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Special Points of Interest:

- May! Monthly Meetings, Back Page
- May! Birthdays and Anniversaries included with Calendar

Administrative Assistant
Office Hours:

Monday,
Wednesday &
Thursday:
9:30 am - 1:00 pm



Faith Messenger



MAY

Faith United Methodist Church
"Engage, Equip, and Empower!"

Volume 2023
Issue 5

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Ones,

Have you ever tried to give a dog a pill? I will say it's easier than giving a cat a pill, but still can be a challenge. My dog Merry takes two pills in the morning and one at night. It is part of our daily routine. The cats make sure we are up on time so they can have breakfast at a decent hour, at night, the cats remind us when it is bedtime treat time and Merry gets her medicine. She takes medicine for itching and for her heart murmur. I used to try putting the pills in a tasty treat like a piece of cheese, and that would work for a while, then she stopped eating cheese, so I tried a piece of hotdog and that worked for a while, then she stopped eating hotdogs. Adding to the problem, my cats thought this was a fun game and would race to the pill treat to see if they might want it. Merry will not usually eat out of my hand, so I had to put the pill treat on the floor, and the cats would come to sniff it and see if they might want it. Merry is very docile and will let the cats eat before she does. The cats would never want to eat the pill treat, but would pick it up and carry it somewhere, so I would be chasing them to get Merry's treat back. So, this was an every morning and night routine, trying to find something Merry would eat to hide the pills in and then chasing cats to get the pill treat back and hope Merry would eat it.

This went on until I asked my vet about it and he suggested something called pill pockets and now my life is changed forever! Pill pockets are a wonderful invention! They are a treat that Merry loves and they are shaped with a pocket where you put the pill, then roll into a ball and I place it on the floor and Merry runs to it and eats it before the cats know what's happening! Thank you to the makers of pill pockets for making my life easier.

Think about all the modern conveniences we have to make our lives easier. Robot vacuums, high speed internet shopping, curb-side pick up at the store, and so much more. We even have modern ways of making our walk with God easier. We have wonderful church buildings with heating in the winter and AC in the summer, parking right next to the door, someone to hand us a bulletin. We have all kinds of bibles with different translations to make our reading of God's word more enjoyable and assessable. We have thousands of devotionals to give us daily bites of God's word, with a story to read so we can relate the word to our lives. We have bible studies to attend with our friends so we can have fellowship along with our Godly walk. We have groups to join so we can live out our calling from God in community with other believers.

With all these conveniences why are some of us still in the ditch and not on the path with Jesus? How much easier will it have to be to put God into our weekly routine, our daily routine, our minute-by-minute routine? If cats can keep a routine, surely we can and make Jesus a part of it. I pray you will take advantage of the God given conveniences we have! Your life will be the better for it.

Blessings, *Pastor Carolyn*

Prayer Requests

Remember our church members & friends who are less mobile and are unable to join us as often as they would like, including:

Colony Court: Joe Tollefson, Shirley Burdick

Janesville Nursing Home: Nina Youngberg

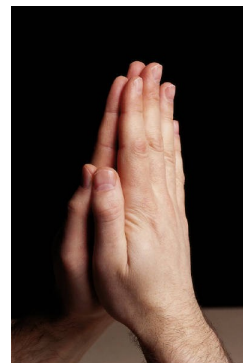
Traditions Assisted Living Owatonna: Ardella Draheim

Benedictine Living Community: Chuck Youngberg

Lakeshore Inn: Leona Quast,

Foxdale: Lucille Kubista

Prayer Requests from Sunday Worship: Sue Baldini, Roger Groskreutz and family, Kara Ecoff, Tim Dahnert, Gail Sauer, Beverly Peppenger, health care workers, first responders, and those who are most at risk and vulnerable to Covid-19, those who battle chronic illness and pain.



Administrative Assistant Hours

Stacy's hours are typically Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. Days or hours are subject to change at times. It is best to call ahead if you need to visit the office. Hours will be posted in the weekly bulletins. Stacy will be out of the office on **Thursday, May 4** and **Thursday, May 25**.

Soap Closet

Faith UMC is participating with Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) as a drop off site for their "Soap Closet". It is a program to help those in need with hygiene supplies in our county. The drop off box is located in the narthex. Items they are looking for include the following:

- New men's, women's and children's underwear and socks
- Toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Body Wash or bar soap
- Q Tips
- Hand soap/hand sanitizer
- Toilet paper
- Feminine products
- Baby wipes/diapers/powder/soap
- Laundry detergent
- Dish soap
- Deodorant

Please consider donating items to help with this cause.

Thank You!

A big thank you to all who helped make the Spring Luncheon such a success! We will have more information in the next newsletter.

Sunday School

Sunday school will meet May 14 and May 28. Sunday school will not be held during the summer months. We will resume again in September.

Rock Party

Watch the bulletins and poster announcing a 'ROCK PARTY' coming in May.

2023 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes have finally arrived and can be picked up in the narthex. If your envelope number was previously higher than 75, you have been assigned a new number. Also, if you did not previously have envelopes, please check the table because you may have been assigned envelopes. If you do not have envelopes and would like some, please let Stacy know.



United Women in Faith - Tea Party

Monday, May 15 at 1:00

Fancy dress is fun but not required (hats, gloves, jewelry, etc.)

Ruth Circle is hosting.

RSVP Edy Barber at 320-330-2107

Everyone welcome. Games too!

The business meeting will follow, with Prayer & Self Denial service and offering.

Ruth Circle

Ruth circle met Monday, April 17th.

The meeting was hosted by Lorraine and Roberta. The Sugar and Cream pie and ice cream with toppings that was served complimented the program, 'Sugar and Cream'.

Roberta shared her collection of miniature sugar and creamer sets. She talked about tidbits about sugar and cream and then about what it says in the Bible about sugar and cream.

The main point of the program was; keep your body in good shape so you can serve God to your fullest.

The devotion that was read covers a lot of the message of the program.

3 John 1:2: "May you prosper in all things and be in good health even as your soul prospers".

Guard your spiritual and physical health. Those are the only real treasures that we have. If we lose those things, all the money in the world cannot help us. So let's choose to be healthy and wise and be God's people.

God has given all of the principles for health management in his Word, the Bible. The Bible is the owner's manual for your body. As David says, *"You made my body, Lord; now give me sense to heed your laws"* (Psalm 119:73 TLB).

One key verse today says, *"Keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity"* (Proverbs 3:1b-2 NIV).

What are some of those commands? In Proverbs 3:5-10a it says *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom."*

Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones. Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain."

These verses highlight some factors that you probably don't think about but that will keep you healthy: tranquility, trust in God, integrity, humility, and generosity. These things will cause your health to be better, because your physical health is influenced by your spiritual health.

As important as health and fitness is, there must be balance, not obsessiveness. The Bible warns against being a slave to anything including health and fitness, and diets. (1 Corinthians 6:12). 12 "Everything is lawful for me," but not everything is beneficial. Scripture also addresses our motives warning against vanity (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Peter 3:3-4). The purpose of being healthy and fit is to serve God better, not so others will notice and admire us.

Since Jesus willingly paid for our bodies with His life, they must be worth a lot. Let's value them.

Roberta shared information about the Pampered Chef Event that was sponsored by the Women United In Faith and the Spring Luncheon that was held at the church.

The United Women In Faith has scheduled a unit meeting on Monday, May 15th at 1:00.

The plan is to have 'A Tea Party' and invite the women of the church. Elizabeth circle is planning the activities for the event and Ruth circle is acting as hostess and discussed plans for the tea party.

The next Ruth circle meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9th at 1:00 in The Gathering Room. The program will be 'Insulators'.

There's Room at the Table

Presently there are two women's Circles here at Faith Church: Ruth and Elizabeth. Monthly meetings are wonderful opportunities for us to come together at the table — for Elizabeth meetings it's at the large, welcoming table in the Lakeview Room — where our hostess of the month offers delicious treats and coffee as we gather for good conversation, laughter, and learning. Last month Sherry Scholljegerdes presented a short lesson on Seeds and their life-giving value. An avid gardener, she reminded us of God's plans for growing the earth and its people. She even had us making seed-art pictures as a take-home project, which was fun and a fine reminder of how we all work together with God to grow in His love and keep planting those seeds in our world.

April 19, Elizabeth Circle met, enjoyed delicious lemon pie offered by Wilda, our hostess, and heard Springtime readings given by Sandy. It brightened up a chilly, windy, cloudy day just to gather again at the big table; hearing the story of a modern-day hero and how he changed his corner of the world through acts of kindness. God has given all of us Special Gifts that are meant to be shared as we are led by His hand.

Faith women of all ages: we need you...we want your presence at our gathering tables. Please prayerfully consider joining — or returning to — a Circle. You will be welcomed (possibly with open arms!) as one of our sisters-in-faith.

Blessings, Karen Ferch
Sec. Elizabeth Circle



What Gardening Can Teach Us About Life with God

Peter White

Soon after my wife and I purchased our first home, I tilled the entire backyard. It was a pretty good size. “You tilled the ENTIRE backyard,” my wife asked. “Well, yeah,” I said, “Now I won’t have to mow it.” “But you’ll have to weed it,” she quipped right back. And so amidst a lot of weeding over the years, I come to find there are quite a few parallels to taking care of a garden and life with God.

When I was really young my dad had kept a garden, mostly to keep the grocery bill in a manageable range. So I have some very early memories lodged in my subconscious from sitting in the freshly tilled dirt and ordered rows of planted seeds. Years later when I was in seminary, I was living in Kentucky, and suddenly found myself swimming in ideas from voices like Sandy Richter and Matthew Sleeth and Michael Pollan and Bill McKibben and Wendell Berry. I was making all kinds of connections between food and theology, gardening and farming and spirituality.

There’s a quote from the monastics that goes along the lines of, “Sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.” The same is true of your garden plot. Be in your garden, and your garden will teach you everything. Here just a few things my garden has been teaching me through the years.

Gardening makes me slow down

There’s nothing like waiting for seeds to sprout out of the soil, then waiting for those seedlings to grow into mature plants, and then finally for those plants to bear fruit I can eat. It doesn’t happen overnight. In a world that keeps promising that I can have whatever I want whenever I want, gardening is a constant reminder that good things are worth waiting for.

When it comes to the spiritual life, I don’t arrive all in one fell swoop. Healthy growth is slow. Gardening cultivates my patience. The seed packet tempers my expectations, that if all goes right, it will be a month, two months, three months before I see fruit. I planted asparagus crowns and had to wait three years before something edible came out of the ground. The same can be true of our spiritual disciplines. It may take months, even years, before we see the benefits of them.

Gardening starts with the soil

You don’t have healthy fruit without healthy plants. You don’t have healthy plants without healthy soil. Roots are crucial for a healthy plant. Sure, leaves are pretty, but it’s the unseen roots that determine how successful a plant may be. There’s a lesson there. What’s unseen, buried in dark, is the true measure of what our fruit will look like. Our own initiative in our private devotional life can be the prime indicator of our capacity to be peaceful, joyful, patient, Spirit-filled people.

As Paul writes to the Ephesians, “Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.” Soil needs fertilizer. The best fertilizer is the footprints of the gardener, a person who cares and pays attention. The next best fertilizer is compost, the dead, useless and fruitless parts from last season. Pain, suffering, and wounds can, like compost, be what feeds new life in us. Plants may prove vulnerable to disease because of a lack of some nutrient in the soil. In the same way, if I continually find myself vulnerable to particular sins, is there something out of sync with my “soil,” that space that waters and nourishes my soul?

Weeds have to be taken by the roots

Nature always finds a way. That's, of course, a lesson I learned from the many times I watched the original *Jurassic Park* movie. And no matter how intentional I am about a particular vegetable bed, nature always has a way of growing something else there, too. Weeding has to be a consistent discipline. Everything growing in the bed that I didn't plant is in direct competition for the same soil, nutrients, and sunlight.

If I don't get the weeds up from the root—if I'm just stripping leaves off the stem or breaking the stem at the ground—they come right back the very next day. It can be this way in my spiritual life as well.

In Galatians 5, Paul not only lists the fruit of the Spirit, he also lays out “the desires of the sinful nature,” a litany of soul-weeds. I don't get to weed the garden once and call it a season. A consistent practice of confession can be one such way of uprooting these destructive weeds.

Having a plan helps

You can toss a seed packet in the backyard, and there's a good chance something will grow. Nature knows how to do this. But to have a plan is better. More stuff grows better with some planning and intentionality. Till the ground. Plant during the appropriate season. Space plants apart as needed. Keep plants from freezing. Watch for pests.

Your spiritual life needs a plan. Sure, growth can just happen. But more stuff grows better when you're paying attention and playing along. Journal. Reflect. Commit to practices. Be accountable to others. You have a part to play.

Gardening requires cooperation, not control

Nature knows what it's doing because God designed it that way. Try as we might, humans haven't yet found ways to improve the processes of nature. Grocery stores fool us into thinking anything grows anytime, but gardening teaches us to submit to the seasons. We can cooperate with nature's processes, but there's little we can do to control them. Gardening teaches me that I can't control everything. I can participate in the processes, but I don't get to be in control.

The Hebrew word for humanity is '*adam* (most English Bibles render it a proper name, Adam), and it's taken from the word for life-giving, healthy soil, the stuff for growing things in, '*adamah*. There's an explicit link in the biblical account between humans and soil. We're made of the same stuff. Productivity and efficiency and control, more often than not, produce unintended consequences in the spiritual life.

Gardening involves paying attention to diversity

A garden can be a wildly diverse place. Tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, beans, radishes, cabbages. Leafy greens and crunchy roots. Cool spring and autumn veggies and hot summer veggies. Plants that thrive in the sun and plants that need shade. Plants that need a lot of space and plants you can cluster close together. There are dozens of different varieties of tomatoes. But there's no one single strategy for growing everything.

I wonder if the practices that cultivate joy in me are the same ones that cultivate self-control. Church community is certainly a diverse environment like a garden. What grows one of us may not grow the rest of us. Centering prayer may be a practice that feeds my soul, but it might not yours. We're all unique, and our souls all respond to spiritual disciplines in different ways.

Gardening is good for the soul. It helps us slow down. It helps us pay attention. It helps us watch things grow. It helps us shape our imagination to see how we ourselves are growing deeper in the life of God.



Faith United Methodist Church

"Engage, Equip, and Empower"

**801 Fourth Ave. NE
Waseca, MN 56093**

Phone: 507-835-3167

Fax: 507-835-5400

E-mail: faithwaseca@gmail.com

www.faithwasecaumc.com

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56093

Change Service Requested

Come Worship with Us
We have room.

MONTHLY MEET-UPS:

Elizabeth Circle

Elizabeth Circle will **not** meet in May

Ruth Circle

Ruth Circle will meet on **Tuesday, May, 9** at
1:00 pm in the Gathering Room. The
program will be "Insulators".

Conversation, Bible & Friends

Conversation, Bible and Friends will **not**
meet on Monday, May 15 or Monday, May
29.