



February 2016

Doorways to Grace

One of the joys of this past Christmas season was that our son, Stephen, and his wife, Sarah, were home for the holidays. Stephen and Sarah are currently teaching in Abu Dhabi. I appreciate all the ways to communicate via technology but there is nothing quite like a face-to-face conversation.

Conversation is powerful; some consider it a lost art. As United Methodists of FUMCAH, we want to Nurture, Include, Connect, and Empower – it's our mission statement! Meaningful conversation makes much of this happen.

Preeminent author and researcher, Sherry Turkle, a professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, has been studying digital culture for over thirty years. Long an enthusiast for its possibilities, her new book investigates a troubling consequence: at work, at home, in politics, and in love, we find ways around conversation, tempted by the possibilities of a text or an email in which we don't have to look, listen, or reveal ourselves. Turkle's new book is *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*.

It's not just adults that need to keep talking. Research into the ways that preschoolers learn has discovered that "the real focus in the preschool years should be not on just vocabulary and reading, but on talking and listening. We forget how vital spontaneous, unstructured conversation is to young children's understanding. . . . Conversation is gold. It's the most efficient early learning system we have." It fosters creativity, inquisitiveness, and a love of learning. (Erika Christakis in *The Atlantic*) We are blessed to have a multi-generational church and a weekday preschool filled with open-ended questions and good adult-child conversation.

Meeting face-to-face can also be powerful in our faith development. The opportunity to bounce ideas back and forth, to test a new insight, to be authentically present with others, to get feedback from those we can trust - these are essential components in our growth as Jesus' disciples. We are also blessed that FUMCAH provides many opportunities and formats for meaningful interaction. Several are described in this issue of the church news. Church should be a place where we can be ourselves in all of our brokenness and beauty, where we can foster conversation and connections with God and one another. FUMCAH will continue to explore new digital options, while also fostering the value of getting together. Won't you join the conversation?

Pastor Lynn Mikels



ASP Pancake Breakfast and Worship

Before
Lent
begins,
join
us on



ASP Pancake Breakfast and Worship
Sunday, February 7 9:30am

Sunday, February 7, for lively worship and indulgent fellowship as we support our annual youth mission trip to Appalachia. Come at 9:30am for a down-home revival-style worship celebration, and plan to stay afterwards for our free-will pancake breakfast in Fellowship Hall. All monies raised will go directly to underwriting the cost of our trip.

Worship Schedule: Sundays at 9:30am

“Doorways in the Desert” - Lenten Sermon Series

We live in deserts of our own making, not deserts of dust and heat, but deserts of longing and desire. So much of our energy is spent longing for approval, thirsting for relationships, and wearily wandering about after the success our culture teaches us to relentlessly pursue. But, deserts don't have to be bad. Throughout God's history, deserts have been doorways for God's people - doorways into deeper relationship, richer dialogue and soul-quenching grace.

- February 14: “The Call of Abram” (Genesis 12:1-9)
Spiritual Practice: Listen
- February 21: “A Ladder in the Sky” (Genesis 28:10-22)
Spiritual Practice: Dream
- February 28: “The Voice of Temptation”
(Matthew 4:1-11)
Spiritual Practice: Fast
- March 6: “Resting in the Desert?” (Mark 6:30-44)
Spiritual Practice: Rest
- March 13: “Voices of Challenge, Voices of Change”
(John 4:1-42)
Spiritual Practice: Converse
- March 20: “Journeying through the Gate”
(Palm Sunday)
Spiritual Practice: Joy
- March 27: “From the Desert to the Garden” (Easter)
Easter Services are at 9:30am and
11:00am.

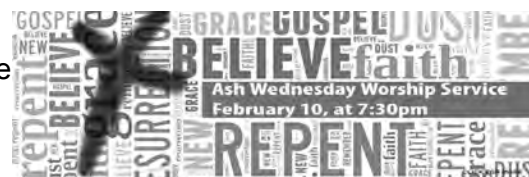
Healing Service

Save the Date for the first of our periodic Healing Services. Promising a time of quiet prayer and reflection, the gathering will be on Sunday afternoon, March 13, 4-5:00, in the main floor Chapel. All are welcome.

Ash Wednesday Worship + Simple Supper

“Lent comes providentially to awaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.” (Pope Francis)

As we
begin the
Lenten
journey
this



year, walking together toward a faith which is fully invigorated and alive, we invite you to join us for our Ash Wednesday Worship Service on Wednesday, February 10, at 7:30pm. During that service we will, through ash and song, prayer and proclamation, find safe spaces to name our brokenness, acknowledge our need for healing, and together walk toward that healing...together.

You are also invited to join us for a simple soup supper before our Worship Service. Soup suppers are a traditional meal during Lent: a time to receive the blessing of simplicity, experience meal fellowship, and to anticipate the Lenten experience ahead.

The meal will be served from 6:30-7:15. Salad, bread, and beverage will also be available. Reservations are appreciated (you can sign the form on the bulletin flap in worship), but are not required. Please join us if you are able. Child care is provided during worship but not during the supper.

For more information, please contact the church office at 847-255-5112.

Rainbow Circle Worship

LGBTQ+ persons and their allies are invited to join Rainbow Circle for another Rainbow Circle worship service on Sunday, February 21, at 4:00pm. Worship in a casual, relevant, and intentionally welcoming space with us, and then stick around for a potluck meal following the service. For more information about Rainbow Circle, or about Rainbow Circle worship, please contact Pastor Will at will.ed.green@gmail.com.



Threshold Groups to Meet during Lent

At FUMCAH, there is group life and then there are Life Groups. Our church has long offered a variety of excellent small groups – for study, prayer, fellowship or shared interests, but we have not had consistent Life Groups. Beginning this Lent, that is changing. During our “Doorways to the Desert” worship series, a Threshold Group will help you get a taste of Life Groups. There is no book to read, no homework; this is a discussion based, relationship oriented experience where the priorities are community and spiritual growth. If you are interested in rich, authentic conversation on faith, life, and following Jesus, join now.

Three Threshold Groups are offered:

Tuesdays, beginning February 9, 7-8:00pm.

Wednesdays, beginning February 17, 6:15-7:15pm. This option coordinates with our JAM time. Participants are welcome to come to the JAM dinner. Child care is available at the church.

Sundays, beginning February 14, 2:45-3:45pm.

One group starts just before Lent officially begins; all groups continue for six weeks, ending just before spring break/Holy Week. Groups meet at the church.

To encourage the participation of families with young children, we are offering a limited number of child care vouchers. Available on a first-come, first-served basis, parents/caregivers will receive reimbursement for up to \$20 per night for babysitting costs. Forms are available from your group leader. This is a pilot project that we hope will be used and will be successful for all concerned.

Threshold Groups are the first stage of our Life Groups, which will begin on a broader scale in the fall of 2016. We sincerely hope that every adult will participate in Group Life - Life Group during the coming year.

Adult Faith Formation

There are many opportunities to grow in faith at FUMCAH. From “59 Minutes for Men” to Covenant Bible Study to our United Methodist Women book groups, you are invited to engage with other adults in any of our classes and small groups. In addition to our new Threshold Groups, the following are a few other highlights for February.

Progressive Pilgrims: Meeting on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 in the Wesley Room, this group is reading and discussing *Original Blessing* by Matthew Fox. An exponent of the movement known as Creation Spirituality and author of 30 books, Fox was considered so controversial that he was investigated and expelled from his Dominican Order for his denial of the doctrine of original sin. In 1994, he was received into the Episcopal Church.

Sisters: This study group for women meets each Wednesday evening at 7:15 in the parlor, for faith-filled conversation. The group will begin discussing *Nine Essential Things I've Learned about Life* by Rabbi Harold S. Kushner.

FaithLink: This Sunday morning option for adults emphasizes discussion of current events, from a faith perspective. Affordable housing, standardized tests, and gun violence have been recent topics. You are invited to gather in room 31 after worship, after grabbing a cup of coffee if you wish. Child care is available in room 101 (infants through age 4) and in adjacent room 32 for older children.

Kaleidoscope: Another Sunday morning adult study option meets in the Wesley Room after worship. There is no Kaleidoscope on February 7 due to the Pancake Breakfast but it will resume on February 14 as we welcome Rev. Paul Palmer, leading a Lenten Bible Study. Paul is practically a Lenten tradition at FUMCAH and he will again present a thought-provoking series. Whether you come occasionally or every Sunday, you will enjoy what he has to share.

New participants are invited to join any or all of these faith formation opportunities.

February Mission: Imagine No Malaria

You may be thinking, didn't we just do Imagine No Malaria? And you would be right! But Imagine No Malaria is once again our mission focus for February. Why, you ask? FUMCAH has pledged to raise **\$30,000** over a 3-year period from 2014-2016. We have currently raised **72%** of this amount. The United Methodist Church, along with Imagine No Malaria and a few other organizations, 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 done to this date, the death rate has been cut in half. However, malaria still continues to take the life of a child every two minutes. Our goal is to eradicate malaria from Africa as was done in the United States 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! Celebrate the loved ones in your life with a donation in their honor that will change the life of a child in Africa.

Here's the breakdown of our fundraising efforts:

- 2014 - **\$11,703.00** (from Valentines, Upside Down Christmas, and Land Sale proceeds)
- 2015 - **\$10,093.35** (from Valentines, Christmas Stars, Cookie Sales, and Land Sale proceeds)
- 2016 - We need to raise **\$8,203.65** this year to meet our \$30,000 commitment goal.





Join Us For a Mission Trip to MMDC

Midwest Mission Distribution Center (MMDC) is located near Springfield in Chatham, Illinois. MMDC assembles and distributes disaster relief, humanitarian aid, medical, and educational goods to people in need all over the world. In 2014, over 50,000 kits were assembled and shipped to various locations worldwide. Visit www.midwestmissiondc.org for more information.

Last year, FUMCAH sent a team of 20 people. MMDC depends on volunteers like us for their operations. Volunteers pack kits; sort items; sew school bags, hospital gowns, and blankets; and box goods for shipment. There are a wide variety of tasks, including tasks that do not require standing. If you have a special talent or interest, we will ask MMDC if they can find a special project for you. Children 11 years and over are welcome.

We will leave from the church early morning on Thursday, April 21, and work that afternoon, all day on Friday, April 22, and the morning of Saturday, April 23. We will depart on Saturday at noon.

The cost of participation is \$60 per person, which is a donation to MMDC, plus the cost for transportation, lodging, and meals. We encourage our participants to carpool and will assist you in finding a ride (500 miles round trip). We will stay in a local, inexpensive hotel (about \$60 per night per room) and we enjoy fellowship by going out as a group in the evening to local restaurants (\$25 per meal).

Please contact Naoki Nakamura at 847-650-3608 or email naokin33@gmail.com for more information.

Save the Date - FUMCAH Service Weekend April 30 - May 1

The Missions committee is working to organize a weekend full of service projects for the entire congregation. Possible service projects include food pantry sorting, Feed My Starving Children packing event, outdoor litter pick-up, blood drive, rummage sale help, and thank you cards. Sign-ups will begin on March 6. Please contact Wendy Dunnington (wadunnington@gmail.com or 847-342-1956) if you are interested in organizing a service project.

NIC Reconciling Ministries Task Force Thank You

On behalf of the NIC Reconciling Task Force, I want to extend our sincere appreciation for the excellent planning and execution of this year's Winter Warming! FUMCAH's hospitality and attention to detail was stellar! Please extend our appreciation to your entire team of volunteers.

Most Sincerely,
Bonnie Beckonchrist



Eagle Scout Project Completed

Connor DuShane, from troop 132, successfully completed his Eagle Scout Service Project for FUMCAH. Connor, with the assistance of his scout troop, fixed two water runoff problems in order to prevent soil erosion and mud accumulation on a busy sidewalk and parking lot on the west side of the church and a soil erosion problem on the east side. In addition, they did some landscaping and painting to improve the appearance of the two areas. Connor designed and managed the digging of a swale ditch and rock diversions to disperse excessive water runoff from the roof. Our soil erosion problems have been solved as evidenced by the hard rains this fall.

In order to raise money for supplies, Connor had a garage sale for which many members and friends of FUMCAH contributed items and donated money. Below is a letter from Connor thanking the church for supporting his service project, and making a cash donation back to the church.

Dear Mr. Reed:

I would like to thank you and the First United Methodist Church Congregation for the opportunity to complete my Eagle Scout Service Project. I have been attending scout meetings at the church since my time with the Cub Scouts, and this allowed me to give back to the generosity of the church.

The congregation of First United Methodist Church supported my fundraising efforts and because of their generosity, I raised \$911.45. I incurred project expenses of \$411.45, leaving a balance of \$500. Attached is a check for \$500 for the benefit of the church.

Sincerely,
Connor DuShane



Register Now for ASP 2016

Are you thinking about serving with Appalachia Service Project this summer? We hope you are, and if so, we have news to share! This year, FUMCAH youth will travel to Kentucky on June 18, and return on June 25. While there, we will provide home repair for families in need, engage in evening gatherings that connect our service to our faith, and learn a bit about life in the Appalachian mountains. If you would like to join us for this transformational week of faith, fellowship, and service, the deadline to sign up is February 1.

Looking for ways to support ASP? Checks, credit card payments, and gas gift cards (Shell, Mobil) are accepted in the church office. Do you know of youth or freshmen in college who might be interested in participating? The cost to participate this year is \$315, and financial assistance is available. Contact Pastor Will (will.ed.green@gmail.com) or the church office (friends@fumcah.com). For more information on ASP, visit the website at www.asphome.org.

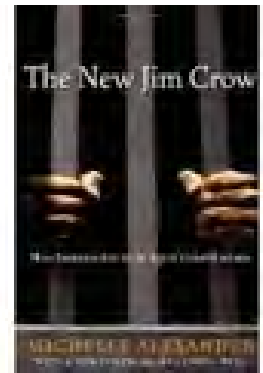
United Methodist Women Work Day Event for WINGS

WINGS offers shelter, education, guidance, and support to homeless and abused women and children. FUMCAH women are invited to a volunteer work day at the WINGS Donation Site on Saturday, February 27, from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Please meet at the FUMCAH parking lot at 9:00am to carpool. Please RSVP to Linda Riddle (linda_riddle@sbcglobal.net or 847-394-5256) by Saturday, February 13.



Black History Month Book Discussion Group with Faith in Action

This February, you are invited to explore the changing battle lines of racism in America by reading *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander (\$12.80, Amazon.com). Then please join us for a discussion group in March. There are two dates to choose from: Tuesday, March 8, at 7:00pm, at FUMCAH, or Sunday, March 13, at 12:15pm, at Southminister Church. *The New Jim Crow* examines how this country's "War on Drugs" has targeted African-Americans and impacted civil rights, state and federal budgets, fair policing, welfare, employment and more. It is clearly written and thought-provoking. Questions? Contact Jane Petrof at 847-651-5263 or janepetrof@gmail.com.



All-Church Potluck

Nothing says FUMCAH like "community," and we want to invite you to celebrate this community on Sunday, March 6, from 5:00 to 7:00pm, for an all-church potluck and celebration. No gimmicks or fundraisers are involved, just a time to get together and share in good food and fellowship. Sign-ups to bring dishes will take place beginning in mid-February.

Save the Date!

Faith in Action and United Methodist Women will present "Racism in Our Community: How Can I Make a Difference?" on Tuesday, March 15, from 7:00 to 8:30pm. Join our member churches of the Community Renewal Society for this important educational program.

Congregation News

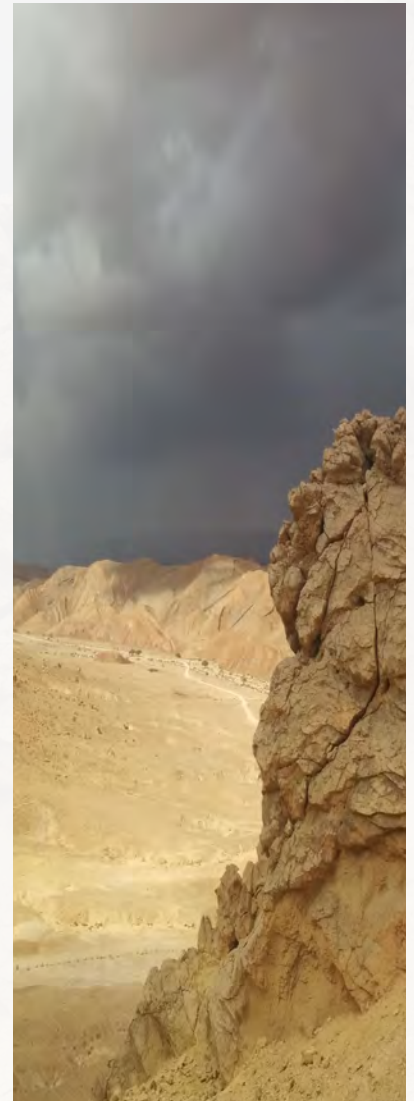
David Aldrich, long-time member, died on January 11.

Report from Stewardship Committee

Hello to all from your Stewardship Committee. We want to bring you up to date on where we stand on pledges for 2016. Melinda Kirby has been working steadily at wrapping up the numbers and commitments.

To date we have received 194 pledges for a total of \$617,181. 44% of those pledges were increased from last year and 17 were new! There are, however, 4 fewer pledges and the total is down about \$8,000. But Melinda is fairly sure that more will be coming in and that it all might total out to between a 3.5% and 5.5% increase. So if you have not let the office know where you stand for 2016, please call Melinda at 847-255-5112, or submit a pledge card. And remember, if your life circumstances change, your pledge can also be changed.

Thank you all for your stewardship concerning not only these pledges, but also for the time and help so many of you give in furthering God's work inside and outside the walls of FUMCAH. May God bless each of you this year and always.






February 2016

Doorways to Grace

or current resident

PRST STD
Non-profit
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Methodist
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