

The Bulletin

Join us as 100 percent of our congregations become 100 percent vital and thriving

A Christmas Message from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling | Episcopal servant, Peninsula-Delaware & Baltimore-Washington Conferences

Wesley's Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own by yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will.
Put me to *doing*, put me to *suffering*.
Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or *brought low* for you.
Let me be *full*, let me be *empty*.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your *pleasure* and *disposal*.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you are *mine* and I am *yours*. So be it.
And the *covenant* now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. *Amen*.

Prayer, said John Wesley, Methodism's founder, "is the grand means of drawing near to God." He adapted this prayer in 1755. It informed his theology and preaching. He expected the people called "Methodists" to pray this prayer at the beginning of each new year as a way of remembering and renewing their baptismal covenant. Wesley would rise at 4 a.m. every day to seek God for the first four hours of the day. In his later years, Wesley was known to spend up to eight hours in prayer.



Bishop's message

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As a church, we are not just embarking upon a new year. We recently closed the door on a very painful chapter of our United Methodist lives. We now have an opportunity to learn the lessons of the past and begin a new future together -- a future that brims with newness and hope and possibility. We are not obliged to repeat our past mistakes, but we must be mindful of them and refuse to repeat those corrosive behaviors. We must learn a new way of living together as the Beloved Community. We must listen, deeply listen, to one another.

We have significant decisions to make in the coming days, decisions about structure, theology, leadership, and revival. These herculean decisions that will affect our future for generations. Generations. This requires discernment beyond our desires and preferences. This requires a selfless surrender to something larger than ourselves. It will require being open to the Spirit, but also being open to one another.

Our disagreements do not have to divide us. We can choose to listen and understand. We can choose to privilege the needs of others beyond our own. We can choose to respect the Imago Dei in all. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have far more in common than we understand. We can choose to listen as well as we hear. May it be so.

Methodist Building stands as century-old witness

The Methodist Building, the only non-governmental building on Capitol Hill, turns 100 this year.

This five-story landmark of faith at 100 Maryland Ave., NE, began in the daydreams of Clarence True Wilson, who took a walk in 1917 and noted a vacant lot across the street from the U.S. Capitol and next to the now Supreme Court building. He knew in that moment that the organization he led – The Methodist Episcopal Church’s Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals – had to buy the property and erect a building.

He began a denomination-wide campaign, focusing on Sunday School classes, and other small groups, and raised \$27,000 for the land and \$650,000 for the building. Seventy percent of the money raised came from women. Wilson’s wife, Maude, served as financial officer, property manager and director of operations. She also drew the original plans, which were approved by the board and given to the architect for development.



The building was the center point for the Methodist prohibition efforts, fighting the evils of alcohol. Not everyone was happy with the Methodist presence on Capitol Hill. Clarence Darrow, the famous lawyer, sarcastically said it “enabled busybodies to sniff the breath of congressmen en route to the U.S. Capitol.” It housed, he said, the “most brutal, bigoted, ignorant bunch since the Spanish Inquisition.”

When prohibition ended in 1933, Methodists used the Italian Renaissance style building, made of Indiana limestone, as a headquarters for live out their social principles and call to social holiness and action. From their space in the heart of the nation’s capital, the Methodists gathered by the thousands over the years, offering a witness for the welfare of all people.

The building has been a rallying point for marches on peace and justice, including the 1963 March on Washington, led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. When Rev. King was honored with a national holiday in 1983, his widow, Coretta King, stood in the pulpit of Wilson Chapel in the Methodist building and said, “If we’re going to survive in this world, we’re going to have to really take nonviolence seriously... I would hope that we celebrate this holiday with a real sense of Martin’s life and his dream. His birthday could be celebrated in such a way that it could be ennobling.”



Seeking to enoble the world and all its people, United Methodists from the General Board of Church and Society and General Commission on Religion and Race, and the Council of Bishops, along with several ecumenical groups have offices in the Methodist Building.

To watch a 13-minute video and learn more about the 100th anniversary of the Methodist Building, visit www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/celebrating-the-united-methodist-building-s-100th-anniversary.