Having a Heart at Peace in a Traffic Jam

The other night I was heading downtown to see “Beautiful: The Carole King Musical” (it was fabulous!) and I wondered out loud to my friends, “Where are all these people going?” It was typical Friday evening traffic, compounded by light snow. My friend who drove did a heroic job of negotiating parked cars, pedestrians crossing the street, and people changing lanes at the last minute.

When I pause and ponder my question, I begin to imagine where all those people were going. Most were getting off work, others though, were just beginning their shift. Some were headed out to dinner, others home, some to the theater just like my friends and me. There was probably a carload or two who were off to some fabulous vacation on a beach, anticipating sunshine and drinks with umbrellas in them. Others were dreading a tough conversation with their parents or kids. Someone in that mass of traffic started a new job. Someone else got fired. Someone was thrilled that his boyfriend called that day and someone else just got bad news from the doctor. Each one of those cars had at least one person in it, and each person has their own hopes and dreams and fears and goals that are as valid as mine. Is holding that in my heart what Jesus meant when he said we should love our neighbors as ourselves?

How would the world be different if we could behold each person we encounter – the people in line at the grocery store and the check-out clerk, the customer service representative on the phone, the neighbor who didn’t shovel, the person we haven’t met yet at church – as someone whose own life is as beautiful and complicated and rich and valuable as my own?

Pastor Melissa Earley

Sermon Series: Be Part of the Solution

Our sermon series “Be Part of the Solution” will continue February 4 - 11.

February 4: Helping Things Right - What are concrete steps that might help us make things go right instead of correcting them after they go wrong? Ephesians 4:17-32 will be our starting place.

February 11: Staying Engaged in Troubled Times - It’s tempting to hide our heads in the sand when it seems that the world around us is falling apart. Ephesians 6:10-18 and 1 Corinthians 13 help us know how we might stay engaged in troubled times.

Lent Worship Schedule 2018

During the Sundays of Lent we will explore the events of Jesus’ last week. The inspiring collection of serigraphs and paintings by John August Swanson will be our guide.

February 14: Ash Wednesday (Anthony Livoti will preach)
February 18: Entry into the City
February 25: Take Away the Stone - The story of the raising of Lazarus
March 4: The Last Supper and Washing the Feet
March 11: Agony in the Garden and the Kiss of Judas
March 18: The Crucifixion, Deposition, and Entombment of Christ
March 25: Palm/Passion Sunday

We will begin the service with a festival of palms Sunday. The children will parade in waving palms, and then the choir will perform John Rutter’s Requiem.

April 1: Easter
February Mission: Imagine No Malaria

Our mission focus for the month of February is Imagine No Malaria. The United Methodist Church, along with Imagine No Malaria is committed to the elimination of this deadly disease in Africa. The good news is that malaria is 100% preventable and because of the work that has been done, the death rate has been cut in half. However, malaria continues to take the life of a child every two minutes. Our goal is to eradicate malaria from Africa as was done in the U.S. in the 1950’s.

The Missions Committee will once again be selling Valentine's Day cards this year to benefit Imagine No Malaria. For each $10 donation, a bed net will be sent to a family in Africa, and you will receive a beautiful handmade Valentine to send to a loved one. These Valentines are perfect for your children, parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, friends, neighbors, teachers, and even your pastors (hint, hint!). Celebrate the loved ones in your life with a donation in their honor that will change the life of a child in Africa. Valentines will be sold through Sunday, February 11.

February Rainbow Circle

Rainbow Circle is a diverse group of LGBTQ+ Christians who are exploring the intersections of faith, sexuality, and gender identity. Together we are creating safe spaces in which seekers can grow in faith through relationship, conversation, service, and worship.

We welcome you all, faithful and fearful, sure and uncertain, to join us as we grow together. We have a regularly scheduled conversation group every other Wednesday (7:00pm), as well as events like group volunteer projects and outings. Our next Wednesday meetup is February 7 in the ROC.

For more information about Rainbow Circle, visit their Meetup page (meetup.com/rainbowcircle/) or contact Liz Evans (elizabeth.evans@garrett.edu).

Young Adult Ministry

All young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 are invited to participate in young adult ministry. Visit their facebook page (go.fumcah.com/youngadultmin) to connect with others FUMCAH members and friends who are seeking to connect and grow in their faith alongside peers. Please contact Liz Evans (elizabeth.evans@garrett.edu) for additional information.

Church Conference on February 4

All adults who are part of the life of our church (completed confirmation and older) are invited to participate in the all church conference on February 4 to decide whether to move forward with the capital campaign to fund our "Building for All Renovation" project:

Be it resolved the First United Methodist Church of Arlington Heights will launch a capital campaign to end prior to June 30, 2018, to raise the funds needed to complete the renovation and construction project “Building for All”. The Lead Pastor working with the Church Council is authorized to form a Capital Campaign Leadership Team to conduct this campaign.

Sunday school will be extended that morning. A ballot will be taken to people in the church building (Sunday school teachers, fellowship hosts, etc.) on February 4 but not able to be in the sanctuary. We want to encourage everyone to attend the meeting on February 4, but if you are unable to be here, please request a ballot from the church office. Votes must be cast on ballots (scanned or photos of the ballot that are emailed are acceptable). Ballots must be received in the church office by Friday, February 2 at 10:00 am. No exceptions will be made for this deadline.
Kaleidoscope is our multi-faceted Sunday morning program welcoming all adults. The focus changes from week to week with various topics and frequent guest speakers – all hoping to offer interesting perspectives on life and faith. Kaleidoscope meets after worship, about 10:40 am, in the Wesley Room on the lower level. Pick up your coffee in Fellowship Hall and head over! For more information about Kaleidoscope or Adult Faith Formation, contact Pastor Lynn Mikels (l.mikels@fumcah.com).

An Adult Faith Formation Opportunity After Worship

February 11:
Family Systems
Rev. Bill Obalil will share a brief introduction to family systems and how that might help us develop hearts at peace. Included will be ideas about anxious self/solid self/borrowing self, as well as four (less helpful) ways systems try to handle anxiety. Bill will remind us that we can only work on ourselves, no one else.

February 18:
Reflections on the Anatomy of Peace
Were you part of one of our six small groups this winter? If not, are you curious about the book? This Kaleidoscope will provide an opportunity for all to share/learn more about the basic concepts of having a heart at peace.

February 25:
The Faces of Jesus
Rev. Paul Palmer will begin his Lenten series on “The Faces of Jesus.”

Lent and Pretzels
In the early days of the Christian church, Lent was a time for sacrifice and prayer. People were required to abstain from eating certain foods. Meals were simple and often included a special bread shaped into arms crossed in prayer. The bread was known as bracellae, a Latin word for little arms. Eventually, as the church grew and spread through Europe, the word became pretzel. The twist in the middle of the traditionally shaped pretzel represents a child’s arms while the three open holes represent the Trinity.

Pretzels are said to have been originally made by monks and given to children to remind them to pray or given to poor people. They were only eaten during Lent. In Austria, pretzels were hung from palm branches on Palm Sunday for passersby to grab and eat. Eventually, Northern European immigrants, especially Germans, brought the pretzel to the United States and we eat them throughout the year. Yet, it is good to remember the early origin of the bread with little arms crossed in prayer.

Here is a pretzel recipe for you to try at home:

1 pkg. dried yeast
1 1/2 cups warm water
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
4 cups flour
1 egg, beaten, for glazing
coarse salt

Dissolve the yeast in the warm water in a large bowl. Add salt and sugar; add flour. Divide the dough so each person can knead his/her/their own piece. Pound and roll as desired until dough is smooth. Cut in small pieces about the size of half an egg. Roll the pieces into long, skinny ropes. Twist into pretzel shape. Place on greased cookie sheet. Brush on egg and sprinkle with coarse salt. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes.

Soothing Stitches : Prayer Shawls and More
It’s perfect weather to play with yarn. The creative knitters and crocheters of Soothing Stitchers will meet on Tuesday, February 20, at 7:30 pm in the Church Parlor. As we knit and crochet for others, we are often soothed and blessed by the work of our hands and the conversation with friends. Currently, the Soothing Stitchers are making caps for newborns in our church and pre-school families, prayer shawls, and working on some of their own projects. We are always open to new ideas, new patterns and NEW PEOPLE. Wish-they-could knitters and crocheters are very welcome. We’ll help you get started. Please contact Pastor Lynn Mikels (l.mikels@fumcah.com) with questions.
Visit fumcah.com/student to learn more about volunteer positions, or contact Anthony Livoti (a.livot@fumcah.com).

Next Chapter White Elephant Party
Saturday, February 24, 6:30 pm

In the midst of the cold, Next Chapter will get together and celebrate our friendship by exchanging white elephant gifts and a potluck dinner on Saturday, February 24 at 6:30 pm at the church. You should bring a dish to share, a beverage of choice (we’ll provide water), and a wrapped gift (something you already have and want to pass along) for each person attending. Please contact Mary Ann Laforet (boesels4@me.com or 847-870-8344) to RSVP so she can provide enough plates, cups, and cutlery for all. Let the festivities begin!

Save the Date for VBS 2018

VBS will take place Monday July 9 through Thursday July 12, 3:00 - 5:15 pm. This year we will experience a Rolling River Rampage. Along the river, children discover that life with God is an adventure full of wonder and surprise, and that they can trust God to be with them through anything. Please contact Pastor Lynn Mikels (l.mikels@fumcah.com) with questions.

Gaga Ball and Games at Glenview UMC

On February 25, FUMCAH student ministry will join together with youth ministries around the district to play Gaga ball at Glenview UMC! A cluster of student ministers have gathered together to create events much larger than one individual church can hold. Last time a large group event was held, around 90 teenagers were able to participating together! We celebrate the fact that so many teenagers are choosing to be a part of church life and gather together for incredible fellowship. We’re excited! Check back next month for some great snapshots of our evening!

Upcoming Student Ministry Events

- Check out what’s happening in student ministry!
- 2/4 Confirmation Class 10:45-11:30 am in the ROC
- 2/4 Student Fellowship 3:00 -4:30 pm
- 2/11 Confirmation Class 10:45-11:30 am in the ROC
- 2/11 Student Fellowship 3:00-4:30 pm
- 2/14 Ash Wednesday - Confirmation participation required
- 2/18 No Student fellowship or confirmation
- 2/25 Gaga Ball and Games at Glenview UMC
- 3/3 Confirmation "Lock-In" 5:00-10:00 pm
- 4/21 Confirmation Retreat (all day)

Visit fumcah.com/student to learn more about volunteer positions, or contact Anthony Livoti (a.livot@fumcah.com).

Decluttering Challenge and Early Bird Rummage Sale Drop-off

Do you have clutter in your home? Are you anxiously awaiting the date when you can finally drop it off at FUMCAH for the Spring Rummage Sale? If you answered yes to either of those questions, United Methodist Women has a new challenge for you. The project is called 40 Bags in 40 Days, and is a decluttering challenge to be done during Lent. The ultimate goal is to declutter one small area of your home each day and fill one bag per day for each of the 40 days of Lent. You can choose the size of the bag (or box), and you can be as strict about it as you’d like. As an incentive for you to join in this challenge, we will be offering two days for you to drop off the items you’d like to donate to the Rummage Sale without waiting until May. Donations will be accepted at the parsonage and we will help you bring items down to the basement on Saturdays, March 3, and April 7, 9:00-11:00 am. No furniture please. If you miss these early bird dates, official drop-off for the Rummage Sale will begin on May 1. Happy decluttering! please contact Jacqueline Raitano (jacquelineraitano@yahoo.com).

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Visit fumcah.com/student to learn more about volunteer positions, or contact Anthony Livoti (a.livot@fumcah.com).

FUMCAH Preschool Registration

Do you have a preschool age child? FUMCAH Preschool and We-e Care have an excellent program, and we would love to see you here!

Registration for the 2018-2019 preschool program is now open! Contact Amy at fumcps@sbcglobal.net or 847-255-5119 for more information. Visit fumcah.com/preschool for a registration form.

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**Interfaith Dialogue on Love, Understanding, and Forgiveness**
Tuesday, February 13, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Pastor Melissa Earley will moderate a panel discussion at the Arlington Heights Library, featuring religious leaders from our area who will discuss their perspectives on Love, Understanding, and Forgiveness.

This program is presented in conjunction with XOXO: An Exhibit About Love & Forgiveness.

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**World Day of Prayer Breakfast**
Friday, March 2, 9:30 am
All God's Creation is Very Good! World Day of Prayer is a worldwide, ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and who, in many countries, have a continuing relationship in prayer and service. Questions? Contact Nancy Duel (847-208-1267 or nduel@aol.com).

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**ChiLDSeRv’S Legacy Banquet**
Sunday, February 11, 2:00 - 4:00 pm
ChildServe will be holding a Legacy Banquet at Avalon Banquets in Elk Grove Village. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Janet Wolf, Director, of the Children's Defense Fund Nonviolent Organizing and Haley Farm. Please contact Nancy Duel at 847-208-1267 or nduel@aol.com for more information. Please respond by February 2.

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**United Methodist Women Work (and Fun) Day**
Saturday February 24, 2018, 9 am - Noon
Fitting the Pieces Together: You are the Piece We Need!
FUMCAH United Methodist Women will be hosting the Elgin District's Learning and Sharing Day. This free event is an opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments, share ideas, and network with other United Methodist Women units in our District! We need your help with greeting our guests, setting up tables and chairs in the rooms, preparing a continental breakfast for participants, or cleanup. We also encourage you to enjoy this fun event by taking part in the activities and discussions. If you’d like to volunteer to help or register as a participant, please contact Linda Riddle for more information (linda_riddle@sbcglobal.net).

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**ChildServe’s Legacy Banquet**
Sunday, February 11, 2:00 - 4:00 pm
ChildServe will be holding a Legacy Banquet at the Avalon Banquets in Elk Grove Village. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Janet Wolf, Director of the Children’s Defense Fund Nonviolent Organizing and Haley Farm. Please contact Nancy Duel at 847-208-1267 or nduel@aol.com for more information. Please respond by February 2.

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**CHILDSERV’S Legacy Banquet**
Sunday, February 11, 2:00 - 4:00 pm
ChildServe will be holding a Legacy Banquet at Avalon Banquets in Elk Grove Village. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Janet Wolf, Director of the Children’s Defense Fund Nonviolent Organizing and Haley Farm. Please contact Nancy Duel at 847-208-1267 or nduel@aol.com for more information. Please respond by February 2.
Repairs To The Resurrection Garden

Our Resurrection Garden was built in 1988 and is maintained by the Board of Trustees with assistance from volunteers who plant flowers in the center section flower bed as seen in this picture and along the sides of the other walls.

The inside walls in the center section of the flower bed are deteriorating and need to be replaced as soon as the soil temperature reaches 50 degrees. The Trustees have hired Martin & Associates Landscaping to remove the dirt, construct a drainage trench at the bottom of the inside walls, construct new limestone and masonry walls and apply a sealant to the new walls. Once the walls are dried for a few days, the dirt will be mixed with compost from our compost bin and placed in the center section. Garden volunteers will plant flowers this spring in the center section and along the outside walls of the entire garden.

No existing burial plots will be disturbed from this maintenance project.

This work will maintain the structural integrity of the center section of the Resurrection Garden for many years. The cost is $2,610 and will be paid for using a reserve account funded from the sale of plots.

There are a total of 252 plots in the Resurrection Garden of which 166 have been purchased. Our Business Manager, Melinda Kirby, can assist anyone interested in purchasing and selecting plots.

FUMCAH Welcomes our new bell choir director, Amy Bearden

Amy Bearden holds a masters degree in Early Music Voice from the Early Music Institute of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, where she studied voice with Paul Elliott, renowned tenor and founding member of the Hilliard Ensemble. At IU, Amy focused on Medieval and Renaissance music, studying both history and performance. In Chicago, Amy is the Artistic Director and Founder of The Marion Consort, a premier early music ensemble. In addition to Marion, Amy is a sought after choral artist who has performed with Texas Early Music Project in Austin, Texas and is on staff of the Amherst Early Music Festival in New London, Connecticut. Amy also holds a Bachelors degree in Music Education from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Currently, Amy teaches K-8 General Music in the McKinley Park neighborhood of Chicago.

Winter Warming Thank You

Thank you to all of the volunteers, staff, pastors, attendees, and everyone at FUMCAH for helping to make Winter Warming such a great event this year. Many people commented on the welcoming spirit of those who volunteered. With much gratitude, The Reconciling Ministries Team (Liz Evans, Thom Frerk, Anita Herr, Lisa Kelsey, Brittany Lindstrom, Jess Lutke, Linda Riddle, and Suzanne Nice)

Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed!

We commend our “crew” of willing and dedicated volunteers who serve Coffee Hour on Sundays after worship. These current Coffee Hour servers have gone “above and beyond” due to a shortage of volunteers. Would you like to join the “crew”? As a server, you would work with two or three others on a given Sunday (or two) of your choice each year. Your crew would set up about an hour before the worship service, leave the service a little early to do last minute preparations, and then clean up afterwards.

It is a small amount of time spent to make many of our worshippers happy and also have a good time working with others! Please let us know if you would be willing to join the “crew” of Coffee Hour volunteers by calling the office (847-255-5112) or emailing Joyce (j.hawley@fumcah.com).
**2018 Stewardship Update**

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank Mary Stitt and Jim Abdnor for their many years of dedicated service to Stewardship and to acknowledge Jim's steady leadership over the last four years as committee chair. We also welcome Becky McClaney, and as the team looks forward to starting the planning phase for the 2019 campaign in the coming months.

As of mid-January, 161 2018 giving commitments have been received totaling approximately $588,000, an $8,750 increase or 1.5% above 2017. The average pledge has increased by roughly $325 as well! We are still waiting on feedback from 24 families whose giving we anticipate will remain the same as 2017, which would increase total 2018 funding to $615,000. Thanks as always for your ongoing support of the vital ministries of First United Methodist Church. If you would still like to make a pledge, pledge cards are available in the church office or pews in the sanctuary.

**Financial Report through December 2017**

December Revenue: $93,977  Year-to-date Revenue: $768,481  
December Expense: $68,201  Year-to-date Expense: $744,794  
We have paid all of our $90,720 apportionment for 2017!  
It’s not too late for a New Year’s resolution: consider Electronic Funds Transfer – no need to worry that you don’t have your checkbook or cash with you! And, please let me know if you’d like any help looking at your pledges and contributions on our church database, Access ACS.  
With Access ACS, you can also set up contributions through your bank account or credit card. Please consider rounding up your donation to cover the fees for this service, especially on credit card charges (2.25%). We really encourage EFTs; it’s great for household and church budgeting!  
Contact Melinda in the church office with any financial questions or concerns.  
Thank you very much for your good stewardship in 2017 and we look forward to 2018!

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**Congregational Care**

How can the members of a congregation effectively care for one another? How can we support one another in prayer? Beginning in February, there will be two new ways to share your joys and concerns.

You may still list your prayer requests on the tear-off form in the bulletin. If you wish to share your prayer need(s) with the whole congregation, rather than just with staff and the prayer team, you may check the box indicated. The following week, your request will be printed in the bulletin. To preserve privacy, we will only print the names of persons from whom we have permission. If someone asks for prayers for a friend, family member or fellow congregant, we will simply list “Joe Smith’s friend, etc.”

Space will be provided on one of our bulletin boards to post your concerns and joys. The same privacy policy will apply.

We hope these options will help us do even better in surrounding our church family with prayer and care. Please contact the church office (847-255-5112) with questions.

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**Deaths**

January 3 - Janet Grimm  
January 5 - Gloria Loftus
or current resident