

Dear Reader,

There are many things I enjoy about the internet. Each morning I play the New York Times games (wordle, strands, connections, mini crossword and connections) followed by the Merriam Webster Dictionary quordle games. I also fond of checking sports scores on the ESPN app in the evenings. It is nice to access email with a quick tap. And, as is happening more frequently, when I can't recall the title of a book or the name of that actress in that one movie, a quick search online can usually yield the answer.

The internet has many great features. But, like many others, I can find myself checking email or scrolling through social media and suddenly five minutes has become thirty minutes (or more.) The internet and social media can be highly addictive. It has its benefits, but also its hazards.

This week I read a prayer by Nadia Bolz-Weber entitled, "A Prayer for Trying to Stay Off the Internet More." Let me share a brief portion of her wise words.

She writes, "In your infinite mercy, guide me away:

...from the virtual into the actual

...from the feared tomorrows into the only now

...from what I see on a screen to what I behold in my life

...from what I am manipulated to desire to what I am content to have."

That's a great prayer. She has acknowledged the benefits and joys that come from the internet while acknowledging that the internet has its limitations. At the core of our being, we want something more.

When you are done reading this devotion and have finished the wordle for the day and checked email, I encourage you to take a little internet break. Call a friend. Schedule a lunch with someone. Turn away from the monitor and admire the beauty of something nearby. Do something nice for yourself and for those around you. To do so is holy work.

Peace,

Howard



Prayer Concerns

Please pray for: Yvonne Achterberg, Nathan Ayers, Sue Ellen Brown, Wilbert Carr, Gloria Chandler, Joe Davis, Melody Devoe, Dave Evans, Susan Gobert, Roberta Hartwell, Vicky Huckaby, Julianna Jerome-Drerup, Steve Johnson, Jane Pettit, Terry Reimer, Tom Sharp, Melissa Stanley, Sara Taylor, Connie Wilson and Jacob Woodworth



Upcoming Activities

Annual Conference Delegates

First UMC is in need of two delegates to represent our church at the upcoming Annual Conference in Indianapolis. This gathering of United Methodists throughout the state will be held June 4-7. Along with conducting the business of the denomination (setting the budget, approving committee work) the Annual Conference is a great way to learn more about the work of the United Methodist Church in Indiana and beyond. If you would be interested in being a delegate, please contact the church office.

Brown Bag Luncheon

The Brown Bag Luncheons will return on Wednesday May 21st at noon. Along with a time for food and fellowship, Rev. Boles will share some of the details of his trip to Peru. All are welcome to attend.

Love Chapel at the County Fair

Once again this year, Love Chapel will have a food stand at the Bartholomew County Fair. We have signed up to staff the lunch on June 26th. We are looking for 10-12 volunteers. If you would be interested in helping that day (or any other day), we will have sign-ups after church for the next two Sundays.

Mission Guatemala Collection

On Saturday June 7th, First UMC will send eleven individuals to Mission Guatemala for a week of service. The team will be working on a rural school to help build a cafeteria and kitchen. Along with their work, the team will be able to take items to the local clinic. If you would like to donate items for the team to distribute, what they are requesting are the following: Children's multivitamins 50 mg (gummy or chewable), Vitamin C tablets (1000 mg.) or Zinc Gummy vitamins (50 mg.) Please have any donations to the church by Wednesday June 4th.

Upcoming Activities

May 30 Red Cross Blood Drive, noon to 5:00 p.m.

Next Sunday's Sermon

May 25 "Unexpected Ministry"

Text: Acts 16:9-15

We readily recall the story of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. Here is another example of that. Peter thought he was going to Macedonia to preach to the people there. Evidently, things didn't go as planned. But Peter left the city and encountered a woman at a well. She was delighted to hear the good news and responded with generous hospitality. Sometimes where we think God is calling us/leading us takes us in an unexpected direction, but one filled with goodness.