

Bellringer

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church November 2018

From the Pastor's Desk

One of my favorite songs is about my favorite time of year: “Autumn in New York.”

The song, sung by every jazz great from Billie Holliday to Ella Fitzgerald, is really a love letter to the magic of this time of year. It exclaims that autumn is so beautiful, so magical, so wonderful, that it has the ability to transform everything, including the not-so-beautiful parts of New York into artwork.

I lived in New York for a while and I have to say that I agree with the song.

Autumn brings a strange mixture of nostalgia, blessings, and potential. It yields the harvest of seeds we’ve sown throughout the year, and braces us for colder days to come.

When life’s autumn arrives, we look back and better understand the way God led us; but we still have work to do—the best and fullest. It’s a good transition time.

“Autumn” only occurs once in the Bible. In Jude 1:12 false teachers are compared to “autumn trees without fruit,” implying that autumn should be a fruitful season, the most abundant of the year. How can we take advantage of the “autumn of life”?

Well, I think we can do that by being grateful for what God has blessed us with, being good stewards of the Creation, and helping someone in need enjoy this time of year.

If we know someone who is not attending worship, or needs to reconnect with God, fall is the perfect time to do just that.

Rev. David



Connections by Craig Myrbo

What would Jesus do? One Methodist Christian 's View on A Way Forward

Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment. He replied with a double commandment. First love God with all your heart soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

In Luke 's account, one of his listeners asks "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responds by telling a story known as "The Good Samaritan " in Matthew and Mark. Jesus states that on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophet (*see Matthew 22:35-40 ; Mark 12:28-34; Luke10:25-37*).

The Method Of Methodism is how we do theology. We examine scripture through the lenses of tradition, experience, and reason. A good question to ask is "How does this align or not align with what the scripture says about this? Keeping in mind Jesus' summary of the commandments. Is my stand or action loving of God and my neighbor?"

The United Methodist Church has been wrestling with issues surrounding human sexuality and relationships between the LGBTQ community and the Church. The United Methodist Church is divided in its approach to this issue. Some in the Church believe that homosexuality is a sin and persons who practice it are not to be allowed to serve in the ordained ministry and furthermore same sex couples cannot be married by United Methodist Ministers. Others believe that the restrictive language below should be eliminated.

According to the Book of Discipline: "The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church."

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church that was held in Portland Oregon in the spring of 2016 Church reached an impasse. The General Conference asked the Council of Bishops for a way forward past this dilemma. The Bishops appointed a Commission on A Way Forward to look at all language in the Book of Discipline (which is the governing document for the UMC) and to work on the issues. This Commission would report to the Council of Bishops. And the Council and Commission will report to the special session of the General Conference.

A Special Session of the General Conference will be held in St. Louis Missouri February 19 through 21st 2019 to consider the restrictive language in the Book of Discipline and recommend action.

In my attempt to be a faithful Christian, I want to follow Jesus. How do I love my neighbor and love God. How do I do what Jesus would do?

I will now state what I have concluded about this issue after much prayer and thought. I also have been wrestling with this issue for a long time. I have studied scripture and examined it in the light of tradition, my reasoning and my experience. I have come to believe that the language in the Book of Discipline is incompatible with Christian teaching. It violates the second great commandment and therefore the first. "How can we say we love God, who we have not seen, when we don't love those who we have seen? (a paraphrase of 1 John 4:20). The Samaritan was the outsider who helped the man. The Samaritan was the one who is held up as our example.

I do not want to be like the persons who attacked the man on the Jericho Road or like the Priest or the Levite. I do not know how the issues will be resolved but I know what I wish and pray would happen. I want the restrictive language eliminated. Period.

A Spiritual Reaction by Veronica Berry

*“And you will have confidence,
because there is hope; you will be protected and take your rest in safety.”
Job 11:18*

There are times in our lives when we face challenging experiences that cause us to lose sight of who to trust, what is real, and how to cope. Fear seeps in and we find ourselves in a state of unbelief, wanting to be in control, knowing that it's all out of our control and for a few moments we feel as if our whole world has completely changed and we have no idea of what to do.

Fear is a human reaction to the unknown. Fortunately for us, faith is a spiritual reaction that connects us with the divine power of God. Through him we can ask for his infinite love and peace to still the anxiety and tension of our minds and give us the wisdom and strength to rely on him to face all our circumstances.

This year has been one of the most stressful years I've had in a very long time. A member of my immediate family was diagnosed with a serious illness. At first, we couldn't believe it and then when the reality hit us, I could feel the fear trying to paralyze my mind and body so I couldn't breathe. When I had to tell others about it, I felt as if I was being choked by the darkness and negativity of what could happen. In spite of all this, I had to find the strength to take a stand and become a health advocate, do research on what doctors to see, get second opinions, and ask the right questions.

The only thing that kept me sane and centered was my faith and trust in God. I knew that if I allowed my physical reaction to guide my thinking, unnecessary stress and tension would cause more problems and irrational outcomes. I had to immediately go with my spiritual reaction which was pray for guidance, divine healing, and the wisdom to know that everything was going to be fine. I became a prayer warrior for my family and gave it all to God. Through him, we were guided to the best doctors, nurses, and staff. He even sent kind and caring strangers who gave us rides to the hospital for appointments. Two of them just happened to be pastors who prayed with us before we made difficult decisions on what treatment to follow. Every day we saw glimpses of God in the healing process and by his grace now everything is going well.

Through all of this, I saw the goodness of people I didn't know who were willing to share their wisdom, faith, and positive energy knowing all would be well. I saw the compassion and concern in my boss' eyes who had no problem in giving me the time off I needed to attend all the doctor's appointments. I listened to the wisdom of my mother when she gave me simple prayers to use for healing and spiritual surrender to God. I am so grateful that God touched so many people to be kind and loving to us when we needed it the most.

There is no presence, no power, other than God. He is our protector and safety net. He is our divine source that gives us the power to face any situation and meet our challenges with a sense of peace and knowledge that all will be well. A spiritual reaction can electrify your life with a divine spark of love, strength, and wisdom that will become a testimony of your everlasting faith.

Have a wonderful and Happy Thanksgiving and love and enjoy your family, loved ones, friends, and kind strangers you have yet to meet.

Thanksgiving prayer for farmers

Thank you, God, for farmers!
For those people who have touched the soil,
who have known it intimately,
the feel of it in their fingernails,
the taste of it, the way it smells after the rain.
For those who have cared for animals,
touched them, heard their cries,
nurtured them carefully.
Being a farmer can be a hard life,
the bills don't match the income,
the weather doesn't co-operate
or the markets are fickle.
Be with farmers, Lord,
and particularly the farming families in our church,
in hard times as well as good.
Help us to create a society where farmers are respected,
and compensated for their work fairly.
Help us to personally be thankful for their work,
that sustains us in the most basic way possible.

We pray for farmers and communities around the world
where the rain did not come,
or the rain came too hard, or too late,
for those whose soil is depleted,
or who cannot afford the cost of production.
So many in the world are hungry today
because of a poor or non-existent harvest,
or because war interrupted the harvest.
Open the hearts of the world, open our hearts, minds and doors
to be generous, to share the bounty that you give us.

All of our farming relies on the good earth,
and we pray for the earth today too.
Help us take care of it, help us cherish it,
help us pass it on, safely, to a new generation.
Guide our governments to make wise decisions regarding the earth.
Particularly we pray for our politicians,
that you would open their eyes to the long term health of our rich land,
giving them the courage to make decisions that will benefit
all of our loved ones a hundred years from now.

We are so thankful for the beautiful home you provide for us,
for our bounteous earth, rich in soil and generous in weather,
a garden of delights for us who live here.
It's your gift, and we thank you for it.

Amen.

November 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Rummage sale donations are welcome any time. You can place them in the entryway and they will disappear into storage. If you need items picked up, contact Chuck Litweiler 244-3845.				1 6:30 Choir	2 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	3 1:00 Jerry Tenney Going-Away Party 5:00 Men's Group
4 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship 12:30 Hmong Men	5 6:00 Cub Scouts 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:30 Speak Up!	6 6:30 United Methodist Women	7 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC 6:30 Book Club 6:30 Bible Study/Dinner with Rev David	8 6:30 Choir	9 6:00 Craft/Direct Sales setup	10 10:00 Craft/Direct Sales 5:00 Hmong Women
11 Sports Sunday 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	12 6:00 Stephen Ministry 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:00 Cub Scouts	13 6:30 Trustees 6:45 Communications	14 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC 6:00 Boy Scouts	15 6:30 Choir	16 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	17 5:00 Thanksgiving Gathering
18 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	19 9:00 Jabez School Board 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:00 Cub Scouts	20 6:30 Admin Council	21 4:30 Bible Study 5:00 Listening Circle 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC 6:00 Craft Night	22 Happy Thanksgiving	23	24 11:00 Advent Decorating 5:00 Hmong Women Song Practice
25 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship	26 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 6:00 Stephen Ministry 6:00 Boy Scouts 6:00 Cub Scouts	27 6:30 Outreach & Missions	28 4:30 Bible Study 5:00 Police/Resident Circle 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC	29 9:00 Copy & Fold 6:30 Choir 6:30 Charge Conference at Asbury UMC	30 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	State of the Church Meeting Between first and second services

November Birthdays

Frances F.	11/5
Linda L.	11/5
David M.	11/7
Steve L.	11/9
Helen J.	11/10
Gayle T.,	11/11
Joan >	11/12
Mailao L.	11/15
Vincent W.	11/21
Thai X.	11/25
Carol T.	11/27
Aron Van P.	11/29

Anniversaries

Chuck & Okhwa L.	11/12
Cyndy & Ron H.	11/25

These are the dates that are in the database. If you find that your name is not included with the Birthdays or Anniversaries, please call Matt Treadaway.

Please take a moment to remember our homebound members

Linda J. (B-day 7/11)
c/o Avalon Assisted Living
2875 Fish Hatchery Rd, Rm 11
Fitchburg, WI 53713-3177
608-274-4350

Justin K. (B-day 12/13)
1601 Wheeler Rd #208
Madison, WI 53704-7056
608-416-5343

Ralph S. (B-day 8/6)
4218 Green Ave
Madison, WI 53704-1124
608-244-6172

Christian Education Opportunities

Anyone interested in learning about God's love is invited to join any of these classes at any time.

Early Adult Sunday School meets on Sundays at 8:30 in the Youth Room.

Sunday School for All at 10:45 The Adult Class meets in the Choir Room. The Children's Class meets in the Youth Room.

Wednesday Bible Study begins at 4:30. This is an ongoing study of the Old and New Testament.

The Youth Group meets Wednesday and Friday. Please check the Bellringer and Bulletin for activities, topics and times.

Dinner with Rev. David will continue on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 in the Parsonage.

Mid-Week Meditation The call in number is 1-641-715-3836. The access code is 486727.