



Williamsburg United Methodist Church

*open hearts
open minds
open doors*

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Summer Office Hours: Tues. 9-11, Thurs. 9-11, Fri. 9-11

Dear Family of Williamsburg UMC,

Last year, Gallup, INC released a study on attendance of religious services. It stated, "Two decades ago, an average of 42% of U.S. adults attended religious services every week or nearly every week. A decade ago, the figure fell to 38%, and it is currently at 30%." There are various reasons for this: demographic change, COVID-19, personal habits, etc... But while church attendance has changed, what has not changed is our intrinsic need for community, mercy and justice, and the transformative grace and love of God.

I am not writing this to complain about church attendance, but I do want us to think about how we meet the needs of folks who are not attending. If they are not attending church (ours or otherwise), how can we still provide them with community? If they are not sharing in acts of justice and mercy, how can we bring justice and mercy to them? If they are not hearing about the love and grace of God, how can we be that love and grace to them?

I do not have all the answers, and there are many ways to go about this. I think the first step is for us to really see who is around us, and to start building relationships with them where they are. As we meet and love our neighbors, they will tell us what they need, and that is when we can step in and be the church even if they don't attend a church.

As the Gallup article said, "On any given weekend, about three in 10 U.S. adults attend religious services, down from 42% two decades ago." But just because people are not in service does not mean they cannot be served. And when they experience authentic love, they will ask why do we go out of our way to love. And as 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

BACK TO SCHOOL TIME

**IT'S THAT TIME of year again to collect
SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR A.C.T.S**

Many Sales are going on right now!!

Below is a list of needed items

- * Spiral Notebooks-College Ruled ONLY**
- * Crayons (24 pack)**
- * Colored Pencils**
- * Glue Sticks**
- * Scissors (Blunt tip)**
- * Yellow High Liters**
- * Rulers**
- * Erasers**
- * Folders W/ prongs**

We appreciate any items that you can donate.

**Money can be donated to buy supplies
if you would rather not shop. See Darlene**

Supplies due to the church by August 17th (If Possible)

There will be a bin in the Narthex

THANK YOU !!

ACTIVITIES

Again this year, we are collecting school supplies to be donated to ACTS. You can find the list of items that are most needed in this Newsletter. A container will be in the Narthex. We ask that all donations be turned in by August 17th. Thank you!

In July we supported The Salvation Army's Grand Traverse Area Housing Fund. We collected \$325.50 for them, thank you!

Usher List for August

8/3- Jan Donkers
8/10- Rich Hargreaves
8/17- Janet Goss
8/24- Jim Hockin



Our Noisy Offering for August is Supporting Ferris Wesley House!



ACTS is Always looking for volunteers! Please see Carol! Thank You!



AUGUST CELEBRATIONS!

1st Brook Goss
9th Diana Wright
14th Carol Hockin
15th Joe Huver
18th Daisy Goss
19th Mark Hamilton



Troubled times call for revival of personalism
Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Christopher P. Momany
July 18, 2025 | DOWAGIAC, Mich. (UM News)

Personalism upholds the dignity and worth of all human beings.

In May 1836, abolitionist Theodore Dwight Weld wrote to a friend about his strategy for delivering anti-slavery lectures.

Weld acknowledged the power of bringing the truth to light regarding the heinous treatment of enslaved people, but he insisted that a bedrock principle was at stake. He always focused his energy on demonstrating that slavery was designed for the “destruction of personality.”

The term “personality” meant much more than simply a description of traits, mannerisms, characteristics and individual style. Weld used the term to speak of one’s very personhood. Slavery attempted to turn people into things — sacred beings, created in the image of God, into property.

Ten years later, Wesleyan philosopher and college president Asa Mahan argued that the abolitionist movement was built on “the eternal and immutable distinction between a person and a thing.” Mahan spoke of an “intrinsic worth” possessed by each and every human being. This 19th-century human rights perspective set the stage for the later movement known as “personalism.”

During the 1950s and 1960s, personalism grounded the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Reflecting on the Montgomery bus boycott, King articulated his understanding of human dignity: “I studied philosophy and theology at Boston University under Edgar S. Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. Both men greatly stimulated my thinking. It was mainly under these teachers that I studied personalistic philosophy — the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality.”

He went on to credit this philosophy for aiding his commitment to “a personal God.” He also shared that personalism gave him “a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality.”

We need a revival of personalism today.

The recent years have witnessed an erosion of respect for human dignity. The current political crisis in the United States displays a cruel and obscene disregard for human personality. This is certainly apparent in the absence of civility around public conversation, but it goes deeper than that. We now live in a country that takes delight in dehumanizing people, stereotyping communities, lying about cultures one does not understand and even wishing for the extermination of certain people.

Our government has instituted policies that attack the value of migrants and immigrants. It celebrates the construction of internment camps and gleefully announces the number of people abandoned to soul-crushing poverty so that we may subsidize the selfishness of those with power and wealth.

We need a revival of personalism today.

Some with theological sensitivities might balk at the invocation of philosophical personalism, as if it is nothing more than the moss-covered relic of a failed modernity. Not so fast! Many who grounded their courageous abolitionist witness in a basic form of personalism also gave specifically theological reasons for their convictions.

The Wesleyan theology of redemption is a case in point. Methodism founder John Wesley famously challenged the exclusionary views that interpreted the Atonement of Jesus in very narrow ways. He quoted Hebrews 2:9 and other passages of Scripture to teach that Jesus tasted death “for every one.”

Wesley’s New Testament notes observed that the sacrifice of Jesus was for everyone “that ever was or will be born into the world.” No person was pre-emptively excluded from the affirmation of Jesus.

Mahan, the thinker who borrowed language from philosopher Immanuel Kant to stress a distinction between people and things, added a powerful theological argument for the dignity of people.

Mahan observed that there are basically three ways to understand the atoning death of Jesus on the cross.

First, one might take the Calvinist view that Christ’s sacrifice is limited to some elect group. Second, one might take a generic view that Christ’s sacrifice is for all people. This second approach moves us forward, but it can lead to a general, nondescript and impersonal reference to “all.” Mahan, building on Wesley’s teaching, insisted that the best approach understands Christ’s sacrifice as something that is, at once, personal and social — intimate and yet expansive and available to every person. He and other Wesleyan abolitionists declared that slavery violated the personality of “those for whom Christ died.”

Our world and our nation are in trouble. We need advocacy for human dignity. We need coordinated resistance to evil. But such advocacy and resistance are going to necessitate articulate, enduring and persistent theological (and, yes, philosophical) reflection.

This is no head game. Webinars, workshops and training are fine, but they will not be enough when we require powerful ideas to sustain us. Denominational programs, consulting and coaching are fine, but they will not be enough when the world demands to know why we are willing to sacrifice for the dignity of others.

We need a revival of personalism.

And a Wesleyan form of personalism has much to offer.

Who will join me in constructing a new path for the moment — and the future?

Momany is an historian and writer serving as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Dowagiac, Michigan. His most recent books are: “Compelling Lives: Five Methodist Abolitionists and the Ideas That Inspired Them” (Cascade, 2023) and the collaborative “Awakening to Justice: Faithful Voices from the Abolitionist Past” (InterVarsity, 2024).

▶ August 2025

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

AA SCHEDULE
Monday, 7:30 pm
Saturday, 7pm

1
2 Harbor Days
Parade @
12pm
Fireworks!

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9am Worship
Communion
Coffee Fellowship

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

9am Worship
Coffee Fellowship

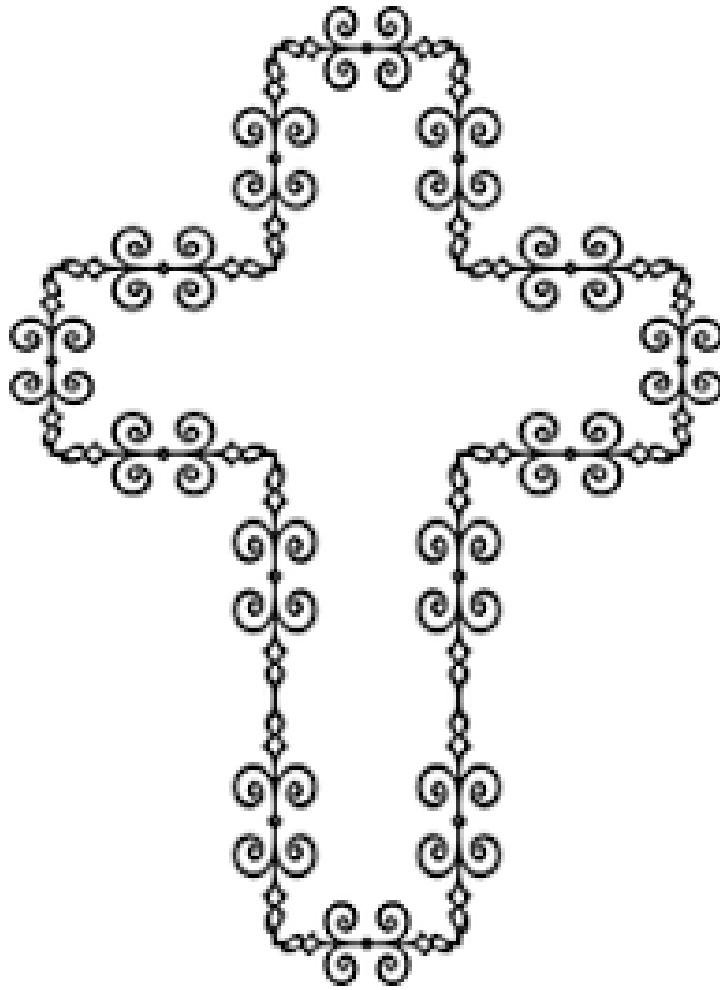
17 18 19 20 21 22 23

9am Worship
Coffee Fellowship

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

9am Worship
Coffee Fellowship

31
9am Worship
Coffee Fellowship



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