



I always think of The Sermon on the Mount as one of the great moments in contextualization. What I mean by that is Jesus' words were addressing the needs of the people standing right in front of him. It was a sermon that addressed exactly what the people were facing. They walked away saying, "He was talking directly to me." It is what any good sermon should strive for.

In Matthew's version of the sermon, Jesus tells his listener's not to be anxious. He illustrates this by saying, "Consider the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" Beautiful words. Helpful words. Words I need to hear.

But the truth is, I am anxious. And I have never found a way not to be. Oh, I don't worry much about what I wear. Fashion has never been my forte. And looks? Well, when my hair began to turn grey, I accepted it. But in other areas of life, I have never been able to shake the anxiety and fears of the unknown. In my mind I play out all the potential terrible things that could happen and lose sleep worrying about them.

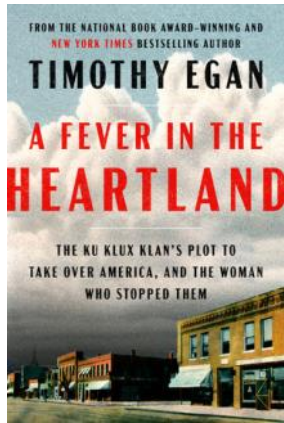
Outwardly, I think I convey a spirit of calmness and reassurance that puts others at ease. This only adds to the anxiety. If I have assured everyone that things will turn out ok and they don't then I feel even more responsible. And then I worry about that.

It feels to me like we are living under added pressures and anxieties today. We worry about our climate. We worry about the political tensions in our society. We worry about our health and wellness. We worry about our loved ones. And though I hear Jesus' words reassuring us not to worry, I find myself thinking that some level of worry is not so bad. It makes us aware of the concerns around us and leads us to work on helpful solutions. Our worries lead us to action and that is not all bad.

Perhaps what we can take away from Jesus' sermon is that we should worry about the things we can control, the places where we can make an impact, but let go of the things that are beyond our control. Somewhere within that message is a reminder that we are not alone. We are not the only ones who are worried. There are others joining us in the work of cleaning up our environment. There are others who are worried about how we treat one another and are sowing seeds of kindness. We are never alone in the things we face. Along with that, God is at work within and among us to make a difference. That awareness can be a great comfort amid the anxieties and worries we face.

Pace bene (peace and all good things),

Howard

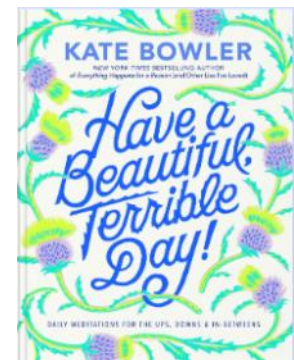


Book Club

The February book club selection is “A Fever in the Heartland” by Timothy Egan. This well-researched book describes the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S. (and particularly in Indiana) in the early years of the 20th century. While describing this growth in Indiana, the author also tells the story of the heroic woman who was victimized by the Klan leader and how her courage changed the course of history. We will gather in the church library on Sunday, February 18th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss this book. All are welcome to attend.

Lent Weekly Devotional

During Lent, we invite you to read the weekly devotional “Have a Beautiful, Terrible Lent!” by Kate Bowler. You can download a free copy of this devotional on her website katebowler.com or pick up a printed copy at the church entrances in February. This devotional will form the basis for the adult Sunday School class which meets at 9:00 a.m. in the Multi-Purpose room.



Ash Wednesday



In the church calendar, Lent is a forty-day season set aside to prepare us for the joy of Easter. For many, it becomes a time to give something up (caffeine, chocolate, complaining, etc.). For others, it becomes a time to start a new spiritual discipline (reading a devotion, praying at the beginning of the day, reading a psalm each evening, etc.). In whatever way you choose to honor this holy season, we will begin our journey together

with a service of ashes on Wednesday February 14th at 7:00 p.m. We hope that you will be able join us for this special worship service.

Lunch & Conversation

The Brown Bag Luncheons continue to Wednesday February 21st at noon. This is an informal time to share lunch and meet new people. Along with enjoyable conversations, there is also a guest speaker. No advance sign up is needed. Just bring a lunch for yourself and meet us in Room 116.



Pancake Breakfast

Join us on February 4th for Scout Sunday. First UMC is pleased to host very active scout troops and will offer a blessing to them that morning. Following the service, you might like to purchase cookies from the Girl Scouts. And in the Fellowship Hall, the Cub Scouts will be holding their annual Pancake Breakfast to raise money for future activities. Your support helps with these important ministries.



Youth Group

All 6th graders and up are invited to join us for youth group from 5-7 on February 25th.



Love-A-Child

During the month of February, First UMC focuses on the important work of the Learning Tree Preschool. This preschool has an enrollment of more than 150 children. If you come to the church on a weekday morning, you will experience the energy and enthusiasm that accompanies these students and their loving, patient teachers. The preschool is an outward expression of the values of our congregation, providing a safe learning environment for children throughout our community. The preschool also embodies the value of care for all children by offering scholarships so that families in need can attend. This scholarship fund is called "Love a Child" and is the missional emphasis of our church in February. All funds raised go directly to helping children attend our preschool. Your contribution to this important ministry is a great opportunity to make a positive difference in the life of a child. We hope that you will consider making a gift to this scholarship fund for the 2024-2025 school year.

Lenten activity for the whole family!

Calling all children, youth, and families! Make sure to get your coin collect jars for a Lenten activity. We will have a devotional printed out and are encouraging all families to collect coins during lent. Please bring your containers back to service on Easter! All proceeds will go towards packing care packages for those who come to Hotmeals.



The Perfetto's would like to invite LINC's with Kids and the FUMC Youth Group + family to our house for a Superb Owl Party on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 11. The game starts at 6:30pm, so let's gather at 5:30pm and plan to start eating at 6pm. Please RSVP to the Perfetto's. If a parent is not staying, please let me know if you'll be picking them up at Halftime or End of Game. Please also share a parent contact number. For more information, please contact Shana.

Please sign up to bring some food to share: [SuperbOwl2024.xlsx](#)



Lenten Bible Study

Pastor Harriet will be offering a Lenten Bible Study on Tuesdays starting February 13 until Tuesday, March 26 at 11:00 am in the multi-purpose room.

We will be using the Lenten Bible Study that Pastor Harriet has written, From Passion to Promise. The Bible Study includes opportunities for journaling and being creative.

If you are unable to attend in person and would like a copy of the Bible Study booklet to do on your own, please email Pastor Harriet. (hwilkin@fumccolumbus.org).



The Journey of Grief Grief Support Group

Grief does take us on a journey of remembering and leads people to us just at the right moment. In 2015 when I started at my very first appointment as a United Methodist Church Pastor, there was a grief support group that met once a month in the church building. The Grief Support Group was open to the whole community. The woman who was leading the group had experienced the loss of a husband and a child. With the losses that she experienced in her life, she felt called to walk the journey of grief with others. She did not use a workbook. She used resources that she had collected over the years to help lead discussions and do check-ins with people who attended. She led the group until she and her second husband moved to be closer to family because of health reasons. With her leaving, the question then became, who was going to lead the Grief Support Group? As the pastor, that question came to me, and I began the discernment to listen to who would be leading the group. The answer to the question of who that person would be, became me.

I have led other Grief Support Groups over the years of being a pastor or I have found someone to lead the group.

At that point in my life, I had experienced grief of loss of both parents, all my grandparents, great-aunts, great uncles, and close family members. I did not know the grief that was associated with losing a spouse or significant other. As of August 2022, I learned of the grief that is associated with losing a spouse - a significant other – friend, partner, confidant, a football fan, crafting partner, and that list goes on.

Some say grief comes in stages. I experienced grief of losing Jim with, at times, those stages intermixing and coming all at once. For each person grief looks different.

On December 13, 2023, the Longest Night Service was hosted by Columbus First UMC. During that service, we incorporated the loss of life, loss of livelihood, loss of love, and the loss of liveliness. We came together to share in the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love in Christ. There are so many ways and reasons we can grieve. The loss of a loved one is normally the first loss that comes to people's mind. There is also the loss of employment, housing, ability to provide, the loss of what was to the journey of what will be new in the way we are identified. A new title or a title change, a change from being employed to being retired, and the list can go on.

Caregivers who care for parents, children, and/ or spouses/ significant others also experience grief. I know when my husband's health continued to decline, we had to make adjustments in how and when or if we planned vacations and even what short day trips might look like. The day-to-day life looked different depending on how he felt and what his body and mind would allow him to do.

Walking this journey of grief of losing Jim, my husband, and discerning all the next steps is and will continue to be an interesting path with twists and turns, with side trails that include benches to sit down and reflect on, to only when it is the right time to move back to the main path and continue down the road until the next pull off spot. At some point, from what I have been told by others who have embarked on this journey before me, each person's journey is different, yet there are similarities too.

What I have found interesting as I continue on this journey is when I take the trails or pull-off spots, I am not in that space necessarily alone – even though the journey at times feels lonely. There on the bench is a friend or family member who takes time to be with me on the phone, be in a text or email exchange, sending pictures or videos to make me smile, finding peace with the quietness at home on the couch with my cats nearby, watching a movie or TV show, listening and signing to music.

And when my mind and body are in sync, I have a great time being creative with designing handmade cards or being creative on the computer with pictures and graphics to create flyers and other social media posts.

As you have might have noticed, I have not yet mentioned where God or Christ is on this journey with me. Where is Christ in the midst of all of this? What about my personal faith life, what did that and what does that look like? Those questions are personal. However, those questions are great to ask when considering, how is my soul?

Through the journey of grief, the exploration of one's spiritual life is either intermixed with the highs and lows of the journey or can hold a person steadfast.

This is only the beginning of a blog posting, chapter, or a book that I am writing. Not sure yet. What I know is that it has taken me some time to get to the place where I could start writing my thoughts on my journey through grief.

I will be offering a Grief Support Group at Columbus 1st UMC, during the weeks of Lent. Mondays starting February 19 through March 25, 2024, at 1 pm in the church library. This is not counseling. This is a support group to share stories and to encourage one another.

These are stand-alone sessions. You are welcome to come to all or as you can.

If you are unable to attend in person, contact Pastor Harriet to set up a time to chat.

No books are required for this support group. Handouts will be provided as needed.

Care Ministry

Care Ministry meetings will be at 11am in the church library. Dates for meetings are:

Monday, February 12th

Monday, March 11th

Monday, April 8th

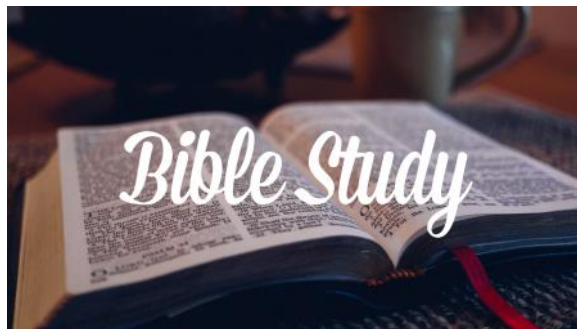
Monday, May, 13th

Monday, June 10th

We will be using the Bible Study—**Creating Sacred**

Space, written by Pastor Harriet Wilkin in our monthly meetings.

If you would like a copy of the Bible Study, please contact Pastor Harriet for a copy.



Crafting Extravaganza

Thursday, February 29, 2024 -- Fellowship Hall @ 10 am.

When we meet in February - we will be working on a project that you will be able to take home, and we will begin working on the March project.

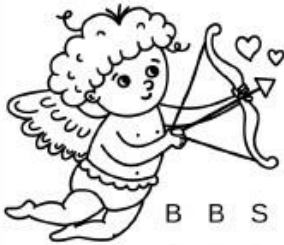
The theme for February will be Lent/ Easter and the theme for March will be spring. More information to come on the projects.

Please sign up in advance to ensure Pastor Harriet has plenty of supplies.

Walk-ins are always welcome! Invite a friend to join you.



VALENTINE'S DAY



Wordsearch



B B S D E C O R A T E L T T U S Q L R T
 G I R L F R I E N D V Y H O L R E N F C
 X A W P F L O W E R S Q A J S O W S V L
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WORD LIST

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|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| ADMIRER | CHOCOLATE | GIRLFRIEND | ROSE |
| AFFECTION | CRUSH | HEART | SMILE |
| BE MINE | CUPID | KISS | SWEETHEART |
| BOUQUET | DECORATE | LOVE | TEDDY |
| BOYFRIEND | FEBRUARY | PINK | TOGETHER |
| CANDY | FLOWERS | POEM | VALENTINE |
| CARD | FOURTEENTH | RED | |
| CELEBRATE | GIFT | ROMANCE | |

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY



First United Methodist Church

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The Spire

Church Staff

Pastor, Howard E. Boles
Associate Pastor, Harriet Wilkin
Director of Youth and Family Ministries, Shana Dublan
Music Director, Caio Lopes
Organist, Destin Wernicke
Handbell Choir Director, Joyce Crowder
Co-Director of Learning Tree Preschool, Gayle Kelley
Co-Director of Learning Tree Preschool, Teresa Nickerson
Business Administrator, Daron Thayer
Administrative Assistant, Vivien Teo
Maintenance Supervisor, Steve Heyerdahl
Custodian, Lucy Hiatt

Do we have your email address?

If not, please send to fumc@fumccolumbus.org.

The Spire is a monthly publication of
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www.fumccolumbus.org

Worship Services:

Sunday Mornings

9:00 a.m. Sunday School for kids up to 8th
grade (multiple classrooms; **won't meet during
Summer Break**)

10:00 a.m. In the Sanctuary

Will also be livestreamed via our Facebook or
YouTube pages:

www.facebook.com/columbusfumc

https://www.youtube.com/@FUMC_Columbus

Church Office hours:

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Articles for *The Spire* should be submitted to
Vivien Teo at vteo@fumccolumbus.org by the
20th of each month.