

The Connection Point



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Vacation Bible School!

by Betsy Modrzejewski



Close to one-hundred campers and fifty volunteers experienced a fun-filled week of Vacation Bible School at Fellowship in June. Day one, campers arrived to find Fellowship UMC visually transformed to match our “Ready, Set, Move!” theme. A big thanks to the Clements and Carnahan families for sharing your time and artistic talents to create the perfect VBS environment. According to campers, highlights from the week included “the wonderful leaders”, “super fun art projects”, “awesome music”, “delicious snacks” and “seeing all the cool animals during “Wildlife on the Move”. Led by caring and energetic volunteers, campers explored how to follow God “here, there and everywhere” through games, stories, crafts, snacks and music.

(continued on page 6...)



A Note from Pastor Bill

At a recent gathering of our wonderful and inspiring Creative Christian Women, we had a laugh over the many obstacles we have faced over the last several years - frozen pipes, flooding, lightning, sewer backups, steeple collapse, etc.. I love the fact that we laughed instead of cried. Honestly, we might as well laugh, right? Someone reminded me that we get through these adversities because we are family; we are tough; and we keep going! It reminds me of a history lesson.

Abraham Lincoln was born into poverty and faced defeat throughout his whole life. He lost eight elections, twice failed in business and suffered a nervous breakdown. He could have quit many times — but he didn't, and because he didn't quit, he became a beloved and admired presence in the history of our country. Consider these events in his life:

- 1816 - At the age of seven, he went to work to help support his family after losing their home.
- 1818 - His mother died.
- 1831 - He failed in business.
- 1832 - He ran for the state legislature and lost. He lost his job. He wanted to go to law school but couldn't get in.
- 1833 - He borrowed some money from a friend to begin a business. By the end of the year he was bankrupt, and he spent the next 17 years of his life paying off this debt.
- 1834 - He ran for the state legislature again and won.
- 1835 - He was engaged to be married, but his heart was broken when his sweetheart died.
- 1836 - He had a total nervous breakdown and was in bed for six months.
- 1838 - He sought to become speaker of the state legislature and lost.
- 1840 - He sought to become an elector and lost.
- 1843 - He ran for Congress and lost.



- 1846 - He ran for Congress again - this time he won, went to Washington and did a good job.
- 1848 - He ran for reelection to Congress and lost.
- 1849 - He sought the job of land officer in his home state and lost.
- 1854 - He ran for the Senate of the United States and lost.
- 1856 - He sought the nomination for vice president at his party's national convention and received fewer than 100 votes.
- 1858 - He ran for the United States Senate again — and lost again.
- 1860 - He was elected president of the United States.

Yes, obstacles come our way. When these obstacles come our way, we must ask ourselves some questions. What motivates you? What drives you? What makes you tick? Is it the love and grace of God?

“The path was worn and slippery. My foot slipped from under me, knocking the other out of the way, but I recovered and said to myself, ‘It’s a slip and not a fall.’”

-Abraham Lincoln

Struggling with adversity reminds me of the following scripture:

“But seek first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

-Matthew 6:33

I absolutely love Fellowship UMC! I love that we are family. That we persevere! That the obstacles we face will never define us. Instead, it's how we respond that speaks volumes about who we are and what we are about. We may slip, but we do not fall. We seek God's kingdom first! We are family! We are Fellowship!

Grace and peace, Pastor Bill

Music Ministry

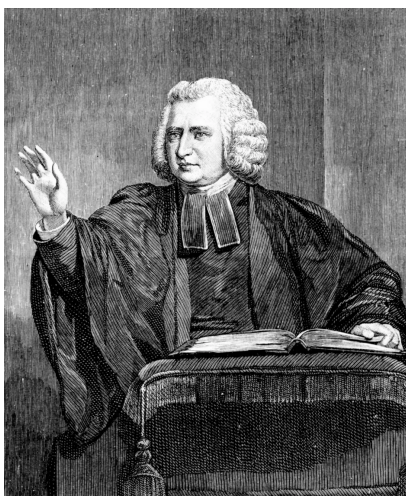
The Great Congregation His Triumph Shall Sing

by Scott Scheetz

We as a church have been going through a lot recently. Just in the past couple of months our local church has had to deal with flooding, lightning strikes, relocation of the preschool, and air conditioning failures. Our denomination is feeling the pain of differing opinions leading to arguments and schisms. As I look at the hatred and the divisions in the world around us, I long for words of comfort and hope.

I am reminded of the hymn *Ye Servants of God* by one of our founding fathers of Methodism, Charles Wesley. This hymn is found in our hymnal as number 181. Right away, the first stanza helps to remind us to put aside our differences and focus on God.

*Ye Servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad his wonderful name;
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol,
His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.*



Charles Wesley (1707-1788), one of the most prolific hymn writers of all time, crafted more than 8,900 hymns and poems. Although “Ye Servants of God” may seem like a standard hymn of praise to God, there is a

deeper theology within it, which Wesley works into all his writing.



This hymn was first published in 1744 in *Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution* and opened the section of “Hymns to Be Sung in a Tumult.” While not as well known as some other hymns by Charles Wesley, “Ye Servants of God” certainly falls in the second tier of hymns by this poet that appear across ecumenical traditions.

During the time of this hymn, Methodist Societies experienced severe persecution by the Church of England. A sect of the Roman Catholic Church known as the Jacobites was trying to restore the Catholic Church as the ruling church in Britain. Some of the Methodists were confused for Jacobites and thus labeled as anti-crown, leading to their persecution. This hymn was published only one year before the Jacobite Rebellion in 1745 when Charles Edward Stuart, grandson of James II, invaded Britain.

The original hymn had six stanzas, as opposed to the four found in modern hymnals, including our own United Methodist Hymnal. The omitted stanzas, originally stanzas two and three, are as follows:

*The waves of the sea have lift up their voice,
Sore troubled that we in Jesus rejoice;
The floods they are roaring, but Jesus is here,
While we are adoring, He always is near.*

*Men, Devils engage, the billows arise,
And horribly rage, and threaten the skies:
Their fury shall never our steadfastness shock
The weakest believer is built on a rock.*

These stanzas deal heavily with the turmoil and chaos these Methodists and the Wesleys were going through, contextualizing the adversity of the Wesleys’ ministry. Charles and John experienced harrowing storms on their American voyage in 1735, so they were familiar with the trouble of being tossed around on the roaring

waves of the sea. They also suffered grave persecutions in the 1740s. Among the worst were accusations of treason against the king. John was assaulted by a law officer and mob while preaching in Sheffield in 1743:

...The stones often struck me in the face. After the sermon I prayed for sinners, as servants of their master, the devil; upon which the Captain ran at me with great fury, threatening revenge for my abusing, as he called, 'the King his master.' He forced his way through the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast... I threw it open, and, fixing mine eye on his, smiled in his face, and calmly said, 'I fear God, and honor the King.' His countenance fell in a moment, he fetched a deep sigh, put up his sword and quietly left the place" (The Journal of Charles Wesley, May 17-August 28, 1743).

This hymn gave people a hymn to sing in a tumultuous time and gives us hope as we deal with the chaos and uncertainty in our own local church and global church. The line from the second stanza: *"The floods they are roaring, but Jesus is here"* really resonates quite strongly as a flooded church was the last thing I expected to find on Christmas Eve when I came to prepare for those services.

Looking at the deeper elements, Wesley was known to have followed a pattern in his hymn writing. His focus is on God, followed by Christ as Savior. Wesley sets up a path that leads to the goal of heaven or the eternal dimension, using words such as "ceaseless" and "infinite," while always being grounded in love.

Looking at this hymn, one can see the theological motifs and the structure that Wesley consistently uses. The first stanza begins with God and the praise that God's servants offer to the deity. By the end of the first stanza, the poet mentions the glorious kingdom that "rules over all," pointing toward heaven. As the hymn progresses, the focus shifts more from God and God's acts through Christ in the second stanza in our hymnal (originally the fourth stanza).

*God ruleth on high, almighty to save,
and still he is nigh, his presence we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.*

In the penultimate stanza, we are fully focused on Christ and His sacrifice as we are called to fall down and worship the Lamb.

*"Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"
Let all cry aloud and honor the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.*

Finally, in the last stanza, everyone should adore God because of God's works and Christ's sacrifice. In the third line, Wesley describes the "angels above," ending the stanza with "and thanks never ceasing and infinite love," describing the eternal dimension. The words "never ceasing" and "infinite" describe God's love, which is the grounding and route of God's acts.

*Then let us adore and give him his right,
all glory and power, all wisdom and might;
all honor and blessing with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.*

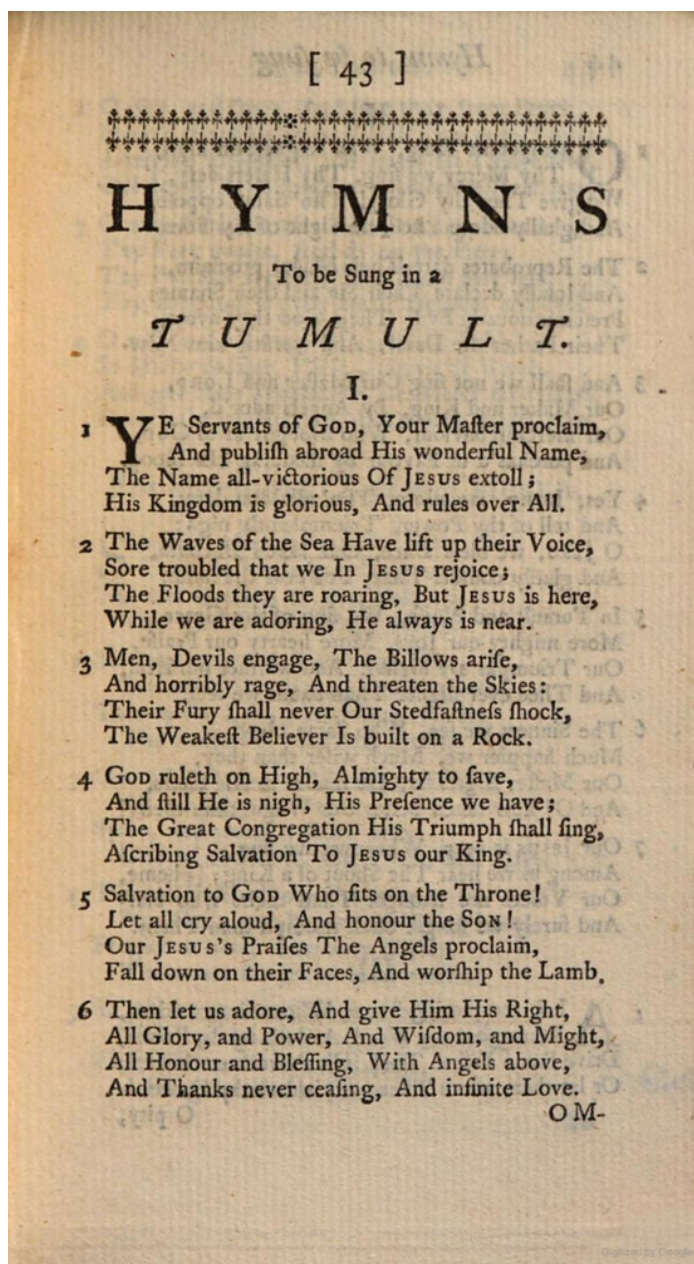
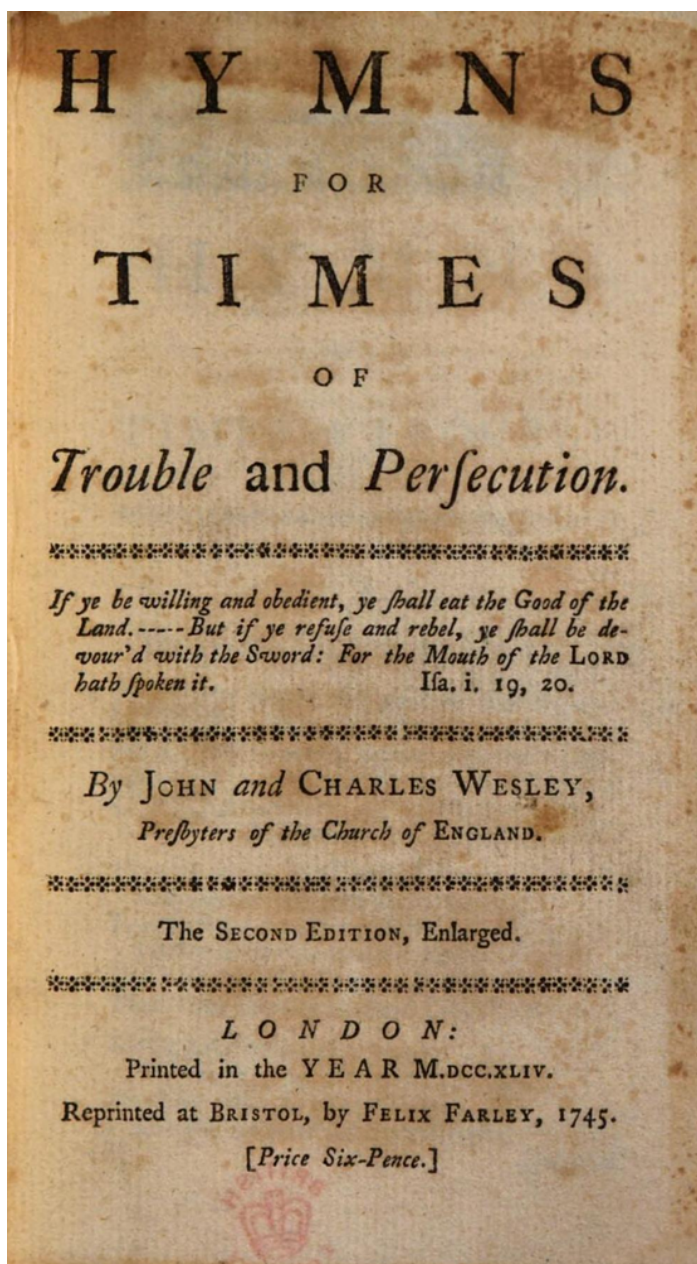
The final two stanzas quote of the Book of Revelation. Stanza three (in our hymnal), beginning with "Salvation to God, who sits on the throne," echoes Revelation 7:10-11:

*"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne,
and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round
about the throne, and about the elders and the four
beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and
worshipped God" (KJV).*

The last stanza invites us to join the heavenly pantheon and alludes strongly to another passage in the Book of Revelation: *"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"* (Revelation 5:13, KJV). The song that we are joining is one of "thanks never ceasing" (I Thessalonians 2:13) "and infinite love."

Not surprisingly, Charles penned some of his most powerful hymns during the 1740s. Fruits of adversity, these hymns were molded in pain and uncertainty, leaving works of exquisite strength and substance. In “Ye Servants of God,” Wesley provided a way for the persecuted Christians of the time to sing a hymn of

praise amidst all the turmoil with the reminder of God’s gift of salvation and love. This hymn provides a source of comfort and fortitude for those struggling and a reminder that God’s never-ceasing and infinite love is the most important thing that will remain in the end.



Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution, second edition (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1745)

Children's Ministry



Vacation Bible School

(continued from page 1)

All week, Rebecca Berthold led impactful worship sessions and we are so thankful for her and EVERY volunteer who stepped up and made this a VBS to remember. THANK YOU. A final special shout out goes to the youth volunteers who competed in the "Ultimate Chicken Dance Obstacle Course" to raise money for the Roanoke Food Pantry. Make sure to check out all of the pictures of our fantastic VBS week taken by Scott Scheetz on the Fellowship Facebook page!



Summer Months

Summer is here and we hope our Fellowship families get time to enjoy a slower pace complete with sunshine and family time. Children's Church and K-5th grade Sunday School are taking a break for the summer months while Preschool Sunday School and Nursery will continue throughout the summer.



Worship Packs

Worship Packs are available at the table across from the children's wing. Children are invited to pick up materials such as sermon note sheets, devotionals, weekly bible stories and art supplies highlighting our monthly bible theme. These can be used during the service or taken on the road for traveling families. Additionally, adult guides are encouraged to pick up a "Parent Cue" sheet from the table.



Youth Ministry

By Tyler Sweatt



Last week Ginger took 10 of our Middle School youth, and 3 adult volunteers on a mission trip to Waco, Texas. This was the first mission trip ever for 9 of those youth, and 2 of the adult leaders. It was a long, hot week of work from the moment they woke up, until the moment they went to sleep.



They worked at food pantries, food distribution sites, adult daycares, the warehouse of a few different thrift shops going through donations, preparing them to go out to the floor to go to someone in need.



They had a list of duties that had to be performed where we were staying like meal prep, meal cleanup and building cleanup. They were also paired with another church during this time where some lifelong friendships were made. These youth and adults stepped up to this challenge beautifully. We couldn't be more proud of them and the work they did and the way that they represented Fellowship UMC!



A Note from Pastor Bob

Last month I outlined how I was going to approach presenting material in my “column”. Yesterday, I talked with someone who had read it, so that was a positive sign for me! My plan is to present a look at Bible study focused on tools we can use to do our Biblical studies.

The “A” in my mnemonic represents our first study tool. A Bible Atlas is very helpful, especially for people who are curious about any “where” questions we might have as we read our Bibles.

While I am well known, and often teased for, my emphasis on maps, I love them! As you select an Atlas to buy, I remind you of the huge volume of material recently (since 1988+) offered by scholars studying, and trying to unlock, the “secrets” of the Dead Sea Scrolls. So, as you search for a compatible atlas for your library, try to find one that has been published since 1990 or later. Then you can hope you get the latest take on topics presented in your atlas.

When I began teaching Disciple I used (and now frequently reference) the Oxford Bible Atlas. I have 3 versions, the second through fourth editions. The fourth edition was printed in 2007. If I were starting out, though, the second (1974) or third editions (1993) are great and a quick reference book. The fourth edition is beautiful with some extra pictures of the area, which are not in the earlier editions. But it has less chronological information which shows the relationships of empires/kings to each other. I like the chronologies which are handy for historical comparisons. The maps are lush in the later edition, but I guess I prefer the way the earlier atlases handled the information.

Some of you know that Pat and I lived in the Middle East (Syria) in 1975 while serving in the Air Force. I was “on loan” to the United Nations peacekeeping effort after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Later, we traveled with our friends from Fellowship UMC to Greece and Turkey in 2014 on a demanding tour of about 3 weeks.



Our organizer was Carl Rasmussen. Carl is retired now, but has been an adjunct professor at Jerusalem University College and the dean of the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem. His background is as a cartographer. During COVID restrictions Pat and I showed a 13-week video on ZOOM that Carl had developed to introduce people to the Holy Land. It was entitled Encountering the Holy Land. Some of you might have his Essential Atlas of the Bible where you could follow along as he took us from the Euphrates to the desert to Jerusalem. It would be worth buying both tools!

Another aspect of Atlas use will be to see that many of the sites mentioned in the Hebrew (Old) Testament are unknown in our modern world. They are placed in “possible” positions usually accompanied with a ? Dr. Rasmussen talks about those situations in one of his lessons. I think his books are on Amazon, but he also sells some of his material on his web site (if you need it give me a call/email).

Finally, using an older atlas might be just fine, but Grandma’s 1900 or so edition will not help a serious student gain the best, most current, information. I like to know the topography and geology of these places as much as I can because they affected the people then and those we read about now, as to resources necessary to live their lives.

Next month, we’ll tackle the “B” of our mnemonic. That stands for the Bible. Which version will we choose to use?

Go with God,
Rev. Bob
214-533-4080 | bob@fumctc.com



How you can help serve our community needs!
Purchase any of the items below:

**Canned Vienna
Sausage**

Canned Chicken

Spam

Bring them to church and place them in the labeled bins in the narthex.

Our youth will deliver the donations to the Roanoke Food Pantry.

Thank you for your generosity!

Recurring Weekly Events:

Sunday

- 9:00 am Modern Worship
- 11:00 am Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm Youth Group
- 5:00 pm Adult Bible Study

Monday

- 10:00 am Creative Christian Women

Tuesday

- 6:45 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)
- 8:30 am Men's Bible Study (at Dove Creek Cafe)

Wednesday (August-May)

- 5:00 pm Wednesday Night Dinner
- 5:30 pm Children's Bible Study
- 6:00 pm Adult Bible Study
- 6:15 pm Children's Choir Rehearsal
- 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal