

Bellringer

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church

August, 2015

From the Pastor's Desk

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus and Friends:

As you read this article in the company of family and friends, I hope you are enjoying the blessings of this beautiful summer!

Today, I would like to reflect on the importance *of sharing our faith with other people*, in order to help them to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Sharing the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ explains what God has done in Christ for us. I believe that sharing our Christian faith is the most relevant duty for Christians! It is through the sharing of our Christian faith that we come to the knowledge of Christ. This journey of faith has blessed our family, through Sunday school, spiritual prayer groups and other ministries of our congregation that help us grow in our faith.

The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near him". Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading prophet Isaiah. "Do you understand what you are reading?", Philip asked. "How can I" he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. (Acts 8:29-31 -NIV).

It's through faith sharing that the Church continues to grow in every part of the world! Praised be the Lord! I remember the words of wisdom spoken by my spiritual father when he said to me, "Raphy, you really become a disciple of Christ and not only a church member when you have won another person for the Lord." I took his advice very seriously. Sharing my faith is a very important part of my life. Our job is not to convince people, but to share our faith in Christ with them, and trust the Holy Spirit to do the rest.

This summer, as you have the blessing of spending some time with family and friends, I invite you to take some moments of your time to share with them the good news of salvation in Christ. You could think about something God has done. You make a difference in those who listen to you as you share with them the gospel. You'll see the work of the Holy Spirit in action as he strengthens your ministry and blesses you in the company of those who listen to your proclamation.

There is no doubt in my mind that when we share our faith with other non-believers we experience growth in our spiritual life. Also, as we touch their lives, we collaborate in the expansion of God's Kingdom on the earth. This is the Kingdom of Love, Peace and Justice for all. Remember, that when we share our faith, we are not alone in this journey. Jesus promised to be with us until the end. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples so that whenever we share our Christian faith with others, we do so in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord Jesus Christ give you wisdom to guide your journey to share the love of God with other during this month of August. Have a great summertime!

Your servant in Christ Jesus, **Pastor Rafael**

A Shift in Time by Veronica Berry

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

For the past few weeks, I have been working an early shift 6:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. Every morning, I’ve been getting up at 4:15 feeling drowsy and grumpy because I don’t have sense enough to go to bed at a reasonable time. It is so quiet you could hear a pin drop. The only sound comes from the light chirping of birds underneath my bedroom window. I’ve learned to take refuge in these quiet moments because in the silence I can slow down my thoughts and relax my mind.

The more relaxed and peaceful I become, the easier it is to get ready and face the day. Thanking God for this moment of peace while I sip my hot cup of green and lemon tea is one of my favorite rituals. It helps me realize that God is always present to guide me. I just have to slow down, be still, and listen.

Life and work moves so quickly that sometimes we feel we will never catch up. We either try to hurry through our tasks or we tackle our routine like dazed sleep walkers. Rushing leads to delays, mistakes, and damaged relationships. Sleep walking through life causes us to miss important details, swallow our feelings, and ignore the blessings that are right in front of us.

There is always time to be still and embrace God. We can let go of the hurry and ground ourselves in the silence. In the silence we can let go of fear, imperfection, and anxiety. As we relax our minds and surrender to the stillness, a calmness of spirit fills us with the knowledge that we are able to do all that is ours to do.

I am extremely grateful that I am constantly learning new ways to enjoy God. A simple thing, a shift in time, helped me find more tranquility and peace. Releasing anxiety about accomplishing all my tasks opened my eyes to see what really is the most important, to treat others with the utmost respect and kindness. We have so much more to give than our to-do lists. We are expressions of God with the ability to transform someone’s life.

God is everywhere. Unfortunately, we don’t see or feel him when we are too busy, too hurried, or too shut down. We have to make ourselves stop, be still, listen, and know who and what he is. He is our God, waiting for us to acknowledge and accept him into our lives, love him, and be open to take in his love.

Wake up! I am learning how to every day.



United Methodist Women

The next UMW meeting is Tuesday, Aug. 4 at 6:00 PM.
Dr. Bob McGrath will be giving a presentation on "Handling Stress with Vitality."
Everyone is invited to attend.

Also, the weekend of Saturday, July 18, 2015 we had our Second Craft & Direct Sales Fair and brought in \$207.50 for our church, not to mention the \$70 that was brought in from the Bake Sale & Bazaar table.

*Our sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Arlene Fike.
Arlene will long be remembered for her contributions to the women of our church.
She will be forever loved.*

Christian Education Opportunities

Early Adult Sunday School begins at 8:30 am each Sunday. The group is currently discussing “Twelve Women of the Bible”, a study which will help us see how God changed the lives of twelve biblical women.

Sunday School for All, beginning at 10:45 am each Sunday, currently on summer break, will resume September 20th.

Thursday Bible Study will move to **Wednesdays** August 12th at 4:30. The group is currently studying the Gospel of John. This study group will continue throughout the summer. Lisa Bobo is the study leader.

A new **Wednesday Bible Study** will begin September 23rd at 6:30 pm. This group will study **The Story**. Patsy McDonald is the study leader.

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

All of the above groups will begin a new study called **The Story** beginning the week of September 20th. **The Story** is a dynamic, powerful, and rewarding experience. **The Story** helps people experience Scripture in a new way. Carefully selected verses from the Bible are organized chronologically and written in the form of a novel from Genesis to Revelation. This study is for all age groups and a great opportunity for families to study the Bible together.

Anyone interested in joining any of these studies is welcome at any time. Please contact Patsy McDonald if you have any questions.

The Story

A new Bible Study program, called The Story, will begin the week of September 20th. In preparation for the study, please offer up prayers for our Church using the Prayer Guide that is included in this Bellringer.

The Story is a Bible that reads like a novel. There are no verse references, and Scripture segments are seamlessly woven together with transition text into a single grand narrative. **The Story** helps people understand God’s Word more fully and interact with it more easily.

The Story is a tool to increase Biblical literacy, helping readers understand God’s story from Genesis to Revelation and how their own stories intersect with God’s.

The Story Church-wide study is a unique program providing up to 31 weeks of curriculum for children, teen and adult Sunday school programs. When accompanied by reading through the five age-related books (*The Story*, *The Story: Teen Edition*; *The Story for Kids*; *The Story for Children*; and *The Story for Little Ones*) the entire church can be literally on the same page for 31 weeks. This is a wonderful opportunity for families to study the Bible together.

Classes will begin the week of September 20th. Classes will be held on Sunday at 8:30 and 10:45, and on Wednesday at 4:30 and 6:30. Bible material will be provided. If you would prefer to have a small group study outside the church building, please contact Patsy McDonald.

Come and experience The Story.

The Story - 40 Days of Prayer Begins August 11

Pray that God will . . .

. . . touch our hearts with His **STORY** of love

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. [John 3:16-17 NIV]

. . . train our hearts as we share His **STORY** with one another

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people, and his incomparable great power for us who believe. [Eph. 1:17-19 NIV]

. . . transform our hearts to live His **STORY** in the world

And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him. ... This is the wonderful message He has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors. [2 Cor. 5:18b-20 LB]

Day 1: Ask God to prepare our hearts to hear His Story.

Day 2: Pray for those who will be telling The Story.

Day 3: Praise God for speaking to us through the Bible.

Day 4: Ask the Lord for guidance as we seek him.

Day 5: Thank God for our small group leaders.

Day 6: Pray that that we will be led to truth, freedom and hope.

Day 7: Confess our lack of attention to His word.

Day 8: Pray for our friends and family as we share God's story with them.

Day 9: Pray for spiritual growth in our church.

Day 10: Ask God to bless our children as they learn of His love for them.

Day 11: Thank the Lord that his written word is so accessible to us.

Day 12: Pray that we will be challenged by each week's message.

Day 13: Praise God for Jesus Christ, the ultimate expression of His love.

Day 14: Ask God for wisdom as we apply His story to our own life story.

Day 15: Thank God for those who prepared the materials for our study.

Day 16: Praise God for His Holy Spirit who guides us.

Day 17: Pray for families as they experience The Story of the Bible together.

Day 18: Pray for conviction of sin in our lives and willingness to repent.

Day 19: Ask God to protect our minds from distractions.

Day 20: Ask God to be our voice as we share our testimony.

Day 21: Praise God for the grace He has extends to His people.

Day 22: Pray for salvation for those who have not taken that step.

Day 23: Pray for physical protection of leaders and participants.

Day 24: Pray that each participant would sense God's presence.

Day 25: Pray God's blessings be upon those who lead and serve.

Day 26: Pray that we will respond to God with praise.

Day 27: Pray that we will hunger and thirst for spiritual transformation.

Day 28: Pray that we would experience deeper relationships.

Day 29: Ask God to lead us to neighbors who need Jesus.

Day 30: Pray that God will bring groups together to share The Story.

Day 31: Ask God for spiritual protection for our leaders and participants.

Day 32: Pray for a renewed desire to pursue spiritual habits.

Day 33: Pray for each person to have a servant's heart.

Day 34: Praise God for the hearts that will be changed by this study.

Day 35: Ask God to powerfully use The Story to impact our community.

Day 36: Pray that our love of God will grow.

Day 37: Ask God to maintain unity among leaders and participants.

Day 38: Pray for lasting, eternal fruit.

Day 39: Pray that guests to our church will be warmly welcomed.

Day 40: Pray that The Story will be a defining experience in our church's journey.



The Story Study begins September 20th.

Please contact Patsy McDonald or Pastor Rafael if you have questions or would like more information.

Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the **After People**.

Stephen Ministers are there:

- ... **after** the phone call you hoped you'd never get.
- ... **after** the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ... **after** the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ... **after** the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."
- ... **after** the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."
- ... **after** the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ... **after** the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ... **after** the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ... **after** you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- ... **after** your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "After People." They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support for as long after as needed.

www.stephenministries.org

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Stephen Recognition In the spirit of the Book of Acts

"Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." Act 6: 3-4

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church Certificates of Appreciation Presented to Jolieth McIntosh

In recognition of your volunteer service to our church, you chair the Worship Committee, make Jamaican Jerk Chicken for the International Ham Dinner, organize fellowship, visit homebound members, provide a welcoming attitude, offerings of poetry, and many other tasks in which few people are aware.

We hope this certificate will serve as a lasting memento of our appreciation for your continued and dedicated service.

In the name of God, Thank You!

CONNECTIONS BY CRAIG MYRBO

The Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice welcomes to Madison Rudy Lopez, Executive Director of Interfaith Worker Justice since January 2015.

Rudy López is from a small steel town called East Chicago, Ind. where he currently resides. His father was a migrant farm worker who then became a union member at Inland Steel Co. His mother was instrumental in shaping his faith which is one of the reasons he has dedicated himself to social justice and has built a career developing leaders and building power in disenfranchised communities. On Tuesday, August 4th, 7:00pm, at the First Unitarian Society of Madison, 900 University Bay Dr, Madison, WI 53705, Rudy will give his talk and interactive workshop entitled: *What Matters: Faith & Values Shaping Economic Justice*.

Rudy's talk and workshop will remind participants that, drawing on our faith and values, we already have what we need to move Wisconsin forward as an economically just society.

Our website is up! ShermanAvenueUMC.org is where to go to find out what is happening at our church!

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church is pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can now be debited automatically from your checking or savings account. Our new electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

An authorization form and a “Frequently Asked Questions” flyer are available from the church office.

A Couple of Thoughts about Prayer

UNTIL WE LEARN

Until we learn to be quiet,
we do not know the essence of prayer.
Until we learn to be still,
we do not know the secret of peace.
Until we learn to be alone,
we do not know the joy of solitude.
Until we learn to forgive,
we do not know the nature of love.

William Arthur Ward



PRAYER

Much of our praying is just asking God to bless some folks who are ill
and to keep us plugging along.
But prayer is not merely prattle, it is warfare.

Alan Redpath



Summer Musicians Wanted!

We are looking for singers and instrumentalists
for August
Please contact the church office
if you are interested in sharing your music with us

AUGUST 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>The Hmong Church picnic will be on Sunday, August 23rd at Token Creek Park. We will be at shelter #2. Please bring a dish to share for lunch. We will have service at 11:30. Please contact Neng Ya if you have any questions.</p>						<p>1 10:00 Visitation 11:00 Funeral 5:00 Men's Group</p>
<p>2 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship 6:00 Self-defense</p>	<p>3 6:15 Cadette Scouts 6:15 Daisy Scouts</p>	<p>4 9:00 ELL 12:30 Staff Meeting 6:00 UMW</p>	<p>5 6:00 Band Practice</p>	<p>6 4:30 Bible Study</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship 6:00 Self-defense</p>	<p>10 6:30 Bike Safety</p>	<p>11 9:00 ELL 12:30 Staff Meeting 6:30 Trustees</p>	<p>12 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 6:00 Hmong Ministry 6:00 Youth Bible Study</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 Youth Breakfast 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship 6:00 Self-defense</p>	<p>17 6:15 Brownie Scouts 6:15 Daisy Scouts</p>	<p>18 9:00 ELL 12:30 Staff Meeting 6:30 Admin Council</p>	<p>19 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Craft Night 6:00 Band Practice</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Picnic 6:00 Self-defense</p>	<p>24 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 Cub Scout Planning</p>	<p>25 9:00 ELL 12:30 Staff Meeting 6:30 Outreach & Missions</p>	<p>26 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice</p>	<p>27 8:00 Copy/Fold</p>	<p>28 6:00 Hmong Ministry 6:00 Youth Bible Study</p>	<p>29 4:00 Baptism setup</p>
<p>30 8:30 Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 Blood Pressure Clinic 10:45 Sunday School 11:30 Worship 12:30 Baptism Luncheon 6:00 Self-defense</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>Need A Prayer? Call Pat Bruccoleri (576-7331) or Cyndy Hoffman (513-2280)</p>				

Please take a moment to remember our homebound members
Contact Lisa in the office for current addresses: 244-0868

Linda Jungbluth
608-274-4350

Marvel Mapes
608-663-8783

Jean & Justin Kramer
608-268-9114

August Birthdays

RON H	8/1
HILDA D	8/3
JAN K	8/3
JASON V	8/4
JOHN V	8/4
LINDA S	8/5
RALPH S	8/6
CYNDY H	8/7
MARGERY S	8/8
BROOKS B	8/13
TRACY A	8/18
ETHAN B	8/24
JEAN K	8/26
JOHN K	8/28
KIMBERLEY N	8/31

August Anniversaries

CINDY & CURT V	8/16
CRAIG & DEBBI M	8/20

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