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**Berea Friendship News**  
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**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,  
9:00 AM—1:00 PM  
Friday—Closed

## Berea Friendship United Methodist Church News

Berea Friendship United Methodist Church

### August 2017

#### Our One Great Big Beautiful Biblical God

**Expanding concepts of our names for God is an important step toward bringing us closer to one another and to God.**

by Leigh Goodrich

It was a beautiful spring day—crocuses and tulips were finally breaking their way through the icy ground cover, buds were popping out along the branches of forsythias that lay dormant all winter long, melting snow formed a large puddle at the back door of the church. That was where a lone parishioner stood after worship, waiting to speak to his pastor. The building was almost empty when I finally made my way down the winding steps and saw him. “Pastor,” he began. “I want to talk to you.”

Experience causes many clergy to cringe when these words are uttered. While the message that follows *might* be complimentary, more frequently it is not. There was good reason for me to expect the worst. I was leading my church through a change in worship that was peculiar and felt very uncomfortable to many. We were introducing expansive language for God in our worship service. It meant modifying familiar liturgy and hymns, alterations to language for God in sermons, and even introducing a new version of the Bible in worship. It was not an endeavor for the weak of heart!

These changes were not haphazard. As anyone knows, the slightest changes can create disharmony among the most flexible of congregations. Colleagues have shared stories of spending an entire summer moving a baby grand piano from one side of the chancel to another in six-inch increments. So, it was only after several months of church wide theological study, including the free resource “God of the Bible” offered by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, that the community acknowledged that it limited language for God and voted to begin to use expansive language for the nature of God.

#### Expansive language for God

For those unfamiliar with expansive language for God, it is language that explores less frequently cited references to God in the scripture. For example, God is referred to as a rock over 50 times in scripture. The term “midwife” refers to God in Isaiah 66:6-9 and Psalm 22:9-10. Isaiah 5:1-7 and John 15:1-6 tell us God is a vine-grower. Isaiah 49:15 refers to God as a mother, while Deuteronomy 32:6 uses the more familiar image of God as father. Throughout Proverbs, God is “Wisdom,” a feminine attribute of God, and the pronoun “she” is used to refer to the Divine.

Scripture uses all of these images and hundreds more to help us understand our one great big beautiful biblical God. We discover that God cannot be limited to any of our categories, including gender or form. The Divine is characterized as an eagle (Deuteronomy 32:11-13, Exodus 19: 3-4), a lion, a leopard, a bear, and a lioness (Hosea 13: 4-8). Beyond that, light (Psalm 27:1-3, Isaiah 60: 19-20) and fountain (Jeremiah 2:11-13).

Discovering that our language for God might move past images of lord, king and father and that our conception of the same God might be embraced by a pronoun other than he, him, and his, was revolutionary for me as a seminary student. Exploring other images and adjusting my language to a God who might also be “rock,” “vine” and “bread of life” was a growing edge. Moving beyond that to “divine mystery,” “source of all being,” and “hope of the world” took my breath away. However, expunging exclusively male, oppressive images of God in my language required a bit more adjustment. They were all so familiar and embedded in my speech and thoughts about the Divine. Yet, over time, lord became love, king became kin, father became parent. Most significantly, God was neither he, him and his or she, her, hers exclusively but a revelation that embraced the qualities of both genders equally and magnanimously.

### **Words have power**

Our language influences us and the world in which we move and grow. We regularly eat “the body and blood” of Christ, ignoring the literal meaning and insisting on a more theological anamnesis. What might happen when we change those words to “the love and life” of Christ? How might we understand the sacrament in a freer, more holistic way? We speak of God as lord, master and king, presuming everyone shares our understanding of a deity we yearn to serve, ignoring the glimpses of intimidation and historical oppression those words carry. We ignore the pain words like father or mother may carry as they make God an anathema to a worshipper who has experienced abuse by a parent. There is no doubt that our words carry great power.

This should come as no surprise as we consider the power of God’s words calling the creation into being in Genesis: “And God said, ‘let there be light,’ and there was light.” Why would we doubt that our own words carry influence and importance? Our words matter, and our words for God have even more significance.

This significance is a good reason to consider the secular context from which many visitors to our congregations come and reexamining our “church talk.” Is God really “he?” What does that say about women? If God is irrevocably male, women will never have the same status and role as men in the church or in the world. A male God makes one gender inherently superior to the other. As a church and as a society, how can we hope to eradicate sexism if we continue to believe that God is a guy in the sky?

Yet battling that image is difficult. With the many struggles and opportunities each church faces, challenging the conception of an exclusively male God—an image held by Christians for centuries—may seem like a less important use of time or resources compared to other ministries. It is a long, sensitive and careful journey to a more expansive vocabulary for God, and one that questions many long-held beliefs. But it is a journey worth taking. The promise of expansive language for the Divine is freedom from old conceptions and the opportunity to entertain an even more intimate relationship with God that liberates and stretches us. As a clergy person, I had the opportunity to offer this same opportunity to my faith community.

All of it leading to this moment of reckoning.

I saw him as my foot landed on the bottom of the staircase.

“Pastor, I want to talk to you.”

“Sure,” I responded, smiling broadly to hide my inner trepidation.

“Thank you for expanding my understanding of God. Worship feels liberating. You’ve helped me see my faith differently. Talking about God in new ways has been so refreshing.”

I smiled with relief, and told him how glad I was to introduce him to our one great big beautiful biblical God.

If using language for God differently can help a person take one more step in her or his spiritual journey, it is worth all the angst the process can hold. If changing language can make us more accepting of one another, then we are on our way to making disciples for the transformation of the world.

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*The Rev. Leigh Goodrich is pastor at Lexington United Methodist Church in Lexington, Massachusetts.  
Posted or updated: 6/30/2017 12:00:00 AM*

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### **United Methodist Women**

#### **Our Circles**

##### **Morning Circle**

The Morning Circle will not meet during the month of August. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 19th .

##### **Shalom Circle**

The Shalom Circle will meet on Saturday, August 19, 2017 at noon at Mama Maria’s. We will have a short devotional and work on our shut in mission project.

### **Prayer Focus**

Our prayer focus for August is on the Susanna Wesley House in Baltimore, Maryland. They have been serving women and families since 1919. Named for the influential mother of John and Charles Wesley, it began as a boarding house for working women. After being heavily damaged by fire in 1993, it was rebuilt and reopened as a transitional home for single mothers and their children. They can provide housing and services for up to 9 families. Candidates are well screened and must be alcohol and drug free. Each resident is provided with a case manager who gives them careful and creative guidance. Many former residents have moved on to obtain their GED, find employment and housing, and in a few situations, been able to be reunited with their children who had been in foster care. As one person said, "By the Grace of God, I came to Susanna Wesley House, and it met me in my need." And from another former resident, "I'm taking everything they instilled in me and I'm applying them to my life." Their mission statement reads, "The mission of Susanna Wesley House is to assist women in need and their dependent children; to provide a safe, clean home; and to ensure a viable program for the residents to obtain independent living." Today they are funded in large part by United Methodist Women and the Baltimore/Washington DC Conference of the United Methodist Church. Birthday cards will be sent to missionaries Marcia Florkey in Ohio and Amanda Mountain in New York.

### **Upcoming District and conference events**

Greenville District Annual Meeting	September 16 <sup>th</sup>	St. Mark UMC, Taylors, SC
Annual Meeting of SC UMW	October 27-28	Union UMC, Columbia, SC

Please watch the newsletter for more details on these events.

I am sending a gift in memory of Mrs. Doris Williams, a longtime, faithful member of your church, who recently died. Please use this small gift in ministry and missions as requested by the family. Mrs. Williams daughters, Ms. Tracey Walker, and her husband, the Reverend Michael Walker, have been friends and colleagues in ministry for many years. Blessings in all of your future ministry at Berea Friendship.  
Yours in Christ,  
Gloria Davis

**August Ministry Workers Ushers**

- August 06 Steve Capps, Tony Earnest, Corky Holman, Ronnie Hunter
- August 13 Eddie Hughes, Jim Humphreys, Corky Holman, Ronnie Hunter
- August 20 Steve Capps, Rick Greer, Corky Holman, Ronnie Hunter
- August 27 Steve Capps, Corky Holman, Jim Humphreys, Ronnie Hunter



**Thank you.** Thanks to all my church family for the cards, calls, and visits during my disability. As I continue to improve I sure would appreciate your continued prayers. I am living evidence of divine providence and God's love. Jim Durham.

**Thank you.** Thank you for all the cards, calls, and other acts of kindness following our mom's passing. She loved BFUMC and appreciated how you kept in touch after she moved to Knoxville. Thank you for all you've meant to her. Sincerely, Tracy Walker & Greg Williams.

**Those who serve in August**

- Altar Guild** - Ellen Holman
- Stewardship** - Tony Earnest
- Trustee** - Rick Greer

**Children's Message For August**

- August 06 Terri McCloud
- August 13 Terri McCloud
- August 20 Terri McCloud
- August 27 Terri McCloud

**Nursery for August**

- August 06 Vickie Failor & Lynnsey Nalley
- August 13 Maribeth Willard
- August 20 Debbie Capps & Lynne Dyson
- August 27 Becky Philpot & Melissa or Mark Miller



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

"God's Great Gallery" Vacation Bible School will be held on August 5th, from 10 until 2! We need lots of volunteers to make this (and the Back-to-School Bash) a success! Please contact the church office if you would like to volunteer.

**COLLECTING SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

As you may have noticed in your calendar, we will be collecting school supplies throughout the month to hand out at our "Back-to-School Bash" on August 5th following VBS. We need notebook paper, pencils, notebooks, colored pencils--all those items that will help students be successful in school! There is a collection box in the back of the sanctuary--please give generously to support this mission!

**SALVATION ARMY NEEDS HELP**

The Salvation Army provides food boxes to families unable to make ends meet. During the summer when school is out, the amount of requests for food increases. The summer food crisis is here. Our food pantry is looking bare. It has become difficult to assemble nutritionally complete meals in our food boxes with what we have left. We need help. Last year, we provided food to almost 3,000 families and over 200,000 meals in our dining hall right here in Greenville, SC. It looks like that number will be higher this year. If you would like to help, please bring your food to the church and put it in the blue tub located in the back of the church. Items needed are:  
Peanut Butter, Instant Milk, Cereal, Peanut Butter Pasta, Crackers, Instant Potatoes, Canned Meats

**Acolyte Schedule for August**

- August 06 Debbie Gissendanner
- August 13 Lynnsey Nalley
- August 20 Debbie Gissendanner
- August 27 Lynnsey Nalley

**Children's Church for August**

- August 06 Terri McCloud & Melissa Miller
- August 13 Terri McCloud & Carolyn Earnest
- August 20 Melissa Miller
- August 27 Terri McCloud & Linda Crouch



OUR CDC NEWS

Where did the summer go? We can't believe its time for school to start back. August 28<sup>th</sup> will be our first week and officially begin kindergarten Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>. We are looking forward to the new year with lots of new memories. We welcome anyone who would like to come tell stories, sing, read. You can even rock a baby that is sure to bring a smile on a bad day. We hope everyone enjoys the rest of their summer and we thank you for your support.

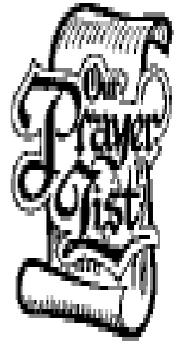
Shannon and the CDC Staff

**August Birthdays**

- August 01 Maribeth Willard
- August 02 Sarah Reinhardt
- August 04 Donna Helms
- August 07 Masen Willard
- August 09 Tremaine Gordon
- August 10 Vera Hunt
- August 10 King Amir Gordon
- August 13 Jose Ferrer
- August 15 Claire Philpot
- August 15 Ronnie Hunter
- August 16 Shanna Creswell
- August 18 Corky Holman
- August 19 Tom Smith
- August 20 Jim Rawson
- August 22 Michelle Artificio Johnson
- August 26 Matthew Willard
- August 27 Alex Philpot
- August 29 Molene McDuffie
- August 30 Matthew Earnest
- August 30 Ryan Mann



- Mildred Bray
- Mary Childs
- Troy Clements
- Jane-Hunt Grady
- Kathleen Griffin
- Donna Helms
- Vera Hunt
- Carolyn Hunter
- Andi Nichols
- Dot Nichols
- Joe Philpot
- Mildred Pollard
- Fredda Powell
- Glenn Wells
- Allen Zorn



Special prayers for Glenn Wells who is at Heartland Health in Rm. 500, Paul Vaughan, Jr.  
 Jim Durham as he recovers from an accident at home.  
 Fredda Powell's son-in-law who is waiting on a liver transplant.

**PLEASE HELP UPDATE THE PRAYER LIST**

We are only listing those who we know are in nursing/Assisted living homes, the home-bound, those who are hospitalized at present, and those who are at present under going medical procedures such as chemo, etc. We do not want to leave anyone out so if you want your name or loved ones name listed, please notify the church office. We will up-date this list every 30 days—please help us with this important endeavor.

**August ANNIVERSARIES**

- August 06 Laura & Mike Brown
- August 12 Nancy & Junior Neal
- August 27 Becky & Henry Philpot



**Schedule of Committee Meetings**

Administrative Council: January 11th, April 12th, July 12th, October 11th  
 Finance Committee: February 8th, May 10th, August 9th, November 8th  
 Trustee Committee: March 8th, June 14th, September 13th, December 13th

Committee chairs can call a special meeting if needed at other times.

**Finance Committee Meeting**

The Finance Committee will meet on August 9th at 6:00 P.M. in the Ruth Bible Class.

**Nursery Workers Needed**

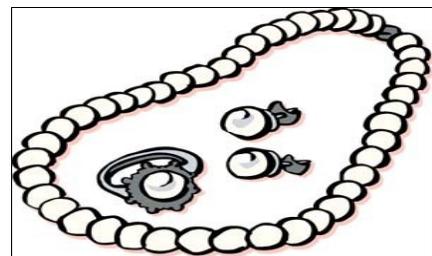
We are in need of volunteers to work in the nursery during church service on Sunday morning. If you would like to help, please contact Vickie Failor at 294-9755. All that is necessary is for you to complete the Safe Sanctuary paperwork.



Join us on Sunday, August 20th for our 3rd Sunday Covered Dish Lunch. Bring a dish to share.

**Collecting Jewelry.**

We are collecting jewelry for the Bazaar again this year. If you have jewelry that you would like to donate for resale to help our bazaar, please place it in the box located in the back of the sanctuary labeled jewelry for the bazaar



**Note:** If Morning Circle members would like to bring school supplies, please get them to the church by Friday, August 4th in time for our "Back-to School" following VBS.

**Bazaar Planning Meeting.**

**Please come to the Bazaar Planning Meeting so we can get started planning for the big event! It will be on Tuesday, August 1st at 2 pm. We need all of you to help us make it successful! We will meet in the Quilters Room.**

# August 2017

NSun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<p><i>1</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>and 7:00 p.m.</i></p> <p><i>Bazaar</i>  <i>Planning</i>  <i>Meeting</i>  <i>2:00 PM in</i>  <i>the quilters</i>  <i>room</i></p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>4</i></p>	<p><i>5</i>  <i>Vacation Bible</i>  <i>School</i>  <i>10-2</i>  <i>Followed by</i>  <i>Back to School</i>  <i>Bash to hand</i>  <i>out School</i>  <i>supplies</i></p>
<p><i>6</i>  <i>Communion</i>  <i>S.S. 9:30</i>  <i>Worship</i>  <i>10:30 p.m.</i>  <i>Spanish</i>  <i>1:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p>	<p><i>8</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:000 a.m.</i>  <i>and 7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>9</i>  <i>Finance</i>  <i>Committee</i>  <i>6:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>10</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>11</i></p>	<p><i>12</i></p>
<p><i>13</i>  <i>S.S. 9:30 a.m.</i>  <i>Worship</i>  <i>10:30 p.m.</i>  <i>Spanish</i>  <i>Worship</i>  <i>1:00 p.m.</i>  <i>Blessing of Back-</i>  <i>packs and present</i>  <i>1st Grade</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>	<p><i>15</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:000 a.m.</i>  <i>and 7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>16</i></p>	<p><i>17</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>18</i></p>	<p><i>19</i>  <i>United Meth-</i>  <i>odist Men</i>  <i>8:00 a.m.</i></p> <p><i>UMW</i>  <i>Shalom Circle</i>  <i>12 noon at</i>  <i>Mama Maria's</i></p>
<p><i>20</i>  <i>S.S. 9:30</i>  <i>Worship 10:30</i>  <i>3rd Sunday</i>  <i>Covered Dish</i>  <i>Lunch</i>  <i>Spanish</i>  <i>Worship</i>  <i>1:00</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p>	<p><i>22</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:000 a.m.</i>  <i>and 7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>25</i></p>	<p><i>26</i></p>
<p><i>27</i>  <i>S.S. 9:30</i>  <i>Worship 10:30</i>  <i>Spanish</i>  <i>Worship</i>  <i>1:00</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p>	<p><i>29</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00 a.m.</i>  <i>and 7:00 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i>  <i>Quilters</i>  <i>10:00</i>  <i>7:00 p.m.</i></p>		