

Events:

Baptism

- It is generally considered that the Baptists were an outgrowth of the Anglican Separatist movement.
- Baptists are distinct from the Anabaptists, who started about 80 years earlier in Switzerland.
- John Smythe (1570-1612) and Thomas Helwys (1575-1616) are credited with starting the first Dutch Baptist church in Holland in 1609.
- Roger Williams (1603-1683) and John Clarke (1609-1676) are credited with starting the first American Baptist church in Providence, RI in 1639.
- Baptists believe that the New Testament teaches a “believer’s baptism” (rather than “infant baptism”) by full immersion (rather than pouring or sprinkling).
- Baptists believe that the Lord’s Supper may be given in “close” communion (open to other Baptists) or “closed” communion (open to the local congregation only). It is usually viewed as a memorial or remembrance similar to Zwingli.
- Baptist churches usually have a congregational government. There is no central governing body. Some Reformed Baptist churches have a Presbyterian form of government.
- Some Baptist churches organize into “conventions” or similar groups, the largest being the Southern Baptist Convention. But no denomination has authority over any other. Churches remain as “independent” congregations.

Pietism

- Pietism was a movement within the Lutheran church that started in the late 17th century and lasted for 100-200 years.
- It combined the beliefs of Lutheranism with an emphasis on individual piety and a vigorous Christian life.
- Pietism originated with Philip Jakob Spener with his publication of a book entitled “Earnest Desire for a Reform of the True Evangelical Church” in 1675. In it he laid forth six proposals:
 - Earnest study of the Bible within private small groups
 - Universal priesthood of all believers
 - Christian practice accompanying Christian knowledge
 - Treat non-believers with sympathy and kindness (not bitterness)
 - Emphasize devotion to a greater extent in the universities
 - Simpler, spirit-filled preaching emphasizing the “fruits” of life
- The “Bohemian Brethren” consisted of followers of Jan Hus in what is now the Czech Republic. Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, a Pietist, revived the Brethren at his estate of Herrnhut (God’s Watch) in 1727 and formed the Moravian Church.
- Pietism declined in the 1800’s, but its influence continues in denominations such as Methodists, German Evangelicals and the United Brethren.

Heroes of the Christian Faith
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Methodism

- Methodism began with Charles Wesley's "Holy Club" group in 1727.
- John Wesley joined the group in 1729 and his skills helped organize and expand the group. George Whitefield joined the group in 1733 and eventually became one of its leaders.
- The movement started within the Church of England. They became known as "Methodists", a pejorative term, because of their habits of taking communion every week, fasting regularly, abstaining from most amusements and luxuries, and visiting the sick, the poor, and the prisoners.
- John Wesley had to oversee each society group personally:
 - He issued hand-signed "tickets" every three months to "good" members. The tickets of any "troublemakers" were simply not renewed.
 - He selected heads of groups of twelve in order to collect offerings from the others to help pay off debt
- When the societies and members became too numerous, Wesley drew up the "General Rules" for the "United Societies", which became the basis for today's Methodist book of Discipline:
 - First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind...
 - Secondly: By ... doing good of every possible sort ... to all...
 - Third: By attending upon all the ordinances of God
- Methodism came to America in the late 1760's with Philip Embury in New York and Robert Strawbridge in Maryland – two lay preachers from England.
- There were no ordained ministers in America until Thomas Coke was sent by Wesley in 1784 to establish the American Methodist Church. Coke ordained Francis Asbury, and the two named themselves "bishops" in a meeting of the circuit riders later that year.
 - Wesley disliked their use of the term "bishop"
 - There are still no "bishops" in the Methodist Church in England
- Methodists hold to the Arminian doctrines. The Methodist church has had many splits and unions over its history, similar to Presbyterianism.

The Great Awakening

- This was a period of great religious revival in America in the 1730's and 1740's.
- It is generally considered to have started through the fiery open-air preaching of a young George Whitefield, but other preachers, including Jonathan Edwards, were soon involved.
- Benjamin Franklin was a supporter of Whitefield and published his sermons.
- It included Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches across all of America – New England, the Middle Atlantic and the South.
- It also included the conversion of all types of people – black and white, wealthy and poor, free and slave.
- The ideas that were taught and preached during the revival greatly influenced the ideas of religious freedom put into America's constitution.

Heroes:

John Wesley

- Born in 1703 in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England – the 15th child of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. He died in 1791.
- John, along with his brother Charles, formed the Methodist movement within the Church of England.
- At age 5, the rectory house in which the Wesley's lived burned, and John was rescued from it. He referred to himself as “the brand plucked from the burning”.
- He attended Charterhouse School in London at age 14. The other boys picked on him, and he realized that an almighty God could do much worse than they.
- John joined his brother Charles' “Holy Club” at Oxford in 1729.
- On his trip to America (Georgia) in 1735, John first met the Moravians on the ship and was struck by their calmness during a severe storm at sea.
- His trip to Georgia ended in failure due to his becoming romantically involved with a woman whom he later broke off with. She and her (then) husband tried to sue John for breach of promise, but he escaped back to England.
- In England, John again turned to the Moravians, and at Aldersgate in 1738 he “felt [his] heart strangely warmed”.
- He visited Herrnhut (in Moravia), which led him to draw up rules for his Methodist societies.
- In 1739, John broke with the Moravians and joined his friend George Whitefield in “field” preaching, which before then, he had considered to be “almost a sin”.
- According to one of Wesley's biographers (Edward Oakes):
 - He rode over 250,000 miles
 - He gave away more than 30,000 (English) pounds
 - He preached more than 40,000 sermons
- Unlike Whitefield, who was a Calvinist, Wesley was Arminian because his father had been Arminian. This eventually caused a break in their relationship and they parted ways, but they became friends again later. At a memorial service in 1770, Wesley said of Whitefield, “we may ‘agree to disagree’”.
- Wesley was a prolific writer and a logical thinker who expressed himself clearly. His sermons were usually extemporaneous and brief, but he occasionally gave longer sermons.
- He is described as being below medium height, well proportioned, strong, with a bright eye, a clear complexion, and a saintly and intellectual face.
- He married Mary Vazeille, a widow, at age 48. It was an unhappy marriage with no children. She left him after fifteen years.
- Wesley died at 88 years of age with his friends gathered around him. He raised his arms feebly and said, “The best of all is, God is with us.” Because of his life of charity, he died poor.

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Charles Wesley

- Born in 1707 in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England – the 18th child of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. He died in 1788.
- Charles began his education in 1716 at Westminster School and staying with his older brother Samuel for room and board. In 1721, he received a scholarship that enabled him to get free education and board.
- Charles entered Christ Church at Oxford in 1726, graduated in 1729, and began tutoring at that time. In 1727, he began his first “Holy Club” group, which would eventually become the Methodist church.
- He sailed to Georgia in 1735 along with his brother John to be secretary to Gen. John Oglethorpe, but he remained in Georgia less than a year before returning to England.
- In 1737, Charles came under the influence of a Moravian congregation that was led by Peter Böhler, a missionary to London sent by Count von Zinzendorf.
- Charles began itinerant and field preaching with his brother John in 1738.
- In 1749, Charles married Sarah Gwynne, and they had a mostly happy marriage in spite of losing the first five of their eight children in infancy. She accompanied him on many of his preaching trips.
- By 1756, Charles ceased itinerant preaching and settled down in Bristol, England to care for the now numerous Methodist societies. He moved his headquarters to London in 1771. In addition to caring for the societies, he devoted himself to caring for prisoners at Newgate Prison.
- Charles remained a “Nonconformist” in the Church of England in spite of his and his brother’s Methodist societies. He disapproved of John’s “ordaining” outside of the Church of England, but this never led to a loss of close friendship between them.
- Charles’s death in 1788 grieved John. Charles was buried at the Anglican Church where he had served for several years rather than at John’s own City Road Chapel, where John had prepared burial sites for both himself and Charles.
- During his life, Charles wrote between 5,500 and 7,000 hymns (estimates vary). Some of the ones in our Trinity Hymnal include:
 - O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing (164)
 - And Can it Be That I Should Gain (455)
 - Christ the Lord is Risen Today (277)
 - Rejoice, the Lord is King (309, 310)
 - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (529)
 - Jesus, Lover of My Soul (508, 509)
 - Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (196)
 - Hark! The Herald Angels Sing! (203)

George Whitefield

- Born in Gloucester, England to a poor family in 1714. He died in 1770.
- His father and mother ran the Bell Inn in Gloucester. His father died when he was only two years old.

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- George first attended school in Gloucester. At 17, he entered Pembroke College in Oxford as a “servitor” to the other students in return for receiving free tuition.
- At Oxford, George found his religion:
 - He read Henry Scougal’s The Life of God in the Soul of Man
 - He joined the Wesleys’ “Holy Club” a year after entering Oxford
 - He became passionate for preaching his newfound faith
 - The Bishop of Gloucester ordained him before the age that one would normally allowed to enter the priesthood
 - He became leader of the “Holy Club” after the Wesleys left Oxford
- He became ill in 1732. Poor health caused him to have to leave Oxford in 1735 before graduating. He remained weak and in poor health the rest of his life.
- Whitefield went to America in 1738 as parish priest in Savannah, Georgia and invited the Wesley’s to join him there. He returned to England a year later to resume his practice of open-air preaching and to raise funds.
- He returned to America and established the Bethesda (“House of Mercy”) Orphanage south of Savannah in 1740 (at age 25) and supported it all his life by raising funds from preaching and getting donations.
- He preached a series of sermons that became known as the Great Awakening.
- He traveled on horseback from New York City to Charlestown while preaching every day for months to crowds that sometimes numbered in the thousands.
- Whitefield was a friend and acquaintance of Jonathan Edwards. Both men delivered the message of God’s sovereignty in salvation. Whitefield ended nearly every sermon with, “Come poor, lost, undone sinner, come just as you are to Christ.”
- Whitefield advocated slavery for sustaining farms in Georgia. Though it was outlawed in Georgia early in the 18th century, his efforts caused it to be legalized again by the legislature in 1751. He owned slaves himself, and he used them at the orphanage. He treated his slaves well, and they respected him. He preached to the slaves of the area. He criticized owners who abused or neglected their slaves.
- He traveled between America and England several times during his lifetime. He came to America the final time in 1769.
- Whitefield died in the parsonage of the Old South Presbyterian Church, which he helped establish with his friend Jonathan Parsons, in Newburyport, MA in 1770. He had come to preach and was tired. He had intended to go straight to bed, but upon seeing the crowd waiting for him, he stood on the stairs and preached until his candle went out. He died of asthma just a few hours later. He was buried at his earlier request in a crypt under the pulpit of the church.