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March 1, 2021

Hello, members and friends of Epworth UMC!

I don't know about you, but I am rejoicing in this beautiful pre-Spring weather. Tiny beginnings of buds on the dwarf peach tree in the backyard. Tulips in our prayer garden starting to poke up through the soil. Kids playing outside in the yards across the street from the church. Hints and beginnings.

A couple of you have asked me about a prayer practice I mentioned last year at this time, a practice known as "praying the hours." Honestly I hadn't thought of it this year, but now that you have reminded me I have begun it again. It's an ancient thing, found in the records of the very earliest churches, and practiced especially in monastic communities that would gather to pray several times during each day, based on Psalm 119:164 that says "Seven times a day I praise you," and Psalm 119:62 that says "At midnight I rise to praise you." Traditionally, each "hour" is not just prayer but a mini-worship service, with hymns and psalms and particular prayers, and is meant to be a thing done in community. I have found it an incredibly beautiful thing, though, just to read a Psalm and pray.

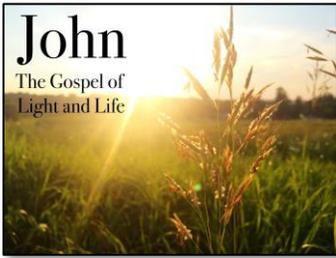
It's the deliberate stopping at weird times during the day, that I think makes it so beneficial. Personally, I don't set an alarm for the traditional prayer in the middle of the night, but some do. The traditional hours are 2am, 5am, sunrise, 9am, noon, 3pm, sunset (known as vespers), and bedtime. It reminds me of Jewish prayer practices, now and in Jesus' time and place...it's not exactly the same, but the day of a faithful orthodox Jewish person was filled with prayer. At morning and evening, at every meal, whenever hands or body were washed, at leaving and entering the home, and many other moments of life. It may sound like a lot, but it had the effect of reminding a person of God's presence and blessing even in the most ordinary, mundane parts of life. That's what I find praying the hours does, too.

When we set aside specific times to pray, and force ourselves to stop whatever we would otherwise be doing, even if just for a few moments, to focus on God, it has the effect of improving our spiritual eyesight. We find our attention more easily drawn to God's presence and blessing all throughout the day. We find our hearts lighter, more full, more aware. We find ourselves noticing things like the tiny buds on trees and tiny wildflowers among weeds and kids playing across the street. And being very, very grateful.

I am so blessed to be in ministry with all of you. Please see the attached pages for things to inform and inspire you this season. And when you are ready, come join us in worship! You are so, so loved.

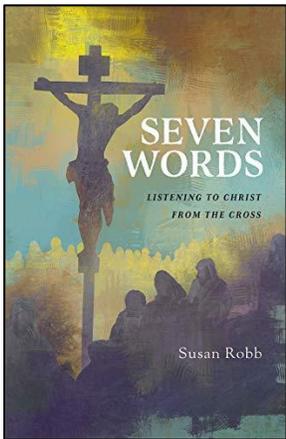
In the arms of the Good Shepherd,

Pastor Dawn



“I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me.”

John 10:14



Worship Any and Everywhere

I AM The Good Shepherd

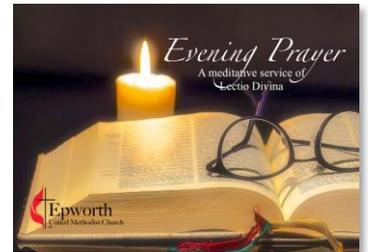
This week, we continue in the Gospel of John by talking about the I AM statements of Jesus. It's a deep and wonderful discussion, really bringing to light what John means when he says that Jesus is the Word made flesh, bringing true light and abundant life to the world.

We are worshipping in person, praise the Lord, and it is good to hear from so many of you who are looking forward to joining us after getting your vaccines. We are also worshipping on Facebook and KVLV as always, of course, for those who join us from home. Wherever you choose to worship, **YOUR CHURCH LOVES YOU!!** See you on Sunday. Oh, and we hope you will join Zoom coffee hour to catch up and share joys and concerns. Here's that phone number, for you who prefer to join by phone...the link to join by computer will be in your email:

1 669 900 6833
Meeting ID: **870 1639 8986**
Passcode: **929340**

Friday Night Prayer

Every Friday night at 7:00pm, join us via Facebook Live for a quiet time of scripture and prayer. We use beautiful music, silence, and a special way of praying with the Bible called lectio divina to open our hearts to God. The video will be posted on YouTube after it airs on Facebook, so that you can use it to pray whenever it is the best time for you.



News and Fun Stuff

“Seven Words: Listening to Christ from the Cross” by Susan Robb. A Multi-Church Bible Study for Lent

Our Lenten study continues with the wonderful book by Rev Susan Robb, who – it turns out – is a United Methodist Pastor in Texas! We meet via Zoom on **Wednesdays at 7:00pm**. There are hard copies of the book available in the church office for anyone who might like to read it, on your own or for our study. The Zoom link, phone number to connect by ordinary house phone, and other info will be sent to everyone by email. If we don't have yours, please call the church so we make sure you get the info you need to join! And absolutely anyone, from any church or none, is more than welcome. Spread the word!

Church Council Meeting Sunday March 14 After Worship

Join us on Zoom for our bimonthly Council meeting! Tell us your joys and concerns, hear reports of our different ministries, and plan together how we will be sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our neighbors in the coming season. Look for the Zoom link (and phone number, if you prefer) in your email.

March Birthdays!

Jill Pinder, 3/3
Kathy Reynolds, 3/3
♥ John McGarity, 3/6
Eunice Bailey, 3/8
Trent Kroll, 3/14
Debbie Moorhead, 3/15
Becky Miller, 3/17
Amy & Christina
Hesselgesser, 3/22
Ed Miers, 3/22
Gail St Clair, 3/22
Pat Smith, 3/23
Abby Mulcahy, 3/24
Artemis Sears, 3/24
Debbie Sherman, 3/29
♥ Fred Roeder, 3/31

♥ *We can still hear the voice and see the smile of our beloved John McGarity. We miss him so.*

♥ *Fred Roeder was the beloved husband of Carol, who passed some years ago. We are so thankful for his faithfulness and love.*

Sunday School Supplies!

As we move slowly toward returning to normal at worship, we need to re-supply our Sunday School classrooms! All kinds of art supplies (construction paper, safety scissors, glue sticks, small glue bottles, paints, crayons, pencils, nontoxic washable markers, all KINDS of stuff) are welcome.

Grief Class and Support Group

Rev Trudy Erquiaga and Pastor Dawn are restarting our grief group, and would love to include anyone who might like some good friends to talk and pray and give and receive support with. You will find it full of love and understanding, and helpful guidance as you move through your time of grief. It doesn't matter if your grief is recent, or years ago...you are welcome, and we will love to have you. Currently we have been meeting on Fridays at 1pm, but we would love to hear from you about what works best for your schedule. Please call Pastor Dawn on her cell phone at 775-671-5553 with any questions, or to let her know what might be the best day and time for you.

Easter Egg Hunt for the Neighborhood!

Your Worship team and Children and Family Ministries team would love to put on an Easter Egg hunt for our church and the whole neighborhood, on Saturday April 3! If the weather is good, we will hide the eggs all around the church grounds. If it's cold and yucky, we will hide them all over the church building. **We would love your donations of filled plastic Easter Eggs!** Please take care to make sure the goodies inside the eggs are nut-free (look carefully at labels, you'd be surprised where nuts lurk), so that kids who are allergic don't get left out. Bring them by the church office on Mondays or Tuesdays, or bring them to church on Sundays. Thank you!

Look for Ways to Love with Hands and Feet at Justserve.org

Our LDS friends manage an outstanding website that seeks to match up needs in our community with folks who can volunteer to help. There are a bunch of great things you can do, from active outdoor stuff to things you can do from home. New opportunities pop up all the time, too! Some examples:

- **Help Chuck Doucette at Top Gun** provide a free hot soup lunch for folks in need on Tuesdays
- **Assemble hygiene kits** for unhoused folks in our community
- **Donate or borrow books** at the Little Free Library
- **Write letters** to lonely residents at Homestead

Oh, AND! **If you have any need for help at home** – like, something repaired or help in the yard, or anything at all – or if you know someone who does, please call the church at 775-423-4714. We would love to invite our neighbors to participate in that sort of work through Epworth, and we will post the need (not with your home info or anything, just the church's) on JustServe.

Missions: Making the World More Heavenly

From an article by Ryan Dunn at umc.org

Beliefs about heaven are not uniform across Christianity. They may not even be uniform across United Methodism. One belief is likely constant, though: The Earth could stand to be a bit more heavenly.

In fact, all of us who regularly pray the Lord's Prayer express a desire for a more heavenly Earth:

Our Father, who art in heaven... Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth, as it is in heaven.

There is an expressed belief in that prayer that the here-and-now is important. This plane of existence matters. God's will is not merely to usher our souls to the heavenly realm—but is instead to have the goodness of God's creation experienced here on Earth.

Heavenly-minded

We, the faithful, are to be heavenly-minded beings—but not so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good. Our purpose is enacting goodness in the world around us. We are tasked with embodying heaven on Earth. So, really, being “heavenly-minded” means participating in God's work of renewing the world (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

The implications of this are challenging. For one, it implies that we will have a very low tolerance for the cycles and systems that perpetuate the brokenness of creation. Systems that allow for the continuation of starvation, racial inequality and the harming of the environment (among so many other things) represent the kinds of cycles that keep us from living into the utopian vision of Revelation 21.

Earthly good

Our calling is to be heavenly-minded disciples who get our hands dirty in planting the seeds of God's renewed creation. One of the ways we engage in that dirty work is through missions projects. Often, these projects allow us opportunity to participate in disruptions to the cycles of brokenness. Ministries that provide food to the hungry, shelter to the unsheltered, compassion to the neglected, and relief to the wearied serve to interrupt systems of perpetuating brokenness. We act as disruptors when we join with those ministries.

But this kind of mission does not supersede a more important calling: to break up the systems of injustice that perpetuate the world's disarray and movement away from God's unifying love. Missions of relief help to smooth over the rough and jagged edges of a broken creation, but working towards justice removes the factors compelling those fractures in the first place. If we truly wish to achieve the vision of Revelation 21, we must look towards breaking down the systems of inequality and inopportunity that mar the world's ability to offer all people everywhere the necessities of welcome and security. The real mission is that of eradicating worldly brokenness.

As United Methodists, we invest heavily in this work. You can join in this important mission, too. One way to engage in the mission is to learn about our work in pursuing full and equal rights for all people. Or by ensuring people have access to the necessities of life. Or by organizing interventions on behalf of those who have a hard time getting attention for their needs.

