



The Tower Call

**First United Methodist Church of London
All are Always Welcome!
February 2017**

Inside this issue:

A Message From Pastor Steve	2
J Walkers News	3
Welcome Table Beyond New Years Resolutions	4-6
Prayer Requests Notes of Thanks	7
Sufficient Grace Mardi Gras Fundraiser	8

J Walkers Dinner Theater - A Fun Evening!



Our church is truly blessed to have such an involved, active and faithful youth group. The J Walkers prepared the spaghetti dinner, served it and presented an entertaining dinner theater for the congregation as a fundraiser for their upcoming mission trip. Thanks to all who attended!



Recurring Bible Study Meetings

- Bible Study with Pastor Steve
Wednesday Evenings at 7pm
- Men's Group
1st & 3rd Saturday Mornings at 7:00am



A Message from Pastor Steven...

Friends,

As I write, I am mindful of the challenging words sent by God to the prophet Micah. They are words that are as alive today as they were when first delivered to God's people during a time of uncertainty brought on by political, social, and spiritual upheaval. It was a time when people either questioned their faith or took it for granted. It was a time, not unlike our own, when the concerns of earthly life seemed to overshadow people's awareness of what it means to live with faith in God's promises.

Micah writes, *"God has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."* (Micah 6:8). I read these words, these God-sent directives, and I hear God reaching out to every believer inviting each of us to remember what is most important, what is most needed to live our lives as God's very own, to live our lives in a good, God-pleasing way. In one concise sentence, God reminds us of the message, the direction, the divine mandate given to humanity since the very beginning of our interaction with our Creator God. If we are to live as good, Godly people, if we are to live as the Light of Christ in this world, if we put our faith in the eternal promises of God, then we are those who commit ourselves to doing justice, to loving kindness, to walking humbly before our God. What does it mean to do justice? The Living Word tells us that only God is just, so to do justice is to follow the all-embracing example of God's grace, holding every human being as a sacred gift, loved by the One who gives them life. What does it mean to love kindness? The God of grace demonstrates to us what it means to love kindness through the life, death and resurrection of the perfect example of God's loving-kindness, Christ the Lord. What does it mean to walk humbly with our God? Of the three directives, this last one seems to me to be the very starting place that leads to our ability to do the other two. Until we recognize deep within our hearts that God is God and we are the created, called to know God, we cannot begin to do justice or love kindness. Unless we realize we are nothing without God, that we know nothing without God, that we can do nothing without God, we cannot quite understand what it means to walk, live, believe in God with hearts steeped in humility. A humble heart understands the wondrous gift of having a faithful relationship with the One who has blessed us with everything, even existence itself.

My friends, this year, 2017, will be spent deepening our faith as individuals and as a congregation. This Year of Deepening Faith will be an adventure of learning about our relationship with God, discovering exactly where we each are in understanding and following the directives God gives us in Micah 6:8. It will be a year when we will collectively commit ourselves to a lifestyle of service for the sake of the kingdom God already sees, the kingdom God invites us to embrace, the kingdom we are called to take to everyone in the world. May 2017 be the year we more fully do what the Lord requires of us, doing justice, loving kindness, walking humbly with our God.

Blessings in Technicolor



WE ARE SELLING SUBS!

****All proceeds benefit the youth fund!****

There are order forms all over the church that you can take and turn into the office or you can find a youth! They have order forms too! \$5 per sub and they will be ready in time for the Super Bowl! Orders and money need to be turned in by Noon Feb. 1st! Orders can be picked up Feb. 5th after church. Other arrangements can be made if necessary-contact Chez.

February 5th is Souper Bowl Sunday and we will be participating in the Souper bowl of caring! We will be collecting money to donate to the Welcome Table after church on the 5Th!! Bring what you can to support this great ministry!

J Walkers Bowling!!

We will be going bowling at Plain City Lanes February 12. 1:00-4:00. \$10 per person

Plan on staying after church. Bring your Valentine's cards for a card swap! Unlimited pizza and pop included in price! Sign up on the youth board outside of Chez's office!

GIVING TREE

Beginning Feb. 5th there will be a Giving Tree located just inside the 4th street doors. On it will be items that we are collecting to give to All Things Common which collects basic items that are not covered by food assistance programs. Please take a heart and return the item printed on it to the church by February 26th! There will be tubs to put items in the parlor!

MISSION AND SERVICE

THE WELCOME TABLE

On Thursday, February 9th our church will be providing dinner at The Welcome Table. We will be serving lasagna, salad, bread, Brownies, and cookies. If you can donate food, time, and/or give a monetary donation, please see Cathie Littleton in the Rudorah Welcome Center after church. Checks should be made out to F.U.M.C. with a notation for The Welcome Table. Monetary donations can be placed in a giving envelope. Write your name and The Welcome Table on the envelope and place it into the collection plate, or give it directly to Cathie Littleton.

Beyond New Year's resolutions — make 'faithful intentions'

By Laurens Glass*

New Year's Resolutions have always been a very pass/fail sort of test for me. I set myself up to forgo chocolate and lo and behold, two weeks into the New Year, I find myself munching nonchalantly on fudge. In the immortal words of comedian Steve Martin, "I forgot." But worse, one slip up and I feel like I have failed. I can't go back to "the day before the fudge" so what's the point? My record is no longer perfect.

But that is the whole point from a spiritual perspective. We're not perfect. But we are improving. Resolving to be more spiritual is not a hard date to keep or a hard bar to leap over. It's a daily resetting of your mind and soul. It's trying again when you "fail" and knowing that you can never fail if you're trying. It is...grace. Here a few ideas for growing spiritually and for spurring you to think of your own.

1. Count to 10

Your mother was right — or, maybe it was my mother — but anyway, counting to 10 is an age old axiom for a reason. Our first reactions to things may be influenced by how stressed we are at the moment, what just happened in that meeting or where our blood sugar levels are hovering. Do you really want to snap at someone because you are mad at someone else? Especially, if it that someone else is yourself? Taking a few seconds to think before speaking takes discipline and practice. But taking time to respond when you feel emotional is a spiritual exercise that will help you be more centered and more caring. Make sure you eat first.

2. Breathe

But I am! Right? Breathing is an involuntary response of the body. One that happens regardless of whether we're aware of it. But breathing can become shallow or quick when we are anxious or stressed — and that is when we need oxygen the most.

There are over 30 verses in the Bible that mention breath and they seem to often be connected to or representative of Spirit, of God.

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. — Job 33:4

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. — John 20:22

Mindful breathing is essential to our spiritual life because it connects our heads with our bodies and our bodies with our hearts. When I feel afraid or physically sick, I breathe 10 times as deeply and calmly as I can and remind myself that it will be OK. And it is.

3. Think positive thoughts

I read that human beings think three or four negative thoughts to every positive one. My friends admit to beating themselves up for their shortcomings or worrying to the point of distraction about the future. When things are going wrong, that's the most difficult time to be positive — and sometimes you just have to go to bed! But a steady stream of hopeful or reassuring thoughts can help bring us back to the truth that we are not alone.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) or simply, "It's going to be OK!" are better thoughts to think than, "I'll never be able to do it!" Thinking on the true and good thing (Philippians 4:8) is far better than allowing fear to overcome you. No matter how bad the situation is, remember you are loved beyond measure.

A COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.

"A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition" is used in the Covenant Renewal Service, often celebrated on New Year's Eve or Day. This version is on page 607 in the United Methodist hymnal.

4. Love (and forgive) yourself

One of my favorite Bible verses ever, but one that has taken years for me to comprehend is "love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, among others). What does that really mean? I struggled with thinking loving the self was, well, selfish. Now, as an adult, I understand that you cannot love and accept others if you do not love and accept yourself. You cannot express unconditional love if you do not first practice it with yourself.

Holding on to guilt can impact relationships because it blocks the flow of communication, of love itself. Practice grace — with yourself. You can't truly live your life until you do.

5. Love one another (and forgive the ones you can't forgive) Such a simple directive. Such a beautiful philosophy. Did He really mean the ones we disagree with, too?! Learning to love in the manner Christ intended is more of a lifetime goal than an immediate accomplishment. The progress sneaks up on you over months, years, sort of like when I gave up the perfection of Yoga Magazine and settled for "getting better." Which is a nice verb phrase whose synonyms include "rejuvenate, restored and released."

Forgiving people who have hurt us may well be the most difficult task we are asked to perform as Christians. But if you keep "carrying all that anger, it'll eat you up inside," as Don Henley sang. The subtitle of the Rev. Adam Hamilton's book on forgiveness is, "Finding Peace Through Letting Go," and it means just that. And just know...it's a process. Accept where you are with it.

that. And just know...it's a process. Accept where you are with it.

6. Pray — right where you are

I tend to agree with writer Anne Lamott that prayers are usually “Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!” or “Help me! Help me! Help me!” But as I grew spiritually, I began to pray for other people when I myself was hurting. It's been a powerful practice that has changed my perspective about what others go through and how many blessings I actually have.

A daily devotional, like the one offered at The Upper Room, a book of prayers from around the world, “A Bead and a Prayer,” (as explained by United Methodist author, Kristen Vincent) and even crying, are all ways you can connect with God. Pray. Pray in the way that works for you. If you haven't in a while, if you don't believe it works... then pray that. God's not afraid of your doubt. Praying is something you can do *wherever* you are.

7. Be grateful — and be joyful

I woke up one morning when all I wanted to do was cry, and I heard clearly in my head: *This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.* (Psalm 118:24) So, I played “Happy” by Pharrell Williams, instead. Gratitude is a spiritual practice that will change your life. It's not just that it shifts your focus from what you don't have to what you do have. It can lift your spirits in such a way that helps you cope when you are down. Joy is an inside job but it can be inspired by external things. Music. Children. Nature. Art. Find them.

8. Think of the other fellow

That is what my mother used to say. “And you'll feel better.” ? When I was little, I thought doing things for others was about, well, others. It was the right and proper thing to do, but I wasn't sure it was necessarily fun. But as an adult, I realized it did far more for me than it ever did for anyone I ever helped. The Wesleyan tradition holds that faith and good works belong together. “We offer our lives back to God through a life of service.”

You cannot help someone else and not be changed yourself. Which may be the coolest paradox of “do unto others as you would have done unto you.” Try it. You don't have to master all spiritual practices this week or even this year. But you can earnestly strive to be more spiritual at any point in time. It is an ongoing practice. A resolution you can remake daily.



Choir Christmas rehearsal and dinner at Brennan Loft



Our church donated 125 toys to the London Fire Dept Toy Drive!

Prayer Requests

Continual

Carolyn Blausen, Bev Dhume, Doris Foster, Betty Garrett,
Mildred Good, Geraldine Henry, Phyllis & Ted Hunter,
Connie Hunter, Sue Jackman, Virginia Richey,
Georgia Smith, Harold Snell, Linda Snyder, Loretta Weimer

Current

Madelyn Duffey, Coda Morrison,
Bob Edwards, Howard Emswiler,
Lynda Junk, Shuna Smith,
Caleb White, Gerald "Butch" Yakubik

Serving on Active Military Duty

Captain John Crisp,
Lt Tom Crisp,
Sgt Mathew Rowley (Afghanistan)

Please pray for the family and friends of those who have given their lives for our nation.

NOTES OF THANKS

To Pastor Rodgers and Church Family,

Thank you to Pastor Rodgers for the beautiful service and kind words used to celebrate Jack's life. We really appreciate all that you did for our family.

A special thank you to those who prepared and served lunch after the funeral. What a blessing to enjoy great food and be able to relax after such a stressful time.

With deepest appreciation, T. J. and Stephanie Leach and Family

Dear church friends,

Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, and love during my recent health issues.

The power of prayer is truly amazing.

God is good!

Rosemary Blakeslee

Staff

Resident Bishop.....Bishop Gregory Palmer
Capital Area South Superintendent.....Rev. Dr. Timothy L. Bias
Senior Pastor.....Rev. Steven J. Rodgers
Executive Assistant.....Gail A. Baker
Director of Youth Ministries.....Chez Gorman
Director of Music Ministries and OrganistMichael Schreffler
Children's Choir Director.....Eryn Sandhage
Financial Manager.....Tara Shoemaker
Housekeeping.....Dale McNeal

February Worship Leaders

Liturgist

Sue Mosier

Ushers

David Ladd, Chair
Mike McMahan, Mick Harris, John Foote,
Felica Isaacs

Acolytes

Luke Hockman and Elizabeth Cleaver

Sound & Video Technician

Brian Benedum, David Cover

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**Donation of food and auction items
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Contact Pat Dillon 614-370-9428 or Nena Dillon 614-736-8384

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**The Mission of Sufficient Grace: To provide children physical nourishment
through food and spiritual encouragement through kindness and example**