



THIS MONTH

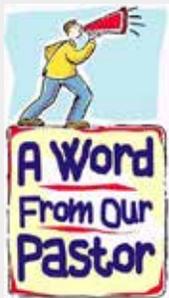
January/February 2019



The Calvary United Methodist Church Newsletter

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minister's message



As we begin the new year, I can't help but think about story found in Exodus 14:21-22 which states, "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with

a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left." With the Egyptian army behind them and a wall of both their right and left, the ancient Israelites had no choice but to move forward.

For United Methodists, February will dictate the trajectory of our denomination as we seek to resolve our official stance on human sexuality. On a more local level, Calvary has decided to undergo a local church assessment. Essentially, our congregation has requested a study task force to assist in an extensive study of the past, present, and potential ministry of our church. Lastly, as

individuals, each of us must wrestle with the drama and trials that are in store in 2019.

I imagine many of the Israelites were scared, confused, and second guessing their decision to leave the comfort of Egypt. That's only natural. However, left with no other options, they were forced to simply put one step in front of the other until they made it to their destination. However, by the end of the process, with the benefit of perspective, we can surmise the people were able to more fully grasp all the ways God had been present and working all along.

Taking a page out of their book, let us place one foot in front of the other. If you feel anything less than assured this year, lean upon your fellow brothers and sisters in faith. We seek to move forward together trusting that God is at work within our midst.

In Christ,

Andy

women's basketball outing

Join the fun with a Calvary outing to the 2 pm Sunday, January 27 University of Michigan Women's Basketball game against the Michigan State University at Crisler Arena. It's Maize Out event!



bigelow memories

To close out 2018, Calvary received a very generous gift along with this message:

This donation is in loving memory of George & Virginia Bigelow who so very much enjoyed the fellowship of the church for more than 60 years. Please use the money for whatever the church needs.



sing with friends

Join the Calvary Singers and enjoy singing with friends during the Sunday service! Practice is generally at 9 am on Sundays to prepare for that day's service and preparation for a few weeks ahead.



morning in home help needed

Jude Fardig is looking for someone who could come to her house to keep her parents compa-

ny (including preventing her mom from letting the dogs outside!) while she takes a class at WCC 8-12 Mondays and Wednesdays.

Can you help? She proposes perhaps different people help for a month, one week per month, or one day a week? Whatever works! Plus she will pay the helper. Please contact Jude at (734) 272-2014 or walldig55@comcast.net.

celebrating the legacy

In the last quarter of 2018 three people who were once in the mix of the many phases of Calvary United Methodist Church made their heavenly transition. We remember them all with sadness that they have departed this life journey but with joy that they have begun their heavenly mission.

Patricia A. Fischer passed away on September 28, 2018. She was an active member of Calvary United Methodist Church for many years and volunteered in multiple roles as her obituary states.

Perhaps one of the more familiar areas of her contributions was as part of the vocal music ministry and her role in producing the Calvary Cooks collection of recipes.

Barbara A. Robinson passed away on November 24, 2018 and is remembered for attending Calvary, blending her alto voice among the Calvary Singers, and fostering a "Soap and Socks" ministry for local shelters which Calvary faithful helped support with soap donations.



Gail Davis Barnes passed away on December 8, 2018. Gail attended Calvary with her daughters, Regina and Raegan, until they graduated from high school. She is remembered for her smile, her piano talent and her work with the youth, especially in producing Christmas programming.

The full obituaries for each can be found and read at MLive.

local church assessment

Calvary will begin the local church assessment process this month with an orientation meeting at Milan's Marble Memorial Church on Thursday, January 17 from 6-8 pm. The subsequent four meetings will be held at Calvary. We will complete five worksheets as a part of a report to the District Assessment Team who will present us with options for going forward. Pastor Andy will work us to make decisions about these options.

The purpose of this study is to assess the past, present and potential ministry of these churches with an eye toward making decisions about future ministry and the best use of resources. The recommendations will be based on:

- a. What is the potential for ministry in the community?
- b. Does the church currently have the resources (leadership and financial/facilities resources) to serve the community through ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness?
- c. Is the church currently able to fulfill its call to ministry and to optimize the stewardship of the ministry resources available?



As We Start the New Year

faithful intentions

New Year's Resolutions have always been a very pass/fail sort of test for me. I set myself up to forgo chocolate and lo and behold, two weeks into the New Year, I find myself munching nonchalantly on fudge. In the immortal words of comedian Steve Martin, "I forgot." But worse, one slip up and I feel like I have failed. I can't go back to "the day before the fudge" so what's the point? My record is no longer perfect.

But that is the whole point from a spiritual perspective. We're not perfect. But we are improving.

Resolving to be more spiritual is not a hard date to keep or a hard bar to leap over. It's a daily resetting of your mind and soul. It's try-

ing again when you "fail" and knowing that you can never fail if you're trying. It is...grace. Here a few ideas for growing spiritually and for spurring you to think of your own.

1. Count to 10

Your mother was right — or, maybe it was my mother — but anyway, counting to 10 is an age-old axiom for a reason. Our first reactions to things may be influenced by how stressed we are at the moment, what just happened in that meeting or where our blood sugar levels are hovering. Do you really want to snap at someone because you are mad at someone else? Especially, if it that someone else is yourself?

Taking a few seconds to think before speaking takes discipline and practice. But taking time to respond when you feel emotional is a spiritual exercise that will help you be more centered and more caring. Make sure you eat first.

2. Breathe

But I am! Right? Breathing is an involuntary response of the body. One that happens regardless of whether we're aware of it. But breathing can become shallow or quick when we are anxious or stressed — and that is when we need oxygen the most.

There are over 30 verses in the Bible that mention breath and they seem to often be connected to or representative of Spirit, of God.

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. — Job 33:4

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." — John 20:22

Mindful breathing is essential to our spiritual life because it connects our heads with our bodies and our bodies with our hearts. When I feel

afraid or physically sick, I breathe 10 times as deeply and calmly as I can and remind myself that it will be OK. And it is.

3. Think positive thoughts

I read that human beings think three or four negative thoughts to every positive one. My friends admit to beating themselves up for their shortcomings or worrying to the point of distraction about the future.

When things are going wrong, that's the most difficult time to be positive — and sometimes you just have to go to bed! But a steady stream of hopeful or reassuring thoughts can help bring us back to the truth that we are not alone.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) or simply, "It's going to be OK!" are better thoughts to think than, "I'll never be able to do it!" Thinking on the true and good thing (Philippians 4:8) is far better than allowing fear to overcome you. No matter how bad the situation is, remember you are loved beyond measure.

4. Love (and forgive) yourself

One of my favorite Bible verses ever, but one that has taken years for me to comprehend is "love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, among others). What does that really mean? I struggled with thinking loving the self was, well, selfish. Now, as an adult, I understand that you cannot love and accept others if you do not love and accept yourself. You cannot express unconditional love if you do not first practice it with yourself.

There is a beautiful song by the Bluegrass band Mountain Heart that lists the writer's transgressors and his success in forgiving them. Notice the last line.

*I forgive my daddy for missing half my life,
I forgive my momma for holding on too tight,
I've forgiven friends, strangers, neighbors, family,
Everybody... everybody... but me.*

Holding on to guilt can impact relationships because it blocks the flow of communication, of love itself. Practice grace — with yourself. You can't truly live your life until you do.



"Forgive your
brother or sister
from your heart."

MATTHEW 18:35, NRSV

5. Love one another (and forgive the ones you can't forgive)

Such a simple directive. Such a beautiful philosophy. Did He really mean the ones we disagree with, too?!

Learning to love in the manner Christ intended is more of a lifetime goal than an immediate accomplishment. The progress sneaks up on you over months, years, sort of like when I gave up the perfection of Yoga Magazine and settled for "getting better." Which is a nice verb phrase whose synonyms include "rejuvenate, restored and released."

Forgiving people who have hurt us may well be the most difficult task we are asked to perform as Christians. But if you keep "carrying all that anger, it'll eat you up inside," as Don Henley sang. The subtitle of the Rev. Adam Hamilton's book on forgiveness is, "Finding Peace Through Letting Go," and it means just that. And just know...it's a process. Accept where you are with it.

6. Pray — right where you are

I tend to agree with writer Anne Lamott that prayers are usually "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" or "Help me! Help me! Help me!" But as I grew spiritually, I began to pray for other people when I myself was hurting. It's been a powerful practice that has changed my perspective about what others go through and how many blessings I actually have.

A daily devotional, like the one offered at The Upper Room, a book of prayers from around the world, "A Bead and a Prayer," (as explained by United Methodist author, Kristen Vincent) and even crying, are all ways you can connect with God.

Pray. Pray in the way that works for you. If you haven't in a while, if you don't believe it works... then pray that. God's not afraid of your doubt. Praying is something you can do wherever you are.

7. Be grateful — and be joyful

I woke up one morning when all I wanted to do was cry, and I heard clearly in my head:

This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

the refrigerator page

(you know, to hang on the frig door, so you don't miss anything)
Check your bulletin for details and dates and times that may change.

FREE CALVARY BREAKFAST — Sunday, January 13, 9-9:45 am
Join special invited guests and enjoy a hot breakfast before church!

DONATION COLLECTION — January 13 (and every 2nd Sunday)

RELIGION IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY — after fellowship, January 20
Book based discussion on Religion in the Age of Technology. This Sunday's discussion based on Chapter 4: The New Alchemy.

UM WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAME OUTING — Sunday, January 27, 2 pm
Join the fun at the University of Michigan Women's Basketball game against Michigan State University at Crisler Arena with Calvary friends.

FREE COMMUNITY CALVARY BREAKFAST —
Sunday, February 11, 9-9:45 am
Join special invited guests and enjoy a hot breakfast before church!

DONATION COLLECTION — February 10 (and every 2nd Sunday)

RELIGION IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY —
after fellowship, February 17
Book based discussion on Religion in the Age of Technology. This Sunday's discussion based on Chapter 5: Technology Goes Global.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS — Sunday, March 10, 2 am

FREE CALVARY BREAKFAST — Sunday, March 10, 9-9:45 am
Join special invited guests and enjoy a hot breakfast before church!

DONATION COLLECTION — March 10 (and every 2nd Sunday)

RELIGION IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY — after fellowship, March 17
Book based discussion on Religion in the Age of Technology. This Sunday's discussion on Living in an Information Age.

DONATION COLLECTION — April 14 (and every 2nd Sunday)

EASTER CELEBRATION — Sunday, April 21
Easter service followed by Easter Egg Hunt for kids!

ALSO LOOK FOR the next Spaghetti dinner!

Weekly Activities:

HOLY YOGA — Tuesdays, 5:15 pm

Faithful Intentions continued from page 4

So, I played "Happy" by Pharrell Williams, instead.

Gratitude is a spiritual practice that will change your life. It's not just that it shifts your focus from what you don't have to what you

do have. It can lift your spirits in such a way that helps you cope when you are down.

Joy is an inside job but it can be inspired by external things. Music. Children. Nature. Art. Find them.



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1415 Miller
Ann Arbor, MI 48103



**Bring
a
Friend**

Please check and return to church office to cancel newsletter

The Calvary United Methodist Church Newsletter

Rev. Andy Lee, Pastor
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Sunday Worship 10:00
Sunday School 11:15

Faithful Intentions continued from page 5

8. Think of the other fellow

That is what my mother used to say. "And you'll feel better."

When I was little, I thought doing things for others was about, well, others. It was the right and proper thing to do, but I wasn't sure it was necessarily fun. But as an adult, I realized it did far more for me than it ever did for anyone I ever helped.

The Wesleyan tradition holds that faith and good works belong together. "We offer our lives back to God through a life of service."

You cannot help someone else and not be changed yourself. Which may be the coolest paradox of "do unto others as you would have done unto you." Try it.

You don't have to master all spiritual practices this week or even this year. But you can earnestly strive to be more spiritual at any point in time. It is an on-going practice. A resolution you can re-make daily.

Happy New Year.

Laurens Glass, United Methodist Communications

"A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition" is used in the Covenant Renewal Service, often celebrated on New Year's Eve or Day. This version is on page 607 in the United Methodist hymnal.

A COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
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.
And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.