

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for May 28, 2022

No Sunday School this weekend due to Memorial Day Weekend. I hope you are all planning a nice holiday weekend. We will start Summer Sunday School on June 5th. This means you can come to Sunday School in your play clothes and enjoy some crafts, maybe outside activities, and some videos. So if you are between the age of 3 and 10 or 11 (just finishing the 5th grade), come join us for a fun time during our church service at 9:30 am starting June 5th. Hope to see you there! Deb McMurtrey and Mt. Carmel Sunday School

The United Methodist church has two locations for summer camp opportunities for children and youth. Manidokan is in the Maryland mountains near West Virginia and West River Camp is on the water south of Annapolis. Both locations have week-long camps for children from grades 3-5, middle high students from grades 6-8 and high school students. Our church will provide up to \$500 total in campership aid for children or youth from our church interested in attending this year. For more information about the camps please contact the Camp Office directly at 800-922-6795 or check out the schedule at bwccampsandretreats.com.

We need to train, and have available, several individuals to operate the technological aspects of our Sunday Worship services on those days when Shannon and Joe are unable to. Please let us know if you are interested in helping in the ministry of our church in this way. You can contact either myself or Shannon Shanefelter.

Is someone in your house graduating high school or college? If so, please let us know so that we can celebrate them. Please contact the office to let Jen know who it is and their future plans.

The early planning stages for our October Harvestfest have begun! Pat Mulkey has a good start on the event but is looking for some eager volunteers. If you are interested in helping make this event a success, please let us know. Contact the office and Jen will point you in the right direction.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to staff our nursery on Sunday mornings please let me know. We may not be able to staff every Sunday morning, but we can let our young families know those Sundays when nursery will be available.

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning.

Signing On For Zoom Worship Services. As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. in order to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat, and share prayer requests

The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word. Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

An Encouraging Word

It's amazing how much inspiration I find simply sitting on the back porch and gazing out over the farm that's adjacent to us. Several weeks ago, I found myself on the porch ruminating about all the problems and difficulties most of us are facing. It had also been raining for a couple of days, so I was

in a kind of blue funk. Then something happened to remind me that life is wonderful, beautiful, and filled with amazing blessing. It lifted my depression completely away and left me wondering about how joyful life can be.

A little over a week before this wonderful revelation, a colt had been born on the farm. We can often hear it whinnying out on the paddock behind our annex/trailer. On the afternoon of my bleak mood the sun had finally come out, the air was warming, and a gentle breeze was stirring the leaves. Then Cathy, our neighbor, led this young colt and its mother (dam) from the paddock to the barn where the mother was stabled. The mother, of course was being led by a halter, but the colt was untethered. It let out a joyous whinny as it dashed out ahead of its mother and romped across the lawn. It never strayed far from the mare, simply running in circles around her. The sight was mesmerizing. The warm sun reflecting off the colt's chestnut coat, its head lifted high, almost dancing into the beautiful afternoon. Here was a picture of the joy of being alive! I thought in that moment, "that's as God intended it to be". That's what God wants for all of us, to be able to greet each day with such joy! To be dragged down by worries and fears is almost sinful when surrounded by the beauty that is all around us, and the wonder of life that God has given.

Yes there are problems to deal with. There are fears that we can't help but entertain. But all too often we let those problems and worries obstruct the beauty and joy that is available to us every day. Our tendency is to look at life as a glass half empty when it's really almost full. It's nearly full because whether or not we want to see it God is blessing us in every moment. Philippians 4:19 declares, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. **James 1:17** reminds us that, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." In truth we are surround by the blessing and the glory of God! We just have to pay attention. There is a tremendous amount of truth and wisdom in the song written and sung by Mac Davis (a voice from the last century).

Hey Mister

Where you going in such a hurry

Don't you think it's time you realized

There's a whole lot more to life than work and worry

The sweetest things in life are free

And there right before your eyes

You got to Stop and Smell the roses

You've got to count your many blessings everyday

You're gonna find your way to heaven is a rough and rocky road

If you don't Stop and Smell the roses along the way.

I won't quote the whole song here but if you have the time, it's worth a listen, especially in these times when we're so occupied smelling weeds.

To be able to greet each day, each moment, with joy like that of a newborn colt springing and frolicking in the warm sun, under a blue sky, is what God wants for us. In fact, God makes such joy available to us every moment in the assurances we have of God's absolute love, radical forgiveness,

and constant presence and inspiration. These are always available to us, and these assurances promised throughout scripture. They are most evident in Christ's love poured out on the cross.

Our lives are illuminated each moment in the light of God's love. Our lives are surrounded each moment in God's loving and warming embrace. We are fed and nourished each moment by God's spirit and held in God's grace. We have every reason to be joyful and jubilant in the lives God has given us. The key here is simply to stay close to God, the way that colt I witnessed stayed close to its mother who is the source of its life. It's in the light and warmth of God's presence that we will find abundant life, joy, and reason to celebrate in every moment of our lives.

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday either on Zoom or at in-person worship. Until then be well, stay safe, make good decisions in this Coronavirus environment, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike