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Happy almost-birthday church family, and friends near and far!

This Sunday is Pentecost, when we celebrate with the church around the world and across time, in nearly every known language, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. It is, hands down, my favorite church holiday. Yes, much more than Christmas and Easter. Which makes me a church nerd, I realize, but here we are. On the back page of this newsletter, you'll find more about that via an excerpt from an interview with Old Testament scholar and professor at Perkins School of Theology Dr Jack Levinson at www.umc.com. Check it out!

In the meantime, there is baseball.

Near the end of the movie "Moneyball," as Billy Beane is grappling with tough decisions and an emotional collision of success and failure, he says "It's hard not to be romantic about baseball." I've never been a huge baseball fan myself until kinda recently, so I'm still learning a lot, but he's right. And what I'm about to write might sound over-romantic. But this letter isn't about baseball. It's about the church.

See, in last night's game against the Nats, two excellent and well-loved former Cubs players returned to Wrigley Field for the first time to play against their former teammates. They both got standing ovations from Cubs fans, and a lot of welcome and affection from Cubs players. Mr Kenny Coval was telling me a similar story the other day about the Cardinals. Apparently this is normal in baseball! It happens all the time! I mean...I just...I find that incredible. And just the coolest thing ever.

It makes me think of other things, too. Like the way players of all kinds, on every team, cheer for each other when they make a great play, and stand by each other when they don't. The camaraderie of competitors as they chat together between pitches. Their playfulness with each other, on opposing teams, even while being fierce competitors. I grew up on football, not baseball, and that is a WHOLE different ballgame (heh). Now obviously it isn't always all sweetness and light; there is plenty of normal competitive frustration and some occasional poor behavior, too. But there is a culture of respectfulness and grace that is evidently nurtured and respected in baseball, and I find it all shocking, in the best way.

I'm probably not explaining it very well, but here's the thing. In this life, and in the church, we can walk through life as though it's a competition between the good guys and the bad guys. As though everyone who isn't with us is against us. As though everywhere around us are sides we need to take, and people and circumstances we need to be prepared to fight.

Or, we can stand and fall and play and work together, and love one another as Christ first loved us. We can see each other, even when our perspectives seem diametrically opposed, as fellow humans, all known and loved by God. We can be the Body of Christ in a way that is marked by humility, empathy, understanding, and grace. And in that, especially in this polarized and bitter day and age, shock everyone around us in the best way.

And thereby, bring a little heaven to earth.

Come Holy Spirit.

Pastor Dawn

“Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Acts 2:21

Worship Any and Everywhere!

Pentecost Sunday: Come, Holy Spirit

It's Pentecost!! Well, almost. We have been spending the past few weeks praying about and thinking about the way Jesus' disciples and apostles lived and worked as people of the Resurrection. This Sunday, we celebrate where it all started, enter into the mystery and power of the Holy Spirit, and celebrate the birthday of the church. See you there!

After worship, we will share in-person coffee and fellowship. After more than a year of Covid restrictions it has been very good to enjoy each other's company in person once again. We are so thankful that almost all of us have received our vaccinations, to make this possible. As we continue to observe Covid protocols, we will have masked and gloved servers to give you your refreshments, and we encourage everyone to keep as much distance as makes you feel most comfortable. The rules are a bit vague right now, so let's grant each other an extra measure of grace and kindness as we navigate it all.

News and Fun Stuff

United Methodist Women Meets Twice Per Month and You are Invited!

The first Thursday of each month is a business meeting, and the third Thursday of each month is a "Pricilla Circle", with an educational or inspiring program and conversation. Both meetings are in the Fireside Room at 1:00pm. For more info on these meetings, call Judy Pritchard at 775-217-5611 or check out www.unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Alzheimer's Association Summer Education Events

The Alzheimer's Association is offering a 4-part webinar series to teach about Alzheimer's Disease. You can also attend the classes in person 111 Sheckler Road, though space is limited. Click or copy the links below to register, or call 775-423-5121 for more information. We'll put the flyer that Linda Brown sent us in your email, too...the links in the original might work better.

- June 3 at 1:00pm Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research. Register: <http://bit.ly/AlzHealthyLiving>
- July 1 at 1:00pm 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Register: <http://bit.ly/Alz10WarningSigns>
- August 5 at 1:00pm Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia Register: <http://bit.ly/AlzUnderstanding>
- September 2 at 1:00pm Dementia Conversations (Doctor Visits, Legal and Financial Planning, & Driving) Register: <http://bit.ly/AlzConversations>



Tintabulations is Coming to Epworth!

Join us on **Sunday, June 13 at 1:00pm** for a concert by an AMAZING traveling bell choir. They are based out of Reno, and several members belong to Methodist and other churches in Reno. They are fun, funny, and extraordinarily talented, and have participated in bell choir competitions all over the country, and even internationally. You will love it! Tell your friends! If you'd like to get a sense of who they are, look for them on Facebook or YouTube, and check out their website at tintabulations.com.

May Birthdays!

Bailey
 Stritenberger, 5/13
 Ailene Brown, 5/18
 Jeanie Fahl, 5/20
 Judy Lafferty, 5/23
 Kate Pinder, 5/23
 Ernie DeCoux, 5/24
 Margaret Knox, 5/30
 Diana Greer, 5/31
 Maggie Neidigh,
 5/31

Food Pantry and HeLP Ministry Closed on Memorial Day

Epworth Community Food Pantry and our laundry and shower ministry will be closed on May 31 for the holiday.

June Special Communion Offering

On the first Sunday of every month, we take a special offering for different special projects or needs. In June our special offering will go toward paying the costs of our adult and youth delegates to Annual Conference. This year our adult delegates are Margaret Knox and Barbara McGarity, and Kenny Coval is our youth delegate. Together with Pastor Dawn, these folks lend their voice and vote to very important regional, national, and global church matters, and represent the interests and uniqueness of Fallon and Epworth in lots of important ways. Usually Conference is held in June, but this year it will be the last weekend in October, in Sacramento. Costs can be significant for travel, hotel rooms, and meals, so your help is greatly appreciated! Thank you in advance for your giving; it is YOU who enables us to be in ministry.

Classes and Groups to Grow and Learn together!

It is so good to have our classes and groups meeting again! We all wear masks and keep to the Covid protocols. Call the church office for more info about any of these great groups! 775-423-4714.

- Women's Bible Study on Mondays at 3pm in the Good News Room. We are studying "Follow" by Andy Stanley.
- Men's Fellowship meets every Monday morning at 6:30am in the Wolf Center dining room to talk and pray together.
- Adult Sunday School meets after worship on Sundays in the Wolf Center. We are studying the parables of Jesus.
- TOPS (Taking off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Friday morning at 8am for fun, info, and mutual support and friendship.
- Grief support group meets at Trinity Episcopal Church on Wednesday evenings from 5:30pm-8pm
- Al Anon, a 12 step group for the family and friends of alcoholics or addicts, meets on Wednesday mornings at 10am in the Wolf Center dining room.
- United Methodist Women meets the first and third sThursday of every month at 1pm in the Fireside Room.

Holy Spirit: Transforming the Ordinary

Excerpted from an interview with Dr Jack Levinson on the “Get Your Spirit in Shape” podcast at United Methodist Communications

Jack Levinson:

I’m gonna give you a little nerd lesson. Okay. Okay. So the Hebrew word *ruach* that gets translated wind, breath or Spirit occurs 378 times in the Old Testament and then 11 times in the Aramaic portion of the Old Testament in Daniel. So about 389 times. In the New Testament the word *pneuma* that gets translated as pneumatology or pneumonia or a pneumatic drill...that word that gets translated as Spirit occurs almost exactly 378 times in the New. So you have 800 references in the Bible to this *ruach* in the Old and *pneuma* in the New...These are the verbs that are associated with the Spirit in the Old Testament: blowing and breathing, coming upon, resting upon, passed on from one person to another, poured out, filling, cleansing, standing and guiding. So the Spirit is very active throughout the Old Testament.

You know where my favorite passage is, probably of all, is in Exodus, chapter 28, verse 3. And in the English it’s not even translated Spirit. It says, ‘God filled the artisans who would make the outfit for the high priest.’ God filled them. And it’s usually translated with skill. But the word is *ruach chokmah*—a Spirit of wisdom. A Spirit of skill. And God... They are filled with the Spirit of skill and they are able to build this beautiful tabernacle in the wilderness.

[*In the New Testament*]...Jesus has to prepare his disciples for persecution. Now, one way to prepare your disciples for persecution is to say ‘everything will be all right.’ Sort of like, Let’s just say we’re a pandemic and no one wanted to give us the bad news that there’s a pandemic. It’s not a very good way to deal with it.

So Jesus isn’t offering them a comforter, which is just a King James translation of the Greek word ‘paracletas’ which...it works. Paracletes is someone called alongside. So if someone could be called alongside to comfort you, or in other translations it’s an advocate. Someone is called alongside like a lawyer or an advocate to advocate on your behalf. But I think Jesus knew that he couldn’t give his disciples, his followers, false hope because of the kind of hardship and persecution they were going to face. So he gave them a more realistic view of the Spirit as that which would teach them and give them words when their backs were against the wall and they were about to be killed, that their witness would not end.

For many of us our expectations for being a Christian are to have a good life, to be taken care of. God is with us. But in the first century Jesus couldn’t pretend that that’s what was going to happen to his disciples. In the first century, witness, testimony, evangelism in the best sense of the word, was extremely important. And it was more important that you be *faithful* to the end than that you be *comfortable* to the end. And so the Spirit comes helping them to be faithful to the end, not comfortable to the end.

So *comforter* is really not a good translation. Jesus is preparing them to be faithful, not matter what it’s gonna cost them. And that’s something we need to hear because, I think, we’ve associated Christianity with well-being, Spiritual wellness, physical wellness, emotional wellness and economic wellness. And that was not what Jesus was preparing his disciples for.

Pentecost is not ‘let’s go to church and wear red.’ Pentecost is, let’s be witnesses, let’s let the Spirit equip us to be really good witnesses to the word used, the mighty acts of God or the praiseworthy acts of God is the word that’s used.

How can we as people of faith be vibrant—give vibrant testimony to the praiseworthy acts of God? That’s really what Pentecost is for.

To read or watch the whole interview – there is some really interesting stuff in there that we didn’t have room for here! – go to www.umc.org, click on “learn more” right on the home page photo that says “Celebrate”, and then you’ll see the link to the interview.