



Heart Beat Newsletter

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

July, 2022

Pastor Carol's Comments

Our study of the Book of Proverbs has had me thinking about the sayings we use so often, largely without thinking. Many of them come from the Bible, although we may not realize that. Others we are sure come from the Bible but don't! (Don't be surprised if someday you hear some sermons based on these.)

As I pondered these, one of the phrases that came to mind was "crossing one's fingers"—expressing our wish for a desired outcome. It sounds like something that must be pagan, and it does seem to date back to before Christianity, when pagan people believed that good spirits resided in the intersection of a cross. If two people crossed index fingers and made a wish, the spirits would favor them, they thought.

There's another (disputed) story that, during the times when Christians were persecuted, they would greet each other by forming an "L" with their thumbs and index fingers, joining them to form a cross. As time passed, the gesture evolved to one person crossing their own fingers. (It's rumored that this began in the 14th c. when soldiers needed luck in battle and couldn't cross fingers with another soldier.)

So, what's a faithful Christian to do? If we gave up all our traditions which have their roots pagan culture, we'd need to give up Christmas trees and Easter eggs. A better alternative is to think about the meaning they can convey for us. Just as Christmas trees represent eternal life and Easter eggs represent the new life of resurrection, crossed fingers can represent hope and blessing.

So, next time you "cross your fingers," for yourself or someone else, use it as a reminder to pray a blessing on that person—a prayer to the One in whom all our hope resides.

Bible or Not?

Just like the ancient readers of the Book of Proverbs, we have sayings we use all the time. Many come from the Bible. Many don't, but we think they do! Can you tell them apart?

Take the "Bible or Not Quiz" (available in the narthex). Then, circle up to six sayings you'd like to learn more about. Place your quiz in the basket or offering plate. The most popular choices will form the basis for upcoming sermons, starting 7/31. (If you'd like to get your quiz back, put your name on it and it will be returned after your votes are counted.)

News Around Zion

Christmas in July

Oh, the weather outside may be frightful (frightfully hot), and the campfire is so delightful, that we've decided to celebrate Christmas in July. And, of course, Christmas includes gift-giving!



Last winter, we discovered that socks and underwear are greatly needed by our homeless and low-income sisters and brothers. So, we'll be collecting these items as part of our "Christmas in July" celebration on 7/24.

Items are needed for both men and women, especially in larger sizes. (Bras may be gently used.) The items we collect will be shared through the Marketplace for All People at St. Paul's UMC in downtown Toledo. Everything in the Marketplace is free to the users. (St. Paul's UMC was instrumental in beginning St. Paul's Community Center and continues a vital ministry to the homeless, although they no longer have an official tie.) Learn more about the Marketplace at <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmarket> or stpaulsumctoledo.com/page/mission-outreach.

Community Vacation Bible School by Brenda Hendricks

If you drove by Hope UMC the week of 6/20, did you hear giggles, giggles, and more giggles? That was the beautiful sound of about 145 children attending VBS, having fun and learning about Jesus!

I enjoyed representing Zion and talking about Jesus to the preschoolers. The week's theme was "Training Your Emotions," and each day focused on a different emotion: Fear (Luke 8:22-25), Joy (Acts 16:22-34), Anger (Ex. 17:1-7), and Sadness (John 11:17-44).

The preschoolers were involved in play acting/role playing each day's emotion as it related to the Bible story. They learned that even when we face rough times or difficult situations, Jesus loves and comforts us when we believe in Him. Each day, we closed in a Bible verse and prayer. All the children sang songs and played inside and outdoor games and activities. Oh! We cannot forget the snacks, which included caramel rice crispy treats and ice cream!

Now VBS is over until next year, but Jesus is with us always!



“Directions” Update

In our “Directions” meetings, we continue seek ways in which Zion can better serve the community, grow in discipleship, and invite others into a relationship with Jesus. Our calls to previous Food Pantry customers didn’t turn up any striking patterns for non-usage, although they did encourage some to resume coming. We are still convinced that the need is there. So, we have thought of some new places to try to reach people. We are going to see if local gas stations, doctor’s offices, and the Village offices would be willing to hang posters and hand out Food Pantry flyers. Pastor Carol will be meeting with Fire Chief Josh Hartbarger, who is working on hunger issues as part of his graduate work in Public Health. We’ve begun our “Body and Soul” Tuesdays with Bible Study from 2:30-3:30 on Food Pantry days.

We were told we couldn’t hold a worship service after Cherry Fest, but that denial raised questions about why we would need permission to use the Pavilion when its usage is “first come, first served.” We will be asking questions about that among people we know in Village government. Future Pavilion worship may still come about.

Diaper Changing Station Outreach

“Let the little children come to me.” That’s what we hope to do at Cherry Fest, where we again offered a comfortable, clean place for families to care for their babies. While the station itself benefits those who use it, it also provides a way for us to make contact with the many families at Cherry Fest. Pastor Carol handed out flyers and spoke to approximately 140 families this year. In addition to Changing Station details, the flyers included information about Vacation Bible School, the Food Pantry, Bible Study and worship at Zion, and our web site and Facebook addresses.

Freedom School

Zion will contribute our time and presence to Freedom School on Thursday, 7/21, from 11:30-1:00, at Monroe St. UMC in Toledo. Our volunteers will sit with the children at lunch for conversation and help as needed. We have signed up for four slots. As of this writing, the slots are filled but, if you would still like to help, see Pastor Carol and she’ll help you find another slot.

The primary focus is reading, but other local partners offer activities like gardening, singing, dancing, acting, and more. Students also learn about how to be good members of their communities and making responsible decisions. Free healthy breakfasts and lunches are served each day.

Freedom School is a nation-wide program that helps to break the “cradle to prison pipeline” for at-risk children by helping them to be academically successful. Studies show that last year, across the country, 84% of Freedom School scholars maintained or improved their reading skills. 87% of parents saw increased confidence in their children.

Cedar Creek VBS Benefits Food Pantry

The children who participated in Cedar Creek’s VBS had a contest to see which group could bring in the most food for our Food Pantry. Denise, Ron, and Brenda went to Cedar Creek to receive the food and were called up on stage so that Zion’s work could be recognized. The children donated more than 500 items! We are blessed to be part of God’s family together with Cedar Creek. As Psalm 133 says, “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!



Church Information

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Worship at 10:25 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

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Find us on Facebook: whitehousezionumc

Website:
<http://www.zionumcwhitehouse.org>

Upcoming Events

- Tue., 7/5, 2:30-3:30, Bible Study: The Lord’s Prayer
4-6 p.m., Food Pantry
- Sun., 7/10, after worship: “Directions” meeting
- Tue., 7/19, 2:30-3:30, Bible Study: The Lord’s Prayer
4-6 p.m., Food Pantry
- Thurs., 7/21, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Freedom School
- Sun., 7/24, “Christmas in July”