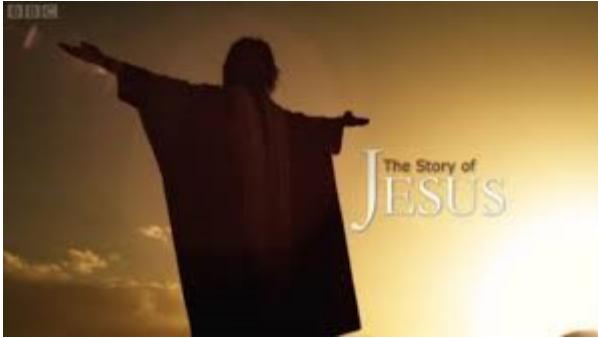




GRACE NEWS & NOTES

March 1, 2019



“Resurrection and Pandemonium” by Ben Patterson

Imagine the mystery and delight of not just hearing, but seeing the story of Jesus for the first time, almost as an eyewitness.

That's what happened to a tribe in the jungles of East Asia when missionaries showed them the *Jesus* film. Not only had these people never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture. Then, all at once, on one unforgettable evening, they saw it all—the gospel in their own language, visible and real.

Imagine again how it felt to see this good man Jesus, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without trial and beaten by jeering soldiers. As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop. When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice! He was forced to stop the film and explain that the story wasn't over yet, that there was more.

So they settled back onto the ground, holding their emotions in tenuous check.

Then came the crucifixion. Again, the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that once again the film had to be stopped. The missionary again tried to calm them, explaining that the story still wasn't over, that there was more. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next.

Then came the resurrection. Pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise now was of jubilation, and it was deafening. The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen, indeed!

Again the missionary had to shut off the projector. But this time he didn't tell them to calm down and wait for what was next. All that was supposed to happen—in the story and in their lives—was happening.

Reprinted from LeadershipJournal.net, 4-13-04

Save the Date!

Fundraiser Dinner for Renee Kleiboeker
Wednesday, March 13, 2019
4:30-6:30 p.m.

The Missions Committee plans to hold a fundraiser dinner to help cover some of the medical costs for Renee Kleiboeker. Renee suffers from Masters' Disease, a tick-borne illness. The menu includes: baked ziti, salad, Italian bread and dessert.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 3** Prayer Group-8:30 am
Worship-10:15 am

Kid's Club-5:00-6:00 pm
Snupper-6:00-6:30 pm
Bridge-6:30 pm-8:00 pm
- 6** Happy Days Chili/Chicken Soup Fundraiser-4:00-7:00 pm
Ash Wednesday Service-7:00 pm
Choir-7:30 pm
- 10** Prayer Group-8:30 am
Worship-10:15 am

Youth Groups (see Mar. 3 for times)
- 12** Happy Days Board-6:00 pm
- 13** "Sharing Grace" (Missions hosts Fundraiser Dinner for Renee Kleiboecker -4:30-6:30 p.m.
Choir-7:30 pm
- 14** Breakfast Club at Little Nashville-9:00 am
- 16** Sr. High Youth go bowling-7:00 pm
- 17** Prayer Group-8:30 am
Worship-10:15 am

Youth Groups (see Mar. 3 for times)
- 19** Education-6:45 pm
- 20** Evangelism-6:30 pm
Happy Days Early Registration-5:00-7:00 pm
Choir-7:30 pm
- 24** Prayer Group-8:30 am
Worship-10:15 am

Youth Groups (see Mar. 3 for times)
- 25** Trustees-6:30 pm
- 27** "Sharing Grace" (Education hosts)-5:30 pm
Choir-7:30 pm
- 30** Light Kids' Conference in Troy, IL-8:00 am-4:00 pm
- 31** Prayer Group-8:30 am
Worship-10:15 am

Youth Groups (see Mar. 3 for times)



BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| March 3 | Jenny Kirsch |
| 4 | Morris Roetemeyer |
| 5 | Margaret Snyder |
| 7 | Terry Campbell |
| 16 | Kourtney Hake |
| 17 | Bernice Chambers |
| 20 | John Luessenheide |
| 28 | Sarah Staley |
| | Selina Reynolds |

ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Mar. 4 | Pastor Bill & Rhonda Bunnage |
| | Len & Terry Campbell |

Congratulations everyone on your milestones! If your name was not included in our list, please inform the office so that we can update our records.

Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

7:00 p.m.

Come and support the Happy Days Chili/Chicken Soup Fundraiser earlier in the evening and then attend the Ash Wednesday Service in the sanctuary.

February Report

Date	Attendance	Offering
02-03	90	\$7,159.60
02-08	<i>Online (Vanco)</i>	\$ 399.25
02-10	47	\$3,340.64
02-17	93	*\$16,321.40
02-20		** \$8,500.00
02-20	<i>Online (Vanco)</i>	\$ 289.05
02-24	90	\$2,489.20
02-25	<i>Online (Vanco)</i>	\$ 300.00

** Includes sale of church van.*

*** Sale of second church van and donation.*

From Me to You

I am writing to you on February 27th, 2019—the day after the special session of General Conference in St. Louis, MO concluded. The UMC represented by delegates from around the world assembled to pass legislation on a way forward. Our church has been in great debate for nearly 50 years around issues of whether LGBTQ persons should be ordained as clergy and more recently whether clergy could hold marriage ceremonies for same sex couples.

Multiple plans were prepared and made available for preview before GC met. During the session, only the Traditional plan was voted through as the option and late on Tuesday was voted upon and passed as the way forward for our UMC. The GC also voted late Tuesday on a disaffiliation plan, or aka exit plan, if churches and clergy wanted to leave the denomination.

What does this all mean? We really are not clear on that because everything that was approved was also voted on to be sent to the Judicial Council. They meet in late April to review and determine if all of the approved petitions are legal according to our church policy.

This much I do know. Most of the votes taken concerning the Traditional Plan, not all of them, were 52-55% in favor of and 48-45% against. So today nearly half of our church is upset with the outcome. But as I was reminded when reading a few days ago, we live in a democracy and our UMC has been organized as a democracy in terms of governing ourselves. In a democracy voices are heard through voting, but with every vote there will be winners and losers. Not everyone will be happy.

I have always been disappointed with the church when we say we will pray for God's will to be done and then when decisions are made we don't accept those decisions as God's will. You know what I'm getting at, we only see it as God's will when it aligns with what we want.

Anytime a group of imperfect people come together to have conversation around issues that persons in the group are passionate about and have personal feelings involved, it always proves difficult.

What I heard from delegates on both sides of the discussion yesterday at GC was this, both quoted scripture as a means of providing a foundation for their particular stance on the topic at hand. And I even heard speakers from both sides stand before the whole delegation and speak for God, trying to assure the whole house that their view was God's view.

Many minutes were used to pray before voting took place, but I cannot see that praying changed God's mind or the minds of those praying! I'm not sure there is any glory in that for God.

This much is clear now. Our UMC is headed for divorce. It was before the GC and it is confirmed. When a couple comes to me for marriage counseling and says, "We are ready to separate. Can you say anything that will help us?" I usually say, "Sounds like you have already decided what you are going to do."

It feels to me like this is where we are as a church and now we are just waiting to see who gets the house and car. Who is going to pay child support? Now would be a good time to start practicing prayer if you are not already! Tell God what a mess we have now.

Pastor Bill

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

—John 3:16

YOUTH Activities

...for March

March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31: The following youth groups will meet:

- 5:00-6:00 p.m., Kids' Club**
- 6:00-6:30 p.m., Snupper**
- 6:30-8:00 p.m., Bridge**

March 16, 7:00 p.m.: Sr. High Youth go bowling

March 30, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.: Light Kids' Conference in Troy, IL

For more information and to sign up for any of these youth activities, please see **Mike Savard, Director of Children & Teen Ministries.**

Happy Days Preschool Chili & Chicken Soup Supper & Silent Auction Fundraiser



**Wednesday, March 6, 2019
Grace United Methodist Church**

Dinner 4:00-7:00

Adults \$7.00

Children 4-12 \$3.00

**Kids 3 and under are free-Dine in Only
Carry outs available—we will provide
containers.**

Silent Auction items awarded at 6:30 p.m.

What Is Summer Camp All About?

Summer camp at an Illinois Great Rivers Conference camp site is all about connections. Our camps are designed to help campers make connections with one another and with a group of caring adults. The relationships developed during the week at an IGRC camp often last well beyond the time spent at camp, some last a lifetime.

Campers are also given the opportunity to connect with and develop an appreciation for the natural beauty and wonder of God's creation. Spiritual development and connecting our lives to Jesus Christ is the key component throughout the camp experience of all IGRC summer camp programs. These connections are vital in the development of those who will be transforming the world while sharing the love of Jesus Christ.



We have funds available to help with camp registration fees and IGRC Camp information brochures are available across from Mike's office. Some of the camp opportunities offered include horseback riding and rock climbing along with all the other fun camp activities. Choose the camp you would your child to attend, fill out the online registration form, and submit a copy of your registration to Mike.

Give your child the gift of camp experiences they will carry with them the rest of their lives.

Happy Days hosted "Sharing Grace" on February 13th.

Valentine cards and tissue flowers were made for people at the nursing home and WCH Extended Care!



Shaped by Tragedy and Grace: Wesley's Rescue from Fire

What influences does God use to shape us into the people we become?

Our family of origin certainly plays a part, as do experiences with other adults. Events at school and friendships at church sometimes leave a lasting impression. A move to a new community, a national tragedy, and a host of other factors may contribute to our understandings of who we are and what our place is in the world. For the most part, these events subtly form us. Other times a single event can be so profound that we remember it for the rest of our lives.

The fire at John Wesley's family home when he was just five years old was such an event for him. And likely impacted the way Wesley would lead the movement that was to become The United Methodist Church.

The Fire

We know quite a bit about the fire at the Epworth rectory from letters the Rev. Samuel and Susanna Wesley wrote to family and friends in the immediate aftermath. In these letters, they describe the harrowing events of February 9, 1709.

The Wesley's 11-year-old daughter Hetty was awakened from a sound sleep around 11:30 p.m. Burning pieces from the roof of the house were landing on her bed! She ran to find her father Samuel. Dad was sleeping in an extra room because his wife was ill and probably uncomfortable as she was in the third trimester of a pregnancy.



He remembers hearing someone outside yell, "Fire!" Not knowing his house was ablaze, he got up to investigate. Opening the door to the hallway, he saw the flames. The burning roof was falling fast and threatening the family's ability to evacuate.

Susanna later wrote to her son Samuel who was away at boarding school, "nothing but the thin wall kept the fire from the staircase," their only escape. The parents, eight children, and a handful of servants needed to leave the house immediately. There was not time enough to dress or take any possessions with them.

Samuel called to Susanna, telling her to run for her life. She and her two eldest daughters, Emily and Sukey, arrived safely in the garden, but not before Susanna's legs were burned. One servant broke a window and climbed out with Molly and Hetty. A servant named Betty went to the nursery to get the youngest children. Picking up the little ones, including Charles who was barely a year old, she called to 5-year-old Jacky (young John Wesley) and told him to follow her to safety. When she arrived in the garden, however, Jacky was missing.

Susanna explains that Betty “left Jacky to follow her, but he, going to the door and seeing all on fire, ran back again.” Samuel attempted to get to his son several times, only to be beaten back by the flames that now consumed the staircase. Defeated, he returned to the garden convinced Jacky would not be saved. The family knelt and “prayed God to receive his soul,” he later wrote. “I believe it was just at that time I waked,” John Wesley would write many years later. Remembering it “as though it were but yesterday,” Wesley recalls yelling for help and going to the door. Finally, he went to the window where “one in the yard saw me.” With no time to find a ladder, a couple of quick-thinking neighbors did the next best thing. One stood on the other’s shoulders and pulled Jacky through the window “just as the roof fell into the chamber [this room],” Susanna reports. His improbable rescue was quickly declared a miracle. “I could not believe it,” his father wrote a week after the fire, “till I had kissed him two or three times.”

While the family lost nearly every possession they had, they all were saved. John Wesley remembers his father calling out from the garden as the fire continued to consume the family home, “Come, Neighbours! Let us kneel down! Let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight Children: let the house go: I am rich enough!”

The fire was not God’s will, but by God’s grace all had survived. After the fire, Susanna sometimes referred to her Jacky as a brand plucked from the burning, a reference to Zechariah 3:2. She believed God saved her young son for a reason, a lesson Jacky learned well.

Nearly 45 years later, Wesley remembered his mother’s words. Lying in bed sick with consumption—a generic term used at the time for any illness that caused a person to waste away—Wesley wrote an epitaph for himself to be used if he didn’t recover. The would-be inscription he penned in his journal began, “Here lieth the body of John Wesley, a brand plucked out of the burning” (November 26, 1753). (Wesley lived another 37 years and this epitaph was not used.)

In summarizing his life, he could have talked about the Oxford Holy Club or the societies he had organized across England. He might have mentioned his heart-warming experience on Aldersgate Street or his missionary work in what would become the United States. Instead, he summed up his remarkable life with the words his mom ascribed to him when he was five. Here lieth a brand plucked from the burning; a man rescued for a purpose.

We've Also Been Shaped

John Wesley’s experience is unique, but God uses events in all our lives to shape us.

It may be a Sunday school teacher who encouraged your drawings, or a schoolteacher who loved your imagination. Maybe a grandparent gushed about how smart you are, or a parent took pride in the strength of your moral character. It may also be something like a fire, the death of a loved one, or an encounter with a bully.

While we may not be thankful for all the events of our lives, we can give thanks to God for the ways God uses them to shape us into people who love and follow Jesus.

This UMC.org feature by Joe Lovino was first published on February 7, 2017.

To God You Shall Return

The traditional Ash Wednesday words "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" might seem depressing. But in our often death-denying culture, some might find it refreshing to hear the frank statement that we can do nothing to save ourselves, physically or spiritually — that, no matter how we try to avoid sin, we can't untangle ourselves from self-interest. How liberating, then, to know we don't have to! God loves us as we are and sent Jesus to break sin's power over us.



A pastor described Ash Wednesday as the point you can pinch in the middle of a long piece of ribbon, such that when you lift it high, the two ends — one symbolizing our baptism and the other, our funeral — meet and touch. We come from dust and will return to dust, but we also come from God and will return to God. Ash Wednesday reminds us that we're always safe in God's love.



Women's Retreat

Saturday, April 27th from 9 am—3 pm
(registration begins at 8:30 am)

**Godfrey First United Methodist Church
1100 Airport Road, Godfrey, IL 62035**

**Key Note Speaker: Shelly Harvey
Cost \$10**

*Several breakout sessions are offered. A flyer is posted on the church bulletin board.
Please contact the church office if interested in going.*

Greeters:

March 3	Gary and Teresa Hake
March 10	Helen Dude
March 17	Julie Schroeder
March 24	Mike and Wynnne Reynolds & Family

