I shall not pass this way again"*

—John Wesley



## 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.

**Collection will begin on Sunday  
January 11, 2026**

**Items needed for Conley's food pantry: Small canned hams, shelf stable milk, Jelly, Juice Boxes & Spaghetti Sauce.**

**SMALL GIFTS BIG IMPACT**

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING**  
tacklehunger.org

Every year, Souper Bowl of Caring brings people together to tackle hunger right in their own communities. Inspired by youth and powered by teamwork, we help local food charities make a real impact one bowl at a time. Join us!

Learn more at [tacklehunger.org](http://tacklehunger.org)

Be Moo-tivated to Support Your Local Food Charity!  
Help provide critical resources to those in need.

Date / Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Collection: \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks to Stephen Bragg, former NFL cornerback for the Browns and the Dolphins, NFL Alumni member and all our former player friends for supporting Tackle Hunger.

**Underbelly DAIRY**  
Tackle Hunger partners with regional dairy councils to help local food charities provide healthy dairy to those in need.

**Collections end on Super Bowl Sunday  
February 8, 2026  
NO soups please!**

### Unload Your Distress

By Billy Graham

“Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” —1Peter 5:7, NKJV

I've been told that the French translation of the phrase “Cast all your care upon Him” is “Unload your distresses upon God.”

Have you ever seen a dump truck get rid of its load? The driver simply pushes a button or pulls on a lever and the heavy load is discharged at the prescribed spot. The truck would be of no use if it carried its burden forever.

We were never meant to be crushed under the weight of care. We can push the button of faith or pull the lever of trust, and our burden is discharged upon the shoulder of Him who said He would gladly bear it. Unload the anxieties of the present moment upon Him, for He cares for you. If He loved you enough to take away the burden of your sins, can't you trust Him to take away every lesser burden as well?

### Hope for Today

Imagine carrying a heavy suitcase filled with useless things everywhere you went. Why would someone do that? That is what we do when we carry the burdens of worry and anxiety. It's unnecessary and does us no good.



# SOCIAL CONCERN



## The Latest from Conley's Social Concerns Team

### Feeding the Flock

2025 was a "fruitful" year for this ministry.  
It was also a year full of blessings.

We fed between 200 and 250 people every Monday and additional people during the week at various locations. We participated in the Farm to Community Program in conjunction with the Historic Lewes Farmer's Market. We were blessed by many donations from volunteers at the Thrift Store via the tithing program. The Ocean Waves Quilt Guild showered us with 650 pounds of canned goods and shelf stable food for our pantry. Conley's Garden with the help of Jerry Pawlikowski and Joyce and Robert Yanchus provided us with a huge amount of fresh produce right up to the beginning of December.

Recently, we had some members of the Lewes-Rehoboth Rotary express an interest in possibly helping with our Monday lunch program. We also received a very generous donation from them. We hope they will be joining us in the Monday lunch program.

Read about the newest way you can support Feeding the Flock in an article written by Bob Marx. It appears in this newsletter.

We look forward to building on our relationship with Code Purple at the Cape (Route 1 tents and overnight shelters), Community Resource Center and Love, INC. during the winter months.

### Pantry

Our pantry remains well stocked, even after filling boxes for 33 families in conjunction with the Angel Tree. Current needs are shelf stable milk (Modern Pantry available at Dollar Tree). Whole milk is appreciated; small canned hams available at Aldi, juice boxes, spaghetti sauce and jelly. Please **DO NOT BRING SOUP OR MAC AND CHEESE**.

### Soup for the Soul

Soup for the Soul will resume on Wednesday, January 7. Please **DO NOT BRING SOUP UNTIL YOU CHECK WITH DALE.**

### Family Assistance

We did see a slight uptick in need for financial assistance during the month of December. We are thankful for your continued support of this vital ministry.

Blessings and a Happy, Healthy New Year to All!



**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.")*



## **Feeding the Flock can now accept donations of stocks, bonds, and ETFs**

Direct donations of securities, including shares of stock, shares of exchange traded funds (ETFs), and bonds, can now be accepted by Feeding the Flock, Inc. As an IRS 501 (c) 3 non-profit, donations are tax deductible. Since securities are accepted directly, there is no need to sell them. It is suggested that you consult your financial advisor or tax professional to see if this type of donation would be appropriate to your individual situation.

To initiate a donation, contact Bob Marx (Conley's member and President of Feeding the Flock) at 302-258-7277, or email at [RMM8155@MSN.com](mailto:RMM8155@MSN.com).



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## NEWS from CONLEY'S THRIFT SHOP

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Great News!!! The Thrift Shop finished 2025 with a banner year. Sally and I would like to thank each of our volunteers and staff members for helping us achieve this goal. We would also like to thank our loyal customers for shopping with us. Our goal is always to make your shopping trip a pleasure.

We will celebrate this achievement with our "State of the Union" luncheon on January 19 th at the Ocean Grill in Longneck. This is always a fun time as well as a time to discuss ways to improve our performance. Please jot down any notes that you would like to discuss. Just remember, there are certain limitations as to what we can do.

A great big thanks to Dale Tulloch and all who helped with our Christmas Shed. It was amazing to see all of the items that came through the check-out line. Bargains abounded!!! Now on to the daunting task of reorganizing and packing up part of it for storage for next season.

We would like to welcome our new donation thrift shop assistant, Kathy Kash. She will be sharing the position with Joan Cogswell. Be sure to stop by and say hello. We would also like to thank Peggy Markovitz, who retired at the end of November. Her family purchased a condo in Florida and she will be spending the cold winter months there. We wish you well.

I would like to remind everyone of our cold weather policy for the Donation Center. If the weather is below 35 degrees and not projected to warm up into the mid 40's, the donation center will be closed for the day. I will post the closing on our Face Book page by 8 a.m. and also recommend that if you want to check before coming over and being disappointed, please call the shop at 302-945-5566. Donation hours are Tuesday through Friday 10 to 2 or UNTIL FULL (the Donation Center is closed on Fridays) and open Saturdays 9 to 1. Thanks for your understanding – safety/health of our staff is our number 1 priority .

We hope to see you soon. THANKS FOR A GREAT YEAR.

### Did you know?

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





## Christmas 2025 at Camp Hope: A Celebration to Remember

What a fantastic Christmas celebration we enjoyed at Camp Hope this year! With 33 children in attendance, the party was filled with laughter, joy, and the true spirit of the season. From the moment the campers arrived, the excitement was contagious—and it only grew as the day unfolded.

The children were treated to a delicious lunch, followed by an amazing spread of homemade desserts. A special highlight was the beautiful and yummy “Happy Birthday Jesus” cake, lovingly made by Cheryl Wood. It was as delightful to look at as it was to eat, and it perfectly captured the heart of our celebration.



Once again, Barb Evans blessed us by presenting the inspirational story of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Barb has such a wonderful gift for teaching young children. The room grew quiet as everyone listened attentively, and it was clear that the children truly understood the real meaning of Christmas. It was a powerful and touching moment for all who were there.



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We were also incredibly blessed by our many awesome volunteers. Without their time, energy, and joyful spirits, the party could not have run so smoothly. The best part was seeing how much fun they had themselves! From our wonderful *kitchen elves* to our game leaders, the volunteers jumped right in with the children—playing games, laughing, and sharing in the excitement of the day.



Christmas 2025 at Camp Hope was truly a gift—one filled with love, service, faith, and fun. Thank you to everyone who helped make this celebration such a meaningful and memorable experience for our campers.

Karen Lessey, Camp Hope Director

***All praise and glory to God!***



## Please Contribute to Conley's Lenten Devotional - Wilderness Experiences

We are now compiling the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Conley's Lenten Devotional for this upcoming Lent with **the theme - Wilderness Experiences**.

You are invited to contribute to Conley's 2026 Devotional. It's through these shared experiences that we as Christians can grow in our own personal faith.

You might ask - how did we come up with the theme Wilderness Experiences? ***The Upper Room's March-April 2025 issue for Lent last year caught my eye (at [www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Upper+Room%20%99s+March-April+2025+issue&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Upper+Room%20%99s+March-April+2025+issue&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)) where writers described a variety of wilderness experiences such as:***

- Surgeries and health crises,
- The loss of a loved one,
- Financial struggles,
- Retirement, and
- Moving to new places.

The writers also shared how God worked in their lives to help them through that experience, to help find their true selves and God's purpose.

**Lindsay Gray, *The Upper Room*'s Editorial Director, put it well in that issue:**  
“The season of Lent commemorates Jesus’s 40 days in the wilderness and offers us an opportunity to prepare for the new reality that Jesus’ Resurrection makes possible. **Wilderness experiences are marked by uncertainty and often a sense of isolation. The challenge in wilderness experiences is to remain open and attentive to God’s creative presence.** Our writers offer a range of practices that help us perceive and share God’s love, including gratitude journals, prayers, daily scripture study, contacting individuals, careful listening and small acts of compassion.”

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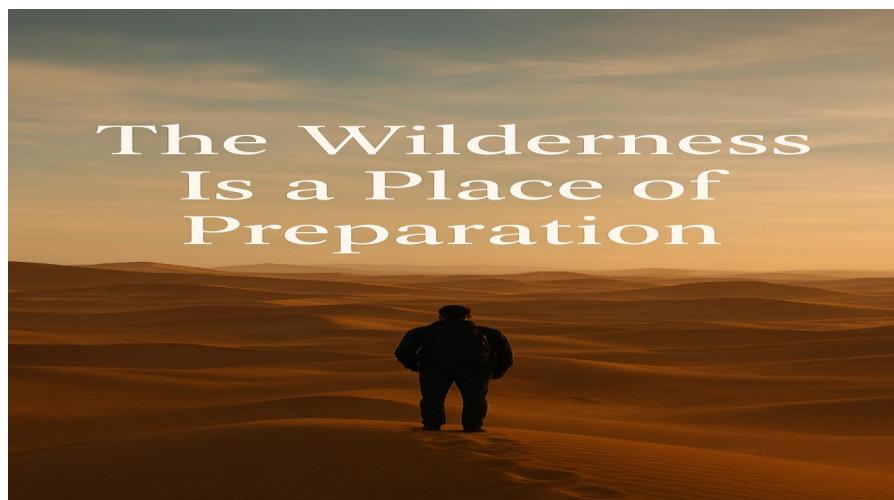
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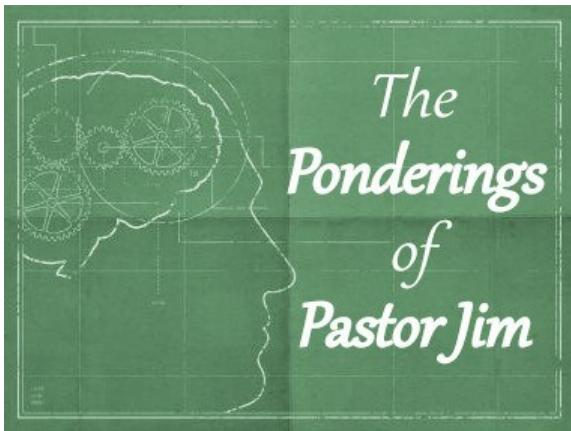
I went through financial struggles 12 years ago when my business went through a sales drought. I developed a hopeless feeling that I would lose my home and a lot of anxiety that caused significant weight loss. I viewed this as a personal failure but this humbling experience fostered growth in my life. I turned this negative experience into an opportunity...an opportunity for developing resilience and becoming more compassionate, patient, and flexible because God had opened a door for me to experience being a caregiver to three men for 18 months.

**Let's make Conley's 2026 Lenten devotional as special as the first two editions!**  
Feel free to contribute a personal testimony, a Lenten-related prayer or favorite hymn or praise song, or something as simple as a picture or artwork.

**Please drop off your devotional to Sandy in the church office or email them to me (at [gipawlikowski@verizon.net](mailto:gipawlikowski@verizon.net)) by no later than February 1<sup>st</sup>.** Please see or contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your participation!  
Jerry Pawlikowski (610-207-7139)





We're back from our Caribbean cruise—here are some highlights:

**FRIDAY**—We flew down to Fort Meyers to meet up with my brother. There was incredible non-stop turbulence all the way down. I was actually in the middle seat and Marie held the airsickness bag open on my left side and a very pleasant 30-something woman held a bag open just in case, on my right side. When we arrived at Babcock Ranch, where my brother lives, I went right to bed.

**SATURDAY**—Woke up renewed and refreshed. Went to Cracker Barrel for breakfast. The vacation has started!

**SUNDAY**—Watched the Conley's church service on Facebook. In the afternoon I played 9 holes of golf with my brother. I shot 48.

**MONDAY**—We drove to Miami (on Alligator Alley) to catch the Royal Caribbean cruise ship. There were 5 of us—Marie and I, John and Nancy, and sister Barbara who also lives in Florida.

**TUESDAY**—Food, food! That evening there was a Broadway quality performance on stage in the theatre.

**WEDNESDAY**—Toured the capital city of Georgetown on Grand Caymen island. That evening there was a comic juggler and he was hysterical.

**THURSDAY**—I fell. I was very unsteady on my feet and walking back to the cruise ship after a day in Grand Caymen and my feet just gave out, instantly there were about 10 natives around me, helping me up. I had to fill out an accident report, which I summarized as this—I was walking, fell, people helped me up.

**FRIDAY**—Arrived in Cozumel Mexico. Fell again. Now we are moving me to a wheelchair. My family supported me throughout the cruise. We played a lot of team trivia. And a good time was had by all.

**SATURDAY**—We left the cruise ship and drove to John and Nancy's house. From there Barbara drove home, John dropped us off at the airport and it was (this time) smooth flying back to Delaware.

Praise the Lord!!

(“HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026!”, A tribute to all our Farmers)

**Old Farmer's Advice:**

“Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.  
Keep skunks and bankers at a distance.  
Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.  
A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.  
Words that soak into your ears are whispered... not yelled.  
Meanness don't just happen overnight.  
Forgive your enemies; it messes up their heads.  
Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.  
It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.  
You cannot unsay a cruel word.  
Every path has a few puddles.  
When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.  
The best sermons are lived, not preached.  
Most of the stuff people worry about, ain't never gonna happen anyway.  
Don't judge folks by their relatives.  
Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.  
Live a good and honorable life, then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.  
Don't interfere with something' that ain't bothering you none.  
Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.  
If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.  
Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.  
The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every morning'.  
Always drink upstream from the herd.  
Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.  
Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.  
If you get to thinking' you're a person of some influence, try ordering' somebody else's dog around.  
Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and enjoy the ride.  
Don't pick a fight with an old man. If he is too old to fight, he'll just shoot you.” (source unknown)



## **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 stickest closer than a brother.* Proverbs 18:24

By: Sandie Wysocki

## 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 worshiping 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**—on hiatus.

#### Monday

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

**Bell Ringers practice** in the Fellowship Hall, 5:15pm.

#### 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. Desserts are needed. Check with Dale about soup.

**Adult Bible Study**—Led by Louise Finn and Karen Lessey, 10am, in the Sanctuary.

**Adult Bible Study** Led by Pastor Bill, 6:30pm on hiatus.

#### Thursday

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

### Happening This Month

**The Trustees** meet Tuesday, Jan. 6th, 6:30pm, in the Library.

**SPRC** —meets Tuesday, January 13th, 6:30pm in the Library.

**The Church Council** will meet Thursday, January 15th, 6:30pm in the Library.

**United Women in Faith**-Undecorating the church, Saturday, Jan 10th at 10am.

**ASP Mission Trip**-June 21-27, 2026. Please consider joining the group, to be a blessing to someone in need. Call Marie Van Der Wall, 302-249-7897, or the church office to sign up.

# 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.



## 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
- 4th Epiphany Sunday
- 19th Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Conley's United Methodist Church**

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PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

