



# The Asbury BEACON

December 2021

Volume 21, Number 10

## THE VISION OF ASBURY

*To Make Disciples for  
Jesus Christ for the  
Transformation of the World.*

## THE MISSION OF ASBURY

*To Inspire People of  
All Generations to  
Love, Learn and Lead Through  
Worship, Education, and Service.*

## THE ASBURY MOTTO

*No Matter Where You Are on  
Life's Journey, You are Welcome Here!*

### **Pastoral Letter: *The Need to Choose***

For the past many years, at least 15 years, special interest groups within the United Methodist Church have been seriously considering leaving the denomination and forming new congregations which would reflect shared theological views. Clearly the dominate sticking point has been the issue of homosexuality and LGBTQ persons. There are other issues too like: term limits for bishops to name one. But without any doubt the dominate issue has been around homosexuality and LGBTQ persons. The Methodist Church has been around since 1784 and up until 1972, there was no comment on this issue in our Book of Discipline, which reflects the rules of our denomination. With that publication, the Discipline stated that homosexuality was incompatible with Christian teaching. Since 1972, there have been increasing restrictions. The denomination forbids the pastor from officiating “same sex” weddings, or allowing such unions to occur on church property. The denomination forbids a “self-declared, practicing homosexual” from being ordained. Lesser-known restrictions are also in place, but I’ve listed the big ones.

Emotional debate over these issues have strained the denomination for many years to the extent, that it has impacted other ministries and missions across the denomination. Leaders on both sides of this debate have become more and more vocal at annual conferences across the country and even overseas. In some ways, It’s as if we have become distilled to a “one issue” denomination.

So, for the past 5-6 years, the United Methodist Church has sincerely grappled with how to move forward as one denomination. The result decision is that we cannot move forward as one denomination. The issue of the inclusion of the LBGTQ Christian community is too important an issue for both sides. There is now a plan in place to separate the denomination into at least 2 churches. The vote to make this happen will occur at the next General Conference, which is scheduled to take place next summer in 2022. (Covid delayed General Conference in 2021, and may impact the ability to hold the conference again). But nonetheless, the decision will be made in the near future.

The proposed plan is to calmly and graciously allow those who wish the current language of our denomination to stay as church law to leave the United Methodist Church, and form a new denomination called, The Global Methodist Church. When that happens, every Ordained Pastor and every local church will be asked to decide to which denomination it wishes to belong. Those who favor the inclusion of LGBTQ Christians in the total life of the church, including ordination and Christian marriage of same sex couples, will vote to remain with the United Methodist Church. Those opposed to inclusion of LGBTQ Christians will vote to join the Global Methodist Church.

**Folks, this is big! It is probably the biggest decision you will make as a congregation.** And once it is made, it will be final. Such a decision should not be entered into casually and without prayerful consideration. I also believe that we should encourage conversation amongst ourselves, trying our best to really “hear” the opinions of each other before making a final decision.

I’ve had the luxury of knowing that this “train was coming down the track” for several years, so I’ve been able to grapple already with this issue. And I know my decision already. It is that which I wish to share with you.

(Continued on Page 3)

**ASBURY'S STAFF**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
FAITH KIRCH

**ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR/  
DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT**  
MAX BOVEE

**BROADCAST MINISTRY**  
BOB KURTZ

**CLEANING SERVICES**  
FRANCES GOUTREMOUT

**CONGREGATIONAL CARE**  
PAMELA QUIMBY  
DARLENE WELBOURN

**FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE**  
DARLENE WELBOURN

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY**  
DAN WEBB

**TREASURER**  
DEBORAH VANHOUTEN

**MAINTENANCE**

**MUSIC PROGRAM  
DIRECTOR**  
CATHERINE MOWERS

**MUSIC PROGRAM STAFF**  
GHILYANA DORDZHEVA  
LYNN MORGAN  
MELANIE RAFFERTY  
MICHELLE RUDD  
LISA SMITH  
HELEN TIMERMAN  
BINA WEST  
MARTHA JABLONSKI

**PASTOR**  
REV. LAURA CALOS



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# From Our Assistant to the Pastor - Max Bovee

## AMF (Asbury Men's Fellowship)

On December 1st the Men's Group helped move Christmas wreaths from Hemlock Haven to Asbury and afterwards they enjoyed lunch at Cracker Barrel.

There will be one last Men's Fellowship Breakfast in 2021 on **Saturday, December 4 at 8:00 A.M. at IHOP.**



## **ADVENT GATHERING**

**Friday, December 10th, Wesley Hall**

Why not plan to join us for supper and an old-fashioned Hymn Sing as follows?:

**6:00-7:00 P.M. – Pizza, Tossed Salad and Beverages**  
**7:00-8:00 P.M. – Christmas Carols and Your Favorite Hymns**  
**8:00-8:30 P.M. – Make Your Own Ice Cream Sundaes**

Reservations to Max no later than Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>.



**“This will be my final news article  
as I am retiring at the end of December.”**

It has been an honor and a privilege to be able to serve you, my friends, at Asbury United Methodist Church, for the past 20 years. Working with Leon VanWie, Wilbert Gamble, Penni Farrington and Laura Calos has been both enjoyable and enlightening. Thank you for accepting me and growing spiritually together. I pray for God's continued blessing upon Asbury. May you continue to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**Max**



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**  
at  
Asbury

**5:00 p.m. - Family Service**  
**7:30 p.m. - Traditional Candlelight Service**

Both services will be in-person & live-streamed

## **Pastoral Letter: *The Need to Choose***

(continued from Page 1)

I will stay with the United Methodist Church. I am at peace with my decision and base it on two streams of thought. The first is my socio-political understanding of what it means to be focused on justice for everyone. I am opposed to discrimination of any kind, whether it be race, age, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Our country has evolved since its beginning on what “all men are created equal” means to us. Had I lived in the early 1800s, I believe I would have become an abolitionist. Had I lived in the early 1900s, I believe I would have marched with Elizabeth Caty Stanton for a woman’s right to vote. I was in support of the New York State’s decision to allow same-sex marriage before it became supported by the Supreme Court. I simply believe every person should have a level playing field in our country. We certainly haven’t achieved that goal yet, but I remain hopeful and determined.

The second stream of thought, and equally important, is my theology which is rooted in the Theology of Jesus. There are many different theologies found in the Bible, our primary source for understanding God’s plan and will for us. Unfortunately, there isn’t a single point of view found in scripture. The Old Testament had several specific concerns when it was written at different times and formed into what we now have as Sacred Scripture. The Epistles of Paul have another theology, as do many of the other Epistles.

It is in the Gospels, (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), where we find the life and teachings of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. I find that I am most interested and committed to what He believed about God, about humanity, about sin, and about salvation. Jesus never mentions homosexuality, though he would have been aware of it at the time, since it has been with us since the beginning of humanity. I feel that if it had been a “hot issue” to him, he would have mentioned it. He certainly spoke often and freely about the issues that did trouble him, like double-standards, greed, indecision and judging others. Also, his ministry focused quite a bit on his concern about bringing others into the Kingdom of Heaven, including those who either lived on the fringe of Hebrew society or clearly outside of Hebrew society. Careful study of the Gospels has me convinced that Jesus was all about being inclusive, bringing everyone who was willing to embrace his understanding of what it meant to be righteous and faithful into the fold of His grace.

My decision to stay with the United Methodist Church, is mine to make as an ordained pastor. I cannot participate in the vote that will be taken by the Asbury congregation. But I can assist you in preparing for the time of decision making.

I’m suggesting that 8-12 members of the congregation, after a little training on how to create “safe environments” and navigate through difficult conversations, be given the task of forming conversation groups to discuss this upcoming vote and what it may mean for Asbury. We truly need to actively listen to one another. We’ve all had experiences both good and bad that bring shape to our deeply held views. We likely have close friends and family members who already belong to the LGBTQ community and feel ostracized by the church in general. We come from a variety of faith traditions, both conservative and liberal. We are not from one cookie cutter shape!

As I wrote above, I am at peace with my decision, come what may. I want every person from Asbury to be at peace with their decision as well. That won’t happen if we hide our head in the sand and continue to avoid the difficult discussions that need to happen. I hope and pray that when called upon to join a discussion group, that you will enter into the conversation with sincerity and love for your fellow members. It is possible that you will be divided in your decision. That makes the need for careful listening, respect and grace to be all the more important. The most important thing for me is that each person feels respected, heard and cherished. Certainly, we can achieve this goal.

Grace and peace,  
Laura



by Jane Eastham

Did you know that the Asbury Prayer Circle meets every Wednesday at 11:00 am in the parlor? And did you also know that we pray for YOU each and every week? We are a group of ten dedicated individuals who come together each week to bring our prayers and our praise to the Lord.

We pray for those with special needs but we also pray for the entire congregation, for Pastor Laura, for our community, and for our broken, hurting world. We offer prayers of thanks and prayers of petition. We spend time as well in sharing our joys and grace moments and God sightings. Every now and then we might wander off on a tangent into an interesting conversation. Most of all we laugh, we learn, and we grow in our relationships with each other and with God.

In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians he wrote, *"Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do."* If you feel God calling you to do a little more for our Asbury family and beyond, please consider joining the Prayer Circle. We would welcome you with open arms! Also, if you have any prayer requests, please contact Sue Snell at 315-782-8235 or Jane Eastham at 315-804-1350.

Watch for more *"Did You Know...?"* articles in future issues of the Asbury Beacon. If there is a topic or question of particular interest to you and you would like to see it addressed in one of my articles, please call me or send me an email at [urbanmissionjane@yahoo.com](mailto:urbanmissionjane@yahoo.com).

**May God bless you this day and in the days ahead!**



**Your Cookies are Needed for Christmas Eve Services!**



As has been our long-standing tradition at Asbury, we look forward to receiving your cookies for the Christmas Eve receptions after both services – 5:00 service & 7:30 service.



We ask that you sign up for cookies on the sign-up sheet in the rotunda just so we have an idea of numbers.

For drop off, you can bring your cookies by the church before either service. We thank you in advance. We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas Eve services and afterwards for refreshments.



**Thank you and Merry Christmas to you and your family,  
Membership & Evangelism Committee**



## Grief Support Group to Begin December 7<sup>th</sup>

Hello Friends: This fall, I feel as if the Holy Spirit has placed on my heart the desire to offer a Grief Support Group. Many have experienced tremendous loss over the past few years, and I feel a safe place is needed to share that grief and through the support of others, learn better ways of coping and moving forward with purpose and courage. I also feel as if starting this group during the holiday season is of value.

I remember the year after my husband died, I felt so very disconnected from everyone's joy and celebrations, for I was consumed with painful feelings of loss and confusion about what my future would hold without this significant person in my daily life. It was a particularly difficult season. There was no support group near me at the time, that I knew of, and while I had the support and encouragement of family and friends, I still felt that a group of persons with similar sharp feelings of grief would have been comforting and helpful.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the famed authority on the "Stages of Grief," wrote that a person typically must go through 5 stages of grief which are: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance*. David Kessler, a student and colleague of Ms. Kubler-Ross, has added a 6<sup>th</sup> stage to grief: *finding meaning*. We will explore these various stages, share our stories, and look for healthy ways to move forward in living with purpose and hope.

I'm thinking that this group will run for 6 weeks, meeting on Tuesday mornings from 11:00 AM until 12:30 PM. We will meet in the church parlor.

I want to encourage anyone who has recently experienced a significant loss in their life to join. Even if it has been several years, if one feels stuck in grief, maybe this group can help one become unstuck.

If you are interested in joining this group or would like more information, please contact me at: 585-329-9934 or at [rev.lauracalos@gmail.com](mailto:rev.lauracalos@gmail.com)

Grace and peace,  
Laura

**"He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy."**  
~ Job 8:21

### **HYMNS THAT BRING A SMILE TO OUR FACE!**

Dentist's Hymn	<i>"Crown Him with Many Crowns"</i>
Weatherman's Hymn	<i>"There Shall Be Showers of Blessings"</i>
Contractor's Hymn	<i>"The Church's One Foundation"</i>
Golfer's Hymn	<i>"There's a Green Hill Far Away"</i>
Politician's Hymn	<i>"Standing on the Promises"</i>
Optometrist's Hymn	<i>"Open My Eyes, That I Might See"</i>
IRS Agent's Hymn	<i>"I Surrender All"</i>
Gossip's Hymn	<i>"Pass it On"</i>
Electrician's Hymn	<i>"Let There be Light"</i>
Realtor's Hymn	<i>"Mansion Over the Hilltop"</i>
Shopper's Hymn	<i>"Sweet By and By"</i>



## UNYC Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel

### A Palestinian Cry for Hope

Hope is one of the candles in this season's Advent wreath. What does Hope look like for Palestinians living in the land where Jesus was born, in the year 2021-2022?

In 2006, when my husband Gary and I, along with 50 other United Methodists, stayed in Bethlehem, I noticed some messages on the Israeli-constructed 27' (frequently designated "apartheid" wall) which surrounded the town. One message which has stayed with me said, "Is there anybody out there?" And, after our ten-day stay in Bethlehem, the United Methodist symbol of the cross and flame appeared on the wall. Are we a sign of hope?

Recent U.S. government actions supporting Israel's ongoing project of Palestinian land-taking would seem to deny such hope. A 2019 action no longer maintaining a U.S. long-held policy of condemning illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank, and a 2020 U.S. action supporting the Israeli "Peace to Prosperity" plan, which basically helps clear the way for Israel's annexation of nearly one third of the occupied Palestinian West Bank, have led to increased home demolitions, control of water resources, and destruction of olive groves and crop and grazing fields.

In the 2020 Palestinian document, "Cry for Hope: A Call to Decisive Action," Palestinians make an urgent appeal to all Christians to study and take action on behalf of Palestinians' human rights. They indicate that this is for our own integrity as Christians, saying, "We declare that support for the oppression of the Palestinian people, whether passive or active, through silence, word or deed, is a sin."

It is time for us, as Christians, to act. Read the Palestinians' "Cry for Hope" and suggestions for action in the link:

<https://www.cryforhope.org/media/attachments/2020/06/30/cry-for-hope-english.pdf>  
cry-for-hope-english.pdf>

Linda Bergh, Co-Chair  
UNYC Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel

#### **SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK** - Submitted by Max Bovee

##### **December 5: I Peter 1:16**

*"It is written: Be holy, because I am holy."*

##### **December 12: I Peter 4:8**

*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

##### **December 19: I John 4:10**

*"This is love; not that we loved God, but rather that he loved us."*

##### **December 26: Micah 5:2**

*"Bethlehem, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel."*

##### **January 2: Genesis 1:31**

*God looked over all he had made, and saw that it was very good."*

##### **January 9: Genesis 2:7**

*"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and a man became a living being."*

##### **January 16: Deuteronomy 11:19**

*"You shall teach God's Word to your children when you sit in your home, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."*

##### **January 23: Joshua 1:9**

*"The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*

##### **January 30:**

*"May He turn our hearts to Him, to walk in obedience to Him."*

## Happy Birthday to You!

December 1	Joanne Rhode	January 9	Darrel Kicherer
December 1	Paul Simmons	January 14	Camie Baker
December 1	Lawrence Littell	January 14	Frances Goutremout
December 2	Carole Bowles	January 15	Penni Farrington
December 7	Michael Hill	January 16	Jaelah Liriano
December 10	Mary Malone	January 17	Erica Petit
December 12	Sarah Lehman	January 27	Jonda Ratigliano
December 18	Patrick Burdick	January 27	David Simmons
December 21	Olivia Lehman	January 29	Dan Webb
December 22	Mary Smith	January 29	Joyce Mcintosh
December 24	Richard Fioretto		
December 28	Matthew Beirman		

November birthdays were celebrated during coffee fellowship right after church on November 7th. We look forward to this new tradition of celebrating everyone's birthday for that month on the first Sunday of the month.

We will provide birthday cake again on December 5th in honor of our December birthdays -- we hope to see you then!



**William and Lisa Smith**  
December 12, 1997

**Darrel and Connie Kicherer**  
January 2, 1987

*May you always be warmed by each other's smile,  
Always take time to walk and talk awhile,  
Always know deep down you're each other's best friend,  
And enjoy the kind of love that grows and knows no end.  
Wishing you an 'always' kind of love!*

- Author Unknown

Thank  
you

Nov. 2021

Dear Pastor Laura and the members of Asbury,

Thank you so very much for your tangible kindness in the form of a snack pack. On behalf of each member of our staff - THANK YOU! We appreciate the treats and we appreciate your prayers and support even more. Thank you for being salt and light here in Watertown. It is needed and felt.

Gratefully yours,  
Chad Fairchild  
WHS principal

*Leah Mae and Tom Carlisle thank our Asbury Church Family for your prayers, beautiful cards, and encouraging letters. They are very helpful.*



**The deadline for the FEBRUARY Newsletter will be January 20th.** Please send articles in "Microsoft Word" format to Sue Beaman at [wfpsec@gmail.com](mailto:wfpsec@gmail.com) with cc: [Asbury@gisco.net](mailto:Asbury@gisco.net). If you don't have the ability to type them in "Microsoft Word," please bring them to the church office and Faith will type them for you. Thanks for your contributions and help with our newsletter.

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# ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

327 FRANKLIN STREET  
WATERTOWN, NY 13601  
315-782-3240  
E-Mail: [asbury@gisco.net](mailto:asbury@gisco.net)  
Website: [www.AsburyUMC.net](http://www.AsburyUMC.net)  
[www.Facebook.com/Asbury13601](http://www.Facebook.com/Asbury13601)

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Address Service Requested



Join us for  
SUNDAY WORSHIP  
at  
**8:15 a.m.**  
**10:15 A.M.**



*No Matter Where You Are on  
Life's Journey,  
You are Welcome Here!*

**“Though we cannot think alike,  
may we not love alike?  
May we not be of one heart,  
though we are not of one opinion?  
Without all doubt, we may.  
Herein all the children of God  
may unite, notwithstanding  
these smaller differences.”**

**~ John Wesley**



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**