



September 2021

Pathways

A monthly newsletter of Nashville UMC & Pastor Ken Smailes

Are you familiar with the expression “the elephant in the room,” referring to something we ignore and tip-toe around? It’s the topic that no one wants to address. Yet, we know it’s there and it makes us anxious.

Over time, many “elephants in the church” have preoccupied Christians – including doctrinal and theological differences, congregational conflict, political ideals, and some very significant social issues. There even have been many books written on the subject. Check these out:

- *The Elephant in the Church: What You Don’t See Can Kill Your Ministry*, by Drs. Dell & Stevenson-Moessner.
- *Elephants in the Church: Conversations We Can’t Afford to Ignore*, by Kevin Hancock, Eric Forgrave, Jon Johnston
- *Elephants In The Church: Courageously Confronting Today’s Tough and Controversial Issues*, by George Bloomer
- *Elephants in the Church: What the Bible Says About Fourteen Contemporary Issues*, by Ken Parker



Ken’s Korner

Pastor Ken

Each of these take aim at what seems obvious to everyone, as Parker puts it, but so delicate that no one wants to address it. The real “elephant in the church,” though, is not any of the topics these authors explore. It’s fear. Many people are letting “fear” control their lives. And that’s holding back Christ’s church.

God tells us over and over in the Scriptures to “fear not,” “do not be afraid.” So, we put on our happy face and pretend everything is OK ... as if that’s what God wants us to do. He doesn’t.

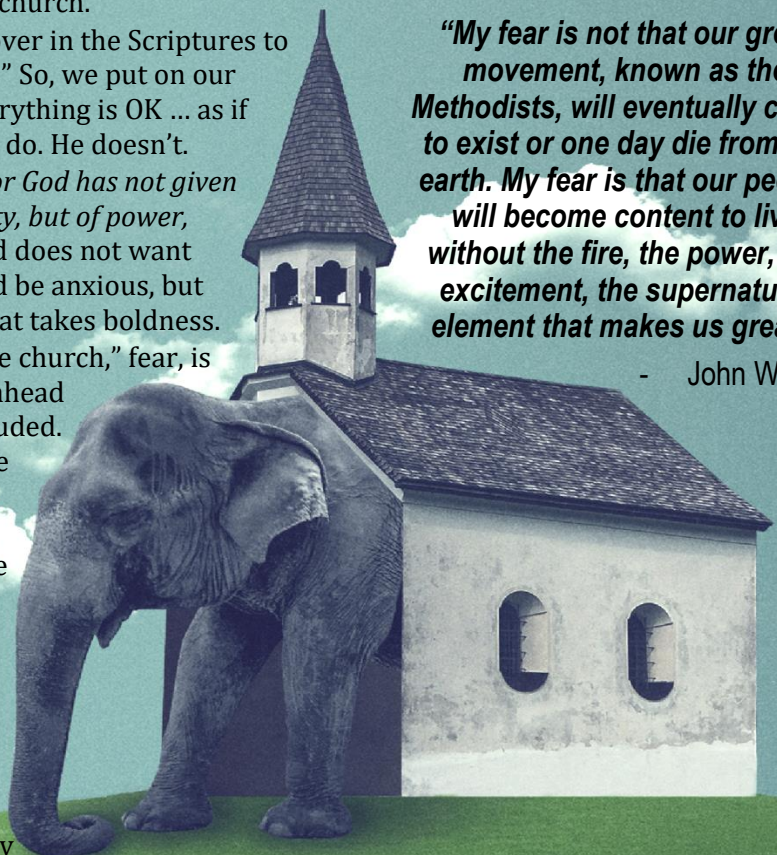
2 Timothy 1:7 says “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” God does not want us to ignore the obvious and be anxious, but to be people of faith. And that takes boldness.

Yet “the elephant in the church,” fear, is driving us. Worldly principles are being put ahead of Biblical principles out of fear of being excluded. We fear being put down, or persecuted, so we remain silent about social ills. Christ calls us into evangelism to share His good news with others, but we’re afraid of offending someone or worse yet, that we might be offended. We fear we’re too old, or too young, or are not smart enough, or lacking resources to make a difference, so we avoid being in mission. We fear we’ll be in the minority so we fight to blend in, rather than being set apart.

Well, folks, I admit. I have a fear. I fear that one day Christianity WILL BE the minority in America if we don’t step up to address -->

“My fear is not that our great movement, known as the Methodists, will eventually cease to exist or one day die from the earth. My fear is that our people will become content to live without the fire, the power, the excitement, the supernatural element that makes us great.”

- John Wesley



What is the elephant that’s holding you back?

THE
ELEPHANT
in the church



Worship: 9:30 a.m. | Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.

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Sept 19: Invite a friend to church

“National Back to Church Sunday,” the largest community outreach in the nation, is expected to draw the participation of more than 15,000 churches on Sept. 19th. Pastor Ken is challenging everyone to invite a neighbor, friend or family member to worship. If you haven’t been to church for a while, what a perfect time to check us out!

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.” Yet, 43% of Methodists say in one survey that they have not invited anyone to church. LifeWay Research suggests



that a personal connection is the best means to reach our communities. Nearly two-thirds say an invitation from a friend or neighbor is effective. This year’s theme amid all the interruptions and turmoil in life is “**Hope is Here!**”

Wall improved

Eagle Scout idea fills church need

The retaining wall at the Nashville church has been repaired and upgraded under the leadership of Wesley Zuercher.

A member of Loudonville Boy Scout Troop 537, Wesley chose to assist with the church’s need as he works toward his Eagle Scout Award.

About a dozen members of the troop rallied behind Wesley’s Eagle Scout project in August. Among the work completed: tearing out the old wall, removing 3 to 4 inches of soil from the back and below, backfilling with limestone and creating a foundation, returning the concrete blocks, and then gluing every-other level in place. The final steps included power washing and cleanup.

Wesley estimates that nearly 100 hours went into the project.

Jeff Gallion with Grasshopper, a Holmes County-based landscaping company, provided technical guidance.

“We had no idea how to build a retaining wall and do it the right way,” Wesley says. “But this was a fun time.”

Wesley has two more merit badges to complete as he gets closer to applying to become an Eagle Scout, which is the highest achievement



Wesley Zuercher and Troop 537 members work on the final touches of the retaining wall August 21.

attainable in the Boy Scouts of America. Only 4% percent of Scouts earn the rank.

The son and grandson of Ted & Mary Beth Zuercher and Don & Sue Weimer of Nashville UMC, Wesley is beginning his senior year at Loudonville High and undertook the project all-the-while continuing his pursuit of cross country.

Fowler remembrance

A public Celebration of Life for Harold Fowler will be held Sunday, Sept. 19, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Round Lake multi-purpose center, 114 State Route 3, Lakeville. Harold passed on June 15, 2020.

He was a longtime member of the Nashville United Methodist Church, including as a church trustee. He also was a member of the Nashville Fire Department for 30 years and the Grange.

RSVP’s are appreciated to help with planning but not required. Call 330-378-2523. Leave a message if no answer.

Sept. picnic planned

A picnic will be held on Sunday, Sept. 26, to welcome Pastor Ken and be in fellowship together as we get to further know each other.

It’ll be 4:30 p.m. at Nancy Tysal’s, west of Nashville off State Route 39 (14758 Township Road 453).

Burgers, hot dogs & lemonade will be provided. Bring a covered dish, your favorite outdoor chair, and table service (although some will be available).

New Sunday curriculum

The K-5th grade Sunday School class will be exploring the story of Creation for eight weeks, beginning in September.

Kids will see how God’s original creation is still a part of their life today, and something they can praise God for. It’s the perfect time to invite families.

The shoe boxes are in!

Anyone wishing to participate in Operation Christmas Child may pick up a shoe box and instructions at the church. Collection week is Nov. 15-22.

Community leadership honored

Pastor Ken was recognized for his leadership in August. Leadership Coshocton County, which is celebrating its 30th year in 2021, created an award to recognize those who exemplify the program's goals of identifying, training, and motivating individuals to accept leadership roles within the community.

Pastor Ken was a member of the fifth class in 1996. He is the first to receive the new award from among more than 500 graduates of the program.

Beyond his 35-year career in newspaper and radio, he has been involved in youth mentoring programs and career

days, is president of the Board of Directors for Head Start, active in ministerial associations in Coshocton & Holmes counties, trained in emergency response and crisis communication, and is an often-sought-after speaker/trainer/moderator.

His passion of local history prompted him to begin facilitating a Leadership class session several years ago.

He also provides guidance for the Walhonding Valley Historical Society and published the 1994 history book *"The Way It Was: From the Pages of the Coshocton Tribune."*

Bible Study Fellowship

Women's Group studying Matthew

Bible Study Fellowship was founded in 1959 by Audrey Wetherall Johnson, a British evangelist to China, and is now serving more than 400,000 people in 120 countries. Three classes on the Gospel of Matthew are beginning in September in Holmes County.

Two will be in-person on Tuesdays at the Berlin Mennonite Church from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., beginning Sept 14. Another class will be online via Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m.

Membership is open to women and teen-aged girls of all faith backgrounds. Classes are limited to 15 individuals to encourage interaction with the readings and each other.

For more information, call coordinator Carolyn Caron at 330-231-0865.



Men's Fellowship Breakfasts

Nashville, Killbuck & Wesley Chapel United Methodist Churches continue to sponsor a time of fellowship and devotion each Saturday morning at 8 a.m. All are welcome. Killbuck is currently hosting on the 1st & 3rd Saturdays at the Killbuck Church fellowship hall; you'll find it at Neil Staats' or an area restaurant on the 2nd Saturdays for Wesley Chapel, and at the Nashville UMC on the 4th Saturdays (although in October, note that it will be on the fifth Saturday).

Love INC plans for annual banquet

"Unwrapping God's Gifts & Good Works" is the theme for Love INC of Greater Holmes County's up-coming annual banquet. It will be held 6 p.m. Oct. 2 at

Martin's Creek Mennonite Church. The program will include dinner, displays, testimonies and an online theme basket



auction. Bidding begins Sept. 24 at www.kaufman-auctions.com and will end Oct. 1. Winners will be announced at the banquet. Check it out!

If you'd like to attend the banquet, RSVP by calling the Love INC office at 330-473-6017 or go online to www.loveincoghc.org.



Wanake Camp & Retreat Center – one of three camps supported by the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church – is celebrating 75 years of ministry Sept. 24-26. Free activities for the whole family are planned for that Saturday.

Highlights include: an anniversary program with Bishop Malone at 1:30 p.m. tours of the camp, crafts, games, & hikes; dedication of the Outpost Barn; a Barn Dance from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.; and night hikes, beginning at 9:30 p.m.

Wanake began in 1945 as a vision of the Brethren Church, one of the merged forerunners of the United Methodist Church. Since then the camp has grown from an 80-acre farm and apple orchard to a 250-acre year-round facility between Beach City and Brewster. Its name comes from the first three syllables of Native American words for "a beautiful spiritual place among the hills." For more information: www.campwanake.org.



‘The Rule of Christ’
(based on Matthew 18:8-9)

***“Healthy churches make healthy disciples.
Healthy disciples make healthy churches.
Healthy churches transform the world.”***

Those words from Bishop Tracy S. Malone began a movement to make congregational health a priority in the East Ohio Conference. So, members of the church leadership at Nashville & Killbuck United Methodist churches met August 30 with Rev. Dr. Brad Call for training called the *“Rule of Christ.”* The Biblically-based process is designed to help churches recognize and respond to change, conflict & congregational concerns. We’ll be sharing more in the coming months.

- **Step 1: Look at Yourself**
Jesus tells us to take time to examine our own individual role in a conflict. Ask yourself: “What do ‘I’ contribute to the problem?”
- **Step 2: One on One**
Attempt to resolve the conflict by having a one-on-one conversation with subjects of the concern. Work to understand the other’s point of view; don’t get mad or even.
- **Step 3: Get objective help**
Invite someone to facilitate the process (others can often help see possibilities). Write a one-page summary of your concern.
- **Step 4: Take it to the church**
Use the resources of the church (SPRC, District Supt, etc)
- **Step 5: Shake the Dust**
Some issues cannot be resolved. Let go of anger & disappointment, and move on in our mission to be in ministry to make disciples.
- **Step 6: Remember: God is There**
God promises to be with us in the midst of problems.

Parsonage status update

The church leadership board met Aug. 17 to listen to input from the congregation and evaluate several options for the parsonage following Pastor Lyle’s reappointment. No decisions have been made yet.

Pastor Ken will continue to live in the Killbuck parsonage.

Craig Houin is identifying any maintenance needs and cleanup tasks for a possible work day.

Additional information is being sought and evaluated about the logistics of taking advantage of the church’s asset in the current housing market by either selling the home or retaining it to lease through a property management company.

Policies from the East Ohio Conference regarding church parsonages are also being considered.

As part of the board’s visioning and goal-setting for the future, the idea of a part-time Youth Director/Minister is being taken under advisement as well, in case the parsonage would be advantageous to make available as part of any compensation package.