

## CONFIRMATION – MONTHLY MEETING

Sunday, January 17, 2010

### Session 5 – Notes

If you ask a group of people to pick a subject they had to study in school that they simply did not like you will likely find several subjects on that list. One of them will probably be history – American history, world history, Iowa history, etc. Why are so many people opposed to taking a look at history? There may be several reasons:

- Hard to remember dates, places, people
- Hard to think about the past when we are focused on today
- Assumption that people and issues in the past faced a world very different from our own
- It's boring

Therefore, seeing a confirmation session devoted to history may bring out a less than enthusiastic response. Walnut Hills' responsibility is to show you why history is important to your faith journey and why you are part of history.

We believe that there was never a time in the past when religious people had their relationship with God and with each other all figured out. There have always been struggles, doubts, disagreements and divisions. The spiritual developments in world faiths have come about against a backdrop of turmoil. In fact, attention to God sometimes becomes clearer when faced with our own imperfections and inadequacies. The writings in the Bible came about in the midst of real life. The Hebrew prophets confronted community and national brokenness. Jesus cared for people who really were poor, sick, ignored, hated.

The reason we give our attention to those who have gone before us is because it helps us understand how and why we are here. Centuries of division, healing, a return to brokenness, a restoration of hope describes a pattern that has eventually led to the creation of Walnut Hills. The same pattern will continue, and if we give at least some of our attention to how we got here we might be better able to take the next steps beyond here.

It's not important to us that each of you memorize the steps from the emergence out of Judaism that became the Christian journey leading to the United Methodist Church today and Walnut Hills' part in that. What we want you to know is that there are some interesting and telling points along the way.

- Christianity came from Judaism. Christianity was a Jewish sect before it became a world faith. Jesus never stopped being Jewish and wanted his hearers to understand the "kingdom of God," a way of living based on allegiance to God, on love for all, on helping the broken ones to get out from under the ruthlessness of domination by imperial powers.
- In 326 C.E. Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the state church of the Roman Empire.
- In 1054 C.E. the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches split.
- In 1517 C.E. Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, declared his objections with the church and the Protestant Reformation began.
- In 1533 C.E. Pope Clement VII excommunicated King Henry VIII of England because of the king's divorce and the Church of England fully split from the Roman Catholic Church.
- The Methodist movement evolved out of the Church of England
  - John Wesley – Aldersgate experience in London in 1738 C.E.
  - Charles Wesley
  - Francis Asbury
  - "Method-ists"
- Evangelical United Brethren
  - Philip Otterbein
  - Martin Boehm
  - Jacob Albright
- In 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged into the United Methodist Church.
- The Iowa Annual Conference is part of the United Methodist Church.
- The Central District is part of the Iowa Annual Conference.
- Walnut Hills UMC was created on October 15, 1989, and is part of the Central District.
- Persons to remember:
  - Our Bishop – Julius C. Trimble

Our District Superintendent – Wesley S. K. Daniel  
Our founding pastor – Gene Koth

As important as all the past history is to Walnut Hills, we sometimes forget about the future history. Those of you currently in the confirmation journey will be a part of the history those people in the future will recall. In 100 or 200 years, the Walnut Hills congregation will not really be able to distinguish between those who were here on our first Sunday and those who are here today 19 years later. In other words, you will be considered founders of the church. Confirmation classes 200 years from now will assume you helped start their church. They might even frame pictures of you and laugh at how old-fashioned your clothes were. The youth who will come along 200 years in the future will assume you couldn't begin to imagine how difficult it is to be them and to live through the complexities of their lives. But they will also assume that you probably had your spiritual journeys figured out. They will probably assume that you had some sort of a special connection to God if you were able to help start a church. Remember, 19 years from the beginning is really the beginning point when a church is 100 or 200 or 300 years old. What would you say to that Confirmation class if you had an opportunity?