

**“Fear, Loathing and Anger – You Can Have It All
at the swimming pool, the BBQ, and in the Lawn Mowing Business Too”
It’s the 15th Annual Study Group for Theological Reflection.**

In early July, a 12 year old boy in Maple Heights has the police called on him because a neighbor (adjacent to the lawn he has been hired to mow) calls 911 rather than speak with the young entrepreneur and point out where his enthusiasm carried over into his/her own yard. Is there so little civil discourse that law enforcement must be summoned to measure blades of grass?

In May two men in pursuit of business opportunities arrange to meet a prospective client at a Starbucks in Philadelphia; they end up being arrested when the manager calls the police to complain that they are loitering. Is “common good” no longer part of barista training but fear, loathing and anger are offered in tall, grande, venti sizes?

In late June, young teenagers are enjoying an afternoon swim at a public swimming pool in Summerville, SC, when a woman a woman begins to shout abuse at them and insist that they leave. She ends up being charged with assault (against one of the boys) and also against the police officer who was assigned to investigate the matter. Another incident of exclusion (with overlapping dynamics, but without the assault charges) plays itself out a few days later at a private community pool on the Fourth of July in North Carolina.

Summer 2018 ‘twas also a summer when road rage continued, shootings remained commonplace, and Roseanne Barr discovered that not everything she says is funny. A US politician muddled into the land reform politics of South Africa, and a photo showed a Supreme Court Nominee ignoring the proffered hand of a father whose 14 year old child was killed in a mass shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Have snubbing and tweeting achieved a slam dunk on civic and civil discourse?

What, if anything, does our Christian faith say to any of this?

Join the conversation at this year’s “Study Group for Theological Reflection” as it begins the 2018-2019 season on Wednesday, September 19, at the Christ Woodland UMC in Akron, OH.

The theme: “A Christian Response Fear, Loathing and Anger”

The plan: To use lectionary epistle lessons for theological reflection and discussion in confronting the idolatries of racism. The study group is open to elders, deacons, diaconal ministers and local pastors, seeking and welcoming theologically diverse participants for theological reflection on key worship texts lifted from the lectionary’s epistle readings.

The premise, ancient though it may be: that “all scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Each of this year's five roundtable discussions will be held on a Wednesday from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm at Christ Woodland UMC in Akron at 444 N. Hawkins Ave., Akron, OH, 44313, followed by optional lunch at a local eatery.

Building on the models of previous years, some key worship texts have been suggested as the starting point for discussion, study and theological reflection. Here they are:

For Wed., Sep. 19, James 3:13-4:8 (the epistle lectionary for Sunday, Sept. 30).

For Wed., Nov. 21, Philippians 1:3-11 (the epistle lectionary for Sunday, Dec. 9).

For Wed., Jan. 16, I Corinthians 12:12-31 (the epistle lectionary for Sunday, January 27).

For Wed., Mar. 20, II Corinthians 5:16-21 (the epistle lectionary for Sunday, March 31).

For Wed., May 15, Galatians 5:13-25 (the epistle lectionary for Sunday, June 30).

For more information or to simply sign up, please contact Rev. Thomas Shaw at tom.shaw@brunswickumc.org.