



# The Church Herald

Stony Brook Community Church (United Methodist), Stony Brook, New York



## STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

216 Christian Avenue  
Stony Brook, NY 11790

**Chuck Van Houten, Pastor**

Church Office Tel: (631) 751-0574

Church E-mail:  
stonybrookcommunitychurch@gmail.com

Pastor's Study Tel: (631) 751-0659

Church Website:  
www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org

### Newsletter Table of Contents

- 1.....Pastor's Letter
- 2.....Sunday School Notice
- 3.....September Lectionary
- 4.....September Calendar
- 5.....Apple Festival Update
- 6.....Open Letter to Members
- 7.....Four Marks of the Next Methodism (Part 2)

Please send updates and information to  
Newsletter Editor, Bob Retnauer, at  
bobretnauer@optimum.net

## “Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow”

(Great is Thy Faithfulness, UM Hymnal #140)

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare  
and not for harm,  
to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)*

I've been thinking a lot lately about my childhood: the home in which I grew up in Syosset, my family members, and the friends that were my whole world at the time. Most of the time, when I think about the family I grew up in and the fond memories I have of those tender years, I often see my family: my mom, dad, sister, grandmother, and grandfather, sitting around the dining room table having a meal together. While I have many other memories of that house, it is the kitchen and the dining room that my heart and mind often drift back to – the place where we ate together, broke bread together, talked, laughed, worried at times, and showed care for one another. And yes, I even recall tormenting my older sister at the dinner table – especially if she happened to have a boyfriend over. Sorry Pat.

Yet it is many of these younger memories that stick with me and with all of us through life, even as they fade a bit in our minds. It is these memories that shape our emotional and spiritual DNA, that give us our sense of belonging and our sense of where we come from. However, far more importantly than getting stuck in the memories of the past, our past is often what propels us forward into the future. It is what helps us to determine the life and values we share together and the decisions we make as we continue to live into and build the future given to us by God. This is true for all of us as individuals sharing this life together, as well as for all of us as the body of Christ in this place that we call the Stony Brook Community Church.



*Continued on next page...*

### NYAC VISION STATEMENT

The New York Annual Conference, through the grace of God, embodies a beloved community of hope, building up a healthy Body of Christ, with heartwarmed United Methodists in mission for the transformation of the world.



Most of you share memories of this church or community that I can only hear about from you in your collective memory. I will never have the opportunity to live them in this place as most of you already have. Your shared memory of who you have been together as a church – the worship services, the covered dish meals, the music, the struggle, the missional work, the baptisms and weddings, the funerals and celebrations – all of those experiences shape who we have been as a church and they will continue to do so into our more immediate future.

This year as we embark on new mission objectives within the local community (final details to be announced in early October), as we open our new

Sunday school rooms this September, as we prepare for yet another wonderful Apple Festival on September 30th, we are poised to begin sharing the love of God in new and meaningful ways here in Stony Brook. As we move forward we draw upon the values and traditions that brought us to this place and time together.

Let us stand together on Christ, the solid rock, as we move forward in this new year. As we gather on Sept 12th for our information meeting with regard to the Hague House and as we vote together on the 24th, as we share in the joy of yet another Apple Festival, as we look to new Bible studies and mission work, let us do so embracing our calling as a church in this place in such a way that it offers strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. For the Lord has promised a future with hope. It is in that same hope and promise that we move forward through the ages together through this mission outpost for Christ that we call the Stony Brook Community Church.

May God bless all that we take on in the Lord's name this year. May we be faithful in keeping the charge given to us from the beginning: to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27). And may we choose to do this while seeking justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly together with our God (Micah 6:8). This is our charge. This is our calling. This is where we come from and the shared memories of the people called United Methodist. This is our future. May God bless our church to be a blessing upon the world.

I look forward to seeing you on Back to Church Sunday, September 17th, as we celebrate the beginning of a new church year together and register our youth and children for Sunday school and youth group. Please make every effort to be in church that Sunday.

Yours in God's love, joy and hope  
Pastor Chuck



### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday school will be back on September 17th in our new and improved Sunday school room! We are looking forward to another fun year of growing our faith. We hope to see you in September! If you have any questions please contact me at [murphy.megan17@gmail.com](mailto:murphy.megan17@gmail.com)



## **Lectionary**

### **September 3: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Season of Creation: FIRE

Season of Creation invites us into a time of pause and reflection. With Moses we are given opportunity to “turn aside to see” how God calls to us and empowers us in and through the whole creation God is out to save.

*Exodus 3:1-15*

*Psalms 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b*

*Romans 12:9-21*

*Matthew 16:21-28*

### **September 10: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Season of Creation: DEATH

As Christians we have a paradoxical relationship with death. On the one hand, we, with our brother Paul, see death as an enemy whose destruction is already declared in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (I Corinthians 15:26). On the other hand, also with our brother Paul, we affirm that we are baptized into the death of Jesus, and only through experiencing a death like his in baptism are we promised the hope of a resurrection like his (Romans 6:4-8). So already, within some of the most famous passages from one early Christian writer’s most famous work we encounter death as at once enemy and portal to life.

*Exodus 12:1-14*

*Psalms 149*

*Psalms 119:33-40*

*Romans 13:8-14*

### **September 17: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Season of Creation: WIND, SKY, AND SEA

Fire fascinates us, draws us in, and then reduces us to trembling. Death is at once enemy, and sister. And today, we join the witness of scripture in joy and terror at the power of wind, and sky, and sea, and with Francis we confess that God is surely praised through them.

*Exodus 14:19-31*

*Psalms 114*

*Exodus 15:1b-11*

*Romans 14:1-12*

### **September 24: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Season of Creation: FOOD

We increase God’s praise when we address not just our own “hanger,” but the legitimate howls of hanger or hunger, “the cries of the needy,” as we pray in our confession of sin, cries we are called to hear as Christ’s body, are respond to with whatever means we have, just as God did, and longs to do through us — without hesitation.

*Exodus 16:2-15*

*Psalms 105:1-6, 37-45*

*Philippians 1:21-30*

*Matthew 20:1-16*





# September 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	28 7:00 (pm) AA	29	30	31 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir	1 11:15 AIAnon	2
3 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	4 7:00 AA	5 Finance Committee	6	7 6:00 AA 7:30 First Choir Rehearsal	8 11:15 AIAnon	9
10 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour MYF Mystery Trip!	11 7:00 AA	12 Hague House Meeting 7:30	13 Meals on Wheels Board Meeting	14 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	15 11:15 AIAnon	16
17 Back to Church Sunday; Sunday school starts 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 MYF	18 7:00 AA	19 7:30 Church Council	20	21 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	22 11:15 AIAnon	23
24 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour Pie Sunday!	25 7:00 AA	26 7:30 Trustees	27	28 6:00 AA 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	29 11:15 AIAnon Apple Festival set- up	30 Apple Festival!!!



## Apple Festival 2017

Saturday, September 30

The Apple Festival Kick-off was held on Sunday, August 20th during coffee hour. Everyone there was able to enjoy apple-themed food, choose from our new selection of festival-themed apparel (contact the office if you might be interested in what's available and how to order items), sign up for spots to work at the fair, have a picture taken in the apple cut-out, and choose an item to donate from the Giving Tree. We're off to a good start! Apple Festival Central will stay in the Community Room throughout September.

We need you...in so many ways:

- ...to be a part of our Pie Making Extravaganza on September 24*
- ...to volunteer to help set up and/or clean up*
- ...to choose item(s) from the Giving Tree to donate*
- ...to bake for the Bake Table*
- ...to set aside gently used items for Attic Treasures (bring the morning of the fair)*
- ...to sign up for your favorite spot*
- ...to save paper and cardboard items (paper towel rolls, etc.) for the kids' free Construction Zone*
- ...to take out an ad in the pamphlet or ask a local business to do so*
- ...to tell everyone you know about the day*
- ...to share any ideas/thoughts you may have that would make the fair even better!*

We need you...to be a part of the success of this very special day!





## **An Open Letter to the members of the Stony Brook Community Church**

As many of you may know, the Trustees and Church Council have been in conversation regarding the possible sale of the Hague House. Located at 222 Christian Avenue next to the Sullivan House, the Hague House is a rental property owned by the church. At present the building requires significant internal and external repair to maintain its structural integrity.

The Trustees conducted an extensive analysis of the costs of repairing only the pressing external issues that need to be addressed. After months of discussion and review of these costs while also evaluating the possible sale price of the property, the Trustees eventually voted 6-2 in favor of selling the Hague House.

This matter has been reported to the Church Council. Subsequently, an informational church-wide meeting will be held September 12th at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room. At that time Jerry Meyer, a representative of the Trustees, will present information with facts and figures so that together we will be able to make an informed decision about the Hague House and the future of our church.

We hope that you will make every effort to be present at the September 12th meeting. The decision we make as a church family must be missionally driven based on the current vision as well as the needs of our church and community for new and future ministries. We know that this may be an emotional decision for some. However, we ask that everyone will allow others to prayerfully make up their own minds as to how they will choose to vote. The vote will be held on Sunday Morning September 24th immediately following worship. Details to follow.

In God's love, joy, and hope,

*Gail Chase, Donna Smith, Co-chairs, Church Council*  
*Carolyn Martin, Co-president, Board of Trustees*  
*Rev. Chuck Van Houton, Pastor*



## Four Marks of the Next Methodism, part 2



Statue of John Wesley, outside Wesley's Chapel on City Road, London.

*Part 1 of this article was printed in the Summer 2017 Herald which may be found online at [www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org](http://www.stonybrookcommunitychurch.org).*

Let's face it: no one really knows what's going to happen over the next few years within The United Methodist Church. Division? Restructuring? Fragmentation? Slow demise? Despite widespread conjecture and one or two wild conspiracy theories, your guess is as good as mine.

The Wesleyan movement, however, is much larger than The United Methodist Church. At its core this movement is dynamic, revivalistic and evangelistic, and I believe we can have revival here, too. In fact, I believe we will have a Wesleyan revival in which the awakening taking place in the global South will catch fire in North America. I've thought a great deal about what it might look like for that revival to come to the United States. Were this to happen, I believe it would involve four characteristics, which I'll discuss briefly below.

### **3. The Next Methodism will be rooted in Scripture.**

There was a reason that John Wesley and his friends at Oxford were derisively called "Bible moths" (among other things). They were rigorously committed to reading, internalizing, and living out the words of Scripture. Wesley famously called himself a "man of one book," referring, of course, to the Bible. Though Wesley read quite broadly, no other book could compare in importance, because only one book could show us how to be saved.

I can't speak for all Wesleyan traditions, but in the UMC, biblical literacy has not been our strong suit. We have improved somewhat, in part because of the success of the *Disciple* series, but on the whole we will not go down in history as a denomination that has maintained its founder's emphasis upon Scripture.

The Bible is the one reliable guide that we have to lead us into salvation. There are things that we could derive about God just by observing the word around us. For example, we might derive that God is creative and desires order. We might reason from this that God is good. But we wouldn't know, for example, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Likewise, we would be unlikely to derive on our own Christ's command to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors (Matt 5:44) or that to enter the kingdom of heaven we must become like a child (Mark 10:15). Through Scripture God reveals to us



things we would never know otherwise. Most importantly, Scripture tells us the story of salvation beginning with creation, continuing through the children of Abraham, and brought to fulfillment in Jesus.

There's one more reason, however, to pay closer attention to Scripture: You can have a revival without attention to Scripture, but it won't last, and it will soon veer off course. Or, to paraphrase Bill Johnson, biblical illiteracy in a generation seeking miracles will make us vulnerable to false signs and wonders.

#### **4. The Next Methodism will be truly Wesleyan.**

Earlier this year I read Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*. Its basic premise is that the culture has turned against us as Christians. We need to retreat and form tightly knit communities that will serve as arks in which we can ride out the flood of neo-paganism in Western culture. This is the best hope we have of preserving a Christian identity in the midst of a hostile world.

After I finished it, though, I thought, *What if John Wesley had done that?* Thankfully, he didn't. In fact, he did the opposite. He preached in the fields and where anyone would listen. He went into the places where he knew people were hostile to him. He was attacked by mobs. He was badmouthed and ridiculed. He didn't retreat from the culture. He confronted it. And in the midst of all this, he led a revival that swept through England and eventually became a global movement.

I don't want the Benedict Option. I want the Wesley Option: high-octane evangelism with a deep commitment to Scripture and an emphasis on sanctification and social holiness.

Now, many have said this before, but I'll say it one more time, with feeling: Social holiness and social justice are two different things. Social holiness means that God works through our relationships with other people in order to make us into the people God wants us to be. The class and band meetings of the Wesleyan movement were aimed at social holiness. People would inquire into one another's spiritual wellbeing, encourage and exhort one another, and confess their sins. This is what Wesley meant by "holy conferencing" (and I write this with an obvious nod to my friend Kevin Watson, who has [a great book](#) on the class meeting).

We will have to get more serious about theology if we are to be truly Wesleyan. Too often United Methodists have substituted pragmatism for theology. We will have to recover our doctrinal heritage. We will have to recover elements of our liturgical heritage. We will have to double down on our sacramental life. Communion via video-conferencing or handed out on-the-go in a train station simply won't do. Our theology of sanctification holds that God is present and active amidst the gathered community of faith, and this is not something we can conjure up on the cheap. Community matters.

Believe me, I'm not saying that we should seal ourselves off from the insights of traditions outside the Wesleyan family. One of the great tragedies of the 1968 merger that created The United Methodist Church was that the pietistic tradition of the Evangelical United Brethren was swallowed up, and at this point has all but disappeared except at United Theological Seminary. Wesley himself was shaped in important ways by German pietists, and I can't help but think that we in the UMC would be much better off had we taken this tradition more seriously.

This isn't a post about the UMC. It is about something much bigger, more powerful and more important. Institutions can be helpful, but a movement will change people's lives. That's what I want to be part of — a movement, or, more precisely, a move of God.

Come Holy Spirit.



#### **DAVID F. WATSON**

David F. Watson serves as Academic Dean and Associate Professor of New Testament at [United Theological Seminary](#) in Dayton, Ohio. He holds a Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University, and is an ordained elder in the [West Ohio Conference](#) of the United Methodist Church.