

Pastor's Update 2024 – July

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Mid-Year

Mid-year is a rather predictable time of reflection and transition for United Methodists and perhaps most particularly for we pastors of the UM church. Since its inception, pastors and representative lay persons from each congregation met annually for “holy conferencing” to pray, discern, and decide matters related to the church’s ministry. Clergy are ordained at the annual conference and bishops read or “fix” the appointment of pastors either returning them to their current congregations or moving them to their next one – a process officially called “itineracy” and colloquially referred to as “circuit riding”, reminiscent of Methodism’s early days when pastors rode their horses from church to church to preach. On Monday, July 1, 2024, I begin my 35th year as a “circuit riding” pastor in the United Methodist Church. Eight of those years have been among you who gather as Davis UMC, and now begins year nine! A few years more and this pastor and horse will be put to pasture - just, not yet! ;o). Find below the active links to news about recent UMC conferences. Take a look!

With gratitude, good faith, and a sense of adventure with you in the way of Jesus – *Pastor Brandon*

176th California-Nevada Annual Conference Session - June 7th – 10th

You can see videos and read daily summaries of this year’s conference here:

<https://www.cnumc.org/eventdetail/18235978>

UMC General Conference Session – Summary of Outcomes

Charlotte, North Carolina

[Note that some details from the reporting conference are included]

<https://www.minnesotaumc.org/newsdetail/summary-of-key-decisions-from-the-postponed-2020-general-conference-18356278>

Revised Social Principles of the UMC

Read the impressive revisions to our UMC Social Principles here.

<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>

Contemplative Worship

Sunday, June 30th 10:00 AM

In Person and Livestreamed!

Please arrive a little early in person! Be sure to download the Order of Worship!

For every month of the year that contains a fifth Sunday, we offer a contemplative worship service instead of our traditionally structured service. Through music, readings, and visuals we engage with God’s Spirit in a form of worship intentionally structured to maximize freedom of the Spirit among us. The message is what we discern in our contemplations as those who seek to live in God’s love as a community of faith. Please arrive on time to fully absorb this generous offering from our team of contemplatives who so prayerfully prepare a sacred space for our time together. May your soul be nurtured and refreshed!

Worship Services for July & August

Each worship service is “live streamed” for your participation. Be sure to download the Order of Worship!

Sermon Series: “I’ve Been Meaning to Ask You . . .”

-- Developed using themes and summaries provided by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity of “A Sanctified Art”

“While the challenges of becoming beloved community to one another are endless, these questions are simple. We recognize that all courageous conversations begin with simple questions and the curiosity to truly listen. Our leading question, *“I’ve been meaning to ask...”* conveys intentionality, warmth, curiosity, and consideration. In essence, this question also implies the following statements: *“I’ve been thinking about you and I’ve been wanting to check in... You’ve been on my mind... I haven’t known how to have this conversation, but I’m getting started with a question.”* The ellipses symbolize the main objective of this series: to cultivate courageous conversations—and to keep having them, even if we need to pause. As you can see, these questions aren’t surface level; they invite us to share our pain and seek ways to care for one another.

May this series help us to behold each other as images of the divine. May it help us strengthen our capacity for empathy and compassion. May it remind us of the power of asking unassuming questions. May it show us that courage is rooted in the heart. Through vulnerability and authenticity, may our courageous conversations lead us to glimpse hope, joy, and beauty—and to become the community God created us to be.”

Where Are You From? - Communion

July 7 th	Genesis 2.4b - 15	(NRSVUE)
July 14 th	John 1. 35 – 51	(NRSVUE)

In order to build connection and trust, we need to listen to each other’s stories and experiences to learn who and what has shaped us. We also need to feel seen and known for who we are. In these first two weeks, let’s affirm the particularity of our identities while also acknowledging our common ground. Formed from the dust and God’s very breath in the garden of Eden, we have a common home, a shared birthplace, and a collective calling: to sustain and care for all of creation. The story of Jesus calling the disciples provides a helpful charge for the whole series: to “come and see” what the journey holds. Let’s explore how the question, *“Where are you from?”* is sometimes coupled with assumptions, judgments, and even microaggressions—all of which can be exhausting and painful to receive. Hope can be renewed when we take time to acknowledge, disrupt, and release the assumptions we hold about others.

Where Does It Hurt?

July 21 st	I Samuel 1. 1 - 18	(NRSVUE)
July 28 th	Mark 5. 21 – 43	(NRSVUE)

Over the next two weeks, our stories from scripture serve as an opening for how all of us have known pain and suffering. When we can get cultivate our curiosity about the pain others carry and the pain we carry ourselves we find meaningful and healing connection. Acknowledging and bearing witness to each other’s pain helps us cultivate compassion. In 1 Samuel, Hannah’s pain is ignored, diminished, and mocked. Yet, Hannah vulnerably and courageously bears all of herself before God, which transforms Eli’s perspective. She finds release by being fully seen and known by God. In the dual healing story of the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus’ daughter, we acknowledge those who suffer chronically and in isolation. By telling these women’s stories, we may bear witness to the particular and very common struggles related to fertility and reproductive health. Confessing the harm done in neglecting the emotional, physical, individual, historical, and systemic wounds that exist among us begins the process of much needed healing and hope.

What Do You Need?

August 4th **Job 2. 11 - 13** **(NRSVUE)**
II Timothy 4. 9 - 18 **(NRSVUE)**

This week's question recognizes that we all have needs and that we need each other. It reminds us that we each have unique needs; we can't assume to know what is best for others. It also prompts us to reflect on our own needs, priorities, and desires, which can sometimes be difficult to discern from one situation to the next. In the midst of Job's afflictions, three of his friends promptly leave their homes and come to him. They tear their garments, weep loudly, and sit with him for seven days, saying nothing. Their response is the ministry of presence, of true solidarity, of seeing his excruciating pain and joining him there. Beaten and imprisoned, Paul writes to Timothy with a simple request: "Come quickly." He lists those who abandoned him, but says, "I hope that God doesn't hold it against them!" In his greatest moment of need, Paul doesn't need revenge, but instead asks for companionship. In essence, this is what we all need—for someone to come quickly, to gather the items we want, and to simply show up.

Where Do We Go from Here?

August 11th **Ruth 1. 1 - 22** **(NRSVUE)**
August 18th **Acts 10** **(NRSVUE)**

This final question is not meant to be the end of the journey; instead, it creates openness to explore together what is next. It invites us to discern how to move forward into something new. While stepping into that next chapter, how will we keep cultivating curiosity, asking questions, having conversations, and seeking connection in order to humanize and care for each other? Ultimately, this final question invites us to foster hope and imagination. After the loss of loved ones disrupts their lives, Ruth and Naomi create a new covenant with each other, choosing to be in a relationship across their religious, cultural, and generational divides. As women, they build power together in a system where they have little power. Cornelius, a pious Roman centurion, and Peter are brought together through visions they each receive. Peter and Cornelius meet face-to-face, and Peter says: "I really am learning that God doesn't show partiality to one group of people over another." Through their courageous conversation, their narrow perceptions of others expand, the Spirit descends upon them, and they share in community and hospitality.

Minding the Gap

August 25th **"What Does God Want Us to do Now? Will We Do It? How?"**

Preacher: Rev. Mel Brinkley - USAF Chaplain, ret.

First Reading: **I Samuel 8. 10 - 22** **(NRSVUE)**
Focus Scripture: **I Corinthians 8. 1 - 13** **(NRSVUE)**

-- A Circle of Eight --

July is FULL! -- Sign-Up for August or September

Well, it seems the time is right for forming circles of eight. At least, that's what 30 of you are thinking! If you are not on the schedule for a circle in July, you will be contacted to determine your interest for signing up in August or for another month this fall. Please don't get discouraged as you wait; you will have a circle in due course ;o)

In the meantime, begin to consider how you'll tell your story. You'll have up to 35 minutes to share. It's OK to use notes if you need them but trust yourself and the circle and your story will follow. There will be other circle opportunities to share again and again if enough others sign-up. And, if you have questions, please contact me at the number and email listed below.

What's Involved for "A Circle of Eight"?

- 1. You commit to meeting for four consecutive weeks** – same day and time for 90 minutes.
 - 2. You agree to share your story.**
(I'll send a one page set of guidelines to everyone in the group; you can also contact me ;o).
 - 3. You sign up with Pastor Brandon** – call/text: 530-760-8858, email: RevBOffice@gmail.com, sign up at worship, send a note, tell me in person.
 - 4. I will send you a word of confirmation and work with you for a day and time that fits your schedule.**
(If transportation or childcare are a factor for your attendance, we can discuss that, too!)
 - 5. At our first circle gathering, I and one other person will tell our stories, so you'll have a chance to settle into the group and see what it's like to share and to listen to another's story.**
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THANK YOU for Caring!

Over the last two weeks I've heard up to four of our church families have tested positive for COVID. Fortunately, every one of them is recovering or is now testing negative for the virus. I simply want to thank you for keeping up your efforts to "Do No Harm" by staying home if you have any sense that you have been exposed to or are experiencing symptoms of the virus. Especially if you travel in close proximity with others, your risk of exposure is higher. And, if ever you need some assistance, please contact the church office or me and we'll render assistance as we can. So, thank you for caring and taking care of our community – in health and in illness!

In good faith and good health with you! – Pastor Brandon

Congregational Care

If you believe the information below to be incorrect or needs updating, please contact Pastor Brandon or our Davis UMC office with the correct/updated information. Let us continually pray, send cards and notes, emails, make calls, and remain in connection with one another.

Prayer Chain – send your prayer requests to this email address: (prayerchain@davisumc.org)

Hospital Care

None

Home Care - see church directory for contact information.

Joe Archer
Jerry Beaman
Sara McCarthy
Chuck and Blanche Shannon
Joyce Smuda and Alan
Lauren Jewett – CA House Campus Minister

Atria Covell Gardens - 1111 Alvarado Avenue, Davis California 95616

Betsy Marchand – *Memory Care*
Melody Moore
Jan Tackett

Calmia Place - 4220 Calmia Place, Davis, California 95618

Kay Singleton – *Memory Care*

Carlton Senior Living - 2726 5th St, Davis, CA 95618

Ted Dill
Carol Holmes

The Farmstead at Dixon - 350 Gateway Dr., Dixon, CA 95620

Philip Kurien

University Retirement Community - 1515 Shasta Dr, Davis, CA 95616

Dotty Dixon
Brian and Louanne Horsfield
Bob Medearis
Jane Smythe
Ken and Diane Wagstaff – *Memory Care* (Diane)

RESOURCES

Stephen's Ministry – contacts: *Caroline Chantry, Mary Ann Ingenthron* (Leaders) or *Pastor Brandon*

CaringBridge - <https://www.caringbridge.org/how-it-works>

A free, easy online tool for sharing health news with family and friends—all in one place.

Yolo Cares - <https://yolocares.org>

Dedicated to improving the quality of, and expanding access to, end-of-life services for persons/families of all backgrounds.

BOOK - “**Caregiving 101**” - https://www.thepilgrimpress.com/products/caregiving-101-cannon?mc_cid=0a2580904b&mc_eid=c5d37d56e9