

The Messenger



First United Methodist Church

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Our Mission is to Look Up, Build Up, Reach Out, and Invite In

December 6, 2020

Thoughts from the Pastor's Desk

Do No Harm -- Do Good -- Stay in Love with God -John Wesley

Rather early in my ministry, I was exposed a book that describes the Three Simple Rules of John Wesley for living in this world as a Christian Disciple. The book was written by Bishop Ruben P. Job and is titled, Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living. Bishop Job took the principles left in the writings of John Wesley and places them in the context of a modern world that often bases rules on personal preferences.

These three simple rules are Do No Harm, Do Good, and Stay in Love with God. They certainly sound simple in their presentation. But there is great depth to what Wesley suggests for those who would seek to be committed Disciples of Jesus Christ. Wesley's rules were developed over a lifetime of scripture study, church experience and tradition, and his ability to apply human reason to the teachings of Jesus.

The first is listed first for a reason. We often find ourselves in conflict with others due to our lack of consideration of living in this world while doing no harm to others. Though he lived his life in a different world than any of us would recognize today, Wesley believed this rule should apply to all areas of God's creation. He encourages us to do no harm to our fellow humanity, including the ways that we impact the rest of creation by our choices. In some cases, this includes the fallout of choices we make today that may impact others in the future.

The example of Job relates the story of our purchasing a pair of the most popular tennis shoes for one of our children. After making our purchase, we then discover the actual manufacture of those shoes happens in a foreign country makes use of child labor that takes advantage of cultural need. We are encouraged to consider how our actions in life in what is perhaps the most developed country in the world impacts areas of the world that only dream of such development.

Job goes on to encourage us to understand how our actions now have an almost invisible impact on those whom we don't know. A current example could be those persons who declare it is their freedom to refuse to wear a facial mask during our current pandemic. It is true that we live in a free society. Our forefathers and mothers fought valiantly for us to live freely. Wesley's call to "Do No Harm" invites us to consider how our exposure to this virus may not impact our life much.

We may be among the fortunate who do not respond in ways that put life at risk, for us. However, what about the family who lives next door to a friend of ours who also celebrates the right to freely live mask free? What if the virus is passed on by a friend, who passes it to a friend, who shares it with a family, who unknowingly exposes a beloved grandparent to the deadly effects of this virus? It is simple from Wesley's point of view. Do NO Harm!

Therefore, as a follower of Wesley's teachings and a member of the United Methodist community of faith, we encourage everyone to "Do No Harm" by wearing a mask in public, maintain social distancing, and wash your hands often. Wesley understood the teachings of Jesus and for him, it really *is all about Jesus!*

Pastor Greg



Please join us on Sunday, December 13th at 4:00pm!

HYMN SING – We recognize how difficult it can be to gather together during the pandemic, so this Hymn Sing will be for anyone who wants to *sing those favorite Hymns* from the First United Methodist Church **East Parking** area, while in YOUR automobile. Simply gather in the parking area, tune your FM radio to First UMC Radio signal **FM-87.9** and turn up the volume and Sing with Joy in Your Heart as Tom Michalek, Choir Leader, Barb Sergeant, Organist Extraordinaire and Pastor Greg share Favorite Hymns with OUR Congregation!

For more information, call the Office @ 402.463.6733.

Join US on Facebook LIVE!

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m.

Public Access Channel – Allo Channel 16

Sundays @ 10:30 a.m.
Tuesdays @ 11:30 a.m.

GSV Channel

Sundays @ 3:00 p.m.
Wednesdays @ 4:00 p.m.

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***The service will be available on 87.9 FM in our church parking lot or stay home and watch on Facebook Live or YouTube.**

Do Good- Wesleyan Simple Rule #2

John Wesley, founder of our Methodist heritage, encouraged the people of the church to “Do Good” in the world to benefit our “neighbors.” First UMC has a strong history of doing good for our community throughout the year. At Christmas time, we have a long-standing tradition of reaching out to provide a Christmas experience for those less privileged than many of us. Due to CoVid-19 safety protocols, we have to work harder this year to accomplish our task. One way to provide support for children and youth in difficult family settings is by working with Epworth Village where Family Focused Gifts are desired, such as: Art supplies for families - items to make home-made ornaments and stockings, paints, paint brushes, markers, crayons, etc.

Do Not Wrap gifts. Epworth Village staff will put the appropriate items together for each family. Your donations should be brought to the First UMC office by 4:30pm on Wednesday, Dec. 16th.

Stay in Love with God- Wesleyan Rule #3

Wesley understood the difficulty of dealing with the challenges and catastrophes of life in this world. He knew the long-term solution to those challenges would be best approached through the lens of a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, he encourages us to stay in love with God through the means of grace, including prayer, Bible study and reading, regular worship and the practice of sharing Holy Communion.

Given our current limitations and response to the CoVid virus, our Worship is available live via our Facebook page and YouTube. You can also listen live from our parking lot on FM 89.7, or see us on the local Cable channel.

Pastor Greg offers a Thursday Prayer time on our Facebook page each Thursday at 12:30 pm. There are also book and Bible studies available through Zoom connections. Contact the Church Office for more information.

Help provide Christmas for Children

During the month of December every year, with your help, we provide Christmas gifts for the families and children we serve. We also host a Christmas party, however, because of Covid-19 we will not be able to host a gathering this holiday season. In order to still make this Christmas extra special for all the families we serve, we are again asking for your help in sponsoring a family. We will be giving a family focused gift to each family that will provide them an opportunity to bond as a family unit and create special memories. We need help from you, our generous donors and churches, to make this Christmas an incredible one for the families served by Epworth Village.

If you are interested in providing gifts for a family, please contact Mary at 402-362-3353 or email her at mplock@epworthvillage.org.

Ways to Connect

In the most recent “UMconnect,” our Nebraska Conference online newsletters were stories about:

- Great Plains Church’s response to racism is subject of new series.
- Helping Children during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Disciple Bible Study Training and much more! **To subscribe to UMconnect, enter**

UMNS Daily Digest is centered in Christ, committed to excellence, United Methodist Communications informs, inspires and engages the people of The United Methodist Church and the world. **To learn more about this digest go to UMNS.umc.org to subscribe.**

Gift Wrapping Options

No-contact drop off and pick up. Boxes, tissue paper, beautiful papers and handmade bows all provided. NO per-gift rate...just what ever you wish to donate to United Harvest Food Bank.....serving people right here in Adams County and central Nebraska. So many families need help with basic food this year and United Harvest fills those needs. I can also prep gifts for shipping across the country as well. Please drop off before December 20th. Contact me via email or phone. Let’s make Christmas shine this year! Judy Hoch, 492-460-0832, judyahoch@gmail.com

2020 Total Budget: \$400,000

Total received as of Nov. 30th: \$300,000

Funds needed to make budget: \$100,000