

Pastor Peter's message notes from Jan. 23, 2022

The Baptism of the Family

When I was in my early twenties, I drifted away from the faith in Jesus that had been handed down to me. Looking back, this was a very painful time. It would have been hard for me to articulate what I was feeling then. But I can tell you now that I felt a longing to be loved and accepted by God and other people. I was searching everywhere to feel loved, even though the answer was always right in front of me.

I see now that God continued to uphold the covenant we shared through my baptism. God kept reaching out to me. Other Christians continued to uphold the covenant we shared in baptism and kept reaching out to me. When I lived in South America, Christians from a world away encouraged me to embrace faith in Jesus. When I returned to my home church in Wentzville, they upheld their side of the covenant and invited me to remember my baptism.

Baptism is a gift, a means of grace, which was given to us in the fullness of time through the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. Christians understand salvation as a gift that we can't earn or deserve, but only receive as a gracious gift from God. When we understand baptism as a covenant with God and into the church, we understand that our baptism is perfect and does not need to be repeated. The baptismal covenant as a divine gift and promise remains in spite of our neglect or defiance of it. God never fails to maintain the covenant with us. We will almost certainly have seasons in our lives when we drift away or even intentionally do not uphold our covenant with God and the family of faith. But the covenant still endures.

When this happens and we feel far from God, the baptismal covenant does not need remaking; indeed, it cannot be remade because it was never broken. What is necessary is that we repent and return to God's covenant. Every time a new person is baptized in our church family, we reaffirm our covenant of faith as we support them as a church and speak the words of forgiveness, affirmation, faith, and welcome in our liturgy. It is important to regularly reaffirm our baptism, repent, and draw closer to God. That is one reason why attending church every Sunday is so important.

It isn't a perfect metaphor, but reaffirming your baptism is kind of like telling your kids or your husband or wife, "I love you." I'm so glad that we are married. I'm so glad that you are my kids. We can never tell our kids enough how much we love them. We can never remember too many times our baptism and the covenant we share with God and our family of faith, the church.

I invite you today to pray these words and remember your baptism and be thankful. *Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and call to our remembrance the grace declared to us in our baptism. For you have washed away our sins, and you clothe us with righteousness throughout our lives, that dying and rising with Christ we may share in his final victory.*

Church worship services

Upcoming Messages

The next two weeks will feature a sermon series called "Let's Talk It Out."

Jan. 30 Healthy Communication
Feb. 6 I Disagree and I Love You

Service times for in-person and online worship
9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Preparing for worship

Scriptures for the coming week:

Monday, Jan. 31 Proverbs 18:13
Tuesday, Feb. 1 Proverbs 20:25 & John 7:51
Wednesday, Feb. 2 James 1:19-20
Thursday, Feb. 3 Proverbs 10:19
Friday, Feb. 4 Proverbs 15:1
Saturday, Feb. 5 Ecclesiastes 7:9

Prayers for our church family

Andrew Wallace, Bob Garrow, Margie Simmons, Brian & Alyssa Gossett (Amy Holmes' cousin), Janet Ernest, Felicia Brown, Ginger Baile and family on the loss of her husband Charles

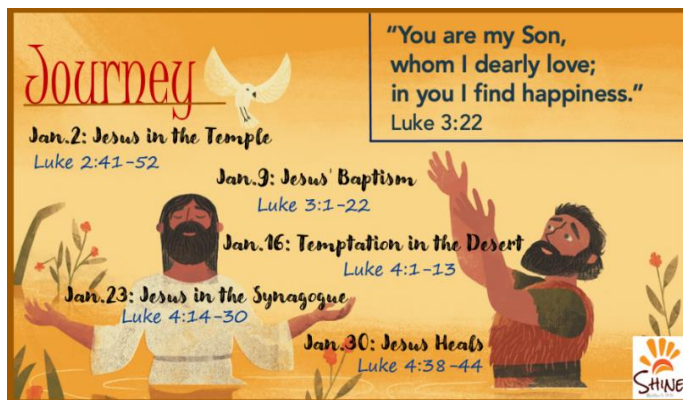
Celebrating our church family

Birthdays for the coming week:

Sun. Jan. 30 Donna Sample
Mon. Jan. 31 Aaron Dustin, David Glover, Jamison Yung
Tues. Feb. 1 Konnor Burton
Thurs. Feb. 3 Bryn Honan, Deborah Brown, Monta L. Miller
Sat. Feb. 5 Sue Evans

Anniversaries for the coming week:

Thurs. Feb. 3 Paul and Sue Engelmann
Sat. Feb. 5 Stan and Pam Smith



Jamaica Mission Focuses On Restoring Clinic

By Steve Mills

The Jamaica Medical Mission is the Disciple Gift focus for January. The Jamaica Mission usually benefits from a diverse team membership. Erica Collins previously described how volunteers often receive more from the local population than they can give. You can be a team member if you have an interest in building relationships. You might do this in a girls' home, clinic, school, meal preparation or repair of the hostel.

Our focus this year is to restore the clinic and housing facilities, which fell into disrepair during the pandemic as travel concerns limited its usage over the past several months. A series of projects need to be accomplished in order to bring the facilities back in order. We intend to work with local church members and craftsmen in the preliminary steps, and friends made from past projects are helping us to get the process underway.

In consultation with the local church, we have developed the following strategy. Flexibility is key. We plan to begin by treating the hostel and clinic for termites. In order to protect the clinic supplies, the hostel will be treated, cleaned and prepared for storing the medicines and equipment. Once ready, medicines and other clinic supplies will be packaged and transported to the hostel. The clinic then would be treated, including removing and rebuilding damaged cabinets.

Some steps in the process are more time consuming than initially expected. For example, the chemical treatment must remain undisturbed for a week before tear out and rebuilding can occur. Yet the timing of these projects isn't as critical as how we plan to work together with local community members to reopen the clinic. The Falmouth clinic is important to both the local population, which depends on it for long-term medical care, and our college-age ministry, which matches students with medical professionals at a time when these young adults are deciding on a future career.

For example, Mikayle has said, "As a future medical student, the Falmouth Mission is so important to me because I got to see what it truly looks like for a community to lack access to affordable healthcare. I was immersed into the Jamaican culture, which helped me learn the importance of cultural competence and respect. I have gone to Falmouth twice, and it was truly special to have met our Jamaican team members and patients, then see them again the next year and keep building those relationships. I want to return to Falmouth to see my Jamaican friends again and continue to learn from the people of Falmouth how I can help this Parish meet their needs."

All monetary gifts are appreciated and can be left in the offering plates on Sunday morning, mailed in to the church office, or given through the church website, UMCBurg.org.

Giving To God's Work

It's that time of year: getting items organized to prepare our 2021 taxes. As you ready yourself for a tax appointment or prepare them yourself, think ahead to what might be done this year to impact your 2022 return. While our giving comes from the heart, there are often tax benefits in making gifts to qualifying 501(c)(3) organizations like the Church.

For instance, did you know that the required minimum distribution from your IRA can be made payable directly to the Church? Doing this supports the Church per your designation, and you don't report this amount as taxable income. There are ways to make gifts of grain, establish donor directed funds, and create charitable gift annuities to name a few. If you are interested in exploring options, your tax preparer may be able to discuss opportunities. Additionally, Dale Carder and I are able to work with you—not as tax professionals, but we can provide assistance in how to set up various instruments.

If you have questions, comments, or need more information, please contact Dale Carder, carder@ucmo.edu, or Robyn Criswell-Bloom, rcriswellbloom@gmail.com. Thanks for all you do!

Smile and Say 'Cheese' ; New Church Directory

It's time for a new church directory! We will be working with Universal Church Directories to create a new church family album. Photo sessions will be at the church Mon. Feb. 21 2:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Tues. Feb. 22 2:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Fri. March 4 2:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sat. March 5 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Everyone who is photographed will receive a complimentary 8 x 10 portrait and a church directory. You will also have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits.

Flyers are in the atrium with instructions on how to sign up online. Volunteers will be available to help you sign up on Sundays in the atrium before and between services. Watch for more information on Facebook and the church website on how to sign up.

Confirmation Trip to Conception Abbey

Planning has started for a Saturday, full-day road trip to Conception Abbey near Maryville, MO, on March 26.

The United Methodist Foundation has awarded a grant to cover the cost of the charter bus and additional expenses for the trip.

The road trip is available to any others in the congregation who wish to join the class and the youth for this experience. The trip will include a tour of the abbey, attending mass, a lunch, and the Stations of the Cross.

As soon as the details are finalized, they will be announced so we can get everybody signed up

--Pastor Susan