



# Good Shepherd

United Methodist Church

**1201 Leta Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80911**  
**(719) 392-5782**

## The United Methodist Church Is at a crossroads.



Our denomination is divided, and many believe the differences are so great, so destructive that it's time to part ways. For more than 40 years, conservative and progressive United Methodists have been in a struggle over questions involving human sexuality and the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals. The battle began when the General Conference of 1972 said officially of United Methodists that *we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider it incompatible with Christian teaching* and *we do not recommend marriage between two persons of the same sex*.

During the 2016 General Conference, the disagreement became so intense, the Council of Bishops asked delegates to not allow the topic to become a blood bath on the conference floor but instead to create a 32-member Commission on a Way Forward to develop solutions to deal with the conflict overtime.

According to Wil Cantrell, author of *Unafraid and Unashamed: Facing the Future of United Methodism*, clergy and laity generally fall into three separate opinions.

- **The traditionalist view:** *Traditionalists maintain the practice of homosexuality is contrary to the will of God. They tend to base this view primarily on the consistent witness of scripture which they believe is supported by human life cycle patterns and studies of psychological health.*
- **The progressive view:** *Progressives tend to see human sexuality as a gift from God with diverse expressions. Many progressives view homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality as sexual orientations intended within God's creative purposes.*
- **The centrist view:** *...centrists are better defined by their hopes for resolving the conflict over human sexuality between traditionalist and progressives, rather than by a consistent theological perspective or opinion on Biblical interpretation. Centrists want to see the United Methodist Church reach a creative compromise, allowing both progressive and traditional expressions of United Methodism to co-exist within the same denomination.*



The Commission on a Way Forward will finalize a report for the Council of Bishops by April 2018. Rocky Mountain Conference leaders are expected to dialogue on the report in June 2018. The General Conference will debate and make decisions that will hopefully lead the denomination forward into the future during a special session to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, February 23-26, 2019.

Serving Christ is an adventure.

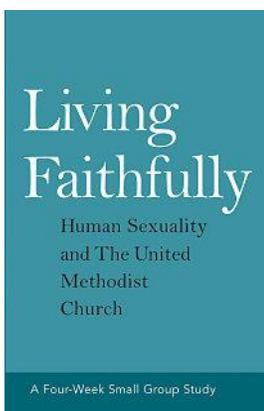
## UMW News



United Methodist Women will celebrate 150 years of service in 2019. Begun in response to needs in India, what became known as United Methodist Women has, from its inception, been an organization of women answering the call to bring loving justice to the world. In 1869, the handful of women on that dark and stormy night in Boston were moved to action and began a tidal wave of activity that still roars today. A glance at UMW materials now reveals advocacy topics ranging from climate justice to peace building. The list on the UMW website shows 10 different areas of study and commitments for the year. We are a busy group, and we accomplish much in our connection to each other. And it all begins with the local unit.

Our local unit has been a part of the global ministries of the church through our focus on ministries with women, children, and youth, and we have lived out that mission in our community, too. In 2017, we collected and donated children's book for Court Care of the Pikes Peak Region. We have assembled hygiene kits for UMCOR West and supplied funds to the Good Shepherd mission trip team who journeyed there in August. We have learned about CASA of the Pikes Peak Region, where Pastor Terilynn has served in the past. We donated to the support of missionary, Donna Pewo at the Clinton Indian Church and Community Center in Oklahoma. In November, we sponsored a clothing drive to support Ecumenical Social Ministries, and we encouraged participation in food donations to the Good Shepherd food pantry on Christmas Eve.

Wouldn't you like to be a part of this energetic group of women? Join us on January 6 at 9 a.m. or talk with President Sharon Clayton to find out how you can take part in our ministry, even when you can't make it to the meetings. Submitted by Mary Ann Tabor



### **How can we as United Methodists move forward and continue to live faithfully?**

A small group study is being offered to learn how questions pertaining to human sexuality and LGBTQ are impacting our denomination. The study includes four classes on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. held in January and February with Rev. Terilynn Russ guiding the discussions. All positions dealing with this complicated denominational issue will be covered.

To assist in the study is the book *Living Faithfully: Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church*. Each book costs \$8.70 and a donation to the adult education is appreciated. Due to scheduling conflicts, the classes will be held as follows:

- January 7 - Chapter 1: Is the Practice of Homosexuality Incompatible with Christian Teaching?
- January 14 - Chapter 2: Is Same-gender Marriage Compatible with Christian Teaching?

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January 21 - Chapter 3: Is Ordaining Practicing Homosexuals Compatible with Christian Teaching?

February 11 - Chapter 4: Where Are We Now?

Individuals with all views – traditionalists, centrists, and progressives - are welcomed and encouraged to take part in the discussions. We may not always agree but we can always choose to love one another.

To secure a book and to answer questions, talk with Rev. Russ.

### Story behind the song: "The Old Rugged Cross"

When polls are taken to determine the most popular American hymns, invariably near the top of the list is "The Old Rugged Cross."

It has been the most favored of the approximate 300 songs written by George Bennard.

Bennard was born into a very modest family in Youngstown, Ohio in 1873. His father passed away during George's teen years, leaving the youth with tremendous family responsibilities. To that end, he became a coal miner, as was his father before him. For a number of years, following his marriage, he and his wife worked with the Salvation Army.

George later became an itinerant Methodist preacher and served for several years in Canada and in some of our northern states. Bennard had a favorite Scripture verse, John 3:16. When quoting the verse, he seemed to always have a vision of a cross — a crude Roman instrument of death. It was stained with the blood of Christ, who gave his life in order that we might become Christians.

On one occasion, as he was thinking of Christ's crucifixion, an original melody ran through his mind. He later reported that although it was a complete melody, very few words came with it. He struggled to write some appropriate lyrics, but all that came was the passage, "I'll cherish the old rugged cross." The song seemed to take shape in bits and pieces. He completed the chorus and was pleased with his efforts, but the verses he composed did not seem proper and suitable.

He returned from several preaching engagements to his home, 1101 E. Michigan Avenue, Albion, Michigan, with a renewed meaning of the cross etched into his mind and heart. He took the manuscript, on which he had labored for so long, and placed it on the kitchen table. In a very short span of time, he was able to rewrite the stanzas with each word falling perfectly into place. He asked his wife to join him in the kitchen. She did so, and he joyfully sang his prized, new song for her to hear. She was very pleased and expressed that the song was great!

He then sent the manuscript to Charles H. Gabriel in Chicago, asking if he would write the proper chords with the melody line. Gabriel did so and returned the song with the message, "You will hear from this song."

Bennard said what I have heard countless other songwriters say, "I really didn't write it. I was merely the instrument that God used."

A plaque, identifying a State of Michigan Historic Site, marks the location on Michigan Avenue in Albion, Michigan, where Bennard wrote the song. It reads, in part:

Birthplace of the "Old Rugged Cross"

... one of the world's best-loved

hymns, was composed here in 1912.

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,

The emblem of suff'ring and shame.

And I love that old cross

Where the dearest and best

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For a world of lost sinners was slain.

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,

'Till my trophies at last I lay down.

I will cling to the old rugged cross,

And exchange it some day for a crown.

George Bennard lived his retirement years in Reed City, Michigan, and passed away there in 1958.

"And he bearing his cross went forth into

a place called the place of the skull,

which is called in the Hebrew Galgotha:

Where they crucified Him." -John 19:17-18

## Worship Schedule January 2018

January 7	WORSHIP for Soul-Health, John 4:19-24
January 14	WORSHIP – Sacred Space
January 21	WORSHIP – Sacred Space
January 28	TR ON VACATION

### January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Steve Smith	4
Amanda Cribbett	6
Maria King	9
Vanda Skadden	10
Russ and Irene Lambert	10
Barb Sterry	11
Mary jean Ciemiewicz	13
Jim DeRubis	20
Judy Hodges	21
A.J. Johnsen	21
Pat Smith	21
Ben Wentworth	21
Tamara Olsen	21
Beverly Weinert	23
Brenda Ledeboer	25
Irene Lambert	29
Judy Henke	30
Bob Rickard	31

### Long-Term Prayer Concerns

Alma Arnold, Candy Hatton, Lorraine Helminski, Vera Hinshaw, Irene Lambert, Tamara Olsen, Conner Peck, Letha Phillips, Marketa Protzy, Terilynn Russ, Carrington Seay, Keith Simpson, Vanda Skadden, John and Pat Smith, Nancy Waller

### Short Term Prayer Concerns

The Virginia Street Family, "Doug", Dexter Greener, The Betty Proal Family, Betty Bosch, Joyce Nicholson, Charley Langdon, The Robert Young Family, Dave Bell, The Roma Borland Family, The Hiten Family, The Rose-Zamora Family, Flooding Victims in Texas, The Wilkinson Family, Kayla Hogan, The Robert Hart Family, Donna Mayer, Dorothy Thompson and Family, The Ann Lantz Family, Jeff Zentz,

