

Bellringer

Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church

June 2017

From the Pastor's Desk

"As for you, son of man, your people are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.'" Ezekiel 33:30

History is an interesting concept. We study it, we commemorate it on national holidays.

The Old Testament is full of history. Behind the history, the foreign customs and complex family trees, there's so much we can learn – particularly about how to live and establish healthy interpersonal relationships.

In the scripture above, when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (modern day Iraq) first attacked Jerusalem, he took many Jewish people captive. As years passed he finally destroyed the city of Jerusalem, devastating Israel. Their future looked bleak. This was when the prophet Ezekiel showed up with a message from God explaining the course of events.

The Israelites had lost sight of God. They began to put other things first. We can certainly relate to that. We have many things in our lives--family, job, friends--that compete for our attention.

Many recent newspaper headlines reveal just how many similarities modern-day America has with ancient Israel. As we argue, justify and harm one another with weapons in our homes and on the streets, we see a parallel to ancient Israel.

The Israelites became content with the way they were living. They listened to Ezekiel and even agreed with much of what he said, but their lives did not change. They continued to accept and justify the wrongs they were committing, from adultery to dishonest business practices and everything in between.

The root of all these problems was pride. From ancient Israel to modern America, the danger of pride is when it begins to replace our reliance on God with a false sense of self-sufficient security.

Let us remember to put God first in our lives.

Rev. David

CONNECTIONS by Craig Myrbo

We connect through holy conferencing

"The church at Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and several others from Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to set this question before the apostles and the elders. The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this matter. After much debate, Peter stood and addressed them. The entire assembly fell quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul describe all the signs and wonders God did among the Gentiles through their activity. When Barnabas and Paul also fell silent, James responded." Acts 15

Since the beginning of the church, there have been conferences to discuss church business and resolve issues.

At the beginning of Methodism in United States of America, the Christmas Conference was an historic founding conference of the newly independent Methodists within the United States held just after the American Revolution at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1784.

There have been conferences ever since. There are Annual Conferences that meet in smaller regions of the Church every year. The next Annual Conference of the church in Wisconsin will be held June 16-19 at the Marriott in Middleton, Wisconsin. Many issues are before the Conference this year. This includes a number of Constitutional Amendments. These are voted on by paper ballot by the membership of each Annual Conference in the year following the General Conference and pass by an aggregate 2/3 of all votes across the connection.

The last General Conference was held in Portland, Oregon last May. The issues relating to the performance of gay marriage by United Methodist UM clergy and whether homosexuals can be UMC clergy have been prominent in the church in the last four decades. At the 2016 General Conference an impasse was reached. The conference called on the bishops to find a way forward to resolve these issues. The bishops constituted a "Commission on the Way Forward". There will be special session of the General Conference Feb. 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri to act on the recommendations of The Commission.

Various issues will come before the Wisconsin Annual Conference this June. These include a resolution of affirmation of Board of Ordained Ministries in its not considering gender orientation as a factor in the process of ordination, freedom religion and assembly and welcoming the stranger.

Besides all this there is worship, bible study and mission opportunities.

Please pray for our clergy and lay members as they participate in Annual Conference.

Friday June 2 is National Gun Violence Awareness Day. If you are concerned, you are urged to 'Wear Orange' that day to bring attention to the problem. In Wisconsin the immediate focus is on stopping legislation that would allow Permitless Concealed Carry. For additional information go to the Wisconsin Against Violence Effort website.

Wake Up! Hope Lives! by Veronica Berry

“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.’”

Matthew 19:26

I often smile as if I’m aware of an inside joke that no-one else knows. The reality is I’m always looking for God’s signs of hope and whenever I find one it makes me giggle. I used to try to suppress my giggling because it didn’t seem to be the adult thing to do.

But I found out that smiles, giggling, and laughter seemed to be a contagious cleansing air that lifted spirits and opened communication.

God provides beauty and wonder all around us. Rain falling on a farmer’s parched field soaking the roots of vegetables and fruit that will feed multitudes, a full moon and twinkling stars lighting our way in the dark, voices of birds chirping waking us up on a beautiful spring morning. These are all signs of God’s magnificence and hope. When we choose to wake up and open our eyes, we can begin to see the sacredness of all life and realize that hope lives.

Sometimes in order to be uplifted we need to change our viewpoint and remember our inner truth. The truth is God lives inside of us. He created us in his own image. He provides everlasting love, endless hope, and spiritual clarity. When we rely on him to help us find the perfect solution to our problems, bring a peaceful solution to a controversial situation, heal a broken soul, or replenish a cluttered mind, he will be there to lift us up and give us hope.

We have to be willing to stop sleepwalking through life. We have to be willing to step out of the box that the world tries to put us into by filling our minds with fear, hopelessness, and dread. We are destined to be more because we are God’s children and our Father has filled our hearts with courage, faith, hope, and love.

We can awaken that spirit through simple ways with a gentle touch on the shoulder of a loved one or a smile of acknowledgement to a stranger. We can pray for peace in the world and do our best to live in peace with our neighbors, family, and friends. We can clear our vision to see that we all are one and hope lives in all of God’s creations.

When a dandelion grows poking through a tiny crack in a sea of concrete, some may see a hopeless weed invading space. I see the power of God’s hope breaking through a hardened surface. We are God’s children in spite of the vines of negativity, disenchanting dreams, and acts of desperation. Even when we build the walls around us so high it seems as if love will never find us, God discovers the crack in the barrier and allows his infinite love to seep in. All we have to do is accept it, grasp the hope, and smile.

What the world says is impossible *is* possible for God. When the world says all hope is lost, know that God is always with you and his hope lives everywhere.

Christian Education Opportunities Summer 2017

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. Topics will vary during the summer.
- Sunday School for All at 10:45 will begin Summer Break on June 11th. Classes will resume September 15, 2017.
- Wednesday Bible Study begins at 4:30. The 4:30 group is currently exploring Acts. This is an ongoing study of the Old and New Testament. The group plans to study Joshua, Judges and Ruth when they are finished with Acts.
- 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.

Father's Day Prayer

God our Father,
in your wisdom and love you made all things.

Bless these men,
that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers.

Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.

Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
may honor them always
with a spirit of profound respect.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Summer Musicians Wanted



Many thanks to Barbara Z. and the choir for all the hours spent preparing music for our worship services. As the choir takes a summer break, we are looking for others to contribute their musical talents to our worship services. Please contact Barbara or the church office if you are able to provide music. Thank you!

JUNE 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Rummage Sale donations can now be collected year round and stored in the parsonage. If you have a few items, you can leave them in the church entryway or call Chuck L.r for more information.				1	2 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study 6:30 Cub Scouts	3 1:00 Stephens Ministry
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 6:00 UMW	7 3:00 ELL 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC 6:30 Book Club	8	9	10 1:00 Stephens Ministry 4:30 Boy Scouts 5:00 Men's Group
11 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 10:30 Blood Pressure Clinic 11:30 Worship 12:30 Hmong Women	12 6:00 Cub Scouts	13 6:30 Communications 6:30 Trustees	14 3:00 ELL 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC	15	16 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	17 1:00 Stephens Ministry
18 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 11:30 Worship	19 6:00 Cub Scouts	20 6:00 Admin Council	21 3:00 ELL 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Craft Night 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC	22	23	24 1:00 Stephens Ministry
25 8:30 Adult Sunday School 9:30 Worship 11:30 Worship	26 5:00 Newsletter Deadline 6:00 Cub Scouts	27 5:30 Discipleship Team 6:30 Outreach & Missions	28 3:00 ELL 4:30 Bible Study 6:00 Band Practice 6:00 Prayer Group 6:00 Meditation TC 6:30 Dinner With Rev David Bible Study	29 9:00 Copy & Fold	30 6:00 Hmong Ministry & Youth Bible Study	

BIRTHDAYS

Colleen M.	6/5
Unda T. X.	6/5
Patti H.	6/10
David H. IV	6/11
Robin B.	6/11
Cindy V.	6/11
Michael T.	6/13
Pat Br.	6/15
Katie H.	6/15
Nou L.	6/15
Matt K.	6/21
Don H.	6/23
Brad K.	6/24
Rev. David Hart	6/27
John K.	6/28
Melodie B.	6/29

ANNIVERSARIES

Dawn & Ed N.	6/19
Kay & Walt N.	6/23
Judy & Dan M.	6/28

June Birthdays & Anniversaries

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 T.

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

Marvel M. (B-day 2/28)
718 Jupiter Dr #202
Madison, WI 53718-2950
608-663-8783

Carol R. (B-day 2/1)
1524 Wheeler Rd #B
Madison, WI 53704-1443
608-249-2638

Ginny S. (B-day 9/24)
1601 Wheeler Rd #209
Madison, WI 53704-7056
608-244-9515