

THE MESSENGER

March 2024

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH SPLENDORA

Sharing God's Love In Our World

firstmethodistchurchsplendora.org

Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot, Pastor

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



The Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer and Fasting

By Rev. Steven G. Lightfoot

Prayer

A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. – James 5:16b-18

We tend to engage in prayer in one of two ways... either as preparation for the work to be done, or in desperation, a last resort to “seal the deal” to complete the work. What we miss is the fact that **the prayer is the work**. Prayer is the character and nature of the work itself. James tells us that a specific kind of prayer accomplishes much. Specifically, the prayer that originates in the righteous person. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Righteousness doesn't come from checking the daily prayer box on your to-do list. The righteousness comes by faith, through Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. It is not our

righteousness, but rather the righteousness of Christ in us. It doesn't come by our earning it, but by his giving it and our receiving it, through revelation and relationship.

Prayer then, is the spiritual discipline practiced by the righteous person, who engages in a life of holiness, in relationship with Christ, for the benefit of others, for our highest good, and for the glory of God the Father. All of this leads us to real transformation. So, we pray...

Lord Jesus, teach us to pray.

I receive your righteousness and release my sinfulness.

I receive your wholeness and release my brokenness.

I receive your fullness and release my emptiness.

I receive your peace and release my anxiety.

I receive your joy and release my despair.

I receive your healing and release my sickness.

I receive your love and release my selfishness.

I receive your given life of prayer and release my striving after a better prayer life.

Come, Holy Spirit, transform my heart, mind, soul, and strength so that my consecration becomes your demonstration; that our lives become your sanctuary. For the glory of God our Father, amen.¹

Fasting

¹⁶ “Now whenever you fast, do not make a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they distort their faces so that they will be noticed by people when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their (Continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

reward in full. ¹⁷ But as for you, when you

fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by people but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”-Matthew 6:16-18

One of the reasons we often fail at fasting is that we go about it with the wrong motivation. We tend to think that fasting is something we do out of obedience. We struggle through our fasting, more focused on when we get to eat again than on the things of God. Instead of spending quality time with Jesus, our heads are spinning with questions, such as, “Can I drink water while I’m fasting? What about juice? Can I have juice? Do I fast in the morning? Or skip lunch? Or is it dinner? How long? 24 hours? 21 days? 40 days?” It can be confusing, and let’s face it, more distracting than any spiritual benefit – not because it is without spiritual benefit – it’s full of spiritual benefits – but because we simply go about it without proper perspective and motivation.

Well, then, Pastor... what’s the proper motivation? Fasting, like prayer, is the spiritual discipline practiced by the righteous person, who engages in a life of holiness, in relationship with Christ, for the benefit of others, for our highest good, and for the glory of God the Father. We grow more and more righteous through prayer and fasting, devoting ourselves to God and to being ambassadors for Jesus Christ to the world. We, as active Christians, the body of Christ in motion in the world, are actively moving in the world as the hands and feet and voice of Jesus. If prayer is our spirit abiding in Christ, then fasting is our physical embodiment of abiding in Christ, which yields spiritual benefits.

Christ works within us, through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us. Ephesians 3:20-21 tells us, “²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

This means that, as we abide in Christ, in spirit and in the physical body where our spirit dwells with the Holy Spirit, we are put to kingdom work, as agents of divine power, doing immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine - for others and to the glory of

God. We focus our physical hunger on the abiding presence of Jesus. We use our bodily hunger to tune in to the Holy Spirit dwelling within our body, so that we experience the real, tangible presence of Christ with us.

By His Grace,

Pastor Steven†

1 Prayer from Wake-Up Call by J.D. Walt

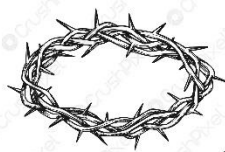


Calendar of Events

- 3rd- Third Sunday in Lent and Holy Communion 9AM***
Communion Rail Gifts go the Church's General Fund
Sunday School 10:15AM
 - 6th- Dinner & Bible Study 5:45PM**
 - 10th- Worship & Fourth Sunday in Lent 9AM***
Sunday School 10:15AM
Board of Stewards Meeting 12:45PM**
 - 13th- Dinner & Bible Study 5:45PM**
 - 16th- Food Pantry Day 9AM**
Volunteers needed
 - 17th- Worship & Fifth Sunday in Lent 9AM***
Sunday School 10:15AM
 - 20th- Dinner & Bible Study 5:45PM**
 - 24th- Worship Palm Sunday 9AM***
Sunday School 10:15AM
 - 27th- No Bible Study**
 - 29th- Good Friday Service 7:00PM**
FMCS
 - 31st- Resurrection Sunday Worship 9AM***
No Sunday School
- *Worship in Person or Online
**In Person with Zoom Link

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

7:00PM at FMCS
All Welcome!





NEW MEMBERS

Gene and Angie Ainsworth were welcomed as new members transferring from Shepherd Methodist Church on Sunday, February 11, 2024. We are so happy to have them as part of our Church Family. Welcome home to Gene & Angie!



MARCH ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Susie Dams
- 6 Travis Bernhardt
- 6 Soila Sportell
- 7 Charles & Mawana Jones
- 13 Mike LeBlanc
- 14 Billie Jackson
- 14 Ashley Vasquez
- 16 Bill Plath
- 19 Merle Fritz
- 20 Matthew Graves
- 21 Evelyn Cater
- 23 Jeanette Melton
- 24 Tom & Tess Nardozzi
- 26 Mikkie Lemaster
- 27 Karl Gray
- 28 Mildred Powell
- 28 Angie Ainsworth
- 29 Tess Nardozzi

WOMEN'S TEA & LUNCHEON

Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 4th for the Spring Tea celebrating Mother's Day. More information will be available soon.

Critical Document Released for the GM Church's Convening General Conference

by Robert Felton

The Global Methodist Church's Transitional Leadership Council has announced the release of a document setting forth a plan of organization and covenants for the new Church's convening General Conference, *So the World Will Know*. The 15-page document, officially entitled "The Convening General Conference: Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together," covers everything from the nomination and election of delegates, the development of the conference's daily agenda, and the conduct expected from all participants during the proceedings. Ultimately, the document will undergo a vote and be officially adopted by the delegates chosen to participate in the Conference. If they see fit, the delegates have the option to make amendments to it.

Global Methodists are eagerly anticipating the upcoming General Conference with feelings of joy and gratitude.

"We are keenly aware how important it is that our convening General Conference be orderly, efficient, and above all, God honoring," said the Rev. Beth Ann Cook, the chairwoman of the GM Church's Transitional Commission on the Convening General Conference.

Given the transitional nature of the Church and the essential matters that must be approved at its initial gathering, organizers are preparing a limited agenda as delegates gather in San Jose, Costa Rica, September 20-26, 2024. High on the list of priorities are ample time for worship, the adoption of a constitution, deliberation over critical legislation, and special times for thanks and praise. While many leaders believe the General Conferences will eventually occur every six years (the decision will be in the hands of duly elected delegates to the convening Conference), they also think the nascent Church will require a special follow-up General Conference in 2026. *(Continued on page 4)*

(continued from page 3)

“Even a cursory review of the plan of organization and the covenants will help GM Church members understand how much work and preparation has been done for our convening General Conference,” said the Rev. Keith Boyette, the denomination’s transitional connectional officer. “The plan and covenants are for all members of the GM Church; they explain things like what petitions will be prioritized at the initial gathering based on its limited agenda. The plan carefully spells out which paragraphs in the *Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* will be open for amending.”

The document further identifies the administrative and legislative committees of the Conference, outlining their duties and responsibilities. To work as efficiently as possible while in Costa Rica, organizers are facilitating pre-Conference virtual meetings of its various committees. At these meetings committee members will elect their officers and begin work related to the petitions and topics assigned to them.

“The nuts-and-bolts of planning a major conference doesn’t necessarily warm our hearts,” said John Lomperis, the convening General Conference’s business manager, “But whether we’re attending a small committee meeting in our local church or a major gathering like General Conference, we can all tell the difference between a well-organized meeting and one going off the rails. Plans and covenants are developed so we wisely use our financial resources, honor everyone’s time, and most importantly, organize the Church so it can most effectively fulfill its mission to make a disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.”

The Rev. Walter Fenton is the Global Methodist Church’s Deputy Connectional Officer.

This article is edited from the GMC website. To view in entirety, please visit GMC.org



PRAYER LIST

Sean Keith – Starts Chemo
Charles Jones – Heart procedure
this week
Lori Key – Cancer

Sage Herr – Cancer
Lee Stapleton – Cancer
Chantel Wilson - Cancer
Reznor Kral – Leukemia
Craig Hantelman – Health
Karl & Sheila Keith – Health & Strength
William Blake – Health
Isabella Reed - Health
Gary Shugart – Linda Duke’s brother –Health
Barbara Martin – Continued Healing
Patti Lyons – Continued Healing
Alton, Owen & Kasey Moore–Healing
Efrian – Healing
Carla Carelton – Healing
Ellen Cobine – Peace
Rolando - Family
Joseph Masterson
The Jones Family
Brandon Reed
Angel VanOstrand
Allyson, Matt and Girls
Patty & Allen Dye
Jolley Family
Debbie Szymanski & Family
Our Church Family
Unspoken
Upcoming Lenten services
Our Country & Leaders
Election day integrity

SPRING YARD SALE

Just in time for spring cleaning, dust off those items you have been meaning to get out of your shed or garage and donate them to the church for our Spring Yard and Bake Sale. Circle April 6th on your calendar and plan to help us with this fund raiser. Booths will be available to rent if you or someone you know wants to have their own sale in our parking lot. You will be able to drop off items for the sale on April 5th. Angel VanOstrand is organizing this event. See Angel for any questions or want to sign up to help.