



Slip of the Tongue

“So the tongue is a little member and boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!”
(James 3:5)

I can't read this verse without thinking of a story one of my professors told about his seminary days. At the University of Chicago Divinity School, students regularly preached in the chapel. Outside the chapel (near the lunchroom) was a sign that listed their sermon title and their name right below. My professor was preaching on this passage from James. He kept his sermon title short and sweet. So, there above his name on the sign outside the chapel, was “A Little Member.”

It's not the first time or the last time any of us have been embarrassed by our little member. Most of the trouble I have gotten in, most of the damage I have done, has been done by my tongue – the little member about which James warns us. A little member with an out-sized influence.

My favorite biblical passage about the dangers of wayward speech is Psalm 39. The author expresses a resolution to “keep a muzzle on my mouth,” but the resolution fizzled out like so many January 1st pledges to go to the gym every day. “I held my peace to no avail... my heart grew hot within me. While I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue.”

No one likes the silent treatment, but I sure wish I was better at giving it. Better to dish out silence than to speak when the fire burns.

It's axiomatic that preachers are talkers, but there's a difference between the careful presentation of a sermon and ordinary talk. I'm a talker, especially when I'm trying to figure something out. I talk to hear what I'm thinking. (This kind of talk is often better done without witnesses present, something you would think I would know by now.)

The worst kinds of talk I ever engage in are defensive talking. Feeling scared or threatened is a precarious time to talk.

Psalm 39 goes on to recognize that instead of talking when feeling threatened, the best antidote is trust in God.

Feeling threatened and fearful can lead to self-justifying babbling, or worse, it can lead to verbal attacks on those who are opposing us.

The person who trusts in God — really trusts — doesn't allow this anxiety to bubble up and spill out into speech. We can trust that God has our back, even when we're misunderstood or maligned or attacked. Knowing this relieves us of the necessity of battling with our little members.

-Pastor Lynn

Prayer: *I'm sorry for the thoughtless and harsh words, for throwing a sharp elbow with a snide remark, but it's my lack of faith that I regret most of all. You have already spoken for me in Christ; I don't have to answer every challenge. Amen.*



PRAYERS
of the
CHURCH

Jeff Cotton; Jane Duewiger; Robin Federmann; Jack Gertner; Ken Haberman; Paul Hayes;
John & Karen Kaitanowski; Ron Larson; Jewell McFarland; Barbara Middaugh; Jean Roth;
Jerry Severino; Helen Wilson

Our condolences to the family of Shirley Jones who passed away January 17th. Prayers of God's comfort for Shirley's children David & Darlene, Chris & Tom Kluckhohn, Shirmaine and her grandchildren...and friends who knew and loved her.

Our prayers also go out to the family and friends of Patricia Headlee who passed away on January 20th. God's comfort and peace for Sue & Russell Rich, grandchildren Clara, Madison & Jessica, Hannah & Justin Shuttleworth, and Pat's dear friends.



February Birthdays

Don McMillan (2/2); Jeanette Haberer (2/4); Lauren Zdrojewski (2/10);
Sandy Morgan (2/17); Bill Hamm (2/22); Robynn Rich (2/27)

February Anniversaries

Steve & Nancy Jankowski (2/1/1969)
Clayton & Dolly Errington (2/15/1955)
Ken & Sharon Mooney (2/18/1965)

St. Matthew's UCC
will be having a celebration in honor of
**Rev. Gary Burdick for 50 Years of Ordained Ministry
in the United Church of Christ**



Gary's ordination anniversary will be celebrated in worship by sharing some memories of his ministry in the Western Area, including his interim ministry here at St. Matthew's (twice), his long years of leadership at Dunkirk, and his pastorates at other UCC churches. This is an opportunity to let Gary know how much his selfless ministry has meant to us.

The celebration will continue with a time of fellowship and refreshments following the service.

If you plan to attend, please contact the church office by calling 649-1532 or email office@stmattsucc.org.

(If you like, you can also honor Gary's faithful, loving ministry by making a gift to Dunkirk's 2nd Century Fund. Note on check: "In honor of GVB" and you can give it to Jay Rich or donate on Dunkirk's website: dunkirkcc.com. How about \$50 for 50?)

* Gary's 50th anniversary was June 1, 2020. The pandemic delayed the celebration.



Craft Day!

**Saturday, February 5,
10am-12noon**

Devon Asboth and Vanessa Rich will be showing us how to make beautiful necklaces. There are examples on the table in the narthex, as well as the sign-up sheet. Please sign up by contacting Devon (716-465-5619).

Cost: \$10. Snacks provided.

Brown Bag Bible Study

Come share a time of fellowship and discovery as we continue to delve into the book of Romans. Each Wednesday at noon you can bring your lunch, your favorite bible, and your curiosity about Paul's most intriguing letter. Feel free to drop in whenever your schedule allows. We will not be meeting during Lent/Holy Week.



Looking ahead to **LENT**

Ash Wednesday Service

March 2, 2022

7:00 pm



Lenten Soup Suppers & Services

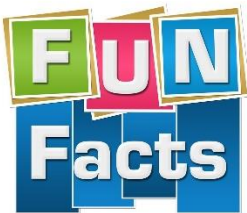
From Wednesday, March 9 through April 6

Soup Supper will start at 6pm. Sign-up sheets will be posted if you'd like to make soup.

Time out for Trivia! (answers bottom of page)

1. Who was the only bachelor U.S. president?
2. If you were eating du Barry, what would you be eating?
3. What was the first capital of the U.S.?
4. What does a funambulist do?
5. What was Mountain Dew's original slogan?

Fun Facts & Trivia submitted by LaDonna Painter



The potato chip was born out of pure annoyance. In 1853, an unhappy customer at a restaurant in Saratoga Springs, NY kept complaining that his French fries were not thin enough. The irritated chef eventually sliced the potatoes so thin they could not be eaten with a fork when fried. The potato chip was born.



An interesting simile of why pearls are the best gifts for the angry girlfriend – oysters actually make pearls to get rid of a nagging pain. When a parasite or a grain of sand or debris gets inside their shell and causes their soft bodies discomfort, they coat it with multiple layers of “nacre”. Eventually, a beautiful pearl is born.

Thank you for your continued generous support of the day-to-day operations and ministries of St. Matthew's.

Your financial support for St. Matthew's is needed. The disruption of the pandemic has been hard on our budget and so, if you can, please make a gift to support the ministry of St. Matthew's. You can send your donations by mail, or use your bank's online bill paying utility, or by giving online at St. Matthew's website.

We use more salt to get ice off our roads (8% of the global salt production) than to eat (6% of the global salt production).

Trivia Answers:

1. James Buchanan Jr.
2. Something made up of cauliflower
3. Philadelphia
4. He is a tightrope walker.
5. Yahoo! Mountain Dew...It'll tickle your innards!!

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