

# Bellringer

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church

March 2016

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## *From the Pastor's Desk:*

*“If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there, If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there”.*

Psalms 139:8

The reality of life is that there will be good times and hard times. There will be some long dark tunnels and some very high mountains.

It is easy to be grateful for good times. When the sun is shining, flowers blooming and birds singing, it's easy to give thanks.

On the other hand, it's not easy to be grateful when the crunch of snow beneath our feet has been replaced by the songs of birds in the trees and we have to carry a load of groceries into the house.

It takes special effort to give thanks for bad times as well as good, for set-backs as well as successes, for weakness as well as strength.

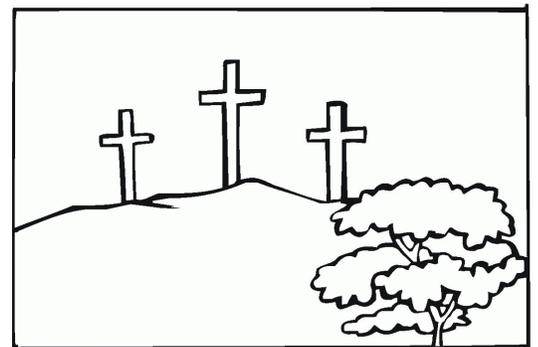
The Priest and famous writer Henri Nouwen wrote “Still, we are only truly grateful people when we can say thank you to all that has brought us to the present moment.”

If we cannot get beyond dividing our lives into that which we want to embrace and all the rest that we prefer to forget, then we will not experience the fullness of God in all of life. Perhaps God has something to say through our bad times, even when carrying groceries through the snow and the bag breaks, spilling eggs and apples onto the ground.

Looking ahead to Easter, let's see if we can look at every experience that has brought us to where we are now and trust that we have never been apart from God. God's providential care has been with us all along.

As you prepare for the celebration of Easter,  
I invite you to pray with me:

God of life,  
We thank you for the miracle of Easter.  
We pray for great joy for ourselves and all people.  
We pray especially for those who will join us for worship  
And whose lives are filled with pain, loss, or deep sadness.  
May they sense how the resurrection is a source of great hope.  
Amen.



Your Servant in Christ, **Pastor Rafael.**

## The Light of Compassion by Veronica Berry

**“Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.” Psalm 4:6**

I woke up this morning with a terrible sinus headache. I was pale and had dark circles under my eyes. I looked in the mirror and thought, ‘Wow, you look awful!’ I wanted to crawl back into bed but I knew I had to write this article. I asked God to shine his light into my mind and heart so I could write words of inspiration and share how much he loves us.

It was funny to me that the first thought that came to my mind was how certain lighting can completely change how you look at yourself. There are stores where the lighting is designed to make you look your best. You go into the dressing room, try on the clothing, and look absolutely wonderful and feel compelled to make the purchase. It’s amazing how a change in lighting can cause us to see things so differently.

How many times do we use the wrong lighting as we glare at others with snap judgements, putting them in the worst possible light? For instance, the sales person who doesn’t smile or is too slow as “grumpy and incompetent”, or the young teenager whose pants are hanging down too low is obviously a gang member or up to no good. What if we changed the bright light of snap judgements to the gentle and glowing light of compassion? That sales person who isn’t smiling today could be going through a difficult time and is doing their best to hang on and get through the day. The young man whose pants are hanging down too low could be an honor roll student who is just wearing what’s in style or could be someone who needs to know he’s worthy and accepted no matter what he looks like.

When the light of God’s face shines on us we look our best and feel his compassion and love. Compassion is key part of spirituality. Our world is in desperate need of it. We have the ability to feel what other people are feeling and the moral capacity to see them in the best light. We can experience the flow of God’s love by encouraging others, being kind, and showing them that no matter what they look like, God loves them and so do we.

Good light can make all the difference. When we dare to shine it on others, it glows back on us as well.



## **Jabez Mission Trip 2016 by Patsy McDonald**

Traveling to Liberia was not an easy task; but it was well worth the time and effort it took to get there.

Our first morning at Jabez we attended the morning devotion and national flag raising before attending the Welcome Program planned and facilitated by the upper class students. Rev. Jakes and I were recognized by the school in a presentation of the new school flag for our continuing efforts to support the school. The flag was designed by students, staff, and parents.

Our mission work was to paint the classrooms and the outside walls of the buildings. That was all accomplished with the help of students and parents working along with the Mission Team. We used approximately 60 gallons of paint. A couple of days, we could only paint when the children were not in class, so some of the painting was done in the afternoons. It was very hot. Several door frames were replaced and the blackboards were also painted. Everything looked really good. A purple trim will be added later.

A highlight of the trip was the gift giving. The children received notebooks, pencils, clothing, shoes, soccer balls and the school choir received choir robes from First Racine UMC. There were gifts for the teachers and administrators as well. Everyone was very thankful and appreciative of their gifts.

We also attended several school functions, the Academic Challenge (a game similar to Jeopardy) and the soccer and kick-ball games that followed. Jabez won the Academic Challenge but lost the soccer and kick-ball games. The last day we were at the school we celebrated with a popcorn party.

We attended a Sunday Service at Miller McAllister UMC church which is on the Ganta Mission compound grounds. The service lasted for two hours and forth-five minutes. It was an experience for those of us who are used to one hour or less for Sunday service. We did a lot of shifting in our seats.

There have been many improvements and signs of growth since my visit to Liberia two years ago. However, there is still the issue of an unstable electrical grid and lack of fresh water in many places, including the school. Hunger, poverty and malaria are still rampant in the country and at the school. Many of the children still come to school sick and hungry. There are hand washing stations outside public buildings, however they supply trickles of water and there is no soap or antibacterial hand wash. The road to Ganta is still unfinished and sections are potted and rutted, a road that shakes your kidneys. Most of the rural roads are also rutted, bumpy byways that take a toll on people and vehicles.

Being part of a Mission Team is not an easy task in a country that is recovering from Civil War and the devastating Ebola virus. However, while we were there the people of Ganta, Liberia showed us nothing but welcoming love and gratefulness for the little things we were able to do for them. The children's smiles more than make up for the inconvenient traveling and lack of American conveniences. The experience made me aware, again, of the wasted resources in America and just how much I take for granted. I do not need to worry about when I will eat again, if I will have fresh water to drink, if the electricity will run, the roads are good, and children have access to neighborhood schools. God has been very good to me. I only wish I could do more for those who do not have what I have.

Please keep the students, parents and staff of Jabez Elementary and Junior High School in your prayers.

Patsy McDonald

## Bingo Prizes Needed

One of our outreach missions is to help at the Bayview Senior Center's Bingo games with small prizes. The following is a list of items that can be used. They are very practical items that seniors find expensive to purchase.

Toilet tissue  
Kleenex  
Small bottles of dish washing soap  
Sandwich bags  
Small garbage bags  
Small bottles of laundry detergent  
Zip-loc bags, quart and gallon size  
Rolls of paper towels  
Dish clothes  
Handi-wipes (hand sanitizing towelettes)  
Non-scratch scouring pads

Donated items can be left for Kazoua Moua in the Youth Room, or you can give them to Patsy McDonald. Thank you for your help.



### **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 Certificate of Appreciation Presented to Ginny Schutz**

In recognition of your volunteer service to our church as Chair of the Membership Committee; a member of SPRC, the Bellringer Committee, the UMW Recycled Card Group, and the Choir; helping to organize the Rummage Sale; as church secretary; and many other tasks of which few 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!

### **Prayer Corner March 2016**

Dear God:

Spring is a metaphor for change. Some changes we eagerly await, and some we abhor. Some changes we plan and others arrive uninvited. To all these changes we ask the gift of Your perspective beckoning us to expectation, hope, and rebirth.

May the sunlight and the rain be reminders that You are at work renewing the earth. As a God of renewal, You are ever at work in our lives, too.

Open our eyes and lives to the needed changes in our lives this Spring. Awaken us to new life and perspective, for we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

by Rev. Mark Bekkedahl

The Communications Committee has been busy, busy, busy! Our goals are to improve external and internal communications.

The committee is using several tools to reach out to the community and to inform our church members. We're bolstering our social media presence. Our Facebook page has moved to <https://www.facebook.com/shermanavenueumc/>. We have a Twitter account: @shermanaveumc. And we've started a blog at <https://shermanavenueumc.wordpress.com/>, which links to both our Twitter and Facebook pages. Follow us through your preferred media to receive updates and share with your friends.

We also are using [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) to advertise events and attract new participants. We place ads in the Northside News, are working on sandwich boards for Northport Drive and updating the main church signs. The committee is also exploring options for recording, live streaming to YouTube, and public broadcasting Sunday services. We are getting t-shirts with our own custom SAUMC logo, which you may have seen at the Rummage Sale, to use for church activities and to sell to our church member.



Our next meeting is on March 14, 2016 at 6:15 pm. Feel free to join us and help us. Our email is [saumccomm@gmail.com](mailto:saumccomm@gmail.com) if you have any questions or comments.

### **ATTENTION MEN**

Men's Group meeting March 5, 5:00 PM, in Fellowship Hall. Our guest speaker will be our own Matt Acheson. He will be talking about Habitat for Humanity. He has been volunteering with Habitat for some time and some of you have volunteered with him. I am sure there will be lots of interesting stories and experiences. Maybe he will tell us about some opportunities for some of us to get involved in a project where we can help somebody achieve home ownership. If you want to feel happy, make somebody happy.

## UPDATE FROM OUTREACH & MISSIONS

2015 was a busy year for Outreach & Missions; it's amazing that we're almost ready for spring. I'd like to introduce the members of our exciting team: Carol Hermansen; Christopher Mack; Chuck Litweiler; Emily Acheson; Jolieth McIntosh; Joan Ristey; Judy Kreft; Matt Treadaway; Kazoua Moua; Pat Bruccoleri; Patsy McDonald; Pastor Rafael Cubilette & myself, Cyndy Hoffman.

Before I go into the list of everything we do; we'd like to also THANK YOU members of our congregation for supporting us so that we are able to continue doing all of these things:

- Rummage Sale lead by Chuck Litweiler & committee;
- Homeless Shelter is the 4<sup>TH</sup> weekend of February, April, June, August, October & December;
- School Bags In-Gathering Project for Annual Conference (June);
- Fellowship Hour & Breakfast held each Sunday after church services;
- Homebound/Visitation;
- New/Visitation;
- Volunteer Appreciation;
- Jabez Elementary & Junior High School lead by Patsy McDonald;
- Lakeview Elementary lead by Patsy McDonald & Pastor Rafael;
- Ham Dinner (October);
- Multi-Cultural Day lead by Carol Hermansen & committee;
- Pastor Appreciation Sunday (October);
- Boy Scout Sunday (February);
- Jesse Tree (November-December);
- Bayview lead by Kazoua Moua & committee;
- Kajsiab lead by Kazoua Moua & committee;
- Seed Garden lead by Kazoua Moua & committee;
- UW Student Crossing;

I'm sure that I have forgotten something & if so I apologize ahead of time. If anyone is interested in learning more or joining our committee, please see me at church, give me a call (608-513-2280) or send an e-mail [cyndy8756@gmail.com](mailto:cyndy8756@gmail.com). We appreciate your continued support & look forward to what 2016 will bring.

# March 2016

| SUN   | MON | TUE  | WED  | THU   | FRI  | SAT  |  |
|---|-----|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Please note: Directory Correction</b><br><b>The Cell Phone number for Pastor</b><br><b>Rafael is incorrect.</b><br><b>Please call the church secretary for any</b><br><b>other corrections that need to be made.</b> |     | 1<br>6:00 United Methodist Women   | 2<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Prayer Group | 3<br>1:30 Staff Meeting<br>6:30 Choir   | 4<br>5:00 Sewing Class   | 5<br>10:00 Spanish Class<br>5:00 Men's Group   |  |
|   |     | 6<br>8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship            | 7<br>6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Communications                      | 8<br>6:30 Trustees  | 9<br>4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Prayer Group | 10<br>6:30 Choir   | 11<br>5:00 Sewing Class<br>6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study |
| 13 <b>DAYLIGHT SAVINGS</b>  |     | 14   | 15   | 16  | 17   | 18   | 19   |
| 8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship  |     | 6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Brownies<br>6:15 Communications Committee                          | 6:00 Admin Council   | 4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Prayer Group<br>6:00 Craft Night | 6:30 Choir   | 5:00 Sewing Class  | 10:00 Spanish Class<br>12:00 Men's Band                            |
| 20  |     | 21   | 22   | 23  | 24   | 25   | 26   |
| 8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:345 O&M Breakfast<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship  |     | 6:00 Cub Scouts  | 6:00 Medota MSCR staff<br>6:30 Outreach & Missions               | 4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Prayer Group                     | 6:30 Choir   | 5:00 Sewing Class<br>6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible   | 12:00 Men's Band<br>Khang Baby Shower                              |
| 27  |     | 28   | 29   | 30  | 31   | <b>Need A Prayer?</b><br><b>Call Pat Bruccoleri</b><br><b>(576-7331) or Cyndy Hoffman (513-2280)</b> |  |
| 8:30 Sunday School<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Blood Pressure Clinic<br>10:45 Sunday School<br>11:30 Worship   |     | <b>5:00 Newsletter Deadline</b><br>3:30 Cadette Scouts<br>6:00 Cub Scouts<br>6:15 Brownies | 6:00 Medota MSCR staff   | 4:30 Bible Study<br>6:00 Band Practice<br>6:00 Prayer Group                     | 8:00 Copy/Fold<br>6:30 Choir                                     |  |  |

## March Birthdays

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| COLEEN H    | 3/2  |
| CHUCK L     | 3/3  |
| TERRY W     | 3/5  |
| PADEA L     | 3/6  |
| PAZOUA L    | 3/8  |
| HAZEL T     | 3/8  |
| KAZOUA M    | 3/15 |
| CHOU L      | 3/18 |
| GARY K      | 3/19 |
| CASEY V     | 3/25 |
| DOMINIQUE M | 3/25 |

## March Anniversaries

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| LUKE T & KAZOUA M     | 3/14 |
| VINCENT & GEORGETTE W | 3/17 |

*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. Contact Lisa in the office for current addresses and phone numbers: 244-0868**

**Linda Jungbluth**

**Marvel Mapes**

**Jean & Justin Kramer**