

THE STAR



Stony Creek United Methodist Church

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

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Reed's Reasonings Continue

Looking Backward and Forward



He is Risen. He is Risen Indeed! I still hear those words echoing from Easter Sunday. As Easter Sunday drew closer my excitement level got higher and higher. When you are called into ministry the opportunity to preach on Christmas and particularly Easter are the times you look forward to most. This year was no exception. We had over 135 people celebrate Easter Sunday with us. Our long-standing tradition of Easter Breakfast was marvelous thanks to Steve Guck. This year I had an added bonus; On April 25th, Juliana and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in South Haven, Michigan.

But there is barely time to remember as we glance ahead and see the spring rush is upon us. It starts with our Chicken Dinner on May 6th. The following Saturday is the Vital Church Initiative. Then I am blessed to celebrate Mother's Day with the baptism of Theodore Neal, baptism is my favorite part of ministry. Then we remember those who laid down their lives on Memorial Day weekend. Then on May 31st, Dave Mongson and I leave for Annual Conference this time in Traverse City. June 4th brings Pentecost Sunday (wear red to show the Holy Spirit still lives in you!), Communion, and Graduation Sunday; followed by the our missionary Jill Hall preaching on June 11th; June 18th is Father's Day which we are celebrating with a Church Picnic and Strawberry Shortcake. Whew we are in high gear now.

At a busy time like, this sometimes the important things can be forgotten. I have a special request to ask of each of you. At this time of

year with so many wonderful programs going on in our church it's the perfect opportunity to invite someone to church. The majority of people in our area don't have a church they regularly attend. Studies show that many of them like the idea of church, but don't know enough about the churches to actually go to one. They are VERY receptive to a friendly invitation from someone they know. Being invited breaks down their concerns and makes them feel welcome. They will usually come knowing that someone they know will be there to greet them. Please don't let people sit at home wishing somebody would have invited them to church, let that someone be you.

May God's Will, Grace, and Joy be with you,

Pastor Reed

Fill your bucket!

David Brooks, author of *The Road to Character* (Random House), created a moral bucket list in an effort to develop "eulogy virtues" — the traits praised at people's funerals. Qualities such as humility, dependence and energizing love offer more joy than any "résumé virtues" ever will, he writes.

"There's joy in freely chosen obedience to organizations, ideas and people. There's joy in mutual stumbling. There's an aesthetic joy we feel when we see morally good action, when we run across someone who is quiet and humble and good, when we see that however old we are, there's lots to do ahead."



Creativity

"I learned...that inspiration does not come like a bolt, nor is it kinetic, energetic striving, but it comes into us slowly and quietly and all the time, though we must regularly and every day give it a little chance to start flowing, prime it with a little solitude and idleness."

--Brenda Ueland

"Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity."

--Charles Mingus

"There are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish."

--Warren Bennis

"Every artist was first an amateur."

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

"One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man."

--Elbert Hubbard

From Pastor Reed's tweets:

"The heart has its reasons which reason knows not."

"One of the greatest failures of our generation is not living out the biblical precepts which we so clearly articulate."

"If you challenge your doubts as strongly as your faith, you'll end up with faith."

"Remember behind every belief or idea is a person. More important than what they believe, is why they believe it. Take the time to find out."

Psalm 22 begins "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." It ends, "it is finished." Jesus knew just what he was doing, he was doing it for you.

Fifteen years ago the American Film Institute found movies with high moral values and kid friendly ratings did better at the Box Office. The Christian Film & Television Commission™ -analyzed the Top 25 Movies at the Box Office in 2002 including, Lord of the Rings, The Two Towers, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Signs, Spiderman, Ice Age, Minority Report, and Catch Me If You Can. Guess what they found? Movies with:

- *Strong/very strong Christian content took in \$219 million*
- *Strong/very strong moral content took in \$197 million*
- *Strong/very strong pagan content took in \$159 million*
- *Strong/very strong occult content \$ took in \$ 157 million*

Have things changed?

"Jesus, Stand Among Us"



Jesus, stand among us, in your risen power;
Let this time of worship be a hallowed hour.
Breathe the Holy Spirit into every heart;
Bid the fears and sorrows from each soul depart.
Thus with quickened footsteps we pursue our way,
watching for the dawning of eternal day.
—William Pennefather

A sign of honor

Even he who died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of his mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought — the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight to heaven.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Beginning ... and beginning again

During the coming weeks, as you or loved ones celebrate graduation, remember it isn't a closed door, an end or a farewell. Instead, it's an entryway threshold, a beginning, a hello — and one of many such opportunities that mark life.

"God wants us to know that life is a series of beginnings, not endings, just as graduations are not terminations but commencements," writes Bernie Siegel. "Creation is an ongoing process, and when we create a perfect world where love and compassion are shared by all, suffering will cease."

Of course, we can "create a perfect world" only by letting God guide our actions. So, dear graduates, may you partner with God to meet suffering with love, kindness and compassion through all the new beginnings of your life!

Decisions matter

Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of. An apparently trivial indulgence in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge or railway line or bridgehead from which the enemy may launch an attack otherwise impossible.

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

In the News

The United Methodist Church may be in the news again in the next few weeks. This is a blessing, and a bit of a curse. It will be about Rev. Karen Oliveto. She was elected to the office of Bishop in the Colorado Area of the United Methodist Church. However, this election took place after she married a woman by the name of Robin Ridenour. What you are likely to hear is that the Judicial Council ruled “against” homosexuals.

This is not true. The Judicial Council is the Supreme Court of the United Methodist Church. Their job is to determine what the law is, and if it has been followed. Since the civil ceremony between Karen and Robin occurred before the Episcopal election the Judicial Council ruled that her election was invalid, because this is precisely what the Book of Discipline says. The Judicial Council did not have the authority to change the Book of Discipline, only to interpret if it had been followed.

On February 23-26, 2019 the United Methodist Church will gather in St Louis, Missouri for a Special General Conference. At that Conference, the UMC will determine how it will deal with gay marriage and gay clergy going forward. Until that time nothing will have changed, despite what you might hear reported.

Restoring the balance

In *Springs in the Valley* (Zondervan), pioneer missionary Lettie Cowman tells of a traveler making a trek through an African jungle. Native tribesmen who helped carry loads walked rapidly on day one, covering a great distance. Yet the next morning they refused to move. When the frustrated traveler asked the tribesmen why they were just sitting, they said they’d gone too fast on the first day and “were now waiting for their souls to catch up to their bodies.”

Cowman writes, “This whirling rushing life which so many of us live does for us what that march did for those tribesmen. The difference: They knew they needed to restore life’s balance; too often we do not.”

God promises rest for our soul and body, so don’t overlook the importance of physical restoration. Only by taking time to recharge can you be an effective laborer in God’s kingdom.

Mysterious ways

Before pursuing a career as a Christian singer, Ryan Stevenson was a paramedic, encountering trauma and “true brokenness.” When he received a 911 call about a woman struck by lightning, Stevenson didn’t think she’d survive. But thanks in part to his efforts, the woman made a full recovery — and later struck up a friendship with him.

One day the woman asked Stevenson, “If you could be doing anything with your life, what would it be?” His answer? Music. She gave him a check for \$2,000, and he used it to cut an EP, which led to a record deal. Through Stevenson’s chart-topping song “Eye of the Storm,” he wants to remind listeners that God “hasn’t forgotten about us. He’s still paying attention to us no matter how horrible things might seem. He’s in control.”

“Why don’t streetlamps have ears?”

“Mom!” my 3-year-old self hissed at 6 a.m. “Why don’t streetlamps have ears?” My mom later wrote (in a 1974 article) that she peered at me sleepily, silently asking a question of her own: “Seriously?!”

That year I amused — and exasperated — my parents with countless questions: “Why did sister leave one shoe here and one there?” “If God is up in heaven, how did he make the grass?” “Why are dandelions yellow?” To that query, Mom replied, “I guess that’s how God wanted them” — and wrote, “In our house, we let God answer many of our questions.”

I still have questions: Why is my dynamic young friend dying of cancer? Why are a parent’s own children sometimes hard to love? How can we end war, poverty, sex trafficking? Should we donate money or save for college? How, exactly, does salvation work? Sometimes science or professionals are God’s instruments to answer my questions. Sometimes answers come quietly to my heart — and sometimes they don’t come at all.

Faith doesn’t mean never questioning. It means trusting enough to ask, even when a question seems silly or pointless. Thanks, Mom and Dad, for teaching me by your loving example that God always welcomes my questions.

—Heidi Mann

Willing recipients

A young graduate longed for a certain sports car and knew his dad could afford it. So on the big day, he was infuriated to receive instead a leather-bound, embossed Bible. He threw it down and left for good.

Years later, after his father died, the son entered his father’s study with sorrow and regret. Sorting through belongings, he found the gift and this highlighted verse: “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11, ESV). Suddenly something dropped from the back of the Bible: a key with a tag from the dealer of the car he’d wanted long ago. On the tag was his graduation date and the words “Paid in Full.”

How often we miss out on God’s generous gifts because they come “packaged” differently than we expect! At graduation — and throughout life — may we be open to every gift God bestows on us with a Father’s deep love.

Bible Quiz



Acts 17 describes Paul speaking about God to the people of Athens in front of — incredibly! — a site that still exists. What is that site?

- A. The Panathenaic Stadium
- B. The Areopagus
- C. The Acropolis and the Parthenon
- D. The Temple of Hephaestus

Answer: B (See Acts 17:22.)

A mother's prayer

A.T. Pierson writes that “all true prayer trusts [God] to give his own answer, not in our way or time, or even to our own expressed desire, but rather to his own unutterable groaning within us which he can interpret better than we.”

As an example, Pierson points to Monica, the mother of the man who came to be known as Saint Augustine. Although Monica “pleaded with God that her dissolute son might not go to Rome, that sink of iniquity,” he went anyway. While there, he met Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who led him to the Christian faith. Saint Augustine is considered one of the most important church fathers.

“God fulfilled the mother's desire while denying her request,” Pierson writes. How might God be meeting your desires, even amid what appear to be unanswered prayers?

Too big for words

In [ancient Hindu treatises called] the Upanishads, God is described as “Thou Before Whom All Words Recoil.” This sounds right to me. Anything I say about God will be inadequate. No matter

how hard I try to say something true about God, the reality of God will eclipse my best words.

The only reality I can describe with any accuracy is my own limited experience of what I think may be God: the More, the Really Real, the Luminous Web That Holds Everything in Place.
—Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World*

Christian Symbol

Agnus Dei

The Agnus Dei — Latin for “Lamb of God” — seated on a book (perhaps the Lamb’s Book of Life, Revelation 13:8), symbolizes the final judgment. The seven seals shown in the image align with the seven attributes that Christ is worthy to receive, according to praises around the heavenly throne: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12, NIV).

Special dates

- National Day of Prayer, May 4, 2017
- Mother’s Day, May 14, 2017
- Armed Forces Day, May 20, 2017
- Victoria Day (Canada), May 22, 2017
- Ascension, May 25, 2017
- Memorial Day, May 29, 2017



Christian Sympathies are extended to Tom Fournier upon the passing of his father, James Fournier, on April 11th in Indiana.

Mr. Fournier is also the Grandfather of Nick Fournier & Rebecca Thelen and Great Grandfather of Tayha, Paytin & Easton Thelen.

Special Dates

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Shirley Ellicott, #80
- 5 Oma Turner, #80
- 6 Gretchen Guck
- 7 Jessica Neal
- 7 Steve Guck
- 8 Lt. Col. Michael Furman
- 15 Fred Ellicott
- 15 Grace Swanson, #19
- 16 Laura Davis
- 16 Chris Rushing, #15
- 17 Sherri van Hollenbeck
- 18 Kathy Heiss
- 19 Heidi Guck
- 23 Tom Sibert
- 24 District Supt. Rev. Mark Spaw
- 26 Paige Furman, #13
- 27 Barb Makarewich
- 29 Anya Freedman-Doan

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Ketl Freedman-Doan
- 4 Nancy Morgan
- 5 Abigail Tarvis
- 6 Paytin Thelen, #4
- 9 Mike Mickel
- 9 Carolyn Rushing
- 10 Jan Hall

Wedding Anniversaries

M A Y

- 5 Joe & Shirley Tarvis
- 8 Bob & Jan Hall
- 10 Dan & Karen Shoner
- 14 Steve & Joan Fracassa

JUNE

- 4 Andy & Kendra Wojtowicz

Membership Anniversaries

M A Y

- 1 Ken & Belinda Husse, 1988
- 1 Lola Roome, 1988
- 13 Terry Heiss, 1999
- 13 Tim Heiss, 1999
- 15 Jenny Fracassa, 2005

- 15 Gretchen Guck, 2005
- 15 Jerry Heiss, 2005
- 15 Katrina Heiss, 2005
- 20 Elsie Smrcka, 1956
- 20 Torry Adamski, 1984
- 22 Sue Adamski/mcb, 1977
- 28 Shirley Ellicott, 1950

J U N E

- 1 Heather Bartley, 2008
- 1 Emily Fracassa, 2008
- 1 Devin Heiss, 2008
- 1 Jenna Shoner, 2008
- 1 Nolan Thayer, 2008
- 3 Heidi Guck, 2001
- 3 Zach Harris, 2001
- 3 Ashley Heiss, 2001
- 3 Julian Heiss, 2001
- 3 Kyle Patton, 2001
- 3 Nick Thayer, 2001
- 4 Kari Bonds, 1979
- 4 Doug Thayer, 1979
- 6 Kristin Adamski, 1981
- 6 Debbie Davis, 1971
- 6 Isobel Guck, 1982
- 6 Kurt Smith, 1974
- 6 Nathan Thayer, 1999
- 7 Danny Davis, 1987

