

February 2026

Conley's United Methodist

THE CONNECTION

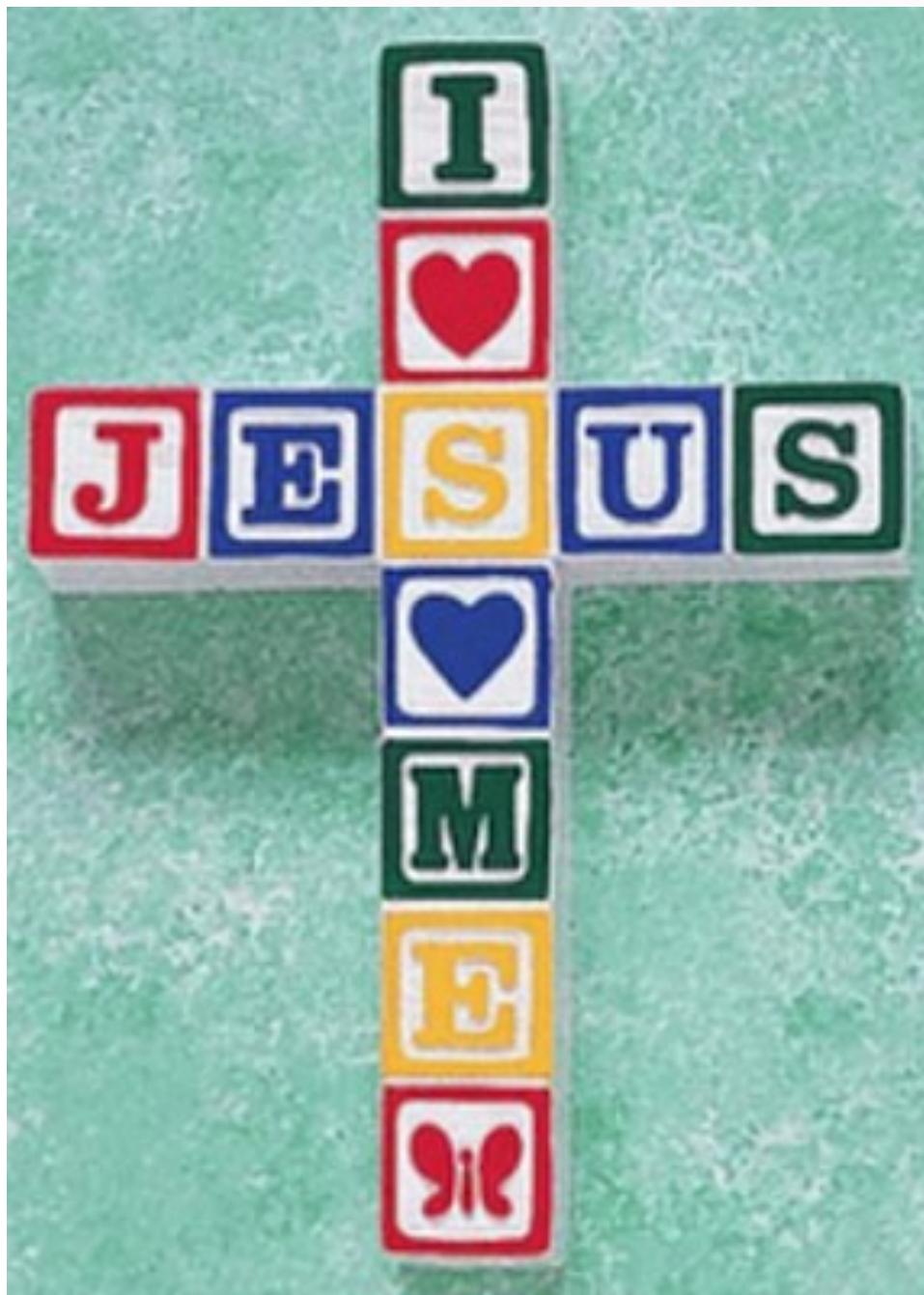
In essentials, unity

In non-essentials, liberty

In all things, charity



Lewes, Delaware



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The Pastor's Pen

a word from Pastor Bill Davis

Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”
Amos 7:12-13

This month, with more than a little trepidation, I feel prompted to share some personal thoughts that I have been wrestling with. Please forgive the length; I will get back to short articles next month. Also, I know that some people I deeply respect will disagree, be disappointed, sad, and maybe even angry. I want you to know that I understand and pray that we may still love alike even when we do not think alike.

I am grateful for the men and women who have helped me through their words and actions to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. One such person was a seminary professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where I earned my first master's degree. Dr. Wayne Grudem is a brilliant Bible scholar who taught with an air of gentle humility that belied his formidable influence in theological academia. At the time I was attending his classes, he was working on "Systematic Theology," a 1200-page book that has since been translated into over 15 languages, sold over 500,000 copies, and come to be regarded as a foundational resource in conservative theology. Dr. Grudem routinely distributed chapters of this work-in-progress to his classes which led to spirited discussion and helped him refine his work. I did not agree with him on all things--his views on gender roles and Calvinism, for example--but I never questioned his integrity. His teachings on Christian ethics and morality had a profound impact at a formative time in my spiritual development.

I attended Trinity in the '90s during the presidency of Bill Clinton. Dr. Grudem did not shy away from addressing the moral failings and character flaws of the President. Dr. Grudem contended that Christians should not support such a leader. While people of faith may disagree on various policies, all should be offended at the President's sexual misconduct because of "the poor example it set for adolescent children and, indeed, for all the rest of society." (As Dr. Grudem later explained in his massive book "Politics According to the Bible" p98). At the time, Dr. Grudem was one of 74 faith leaders from various Christian denominations and backgrounds who signed and published a statement declaring:

We are aware that certain moral qualities are central to the survival of our political system, among which are truthfulness, integrity, respect for the law, respect for the dignity of others, adherence to the constitutional process, and a willingness to avoid the abuse of power. We reject the premise that violations of these ethical standards should be excused so long as a leader remains loyal to a particular political agenda and the nation is blessed by a strong economy. By his own admission the President has departed from ethical standards by abusing his presidential office, by his ill use of women, and by his knowing manipulation of truth for indefensible ends. We are particularly troubled about the debasing of the language of public discourse with the aim of avoiding responsibility for one's actions.
www.layman.org/news86fd

Given my personal admiration of Dr. Grudem, I was surprised and disheartened when he became a defender of President Trump. Please note: I am not writing here to endorse any one politician or party over another. I understand that the mere mention of these names may have already provoked anxiety and defensiveness in you. That is not my intent; I am sharing a personal testimony concerning my own spirit. Over the past two decades I have watched as men and women whom God used to shape my faith have changed their values. Not in small, subtle ways but in fundamental, transformative ways. Dr. Grudem's impact on my life was significant and positive and I get no satisfaction in singling him out. I do so only because his statements were made in the context of public discourse. But there are others among my friends, family, and colleagues who, like Dr. Grudem, now endorse and defend attitudes and actions they once recognized as incompatible with the teaching and example of Jesus. Furthermore, this is not unique to my own experience.

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<Continued from previous page—The Pastor’s Pen

a word from Pastor Bill Davis

In 2011, a poll conducted by The Public Research Institute showed that only 30% of church-going Christians believed that a politician who was immoral in their personal life could be trusted to perform their public duties in an ethical manner. When the same poll was conducted in 2016, that number was 72%. A whopping 42-point change. Take a moment to think about that. In the space of just five years, the American church transformed from a community that valued moral character in our leaders, to one that regards morality as a secondary concern at most, and perhaps completely irrelevant. The modern American church’s commitment to morality and ethics turns out to be a matter of convenience rather than conviction, our fealty to political parties more powerful than our hunger and thirst for righteousness.

The passage above was our lectionary reading for July 13th. I haven’t been able to get it out of my mind since. In it, the priest Amaziah is dismissing Amos, telling him: “Go back where you came from! You’re not a real prophet!” Why? Because Amos dared to confront this man of God for his failure to speak out against the king’s ungodliness. Amaziah had made a calculated decision to side with the king, making excuses for his ungodliness and encouraging the people to submit to his authority. Consider Amaziah’s statement: “this is the king’s sanctuary.” Amaziah is sadly--and blasphemously--correct. He has turned the temple of God into “the temple of the kingdom.” The home of the Holy of Holies, reduced to a partisan pawn.

Many people, both inside and outside the church, have understandably questioned why so many Christians are silent concerning the troubling events happening in our country. This has become an increasingly common question as images proliferate of the abusive treatment of immigrants and refugees, documented and undocumented alike. Many of us--perhaps most of us--*are* having conversations in private. If not, I suspect it is because we value our relationships and, recognizing the emotional toll of such conversations, we hope our silence will protect our connections. Also, many of us see no evidence that discussion, regardless of how reasonable and well-intentioned, ever changes hearts or minds. To the contrary, it is more likely to devolve into personal attacks, name calling, and further entrenchment.

My personal reflection makes me suspect I have a less virtuous reason for keeping quiet. Self-preservation. It is easy to justify a risk-averse defense of the status quo that makes “don’t rock the boat” a primary goal. The first of John Wesley’s “Three Simple Rules” is “Do no harm.” A good starting point to be sure. But if one is not careful, it can be used to rationalize timidity—like the unfaithful servant who received a portion of his master’s riches and buried it in the ground to keep it safe (Matthew 25:14-28). In three decades of ministry, I have learned that faithful discipleship requires risk. To love and follow Jesus means standing with the weak, the poor, and the oppressed . . . and standing **between** them and the powerful, the rich, and the oppressor. That can be scary. After all, Jesus was killed for doing it. But it is there that we find the “well done” in our story.

I have reached a personal tipping point in this season of Epiphany. Over the past couple of years, it has become trendy in the church world to “deconstruct” one’s faith. To the point that many once-committed Christians have openly renounced their faith. I have witnessed too much to deny the existence of God and experienced too much to turn away from Christ, my loving Savior. My faith in the church, however, is on less solid ground. I love the church. My entire adult life has been lived in service to the church. But today, I find myself more often discouraged rather than encouraged by the witness of the church in America. I take some comfort in the fact that Jesus himself expressed similar feelings at times. At one point, he was so troubled by the number of disciples who were deserting him that he turned to the twelve and asked, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” (John 6:67). At another point, his discussion on the world’s injustice prompted him to ask, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). When the disciples attempted to bar children from approaching him, Mark tells us Jesus was “indignant” at their behavior (10:14).

We, God’s people, sometimes struggle to ascertain God’s will. Peter acknowledges that Scripture is sometimes hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16). If this was true for him, how much more should we humbly admit that we see through the glass darkly (as Paul said) and be generous with our grace to one another! This, however, does not mean we should keep quiet when we see the Word of God misused, especially when Scripture is misused to justify ungodliness.

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<Continued from previous page—The Pastor’s Pen

a word from Pastor Bill Davis

My spiritual wrestling will not allow me to be silent any longer. I choose this newsletter as the venue because I believe the Sunday worship service is a time for the people of God to present themselves and their sacrifice of praise to God. In the Bible, God takes communal worship seriously. I believe we should regard it with reverence and strive to keep the elements of the worship service--including the sermon--focused on glorifying God and building up God’s people. The Bible says there is a time for everything, and the time sanctified for the praises of the people is not the time for politics. I also want to affirm, as I have many times in the past, that all earthly authorities fall far short of God’s standard. Conservatives and progressives alike are called to speak against the ungodliness of their “side” and tend to the plank in their own eye with more vigor than the speck in the other’s.

With that said, we are living in a time where power is exercised cruelly, accountability is evaded, humans are treated inhumanely, immorality is shrugged off and covered up, and dissent is demonized. At such times, silence is complicity. And yet, many churches remain quiet. Worse, some walk in the footsteps of Amaziah in open support of whatever ungodly authority they calculate to offer the greater benefit or the lesser evil. This may seem reasonable to the human mind, but its end is destruction. The path of ungodliness has but one destination.

I believe in the separation of church and state for the good of both. The church is called neither to control nor serve the government. Rather, the church is, as Martin Luther King put it, the conscience of the government. The church is called to speak truth to power, and proclaim good news to the poor. Separation of church and state means the church has freedom to preach the Word, to resist idolatry, to stand with the vulnerable and against injustice, evil, and oppression in any form. Scripture is clear and uncompromising: God is found among “the least of these,” the poor, the imprisoned, the foreigner, the widow, the orphan . . . the ones who always suffer the most when power is abused. A church that refuses to advocate for these is not “staying out of politics,” it is serving as an enabler, complicit in the crimes and sins of a nation. Such a church distorts the gospel until it is an instrument of bondage rather than liberation. A church that does not remind those in power that righteous authority is measured by how they serve the most vulnerable does not preserve the Christian faith. It betrays it.

Another man who influenced my faith formation through his writings was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor who stood up to Hitler and paid for this resistance to authoritarian government with his life. Bonhoeffer warned: “Christendom adjusts itself far too easily to the worship of power. Christians should give more offense, shock the world far more than they are doing now. Christians should take a stronger stand in favor of the weak rather than considering first the possible right of the strong.” Bonhoeffer understood the teaching of Scripture borne out in the history of the church: when the church aligns itself with the powerful, it inevitably abandons the vulnerable. And when it abandons the vulnerable, it abandons Jesus.

I believe that what we do to the least among us is what we are doing to Jesus. Whether we intend to or not. Whether they are among us with papers or without. I believe those who are the least in the eyes of society are often the greatest in the eyes of God. I believe that all people are created in the image of God and that life is, therefore, of sacred worth and must be treated with utmost care and respect. My voice is small, I know, but I am determined that it will be on the side of compassion, mercy, and grace.

SPARC

Strategic Prayer And Revival Committee



Can you think of ways that God shows His love for us?

God shows His love through creation - birds, flowers, goats and sheep, the ocean, our pets, the sun and the beautiful sunrises and sunsets it displays.

God shows His love through others - friends, strangers, family, co-workers, fellow shoppers, church congregants, those served through ministries.

God shows His love through music.

God shows His love through prayer.

God shows His love through forgiveness.

God shows His love through His Word, the Bible.

God shows His love through His son, Jesus.

God shows His love through the Holy Spirit.

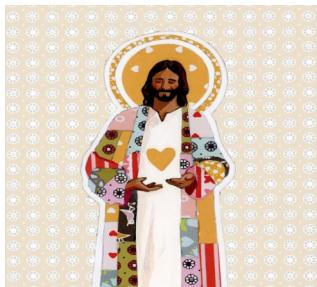
God IS Love!

As He continuously demonstrates His love for us, we can demonstrate our love for Him by loving others. We can be the reason someone feels loved - even those who we feel aren't as easy to love as others - Are we ALWAYS easy to love? God loves us anyway!

Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:17-19 ..that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be

filled with all the fullness of God. (NKJV) Be filled with the love of Christ and share it with others!

God, thank you for the many ways you continually demonstrate Your love for us! Open our eyes and soften our hearts to see and feel Your love through all You've created. Guide us in Your Word as You speak Your love through scripture. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to wash away our sins and for the Holy Spirit who fills us with Your presence. God, no one loves like You, but help us try! We want to love our neighbors, the people we share the roads with, our friends, family, even our enemies. Help us, Lord, to love those who are hard to love, who may see things differently than we do. Father, please fill us with Your love so that it generously spills over for us to share with those around us, bringing Your Light and warmth to a world that feels dark and cold. Thank you, Lord, for loving us! AMEN.



"I want to know one thing, the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. Give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God!"

—John Wesley





Greetings from the Missions Team



We are excited to share our theme for 2026: Love Your Neighbor!

Appalachia Service Project 2026 mission trip is on the calendar for June 21-25, 2026.

If you are planning to join the mission team? Please go to <http://www.asphome.org/participantcenter> and register for trip #16862.

If you are interested in participating in this mission but have questions, please call Marie Van Der Wall 302-249-7897 or the church office 302-945-1881 for more information.

Evangelism Team News

Compassion and Love

By Billy Graham

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

—1 John 4:11, NKJV

Charles Allen once made this statement: “Some people seem to have such a passion for righteousness that they have no room left for compassion for those who have failed.”

I pray that would never be true of us. God, our Father, has shown us such great kindness and gentle mercy. May we ever reach out to the lost in compassion and love to bring them gently to Jesus Christ. Jesus, “when He saw the multitudes,...was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Let me share these lines from an unknown poet:

Just to be tender, just to be true,
Just to be glad the whole day through,
Just to be merciful, just to be mild,
Just to be trustful as a child:
Just to be gentle and kind and sweet,
Just to be helpful with willing feet, ...
Just to let love be our daily key,
That is God’s will for you and me.

Hope for Today

Lord, may I never forget the depths to which You reached to rescue me.



SOCIAL CONCERN

A HELPING HAND FOR THOSE IN NEED



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.")

The Latest from Conley's Social Concerns Team

Feeding the Flock

There is good news to share as we begin the new year. We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to serve our marginalized neighbors and to develop relationships with them and to have the support of a wonderful church family. We have also been blessed with good weather; and in December we met with members of the Lewes Rehoboth Rotary and early in January we learned that 16 of their members are interested in helping us with our bag lunch program. We are planning an orientation in February and then begin integrating them into our teams.

Generous donations of food and money have enabled us to continue supplying lunches to about 230 people per week.

Soup for the Soul

After a few weeks off and a slow return, the Wednesday lunch program had a wonderful crowd of people on Wednesday, January 14. It was great to see so many people sharing a meal.

The freezer is overflowing with soup. Please do not bring soup before you check with Dale Kehrer. Desserts are always needed.

Pantry

The pantry remains well stocked. We can always use shelf stable milk. Whole milk is preferred. Modern Pantry brand is available at Dollar Tree. We can also use small canned hams, available at Grocery Outlet and at some dollar stores. Please do not bring pasta products or mac and cheese.

Social Concerns / Family Assistance

We have continued to see a need for help with utility bills and rent. Working with Love, INC helps us determine the appropriate help. We thank the Thrift Store for their continued financial support of this ministry both through the monthly tithe and the volunteer directed contributions.

NEWS from CONLEY'S THRIFT SHOP



On Monday, January 19th the Thrift Shop treated 42 of our volunteers and staff to our annual Thank You Volunteers Luncheon. We spent the afternoon enjoying everyone's company and sharing our "State of the Union" news. We shared news that we had helped more families this year than previous years and that we gave away more than \$200,000.00 in donations of surplus items to several local charities. This is a win/win for all and keeps useable items out of the landfills. We also honored John Ovens and Edna Spath who have been with the Thrift Shop since we opened in 2011. There are several other volunteers that have been with us for several years. A great big thanks to all of you for your dedication to our mission.

The cold weather is really playing havoc with our donation center. For the health and safety of our donation staff, we have set the rule that if the temperature is less than 35 degrees, the donation center will not open for the day. This news is posted on Facebook by 8:30 that morning and text are sent to the staff and volunteers. They are given the option of working inside the furniture barn or the main shop building or taking the day off. Most choose to come help clean and organize. When snow is forecast, we make decisions to open or close the shop depending on amount of snow and condition of our parking lot. This information is also posted early mornings on Facebook.

Not only is the cold weather an issue for the Thrift Shop, it is a major issue for the homeless people in our community. Conley's steps up in many different capacities. We donate winter coats and clothing to several agencies. One of our regular customers loves to knit, so we furnish donated yarn and she makes beautiful winter hats for us to give away. So far this season she has made approximately 50 hats. This past Saturday, I saw a post from Higher Ground that they were opening an emergency weekend shelter for approximately 50 people in Milford and was asking for food resources. Conley's Thrift Shop gave a check for \$300.00 to help with the food. It is a blessing for us to be in a position that we can help those in need.

We hope to see you at the shop soon. Bring a friend and enjoy a morning or afternoon thrifting. It's a fun way to spend a couple of hours.

Did you know?

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



Dine & Donate

As the new year rolls in, we are already thinking about this summer's camp. The most important task at hand is raising the funds needed to get us through the whole eight weeks. We work hard to put aside money at the end of each year to kick start the next year, but fundraising never stops. Through gifts from generous members of the congregation, numerous church partners, and community donors, fundraising is an ongoing task for our team.

Why are we doing all of this? As I'm sure you are aware, Camp Hope is a costly proposition. We pay for food, bus transportation, field trips, games, crafts, equipment, and countless miscellaneous items. And, while the camp is overwhelmingly managed through volunteer efforts, we do have staff salary costs. And it adds up.

So, why do we do it? We do it for Him. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

One of the ways you can help is to join us at the upcoming event at Big Fish Grill. We love these events because it always feels so special to see friends and supporters joining us for a fun, and profitable, evening. And, we all love Big Fish Grill, don't we?!

We appreciate all you do for Camp Hope throughout the year. Thank you so much for your participation, your prayers, and your support!

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



Tuesday, February 10th

12:00pm - 9:00pm

15% of net sales to benefit

Camp Hope

Caring Hearts Ministry



Caring Hearts is currently serving several church members with visitations and phone calls. We are visiting people who have requested us to do so and calling people who have had recent surgeries or illnesses. Most people we call state that they do not want a visit. We are prepared to provide food, communion, a ride to an appointment, or help with other needs.

We rely on our congregation, along with the Prayer list, to facilitate contact with those in need of any of our services. Always feel free to reach out to Carol or me if you or anyone you know needs our Ministry's help.

God Bless,

Jay & Carol

Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

The SPRC helps guide the working relationship between our church staff, the congregation, the Pastor, and the District Superintendent so that our church's mission can continue to grow. Spiritually, our purpose is to help make disciples of Jesus Christ so that lives and communities can be transformed. Administratively, we support the church by carrying out staff and pastoral evaluations, staying connected with the District Superintendent, and keeping communication healthy among everyone involved.

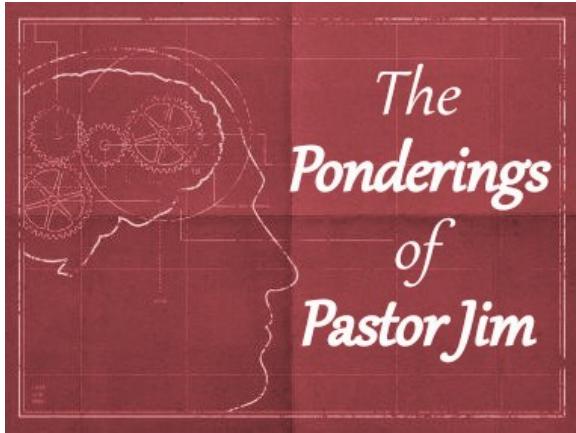
Because the SPRC handles sensitive personnel matters, our meetings are not open to the general congregation.

We recently held our 2026 organizational meeting and are grateful to welcome three new members to the committee. We truly feel blessed to have them join us. As we move forward, we hope to be a helpful connection for your prayers, concerns, suggestions, and for building relationships within our church family.

Your SPRC committee members are:

- **Pastor Bill Davis**, who is welcome in all committees and serves as the Nominations Chair
- **SPRC Chair**: Tina Washington
- **Secretary**: Natalie Taylor
- **Members**: Rob Dandrade, Jim Novinger, Elaine Perry
- **New Members**: Betty Hudson, Mary Bradford, and Joe Mehok

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11



My trip to Nashville

I flew from Philadelphia to Nashville, while Marie drove her Tesla (a 14-hour drive). Because of mechanical problems with the plane, Marie arrived earlier than I did!

We stayed at son Scott's (and Ashley) home in an upscale Tennessee development. All the

homes are constructed of brick, in an attempt to make them tornado proof. Son Jay and Susan flew in from Albuquerque, and the six of us enjoyed our annual family get-together. Scott has a gentle, hundred -pound dog which is snow white, appropriately named Cloud. Scott and Ashley have devised two home offices, as both work from home.

Jay and Susan work at Sandia Laboratories, a remnant of the Manhattan project. They deal with quantum mechanics. They are very smart.

Nashville is rightfully called "Music City" but its cuisine is also world famous. We went out to eat for every meal, and it never failed to impress. Chicken and waffles are my favorites at Hattie B's. We had Tennessee barbecue of pulled pork and baby-back ribs. Biscuits and gravy! Sushi! Scott made breakfast of eggs, bacon, and toast.

A highlight of the trip was visiting Topgolf, a sports entertainment venue with high-tech golf games, great food and drinks, climate-controlled bays, and music. The lively atmosphere is noticeable as soon as you arrive. I won the game where the player netted the most yardage.

Franklin, Tennessee is a Civil War era tourist mecca filled with little shops. We bought delicious chocolate candy in one shop, and a wonderful choice of spices in another shop.

We had that endless joy and conversation that family get-togethers produced. My gift from Scott was first class airline tickets plus using the Admirals Club while waiting for my flight. It was wonderful. I find it necessary to walk with a cane but all four of the kids and Marie cared for me so well. The laundry was on the second floor of Scott's house, but no one would let me climb the steps to do my wash. They all pitched in and did it for me.

Marie arrived home a day before I did. She had to prepare the year-end reports for Conley's Church. I arrived home a day later with freezing temperatures and swirling winds, wearing shorts. Thank God Valarie arrived quickly to pick me up.

Happy New Year!



***"The Jot and The Title"* (for February)**

Tu **While most are thinking **cupids** and **romance**, we're thinking '**Trees**'!**

"The Jewish New Year ... For Trees! February 1, 2026

(Article from: jewfaq.org. A little history about our fellow brothers and sisters (**submitted by Ron Starich**)

"Tu B'Shevat, the 15th day of the Jewish month of [Shevat](#), is a holiday also known as the New Year for Trees. The word "Tu" is not really a word; it is the number 15 in Hebrew, as if you were to call the Fourth of July "IV July" (IV being 4 in Roman numerals). See [Hebrew Alphabet](#) for more information about using letters as numbers and why the number 15 is written this way.

As I mentioned in [Rosh Hashanah](#), Judaism has several different "new years." This is not as strange a concept as it sounds at first blush; in America, we have the calendar year (January-December), the school year (September-June), and many businesses have fiscal years. It's basically the same idea with the various Jewish new years.

Tu B'Shevat is the new year for the purpose of calculating the age of trees for tithing. See [Lev. 19:23-25](#), which states that fruit from trees may not be eaten during the first three years; the fourth year's fruit is for [G-d](#), and after that, you can eat the fruit. Each tree is considered to have aged one year as of Tu B'Shevat, so if you planted a tree on Shevat 14, it begins its second year the next day, but if you plant a tree two days later, on Shevat 16, it does not reach its second year until the next Tu B'Shevat.

Tu B'Shevat is not mentioned in the [Torah](#). I have found only one reference to it in the [Mishnah](#), and the only thing said there is that it is the new year for trees, and there is a dispute as to the proper date for the holiday (Beit Shammai said the proper day was the first of Shevat; Beit Hillel said the proper day was the 15th of Shevat. As usual, we follow Beit Hillel. For more on Hillel and Shammai, see [Sages and Scholars](#)).

Customs

"There are few customs or observances related to this holiday. One custom is to eat a new fruit on this day, or to eat from the Seven Species (shivat haminim) described in the Bible as being abundant in the land of [Israel](#). The Shvat Haminim are: wheat, barley, grapes (vines), figs, pomegranates, olives and dates (honey) ([Deut. 8:8](#)). You can make a nice vegetarian pilaf from the shvat haminim: a bed of cooked bulgar wheat or wheat berries and barley, topped with figs, dates, raisins (grapes), and pomegranate seeds, served with a dressing of olive oil, balsamic vinegar (grapes) and pomegranate juice.

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"Some people plant trees on this day. In my childhood, Jewish children commonly went around collecting money to [plant trees in Israel](#) at this time of year.

In the 16th century, [kabbalists](#), developed a seder ritual conceptually similar to the [Pesach \(Passover\) seder](#), discussing the spiritual significance of fruits and of the shivat haminim. This custom spread primarily in [Sephardic](#) communities, but in recent years it has been getting more attention among [Ashkenazim](#). Aish.com provides a [traditional text](#) for this seder.

"DATES: Tu B'Shevat will occur on the following days of the secular calendar, (a moving year):

Jewish Year 5786: sunset February 1, 2026 - nightfall February 2, 2026

Jewish Year 5787: sunset January 22, 2027 - nightfall January 23, 2027"

"When you come to the land and you plant any tree, you shall treat its fruit as forbidden; for three years it will be forbidden and not eaten. In the fourth year, all of its fruit shall be sanctified to praise the L-RD. In the fifth year, you may eat its fruit. ([Leviticus 19:23-25](#))"

"There are four new years... the first of Shevat is the new year for trees according to the ruling of Beit Shammai; Beit Hillel, however, places it on the fifteenth of that month. ([Mishnah](#) Rosh Hashanah 1:1



[Isaiah 11:10](#): "In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious". [Isaiah 11:1](#): "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (This sets up the "root" metaphor). " The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree"[Acts 5:30](#)....

...(Just a few references about **trees** that portend to **Jesus, mine**).

Peace in my Heart

When anxiety strikes my heart, I try to remember to say to my heart, “nothing can happen to me that God doesn’t know about.”

It’s time to pray, speak to God. He is your father. He does not want you to spend your days feeling anxious and unsettled. Our minds can be our worst enemy at this time trying to find a reason for this feeling.

Outside circumstances can overwhelm us and send us spiraling downwards. Try to calm down and figure out where these feelings are originating.

A good bit of the time, most of us are just overwhelmed by all the day to day responsibilities we put on our daily schedule.

Just stop, find a quiet spot, ask our Lord to help you see clearly what you can change to alleviate this fluttering in your heart.

This is what I do, it works!

“I will give thanks to the Lord, with all my heart, I will tell you of your wonderful deeds.”

—*Psalm 9:1*

By: Sandie Wysocki

1John 4:10, NKJV “*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.*”

Loving Compassion By: Billy Graham

“The supreme happiness of life,” Victor Hugo said, “is the conviction that we are loved.”

“Love is the first requirement for mental health,” declared Sigmund Freud.

Unfortunately, many people go through life feeling unloved—and unlovable. Perhaps they were constantly criticized or ignored as children, or their family was torn by conflict. Perhaps they made bad choices about important issues in life—which only confirmed their belief that they were unworthy of love. This may be your experience.

But listen: I have good news! No matter the reason, your feelings aren’t telling you the truth! God loves you, and if you begin to see yourself the way God sees you, your attitudes will begin to change. If He didn’t love you, would Christ have been willing to die for you? But He did! The Bible says, “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us” (1John 3:16).

God loves you. Hammer that truth into your heart and mind every day. It will make all the difference.

Hope for Today: God’s Word is His love letter to each one of His children. By reading it, we are reminded that the high King of heaven left His throne, came to earth, and conquered the grave so that we might be set free from the chains of death and live with Him forever. That is true love.

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 Facebook; 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 Van der wall in the Library, 8:30-9:30am.

Youth Bible Study-On Hiatus.

Monday

Choir practice in the Choir Room, 6-7:15 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. We are okay with soup at this time. Check with Dale Kehrer.

AM Adult Bible Study led by Louise Finn & Karen Lessey in the Youth/Family Room, 10-11:30am.

PM Adult Bible Study led by Pastor Bill in the Youth/Family Room, 6:30pm

Thursday

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

Happening This Month

Trustees Meeting—February 3rd, 6:30pm in the Library.

United Women in Faith-Business meeting, February 14th, 9:30am, in the Library.

Fundraiser-Feb. 10th, Big fish Grill in Rehoboth. We receive 15 percent of their net sales from 12-9pm. Benefits Camp Hope.

Ash Wednesday Service, February 18th, 6:30pm, in the Sanctuary.

Prayer Team Meeting-February 13th, 9:30am, in the Prayer room.

Church Council meets Thursday, **February 19th**, 6:30pm, in the Library.

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 February

Black History Month

2nd	Groundhog Day
14th	Valentine's Day
16th	President's Day
18th	Ash Wednesday

Conley's United Methodist Church

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

