



The KEY

... TO OPEN WIDER
THE DOOR OF THE
CHURCH

A Newsletter of Newport United Methodist Church

January, 2018

Pastor's Page

The new year is always a time for reflection – looking to what has happened in the past year, perhaps even resolving to make personal changes in the months to come.

I asked some friends what words characterized the past year and one of the words they mentioned was *truth*. Perhaps in a perverse way, 2017 was the “year of truth” because we in the U.S. don't agree what it means or is; it seems to separate us even more.

While the meaning of truth may have been changed and contested in new ways this past year, it has always been a special, important word for Christians.

The origin of the word *truth* probably comes from Old English words for constancy and faithfulness. As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we understand it as a sign of God's faithfulness to humankind. Christmas is not about us becoming more godlike (even if there was a Lexus with a bow on top in our driveway on Christmas morning), but about God identifying with us, becoming more human-like, entering into our lives in personal ways. God's commitment, God's faithfulness to us is truly the gift we need at this moment. This is truth.

In the quiet moments of January mornings, when the world outside is still dark and cold, I focus my mind (not easy when the day looms before me with so many tasks, so much to do), and slowly I feel truth, God's faithfulness, despite all that has pressured me, pushed me, hurt me, frustrated me. I feel the support and foundation of the Holy One down in the core of my being. The Christmas promise is true; God has come to us. With this truth I can sort out other truth, face a world of challenge.

Welcome to 2018.

Linda

2 *FLOCK WATCHER asks that you keep these people in your prayers:*



John and Phyllis' friend **Dean** who had brain tumor surgery last month; two of **Doug's** brothers need our prayers: **Gary** for continued recovery from cancer surgery, and **Ted** for diagnosis and treatment of cancer; for **Ethel's** sister-in-law **Eileen** who is dealing with aggressive cancer;

people and families dealing with mental illness; everyone who faces **financial crisis** for various reasons.

We share our joys too: **Audrey**, young granddaughter of Sherry's friend **Suzie Christmas**, had a tumor removed which proved to be not cancer! **Ethel's** husband **Dave** is home resting up for surgery. Newport UMC received the grant for the dumpster enclosure! **Bob and Sue's** nephew and his wife will welcome a baby very soon! **Sue's** surgery went well and she is recovering at home.

If you have lifted someone up for prayer, please update us in the church office as their conditions change, as a concern or joy!

From UMC News Service (edited and adapted for the Key) :

Sunday, January 14 is Human Relations Day, one of the six Special Sundays for The United Methodist Church. On this day, we take an offering across the denomination.

Over 900,000 youth were arrested in the United States in 2015. While the rate of juvenile arrests has been steadily trending down over the past 20 years, this is still a large number. Add to it the families, schools and communities affected when young people are at risk to become involved in committing crimes and we can begin to take into account the whole picture.

At-risk youth are in need of strong families and communities to lead them toward better paths. Our gifts on Human Relations Day support ministries that work to strengthen our communities.

The Minnesota Annual Conference supports Park Avenue Freedom School in Minneapolis through the Children's Defense Fund. The school site is provided through the ministry of Park Avenue UMC.

Six Weekly Themes help the scholars to understand the various ways they can make a difference:

I Can Make a Difference in Myself; I Can Make a Difference in My Family;

I Can Make a Difference in My Community; I Can Make a Difference in My Country;

I Can Make a Difference in My World- with Hope, Education, and Action! (see p.6)

The **LEADERSHIP TEAM** meets on Monday, **January 15th** at 6:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room.

Martha Circle meets in the Fireside Room on Monday, **January 8th** at 9:30 a.m.

The Red Rockers will hold their luncheon on **Thursday, January 18 at NOON** at the North Pole Restaurant in Newport Center. If you are attending please contact Ruth Pommerening at 459 1970.

Angel Closet has moved to Thursdays! The next regular opening will be on January 4 but you can call the church office with individual needs in the meantime. We will do our best to take care of families needing school supplies. Consult the list of supplies furnished by the school and grade your child will be attending. Church office phone: 459 2747.

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November, 2017 Financial Report

FUND BALANCES REPORT

The November 30, 2017 checkbook balance was **\$508.15**.

MONTHLY BUDGET ENVELOPE GIVING

For November, envelope and loose plate giving was **\$4,299.00**.

TOTAL INCOME FOR REPORT PERIOD

November income from all sources was **\$9663.00**.

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR REPORT PERIOD

November expenses were **\$11,347.41**.

SUMMARY: Income in relation to expenses for October 31, 2017 was -\$1,684.41.

The cost of the waste/recycling enclosure will be totally covered by the WasteWise grant which has been approved.

Please mention any projects you feel need doing or any concerns you have about repairs to Mike in written form. He will pass them on to the appropriate person.

Everyone is encouraged to maintain good stewardship.

Any suggestions for improving this financial report will be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

John Brenneman

A Prayer That Changed My Life: It was the weekend of July 5-7, 2002. Six weeks earlier I had cardiac by-pass surgery and had gone to our home at Lake Junaluska for an expected routine recuperation. On July 5th crushing chest pains developed. Linda rushed me to the nearby Haywood County Hospital. I was then transported to a hospital in Asheville.

The weekend was spent in ICU with constant monitoring and tests. The future was uncertain. Would I survive? How much has the heart muscle been damaged? Will I be able to continue as an active bishop? More definitive prognosis had to wait. *(See next page)*

(Freedom School from p.2) The school features an Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC) which reinforces daily reading activities; regular Days of Social Action where students practice being involved in their communities; and Parent Engagement Nights where parents meet to develop skills to help their children succeed in school.

Please support this and other worthy programs through your gift on Human Relations Day.

(Additional material from Park Avenue UMC website)

(Prayer from p.3) Sunday morning I was surrounded by family. We were mostly silent. No words seemed appropriate. Sadness prevailed. The grief of a lost preferred future had already set in. The gravity of the situation weighed heavily.

Suddenly, a knock came to the door. In walked my friend, David Lowes Watson! He was carrying a loaf of bread and a chalice! He had made his way from Nashville and through the corridors of Mission Hospital bearing Communion. What a welcomed sight!

With our permission, he proceeded with the familiar liturgy and the serving of the bread and juice. Then, this Wesley scholar and valued friend and colleague caught me surprise. He invited us to pray. And, in his distinctive British accent he prayed from memory the Wesley Covenant Prayer:

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

I began to feel very uncomfortable and almost wanted to ask David to stop. I wanted only half of the prayer answered:

“Put me to doing,” **YES!** “put me to suffering!” **NO!**

“Let me be employed for thee!” **YES!** “laid aside for thee!” **NO!**

“Exalted for thee!” **YES!** “trampled underfoot for thee.” **NO!**

“Let me be full!” **YES!** “let me be empty.” **NO!**

“Let me have all things” at least life! **YES!** “let me have nothing!” **NO!**

My discomfort exposed the limitations of my own commitment. I wanted a covenant on my terms. I wasn’t ready to pray:

“I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.”

But I wanted to be able to do so! With David’s encouragement, I decided to make the prayer part of my daily devotions. Maybe I would come to embrace the whole prayer.

Uncertainty continued about the future. It became evident that the pace and stress of the active episcopacy was too much for my weakened heart. Being laid aside from that position was necessary.

But new doors opened. I joined the faculty at Duke Divinity School and was “ranked” with a marvelous community of students and scholars. For seven years, I relished my new vocation!

Then we hit another brick wall. Linda was diagnosed with Frontotemporal Dementia, a progressively debilitating disease. The Covenant Prayer again came to the forefront of my daily prayers. This petition was repeated several times daily:

“I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.” *(concludes Page 7)*



JANUARY 2018



Birthdays

2 - Julie Nelson Law

7 - Oneida Zavoral

15 - Bonnie Zappa

21 - Garel Link

25 - Leanne Clouse

Christi Nelson



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 6:30 pm Voice Choir S 7:30 pm Handbell Choir FH	4 4-7pm Head Start Family Night and Angel Closet	5	6 Epiphany/Twelfth Night 1:30 pm United Church of God
7 <i>1st Sunday in Epiphany</i> 9:30 am Worship Service	8 9:30am Martha Circle 6:00-8:00 pm KNITTING GROUP @ CG Library	9	10 6:30 pm Voice Choir S 7:30 pm Handbell Choir FH	11	12	13 1:30 pm United Church of God
14 <i>2nd Sunday in Epiphany</i> 9:30 am Worship Service	15 6:30pm Leadership Team FR	16	17 6:30 pm Voice Choir S 7:30 pm Handbell Choir FH	18 Noon RED ROCKERS EVENT North Pole Restaurant in Newport	19	20 1:30 pm United Church of God
21 <i>3rd Sun day in Epiphany</i> 9:30 am Worship Service	22 2:00 pm <i>Key</i> articles due	23	24 6:30 pm Voice Choir S 7:30 pm Handbell Choir FH	25	26	27 1:30 pm United Church of God
28 <i>4th Sunday in Epiphany</i> 9:30 am Worship Service	29 6:00-8:00 pm KNITTING GROUP @ Newport UMC	30	31 6:30 pm Voice Choir S 7:30 pm Handbell Choir FH	Room Use Designations C – Classroom FH – Fellowship Hall FR – Fireside Room N – Nursery S – Sanctuary	NEWPORT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1596 ELEVENTH AVENUE (AT GLEN ROAD) NEWPORT, MINNESOTA 55055-1649 JESUS CHRIST, HEAD; THE CONGREGATION, MINISTERS; REV. LINDA GESLING, PASTOR	

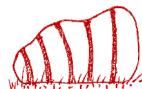
Being laid aside from the full time faculty position followed. A move to South Carolina “ranked” us with family and subsequently with some of society’s most vulnerable citizens, those with dementia diseases.

Wesley’s Covenant Prayer continues to challenge and enrich my life. The future remains uncertain. Amid the uncertainty is the confidence that whatever circumstances emerge, I will be able to more faithfully affirm

“I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it.” *Condensed from Kenneth Carder’s blog Shifting Margins. [c]2018 Kenneth Carder*



Words of Gratitude :Thank you so much for the Christmas gift of money and gift card. I so appreciate it and will especially think of all of you as I sip tea purchased with the Teasource gift card. The money is most welcome as well! Thank you.

I am also grateful for the encouragement and support I received for my adventure in Norway, taking part in the Nobel Peace Forum. The final invitation came through fairly last minute so having the support of the congregation made it easier for me to focus on making arrangements, packing, and planning for Oslo in December – weather, darkness, lutefisk.

For those of you who didn’t hear in church, the Nobel Peace Forum, which follows the awarding of the Nobel Peace, focused on indigenous issues of protecting environmental resources and sacred sites. Because of the process we are involved in of returning the Red Rock, I was invited to take part.

Taking part meant that I was the table of discussion in the Nobel Peace Institute – along with Sami people and Norwegian officials, Native Americans, and a mediator who was at Standing Rock. This was truly a once in a lifetime experience. Several opportunities for discussion were almost surreal as we sat in an Oslo hotel, with signs of Norwegian Christmas all around, and talked about Native American issues, especially Standing Rock. I also joined the annual event to honor the latest Nobel Peace Prize winner, a torchlight parade through the main streets of Oslo.

More personal to me were the walks around the city, being open to the possibilities for new experiences. One evening as I walked through the streets, I realized I was seeing the Oslo Cathedral, the main church of downtown Oslo. There was a line outside the church and I pondered what it might be. Theorizing it might be a concert, I got in line and found that yes it was the annual Christmas choir concert, and yes, there were tickets left. I paid for a ticket and found a place in the pews. The concert was glorious, the music soared into the rafters of the church, and I felt the joy and affirmation of the Christmas season.

I had planned to attend the Methodist Church on Sunday morning but instead I agreed to accompany one of the youth to a special event. I had not idea what it would be and wasn’t super happy about giving up a visit to the Methodists. This was the event where – as some of you heard – the Peace Prize winner and the Queen and Prince and Princess of Norway were present – helping me deal with my regret.

Not everything went well on the trip nor did the discussions get as far as I would have hoped. But I am so thankful for the opportunity and learned again that being open to the moment can bring unexpected joy. *Linda*

-a Retreat in the City-

Founded 1861 — Celebrating 156 Years of Ministry

Newport United Methodist Church
1596 Eleventh Avenue *(at Glen Road)*
Newport, MN 55055-1649

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



The Key is a monthly publication of Newport United Methodist Church, 1596 Eleventh Avenue, Newport, Minnesota. News items to run the following month are due in the Church Office by the 3rd Monday of the current month.



*A warm welcome
awaits you . . .*



Voice and Handbell Choirs
Adult Bible Study
United Methodist Women
Martha Circle
Fellowship Dinner Groups
Pastoral Care
Pastor: Rev. Linda J. Gesling
Cell Phone: 651-226-2738
Church Telephone: (651) 459-2747
Fax: (651) 769-1216
Church e-mail: newportumc@gmail.com
Web address: www.newportumc.org

EACH SUNDAY:

Worship Service at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School is available during worship. Adult Study follows at 10:45.

WEDNESDAYS:

Voice Choir at 6:30 p.m. - Handbell Choir At 7:30 p.m.

MISSION STATEMENT

Newport United Methodist Church is people of God dedicated to following the teaching of Jesus because we want to set an example so that we and others can grow in our faith.