

FAITH *news*

Monthly Newsletter of the
ELDRIDGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 2021

CONVERSATION with Pastor Courtney

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. – Galatians 5:22

Lent is a time for reflection. It is a time we bend our hearts to God and prepare for Easter. During Lent we journey with Jesus through his ministry, arrest, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. This is considered a somber time in the church when we repent of our sins and rest in the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For many of us, the 40 days of Lent include taking up a new spiritual practice or giving up something. This could be spending more time in prayer or scripture or less screen time or abstaining from certain foods. My challenge to you this year is to choose one of the fruits of the Spirit to focus on.

For love, you may send a note to one person every day expressing how much you appreciate them. For joy, you could list something you are grateful for every day. You could do one act of kindness every day. You could set an intention every day to be patient, gentle and practice self-control in every interaction you have with another. To practice goodness and faithfulness, set aside 10 minutes every day to pray and read scripture.

I believe by practicing one or more of the fruits of the Spirit this Lent we can draw closer to God and one another. May God bless us as we journey through Lent.

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In Our Hearts & Prayers

Lord, we send our fervent prayers for the millions suffering from the ravages of the **COVID19 Pandemic**. We pray for their physical health, mental health, economic health; we pray for relationships, education, churches, nursing homes and businesses; we pray for the fears and safety of front-line workers; we pray for the efficacy and urgency of vaccines and for the trust of your people to follow in ways that you provide for us that might lead to the end of these terrible times and the restoration of both lives and 'life'.

We pray for the family of **KRISTI ERNST**, who passed away last week after a lengthy battle with COVID.

We thank you, Lord, for **JAN WRIGHT's** very successful surgery to place a stent in her carotid artery and pray for her continued positive recovery and good health. We also continue prayers for recuperation for **LARRY FRAZEE & DENNY DenHARTOG**.

We continue healing prayers for **JORDAN REICKARD** as she continues convalescing at home from her serious infection and long hospital stay. We thank you, Lord, for her positive progress so far.

We pray for Christie Nevenhoven's brother-in-law, **DAVID FISCHER** with inoperable prostate cancer and praise you that her sister, Barb Fischer, is currently doing well in her own fight against pancreatic cancer.

Lord, we pray for our **NATION**. We pray for discernment for its new leaders and for patience from its peoples. We pray for peace, open-mindedness and understanding; for calm and safety; for the future of the American people.

Proverbs 22:17

"A merry heart does good like medicine"

APPROACHING LENT

Ash Wednesday "To-Go"

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 17. There will be three drive-up opportunities to receive a blessing from Pastor Courtney:

3 to 4 p.m. at Eldridge UMC

5 to 6 p.m. at McCausland UMC

7 to 8 p.m. at Eldridge UMC

We ask that you are masked and remain in your cars. More details will be shared once finalized. We are doing our best to make this a meaningful and safe experience.

Pastor Courtney's Lenten Study

. . . will begin 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 24, and 1:30 p.m. Thursday, February 25, via Zoom. The study will be held for six weeks. Books will be available in the church office. Pastor Courtney has covered the cost of books, so they are available free of charge. All are welcome to join.

What Makes a Hero? offers us an image of what it looks like to be victorious over trials and temptations. Looking at pop culture heroes and others through the lens of faith, Matt Rawle shows how Jesus turned the concept of hero on its head. The book examines how good vs. evil, right vs. wrong, and overcoming adversity are fundamental to how Christians understand salvation. Heroes help us discern the good, fight for what's right, define identity, execute justice, spark revolution, and save lives. Rawle enters the Gospel story to tell quite a different victory story—one obtained through humility, obedience to the cross, and an empty tomb. How does Jesus redefine what it means to be a hero?

Return To Worship



SPPRC is announcing a new venture we are calling "Return to Worship Caring Groups". The purpose of these groups is to develop lines of communication that includes our entire congregation. In the next two weeks you will be receiving a phone call from one of your fellow church members. We hope you look forward to this monthly communication knowing it is done to share church news and information. If you are not contacted in the next ten days, please call the church so we can correct this error. Our hope is to strengthen our communications/support with each other, and celebrate when we return to church!

Thank you from the SPPRC:

Gary Abbas, Deb Menke, Joyce Orcutt, Judy Kilzer, Dave Muhs, Mike Shaw, & Pastor Courtney

Celebrating...



2/07	Randy & Ana Kinney
2/10	Doug & Ethel Reynolds
2/28	Troy & Andrea Petersen



2/01	Pastor Courtney Shari Carter-Steiner
2/03	Carol Faeth Keith Riewerts
2/08	Trish Reisener
2/13	Aundrea Crain Owen Gentz Rachel Sorensen
2/15	Cole Gay
2/16	Alauna Gentz
2/21	Rheta Allen
2/27	Carol Haugland

I printed this in the May 2020 Newsletter. Unfortunately still apropos today, it is a good reminder to us all. Keep those prayers a-comin'!

PRAYER FOR A PANDEMIC

by Cameron Wiggins Bellm

May we who are merely inconvenienced —
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors —
remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home —
remember those who must choose between
preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our
children when their schools close —
remember those that have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips —
remember those who have no safe place to
go.

May we who are losing our margin money in
the tumult of the economic market —
remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for quarantine at home —
remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose to love
during this time when we cannot physically
wrap our arms around each other.

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace
of God to our neighbor.

Amen

E.U.M.C. ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

January 14, 2021

Members present: Brian Popelka (chair), Pastor Courtney Dake, Becky Esbaum (treasurer), Kelly Cronkleton, Keith Riewerts, Debbie Menke, Gary Abbas, Steve Sorensen, Bill Tubbs, Mike Shaw, Joyce Orcutt, and Cindy Irwin (parishner)

Election: Judy Kilzer, our faithful minutes keeper for many years has resigned. Keith moved and Gary seconded Joyce Orcutt as secretary. Motion carried.

Ice Breaker: Each person shared a fun memory of a church experience or activity.

Committee Roundtable: SPPRC –

1. Debbie Menke shared updated information about the sound board that has been ordered from Reference Audio. The current shipment date is February. Training for those interested in learning to operate the sound board will follow installation on a Saturday in February.
2. Debbie also shared the committee's work on planning for "Caring Groups" whose purpose is to help our congregation stay connected, to be supportive of members, to share faith, and fellowship.
 - a. Groups will consist of 4-5 individuals, couples, or families.
 - b. Each group will have a leader(s) who will convene the group.
 - c. SPPRC will provide a basic format for meetings, although the group members will decide how, when, and what direction their meetings will take.
 - d. Pastor Courtney is willing to provide short devotions for the group meetings.
 - e. Groups can share information and promote enthusiasm for church initiatives.
3. Ad Council instructed SPPRC not to wait to present a more complete plan to the Feb. meeting, but to proceed with the plan and establishing the Caring Groups.
4. It was noted that Zoom training might be needed for group leaders and possibly participants since meetings may be via Zoom for a time.

Finance Update: Becky Esbaum and Kelly Cronkleton reported that giving has been pretty consistent and that we are stable financially. A generous year end gift will enable us to use that money for a special outreach project that can make a difference in our community. Ad Council is seeking ideas and input for community projects; an "Outreach Challenge". Pastor Courtney will include an announcement during next week's worship service, and C.J. will work with Keith to word an e-mail to be sent to our congregation.

Goals for the February meeting:

Ad Council members are asked to come with one or two things on which we want E.U.M.C. to focus and to accomplish by the end of 2021.

Open Table: Bishop Laurie has indicated that counties whose COVID positivity rate is below 15% may move from the red zone to the yellow zone and may again meet in person with restrictions. Since Scott County is at 11.25%, Pastor Courtney will convene the Re-entry team.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 11, 2021
Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Orcutt, secretary

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17

5 SUNDAYS OF LENT

February 21, 28

March 7, 14, 21

PALM SUNDAY

March 28

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 1

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5

etc.

- There are plenty of copies of "THE UPPER ROOM" still available in the church foyer. This issue runs through the end of February.
- Please send your updated contact information — that includes physical address, phones, email addresses, birthdays, etc. We are aware that many items have changed since our last update in 2018.
- Your 2020 TAX STATEMENTS are in the mail. If you do not have yours by the beginning of next week, please call Trish at 563-570-8280.
- February Food Pantry Items are: Canned Meat; Canned Meals; Granola Bars



Happy Birthday
to
Pastor Courtney!