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May 4, 2021

Hello church family!

Somewhere deep in my bones, there is some kind of as-yet-unnamed and undefined attraction to the spiritual connection between food and faith. Between growing and/or cooking food, and God. I'm not sure when that started, because it wasn't always there (or at least, I didn't always notice it), but it's grown stronger over the years.

I remember back in seminary, in a class on meditative prayer, we were asked to write a short paragraph describing a moment from the previous day, focusing on the senses: what did we see, hear, smell, feel, taste in that moment? The moment need not be special, our instructor told us, in fact the more ordinary the better. So I described making lunches for my kids in the rush before school, something I did without thinking every weekday. It was the most mundane thing I could think of; unlike some parents, I didn't take any particular pleasure in it or feel any particular way about it. But in the describing of it, and in the reading of it out loud to my prayer partner in class the next day, I found myself astonished by the presence of God. Like a bright, warm flood of light, I was brought to tears and thought, *how had I not noticed this before? How had I been paying so little attention?* That moment may have been the beginning of my noticing this connection between food and God, though I can promise you, friends, **any** moment when we pay careful and prayerful attention we will find the presence and power of God in it.

Anyway, there is something that has been forming itself in my own ministry around this. Something around meals together, and neighborhoods, and home, and welcome, and history, and health, and sacrament, and the real meaning of holiness. First Covid and then cancer treatment have created very annoying obstacles to experimenting and enacting anything around this with you, but still it has been percolating. And then, just a couple of weeks ago, a beloved church member – who doesn't know any of this – handed me a book she no longer needed, called "The Frugal Gourmet Keeps the Feast", which is a cookbook of Biblical foods AND full of stories about the connection between food and faith!

It's a sign, I think.

I didn't know anything about the Frugal Gourmet before this very morning. Probably many of you already know this, but he was a United Methodist minister! He considered his ministry to be all wrapped up in cooking and eating together, and both his books and his TV show were peppered with historical and Biblical references. I feel as though I've discovered a long-lost brother.

**“Comfort, oh
comfort my
people,”
says your God.
“Speak softly
and tenderly to
Jerusalem,
but also make it
very clear
That she has
served her
sentence,
that her sin is
taken care of—
forgiven!
She’s been
punished
enough and
more than
enough,
and now it’s
over and done
with.”**

Isaiah 40:1-2, The Message

Now, I am not a great cook. Far from it. I am a passable cook, who nevertheless loves cooking and sharing food. (The other day, Dennis was looking for a personalized recipe book for me as a Mother’s Day gift, and he proposed naming it “Dawn’s Delights and Honest Attempts” which I thought was hilarious and fully endorsed. I’m giggling here, just thinking about it.) Maybe you are not a great singer, but nevertheless love to sing. Or maybe you are a clumsy sort of wood worker, but still love to make things. Or an imperfect parent, who desperately loves their kids. Thankfully, God does not require us to be perfect, but rather uses our honest attempts to lead us into the messy imperfection of joyful, abundant life.

Pay attention this week, friends. To the smallest, most mundane moments and imperfect people. In doing so, you might discover a new joy...and you will most definitely find our living, loving, laughing God rejoicing in you.

Thankful for God’s steadfast love and abundant blessings,

Pastor Dawn

P.S. Very sadly, Rev. Jeff Smith’s legacy is tarnished by accusations of sexual abuse from when he was a young man. When it came to light in 1998, it ended his television career and his time in public life. When I first read about that, I wasn’t sure I could rightly use or enjoy his book after all. But then I remembered perspective from a counselor I knew, who reminded me that the world is not divided into perfect people and monsters. Human beings are flawed, sometimes catastrophically so. And capable of great good, and great faith, too. We are complex creatures.

Worship Any and Everywhere!

Living the Resurrection: Comforters

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians, he was suffering. He was in jail somewhere, though it’s not clear where. And yet, the tone of the letter is sweet and confident, encouraging and comforting. He repeatedly expresses gratitude to God and to the church at Philippi for the “gifts” they had sent him. He claims this present suffering as something God continues to use for good. And he encourages the church that they need not worry about anything, and can hope and rejoice, because the Lord is near.

In Henri Nouwen’s “Wounded Healer”, he writes that God uses the things we struggle with as a source of compassion and comfort to others. Paul certainly shows that in his life, in powerful ways. As you prepare your heart for worship on Sunday, you might like to read and pray with Paul’s letter to the Philippians, and see where God might draw your attention or touch your heart.

After worship this week, we will share a time of snacks and fellowship out on the front lawn. A bit of a sort of Mother's Day garden party. Because of this, we will not have our usual Zoom coffee hour. Hope you can join us!

News and Fun Stuff

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

National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 6

Join us at the Laura Mills Park gazebo on Thursday May 6 from noon til 1:00pm to pray together for our community and our country. The theme of the day is "Lord, pour out your love, life, and liberty", inspired by 2 Corinthians 3:17 "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This is the 25th anniversary of the NDOP in Fallon. Hope to see you there.

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.

United Methodist Women Meets May 6 at 1pm

We are so glad to meet again after a long hiatus! Join us to learn what UMW is doing in our community and around the world, participate in nation-wide Bible studies and education events, and explore new ways we can love and serve the Lord. UMW is one of the oldest and most effective service organizations in the world. We will meet on Thursday May 6 at 1pm in the Fireside Room.

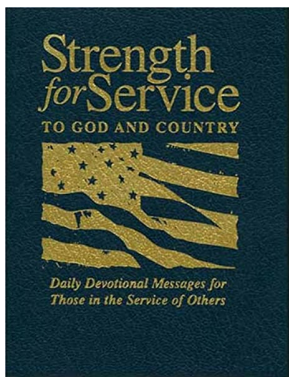
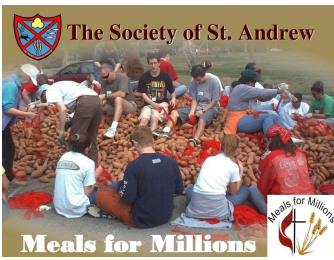
Worship meeting on Saturday, May 15 at 9:00am in the Fireside Room

Join us to dream and plan themes, art, music, and other aspects of our worship together. All are welcome!

Church Council Meeting on May 16

All are welcome and encouraged to join us for our regularly scheduled Church Council meeting after worship on Sunday, May 16. We will talk about where we are financially, hear about what's happening in our various ministries, and talk together about worship, education, and outreach this summer. We need your thoughts and ideas! Hope to see you there.

Some of the work of United Methodist Men:



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, so you can feel confident about gathering with your friends in person to learn and grow and build friendships together. 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 Thursday of every month at 1pm in the Fireside Room

United Methodist Men Provide Transportation to Those Who Can't Walk

From an article at United Methodist Men Magazine, Spring 2021, by Scott Walters

Take a newly made mobility cart to a forensics lab and you will find that it's covered with the fingerprints of men involved in the UM Men's ministry. Each one of these unique wheelchair carts are handcrafted by dozens of men and sometimes women who painstakingly handcraft each part. Volunteers fashion raw lumber and steel into sturdy, sleek and finely engineered wheelchair carts for people who are unable to walk on their own and who live in remote areas of the developing world.

Mobility Worldwide's Methodist founders had harsh environments in mind when they designed the first mobility cart in the early 1990s. Today, UM Men can be found in virtually every one of their shops cutting wood, fabricating metal, turning bolts or getting grease under their fingernails. Since production first began in a Methodist minister's garage in Columbia, Mo., over 25 years ago, mini-factories, called affiliates, have sprung up in dozens of locations throughout the US and Zambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia. But the Methodist Men are giving away more than wheelchair carts. When a leg disabled person is lifted from the roadside and placed on the seat of a mobility cart, they are blessed with independence, dignity, hope and joy in addition to mobility. Users are no longer looked down upon by passersby. They are filled with the confidence needed to convert their Mobility Cart into a mobile business to earn money for themselves and their family.

**Read more about this service project and many others in the US and around the world, as well as prayers, studies, and devotions at GCUMM.org. Click on "resources" and then look for the button on the right marked "UM Men Magazine."*