A Joyful Community of Faith loving God by serving all people including the least, the last, and the lost.

Pathways

Second Sunday of Lent - 2021

News from the Eureka Springs United Methodist Church

We are reopening the Church!

Starting today the church is open for in-person worship. The seating areas are still marked off to maintain social distancing, and masks are required and temperature checks will be conducted. With our numbers declining so rapidly and with so many receiving the vaccines the Leadership Team felt now is the time to start moving forward. If you feel like attending in-person worship then come on and join us. If you are not comfortable with this then by all means stay home and watch our services from the comfort of your home. Whether you are worshiping digitally or in-person we really don’t care how you dress, it will be great to see you. Worship will be different as we are not quite ready for the full choir to be in action, so please be patient as we experiment with different types and styles of music. Since each service is live-streamed the way we usually do things is different. We actually start on time at 10 AM without announcements and the greeting. Communion will only be offered via the Drive-Thru option. Our bulletin and newsletter will be completely digital with only a few hardcopies for those without computer access. We encourage you to use your iPads and computer devices to access the bulletin. Equipment rentals, ink, and maintenance of the copying machine is becoming a bad use of our stewardship so now is the time to embrace new ways of doing things. Bren and the music team are planning a series of Spring and Summer worship evenings out in our amphitheater, and we will hold a Sunrise service out there for Easter. We know the livestream has been problematic for watching. This is due to Internet service thru Cox. We have to have at least an upload speed of 16, but we are often only getting 4 or 8 on Sunday mornings. We are busily looking for alternatives, but the service will be posted to YouTube by Noon that you can watch without the glitches.
Conference Updates

The General Conference has expressed concerns that the Episcopal Fund, which finances our bishops, is running low on funds and will exhaust itself in less than a year. Proposals are being submitted to not elect any new bishops, thus allowing the retirement of the 15 who are eligible to eliminate those episcopal areas. Arkansas would most likely share a bishop with Louisiana. The pandemic is changing everything.

Despite the pandemic we have had a wonderful year of giving. We met our budget and expanded our missions as we served those who were hungry and sick throughout our community. We created digital worship and bible studies reaching an audience of nearly a thousand. None of this would be possible without your generosity and faithfulness. Let’s look forward to what 2021 holds for our church. God is good! All the time! Scan your phone’s camera over the QR code to be taken to a secure site to donate electronically.

Widows & Widowers Support group

Widows and widowers support group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at noon in fellowship hall (with masks & social distancing.) This is an active and growing group of folks who help each other through difficult times. If you are considering getting help come to one meeting and hear how others have faced similar problems. Contact: Virginia Voiers for more info at 479-981-1097 or vavoiers@aol.com

LIVESTREAM

Our livestream is now found on our church Facebook Page, and we also have a YouTube Channel under First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs. It is important to remember that our audience reach on Facebook is completely dependent on YOU! The more you like, share, and watch, the more Facebook pushes our page to more people. If you want a way to help out, then by all means “like” and “share”!

Digital Bible Study: “Resetting Racism”

Our digital study on racism and Social justice is now in its fourth week. We have had some great discussions (you can watch via the link on the group page) and some great posts and suggestions for further reading and actions. Currently we have over 100 people involved in all sorts of ways. You do not necessarily need to be available for the ZOOM discussion groups on Tuesday at noon and at 6. Videos of those discussions are posted on the group page. So join us and follow along, or actively participate, or post your questions and thoughts. Please send Facebook requests to join Blake Lasater.

Reopening Soon

Plans are underway to reopen the church. Infection rates and hospitalizations are down across our county and state, and with vaccinations currently go on we feel it is safe to move in that direction. We will continue to take precautions including temp checks and masks. We know it’s been a long year, and our spiritual and emotional and mental health is important too. Practicing our faith is a big help to all of these. Please get the vaccine!

Faith Talks are conversations that empower us to put faith, hope and love into action. United Methodist Women hosted a recent discussion on Black History Month and featuring Darryl W. Stephens, author of UMW’s 2021 Spiritual Growth study book, “Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom: Living into the Church’s Moral Witness through Radical Discipleship” and Emily Jones, United Methodist Women executive for racial justice. Take a listen: https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks
Join us live at 10 AM via the “First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs” Facebook page or Sunday afternoon you may watch it on YouTube, look for channel, “First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs” But please “share” the post or link as your witness to help us spread the Good News of God’s Love.

Prelude & Greeting

The Lenten Candle Ritual
(see page 5 for the liturgy)

Morning Prayer

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done. On Earth, as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

We Sing Praises to God

Listening to the Scriptures

A Prayer for Illumination

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light,
in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace;
through Jesus Christ our Friend. Amen.

Source: https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-illumination

A Reading from: Genesis 33:4-11
Thanks be to God for the Gift of the Scriptures

Thanks be to God

Special Music: Bren Marshell

The Message    “Deliverance from Myself”             Rev Blake Lasater

Giving & Receiving

We invite you to participate with us by gathering your own elements of bread and wine, as well as water,
the symbol of our baptism.

Remembering Our Baptism & Celebration of Communion

Sending Forth

A Musical Benediction

Go in Peace, and may the good Lord bless and keep you,
may the good Lord bless and keep you, till we meet,
till we meet again. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Opening Hymns:
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind, but now I see
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear, The hour I first believed
My chains are gone, I've been set free, My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns, Unending love, Amazing grace
The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures
He will my shield, my potion be, As long as life endures
My chains are gone, I've been set free, My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns, Unending love, Amazing grace
The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below, Will be forever mine, will be forever...

Amazing grace, shall always be my song of peace
For it was grace that bought my liberty,
I do not know, just why Christ came to love me so,
He looked beyond my fault and saw my need.

I shall forever life mine eyes to Calvary.
To view the cross where Jesus died for me;
How marvelous the grace that caught my falling soul,
He looked beyond my fault and saw my need.
Lent 2021
From Darkness to Light: Stories of Deliverance & Hope

Lent Week Two: Deliverance from Myself

We are our own worst enemies. We make mountains out of molehills. We think we are smarter than we actually are. It is we who take the bite out of the forbidden fruit and then wonder why we face such terrible consequences. We blame others for all our problems. We dig the hole we find ourselves in, and then we dig it deeper, all the while in deep denial about how we really got there in the first place. We have placed ourselves in echo chambers of fake news, lies, and falsehoods, and we use all these tools to hate our neighbors instead of loving them. We embrace a twisted reality that soothes our prejudices rather than challenge them. We have broken relationships and family ties, friendships and bonds, by the words we say and the actions we take, and yet we wonder why we the world has grown so cold, so loveless. We ask God to forgive our sins, yet we refuse to offer that forgiveness to those who sin against us. As we find ourselves sitting in a land of deep darkness, as we pray for deliverance from that darkness, we must honestly confess that we need to be delivered from ourselves. We must find the courage to admit we are powerless, we are not as wise as we think we are, and the brokenness we are experiencing is due to the actions and words we have taken and spoken. The first step belongs falls on us as we honestly confess our sins that have made a mess of our lives.

God of mercy, God of grace, God of forgiveness and new beginnings. We confess to you we are powerless in the face of worldly realities, and only you can come and restore our sanity and heal our brokenness. We are living lives based not on your word but on our own understandings, and the life we have built is shattered and empty. We need courage to look deeply into the mirror of our souls to honestly take that moral inventory and to find all the ways in which we lack goodness and faith. Listen to our hearts now as we admit not only to you but to ourselves as well all the defects of our character and actions. Help us to bravely see the harm we have done to others instead of embracing the blame we place on others. We are blind to our own sins and the brokenness they have inflicted upon those we love. If we are ever to move from Darkness to Light it must first begin with us. Forgive us for worrying about the splinter in the eyes of other people, rather than focusing on removing the log that is stuck in our eyes.

We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus, who offers mercy and forgiveness to all people. Amen and amen!

Hear these words of assurance and pardon:

“Don’t judge, so that you won’t be judged. You’ll receive the same judgment you give. Whatever you deal out will be dealt out to you. Why do you see the splinter that’s in your brother’s or sister’s eye, but don’t notice the log in your own eye? How can you say to your brother or sister, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ when there’s a log in your eye?

Leader: My friends, follow the good news of the Gospel!
People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and set free from our sins!