

United Methodist Church
PO Box 94
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Boyceville, WI 54725

Return Service Requested



Newsletter of Boyceville, Prairie Farm Faith and
Wheeler Grace United Methodist Churches
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February 2021

The Gleaner

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

When you read this letter, it will already be February. Even though February seems to be when the lengthening of days becomes noticeable, it is also a time that people who do not or cannot engage in winter activities feel cooped up. Perhaps this has been amplified this year with the Covid-19 pandemic.

In recent conversations people have indicated to me that they have a lot to do but find that they are bored. It reminds me of an episode of Arthur. Arthur is a series of children's books that have been animated. In the episode I am thinking of Arthur and his friends become bored after all the excitement of the fall holiday's, culminating in winter with Christmas and New Year's. They try to create a holiday to fill the gap. They spend day's arguing over what the holiday should be, when someone realizes that it is February, and they need to get busy making Valentine's cards.

With February come stores filled with boxes of chocolates in the shape of hearts, an abundance of flowers, and racks of cards devoted to love. The origins of Valentine's Day are rather murky ranging from a pagan ritual celebrating fertility with the onset of spring, birds gathering in Britain to choose their mating partners, to a pope in the fifteenth century designating the day as the Feast of St. Valentine (thought to be one of three people who were martyred on that day).

Whatever the origins of Valentine's Day, it is a day devoted to love. The Bible has a lot to say about love. Perhaps the most remembered text about love is found in the first letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth.

4 Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, it doesn't brag, it isn't arrogant, 5 it isn't rude, it doesn't seek its own advantage, it isn't irritable, it doesn't keep a record of complaints, 6 it isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth. 7 Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.
(1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a CEB)

Although often associated with weddings these days, it was written to help the followers of Christ understand how to be in relationship with each other as well as people they would encounter. If you read the verses before and after these in this chapter of the letter, you will find that it is actually about spiritual gifts, love being the greatest, the universal gift. Paul ends this chapter saying that although all else may fail but, 13" Now faith, hope, and love remain—these three things—and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13 CEB)

As we celebrate Valentine's Day and prepare for Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, remember to consider love in all you do.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Shannon

Worship

At present, all in-person worship and activities are cancelled. Weekly worship videos are available on the boycevilleumc.org website and the United Methodist Church of Boyceville Facebook page.

We will not be meeting in-person or on-line for Ash Wednesday or the Wednesdays in Lent.

Sermon by Phone

The Boyceville church is offering a new service, Sermon by Phone. Each week you can call into our Sermon by Phone telephone number and listen to the scripture reading and sermon. The phone number is 715-309-5114. This is a Menomonie number, and it is a local phone number for Boyceville and Wheeler. There is no charge to listen to the sermon. The first sermon will be available to call Sunday, December 6 after 8 am. Each service will be available till the following Saturday afternoon. If you have any questions call Marguerite at 715-643-2164.

Sermon by Phone - call 715-309-5114. The message will change each week, but the phone number stays the same.

Please continue to support your church during this time of uncertainty. Donations can be sent to:

Boyceville UMC
P.O. Box 94
Boyceville, WI 54725

Faith UMC
c/o Margie Wiseman
405 Bluff Ave. N
Prairie Farm, WI 54762

Grace UMC
P.O. Box 183
Wheeler, WI 54772



There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

My mind, my heart, my soul and spirit are in a whirl. So much is going on. The inauguration, the civil unrest and divisions in our country and our church, the global pandemic and the continued impact on our communities throughout Wisconsin, the feelings of isolation, separation, frustration, and despair. The ways people are unhappy, conflicted, and distressed. At times it feels all too much. How will we come through it all?

Martin Luther King, Jr. remembrance was good for me. In the midst of all the turmoil, this day and time for celebrating Dr. King's legacy was a true gift. Message after message focused on the man and his vision, the figure and the dedication, the crusader and the impact on history. The attention on who Martin Luther King, Jr. was, makes me ask a question that I share with all of you: who am I?

This is a form of koan – a multi-layered, simple yet complex, question leading to deep introspection and reflection – for me. It is too easy to dismiss such a question or to say it is irrelevant, but I am thinking that it may be one of the most important questions at this moment in time. "Who I am" includes my deepest beliefs and yearnings, my values and sense of ethics and morality, my relationships, my dreams, my actions, my priorities, my treatment of others, my thoughts and words. "Who I am" is my fundamental understanding of my identity and purpose. It is no small question.

There is an added dimension to this question for members of the body of Christ. If we are truly "in Christ" and Christ is fully "in us," then the question gets both easier and harder. The easy part is that "I am a Christian." The hard part is truly discerning and understanding what this means. We spend way too much time judging who else is acceptable or not, and too little time reflecting on our own inadequacies. It is God's grace that makes us acceptable; nothing else. We may say "yes" or "no" to God's grace, but beyond that our place in the body of Christ is God's doing, not ours. As long as we fully understand that God's acceptance of us does not make us better than others, we live fully in that grace. When we waste our God-granted blessing to judge and curse others we prove that we don't understand.

Richard Rohr, in his wonderful book *Falling Upward*, says, "Like any true mirror, the gate of God receives us exactly as we are, without judgment or distortion, subtraction or addition. Such perfect receiving is what transforms us." This echoes John Wesley's lifelong exploration and discovery of God's grace, providing the motivation for his constant question, "And how is it with your soul?" We often gloss over Wesley's meaning in this phrased question, answering "How are you doing?" rather than how it is with our soul. Wesley's probing question was also a koan of sorts, and its basis was accountability: how well are you living God's grace with integrity? How well are you sowing, harvesting, and spreading the fruit of the Spirit? How well are you using your spiritual gifts to spread scriptural holiness wherever you walk? How do you offer Christ to others through your words, actions, and intentions? Where have you consciously and correctly refrained from doing harm? Where have you done well as a faithful witness to Christ's love and God's grace?

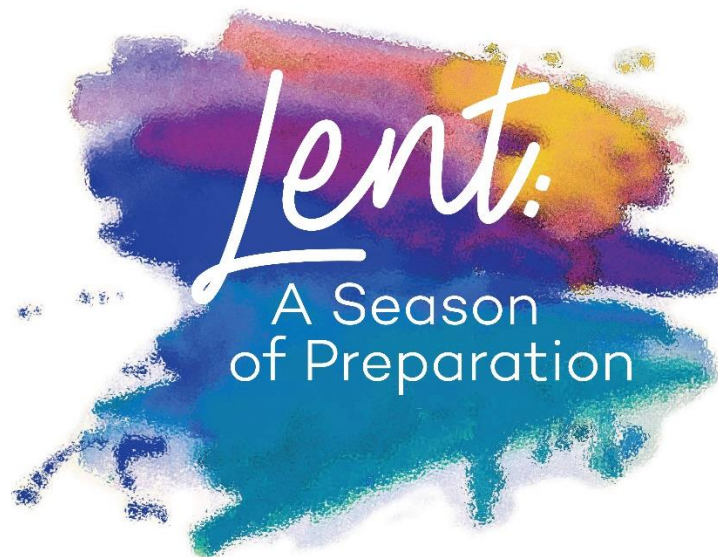
The beauty of this depth of engagement is elegant and sublime: if Christians will commit to doing all the good they can in all the ways they can, there will be no time left over to do harm. We may answer the question "Who am I?" by stating what we do for a living, what sports team we support, what political party we join, what we think about a key issue – and all of these are pieces in

our puzzle – but the foundation of our identity in God is Jesus Christ. We are members of the body of Christ. We are interconnected fibers and sinews of the incarnate Christ in the world.

But today more than ever it is important that we not confuse Christian kindness, love, and grace with being nice or weak. A strong Christian witness is essential in our day. As the incarnation of Christ, we must say no to violence, no to destruction, no to selfishness, no to oppression. As witnesses to God's grace, we must fight for peace, justice, equity, healing, and redemption. I close with an invitation to use the Prayer of St. Francis as a devotional focus for these troubled days of 2021. There is great wisdom and great potential in these words. I pray you make them your own:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung



The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. **We will not be meeting in-person or on-line for Ash Wednesday or the Wednesdays in Lent.**

NewsLetter DEADLINE

Gleaner Deadline

Gleaner news is due Tuesday, February 23rd. Please contact Tammy Nelson at 715-505-2657 or rsmnelson@hotmail.com with your news. Thanks. ☺

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Samantha Christian Pat Schoonover
Chloe Howey Jackie Vos
Jeanna Hollister Parker Knutson
Jean McIntyre Irene Schmidt
Family & friends of Angie Thomas
Victims of Violence and Natural Disasters
Our shut-ins & those in nursing homes

Virgil Schoonover
Shirley Christopherson
Doris Herdahl

Food Harvest Ministry
Honduras Mission

A reminder: Please remember our shut-ins with calls and cards.

Please keep our prayer list current by letting Pastor Shannon or Tammy know when names should be added or removed.

Parish Birthdays and Anniversaries in February

1 - Bridgett Kahl
2 - Ashlee Hanson
2 - Jeremy White
10 - Gilbert Krueger
11 - Kyle Smith
15 - Linda Miller
15 - Jerod Nelson
15 - Doreen Olson
16 - Gary Knutson

17 - Frank Dummer
20 - Cory Dunn
20 - Katie Kegen
23 - Jean McIntyre
25 - Glenise Thomas
27 - Julie Hiben
28 - Ray Cherney



Weekend Meal Bags

Boyceville is scheduled to deliver the weekend meal bags from WestCap to the school on Wednesday, February 17th. No packing of bags, just delivering. Bags need to be picked up from WestCap and delivered to the middle school and elementary school between 1-2 pm. Contact Marguerite if you would like to help.

Food Harvest Ministry News

The next Food Harvest Ministry distribution will be from 8-10 a.m. on Saturday, February 20th at 1002 Main St., Boyceville, WI. Items will be boxed and ready for pick up. Volunteers are needed to unload the truck and pack boxes on Thursday, February 18th.

The Coat Closet

The Coat Closet is open by appointment only this year. Please contact Sonya Zebro at 715-308-8435 if you are in need of winter outerwear or would like to make a donation.

Faith United Methodist Church News for February



- To Roger and Anita Smith for a monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Roger Miller.
- To Gary and Pat Frisle for a monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Roger Miller.
- To Carol Miller for a monetary donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of Roger Miller.
- To all who faithfully support our church financially. We paid our apportionments in full.

Plans are to have worship at church starting on March 7th. Remember to wear masks and we will be socially distanced.

Administrative Council will meet March 12th at the church at 7:00 p.m.

Faith United Methodist Women

UMW will meet Friday, March 5th at 1:00 p.m. There often was conflict with the Food Pantry delivery on Thursday, so we decided to hold meetings this year on Friday.



Our deepest sympathy to Pastor Dora and family for the passing of Marcos on Saturday, January 16th. He will be cremated.



Giving Giving is Love and Love is Giving February 2021

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

“God loves a cheerful giver.” Why do you give? Why do you put money in the plate? Why did you sign up for EFT? Is it to keep the lights on? Is it out of obligation? Is it because “it is just the thing you do”?

In this month of February, when consumer products turn red, chocolate, and velvety, society asks us to think about love. We give gifts to others because we love them. Could it be that we give in church (online) because of **Love**?

We are called to give to God because God loves us. We are called to give to God because we love God. We are called to give, not begrudgingly, but cheerfully! When we give, we are saying, “I love you God!” We are not saying, “Fine, here you go God.”

Why do you give? Look inside of yourself right now. Be honest. Why do you give? When the plate passes you, what goes through your mind? In this time of online giving, has your giving changed? Have you been giving more or less? More or less often? Why? Always remember, you cannot out give God!

God loves us and has, does, and will do so much for us. So, in response, we give back to the Lord. We give out of LOVE.

Rev. Krystal Goodger, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Visit the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation at www.wumf.org or [Facebook/wumf.org](https://www.facebook.com/wumf.org)
or call 1-888-903-9863

