



The Messenger

Mogadore United
Methodist Church

February 2024

HOW IS IT WITH MY SOUL? HOW DOES MY SOUL PROSPER?

LENT 2023

Lent begins on February 14 Ash Wednesday; as individual disciples of Jesus and together as a community of faith we begin a sacred journey of renewal in God in which we are especially mindful of the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and giving to those in need. A key part of this blessed time of renewal is penitence. Penitence is an honest recognition of our shortcomings and the need for God's grace to make holy our thoughts, words, and acts. Penitence involves our willingness to name our sins, to change our ways, to trust in God's grace and forgiveness, and to let God's love heal us so that we in turn can forgive others and ourselves for our mistakes, and to make amends whenever we can. Our United Methodist Wesleyan tradition offers us some very helpful tools for our Lenten renewal.

Let's begin the journey with a moment of Methodist history. In 1729 John Wesley and his brother Charles were students at Oxford University in Cambridge, England. They and other young men felt called to deepen their Christian commitment through Bible study, prayer, regular holy communion, and by keeping spiritual diaries. These disciples recognized that to grow in Christ we need each other. As I reflected on the vision of our spiritual ancestors, I became aware of how their wisdom is seen today in organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous in which authentic participation in the group process allows for profound personal transformation which in turn brings new life to families, workplaces, and communities. In like manner, the members of the Holy Club spiritual formation society recognized long ago that to love God was to love others outside of their circle and that personal transformation leads to social change. In fact, the participants in the Wesleyan Holy Club began to share the love of Jesus by visiting prisoners, serving the poor, and educating children. Because of the emphasis on clarity of purpose and mutual accountability, these men were mocked as "Methodists" for governing their spiritual growth in such methodical ways. Later this spiritual movement grew beyond Oxford; in defiance of social norms and cultural patterns this movement grew to include women and persons of all social classes. Eventually the spiritual work was carried out in groups called societies, class meetings and bands.

This Lent we are invited to embrace the Wesleyan spirit of the class meetings. The core question for these methodical, accountable spiritual small groups was: How does your soul prosper? This question is often stated today as: How is it with your soul? Either phrasing has merit, but I think the earlier version captures the goal of the meetings more effectively — the goal being growth in the love of God. What if we were this Lent to ask ourselves each day — How does my soul prosper? What actions, words, or thoughts made me more like Jesus? In the Wesleyan spirit we might seek out a partner or circle of the faithful with whom we could share our journey honestly, or we might spend time alone with God in silent prayer reflecting or by keeping a spiritual diary. Being methodical, Wesley gave his fellow disciples twenty-two questions to use as they pondered the prosperity of their souls. We will be using these questions for our Lenten reflection in worship, and they have been included for you in this newsletter.

(continued on page 2)

The Lord may put other questions on your heart which would foster your spiritual renewal this Lent. Bring to the love and wisdom of God the "failures, sins, temptations, and inner battles" (holinesstoday.org, 2019) you face as you seek to become more holy and more filled with the fullness of Love. In like manner, dare to name with joy the ways God's grace is making all things new in your life.

Let us journey together the Wesleyan way with Jesus this Lent !

Rev. Pam

These are 22 questions the members of John Wesley's Holy Club asked themselves every day in their private devotions more than 200 years ago.

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it/
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

Treasurer's Report

Balance in General Fund as of January 1, 2023		\$18,363.65
January Offerings	12,943.02	
January Disbursements	14,937.01	(-1,993.99)
February Offerings	11,191.21	
February Disbursements	15,379.20	(-4,187.99)
March Offerings	18,586.63	
March Disbursements	12,631.98	5,954.65
April Offerings	13,574.80	
April Disbursements	12,453.96	1,120.84
May Offerings	9,465.01	
May Disbursements	1,734.19	(-5,269.18)
June Offerings	10,136.50	
June Disbursements	10,529.58	(-393.08)
July Offerings	10,801.42	
July Disbursements	16,007.97	(-5,206.55)
August Offerings	17,615.67	
August Disbursements	15,774.28	1,841.39
September Offerings	15,184.55	
September Disbursements	12,405.22	2,779.33
October Offerings	9,961.24	
October Disbursements	13,024.99	(-3,063.75)
November Offerings	17,118.49	
November Disbursements	16,002.71	1,115.78
December Offerings	13,246.02	
December Disbursements	16,725.42	(-3,479.40)
Ending Balance on December 31, 2023		\$7,520.69

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Our December offerings were below average for a five Sunday month, and with the Christmas holidays, it is usually our best month of the year. The December disbursements of \$16,725.42 were a little above average, but did include our six-month insurance premium, and also our Christmas donations from the Outreach account for the Adopt-A-Family program.

If you are interested in online giving, please contact Kathy Lang, and she can get you set up. If you are unable to attend our Sunday morning service, offerings can be mailed to the church, or to my home address of 13523 Iris Ave., N.W., Mogadore, Ohio 44260.

— Barry Rudy, Treasurer

Our accompanist Fran Snyder has decided to retire at the end of February. Music has always been a big part of our church. We have over the years had many talented people that have made our services special

Fran came to us as an accompanist, but has been much more. She on her own has become our music director. She has planned and put together programs. She has worked with any of our congregation that wish to perform. None of this is in her job description.

Fran's enormous talent has blessed us from the day she came. We wish her the best in her retirement.

We will find a new accompanist but there is no way we will replace Fran; she is in a class by herself.

— Fred Slocum

February Birthdays

February 1 Paislee Triplett
 February 4 Sue Thomas
 February 6 Barb Turner
 February 11 Fran Snyder
 February 19 Russ Hull
 February 26 Dan Straight
 February 27 Linda Hunsucker



February Anniversary

February 25 Don & Joyce Whitmer



Scriptures for February

Noted below are the Scripture lessons for February. A wonderful spiritual practice is to read, ponder, and pray the passages before the Sunday worship service. Hearing the Scripture and the message will be a richer experience if you have taken a "sneak preview."

- February 4 Holy Communion Sunday
Isaiah 40: 21-31
Mark 1: 29-39
- February 11 Transfiguration Sunday
Scouts Sunday: Blessing of the Girl Scout Troop
Mark 9: 2-9
- February 14 Ash Wednesday
At the Table: Worship with the Imposition of Ashes
Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m.
- February 18 First Sunday of Lent
Psalm 51: 1-17
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Ashes will be offered
- February 25 The Second Sunday of Lent
1 Corinthians 1: 18-25
John 2: 13-22

Lent and Eastertide at MUMC

Lenten Bible Study: The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew
Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Ash Wednesday February 14
Rev. Pam will offer ashes at the Wildcat Cafe from 8:30 to 10 a.m.
Worship in Fellowship Hall at 10:30 a.m. Ashes and Prayer

Palm Sunday March 24 Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday March 28 Worship at 7 p.m.
A Celebration of Jesus' Faithful Love

Good Friday March 29 At the Cross with Christ
Our sanctuary will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for prayer.
All are invited to sign up for 30 minutes "at the cross" or you may come to the church as the Spirit moves you.

Easter Sunday March 31 He Is Risen!
Breakfast and Children's Treats at 9 a.m.
Festive Worship 10:30 a.m.

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends,

I recently had the opportunity to attend via Zoom a Leadership Conference held by West Ohio Bishop Palmer featuring renown UMC pastor and author, Adam Hamilton. I took notes to share with our church family only to discover a wonderful summary had been posted by Rev. April Casperson. Rev. Casperson had been a classmate of mine at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio; she now serves at MTSO, one of the organizations that sponsored this great event. I reached out to her and asked if I could republish her Facebook post which had such an excellent summary of the presentation. It was great to reconnect with her, and she was a very happy to allow me to publish her post-

If you have any questions or would like to be in conversation about the matters addressed at the event, please be in touch!

Rev. Pam

Long post ahead. This morning Bishop Palmer's West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church Leadership Clinic hosted Rev. Adam Hamilton. We had a substantial crowd in person (even with all the snow and school delays!) and a big livestream presence. It was invigorating and hopeful.

I appreciate how Rev. Hamilton, pastor of The Church of the Resurrection UMC, talked about leadership, the United Methodist Church, disaffiliation, and how we in the #BEUMC can truly reach out to our communities. He shared a couple of visioning resources with our group. Here are paraphrases — errors are mine; ideas are his.

Five Areas of Focus:

Leadership: Churches have to have a mission, a vision, and a plan. What is God's mission for our church? Christian perfection (love the whole world with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself ...)

Discomfort by nausea. When your church or the organization has two paths ahead — one that maintains the status quo, and one that looks much harder, and makes you sick to your stomach with the unknowns .. which path is Jesus on?

Change, innovate, improve or die. Your church or ministry setting can choose one of those four options. What are you going to choose?

It's all about the people and the relationships.

Leaders don't give up. Sometimes you need to just be gracious, accept the angry words, and then keep going.

Numbers and stats!

When you look at disaffiliation, the numbers tell the story:

- 35,000 churches have remained United Methodist #BeUMC
- 4,200 have disaffiliated and moved to the Global Methodist Church
- 3,500 have left the UMC and have gone independent

(continued on page 7)

It is interesting to note that many of the churches that have left the UMC have gone independent and have not joined the GMC. It is a very hard sell to convince churches to leave the UMC and join the GMC because you will not tolerate the inclusion of all people. Therefore, it is necessary to build other "rationales" for recruiting people.

Final Notes: You can read about regionalization (one of the primary tasks of the upcoming General Conference) in the comments.

Anyone can read The United Methodist Book of Discipline. Start with "Our Theological Task" (paragraph 105) and read for yourself about who we are as United Methodists. It is a breathtakingly hopeful and honest statement about who we are

You can find resourcing for your church and community about how we can close the kindness and justice gap. <https://resurrection.church/kindness/>

Why are disaffiliating churches choosing to go solo rather than joining the GMC? Churches that disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church are overwhelmingly choosing to remain independent rather than join the Global Methodist Church's splinter denomination. Why is that?

It was a great day. Methodist Theological School in Ohio and OhioHealth helped sponsor today's event. MTSO had a solid student and alumni turnout, and our students had great questions for Rev. Hamilton in the question and answer time. #MTSOStrong I am hopeful in so many ways about the coming months and years, and I am thankful for this connection. #BeUMC



Christmas Day Karen Hyde was called to heaven to God. She arrived in time to sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. A lot of you only know Karen as a voice on the phone that sang to you on your birthday. She has been part of my life for 60 years.

In 1954 a new girl came into my class. Her name was Karen Alice Miller and she was the smartest, most talented, funniest, and most beautiful girl I had ever seen. I convinced myself that God had sent this goddess just for me. I spent the next five years trying to convince her that this was God's plan. But God hadn't shared our plan with her and after high school she slipped away.

I never forgot her and would compare her to every woman I met.; none could compare. When I came home from the Army I heard she was married and had children. I wouldn't see her again for years.

One Sunday after church she walked up, tapped me on the shoulder, and asked, "Remember me?"

I thank God for the last few years that she came back into my life.

About five years ago she had a stroke that left her bed fast. I visited her once a week. We shared old times. She loved music; Sarah Brightman was her favorite. She loved cats and I learned to like them. No mean feat for a dog lover. We watched the birds out her window; she loved her birds. She collected angels and got a new one for her birthdays and Christmas. She had a big collection and now she is one.

Some would say it is madness to carry a torch for 60 years. First love never dies and the torch still burns. I will miss her sunshine smile, the lilt of her voice, and her wit that could cut like a knife. What I have left are a few photos and 1,000 memories. I will hold them close until God calls me and we can share them together.

— Fred Slocum

There are many ways you can lend a hand here at MUMC without officially being on a committee. Among the ways are:

- Greeting ion Sunday morning
- Helping the Altar Guild prepare Communion
- Assisting the Trustee Committee with various tasks
- Serving as a worship leader
- Providing special music on Sunday morning
- Helping with set-up and clean-up for special events.

Contact Joyce at the church office (330) 628-1232 or email her at mogadoreumc@att.net if you are interested or need more information.



Valentine's Day Prayer to the Father

Dearest Heavenly Father,

I want to thank You for the precious gift of love You have given to the world and to me. Thank You for blessing me every day with this love and the power and strength that I get from You every single day. Without Your love for me I can't be ... I can't function ... I can't even breathe ... because I need Your love to sustain me. It's like food and medicine for my soul Lord.

Please continue to let me feel Your comforting love in my life and Lord I give myself over to You to perfect in me this gift of love ... that I may be able to express it and share it with others. Lord, I have not always been good at this ... forgive me. Lord, some people are harder to love than others, but I want to be like Your Son Jesus, so please continue the work You are doing in my heart so my heart will be like Yours. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Ash Wednesday, February 14 8:30 to 10 a.m.: Ashes at the Wildcat Café 10:30 a.m. Ashes and Prayer Worship in Fellowship Hall All are welcome!				1	2	3
4 Holy Communion Sunday	5	6	7 10:30 a.m. Bible Study 6 p.m. Girl Scouts	8	9	10
11 Transfiguration Sunday Scouts Sunday	12	13	14 Ash Wednesday (see box above for more information) 6:30 p.m. Rebecca Circle	15	16 7:30 a.m. Meet at the church for Open M Mountain of Food	17
18 First Sunday of Lent	19 Office Closed 6 p.m. Naomi Circle at Beef O'Brady's	20	21 10:30 a.m. Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Portage Patchers 6 p.m. Girl Scouts	22	23	24
25 Second Sunday of Lent	26	27 6:30 p.m. United Women of Faith Pledge Service	28 10:30 a.m. Bible Study	29		



Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. Pamela Buzalka

Church: (330) 628-1232

Parsonage: (234) 813-9040

Pastor's Cell: (216) 704-0307

Accompanist: Fran Snyder

Custodian: David Smith

Secretary: Joyce Selzer

The mission of the Mogadore United Methodist Church is to follow the example of Jesus Christ, demonstrating Christ's love and service to others through worship, outreach, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Mogadore United Methodist Church
3828 Mogadore Road, Mogadore, OH 44260
(330) 628-1232 Email: mogadoreumc@att.net
Website: www.mogadoreumc.org
Find us on FaceBook!
Church Office Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays