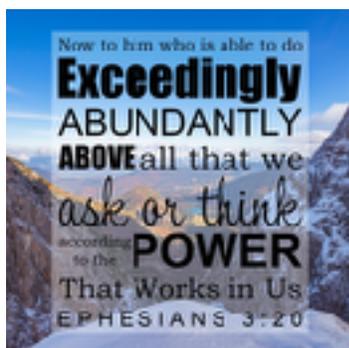


“Not Done With Us Yet” - State of the Church Address
January 20, 2019
North East United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

In my office is a small frame with a picture of a waterfall and the word POWER. The scripture below that picture is one I hold in front of me often.



Ephesians 3:20, “Now to Him who by the power at work with us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine...” God can accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine. God has certainly done this here at North East United Methodist Church.

Since 1794, when one acre of land in North East was purchased for the society of religious people called Methodist, our church has been doing ministry and mission, impacting lives throughout this community and the world.

The North East United Methodist Church through our personal COMMITment to Jesus Christ, is striving to be a GROWing and vital congregation, actively SERVing God, the community and one another.

Throughout the past year, we have strived to live out this mission. Just look at all that has been accomplished, all that God has done over the last year.

First, we **COMMIT**. We COMMIT to loving God by walking in His ways, keeping His commandments, and by loving one another.

In 2018, we COMMITed to God and our church family, coming together to worship God over **110** times, averaging **175** in attendance on Sunday mornings.



Over the summer we had **153** people come to our **15** worship services held at Elk Neck State Park.



Even more exciting, **9** individuals made a COMMITment to God through baptism and **7** through confirmation.



Many individuals throughout our church are living out the COMMITments they made when they joined our church family, when they were baptized and confirmed. Dozens and dozens of individuals and families are living out their COMMITment to renounce the evil powers of this world, to accept the freedom and power God gives us, to put trust in Jesus Christ, and remain faithful members of Christ's Holy Church, serving as Christ's representatives in the world, and to faithfully participate in the church's ministries with one's prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Men and women throughout our congregation have COMMITed themselves to Christ and His Church serving as Chairpersons or Team Members on our Administrative Council, the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, the Missions Team, Hospitality, Worship, Small Groups, Outreach, and countless other teams. Countless hours to make sure needs are met, lives are impacted, our facilities are cared for, and decisions are made that will one day show that we have been faithful.

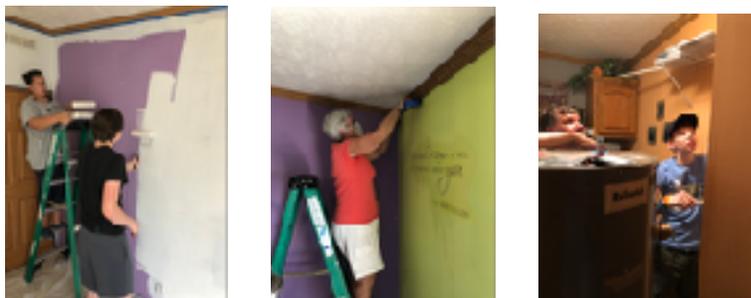
*Committee Chairs Stand

*Team Members Stand

In 2018, we saw **39** children in Preschool, **12** 3rd-5th graders in Sunday school, **12** children in Children's Church, **9** youth on Sunday mornings and **12** on Sunday nights, and up to **60+** children impacted through our support of the Boys & Girls Club and Scouts meeting at our church. These children and young people experienced God and were cared for, loved on, because men and women, out of their love for Christ and for others, COMMITed to teach Sunday school, volunteer in the nursery, lead Children's Church, serve our Youth on Sunday nights, teach our youngest through the Preschool, and help out with the Boys & Girls Club. They do this out of their love for Christ, for God's children, and for His Church.

*Sunday School Teachers, Nursery Workers, Children's Church, Preschool, Youth, Boys & Girls Club Volunteers Stand

In 2018, the members of North East United Methodist Church COMMITted over \$16,000 to Jill's House, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, "3 Nails" Community Mission...



...Share Your Care, Community Food Pantries, Crop Walk, Holiday Meals & Baskets for people in our community...



Youth Preparing Thanksgiving Dinner Boxes

...Cecil County Pregnancy Center, Operation Christmas Child, and our church's Emergency Assistance Fund to help those who are struggling.

Secondly, we **GROW**. We GROW in Christ and closer to one another through the scriptures and self-examination, by putting into practice God's Word, by allowing God to transform our thoughts, words, and actions, making them more and more Christ-like.

In 2018, we GREW through small groups, over 70 men and women participating in the study, One Month to Live.



We studied Billy Graham's book, The Holy Spirit, and Don Underwood's Pray Like Jesus on Tuesday mornings. In the adult Sunday school, the group traveled together through several

studies including Angels by David Connelly, The Cross by John Stott, and a DVD study on Cults and Religions. There were many other opportunities to GROW in 2018 including the Deeper Life Crusade with daily Bible studies with John Hobbs and Kenny Davis...



...Camps Farthest Out, New Member Classes, Confirmation Classes, the Annual Youth Rally...



North East UMC's Women's Retreat...



Vacation Bible School...



Many members studied through the weekly devotions in the bulletin and Sunday mornings lifted up Biblical truths through message series like *Dare to be a Daniel*; *Fun in the Son: The Parables of Jesus*; *Commit, Grow, Serve*; and *It's A Boy!*

Throughout 2018, lives were changed, addictions broken, marriages strengthened, hearts opened, anger released, bodies and spirits healed, and love experienced and shared. I know from my conversations and experiences this past year that many of you did GROW in your relationship with God, in your relationship with others, and as a child of God.

Thirdly, we **SERVE**. We fulfill our vows, the vows we made at our baptism, the vows we made when we stood in front of the congregation and joined North East UMC, when we SERVE. We recognize that every Christian is called to SERVICE, all are called to invest the gifts and talents God has given them.

Members served thousands of hours pouring coffee, folding bulletins, teaching children, working on homes in our community, creating a church logo, working the sound booth, playing the organ and piano in worship, leading worship as part of our praise band, greeting at the doors, handing out bulletins, cleaning up around the church, cooking meals, setting up tables, decorating the church for Christmas, reading to our preschoolers, hosting family movie nights, working to make our church safer, counting money, visiting the sick, traveling with the youth to Ocean City, teaching at Vacation Bible School, leading worship at Elk Neck State Park, teaching Sunday school, leading small groups, volunteering during Share Your Care...



...bringing in food for the pantry, and providing not only the manpower but the financial resources to make the church's many ministries and missions possible.

The number of people impacted, the ways they were impacted, in 2018 are too numerous to count. As we enter 2019, we must continue to CONNECT, GROW, and SERVE, each one of us fulfilling our vows to Christ and His Church. This is a responsibility, a calling, God gives each one of us, His children. God is not done with us yet!

We have the opportunity in 2019 to follow God to new horizons in our personal lives and as a congregation...in ministry and mission. I believe...I know...God can and God will and God is going to do something significant, something amazing, something *"immeasurably more than you or I can dream or imagine"*...through this church, through each of you, through us together.

Tomorrow, January 21st, our nation remembers Martin Luther King, Jr., an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1954 until his death in 1968. He advanced civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs. On October 14, 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance.

In 1963, King helped organize the March on Washington and it was there he delivered his most famous speech, *"I have a dream..."*



King had a dream for a nation where his children would not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character. It is a dream started with King's vision...a dream for our country that is still going through its birth pangs.

King's dream was for a nation that did not see color...a nation without prejudice...where we would see each other as children of God, created...every one of us...in His image...

I have a dream of a church that is so excited, so passionate, so connected to God and God's vision that countless lives are being changed, a community is being transformed, that

people...all of you...come to know how much God truly loves you and you cannot hold that fact in...you have to tell others...you have to help them experience that love as well...

But I know...as Martin Luther King stated, *“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”*

I want you to hear that quote a second time...***“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”***

God did some amazing things in 2018...many things that you and I did not even see... behind the scenes...God has been at work...God has moved in our hearts...in our lives...our families...our children...our community...our church...and many of us have experienced Him by working alongside Him, diving into His Word and prayer, serving in His church out of gratitude for all He has done for us, giving sacrificially so ministry and mission could take place...All God did this past year was not *“automatic or inevitable;”* God worked through His children...you and I...through *“our sacrifice, our suffering, and our struggle”*...through our *“tireless exertions and passionate concern”*...God worked through the many *“dedicated individuals”* at North East UMC to impact His world...and God is ready to do it again, but you and I must do our part...We must COMMIT, GROW, and SERVE...

Because the thing you have to realize...that thing that is so easy to forget...is whatever blessings we have received from God, from the church...whatever amazing things we have experienced...whatever healing and grace we have felt...whatever it is God has done in our lives and through our lives...we have only experienced the tip of the iceberg.



There is so much more beneath the surface waiting to bubble over through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Paul writes in Ephesians 3:20, *“Now to Him who by the power at work with us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine...”*

This year, 2019, our theme will be **PRAYER**.

Our key scripture that will guide us throughout this coming year will be I Chronicles 16:11, ***“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.”***

Throughout the coming year, there will be countless opportunities to PRAY, to crawl up in your Heavenly Father’s lap. There will be opportunities, through movies and books and devotions, to learn how to PRAY, and to dive into God’s Word, learning what God has to teach us about PRAYer. There will be opportunities for the community to share their PRAYer concerns with us,

opportunities to share how God has answered PRAYers in your life, and opportunities to turn your prayers for the church into action, SERVing in ministry and mission alongside God.

Don't miss these opportunities. Don't just sit through this year. Don't allow 2019 to be just like any other year. Join us in COMMITing, GROWing and SERVing. Join us in PRAYER. Allow God to fill you with "*passionate concern*" and through your "*sacrifice...suffering...and struggle,*" through your "*tireless exertions*" in 2019...ask God to teach you how to pray more deeply, read His Word more faithfully, and where He is calling you to SERVE at North East UMC, helping us fill the gaps, meet the needs, so that we can continue to impact this community as we have been doing since 1794.

Experiencing God...impacting the community...is not "*automatic or inevitable*"...Each one of us must do our part...we must "Step Up"...we must PRAY and allow God to work through us... we must dedicate ourselves, our time, our resources, our futures to God and His plan for our lives...We must put Him on the throne of our hearts!

Through your...through our "*dedication*"...we will experience the part of the iceberg below the water that we cannot see...we will experience more than we can "*dream or imagine*"...and we will see lives, including ours, forever transformed...