

Valley Forge UMC Vision Statement

We are a Christ-centered community learning and striving to make our faith a way of life as we share with each other and all people the love, acceptance and forgiveness lived and proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth.



Open Door Tidings

From the Pastor

What is the Spirit saying?

Dear Friends,



In Revelation 2:29 John encourages the churches to “The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.” As United Methodists we seek to do this by focusing on the testimony of Scripture, through the testimony of those from Church history, by the testimony of scientific discovery, for our own personal relationship with God. We get ourselves in trouble if we find ourselves holding on too tightly to any one of these sources of spiritual information.

The Holy Scripture has been useful to the spiritual lives of countless generations of people. It is the record of how people have experienced their relationship with God and interpreted that relationship through the lens of many generations, cultures and lived experiences. These cultures and lived experiences are in some ways similar to our own and in many ways very different. Their understanding and experiences of God are seen changing over time as their world views also changed and as human knowledge expanded. The Bible is made up of many types of literature: poetry, history, sermons, stories, legislation and ritual—all expressing a part of the truth God had revealed to them. God continues to use their experiences and understandings to help us understand our own. This is why the Bible continues to play a central place in our faith today.

Since the Biblical cannon closed, the faithful have continued to experience rich relationships with God. Some we remember as the desert fathers and mothers, and we are still inspired by their faith and wisdom. We still have the writings of the Nicene and Anti-Nicene Fathers, and their debates about their understandings of the Trinity still influence our thinking today. There were the Latin Doctors of the Church like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, whose ideas continue to shape the theology of the western church. As Protestants we cannot forget the leaders of the Reformation and their willingness to risk their lives for new understandings of the Christian faith. Then there are those of the past generation like Bonhoeffer, C. S. Lewis, and Merton. Today we have not only European male experiences, but we have a variety of voices from both genders and many cultures and classes from all over the world. All are important to our understanding of God, especially those whose experiences are different from our own. We gain much by reading about their lived experiences with God and how that shaped their personal understanding of God and what the Bible meant for them in the times they lived.

The way we understand how the world operates also has influenced the ways we understand the Holy Scripture. The universe that God has created keeps expanding for us. With space telescopes we know of worlds beyond our wildest dreams. Through electron microscopes and other technological advancements we have seen who we are with greater complexity, and this effects our understanding of God and our relationship with God. We have a better understanding of human biology and physiology. We are growing in our understanding of the workings of the human brain, our mind and the human soul. All of this causes us to look at the universe

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April Lectionary



April 5 — Passion/Palm Sunday Liturgy of the Palms

Matthew 21:1-11 Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11 Matthew 26:14–27:66
or 27:11-54

April 12 — Easter Day

Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-18
or Matthew 28:1-10

April 19 — Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:1-4a, 22-32 Psalm 16
1 Peter 1:3-9 John 20:19-31

April 26 — Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23 Luke 24:13-35



Scripture of the Month

For April the special *Scripture* is:

“Now on the first day of the week . . . they came to the tomb . . . They found the stone rolled away . . . Two men stood by them in shining garments . . . and they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!’”

Luke 24:1-5



Short Sayings

— My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.

Former atheist C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity

— I am convinced the greatest act of love we can ever perform for people is to tell them about God’s love for them in Christ. *Billy Graham, 1918-2018*

— We can only see a short distance ahead, but we can see plenty there that needs to be done.

Alan Turing in his article, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” — 1950

Submitted by Bob Erb

“What is the Spirit saying?”

Continued from page 1

differently, and also effects the ways we understand what was written in the scripture and the need to find new ways to express these realities. All truth is related and helps us gain more clarity about our own experiences of God.

Our personal experiences of the Divine are an essential part of our spiritual journey. The biblical testimony, historical testimony, scientific testimony all help to bring clarity to what we experience. They point us to what is possible. They show us that our own struggles with God are not unique but part of the on-going human experience with the Holy. Your experience adds to the testimonies of those who have gone before, and the clarity you are able to find will make it easier for your children and future generations to grow in their personal relationship with God. Your personal way of understanding God is important, and the scripture, the history, and the science gives you context and a way to deepen your own understanding and appreciation of what God has done in the world and continues to do through your life. So explore your faith: apply the Scripture to your lived experiences, use how the fathers and mothers of the faith applied scripture to their own, utilize new technologies and develop new understandings of the universe to broaden your understanding of scripture. This is how we understand what the Bible is really saying to us.

Blessings, Pastor Michael Johnson

SCIENCE SAYS THAT WE NEED AT LEAST 4 BASIC ELEMENTS TO SURVIVE.

1. Water
2. Air
3. Food
4. Light

AND LOOK WHAT THE BIBLE TELLS US ABOUT JESUS.

1. I am the Living Water
2. I am the Breath of Life
3. I am the Bread of Life
4. I am the Light of the World

SCIENCE WAS RIGHT, WE NEED JESUS TO LIVE.

Submitted by Bob Erb

Thoughts . . .

“Sheltering in place” . . . Now there’s a phrase that I never thought would become part of my everyday conversations. Life has changed, and we can only pray that “the new normal” will return to “the old normal” sometime soon.

I was going to talk about God as “committed self-offering” this month. But I have some other thoughts that I should get out of my heart and maybe into yours. This is certainly a horrible time for this country and the world, and I find myself thinking about what God is thinking. There are some Christians who might believe that Covid-19 is God’s punishment for a world gone awry. I don’t believe that. I think that God allows things to happen, but I don’t believe God punishes. I have to admit, I used to believe that, but the more I learned about the true nature of God, that belief went away.

So then you might ask — what is the true nature of God? I’ve learned that there are many words that can be used to describe God. I start with three words — love, grace and forgiveness. God is love, unconditional love, in the purest form of the word. Love is why God made us in the first place. I believe that he made us for relationship with him. It seems that pretty much all of life is wrapped up for relationship — with God, with family, with friends, with community.

God is grace and shows grace every time we do something we shouldn’t. And that includes praying only when something goes wrong in our lives. Prayer is for every minute of every day. And hopefully for individual devotion time. That takes a little more commitment. Every time God hears us pray, even if it’s only a sentence prayer, he’s glad we asked. It was described to me once as a parent who has a rebellious child, and surprises the parent with a request for help. A parent who values interaction with a rebellious child is always glad the child asks. I believe God is like that. Always glad we asked. That’s grace.

Forgiveness—that’s a little tougher. When we’ve been hurt, it’s tough to forget and go on like it never happened. Sometimes it’s tough just thinking about forgiving someone. Do I dare say, when I’m trying to forgive someone, sometimes I think, “this is a time for SuperGod!” And then God shows up and helps me remember good times and happy times and close times with the person who did the hurting. And then I usually cry and it’s done . . . I forgive. It’s not easy but it’s so worth it.

During this Covid crisis, I believe God is watching with love and grace and taking it all in. I hope he’s thinking . . . they’re doing pretty well. They’re following the rules and guidelines and they’re helping each other. They’re doing the best they can. *Happy Easter!*



April Birthdays

Kim Heit	1
Linda Gular	3
Bob Hepp	15
Rolf Oesterlin	16
Tom Loane	18
Michael Dorrin	28

April Anniversaries

No Anniversaries.



Jazzercise Classes Tai Chi Classes



While we’re sheltering in place this month, contact Maggie Horosky at 610-343-1343. For questions about Tai Chi. Contact Beth Boyle at 913-233-6625 for questions about Jazzercise.

**Valley Forge United Methodist Church
Administration Board Meeting via E-mail
Minutes
March 23, 2020**

Reports received from: Glenn Davis, Tom Davis, Noel Turner, Bob Erb, Adam Davis, Patty Davis, Robin Coroniti.

Patty Davis led brief devotions. She said, “Wash your hands, don’t touch your face . . . and PRAY!” Minutes of February 24 were not approved.

OLD BUSINESS: None reported.

FINANCE: Noel stated that an audit of the Trustees account was completed, and everything was found to be in order. The finance report from Noel, for the end of February, 2020, shows there was an actual surplus of \$786.00 for the year. Reporting from Tom Davis shows, as of March 23, 2020, the Trustees balance is \$407,385.00 of which \$361,366.00 is in the Vanguard account.

SPRC: Robin reported, that on March 11, 2020, the SPRC met with the District Superintendent, the Rev. Dawn Taylor-Storm. The meeting was to introduce the committee to our new pastor, David Piltz. David currently serves Holmesburg United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. SPRC has a copy of Rev. Piltz’s CV and is happy to share it upon request. The transition will be as follows:

June 21, 2020—Rev. Mike Johnson’s last Sunday in the pulpit.

June 28, 2020—Transition Sunday. Speaker TBD.

July 5, 2020—Reverend Dave Piltz begins.

UMW: No report.

UMM: On March 12th, we requested Sparks Cleaning do an EPA-approved (for Coronavirus) disinfectant cleaning of both buildings which was completed March 14th. Between cleanings, Glenn will be spraying an approved product on horizontal surfaces. Sparks has been directed to do an approved disinfectant cleaning weekly (on Saturdays) until further notice. A VFUMC clean-up day is still planned, but might be delayed given current circumstances.

EDUCATION: Bob Erb announced that he will not be able to continue teaching Sunday School, effective immediately. (Pastor Mike will be taking over the Sunday School.) Bob also announced he will no longer be the Lay Member to the Annual Conference, and therefore, would also resign as a member of the SPRC. He also noted that Doretta Erb would be resigning from the Nominating Committee. The Board will need to discuss possible replacements.

OUTREACH: No report.

FELLOWSHIP: No report.

PASTORAL: Pastor Mike will report in a congregational e-mail.

NEW BUSINESS: Jazzercise has cancelled classes until further notice. They have requested VFMC for financial relief on the rental of the Reeve building, a motion by Adam that was seconded and passed by the Board via e-mail. There was no opposition. Rent will resume once classes start back up.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 27, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Patty Davis will be handling the devotion, and Robin will run the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

GD

APRIL, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
		<p>Please follow Pastor Mike's sermons each Sunday on Facebook (Friends of Valley Forge United Methodist Church). Please follow Pastor Mike's mid-week Bible study on Facebook (Friends of Valley Forge United Methodist Church). Sermons and Bible study notes also will be e-mailed to everyone from the church office. Sermons are e-mailed on Saturdays; Bible study notes are e-mailed on Mondays.</p>				
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Palm Sunday			Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
					<p>Jazzercise: Monday-Thursday at 6:15-7:15 p.m.; Friday & Saturday at 9-10 a.m. Choir—Julia Rich Tai Chi—Maggie Horosky</p>	