



Outdoor Worship begins Sunday, June 6, 9:30am

Get your mug to church!

As the worst days of the pandemic are waning, I would like to offer you a word of encouragement: "Get your mug to church!"

Outdoor worship is beginning earlier than usual this year. No, we didn't move outside earlier in order to catch the earlier part of the gnat season. We are moving outside because going outside means singing!



Sing to the Lord a new song – or return to an old favorite, but sing! We will hear from members of the Praise Band and Choir, and we as a congregation will be invited to sing our hymns of praise together for the first time in 15 months.

We have had worship services throughout the pandemic, mostly online, but we have also had in-person services too. At first these had no music at all. Lately, we have been humming along with Norm as he plays hymns on the organ, but we have been forbidden to sing – and we have really missed it. Well, beginning June 6, we will be able to sing again.

Even when we have been meeting in person, we have been pretty rigid about not socializing: no hanging out in the narthex, no draping oneself over pews to chat with neighbors and no coffee hour. Well, all that's going to change when we go outside.

This summer we will have coffee & tea and refreshments set up so you can visit over a cuppa and then take your drink into the pavilion for worship. After worship, those who want can hang around and visit with a mug in hand. I know that many people have missed being able to mix and mingle far more than the pleasure of sitting in a pew to hear a boring sermon.

So, no excuses, this summer "Get your mug to church!"



We celebrate, honor and remember those living and passed on who have given their lives to serve our country.



Jamie, Adam & Ozzy Butcher; Roger Corlett; Jeff Cotton;
Jane Duewiger; Beth Hancock; John & Karen Kaitanowski;
Bessie Nottis; Helen & Marvin Wilson

Athletic Faith

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)

All too often, faith is defined as the ability to believe the unbelievable. I have heard good, well-meaning Christians assert that the real test of faith is to lay reason aside and to embrace utter credulity. Like the Red Queen in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, they boast of believing six impossible things before breakfast.

According to this view, ‘believing in’ miracles like the virgin birth, walking on water, parting the Red Sea, raising the dead, and multiplying loaves and fishes is the essence of faith – precisely because they contradict nature and reason. For some, faith is the ability to defy our senses, our experience, and our common sense.

I think that’s why people who espouse this kind of faith sometimes sound like they are bragging. They sound like your friend from CrossFit, who does 300 sit-ups a day even when he has the flu. People who make belief in the miraculous a test of faith seem to be telling us that they can bench press the virgin birth and curl the calming of the sea while standing on one leg, whistling Amazing Grace.

If you’re at all like me, when you encounter these feats of religious prowess you might feel like the 97- pound weakling invited to a body-building club. I used to feel that way too, but no longer.

I think all that heavy lifting of things that defy reason is not the measure of faith; it’s not a sign of being a superlative spiritual athlete.

I think it is far more important to cling to the hope that broken lives can be mended than it is to believe that once upon a time Jesus healed someone.

I think it’s more important to have the courage to start over than it is to believe that Jesus called Lazarus out of a tomb.

I think faith is the persistent hope that justice and peace are worth pursuing, even when corruption and violence seem to be winning.

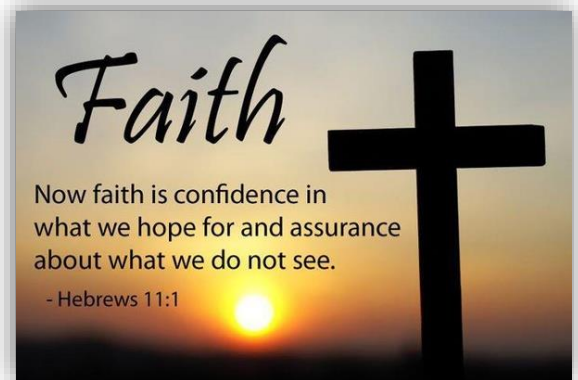
I think faith is the trust that humbly striving to be kind and attentive to the needs of others is success, even though it doesn’t lead to the corner office or the position of power.

I think faith is having a changed perspective that acts as though love is triumphant and that none of the powers of death or evil can ultimately defeat love in action.

Faith is the confidence, born of hope, that our frail and faltering struggles to live like Christ are not wasted. Faith is the assurance that God is at work in the world and in us. Faith is what keeps us running before the finish line is in sight.

-Pastor Lynn

Prayer: *Almighty God, work a miracle in me today; help me take another step in the dark. Amen.*





Birthdays:

Marilyn Fenske (6/1), Joann Ertel (6/2), Aaron Ertel (6/3), Andy Federmann (6/4), Chris Wilson (6/5), Jessie Gillette (6/6), Joyce Kaupa (6/6), Steve Jankowski (6/12), Joan Haney (6/15), Keith Kanaley (6/16), Mike Meyers (6/17), Gary Burdick (6/18), Roger Corlett (6/27), Shea Hamm (6/29), Tammy Kruszka (6/30)

Anniversaries

Ken & Tammy Kruszka (6/10/1989) * Ken & Shirley Haberman (6/24/1967)

If you would like a copy of the newest directory, please contact Michelle in the office.

On the Bread Line

Manna is a pretty important part of the story of the Exodus. When the people didn't have enough to eat on their wilderness wanderings, God sent manna.

The word manna means roughly, "what is it?" in Hebrew. Manna was ancient Israel's equivalent of 'mystery meat.' Manna kept the Hebrews alive as they trudged from slavery towards freedom, but they didn't relish it.

Yet manna was bread from heaven, the food of angels. It was a sign of God's love and providence. It was also only good for a day. You couldn't store up provisions; you had to trust that it would be there day after day.

Manna is bread for which we do not toil.

The fate of humanity since our expulsion from Eden has been to earn our bread 'by our sweat.' Manna is not the bread we sweat for. It's the bread of grace.

Maybe that's why the Hebrews complained about it. It's hard to know that your life depends on something you didn't produce or earn, something you couldn't make no matter how hard you try. They resented the daily reminder of their fragile vulnerability, their absolute dependence on God's kindness.

We still pray for manna: our daily bread. In our moments of spiritual honesty, we know that every day we eat the bread of angels; we are constantly dependent on bread for which we did not toil.

Our diet consists of manna, which daily reminds us that we are not sufficient to fulfil our deepest needs.

Manna is the hard grace that insists that we admit our emptiness if we ever hope to be filled.

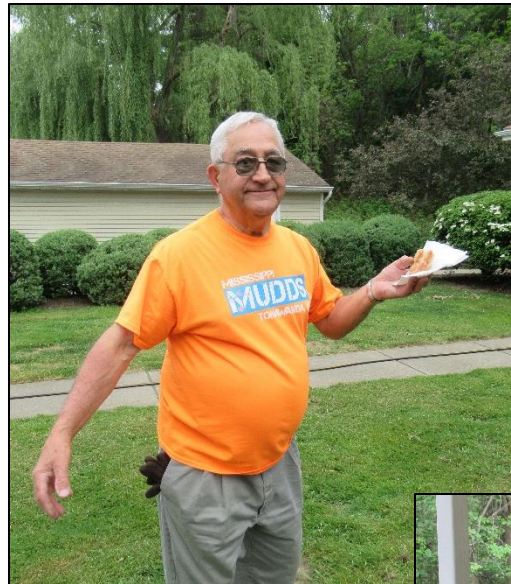
Prayer: *Look, if I could do this myself, I would. But I'm hungry again, so I'm back...*



Who Am I ?

1. I made the front page of the newspaper while building a snowman - Who Am I ?
2. I pitched a no hitter - Who Am I ?
3. I won a Bible for bringing the most kids to Vacation Bible School - Who Am I ?

(answers on last page)



THANK YOU to everyone who helped spruce up the church property by getting your (gloved/ungloved) hands dirty! Thank you for coming out on Saturday morning, May 22!

Photos by Linda Ferraro



There are a ton of misspellings on the Stanley Cup. Unfortunately, whoever is responsible for that task has committed plenty of errors over the years. Including accidentally spelling the Toronto Maple Leafs as "TORONTO MAPLE LEAES" and the Boston Bruins as "BQSTQN BRUINS." Hall of Fame goaltender Jacques Plante won the Stanley Cup for 5 consecutive years and his name is spelled differently each time, according to the NHL.



Tennis players are not allowed to swear when they are playing in Wimbledon. Because of this, line judges have to learn curse words in every language so they know when a player has violated the rules.

Go into the darkest room that you can find, one where there's no light at all and spend a few minutes with your eyes closed. Then, open your eyes and take a look around. While you'd expect to be staring into pitch-blackness, you'll actually notice that you're seeing a sort of dark gray shade; that color is called "eigengrau."

Ladybugs defend themselves by bleeding from their knees. They release foul smelling chemicals from their knees or they can also ooze from their abdomen. Predators learn the combination of colors orange, red, and black means an unappetizing taste and they avoid eating the ladybugs.



A Special Prayer

Peter's sermon in Acts 10:44-48 is interrupted by the Spirit who can't wait to bring his Gentile hearers into the family of Christ. Jesus calls us friends and commands us to love as he has loved us. The epistle of John (1 John 5:1-5) urges us to unite our belief with our loving. It is always a struggle to love. Love is strenuous, even exhausting, at times.

As we think ahead about the scriptures that call us to love, I invite you to enter into the prayer, which was published by the Pension Boards of the UCC in this month's *In the Know* newsletter.

You have created all people in your own image, but you have not created us all alike. We thank you for the rich diversity of humanity; it is a source of wonder and blessing. Sadly, that diversity is often distorted into a source of division as one group or person is pitted against another.

We bear witness to rising racial tensions, political polarization, economic disparity, religious intolerance, and other ruptures in our shared humanity.

Forgive us when we fail to be agents of wholeness and healing.

- Open our eyes that we might see all others as your children with birthrights of dignity and value.
- Open our minds that we might learn from those who are different from us.
- Open our hearts that we might extend love to people of all ages, tongues, races, abilities, orientations, and identities.
- Open our communities that we might collectively embrace the justice without which there can be no true unity.

You call us not merely to tolerate the grace-filled differences you have created among us, but to embrace them. Grant us wisdom to know the difference between uniformity and unity, and the courage to pursue the latter. May we join with one another and with you to establish a just world for all. Amen.

Answers to Who Am I ?

1. I did make the front page of my local newspaper with a picture of me and my brother and sister building a snowman. You would think it was in the WNY area but it was actually while I was living in Kentucky, we did get some snow at times.
2. I did pitch a no-hitter and had 12 strikeouts (softball game).
3. I won a Bible for bringing the most kids to Vacation Bible School, I brought 10 kids from my neighborhood. I also got to ride in a convertible in our VBS parade as the winner.

All of these Who Am I questions were about me - LaDonna Painter (I didn't want to just drop Who Am I, without trying to get more members to contact me with their own fun/interesting things they would like to share). Call or text me so I can continue Who Am I. (no more about just me) It is a fun way to get to know everyone.


Thanks, LaDonna (715-7310)

St. Matthew's United Church of Christ

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Faith, Hope & Love,
but the greatest of these is
LOVE.

BibleVerselImages.com

-1 Corinthians 13:13