



# THE METHODIST MESSENGER

July — August 2021



This issue of **THE METHODIST MESSENGER** was given by Bev Hazlett in loving memory of her parents, Mary Ellen and Bill Hazlett

## Belle Vernon First United Methodist

200 State Street, Belle Vernon, PA 15012

### Member of the Fay-West Cooperative Parish

Phone: 724-929-4696

Pastor Ryan R. Washabaugh

Fax: 724-930-9651

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. — Monday thru Friday

**THEME FOR THIS ISSUE: "Are our freedoms being eroded?"**

## Who's Ready to Run a Marathon??

I know I wouldn't be able to handle running even a mile of the 26.2 miles of a marathon.

Starting on July 1st, as a church, we will be running the race together! Starting July 1st, as a church, we will start a summer reading plan, which will be mailed to you from me. This will be a time to reflect and "exercise" our spiritual muscles. Thankfully, you don't have to be an athlete to run this "Christian race." Be prepared to be challenged and to be open, attentive, available, and receptive to God.



I encourage you to run the race with someone! Make sure you take time to reach out to someone else as you race to the finish line. After all, a race is more fun with friends! I hope you are blessed through the readings and the study. The readings will take you through the significant chunks of the New Testament over this month. I look forward to discussing the results of your study!



*Have a blessed summer, everyone!*

*Pastor Ryan*





## **THE PURIFYING INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY**

### **MORAL STRENGTH**

*...and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Titus 2:14*

Samuel Sullivan Cox (1824-1889) was a Congressman and U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire who stated in a Memorial address to Congress:

*I believe in the religion which was taught and exemplified in the life of the Nazarene, and I never fail to bear testimony to the ennobling and purifying influence of the Christian religion. . . .*

*There was a poignancy in my heart when I saw the old church, where I so often worshipped, razed to the ground. Was it not there I attended my first Sunday school? There it was that I learned my Bible serves. . . .*

*Those early memories were cut in durable stone. Tarnished by worldliness, dusted with the activities of life, they have pursued me through the various vicissitudes of professional, literary, and political life. They became the nucleus of studies in college; the very coat of mail in the struggles against selfishness and skepticism; in fine, they prefigure and preordained my choice of spiritual belief against the delusive sophistries of new philosophies and mere material science.*

*They have enabled me, in following and studying the physical advancement of the past century, to perceive in all the atoms, forms, and forces of nature and the phenomena of mind, the truth and benignity of the great scheme of human redemption, which is founded on the veracity of Christ, and becomes, with lapsing years, more beautiful with the white radiance of an ennobling spirituality.*

(Copied from In God We Trust booklet.)



## **THE BIBLE OF THE REVOLUTION**

### **TRUTH**

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105*

Until the American Revolution, America's Bibles had been shipped in from England. When that supply was cut off and supplies dwindled in 1777, Congress resolved to import 20,000 copies of the bible from other countries, based on a Congressional committee's determination that "the use of the Bible is so universal and its importance so great."

That resolution was not acted upon, though, and the need remained. Robert Aitken of Philadelphia published a New Testament in 1777 and followed it with three additional editions. In early 1781, he petitioned Congress and received the approval to print the entire Bible. This originated the first American printing of the English Bible in 1782, what has come to be called the "Bible of the Revolution."

W. P. Strickland, an early American historian, said of this Bible publication: "Who, in view of this fact, will call in question the assertion that this is a Bible nation? Who will charge the government with indifference to religion when the first Congress of the States assumed all the rights and performed all the duties of a Bible society long before such an institution had an existence in the world?"

(Copied from In God We Trust booklet.)

***"Freedom doesn't give us the right to do what we please, but to do what pleases God."***

***"Our greatest freedom is freedom from sin."***



## **DID YOU KNOW THAT**

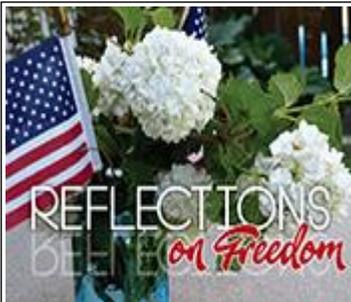
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The Fourth of July—also known as Independence Day or July 4th—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the American Revolution. On July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence, and two days later delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by Thomas Jefferson. From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues. The Fourth of July 2021 is on Sunday, July 4, 2021; the federal holiday will be observed on Monday, July 5, 2021.

## **A PRAYER FOR THE FOURTH**

Sandy Hyland

Loving God, we thank you — the true Father of our country — for the blessings of this land and the gifts of cultures around the world. Prompt us to strive for justice for all, at home and abroad. Remind us, in the words of the hymn, that "this is our Father's world" and that your goodness prevails. Amid tragedies and conflicts, guard us against despair. Help us focus on the kindness evident daily from generous neighbors to conscientious public servants (because most are). On Independence Day and every day, "O let [us] ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet." Amen.



## **ARE OUR FREEDOMS BEING ERODED?**

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Do you recognize and remember those words listed above? They are the words of the Preamble to the United States Constitution. I don't know about you, but when I was in school, we were required to memorize the Preamble and the entire Gettysburg Address. At that time, our history teachers did not think it out of the ordinary to have us do this. These documents helped to establish this great country. If you get into studying the Constitution in depth, you will find that the men who wrote it, not all of whom were highly educated, were still given a brilliant mind to put together a document that has continued for 245 years. I believe these men were gifted from God to have created such a powerful document. However, there are many today, that would gladly either tear this document to shreds and throw it away or change it to suit the changing times. One Supreme Court justice made the statement that the Constitution was outdated and needed to go. There have been changes to it, from time to time, but for the most part, it has remained in tact for 245 years. To tear it to shreds and start over, in my opinion, would be a disaster. Too many people would have various items they wanted to keep and remove others. No one would agree on much of anything!

We have another great and powerful document to use as our guide these days and that is the Bible. Think about the 66 books that were written by men not with a college education (there wasn't any such thing around then), but written with the power of the Holy Spirit leading them. Some of these writers were prophets chosen by God, some fishermen, and others were ordinary men. Just as God guided the men who wrote the Constitution, so He also guided those who wrote the books of the Bible and there are some that bear the name of their author.

What does all of this have to do with our freedoms? Think about it! Way back in the Garden of Eden, God granted Adam and Eve the freedom of choice. They could choose to follow Him or to go it alone. God hasn't changed His mind about that; we still have freedom of choice. We can choose our future — our own destiny! Unfortunately, there are some people who don't believe we know what is best for us and would like to dictate to us how to live our lives (but in the end, it would be beneficial to them and not to us.)

Our freedoms mean a lot to us! Many men and women have died to preserve those freedoms! We have the freedom of religion, the freedom to live our lives (within the teachings of God) as we see fit, the right to bear arms to protect us and/or our families. But, as I said, there are those who would like us to give up these freedoms to follow their lead — wherever it may go! God has given us the intelligence we need individually to live a long, prosperous life. How do we do that? First of all, I would suggest that you accept Jesus as your personal Savior. One thing we all have in common, is that we are sinners in need of a Savior and that is Jesus who gave His life for us. Second, to accept the Bible (as written) as God's Holy Word. Read it, study it, go to church to get more insight into its meaning and then follow its words and teachings. Share his Word with family, friends, neighbors, anyone we meet. Try to live your lives in such a way that God will one day gladly welcome you to your new home in heaven.

Just as the Constitution lays out the laws of our land that we are to follow, the Bible lays out the blueprint for our way of living and how we should act as followers of Christ. Don't allow anyone to try to take away the freedoms given to you through the words of the Constitution and don't allow anyone to try to lead you away from following a Godly life — one that would make you and Jesus proud to say you're a Christian — a follower of Christ. If you don't know Him personally, don't take a chance on waiting until another time. We never know when our number might be called and we must go to meet Him in heaven. Pray the sinners prayer now and become a royal citizen of God's heaven!

Have a beautiful summer! Until we meet again —

God bless you all,

**Cathy**

*Matthew 17:20*





- July 2 — Warren Gibson  
Nichole Visnesky
- 3 — Georgia Perry
- 4 — Pat Christner
- 5 — Kathy Dunmeyer  
Kristen Shutterly
- 7 — Brian Pendo
- 8 — Pam Heckman
- 9 — Leah Hall
- 11 — Willa Pawlak
- 14 — Christine Owings
- 15 — Noah Davis
- 17 — Ian Chalfant
- 18 — Charles Christner  
Bev Hazlett
- 20 — Donna Bennett
- 21 — Cyndi Hoosac  
Zachary Zelenski
- 22 — Brian Gilchrist  
Becky Spiker
- 24 — Sue Crow
- 25 — Jason Shawley
- 27 — Vicki Davis  
Thomas O'Brien
- 28 — Seth Protin
- 29 — Kevin Breakiron
- 31 — Adam Ferguson



### TOO SOON WE'RE OLD

Grace E. Easley

"Too soon we're old, too late we're smart,"

I know you've heard this said,  
How many times the foolish heart,  
Contrives to rule the head.

How great another's faults appear,  
How very slight our own,  
And those with homes of glass draw near  
To cast the sharpest stone.  
We seek to pour another in  
A mold that we design,  
And we are disillusioned when  
The seams do not align.

With careless hands we gather weeds  
And throw the blooms away,  
Consigning all our deepest needs  
To god with feet of clay.

"Too soon we're old, too late we're smart,"

So has it ever been,  
And thoughtlessly we tear apart  
What we might never mend.  
We twist the truth to suit our ends  
And close our ears to shield  
A conscience that the world pretends

Is something less than real.  
O Lord, forgive our blindness,  
Who see ourselves as strong,  
And in Your loving kindness,  
Reach down to right each wrong.  
'Tis love alone dispels the cold  
And warms the hardest heart,

"For it is much too soon we're old,  
And much too late we're smart!"



- August 1 — Joel Dunmeyer
- 2 — Jacob Parsons
- 4 — Bobbie Sue Kelly
- 6 — Tim Gilchrist  
Renee Horne
- 7 — Sue Owens
- 8 — Angelica Canzonieri
- 10 — Susie Black  
Harry Ellison  
Kaiden Weil
- 11 — Hannah Wagner  
Daniel Whyel
- 12 — Scott Gantner  
James Parsons  
Shane Snyder
- 13 — Jacob Hileman  
Jennifer Pendo
- 14 — Sarah Booher
- 16 — Joshua Staffen
- 17 — Jim Yohe
- 18 — Zachary Anderson
- 20 — Sara Staffen
- 21 — Raymond Kimball
- 22 — Edward Owings
- 23 — Rainey Skobel
- 26 — Virginia Allison
- 27 — Daniel Bennett
- 28 — Joelle Kennedy
- 29 — Dan Lopes



# ***WE MISS YOU!!***

As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient (who doesn't love not getting ready in the morning or leaving the home?!), it's important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much.

You can't serve your sofa. You can't have community of faith on your sofa. You can't experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together on your sofa.

Christians aren't consumers either. We are contributors. We don't watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We do life together.

## **The church needs you. And you need the church.**

Wherever you are, find a local church where you and your family can be part of community and use your talents to advance the kingdom and reach others. To come alongside one another physically, not just through a screen. While I'm grateful for technology to keep people connected that can't physically come to a facility or need to be away, it's absolutely not like being in the building. Never will be.



**Yes, church on the sofa is nice.**



*But it'll never be the same as church in the sanctuary.*

## **NEWS FROM THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

Submitted by Barbara Hess

United Methodist Women of Belle Vernon reorganized in February at their postponed Christmas party at Hoss's. There were 9 women present and everyone was happy to be together after the long hiatus. Barb Hess was elected as president and Wendy Kennedy as treasurer. United Methodist Women decided to change their meeting times to after church in order to accommodate both working women and those women who no longer drive in the evenings. We also decided to either meet at a restaurant or at the back of the church sanctuary and order food in so that no one is burdened with fixing lunch.



We had our program on Call to Prayer and Self Denial this spring led by Nancy Trombino and raised \$35 to send to the National Office of United Methodist Women. Barb Hess attended the Connellsville District UMW Spring meeting held via Zoom. Belle Vernon First UMW earned a certificate as a five star unit. This means we gave to all five channels of UMW giving: the Pledge (ours was \$1000 for the year), Special Mission Recognition pin (\$40) given annually to someone in the congregation or community for their charity work, Gift in Memory given in memory of a UMW memory who has passed away during the year, World Thank Offering – a program where UMW gives in thanksgiving to help women all over the world, Gift to Mission – given in honor of someone in which a card is sent and the money given to UMW. This was a great accomplishment during the pandemic with such a small group.

Our ongoing fundraisers include our prayer beads, angel bells and Christmas wreath decorations. We are sponsoring a Ladies Night Off June 11th-12th and a yard sale on July 10th from 8 – noon. We will also be donating baked goods towards the yard sale for the Finance Committee on July 24th. Our next meeting is June 27th after church in the back of the church sanctuary. We will be ordering lunch in. Any interested woman is free to join us.

Don't Miss the



**ARTICLES FOR THE  
SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER  
ISSUE DUE**

**Sunday, August 15th**

***"Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child as it is to the caterpillar."***

**— Bradley Miller**



## ***IN SEARCH OF TRUTH***

By Josh McDowell

*Few people have been more sincere than I in trying —  
without success — to find meaning, truth, and purpose in life.*

At the university I noticed a small group of people — eight students and two faculty members — who seemed different. They seemed to know what they believed and why. I wanted what I saw.

Two weeks later, while I was sitting with some of them in the student union, the conversation turned to God. That bothered me, because I thought it was not intellectual. And yet I was curious.

Leaning back in my chair, I said to one of the students, "Tell me, what has made you so different from others?"

She looked me in the eye with a little smile and said, "Jesus Christ!"

My response revealed my bias and my ignorance. "Oh, for heaven's sake," I said. "Don't give me that garbage about religion!"

She replied, "I didn't say 'religion.' I said 'Jesus Christ.'"

My new friends challenged me to examine the claims of Christ. I thought most Christians were idiots. But these people were persistent. Finally, I accepted their challenge, but I did so out of pride, to refute them.

One of the claims I researched was Christ's resurrection. And after more than one thousand hours of study, I concluded that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was either one of the most vicious hoaxes ever foisted upon human minds or the most fantastic fact of history.

Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish prophet, claimed to be the Christ prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures. He was arrested, judged a political criminal, and crucified. Three days after his death and burial, some women went to his tomb and found his body gone. His disciples claimed that God had raised him from the dead and that he had appeared to them and to many others at various times before ascending into heaven.

In my attempt to refute Christianity, I made some startling observations. Until then, I'd had no idea there was so much historical, literary, and legal testimony supporting the factuality of Christ's resurrection. But the more I investigated, the more evidence I found, including Jesus's foretelling of his resurrection.

Prior to his death, he took his disciples aside and told them that he would be condemned to death and handed over to the Romans who would mock him and spit on him, flog him, and kill him. And three days later he would rise from the dead (Mark 10:33-34).

The more I studied the Christian faith, the more I realized it is a think person's faith. As Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

Having set out to refute the resurrection and Christianity, and then having been compelled by the evidence to believe that Jesus Christ was indeed exactly who he claimed to be, I faced a new problem. My mind was saying, "Christianity is true," but my will was saying, "Don't admit it!"

It came to the point where I couldn't sleep at night. I knew I had to get Jesus off my mind or go out of my mind. Finally, on December 19, 1959, at 8:30 p.m., I became a Christian.

I prayed four things that night to establish a relationship with the resurrected, living Christ, who has since transformed my life. First, I said, "Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for me." Second, I said, "I confess there are things in my life that are not pleasing to you. I ask you to forgive and cleanse me." (The Bible says, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," Isaiah 1:18.) Third, I said, "Right now, in the best way I know how, I open the door of my heart and life, and I trust you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for coming into my life by faith."

After I prayed, nothing happened. There was no bolt of lightning. I even said to myself, "Oh, not! What'd I get sucked into now?" I felt I'd gone off the deep end. And some of my friends agreed. But I can tell you now that in the months following, I found that I had not gone off the deep end. For one thing I had finally found mental peace. I had also found control of my temper. And old hatreds were gradually turning to love.

You can laugh at Christianity; you can mock and ridicule it. But it changes lives. Christianity cannot be forced on anyone. All I can do is tell you what I've learned. Beyond that, it's your decision.

(Continued)

## ***IN SEARCH OF TRUTH Cont'd.***

Christ was raised from the dead. He lives. He has the infinite capacity to enter your life, forgive you, and change you from the inside out.

*Adapted from The Resurrection Factor, published by Here's Life Publishers, San Bernardino, California. Reprinted by permission of Campus Crusade for Christ.*

(Copied from the Crossway Good News gospel tract.)



### ***SUMMER'S SERENE SERENADE***

Linda C. Grazulis

The hidden falls are trickling placid,  
A small part of Summer's serene serenade,  
The gazebo is showered with blossoming roses,  
Gee, the earth is gloriously made!

Today there's such quietude  
As tiny wings flit about in the gentle breeze,  
Folks stretch out in a swinging hammock  
Lazily doing as they please.

The cotton-ball clouds are slowly drifting  
As brawny oaks provide a comforting shade,  
While in the evening there's a golden sunset  
That lingers briefly, but mysteriously fades.

Many retreat to the woodlands and forest  
Plucking wee violets and wildflowers galore —  
A lovely bouquet for a mother or sweet loved one,  
Eagerly searching and scanning for more.

The world is abuzz with an array of insects —  
Praying mantis is now on the scene,  
As well as chirping crickets and lightning bugs,  
Tucked in a haven of green.

The weeping willow is lowly bowing  
In gratitude that Summer's arrived;  
Down by the swimming hole are gales of laughter,  
The water's perfect, come take a dive!  
Next the creek folks are busy fishing,  
Truly the heart is at peace and at rest —  
Humming Summer's serene serenade,  
And ever so thankful to God to be a welcomed guest.



#### **JOHN BAKEWELL**

931 Ada Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **ROSELLA DUBARR**

251 Ninth Street, Apt. 210  
Charleroi, PA 15022

#### **JOANNE DUNLOP**

203 Vine Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **HARRY ELLISON**

1105 Henry Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **EDYTHE FERENCZ**

826 Edwards Avenue  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **SALLY FRANTZ**

705 Tenth Street  
Charleroi, PA 15012

#### **LUCY GONDAK**

112 Price Street  
Rostraver Twp., PA 15012

#### **CYNDI HOOSEC**

305 First Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **SALLIE HOPKINS**

251 Ninth Street, Apt. 510  
Charleroi, PA 15022

#### **GEORGE LEASURE**

235 Vernon Avenue  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **DIANA McCALLUM**

326 Market Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 150125

#### **CAROLYN MENDOLA**

333 Joyce Drive  
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

#### **EDIE POPIK**

121 Johnson Avenue  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **ROSE STEWART**

2081 State Route 906  
Rostraver Twp., PA 15012

#### **JANE SHIDER**

325 Water Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

#### **NANCY TROMBINO**

412 Mutich Street  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012



### **OUR WEBSITE SPONSORS FOR JULY — AUGUST**

**July** — Jackie DeWitt in memory of  
Luann Madden

**August** — John & Carole Chalfant's  
40th Wedding Anniversary

***SAVE THE DATE AND PLAN TO ATTEND  
SUNDAY SERVICEES ON JULY 11, 2021!***

**Please mark your calendar to plan to join us on July 11, 2021 as we gather together to honor Carol Kubalinski and to acknowledge her benevolence and deep love of her Church.**



**FUMC of Belle Vernon cordially invites our congregation, family members (that live both near and far), and friends to join us for the Rededication of our church building and a ceremony to honor and remember Carol L. (Kitto) Kubalinski.**

**This special service will be held on Sunday, July 11, 2021 at 11:15 AM during our regular church service in the church sanctuary. The service will be also available via ZOOM by phone or computer.**

**Telephone Information Needed:**

**Dial into: 1-929-205-6099  
Meeting ID: 411 092 1358#  
Password: 354 262#**

**Computer login:**

**Web Address: <https://zoom.us/join>  
Meeting ID; 411 092 1358  
Password: 354 262**

**Carol joined the First United Methodist Church of Belle Vernon as a child and continued to faithfully attend and support many church activities until she went to be with the Lord on July 9, 2009.**

**A brief reception is planned to immediately follow the church service. All are welcome to attend and share your special memories of Carol.**

**Praying you will join us and our special, distinguished guests on July 11, 2021 at 11:15 AM for our special Sunday Services at the First United Methodist Church of Belle Vernon.**





**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN  
YARD SALE**

**Saturday, July 10th, 2021**

**8:00 a.m. to Noon**

**House adjacent to the church!**

***(This is their fundraiser. Do your best to lend your support!)***

*Purchase a receptacle for \$1, \$5, or \$10 and fill it up with your choices.*

*Various other items available for sale also!*

**" NORTH BELLE VEARNON  
SUMMER ON HE AVENUE  
EVENT"**

**YARD SALE**

**Saturday, July 24th,  
2021**

**8:00 a.m. to Noon**

**House adjacent to the church!**

(All profits will go toward the Church insurance fund. Your support, in any way, will be greatly appreciated.)

*Purchase a receptacle for \$1, \$5, or \$10 and fill it up with your choices.*

Baked goods and other items also available.



**YARD SALE GUIDELINES**

United Methodist Women are having a yard sale on July 10th. We are taking donations. What we have been doing is giving people a bag and charging \$1, \$5 or \$10 based on the size of the bag. People can then stuff the bag with whatever they want. Larger items or items that we thought were of some value, we have marked a price on them and brought them to the back of the church to sell.

**HERE ARE SOME USEFUL TIPS GOING FORWARD:**

1. If your item has several parts that go together then find some way to put the pieces together. Some ideas would be to tape them together, put them in a bag or box and mark clearly on the bag or box that the pieces go together. Too many times we have placed items out only to find later that a lid or other part was missing and then having difficulty matching the parts once they are placed out for sale.
2. If the item can be cleaned, it is helpful to do so before donating it.
3. If the item is an antique or of some value, then mark it as such. Feel free to put a price on it if you wish. Last sale someone marked some plates as antique or as a particular piece of China such as Staffordshire and it helped us a great deal in setting those items aside to mark with a separate price.
4. Check to see if electrical items such as hair dryers, lamps, coffee makers, incense burners, etc. still work.
5. It is best to either junk or throw out items that are: broken, missing essential parts such as a power cord, personal products such as make-up or soap that have been opened, outdated items such as: VCRs, floppy disks, computer equipment that is more than a couple of years old; old TVs before the advent of flat screen TVs, etc.
6. **Probably the best rule of thumb is this, look at your items and say "If I saw this at a yard sale, would I buy it?" If the answer is yes, then by all means bring in your item. If the answer is no, then it's probably best just to throw the item out.**

We really do appreciate how generous your donations have been for these events. If we all adhere to these tips, it will be most helpful to those setting up for each event, and then storing things away afterward that can be offered the next time.

**THE METHODIST MESSENGER  
FAY-WEST COOPERATIVE CHURCHES  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
200 STATE STREET  
BELLE VERNON, PA 15012**

Phone: 724-929-4696 Fax: 724-930-0651

E-mail: [bvumch7@yahoo.com](mailto:bvumch7@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.bellevernonumc.org](http://www.bellevernonumc.org)

**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**



*WE ARE SO BLESSED!*

*MAY GOD CONTINUE TO DO SO!*



**245  
YEARS  
OLD!**

