

Gray Weekly News



Week Leading to Sunday, May 22, 2022

May 24, 2022 – Aldersgate Day

Holy Spirit moments: Learning from Wesley at Aldersgate

Many have experienced a moment when the Spirit of God came upon them in a powerful way. For some, it happened on a retreat as a youth, or a mission trip later in life. Others had an experience during a Sunday morning worship service or a Wednesday night Bible study. Some have felt Christ especially present while praying from the top of a mountain or crying out over the sound of crashing waves while standing on a beach.

Whatever the circumstances, these moments can be life changing. We look back upon them as times of conversion, renewal, and revelation. We may feel called to do something, experience healing and wholeness, or receive peace about a decision.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, rather famously had a Holy Spirit moment often referred to as his "Aldersgate experience." Wesley records in his journal what happened on May 24, 1738:

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Sixth Sunday of Easter



Acts 16:9-15

Psalm 67

John 14:23-29

“Open Your Heart”

News and Notes

THIS WEEK

Sunday, May 22

Please join us on Sundays at 11 am. If you are unable to come in person, you can watch our livestream at graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com or graymemorialumc.org/youtube, at 11 am or any time after that at graymemorialumc.org/



If you have prayer requests, please contact Norma Adams, Jennifer Skinner or Gail Teems.

You may also call the church office at 850/385-6441 or send a text to 850/933-8469.

Prayer Requests

Sam, Patsy and Betty

Bill Eddy – health concerns

Jack, Randy, Jim & Jane Workman

Joyce and Bob

All those suffering from job loss, health issues and family concerns

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：“In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading [Martin] Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

When read by itself, this one journal entry seems to suggest this God-moment happened unexpectedly. The same is true when we hear others report similar experiences. Most often, however, these special encounters with the Holy Spirit come to those who are seeking, those who have opened their hearts to receive something special from God.

A little background: When John Wesley and his brother Charles returned to England after their missionary journey to Georgia, their faith was a bit shaken. Their American mission didn't live up to expectations. General James Oglethorpe had invited John to come to Savannah as a chaplain, but he almost immediately came into conflict with colonists who didn't appreciate his zeal. Charles traveled to serve as Oglethorpe's secretary, a role for which he was poorly suited. Both thought they would have time to serve as missionaries to Native Americans, but that never really panned out.

During their travels, the brothers met Moravian Christians from Germany whose assurance of faith the Wesley brothers envied. In a storm at sea and during trying times on land, these Christians displayed a peace for which John and Charles longed.

Upon their return to England—Charles in July 1736 and John in February 1738—they sought out the Moravians, hoping to discover the secret to their faith.

In May 1738, Charles fell ill and was concerned for his survival. Lying in bed day after day, he focused on his spiritual well-being. If this illness were to take his life, was he ready to die? He prayed, studied, and spoke to friends who prayed for him to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.

At about the same time, John was having conversations with a well-respected Moravian named Peter Böhler. Böhler was teaching Wesley about Moravian spirituality, which included the belief that Christians have an assurance of faith experienced as love, peace, and joy. Those emotions were in short supply for each of the Wesley brothers at the time. Between conversations, John pored through the Bible for evidence of Böhler's claims.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 21, 1738, something amazing happened. Between visits from his brother, his doctor, and those who were taking care of him, Charles had a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. In his journal entry for that day, he reports experiencing "a strange palpitation of heart" that caused him to exclaim, "I believe, I believe!" Several sentences later he continues, "I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ."

When John visited the next day, Charles shared what had happened for him and together they prayed for John to have a similar experience. Charles writes, "I almost believed the Holy Ghost was coming upon him." Later that week, John "went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street" where his heart became "strangely warmed." It was a moment for which he had prayed, studied, and prepared.

The same is often true for us. While God can come to us at any time and any place, it is often helpful to prepare our hearts to be receptive to the Holy Spirit stirring within us. Throughout his ministry, John Wesley taught about the means of grace, things we do regularly to put ourselves in a place where we are open to receiving the grace of God. Those practices include individual and communal works of piety and works of mercy, like private devotions, sharing in the sacraments, visiting the sick, and standing up for justice.

As you and I long to hear from God, it is good to follow the examples of John and Charles Wesley who prayed, studied, and sought the counsel of others. We cannot control when or where God will speak to us—it often seems to happen unexpectedly—but we can put ourselves in a place where we will be ready to hear when it happens.

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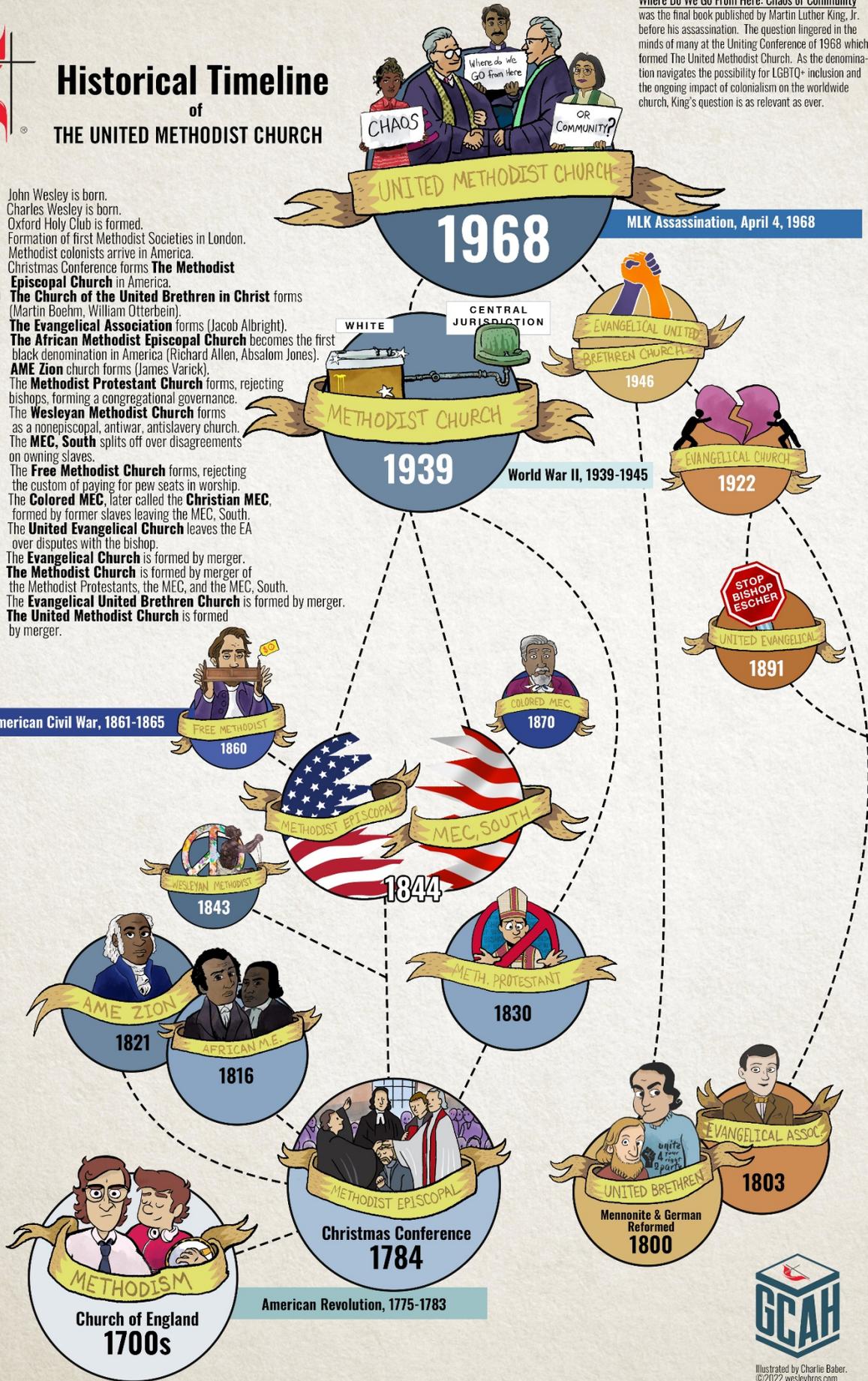


Historical Timeline of THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community was the final book published by Martin Luther King, Jr. before his assassination. The question lingered in the minds of many at the Uniting Conference of 1968 which formed The United Methodist Church. As the denomination navigates the possibility for LGBTQ+ inclusion and the ongoing impact of colonialism on the worldwide church, King's question is as relevant as ever.

- 1703 John Wesley is born.
- 1707 Charles Wesley is born.
- 1729 Oxford Holy Club is formed.
- 1739 Formation of first Methodist Societies in London.
- 1760 Methodist colonists arrive in America.
- 1783 Christmas Conference forms **The Methodist Episcopal Church** in America.
- 1800 **The Church of the United Brethren in Christ** forms (Martin Boehm, William Otterbein).
- 1803 **The Evangelical Association** forms (Jacob Albright).
- 1816 **The African Methodist Episcopal Church** becomes the first black denomination in America (Richard Allen, Absalom Jones).
- 1821 **AME Zion** church forms (James Varick).
- 1830 **The Methodist Protestant Church** forms, rejecting bishops, forming a congregational governance.
- 1843 **The Wesleyan Methodist Church** forms as a nonepiscopal, antiwar, antislavery church.
- 1844 **The MEC, South** splits off over disagreements on owning slaves.
- 1860 **The Free Methodist Church** forms, rejecting the custom of paying for pew seats in worship.
- 1870 **The Colored MEC**, later called the **Christian MEC**, formed by former slaves leaving the MEC, South.
- 1891 **The United Evangelical Church** leaves the EA over disputes with the bishop.
- 1922 **The Evangelical Church** is formed by merger.
- 1939 **The Methodist Church** is formed by merger of the Methodist Protestants, the MEC, and the MEC, South.
- 1946 **The Evangelical United Brethren Church** is formed by merger.
- 1968 **The United Methodist Church** is formed by merger.

American Civil War, 1861-1865



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, May 18	10 am	Neighborly's Time with Afghan Mother's and Children
	7 pm	Acts Bible Study with Todd Clark
Thursday, May 19	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, May 22	11 am	Worship Service
Tuesday, May 24 Aldersgate Day	7 pm	Board of Trustees Meets
Wednesday, May 25	10 am	Neighborly's Time with Afghan Mothers and Children
	7 pm	Acts Bible Study with Todd Clark
Thursday, May 26 Ascension of the Lord	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, May 29	11 am	Worship Service - Fifth Sunday Collection for Florida UMC Children's Home
Monday, May 30		Memorial Day