It's time for a strategy of investment

The United Methodist Church is divided over the issue of human sexuality and the denomination seems to be at a crossroads. There is considerable disagreement among laity, clergy, and even bishops, so The South Georgia Advocate asked Bishop Lawson Bryan to address the concerns many have about the issue and to share where he sees The UMC is headed and how the South Georgia Conference should respond or lead.

By Bishop R. Lawson Bryan

As I said in my statement on the SEJ website as part of the episcopal nomination process, I believe the connectional system is strengthened when bishops uphold the “Book of Discipline;” teach orthodox Wesleyan theology; encourage churches and individual Methodists to think and act “immediately” in their worship, witness, and service; and intentionally build relationships of trust among clergy and laity.

Especially in times of division I think we need to be certain and draw encouragement from our own story. John Wesley faced many contentious situations and yet his very fidelity to the Bible and Christian tradition empowered him to relate effectively to those with whom he most seriously disagreed. He remained a winsome witness for Christ without violating his conscience. May what was alive in him be alive in us today.

The “Book of Discipline” expresses the covenant in which we are bound together as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Social Principles, within the “Book of Discipline,” represent a prayerful and thoughtful effort to be faithful to the scriptures and to the spirit of Christ in speaking to a wide variety of concerns. Paragraph 161, sections A through O, and paragraph 162.J address human sexuality in all its breadth and complexity. Some of the positions in these paragraphs have led to discussions in which United Methodists hold differing opinions. While acknowledging these sincere differences I am also aware that many have shown patience and self-control, which St. Paul named among the fruit of the Spirit.

Continue reading online at www.sgaumc.org/advocate

Bishop Bryan to visit each district this fall: Bishop Bryan will visit each of the Conference’s six districts this fall, meeting with clergy and laity in separate sessions.

Northeast District - October 6 at Pittman Park UMC, Statesboro
Clergy Meeting - 10 a.m. | Laity Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

Southwest District - October 11 at Camilla UMC
Clergy Meeting - 10 a.m. | Laity Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

South Central District - October 18
Clergy Meeting - 10:30 a.m. at Valdosta FUMC | Laity Meeting - 6:30 p.m. at Douglas FUMC

Northwest District - October 24
Clergy Meeting - 10 a.m. at Ellaville UMC | Laity Meeting - 6:30 p.m. at Americus First UMC


Early Response Team Training set for Oct. 15: An ERT training is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 15 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at The Gathering UMC in Valdosta. Early Response Team Trainings help equip individuals and teams to respond in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The cost for the training is $25 per participant. At the training, participants will receive an ERT Training Manual and upon completing the course, will receive an UMCOR ID Badge and a T-shirt. Background checks are required before receiving badges. Please provide proof of background check. Safe Sanctuaries background checks are applicable. Lunch is also included in the cost. To schedule an ERT training contact Luis Morales at morhilll@gmail.com. Visit www.sgaumc.org/erttrainings to register for the Oct. 15 training.

Sunday, Oct. 16 is Vashti Day: Every local church in South Georgia is encouraged to receive a special offering to support the ministry of The Vashti Center, Inc. To learn more about Vashti and its great ministry, visit www.vashti.org.

Published weekly, the Sunday Advocate summarizes news events affecting South Georgia United Methodists and serves as a link to the in-depth reporting of the South Georgia Advocate, the official news source of the South Georgia Conference of The UMC. Unless indicated, all news compiled courtesy of the South Georgia Advocate or United Methodist News Service. www.sgaumc.org/advocate