

Good Friday afternoon, New South Family. Welcome to the 27th edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending January 3, 2020.

-----**The Critical**-----

Announcements

1) Last Call for History and Polity Class I'll need to hear from you by Sunday if you'd like to sign up for the spring H & P class...required for Conference Candidacy. Please refer to previous issues of the Weekly Word for details.

2) You'll Find the January Global Prayer and Praise List...also attached to this e-mail...to be used as a daily prayer guide for Free Methodist Missions around the world.

Church of the Week: Greenville (TN) Heartland FMC – Pastor Doyle Tunnell

Conference Calendar

February __:	Strategy Day
February 2-4:	Area Bishop and Superintendents (ABS) meeting in Nashville
February 7:	FM History and Polity class begins
March 20:	District Leaders – Wilmore, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
March 20:	BOA – Wilmore, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.
March 21:	MEG/MAC – Wilmore, 8:00 a.m. - noon
March 31-April 2:	Global Overseers Team (GOT) - Indianapolis
April 26-28:	ABS - Tampa
May 29-30:	New South Annual Conference, Oakdale Christian Academy
June 7-9:	ABS - Indianapolis
June 15-20:	NSC Teen Camp
June 11-14:	NSC Family Camp
June 22-26:	NSC Kids' Camp
August 9-11:	ABS – Baltimore
August 25-28:	Starting Strong for new pastors - Indianapolis
September 23-25:	New Room Conference, Nashville, TN

And now...

-----**The Important**-----

Resources, Articles and Attachments

1) The Latest Greeting from the F.M. Chaplaincy Area...is attached to this e-mail as well. Take a moment to read what the Lord is doing among our chaplains.

2) I'd Love to Hear what was special about the holiday season in your church family. Please send me a quick sentence or two and I'll share that in next week's Weekly Word.

3) Finally, here is a helpful word/reminder from Asbury Seminary president, Tim Tennent as we enter into a new year:

As pastors and leaders, we find it easy to look around our culture, our world, or even the church, and feel a sense of despair. The sheer weight of bad news can be overwhelming—a random act of terror delivered by an

active shooter in a church in Texas; millions of starving children in Yemen; the plight of refugees around the world; the loss of civil discourse in Washington, D.C.; or watching your own denomination being co-opted by the wider culture to embrace immorality—the list could go on and on. At such times, given the tumult of our time (globally, politically, ecclesiastically, morally, etc.), it might be worth remembering the famous Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who John sees in Revelation 6:1-8. John sees four horses: a white horse representing conquest, a red horse representing war and killing, a black horse representing economic collapse leading to famine, and a pale horse representing death. This vision is a vision of the reality of the world in the “last days.” The “last days” in the New Testament is the period between the ascension of Christ and the return of Christ, or, to put it another way, the entire earthly age of the church of Jesus Christ.

Because the phrase “last days” or “end time” refers to the whole life of the church, I have never been convinced that the Book of Revelation fits neatly into either the preterist (it all happened in the first century) or the futurist (it all happens in the future) views. I hold to more of a continuous historical view which sees the events of Revelation (mostly conveyed through symbolic images) as occurring repeatedly throughout the history of the church, even if they are realized in a climatic way at the very end of the ages. (e.g. Anti-Christ is coming, but many anti-Christ's have come – 1 John 2:18).

John is telling us that we will always live in a world with dictators, evil rulers and military leaders who rise up and conquer the kingdoms of this world. From Alexander the Great to Pol Pot, from Julius Caesar to Mussolini, from Adolph Hitler to Kim Jong-un, these leaders on a “white horse” will always be appearing on the stages of the world. You may have noticed in the news that Kim Jong-Un literally rode on a symbolic white horse last December, causing a big stir in the media. But, these leaders will always be with us. Likewise, the world is always at war in one place or another. Experts define war as an active conflict which claims more than 1,000 lives. Using that definition, only 268 years have been without war. That is just 8% of recorded history! Economic instability and famine have also been a re-occurring theme throughout history. Death, the pale horse, is chasing us all and will someday deliver his blow. Even if you manage to live in a little corner of the world which has not experienced a dictator, or war, or famine or any economic instability, death is the common end to us all.

However, the Christian hope is that Jesus Christ is the victor over all this. The church must live out its existence in the midst of world turmoil and instability. There is no earthly paradise around the corner once this or that political leader finally takes office. There is no utopia on the horizon where wars will cease and everyone will live in some kind of earthly brotherhood. The end of wars, bloodshed and famine will end only with the return of Christ and the ushering in of the New Creation. The Pale horseman will someday strike us down, but even that is only a reminder that “last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:26). The good news is that Jesus Christ has defeated death! We will be bodily resurrected and the Pale Horse (Death and Hades) will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14). Every tear will be wiped away. All wars will cease. The tree of life will bear twelve kinds of fruit, and the leaves of the Tree of Life will be for the “healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2).

Brothers and sisters, we must live our lives in light of these future realities. The church is to be a tiny picture of these future realities. Despite the chaos around us, when people meet those of us who belong to Christ, they should see a glimpse of an outpost of the New Creation right here in the midst of a fallen world! Rather than us being caught up in a cycle of despair, we are people of hope. We know that Christ is the only hope for a lost and fallen world. We know that we must embody the New Creation in the present. We feed the hungry, not because we believe we will be ushering some earthly utopia, but because we believe that in the Eschaton there will be no more hunger, and we want to see that embodied even in the present. We clean up rivers because we know that there will be no polluted rivers in the new heavens and the new earth. We fight for justice for those oppressed because we know that someday Jesus Christ is returning to set all things right, and we have been called to be his co-laborers in that work. Most of all, through word and deed, we proclaim the

forgiveness and grace which comes through faith in Jesus Christ because of his shed blood on the cross and his glorious bodily resurrection.

In the meantime, it can be agonizing to live in the midst of so much pain, brokenness, disease and death and wonder why our sovereign God seems so passive in the face of it all. But, the very saints who witnessed the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse cried out the same thing: "How Long, O Lord!" How long must we wait until you return and set things right? But, we learn that God is patient with a world which is in rebellion against him and is sinking more and more into the morass of its own judgment because this is also the very time when tens of thousands every day of every year are being called out of darkness into his marvelous light. We must be patient until as many as possible are rescued from the coming judgment and the "number of our fellow servants is complete" (Rev. 6:11).

Therefore, as we live into these opening months of a new decade, and as we see the turmoil around us, let us not be discouraged but remember the words of Jesus: "We must work the works of him who sent me (Christ) while it is day; for night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Let us shine boldly in 2020! Let us sow extravagantly in 2020! Let us love lavishly in 2020!

Job Openings

At this point, we have a pastor or interim pastor in every NSC church, although those interim situations are, well, interim.

January Birthdays (*that we know of)

Curt Allen – January 5 - LP

Stan Welton – January 8 – Elder, Administrator, Morgantown Good News Center and Conference Treasurer

Don Stevens – January 14 – Elder, retired

Kevin Hale – January 17 – Conference Trustee

Shivraj Mahendra – January 19 – Elder, student

Carol Matthews – January 21 – Conference Auditor

Bob Barnard – January 25 – Elder, Chaplain, Thomson Hood Veteran's Center

Ron Johns – January 27 – Elder, retired

Ralph Kester – January 27, Lay Delegate, Willmore

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at

newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: This Sunday I begin a series looking at Christmas from the "Backside;" interpreting the Christmas event post-holiday. My text will be Isaiah 43:16-21 and Revelation 21:5
On Sunday night, we will participate, as we always do at the start of a new year, in the John Wesley Covenant Worship Service. You can find the service text in the News Feed of the Willmore web site and also on the Resources page of the Conference web site.

Quote: "I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." ~ Helen Keller

Joke:

A newly-ordained pastor, in the first days of his first call, was attempting to console the widow of an eccentric man who had just died. Standing before the open casket, the nervous young pastor said, "I realize this must be a very hard blow for you, Mrs. Svenson. Just try to remember that what we see before us is only the husk, the shell of your dear husband—the nut has gone to heaven."

The happiest of new years to you all.

D-