



September 2021

Reflections from the Pastor

St. John's United Methodist Church
The Messenger

“Genuine Methodism”

Recently I came across an article written by Timothy W. Whitaker, a retired United Methodist Church Bishop of the Florida area. It was about Wesley's lists of Early Church Fathers whom Wesley read and later encouraged his preachers to also read. In a letter to Reverend Conyers Middleton written somewhere between 1748 and 1749 he gave a short list. Later in 1756 in a “Address to the Clergy” he gave a more expanded list.

The importance of these lists rests in the fact that some of the writings of these Early Church writers go back to the 1st century while the bulk are found in the 2nd century. Wesley was driven to seek in their writings what it was in their faith experience that caused so many of them to suffer persecution while maintaining a vibrant witness to Jesus Christ.

In Wesley's own words, “*I reverence their writings, because they describe true, genuine Christianity, and direct us to the strongest evidence of the Christian doctrine.*” Keep in mind that at the time Wesley wrote this, he was a young man who had been nurtured in the home of an Anglican Church priest. He had studied at Oxford University and was a teaching fellow at Lincoln College, a subsidiary of Oxford University.

He had been ordained a deacon and a priest of the Anglican Church. Yet something drove Wesley to read these great writers of the Early Church as he searched

for a spiritual reality in his own life. Wesley discovered in their writings that faith was more than an assent to recognized doctrines. It was a power at work within the soul; an inward principle through which God filled their souls with holiness and happiness and created a spirit within them that became a fountain of love and peace with the assurance of eternal life. Wesley was searching for this kind of inward spiritual life.

When he traveled to Georgia to be a missionary a tropical storm struck that ravaged the ship. Wesley was very uneasy because he knew no assurance of eternal life and realized that the ship might well be shipwrecked.

On board that same vessel was a group of Moravian Christians who during the most intense moments of the storm, could be found singing hymns and praising God.

After two years of failure as a missionary, John Wesley returned to England and sought out a Moravian friend by the name of Peter Bohler. He was encouraged to attend a meeting of a small group of Moravians. Very reluctantly, John Wesley went and while listening to the reading of Luther's Preface to his Commentary on Romans, where he described the nature of saving faith, Wesley in his own words, “*...felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*”

In that heart-warming experience, John Wesley discovered what His heart had been yearning for; that which the writings of the Early Fathers had described of their own experience.

Wesley describes this ‘inward change’ in his sermon on Scriptural Christianity saying, “...*in consequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteousness; to walk as Christ also walked, in the work of faith, in the patience of hope, in the labor of love.*”

Here is the heart of Methodism. It is not a mental assent to accepted doctrine, but a dynamic faith in the person of Jesus Christ which through the confession and forsaking of sin, a transforming power is released within the heart and mind of the believer that seeks expression in the manifestation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Has Christ brought such an ‘inward change’ to your life? He waits to do for you what he did for the early apostles, the church fathers and John and Charles Wesley. This is genuine Methodism.

Rev. Ivan Schwenn
September 2021

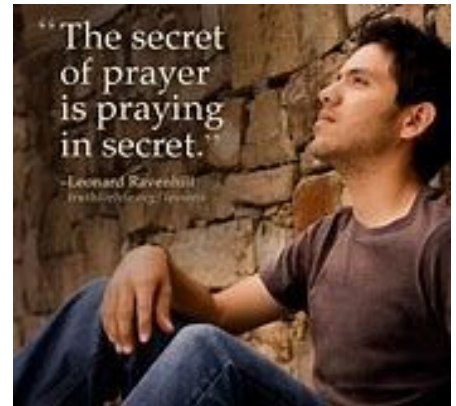
UPPER ROOM PRAYING

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” [Matthew 6:6 (NIV)].

The text before us is part of Jesus’ teaching on prayer and prefaces his giving of ‘The Disciple’s Prayer’, more commonly known as ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’

The King James Version renders this opening phrase, “*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,*...” One Spanish translation renders this, “Pero tú, cuando ores, entra en tu aposento, ...” **Matthew 6:6 (LBLA)** [*La Biblia de las Americas*]. A literal translation would be, “But you, when you pray, enter your upper room,...”

The question is where is this special room that Jesus instructs us to enter when we pray? Two suggestions are possible. Barnes in his commentary considers the Spanish rendition above as probable.



He notes that the Jewish people often built houses with flat roofs and this roof was a place where the people went in the cool of the day to relax and enjoy the cool breezes of the evening. Some people actually built a special room on their roofs where meditation might take place. This was the origin of the term “upper room”.

But the Greek term Jesus used suggests another room. A room from which the material needs of the household were dispensed. It would be comparable to our term ‘pantry’ which was a common room of the older homes from which the housewife kept the many foods and supplies from which to cook and serve meals.

In Jesus’ day, the steward of the house alone had access to this room. It was a well-guarded place, but at the same time, a location where one might be alone without much risk of interruption.

While we cannot be dogmatic as to which of these rooms Jesus’ intended, we can be clear of why Jesus directed his listeners to get alone with God for prayer. The first is that the real challenge of prayer is praying. We do not have much problem getting alone, but once we are alone, the business of praying will demand serious discipline. In solitude, the mind wants to wander. It must be brought into discipline or the time will be wasted.

Secondly, the idea of shutting the door to be alone with God who is in secret and sees in secret, implies the need for our prayer time to be absolutely honest. This is not a time to ‘spin’ your life before God. Remember, He already knows all about you.

It is a time to be completely open and honest. The secret closet is a big help to arrive at this spiritual posture.

When we approach our prayer time in loneliness with God, we are in a position where God can bless and enrich our lives freely. And that is what He wants to do on a daily basis.

Pastor Ivan Schwenn

ST. JOHN'S UMC OUTREACH MINISTRIES

THE SIDEWALK MINISTRY



Through this ministry we connect with people who do not come to church but have need for prayer and spiritual reading materials. Our plan, is to reopen this ministry on Saturdays from 9:00-10:00 am beginning January 2022.

Your help is needed!

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

The Fellowship Ministry takes place every Sunday following the morning Worship Service. It is a time of sharing and social interaction among our worshipers. Individually wrapped packages of chips, crackers, fruit cups, ice cream and juices are welcomed.



RUMMAGE ROOM MINISTRY



The Rummage Ministry Outreach is designed to provide good used clothing and other personal items to people at a reduced cost. Any

kind of dog and cat toys or other pet items are need-

ed, in addition to shoes, books, toys and gently used clothing.

The plans are to reopen the Rummage Room on January 1, 2022 from 8:00am - 12:00 noon for a half price sale. Volunteers to assist in getting ready for a Rummage Room Grand Re-Opening are needed! Please call the church office if you are able to help: 520-792-6398.

CARD MINISTRY

The Card Ministry sends greeting cards for birthdays and anniversaries in the St. John's UMC family. If you would like to support this ministry, you can help by providing greeting cards, Christian bookmarks, stamps or by donating money to purchase these items.



THE FOOD PANTRY



Non-perishable items are always in demand. The Food Pantry can definitely use toilet paper, single servings of canned fruit, cereals, juices, cookies and crackers. Items can be

brought to the church on Sunday mornings or the Pastor is usually in the office on Mondays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. **(Please call before coming to the church - 792-6398).**

ST. JOHN'S CHOIR

The choir will start up again in September! With the assistance of Cathy Mendoza, Daniella Mendoza will direct the choir and the first practice will be Saturday, September 4th at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary. All are welcome to be apart of this exciting ministry!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2021

It is that time of year again! Operation Christmas Child is kicking off the 2021 Season!

We are so excited to see life getting back to normal, at least close to normal! It is great to be able to increase our activities, both at home and in the community, especially our Church community.



We have great news for the Operation Christmas Child 2021 season. It isn't just for Fall! We are adding a new wrinkle to our Build a Shoebox Online campaign. Last year, the Build a Shoebox Online option was so popular, we also have the same option with the added ability to set up a **Goal** page.

We have set up a goal page for St John's UMC, to build **75** shoeboxes online! We can do it! **Last year, we built 51 shoeboxes online in 2 months!** This year, we can start NOW! Just think how many more we can do with the extra time! Imagine how many more children will be Brought to Jesus through these gifts! Below is the link to the **Build a Shoebox Goal** page. Please check it out and build your shoeboxes. You can use your Debit/Credit Card, E-Check or PayPal on the site.

We are encouraging those who can, to use the **Build a Shoebox Goal** page online for a total cost of \$25. That includes the \$9 donation for shipping!



You will be able to choose the items you would like included in your shoebox from a variety of options, or you can let them select for you. You are also able to choose the age group and gender of the child you wish to receive the gift. These shoeboxes go primarily to Unreached People Groups, people who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus. These groups are unreached due to geographical, governmental, economical, and other restrictions. Last year, over **400,000** shoeboxes were built online!

From the shoebox packers who pray for the boys and girls who will receive their gifts to the local teachers who pray for the children who attend The Greatest Journey discipleship classes, prayer is key to the work of Operation Christmas Child.

Please help us reach our goal of 75 shoebox gifts online by using the following link:

<https://build-a-shoebox.samaritanpurse.org/view/ff35c455-a3bc-471b-a8a3-5f8bb64e33f5>

For those of you who don't have computer access, you can still make a \$25 per box donation as we did last year. They will still count towards our goal as they will be purchased through the goal page.

AND we can still pack our own shoeboxes at home and include the \$9 donation for shipping. We will have shoeboxes and hand-outs available at St John's UMC beginning in early September.

Please, **NO** used items! Remember, Quality and Quantity! Many of these children have never received a gift! Handmade items are great!

God Bless each of you!

Bob & Mary Jo Gaines

520-468-1545

Operation Christmas Child Project Leaders, St John's UMC

God Bless each of you!

Bob & Mary Jo Gaines

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. — John 3:16

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E	Q	W	W	E	R	R	X	F	G	O	D	B	Z	J	M

Find these words from this week's lesson and Bible verse:

JESUS	BELIEVES	LOVED	GOD
ETERNAL	SON	LIFE	WORLD
PERISH	WHOEVER	JOHN	GAVE



September 2021 Birthdays



September Birthdays

September 2nd	Melyssa Anderson's Birthday
September 3rd	Susan Coon's Birthday
September 16th	Marilyn Heimke's Birthday
September 21st	Chuck Moyer II's Birthday
September 21st	Alexandria Evans Redmon's Birthday
September 26th	Marjorie Baker's Birthday
September 26th	Sharon Martin's Birthday

St. John's United Methodist Church
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Website: stjohsumctucson.org

Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Monday and Friday

**St John's UMC Sidewalk Ministry, Rummage Sale,
Rummage Sale workdays, Bible Studies and
some meetings will be suspended until further notice.**

**Please stay safe & continue to keep each other
in your thoughts and prayers.**