

FIRST NEWS AND NOTES

A Newsletter of The First United Methodist Church in Hagerstown IN

March 2023

Pastor Nate Shares:

In the Bible, King David is labeled and characterized as a “man after God’s own heart.”

Often, we read or hear someone say those words about David and we think one of two things: 1) That cannot be true because David did so many horrible things, which discredits scripture, or 2) David must have been “perfect” or in some way favored by God above all else, which discredits the sovereignty of God. The truth is, David was not perfect and he did do a lot of horrible things in his life. It is obviously not David’s “perfection” that made him a “man after God’s own heart.” So, what was it?

I think we can find the answer to our question, “What made David a ‘man after God’s own heart?’” in a Psalm that David wrote. David wrote in Psalm 122:1, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’” The Hebrew word that we translate as “glad” is more accurately translated as “rejoice.” David experienced an active sense of rejoicing when he was able to come into the presence of God entering into the ‘house of the Lord.’ I believe it was David’s “gladness” that impacted so much of his life. He had a heart that broke for sin. When David was confronted with his sin, his first instinct was to repent and turn back to God. His desire in life, above all else, was to have a solid and growing relationship with God. Being a “man after God’s own heart” had everything to do with David’s heart.

So what does all of that mean for us today? What does it mean for those of us who struggle in our relationship with God? The first thing that it means is there is hope. If David, who was an adulterer, murderer, and thief – just to name a few – could be considered a “man after God’s own heart” then there is hope that our hearts can be transformed too.

Another thing it means is that we must be aware of our attitudes toward ‘going to the house of the Lord’. How do we feel when get to come to church? It was David’s “gladness” toward coming into the house of the Lord that helped to transform the condition of his heart toward God and sin. When we wake up on Sunday morning are we glad that we get to come to church? Are we glad that we get the opportunity to be in the presence of God with our brothers and sisters in Christ? Are we glad to be in God’s presence?

Psalm 122 does not say, “I was glad when I came into the house of the Lord,” but rather David declares his gladness at the mere invitation. He rejoiced at just knowing he was able to go to the Temple. What we can learn from David is this – our excitement toward going to the ‘house of the Lord’ fuels the fire toward a transformed heart. It is being in community with the church, the body of Christ, that our hearts begin to be transformed. It is the transformation of our hearts that then help to make us a people after God’s own heart.



Join us through the Lenten season (**February 27 – April 3**) at 6:30 pm for **The Lectio Course**, an absorbing and inspiring five-part series that walks you through the practice of Lectio Divina. Learn the rhythms of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation as they apply to the Bible. Hear the astonishing stories of men and women who have encountered Jesus through this ancient yet astoundingly relevant spiritual habit. Discover how to hear God in His Word, so you can be equipped to take His love to the world.

February 27 – Introduction to Lectio Divina

March 6 – Read

March 13 – NO MEETING (Spring Break)

March 20 – Meditate

March 27 – Pray

April 3 – Contemplate

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 22nd (Ash Wednesday) and we will be beginning a new sermon series on that day called *Ashes to Ashes*. This series will be a time for us to pause and consider a foundational tenet of the Christian faith: we are all in need of Jesus’ redemption. Throughout this series, we will dive deep into the significance of God’s loving sacrifice.

February 22nd – Ash Wednesday

February 26th – Confession – Daniel 9

March 5th – God’s Faithfulness – Psalm 77

March 12th – Trust – Psalm 121

March 19th – Restoration – Joel 2

March 26th – New Life – Ephesians 2

Our next date will be
Sunday, April 30th at 10:15.
April has five Sundays so
mark your calendars for
April 30th, 10:15 am.



BIBLES & BRUNCH
A DIFFERENT KIND OF
WORSHIP SERVICE

It is that time again - let's take a hike! Each month we are picking a different park to do some hiking. This is open to anyone and everyone - families, couples, singles, young, and young-at-heart.



Our hope is that as we enjoy the great outdoors we will see how great it is to get to know each other too! We think connecting with others and nature is important to our mental well-being, so we want you to know that YOU are invited to join us!

Our first hike will be on March 25th – mark your calendars!



A thank you card from Christa Coleman (Daughter of Pastor Bob & Joyce).

Christa's husband, Mark Wise, has cancer. A card was sent to them that we were praying and thinking of them during this trial in their life. "I received the card from Hagerstown church. It was great to read all the names and remember people. I can't say enough how much we appreciate the prayers. This has not been an easy journey, and definitely not one we would ever have anticipated. Thank you so much for the card, thoughts, and prayers. Please tell everyone thank you for me. "

Church Mouse **GOD IS ALREADY THERE**

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

Recently a good friend and a long-time fellow volunteer EMT passed away. She was deeply loved by her family and friends. She was never rich in material things, but she had an open generous spirit. Her empathy for others was evident in her compassionate care for our patients on rescue squad calls. When we had a nursing home transport or other less exciting calls requiring a second volunteer backup, some members chose not to respond. I knew she would be there if she was available. She treated everyone with respect and kindness, even if the patient was uncooperative or intoxicated.

Most calls were routine, but not always. Sometimes we found ourselves in difficult situations with serious injuries or medically unstable patients. We did our best to manage the patient's conditions using the tools and training we had until we could turn them over to the Emergency Room or a paramedic intercept as needed. Rescue squad calls were often a journey to the unknown. No matter what happened, be it scary, weird, difficult or routine, we weren't on our own. With time I learned God was already there. I'd say a quick calming prayer for protection and guidance while we were enroute putting it all in God's hands. Yes, sometimes God had already called them home or their issues were beyond our help. Working with our squad mates, we could and did handle whatever we found with compassion and competence.

Heavenly father thank you for you for always being there for every minute and every step of our life journey. Bless and comfort the families and loved ones of those who are now in heaven after a life of service to others. To God Be the Glory! **Paula Guth, the Church Mouse**



80+ Birthday

Happy Birthday! Marty Sharp

March 4

100 E Madison St Hagerstown



United Women in Faith News by President Mindy Smith

Hello Church Family and United Women In Faith. I have lots of information to report to you.

As you remember in January we collected Reusable Water Bottles for the High School Guidance Counselors to pass out to students who requested bottled water from their offices frequently. As you may recall we were able to supply them with 69 water bottles last month. Julie Arnold had also requested some Ear Buds to share with the High School Teachers, as the students frequently break or lose those. We (UMIF) purchased 100 Ear Buds allowing each High School Teacher to have several spares available.

Here's a copy of the Thank You from Julie. January 23rd *Thank you, Thank you, thank you! You guys are the Best!* At the time of writing all that info for the February newsletter I was inspired to also provide Valentines treats for the Teacher's and Staff at the High School. With some great encouragement from Jean Dilley and Teamwork from Betty Thalls, Carol Meyer, Lorna Peelle, Marti Retherford, Deb Salhoff and Donna Winters we were able to provide treats for at least 40 Staff and several students. Here's Julies: Thank you for that event. Feb. 15 Thank you for the delicious cookies. The teachers were so appreciative, I had sent an email with a subject line that said "The Methodist ladies strike again!" Once I explained that there were bags of cookies in the workroom, they came in droves to enjoy their treats. I also shared some bags with two new move-in students, as well as another who was having a panic attack. She calmed down fairly quickly and I said to her "Maybe we just need homemade cookies more often" and that lightened her mood. Anyway, thanks for all that you do. You are very appreciated! ♥

Another form of Mission work I heard about this week was Greta Gustin from Circle of Friendship purchased all the items needed to put together twelve Floor Buckets for UMCOR. Greta had her Young Teens Sunday School Class assemble the Buckets during Sunday School and the Circle of Friendship members will reimburse her for the items she purchased. I love the impact we have through these types of outreach. We can only accomplish this when we work together as the Hands and Feet of Jesus. You know-Being a unit of women whose purpose is to know God. So some of you are saying "I wasn't asked to help.....There's another opportunity coming up quickly. Since we only targeted the High School for Valentines Day, I would love to do the Elementary Teachers for Saint Patrick's Day in March. I will need seven more people to again bake cookies and package them for March 17th. If you want to be involved you can call me or I'll call you.

Upcoming events to mark on your calendars:

- March 26th (Sunday) 2:00 p.m. The Thrift Shop Annual Meeting our church hosts in Fellowship Hall.
- This counts as a General Meeting April 22nd Saturday @ 9:30 a.m. District Spring Fling Speaker Tammy Atwood Indiana Women's Prison. It's held at Losantville Methodist.

This article continues on the back page of your calendar:

FUMC hosts the Thrift Shop's Annual Meeting!

The community is invited to the Thrift Shop's Annual Business Meeting in the FUMC Fellowship Hall at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 26. The Thrift Shop is owned and operated by First United Methodist Church, Congregational Christian Church, and Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren.

Meet the Thrift Shop employees and learn how the shop contributes to the community and provides scholarships to Nettle Creek graduating high school seniors.

The program will be A Better Way, formerly known as Genesis of Richmond. A Better Way is a mobile advocacy organization serving Wayne and seven surrounding counties. Heather Eckert and Candra Ramsey, Richmond Site Coordinator, will share A Better Way's mission: to reduce domestic abuse, sexual assault, suicide, and homelessness through service, shelter, crisis intervention, and prevention initiatives.

Bring the Kids Every Sunday Morning.

Begins at 9 a.m.



Nursery is available every Sunday

During Church

K.I.D.S.



(Kids in Devine Service)

Adult Classes meet!

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