



The Oakletter, Jan. 25, 2026

See above? That's me this morning, at the conclusion of our worship service. If you watched, after I finished preaching, I said, "Okay, Oaklette, let's go outside." I put on my hat, coat, scarf, and gloves and went out the back door, walking to the pavilion behind the church. I did so after asking, "Can we talk about becoming more *vile* as Oaklette UMC together outside of Oaklette UMC?"

"More *vile*" is a phrase that comes from John Wesley. On April 2, 1739, Wesley wrote in his journal that he had "submitted to become more *vile*" by preaching in the field. As an Anglican priest, Wesley had never let himself be so *vile* as to preach outdoors. At the urging of his colleague George Whitfield, Wesley adopted the practice, which allowed him to see the real-life conditions in poorhouses, factories, prisons, hospitals, and orphanages. Can the church today become, like Wesley, more *vile* by going outside?

Ashley Boggan thinks so. Boggan is the General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church. Last year, she published *Wesleyan Vile-tality: Reclaiming the Heart of Methodist Identity*, a book my niece gave me last Christmas. It's on my reading list after I finish Will Willimon's *The Last Supper: Conversations That Led to the Cross*, which will serve as our Lenten study, beginning Feb. 22. Boggan and Willimon both advocate a view that has the church, instead of going to those it views as less fortunate and saying, "Here, let us give you this," going to those who suffer injustice and saying, "Let's work together for the kingdom of God." That requires going outside, doesn't it?

There is no shortage of opportunities for the church to go outside. I shared one on Facebook this morning, the Feb. 25 Faithful Resistance: A Public Witness for Immigrant Justice. This is an in-person or virtual event beginning with gathering and worship that Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at Capitol Hill UMC in Washington, D.C. It's followed by a 30-minute peaceful procession to the Capitol and a 60-minute public witness there. Congressional visits may follow.



I'm going; are you interested? If so, please see me, and let's go outside.

Ned

This week at Oaklette

Sun., Jan. 25
9:30 am
Sunday School

9:30 am
SOTM

11 am Third
Sunday after
the Epiphany
worship

6:30 pm
Beverly
Hillbillies
Bible study

Mon., Jan 26
10 a.m. Food
pantry [Kay
Hill and
Joanne Rooks]

7 p.m. HRM
Band

Tues., Jan. 27
7 p.m., Spirit
of Truth men's
meeting

Wed.,
Jan. 28
6:30 p.m.
Choir practice

Thur., Jan. 29
10 a.m. Bible
study

Sun., Feb. 1
9:30 am
Sunday school

11 am Fourth
Sunday After
the Epiphany
worship

6:30 pm
Beverly
Hillbillies
Bible study

Monday 26

Birthdays: Kathryn Woodhouse – Jan. 27

Today's Epistle 1 Cor. 1:10-18

Now I encourage you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Agree with each other and don't be divided into rival groups. Instead, be restored with the same mind and the same purpose. My brothers and sisters, Chloe's people gave me some information about you, that you're fighting with each other. What I mean is this: that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," "I belong to Apollos," "I belong to Cephas," "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in Paul's name? Thank God that I didn't baptize any of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that nobody can say that you were baptized in my name! Oh, I baptized the house of Stephanas too. Otherwise, I don't know if I baptized anyone else. Christ didn't send me to baptize but to preach the good news. And Christ didn't send me to preach the good news with clever words so that Christ's cross won't be emptied of its meaning.

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed. But it is the power of God for those of us who are being saved.



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