

Associate Pastor Susan Smith's message notes from July 26, 2020

Summer in the Psalms

Two years ago, I spent a summer with books. For years, I had read almost nothing except seminary resources, lectionary readings, and the Bible. As I stepped away from the pulpit, I started reading again for leisure. One of the books I read was *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis.

The Chronicles captured me, so with the summer's sermon series on the psalms, I located Lewis's *Reflections on the Psalms*. In his introduction, he writes, "*Most emphatically the Psalms must be read as poems; as lyrics, with all the licenses and all the formalities, the hyperboles, the emotional rather than logical connections, which are proper to lyric poetry. They must be read as poems if they are to be understood. . .*" (p.3)

Lewis was gifted, but he chose to write humbly in an effort to explain what many might say is unexplainable—God is real and is part of our daily lives. Lewis was a literature professor; and in his introduction, he shares insights about studying the psalms:

(1) Repetition is a way to emphasize a point the author/poet wants to make. Consider the symbolism of the **rock** we find in the psalms as well as in other scripture. In Psalm 62, **rock** is mentioned four times. The **rock** is salvation and refuge. The **rock** is mighty. God is our **rock**. Repetition of one word can impress on the reader/listener the value of that symbol.

(2) Lewis' second literature lesson is parallelism ". . . the practice of saying the same thing twice in different words." Lewis observed that repetition and parallelism remain a means of emphasizing God's message through scripture—despite translations.

Each psalm we read strengthens us as we face the same human challenges as those in the ancient scriptures. We hear God in the words that have been translated into words we sing even today. One of the contemporary hymns that speaks to me is titled, "10,000 Reasons" by Matt Redman who was inspired by Psalm 103:

*Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul and do not forget all his benefits--
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with
steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as
long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's. (v.1-5)*

Written in 2011, the song echoes the words of the psalm. The literature of the hymn keeps the listener centered on God through repetition and parallelism.

Today we close with the words of the ancient psalms echoing in the hymns. We include them in our liturgy as a way to learn, to remember, and to grow in our faith.

As the pandemic creates havoc in our lives—the loss of loved ones and jobs, and future plans are put on hold—no one can predict how the effects are going to impact our lives physically, financially, emotionally or even spiritually. The reality is we need the repetition the poets, the artists, and the lyricists use to seal the words of God in our long-term memory and our inner soul.

Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Aug. 3:	Psalm 23
Tuesday	Aug. 4:	Jeremiah 1:1-19
Wednesday	Aug. 5:	Jeremiah 23: 1-8
Thursday	Aug. 6:	Jeremiah 23: 9-15
Friday	Aug. 7:	Jeremiah 23: 16-22
Saturday	Aug. 8:	Jeremiah 23: 23-40

Worship Service

Join us Sunday, Aug. 2 either in person at 8:30 a.m. or 11 a.m. or on Facebook at 9:30 a.m. as we conclude our Summer in the Psalm series by looking at Psalm 22.

Coming soon: The Good Shepherd

Our Church Family

Prayer concerns from our church family

Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Bill Brame, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province, Nita Woodrel, Charles Baile, Jim Hudson, Marcella Flee and her brother Orville Welker, June Mellinger, Earlene Brown, Baird Brock, Kelly Weinberger, Diana Mooney (Beth Hunt's mother)

Birthdays for the coming week

Aug. 2: Logan Miller, Travis Miller
Aug. 3: Alexa Frankum
Aug. 4: Ryan Helmig, Clint Smith
Aug. 7: Bryan Hunt, Margie Simmons, Kim Stevens, Kelly Weinberger

Anniversaries for the coming week

Aug. 3: Bob and Sharon Muir
Aug. 8: Jim and Dee Hudson

We Need Your Help

First United Methodist Church
of Warrensburg is
Looking for a
Nursery Director!

Contact Vada for more information! * vada@umcburg.org



A Peek Into the Inner Workings of UMC-Burg

Managing the daily business of church takes a lot of people and various committees or teams working behind the scenes. To provide a structure for the church to work effectively and efficiently, the United Methodist Book of Discipline lays out a structure for the organization and administration of Methodist churches. This structure includes five committees--Church Council, Trustees, Finance, Pastor Parish Relations, and Nominations--which are responsible for making sure the church follows the Book of Discipline and for maintaining the finances, building, and staff of the church. In this 5-part series, we will explore each committee and meet volunteers who are currently giving their time and talents to maintain and improve UMC-Burg.

The Trustees: Keeping A Roof Over Our Heads

The Trustees make sure that we have a safe place to worship. Beth Hunt is the chair of the committee which also includes John Yost (treasurer), Thomas Gale, Daniel Benedict, Krystle Gremaud, Bob Muir, Steve Mills, and Jim Baker. Meryl Lin McKean sits on the committee as Lay Delegate to our Annual Conference.



The Trustees are responsible for managing the physical church building and property and the funds and bills related to the building and The Rock. They also oversee the maintenance of the two properties.

According to Beth, some of the accomplishments from the past year include updating church signs and conducting the annual maintenance of both buildings. There has also been outdoor area cleanup at both buildings, electrical updates both indoor and outside at The Rock, and air conditioning maintenance. The committee is currently working on the maintenance of several A/C units and replacement of one A/C unit, maintenance of The Rock, and implementation of saving funds available for annual potential maintenance updates.

The biggest challenge this year, Beth said, has been communication because of COVID-19. Beth explained, "Zoom has been a blessing but not as helpful as in person meetings. There have also been email challenges."

Despite the challenges that come with being part of a committee, Beth believes "a new perspective and appreciation is gained by most who participate in leadership roles. It is the right thing to do as we gain more than we can ever give back to our church and those we call our church family."

Beth encourages everyone to get involved in the church in some way. She said, "I feel it is so important to be active in our church's work as the church is an extension of our own homes. I pray others are led to want to take care of our church as they do their homes. The time commitment is minimal but so very rewarding and appreciated by the rest of the family. If not us, then who is responsible? It IS our responsibility as our church is God's House!"

A moment in my faith journey

"Why not me?" by Susan A. Smith

In the midst of a pandemic, many are facing the classic question as to why bad things happen to good people. Or maybe the question is why did the COVID-19 have to infect me? And sadly there is the question, "Why did God allow this to happen?"

I confronted this question in a surprising setting, and not from my point of view or even my mother's. Mom was fighting breast cancer that had metastasized in her bones. The cancer was fast-growing, and despite a radical mastectomy and chemo, she could not stop the aggressive cancer.

Mom was not a cradle Methodist like me; she joined the Methodist Church when she married Dad. But she was faith-filled and had long been active in the church choir and in various leadership positions with youth ministry--taking kids on mission trips and leading UMYF.

Mom was known in the community for her faith and for her passion for teaching. She was a spiritual leader, and the pastor at that time was a strong believer in the power of prayer. He was sure he could pray her to healing.

As the months passed and Mom continued to lose her battle, the pastor even wanted to take her to Florida to meet a preacher who was known to perform miracle healings—before it was too late. He just could not understand why Mom was not beating the cancer.

And he asked her, "Why is this happening to you?"

Her answer, "Why not me?"

Bad things do happen to good people. Our faith in God does not protect us from bad things. Instead, our faith sustains us through the bad stuff. Faith is our life foundation.

Mom modeled faith throughout her life. She did not live a charmed life; she lived a real life with all the ups and downs that can fill our lives. She modeled a faith that ended as a testimony of how God is always with us, even as we slip away from our earthly lives into eternal life.

I pray that my life is a model for others. I pray that I can defend myself from life's challenges so I can continue to the life beyond this earthly experience. I hope I am strong enough, too, to answer like Mom did: "Why not me?"

The Food Center Needs Your Help!

August is UMC-Burg month at the Food Center. Drop off your donations for the Food Center in the church atrium or mail a check to the church made out to FUMC with Food Center in the memo.

Donations for UMW Sunday

Please consider donating to the United Methodist Women's group, which is sponsoring a Candle Burning for Mission on UMW Sunday, August 9. Donations can be put in the offering plate at the Aug. 2 church services or mailed to the church. Please make checks out to UMW--Candle Burning and in the memo line list the name or names your donation is in memory or in honor of. Call Vicki Ollison (362-0044) or Jana Miller (909-5802) for more information.