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St John's United Methodist Church

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Our Heritage - Notes on United Methodist History Worship Practices Then and Now

Many people assume that the way we worship today is very similar to the way people in our tradition worshipped in the past - that's true in some ways, but very false in many ways!

Our worship services today in most United Methodist churches are quite sedate and subdued compared to those of the people who came before us and the music in our worship services is quite different from what was practiced in our congregations in the past. In fact, our "traditional" worship style services would be seen as anything but traditional during more than half of the history of the United Methodist Church in all of our various branches. Our worship service at St. John's would have been rejected outright in the 19th century!

St. John's United Methodist Church began in the United Brethren portion of our predecessor denominations. The early United Brethren tradition was to be a singing church, but they completely opposed choirs and any musical instruments, especially organs. In 1861, the United Brethren General Conference urged hymn singing but added, "we kindly forbid the introduction of choirs." In 1865, they banned musical instruments – church organs in particular – but by the next conference they soften that a bit and just "earnestly advised against choirs and musical instrumental music".¹

In the nineteenth century, singing was prominent in religious gatherings. Journals of the early United Brethren reveal that whenever believers gathered, they would always have time when they sang joyfully about the God who had redeemed them. The congregations were expected to be active participants in this singing worship. This was necessary since there was no musical accompaniment; they could rely on to support the singing and beef up the experience. In the midst of this worship there were often visible demonstrations of emotion: Crying, laughing, clapping, and shouting would sometimes accompany these times of worship. In fact, they were often encouraged and seen as signs of spiritual life and vitality in the meeting.²

Many of us would be surprised to experience the level of excitement and the enthusiastic exclamations that were normal during most of the history of our tradition. We tend to be a pretty quiet brunch now!

Some of the changes to our worship tradition came about gradually but other transitions were more rapid and very contentious. This excerpt from the history of Wesley United Methodist Church in Carroll County Maryland is typical of some of the reactions in local churches as there was a transition to the use of organs in worship:

In 1885 a group of the young people started to press for an organ for Wesley Chapel. The older members opposed the idea. Rev. W. A. Koontz was the pastor and favored it but he was pastor for only one year and did not see it through. It was thoroughly discussed and there were very heated arguments as it was presented for the vote. Said a dear old lady, "If you bring an organ into the church, you had just as well bring a checker-board in." Said one of the men, "They say the devil is in the fiddle and if he is in the fiddle he is in the organ." Another brother told the first organist, Miss Ella Martin, that the devil is in the organ and she answered by saying "You are mistaken. He is not in the organ; he is in the people." The young people won and an Estey organ was placed in the church.³

Undoubtedly in a few years the tensions about worship styles that many churches experienced in the 1990s and at the beginning of this century will seem as distant and odd as objections to having organs, choirs and musical instruments in worship seem to us today.

- ¹ from United Methodist church archives (SUMC Archives, Ohio - 2000)
- ² from the United Brethren Historical Society (2000)
- ³ from 165th Anniversary of Brown's Meeting House - Shindle, Ira William (1965).

Pastor's Notes, September 2020

Presence in the Present Tense – Is God Necessary to Us Every Moment?

I was reading an article that was advocating that we be willing to take on ministry tasks beyond what we are comfortable with or even capable of doing ourselves, so that we will be forced to rely on God and on other Christians. The author made the point that if we are only willing to do what we know we can do on our own resources; we will never be challenged to go beyond that.

As I read the piece it made me begin to wonder how many times I have been willing to be "successful" in ministry without having to rely on God?

I began my time in vocational ministry about 41 years ago, and at this point, with the exception of a world-wide pandemic, I seldom run into situations that I haven't dealt with in some sense before. Over the years I've bumped into just about every administrative task out there and I have come to the point where I can adjust, adapt, and strategize.

At this point I can generally teach with a few minutes' notice if necessary. I can speak with a full text, or with notes, or just off the cuff. I have developed a wealth of connections and contacts and have access to all the tools I would probably ever need to do ministry.

God is good! I have been blessed!

But with all of the resources I have available to me, do I run the danger of treating God as good... but not really all that necessary to my day-to-day work? I could function for quite some time without having to acknowledge any need for God to be part of it.

And how about us as a church? How long could our church function, and function seemingly well, without really relying on God?

We have people who know how to do all the things you need to do to make our church organization work. We have our plans and our committees and our teams and our policies. We have plenty of programs and capabilities and systems set up. We have great people. When people attend our church, they can count

on a quality, meaningful experience on Sunday. Certainly, we treat God as welcome at our church, but are we really treating God as necessary?

And how about you personally? How long could you get by without having to rely on God? What in your daily life and your ministry as a Christian is challenging enough to make it impossible unless you are relying on God?

In ancient times, Israel created an elaborate and efficient religious and institutional system that could run very smoothly and very well year after year without God having to do much of anything. The priests and Levites excelled at their roles. The sacrificial system was geared to handle the crowds at Passover at a high level of efficiency. The people knew that they could rely on their religious organization and that their needs would be met consistently by caring people. The people were so satisfied with their faith community that they missed the fact that God had become unnecessary in it all. They had created a faith without the need for God to show up.

And then, one day... God showed up!

God ignored their customs and comfort, contradicted their favorite celebrity teachers, and violated all their policies and procedures. Every time Jesus came to a service, things went a bit crazy and havoc often ensued. Finally, they had to either completely change the way they lived their faith and acknowledge that they needed to be, do, and believe something more, or get rid of this inconvenient, uncomfortable, disruptive God. After due consideration and time to gain consensus, they chose to get rid of him by encouraging the powers-that-be, to crucify him.

Now, I am certainly all for policies, procedures, strategy, training, planning and technology. In fact, I love most of those things! I'm grateful for most of the structure we have in our programs and tasks and I'm amazed at just how effectively churches can use these tools to do good things in our communities.

What scares me; what shakes me to my core, however, is how easily we can substitute the tools of ministry for genuine ministry; the customs of fellowship for genuine fellowship; the methods of worship for genuine worship. How often we find ourselves focusing on the creation rather than the Creator. How many weeks do we leave church feeling satisfied because the music was good, the message was interesting and everything went smoothly... without seriously considering if God was pleased - not with the way we did things, but with our hearts and with our attitudes.

How long has it been since you have been on your knees (or even your face!) before God, desperate to hear from God, knowing that you are absolutely nothing without God. When was the last time you were so hungry to experience the power and presence of God that you couldn't eat or sleep or do another task until you felt the touch of the Holy Spirit? When was the last time you were so overwhelmed by the presence of God

and the awesome privilege of worshipping God that you could barely breathe?

It's really not all that hard to build an organization, a ministry, a church, or a life without God... but what a terrifying place to be!

I encourage you to keep God's presence in your present - don't treat God as an accomplished fact in your life, but as a burning necessity of your day. May God inspire you and challenge you to go beyond all expectations, and into territory where only those who walk with God dare to walk.

I'm going to be praying for you... and for me... about that.

Blessings!

Pastor Rob

Message Series Beginning August 23

Priority One: The Way of Worship

There are many things we are called to be and to do as believers – live in fellowship, grow in spiritual maturity, lovingly serve in ministry, bring Good News to people... These are all non-negotiable parts of our lives as Christians and of central importance to our lives. We can't not do these and truly say that we are following Jesus Christ.

But there is one thing we are called to as believers that has the highest priority – living a life that expresses love to God: Worship is priority one! On August 23rd we'll begin this series exploring the Biblical truths about worship and what it means for our lives personally and as the people of God.

In “normal” times, people gather each week in local church buildings for “Worship.” (Lately, we've had to “gather” in other ways!) But what does gathering for worship really mean? What does God mean by worship? Where does worship take place? Why do we worship? What does God expect from us in worship? During this season, we'll cover many facets of worship. Most importantly we'll look at how we can make every area of our lives, everything we do, become acts of worship and help each of us to break through to a more powerful life of worship and praise!

Schedule of Messages

September Music and Dancing in Love (Communion – Church Picnic)

September 13 Power of Love (Service of Remembrance)

September 20 Healing Love (Healing Service)

September 27 Life Changing Love (Time of Congregational Renewal)

October 4 Surrendering in Love (Worldwide Communion)

October 11 Acts of Love (Celebration of Gifts)

October 18 Ways of Love (Discipleship Renewal Service)

September Happenings

Worship Details for September

September 6 – Church Picnic
Message: Part 3 – Music and Dancing in Love

September 13
Message: Part 4: Power of Love – Service of Remembrance

September 20
Message: Part 5: Healing Love – Healing Service

September 27
Message: Part 6: Life Changing Love – Time of Congregational Renewal

Scripture Readers for September

September 6 – Carol Dittoe
September 13 – Kathy Holcomb
September 20 – Sue Mallory
September 27 – Peyton Levering



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A New Way to Pay

Members of St. John's are now able to make your offerings online. All payments are paid directly to the church through Fulton Bank on a weekly basis and will help to provide a consistent stream of income for St. John's. It only takes a few minutes to sign up for weekly, biweekly, or monthly payments. Go to this site <https://bit.ly/stjohnsepay> by either clicking on the link or copying and pasting it into your web browser to begin.

Missions Team – Treasure Box Donations

The mission for September is “Salvation Army.” Your donations help to support the Salvation Army’s mission of serving the people in need in our community during these uncertain times.

Missed a Service?

No need to worry if you didn’t see a service and do not use or want to use Facebook. St. John’s has a YouTube channel where all the services will be hosted. Click on this link, or copy and paste it in your browser to watch the services since we reopened: <https://bit.ly/St-JohnsUMC>.

Birthdays

September 2 Jay Strubel
September 4 Curt Moseng
September 9 Jim A. Bowman
September 11 Mary Parke
September 13 Geraldine Pickel
September 16 Kason Hurst
September 17 Jim Wright
September 18 Mike Worst
September 20 Dale Bowman, Phyllis King
September 24 Barb Henrich



Anniversaries

September 11.....Brian & Wanda Gregg
September 18.....Jim & Louise Knosp
September 18.....Ed & Pat Strubel
September 19.....Dean & Linda Seese
September 30.....Ben & Chere Pickel



Members in Homes and Shut-Ins

Here is the current list of our membership either in homes or at their home. Their birthday is in parenthesis behind their name when known. If anyone is missing from this list, or the information needs to be updated, please contact the church office with the information. Thank you!

Conestoga View

***Darlene Strubel (4/8)**
900 East King Street
Room #407
Lancaster, PA 17602

Conestoga View

***Jay Strubel (9/2)**
900 East King Street
Room #402
Lancaster, PA 17602

Evergreen Estates

Jim Wright
717-291-3239
1300 East King Street
Room C 15
Lancaster, PA 17602

Legend of Lititz

***Jane Eckman (4/7)**
80 Millport Road
Legend Room 109
Lititz, PA 17543

Mennonite Home

***Kathleen Lichty (3/20)**
717-490-8428
1520 Harrisburg Pike
Juniata Room #203
Lancaster, PA 17601
Juniata Rm #203

Millersville Manor

***Shirley White (4/5)**
717-464-1287
Millersville Manor
109A Lee Avenue
Millersville, PA 1751

Susquehanna Valley Nursing & Rehab

***Margaret Lefever (1/9)**
745 Old Chiques Hill Road
Room 33 E
Columbia, PA 17512

Homebound

***Scott Chretien (8/5)**
74 Roosevelt Boulevard
Apt. 101
Lancaster, PA 17601

***Eileen Feister (6/20)**

264 South Vintage Road
Paradise, PA 17562

***Betty Gregg (10/22)**

18 Cherry Hill Road
PO Box 344
Paradise, PA 17562



Thank You!

The softball team wants to thank you for your support of Schreiber Sunday. With your generosity, we raised \$2145 to support the services supplied by the Schreiber Center for Pediatric Development (SCPD).

From their website: SCPD “serves more than 4,000 children every year. We provide outpatient and in-home pediatric therapy services, including occupational, physical and speech-language therapy, early education preschool and child care services, recreation programs, summer camps and specialized for children birth to age 21. We also offer high-quality classes for parents. At Schreiber, we see every child's

unique capabilities and help them achieve their fullest potential.”

If you'd like to know more about SCPD and the services they offer, you can go to their website at <https://www.schreiberpediatric.org/about/>.

Happy Labor Day!

On September 7 we celebrate Labor Day. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, “*Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.*” So, while you're celebrating with family and friends (hopefully following CDC guidelines), take a moment to remember all the workers who have lost their jobs during this time and say a prayer for them and their families.



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Do You Remember?

On April 21, 2013, St. John's celebrated our 175th anniversary as a congregation. To recognize the historic event, past pastors who served our church were invited back to take part in the service and the reception afterwards. Those in attendance are seen in the first picture below. From left: Jim Todd, DS, Pastor Guy Carrigan, Pastor Julia Shearer, Pastor Ben Taylor, Pastor Joseph Puckhaber, Pastor Sandra Knaub, Pastor Gene Errickson

Were you there to help us celebrate? Here are some pictures to jog your memory!



All the pastors and DS with their official looks at the chancel rail



One of three beautiful cakes made for the celebration



All the pastors as DS participated in cutting the cake to be shared by all



A view of the church from the choir loft



St. John's United Methodist Church



Jean Rynier and Jackie Crist



Another beautiful cake for the event with the church's picture on it!



An overview of those in attendance for the reception following the service



The third cake; a beautiful representation of colorful crosses

Presence

Prayers

Gifts

Service

Witness

DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

Discipleship Journey Seminars

Discipleship Journey seminars, taught by Pastor Rob, are new opportunities for experiencing Spiritual Growth and enhancing our Spiritual Lives, as well as building up our Fellowship as a church. They can be life changing! Starting in the fall, we will have a series of opportunities to take part in these important and very interesting seminars.

Discipleship Journey 1 - Presence and Prayers:
Focusing on Our Relationships with God and One Another

This first seminar in the Discipleship Journey series is a foundational one. It is all about discovering, experiencing, and belonging as believers. This seminar can be presented in two sessions, four sessions, or as single all-day sessions on a Saturday or Sunday. We will allow participants to choose their preferred format as much as possible.

This Seminar Covers:

- Our life together as a church family
- Our connection as believers
- The reasons why we are here
- Experiencing the presence of God
- Vision that God gives us

This is a great way to get to know each other and Pastor Rob better. Class sizes will be limited in size. Masks and social distancing protocols will be followed as needed.

- Core values
- The true meanings of membership and ministry
- Distinctive United Methodist ideas
- The Biblical design for a church
- Much, much more!

This is a real opportunity to experience growth in your spiritual life and to focus your faith life. **Classes will begin September 21. Call the office if you want to join but can't make it to church.**

Other Seminars in this Series Include:

Discipleship Journey 2 – Prayers and Gifts:
Making Commitments Necessary for Growth in Spiritual Maturity

Discipleship Journey 3 – Gifts and Service:
Discovering and Using Spiritual Gifts

Discipleship Journey 4 – Service and Witness:
Growing through a Life Mission

The Discipleship Journey Seminars build on one another. To participate in Discipleship Journey Seminar 2, you must first participate in Discipleship Journey 1, and so on.

Pastor: Pastor Rob Stippich
Email: rstippich@msn.com
Administrative Assistant: Carol Dittoe
Email: stjohns_umc@comcast.net
Church Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/stjohnsunitedmethodist/>
Church Website: www.stjohns-paradise.org



Worship Service – 9:00 am
Sunday School – 10:30 am

Nursery Care Provided
Handicap Accessible

Join Our Journey!!

Mission Statement: ~ St. John's UMC is a warm, welcoming church where all are invited to build relationships with Christ and each other. ~

Vision Statement: ~ To be a growing, giving, praying church that responds to the needs of our congregation and community. ~



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED