STAR TREK™
and Christian Faith

PACE Class – April 23, 2017
Discussion Outline

• Gene Roddenberry
• The Star Trek “universe”
• The social impact and appeal of Star Trek
• Latest findings – search for extraterrestrial life
• United Methodist Perspectives
Gene Roddenberry – 1921 – 1991

“Great Bird of the Galaxy”
STAR TREK
THE NEXT GENERATION
July 23, 2017
Royal Festival Hall
London, UK
January 5 – 11, 2018
The Caribbean
from Miami, FL
The appeal of Star Trek

- Optimistic vision of humanity’s future; full of promise and bright with hope.
- Embracing Diversity
Diversity? Still a long way to go..

• While surveys show 67 percent of American churchgoers think their congregations do enough to encourage diversity, eight in ten worshipers still attend services in which a single racial or ethnic group makes up at least 80 percent of the congregation.

• Christians have theological reason to pursue more diversity. We worship a God who is diverse in God’s own self (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and who brings people “from every nation, tribe, people, and language” (Revelation 7:9) into Christ’s body (1 Corinthians 12:12-18).

• Reverend David Ealy, pastor of Hawfields Presbyterian Church in Mebane, North Carolina, thinks Star Trek’s presentation of diversity powerfully parallels “the vision God has for the church. Everyone [on the Enterprise] had their gifts and roles but they were never in a vacuum.” The church can show society an even more compelling, real-world model of diverse community united in common mission.
The appeal of Star Trek (cont.)

• Optimistic vision of humanity’s future; full of promise and bright with hope.
• Embracing Diversity
• Hope in tumultuous times – the mid 1960’s
  – Simultaneous Hot and Cold Wars (Vietnam and the Soviet Union)
  – Protests / Race riots
  – Space race underway
    Project Gemini
The appeal of Star Trek (cont.)

• Optimistic vision of humanity’s future; full of promise and bright with hope.
• Embracing Diversity
• Hope in tumultuous times – the mid 1960’s
  • Vietnam war
  • Race riots
  • Space race underway
• Science and Technology
The appeal of Star Trek (cont.)

- Optimistic vision of humanity’s future; full of promise and bright with hope.
- Embracing Diversity
- Hope in tumultuous times – the mid 1960’s
  - Vietnam war
  - Race riots
  - Space race underway
- Mastering Technology
- Exercising Humility
One Man has resurrected the Glory that was Rome...
...In the 20th Century

MERICVS 1

BREAD AND CIRCUSES
Enceladus
So what is Life?
and other perplexing questions...

• The Heliocentric Challenge
• “If We Made Contact With Aliens, How Would Religions React?”
So what is Life?
and other perplexing questions...

• The Heliocentric Challenge
• “If We Made Contact With Aliens, How Would Religions React?”
• Core Patterns in the Universe
United Methodist Perspective

From The Book of Discipline:

• ¶160.E, the church recognizes that “the universe, known and unknown, is the creation of God and is due the respect we are called to give the earth” and rejects efforts to weaponize space.

• ¶160.F, “We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God’s natural world. We affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world and in determining what is scientific. We preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues and theology from making authoritative claims about scientific issues. . . . We find that as science expands human understanding of the natural world, our understanding of the mysteries of God’s creation and word are enhanced.”
United Methodist Perspective

From “The Long View” – Reflections on God, Life and Nature:

• “The theological history of the church is that we have consistently made God too small and ourselves too important. In the sixteenth century, a Herculean effort on the part of scientists was required to overcome the church’s objections to the observable fact that the earth revolves around the sun rather than the other way around. Unfortunately, there have always been those in the church who resist scientific discoveries that demonstrate that God is much bigger than we thought.”

- Don Underwood
Resources –

- www.startrek.com
- https://www.nasa.gov/topics/technology/features/star_trek.html
- https://www.nasa.gov/content/the-search-for-life
- http://www.lcarscom.net/
- http://www.startrekdesktopwallpaper.com/
- http://www.treknews.net/
- https://www.facebook.com/StarTrek/
- http://tricorder.xprize.org/
- http://www.roddenberry.com/
- http://vitotechnology.com/star-walk.html
- UMC FaithLink – Star Trek and Christian Faith (Sep 4, 2016)