

Associate Pastor Susan Smith's message notes from May 31, 2020

May the Fire of the Holy Spirit Be With You



Many of us have memories of gathering around a campfire watching the dancing flames, the red and blue hot coals, the smoke dancing upward. Today we gather around the flames that connect us to God. The flame is a symbol of the Holy Spirit within us. It is also the symbol of the United

Methodist Church.

Understanding the Holy Spirit is difficult, yet it is the common thread that wraps through all Christians, directly connecting us to God and to one another. Those first believers struggled to make sense of the recent events—just 50 days earlier their Messiah was crucified on a cross. They were all experiencing the range of emotions everyone feels when something tragic happens: anger, disbelief, fear, uncertainty.

Then Jesus reappeared to the disciples, joined them to walk along the road and ate a meal with them. The loss became transformed into a new reality that Jesus is alive--then and now. Jesus was the son of man and son of God: two entities but one. In those final days he told them they would never be alone:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Then Jesus ascended into heaven, and God, through Jesus' guarantee, equipped them with the Holy Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2:1-4)

This brings us to the question today, over 2,000 years later: *How do we know we are equipped with the Holy Spirit?* The answer is simple: If you have "faith the size of a mustard seed," then you are equipped with the Holy Spirit. Of course, this creates the next question: *How do we continue to work as God's hands and feet in the current life circumstances?* Trust that the Holy Spirit is in charge.

Today, we are witnessing about God and his son Jesus Christ in ways thought unimaginable 50 days after that first Easter morning and unimaginable even 50 years ago. Today, we can communicate and worship without leaving our homes. We can reach out to one another to offer words of comfort, words of encouragement, and words of pure joy face-to-face through the internet. We can send gifts without even leaving our homes.

How do we continue to do God's work? We trust that we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us, to open our minds to new ideas, to open our hearts to hear the cry of the needy, and to open our doors to all whoever and wherever they may be.

On Pentacost we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God.



Scriptures for the coming week:

June 8:	Matthew 6:7-15
June 9:	Revelations 21:1-8
June 10:	Revelations 21:22-27
June 11:	Revelations 22:1-7
June 12:	Revelations 22:8-13
June 13:	Revelations 22:14-21

Upcoming Services

Services are 9:30 a.m. every Sunday on Facebook

- June 7: How to Pray Without Owning the Agenda
- June 14: The Kingdom Coming
- June 21: The Kingdom Here and Now
- June 28: The Kingdom on Earth

Prayer concerns from our church family:

Ann Wilson, Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Bill Brame, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province, Beverly Jackson, Nita Woodrel

Birthdays for the coming week:

June 9: Connie Gale

Anniversaries for the coming week:

June 7: Nate and Betsy Ridenhour
June 9: Russell and Alice Coleman, Robert and Jane Cooper
June 10: Dale and Barb Carder
June 11: Jason and Melissa Abner
June 12: Richard and Becky Curry; Claude and Dorothy Jones

The History of the Cross and Flame Emblem

The history and significance of the Cross and Flame emblem are as rich and diverse as The United Methodist Church. The insignia's birth quickly followed the union of two denominations in 1968: The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Following more than two dozen conceptualizations, a traditional symbol—the cross—was linked with a single flame with dual tongues of fire. The resulting insignia is rich in meaning. It relates The United Methodist church to God through Christ (cross) and the Holy Spirit (flame). The flame is a reminder of Pentecost when witnesses were unified by the power of the Holy Spirit and saw "tongues, as of fire" (Acts 2:3).

The elements of the emblem also remind us of a transforming moment in the life of Methodism's founder, John Wesley, when he sensed God's presence and felt his heart "strangely warmed." The two tongues of a single flame may also be understood to represent the union of two denominations.

-Copied from UMC.org



Conner Cummings Uses His Passion For Music To Share His Faith With Others

It's always a pleasure for a congregation to watch young people grow up in the church and ultimately become an active participant in the activities of the church. One of these young people is Conner Cummings, the praise band director.

Conner started attending First United Methodist Church in 7th grade and a year later went through confirmation classes and joined the church. Conner recalls that going to the youth room for Sunday school, led by Jim Metcalf, was a lot of fun. Conner also credits Mike Cassidy, the youth pastor at the time, for introducing him to life at the church. He would always go to the Friday movie nights Mike organized and got involved in the Wednesday night youth group. This is also when Conner, who started taking guitar lessons when he was in first grade, got involved in the youth band. Conner explained, "Mike was the one who had the idea to start the youth band. He gave us the resources to do what we wanted to do. He introduced me to Allie Christie and some other people in the youth group. We asked Rebecca Wilcott then later on Max Ridenhour. We would all eat Wednesday night dinner then come back and have a devotional; he would have us in fellowship hall and we would play on stage. I really liked doing the weekly devotionals."

Mike also helped Conner learn more about the church. "I respected Mike a lot," Conner said. "One year he took me to the annual church conference where I spent a lot of time with other youth and learned about ministry from a youth perspective."

The youth band also shared their music on mission trips. Connor went on four trips: South Dakota, Arizona, North Carolina and Louisiana. He was put in charge of leading music for the VBS kids, which initially was teaching dances to Bible school songs. Conner said, "It was fun; it was a way to connect with the kids in a different way. I brought my guitar along; Max, Allie and I would lead the small devotionals. It evolved and then the next year we brought sound equipment and speakers and upped our game; we started playing at the services at the church where we were staying."

Connor became involved in the adult praise band his junior year of high school. The youth praise band was losing members, but Conner still wanted to play, so he asked John Kennedy, the leader of the band, if he could play with them. Conner said, "He was very excited to let me come up and play, so I played every once in a while. Then he had me start coming more regularly."

Fast forward to August 2019 when Conner was named praise band leader after John stepped down. Connor said, "I like the freedom of choosing the music and the instrumentation. I rely on Austen Schoenborn (vocalist and pianist) a lot because he has way more technical music knowledge. He's very helpful anytime we need to change the

key of a piece or voice it differently." Currently, three members are in the praise band: Conner, Austen and Lauren Vesecky. Conner said they are looking for new people to get involved.

Song selection comes from a variety of places. Both Austen and Conner have mentioned listening to K-Love radio station for ideas. Conner said he especially likes taking suggestions from the congregation: "If a congregation member asks me if I can do a certain song, I'll write it down and try to implement it. I want to play the music people want to hear."

Conner also said he likes to find songs that have a distinct sound so it doesn't sound like they are playing the same songs each week. He explained, "We spent all day two Saturdays organizing all the music we have, and I realized how much music we have that is so similar. For example, we have songs called 'Beautiful,' 'Beautiful, Beautiful,' 'Something Beautiful,' and 'Beautiful Things.' It was eye opening to find we need to grow our repertoire a bit. We also have a lot of music we haven't done for years. Hopefully, we have some refreshing music coming up."

Another issue Conner is trying to deal with is many people don't know the contemporary songs as well as they know the traditional hymns. It is important to Conner that people become familiar with the songs. He said, "It can be alienating sometimes when you're in the service and you don't know the songs. I don't want it to be like that. I want people to feel included." Conner said, "My partial solution is that whenever I do play a new song, I play it two Sundays in a row; that way I don't just bring in a new song and then forget about it for another couple months." Conner notes that "repetition can be good, but there's a fine line between playing songs not enough or too much."

According to Conner, music is a way for him to do something he is passionate about but also a way to do something that ties in to his faith. He said, "I really like sharing my music with other people. It's fun to be able to do that kind of work for God and to use my passion for music in a positive way. Music is already a medium that gets people to feel a certain way, so it's nice when you can evoke those spiritual based emotions in the same medium."

Everyone has a favorite song. Conner said his favorite song the band does is "Come as you Are" by David Crowder. "I love that song!" he said. "Musically, it's fantastic, but the message is great. As the title implies, it doesn't matter where you come from or what has happened to you before; if you want to go to church but you don't feel like you fit in, it doesn't matter, just come as you are. God accepts everybody."



Bishop Farr Calls On Methodists To Become Better Informed About Horrors of Racism

-Associate Pastor Susan Smith

As we met last Sunday, the country began reacting to the killing of George Floyd, which has flamed the ugly reality that racism continues to exist. The days after his death have sent shock waves throughout the country, and we are forced to face the reality that racism is still a very real problem

I want to share a statement written by Bishop Bob Farr concerning this most recent incident and the country's turmoil:

... I know that my faith calls me to get active and stay engaged even when it is hard. If the conversation around #blacklivesmatter and the news reporting creates a sense of discomfort, tension or uneasiness in you, I invite you to spend some time talking to Jesus about WHY it bothers you. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your heart to a place of conviction so that we might create God's kingdom on earth where all people – regardless of their skin color, ethnicity, religion, identity or sexuality – might flourish.

It is not the job of black people to explain the structures of white supremacy, white privilege, racism, police brutality or any of the other byproducts that advances the white standard as the "normative" view. This is white people's work and our need to engage in this work is urgent. Lives depend on it.

*I am asking that every white United Methodist in Missouri but especially our appointed and assigned pastors, paid church staff and lay leaders read a book that has helped me better understand my own sin and complicity to the horrors of racism: *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism* (2018) by Robin DiAngelo, PhD.*

*Please read this book. Read it as church, a staff and within small groups. If you've finished *White Fragility*, begin the next book which may give you some ideas on moving from not being racist to antiracist: *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi. We will have conversations as a Conference later this fall with these two books as our guide. I want Missouri United Methodists to be leaders in transforming their communities into less racist ones.*

To read Bishop Farr's entire statement, click on this link:

<https://www.moumethodist.org/newsdetail/bishop-farr-expresses-outrage-need-to-be-antiracist-14011509>



The Offering Plate

We cannot escape our responsibility to work together to battle social injustice. The challenge is huge, and when we work together, we can do more than when we work alone. Your gifts make it possible for our church to meet its apportionments, which fund the work of Methodists at the conference and global level as we work to help eliminate racial discrimination, poverty, human trafficking, and health issues. Thank you for your continued generosity. God is changing lives through our congregation.

You can mail your gifts to the church or give online through the church's website: <https://www.umcburg.org>

Wall and Floor Tiles For Sale

-Chuck Linville

The church has a large surplus of wall and floor tiles. These high-quality pieces are taking up way too much space in the garage. Most are in unopened boxes. These will be sold at a fraction of full retail cost.

There are many colors and sizes of wall tile. The floor tile is 12x12x1/4" Arizona Brown Cross Sheen

28 boxes + 10 pieces = 38 pieces.

If you are interested in taking a look, call Chuck Linville at 660-441-1244 to make an appointment.

Psst! Rock bottom prices if you attend this church regularly. I will wait one week before I make this insane offer to the public.

Making Contact With Others Still Important

Reach out. Reach out and touch someone. Many of us may remember this slogan AT&T used in both print advertisements and TV commercials in the late 1970s and 1980s. This idea of reaching out continues to remain important even as COVID-19 restrictions start to loosen a bit.

Each week Pastor Peter has been encouraging all of us to find a way to stay connected--to our family and friends, to our community, to our church family, and to God. Here are three ways to reach out.

1. Worship online with First United Method Church once a week. Despite sitting at home worshipping, one still feels connected to others as we realize we are all still worshipping together.
2. Make it your goal to call one person a day. Check in to see how they are doing. Pray with them or ask what needs or concerns they have that you can pray for.
3. Spend time every day praying for those who are most vulnerable in our community.

By reaching out to others and to God, you will feel the holy spirit move within you and continue to fulfill the church's mission that all may know Jesus.



Happy 87th Birthday, Doris!!!

Many of you may remember long-time church member Doris Alexander. She is celebrating her birthday June 6. If you would like to send her a card, the address is

12802 Dusty Willow Rd.
Manassas, VA 20112