

**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*

## Whose Sin?

Dear Friends,



“As *Jesus* walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.’” (*John 9:1-3*)

When there is a pandemic and the angel of death moves through the land, we often look around and ask, “Who sinned?” We always seem to look for someone to blame. King David blamed himself for his prideful census. Pharaoh refused to take any responsibility and hardened his heart as plagues rocked Egypt. Even with the present pandemic, I have heard it blamed on the Chinese, the LGBTQIA community or the slowness of the president. The truth is that none of these are to blame for effects of a virus that continues to evolve. Viruses are some of the oldest and the most plentiful forms of life on this planet. This is not the first virus to have ventured into the human biome and it will not be the last. It is a naturally reoccurring event that has happened over and over since the world was created and filled with life.

The Coronavirus is not caused by God’s anger over our sinful behavior nor anyone else’s. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned.” We love to fix blame, because then we can often free our responsibility to respond to their need, by thinking they had brought it upon themselves. When HIV-AIDS was devastating the world, little was done at first because it was labeled “the gay disease” and was said to be God’s anger poured out upon that community. But actually it was another virus that evolved to enter the human biome. A virus, like this one that we did not have any immunity against. Many said it was their own fault they died. It was because of their sins. But the truth was that this was where it was first noticed in the human population. As it devastated much of the world it was very much a very human disease that did not discriminate according to sexual orientation. Who sinned to cause this disease? No one, but at times our response was very sinful, devoid of the compassion of the people of God.

The reason God allows these things to happen is so the world might see “the works of God revealed.” It is in times of disaster that we are called upon by God to be at our best, so that the world might see the hands of God’s love. This has been true all through human history. So when gay men were dying, shunned by most of the world afraid that they might contract this deadly disease, God’s people did what they had done during the plagues of the past. Gracious Godly people ministered to those afflicted so that they would not have to die alone. Generous Godly people provided for them, cooked and cleaned for them. Holy saintly people prayed with them and comforted them and buried them with respect and honor. In the midst of a very frightening pandemic, God’s works were revealed, sometimes through the church, but often in spite of the church.

During this time, when so many lives are at risk, don’t waste your time trying to find out who to blame, instead look for the works of God to be revealed, and rejoice! God’s works are revealed when funds are provided to keep food banks

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# May Lectionary



## May 3 — Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47 Psalm 23  
1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10

## May 10—Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 7:55-60 Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16  
1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14

## May 17 — Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:8-20  
1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21

## May 24 — Ascension Sunday

Acts 1:6-14 Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35  
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 John 17:1-11

## May 31 — Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b  
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 John 7:37-39

## Short Sayings

— G.K. Chesterton once said it is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Alas, it is worse than that. When they stop believing in God, they believe in anything.

*Malcolm Muggeridge, on loss of faith*

— The tragedy and comedy of fallen humanity is that we have such a laughable view of ourselves: one that would aspire to tell God who and what he must be.

*Carl Trueman  
(Professor at Westminster Theological Seminary)*

— Don't stumble over something behind you.

*Anonymous*

*Submitted by Bob Erb*



## Scripture of the Month



For May the special *Scripture* is:

*“Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.*

*O my soul, you have said to the Lord,*

*“You are my Lord,*

*My goodness is nothing apart from You.’*

*As for the saints who are on the earth,*

*“They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight”*

*... O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance*

*and my cup; You maintain my lot.*

*... I have set the Lord always before me;*

*Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;*

*My flesh also will rest in hope.”*

*Psalm 16:1-2, 3, 5, 8-9*



## “Whose Sin?”

*Continued from page 1*

working for those now out of work. It is revealed through those who run their sewing machines to make face masks, to slow down the virus. It is revealed through phone calls so others do not feel so isolated and alone. How can you use this time to reveal the works of God? Who can you write? Who can you call? How can you keep others safe? How can you share the hope of the gospel with others by your positive spirit?

If there is any sin in a pandemic, it will be in our response, during and after. Sin is closing the door to need. It is choosing not to help when it is in our power. It is blaming others for something most of us have very little control over. God calls us to be the children of God. God calls us during times like these to show forth our higher selves. Be open to what God may invite you to do. Have an expectation that God is going to need you to share some of His love with someone not feeling too loved at the moment. Let us find ways to be gentle with one another and forgiving of one another, for in this way the world will see the Spirit of our God hovering over the chaos of this viral disruption. Keep safe. Feel loved.

*Blessings, Pastor Michael Johnson*

**Thank you . . .**

Many thanks to all the ladies of the church who so quickly stepped up to provide meals for St. Mary's Shelter for May 11th to 15th. Some of the ladies will be providing cooked meals, while others have made very generous cash donations. I know the Shelter will be very appreciative.

*Patty Davis*

**Easter Flower Dedications****In Memory of . . .**

*Major Robert W. Johnson  
Howard & Janie Oliver,  
given by Bishop Peggy & Rev. Michael Johnson*

*Betty & Ed Scholtz,  
given by Linda & Bob Gular*

**In Honor of . . .**

*Bettie Jean O'Hara,  
given by Linda & Bob Gular*

**Upper Room directions . . .**

If you depend on the Upper Room for your daily devotions, and you had a hard time with the link that was sent to everyone in an e-mail (like I did), try the directions below that worked for me.

[www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org)

When the list comes up, choose

"The Upper Room Daily Devotional Guide:  
The Upper Room"

This will take you to the Upper Room Bookstore. Then on the upper part of that page, there's a link that says

**"Discover more. Visit The Upper Room Website"**

When that page comes up, on the right side, about half-way down, you will see:

"May/June issue available free as downloadable pdf."

When you click on that, you'll see the issue of the Upper Room. It's red. Just click on that and print as many pages at a time as you want. The entire issue is 84 pages long, but you can print as many pages as you want at a time. Then go back when done with those pages and print the next amount that you want. Questions? Call me at 610-209-4954.

*The Editor*

**May Birthdays**

Chrissy DeMartinis	2
Tom DeMartinis	8
Terral Johnston	17
Laurie Bohl	17
Michelle Torres	18
Robin Coroniti	21

**May Anniversaries**

Frank & Sue Rechner	14
Patty & Bob Hepp	17

**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.

**Prayer List****Health Concerns**

Patrick Talbot—C. Gallis  
John DeLuca—L. Gular  
Scottie DeMartinis  
Marie Jordan—S. Jennings  
Charlotte Krutsick—L. Austin  
Jeff Austin—L. Austin  
Pat Ronk—P. Torres  
Richard McLean—L. Austin  
Meghan McLean—L. Austin  
Theo—L. Gular

Dear Friends,  
Just before Christmas, my computer's printer "passed away!" I replaced it with a sleek new wireless model which, of course, requires different size ink cartridges. If anyone has a Hewlett-Packard color printer which uses a #564 cartridge, I have 5 brand new ones that I purchased just last Thanksgiving and they have never been opened. Their actual value is \$96.00. However, if anyone can use them, your price is **FREE!!** Just let me know.

Julia Marie Rich  
610-948-5765

[CatsOfLargoLodge@aol.com](mailto:CatsOfLargoLodge@aol.com)



**Valley Forge United Methodist Church  
Administration Board Meeting  
April 27, 2020 via Zoom Conferencing**

**In Attendance:** Pastor Michael Johnson, Adam Davis, Tom Davis, Glenn Davis, Patty Davis, John Torres, Robin Coroniti, JoEllen Hippenstiel, Maggie Horosky, Steve McClellan

Pastor Mike opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of March 23rd meeting were approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Steve McClellan informed the board on website hosting choices. It was approved that the church would go with the GoDaddy premium version starting in May for \$192.00 per year. Steve will be the administrator. A discussion on the church Facebook pages was tabled for later.

**FINANCE:** The finance report from Noel, for the end of March, 2020, shows there was an deficit of \$5,467.00 for the year.

Reporting from Tom Davis shows that, as of April 24, 2020, the Trustees balance is \$468,998.00 of which \$428,007.00 is in the Vanguard account.

Maggie will be depositing funds when donations total five checks.

It was approved that the church will rescind the application for government reimbursement of church salaries and expenses. Richard Johnston has been informed.

**SPRC:** JoEllen will be requested to check the balance of the operating account on a regular basis. The pulpit transition will be as follows:

June 28, 2020 - Reverend Mike Johnson's last Sunday in the pulpit.

July 5, 2020 - Reverend Dave Piltz begins.

**UMW:** No report.

**UMM:** Buildings have been checked. No issues. Landscapers have started in maintaining the lawn. Everyone is invited to check the flower beds for weeding, etc.

**EDUCATION:** No Report.

**OUTREACH:** A motion was approved by the board via E-mail to donate \$5,000.00 to PACS (Phoenixville Area Community Services), who reported a food shortage as a result of the pandemic. This has been sent out by Tom Davis.

**FELLOWSHIP:** Shelter meals have been organized. JoEllen will be putting Upper Room booklets in the lower mailbox of the Reeve building.

**PASTORAL:** Pastor Mike has been trying to maintain connections with the congregation, and is available should anyone would like to contact him. He has graciously offered to preach on June 28th. (Technically, his last official day is June 21st). That offer was accepted.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None to report.

**NOTE: NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 26, 2020**

Respectfully submitted,  
GD



# MAY, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
		<p>Please follow Pastor Mike's sermons each Sunday on Facebook (Valley Forge United Methodist Church).                      Please follow Pastor Mike's mid-week Bible study on Facebook (Valley Forge United Methodist Church).                      Sermons and Bible study notes also will be e-mailed to everyone from the church office. <b>Sermons are e-mailed on Saturdays; Bible study notes are e-mailed on Mondays.</b></p>	6	7	8	9
3	4	5				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	<b>Mother's Day</b>					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		<b>Memorial Day</b>				
	31					

Jazzercise: Monday-Thursday at 6:15-7:15 p.m.;  
 Friday & Saturday at 9-10 a.m.  
 Choir—Julia Rich  
 Tai Chi—Maggie Horosky