



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church
Loving God, Loving People, Serving the World

April, 2022

Pastor Carol's Comments

Holy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter—the day we remember Jesus' supper with his disciples in the upper room. Another name for Holy Thursday is Maundy Thursday. No, it's not a misspelling. It really is "Maundy" Thursday—with no "a" between "d" and "y." What's up with this strange word?

John 13 tells of how Jesus washed the disciples' feet and then told them, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." The English word "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning "commandment." So, on Holy Thursday we remember the new commandment that Jesus gave us—the only explicit commandment Jesus gives in John's Gospel.

But, what's new about this commandment? Jesus tells us to love our neighbor and even to love our enemies. What's new is that Jesus wants us to love each other *just as Jesus loves us*. Theologian Gail R. O'Day explains it this way: "To love one another as Jesus loves us to live a life thoroughly shaped by a love that knows no limits."

As we continue through Lent to the joy of Easter and beyond, let's commit ourselves to living in ways that show we have been shaped by the limitless love of Jesus.

Monclova Primary School Supports Food Pantry

The Food Pantry received a very large donation of food from Monclova Primary School. School counselor Chris Buehrer helped deliver the food, which filled three pickup trucks. Thanks to the Monclova Primary School family!



News Around Zion

3-year-olds Have a Bear-y Special Guest

Louella paid a visit to the Sunbeam Christian Preschool's 3-year-old class and gave each child a special gift—a handmade teddy bear. The bears were all different colors, to which the children promptly gave names such as Pinky and Brownie. The children expressed their thanks with a combination birthday/thank you card in the shape of a bear, which they each signed themselves. Louella is now busy making more to give to the students in the 4-year-old class.



Missions News

The Missions Committee will meet on Wednesday, 4/20, at 6:00 p.m.

Project Easter Bunny

Prompted by a Whitehouse resident's suggestion to provide Easter baskets for children in need, Zion stepped up to be the collection and assembly point for the baskets. Items such as small toys and school supply items, candy, baskets, and grass are pouring in from the AW community. We are working with Amy Barrett, who organizes the weekend food bag program for children who receive free and reduced lunches, to determine how many baskets will be needed.

Mittens, Blankets, and Socks—Oh, My!

Our usual destinations for our cold-weather gear did not have a need for our items this year. We will hold on to what we collected and find a good home for them next year. Denise is also looking for a place that needs the year-round items such as underwear and socks now.

General Conference Update

The Commission on the General Conference (GC) has announced that the 2020 GC, which had been postponed to this year due to COVID, cannot be held in 2022 due to continuing COVID- and government-related constraints.

As a truly global church, the UMC spans many continents and countries. State Dept. officials have explained that a massive backlog of visa applications has led to wait times of more than two years to schedule an initial interview, and an increasingly complex interview process requires two or three interviews in some places. This would prevent participation by many delegates outside the United States. Vaccination rates and the need to plan for quarantine or medical care for any delegates who contract COVID-19 were also considered.

A Commission-appointed technology study team found that there's no way to hold a virtual GC that would safeguard voting and credentialing integrity, and meet the complex legislative committee process required by our *Book of Discipline*. They considered factors such as the need to interpret the proceedings in multiple languages, participation across many time zones, and available technology.

Moving the GC to 2023 was discussed but was found to be unfeasible due to the backlog of visa applications and interviews, and the proximity to the 2024 General Conference (which is required by the *Discipline*).

This latest postponement has disappointed many. But, it is a principled decision that honors our world-wide membership and ensures that all can participate in the decisions which will guide us in the years ahead.

Lent at Zion

Can you believe it's been three years since we observed Holy Week and celebrated Easter in the sanctuary? This year we will return to our traditional Holy (Maundy) Thurs. service with Communion on 4/14 at 7:00 p.m. As in pre-COVID years, we will observe Good Friday (4/15) with a Tenebrae service—a "service of shadows." Through Scripture, music, and symbolism, we will experience the increasing darkness as we follow Jesus' steps to the cross.

Planning Continues for VBS

Brenda Hendricks will represent Zion at the planning meetings for Vacation Bible School. Please let Brenda know if you would be willing to help in any way.

"Directions" Update

Our "Directions" meetings have resumed. We've identified some priority areas for considering how they could be more effective in inviting others into a relationship with Jesus. We'll begin on 4/3 with Worship, Bible Study, and Sunday School. Please attend these meetings since, given our size, it's important that as many voices participate as possible. Keep your ears, eyes, and hearts open to the needs of our community and pray for God to guide us as we determine the directions our ministry should take.

Emmaus Walks

The Emmaus Weekend is a spiritual renewal program that seriously considers the model of Christ's servanthood. It encourages Jesus' disciples to live in ways appropriate to being "a servant of all." Dates of the next 3-day retreats at Widewater Camp will soon be announced. Intrigued? Curious? Contact Pastor Carol for more information.

Church Information

Pastor Carol Williams-Young
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Worship at 10:25 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

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Website:
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Upcoming Events

Sundays after worship: "Directions" meetings

Tues., 4/5, 4-6 p.m., Food Pantry
6:30-7:30 p.m., Girl Scout Troop #10143

Thursday, 4/7, 2 p.m., Bible Study

Tues., 4/12, 6-7 p.m., Girl Scout Troop #16232

Thurs., 4/14, 7 p.m., Holy (Maundy) Thurs. Service

Fri., 4/15, 7 p.m., Good Friday Service of Tenebrae

Sun., 4/17, Easter Sunday!

Wed., 4/20, 6 p.m., Missions Committee Meeting