

From the Pastor's Desk, Custer UMC/1st UMCC (Summer 2018)

Officiated by Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky of the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, the formal opening of the 2018 Pacific Northwest Annual Conference was held on Friday, June 22, 2018 in the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup, becoming the third time it has been held here. But the spate of activities started Thursday as delegates and members of the PNWAC streamed in. As the registration of attendees continued the whole day, the Board of Ordained Ministry was very busy finalizing the list of members to be vetted/accepted into the annual conference.

As usual, the first thing in the morning of Friday was the Blueprint for Wellness arranged with Bruce Galvin. Then the conference began with acknowledgement of First Peoples in their stewardship of the land. In the worship service the lay leader introduced the theme for this annual conference, “**Do this and you will live,**” as listeners were invited into a three-day exploration of the parable of the Good Samaritan as an answer to the question “Do what?”

The Rev. Dr. Brian Brown, an elder from the Virginia Conference and a facilitator for the Arbinger Institute unpacked the message of the book, Anatomy of Peace, in several presentations which were followed by small group work by the conference attendees. During the length of the conference reports and parliamentary proceedings were accomplished.

The following statistics may summarize the year that has ended:

- Membership stands at 37,743; down 1,361
- Worship attendance stands at 16,785; down 531
- Church school attendance at 4,504; up by 774
- Professions or reaffirmations of faith at 745; up by 66
- Adults/young adults in small groups at 10,393; down by 291
- Worshippers engaged in mission at 10,281; up by 1,194
- Three churches were closed.

Our lectionary readings lead us into the Sundays after Pentecost we call ordinary time in the Christian calendar, culminating on Christ the King Sunday. The messages for the following weeks, often based on the theme suggested by our “A Weekly Guide to Prayer” (printed copies available at the small table at the back of the sanctuary/requested through our website at custerumc.com/from the email address of your pastor), would focus on everyday lessons on living in relationship with the community of faith and the community, in general.

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,
In all the ways you can, in all the places you can,
At all the times you can, to all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

John Wesley