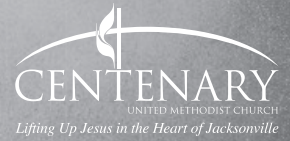


The Messenger

We are believers in Christ who gather
to
PRAISE God, GROW and SERVE.
February 2019



Pastor's Corner

Pastor Mel Nielsen
pastormel1@hotmail.com
cell: 1-815-922-9161

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

- John 8:2-11 (N.I.V.)

This month the United Methodist Church will make one of it's most profound decisions since it's inception. The church's General Conference will be meeting in St. Louis on Feb. 23-26. The purpose will be to receive and act on a report from the Way Forward Commission based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops.

The 32-member Commission was authorized by

General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church. I have wrestled with the reasons for this General Conference for several years. Even more years if I took you back to my high school age self. In those days I had a very narrow view of the world and feared those whom I thought were different from myself.

Over the years, Jesus has taught me how to really look at individuals and build relationships instead of simply passing judgment. Jesus managed to love every person, even those with whom he found theological differences. Jesus is my model in my own way forward. There is no decision that a huge group of people with differing thoughts can possibly come up with that will satisfy everyone.

PLEASE SEE 'PASTOR' ON PAGE 11

Centenary UMC

Church Staff

Pastor.....Mel Nielsen
Coordinator of Outreach
and Growth.....Kevin Hinkle
Office Administrator.....Karen Dirksmeyer
Office Manager.....Destiny Slater
Music Director.....Terri Benz
Contemporary Worship Leader.....Rachel Hinkle
Parish Visitor.....Jarice Crenshaw
Custodian.....Patty Adcock
Nursery Attendant.....Kayleigh Dirden

Centenary's Missionaries

Vae Rose Fultz - Retired Deaconess
Mark & Rebecca Smallwood - Teachers at Red Bird
Mission School in Kentucky

Church Information

331 E. State St., P.O. Box 124
Jacksonville, IL 62651
Phone: 217-245-8417

Email: office@jaxcentenary.org

Website: www.jaxcentenary.org

LaMoine District: www.lamoinedistrict.org

Illinois Great Rivers Conference Website: www.igrc.org

In Sympathy

Raymond Day.....Tuesday, January 8, 2019
 Oueda Fairfield.....Tuesday, January 8, 2019
 Bill Cummings.....Saturday, January 19, 2019

Sunday Morning Schedule

Traditional Worship Service.....8:15 a.m.
 Sunday School (all ages).....9:30 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour.....between services
 Contemporary Worship Service.....10:45 a.m.

Special Worship Services

Holy Communion.....Sun., Feb. 3

Special Offerings

Blanket/Tools of Hope Sunday.....Sun., Feb. 10
 Pennies for Hunger.....Sun., Feb. 24

Fellowship Opportunities

Fellowship Hour.....Every Sunday between services
 Tuesday Morning Fellowship.....Every Tue., 6-9 a.m.
 at SafeCo. Bakery

Mission Opportunities

Donate Blood.....Mon. Feb. 4 & 18
 at Passavant Hospital, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
 MMDC Work Day.....Mon., Feb. 18, 8 a.m.
 AlAnon Meeting....every Wed., 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Leadership Opportunities

Education.....Wed., Feb. 6, 6 p.m. Sun. School Room
 Finance.....Wed., Feb. 13, 5:30 p.m., Parlor
 Trustees.....Tues., Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m. Parlor
 Worship.....Mon., Feb. 18, 6 p.m., Narthex

Children's Ministries

Sunday School.....Every Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study

Lectionary Bible Study.....Every Tues., 9:30 a.m.
 @ Barbara Wooldridge's Home
 Monday Night Bible Study.....Every Mon., 6:30 p.m.
 In the Parlor, (beginning Feb. 18)

Music Practices

Chancel Choir.....Mondays 7 p.m., Sanctuary

Communications

Mini-Messenger Deadline.....Wednesdays at Noon
 Messenger Deadline.....Tue., Feb. 15
 Messenger Folding Party.....Fri., Feb. 22

United Methodist Women

UMW Love Visits.....Wed., Feb. 6, 9 a.m.
 Meet in Church Parlor with 2 doz. cookies
 FHS Circle.....Wed., Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.
 Hostess, Terri Benz
 Hope Circle.....Thurs., Feb. 14, 1:30
 Program: Book Sharing @ Church Parlor
 Spiritual Growth Retreat.....Fri. & Sat. Feb. 15 & 16
 @ Chatham UMC
 Ruth Circle.....Wed., Feb. 20, 1:30
 @ Church Parlor, Hostess: Mary Dalton
 Spirit Circle.....TBD
 UMW Business Mtg.....Thurs., Mar. 7, 6:30 pm, Parlor

FUSION -Youth Ministries

Fusion.....Sun., Feb. 10, 1-3 pm, Brooklyn
 @ Brooklyn Youth Center
 Fusion.....Sun., Feb. 24, 1-3 pm, Brooklyn
 @ Brooklyn Youth Center

Cluster Lenten Services

The Holy Spokes Cluster will sponsor Sunday evening services each Sunday evening during Lent. This year the services will be at 5:00 p.m. with a time of food and fellowship at approximately 6:00 p.m. Centenary will host the first service on Sunday, March 10. Donations of sandwiches and desserts are needed. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

***Fellowship Hour
 hosts/hostesses sought***

Hosts/hostesses are needed for our Fellowship Time between services. Wendy DeBolt is coordinating the volunteers in 2019. Circle members and other groups help with some of the months. However, there are many open dates for individuals to volunteer. Sign the list in the narthex or contact Wendy if you can help.

Mark your calendars

UMW Love Visits
 Wednesday, February 6, 9:00 a.m.
 Wanted: homemade cookies
 and volunteers to deliver cookies!

Sunday Morning Helpers

Liturgists

8:15

Feb. 3 - Pat Manker
 Feb. 10 - Barbara Wooldridge
 Feb. 17 - Barb Ginder
 Feb. 24 - Bev Rhine

Greeters

8:15

Feb. 3 - Helen Baldwin
 Feb. 10 - Dale and Jean Shafer
 Feb. 17 - Shelby Pennell
 Feb. 24 - Donna Tolbert

10:45

All dates - Diana Phillips

Communion Stewards

8:15 - Feb. 3

Helen Baldwin/Cyndi Claussen - Sec. 1
 Gary Hayes/Donna Tolbert - Sec. 2
 Dean and Shirley Gish - Sec. 3
 Angi Freitag/Jane Lair - Sec. 4

10:45 - Feb. 3

Pastor Mel and Marilyn Kimmons
 Tom and Peggy Jordan

Small Talk

8:15 & 10:45 - Pastor Mel

Fellowship Hour Host/Hostess

Feb. 3 - Peggy Jordan
 Feb. 10 - Debbie Belzer
 Feb. 17 - TBD
 Feb. 24 - TBD

Nursery Volunteers

10:45

Feb. 3 - LuAnne Woodrum
 Feb. 10 - Pat Manker
 Feb. 17 - Linda Tribble
 Feb. 24 - Terri Benz



Save BOXTOPS for Red Bird Mission and
 Cunningham Children's Home Big Box
 Tops for Education
 Put in "cereal" box in the parlor.

Upcoming Worship Schedule

*The following is a tentative schedule for
 February 2019 worship.*

(Readings & message may change without notice.)

Feb. 3

4th Sunday after the Epiphany
 Altar Color - White
 "Pointing the Finger of Blame"
 OT: Psalm 71:1-6
 Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

Feb. 10

5th Sunday after the Epiphany
 Altar Color - White
 "Those in Need of Grace"
 NT: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
 Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Feb. 17

6th Sunday after the Epiphany
 Altar Color - Green
 "Some Things Never Change"
 NT: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
 Gospel: Luke 6:17-26

Feb. 24

7th Sunday after the Epiphany
 Altar Color - Green
 Pastor Gone on Vacation
 Guest Speaker - Barbara Wooldridge

Mar. 3

Transfiguration Sunday
 Altar Color - White
 "The Mountain and the Valley"
 NT: 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
 Gospel: Luke 9:28-36 & 27-43



Photo by Pastor Mel

A small group ventured out into the Spring like temperatures on Dec. 19, 2017 to share Christmas Carols. The singers stopped at many individual residences and nursing homes. Pictured above, L-R, are: Jarice Crenshaw, Diane Webster, Martha Vaché, Jane Masters, Eric McClarey, Paul Hamilton, Kevin Hinkle. Not pictured are Pastor Mel and Roberta Randorf.

Community Shoe Drive

There is a basket in the Narthex for shoes for the Shoeman Water Projects. Wanted are gently used shoes. Tie the laces or put a rubber band around the pair of shoes.

Blanket and Tools of Hope Sunday recognized

Blanket and Tools of Hope Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, February 10. There will be a special offering for Church World Service. CWS responds immediately after a disaster happens with tents, blankets, recovery kits, medicines, etc. In addition, CWS is committed to stand with people in the long process of recovery and rehabilitation. CWS works to provide care to traumatized children; rebuild communities; and restoring hope in some 80 countries.

With your support, the CWS TOOLS & BLANKETS Program is a rainbow of caring to people in need around the world. A blanket can be purchased for only \$5. Larger gifts are welcome. Make checks out to "Centenary UMC" and designate Blanket Sunday. Information about the work of CWS is available on their web site: <http://cwsglobal.org/>

MMDC Center Workday

Our next workday at the Midwest Mission Distribution Center near Chatham will be on Monday, February 18. That is a holiday! Contact Kevin Hinkle if you are interested in going with us so we can plan transportation.

Chancel Choir rehearsals

Centenary's Chancel Choir rehearses every Monday at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary under the direction of Terri Benz. New and exciting music is in our lineup this winter. All are welcome - MAKE US YOUR SMALL GROUP INVOLVEMENT! We'd love to have you!



Stewardship Stumpers

This month the stewardship committee is continuing 'Stewardship Stumpers.' The answers can be found elsewhere in this issue.

#1

*True or False:
Confirmation is an
unscriptural practice.*

#2

*True or False:
"Giving is a very real and
meaningful way for believers
to worship God."
(from Called to Give, p. 18)*



Photo by Pastor Mel

Pictured above is the special musical guest, Harvest, which performed at FUSION on Sun., Dec. 30. Harvest lead singer, Tim Price, (center) led worship and entertained the youth and adults with fun interactive games. Snacks, fellowship and more games were enjoyed afterwards. Harvest traveled from Troy, IL for the evening.

FUSION activities set

Sun, Feb. 10

Meeting
1-3 pm, Brooklyn

Sun, Feb. 24

Meeting
1-3 pm, Brooklyn

Fusion is a collaboration of area United Methodist Churches. For more information, contact Rachel or Kevin Hinkle @ 217-370- 3329 or 217-245-8417.

**Follow FUSION activities
on FACEBOOK:
Go to [facebook.com/groups/
JaxCentenaryFusion/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/JaxCentenaryFusion/)**

Collections underway for Share the Love 2019

Share the Love will be held on Saturday, April 20 from 10 am to 1 pm in the brick building at 200 E. Douglas. This community event is an outreach to those in need in the Jacksonville community. There are many ways for churches, organizations and individuals to be involved.

Centenary is collecting quick cook rice (6.8 oz. box) and mashed potatoes (13.75 oz. package). Bring your donations to the Narthex during February.

Collections underway for New Directions Warming and Cooling Center

The New Directions Warming and Cooling Center is asking for help from Jacksonville churches. Below are the items most needed by the center. Please bring your donations to the Narthex.

- Freezer bags, gallon and quart size
- Trash bags, 55 gallon
- Food handler gloves
- Microwave Safe Cookware (bowls)
- Laundry soap
- Fabric softener
- Laundry stain remover
- Twin size blankets
- Twin size sheets
- West Central Mass Transit tokens
- Wal-Mart or Country Market gift cards (to be used by the shelter to cover meals when no meal provider is available.)
- Coffee
- Sugar
- Coffee creamer
- Hot chocolate
- 100% fruit juice
- Tomato juice
- Soups
- Individual Mac & Cheese, soups, Chef BoyArdee cups.
- Breakfast cereal
- Oatmeal
- Microwave popcorn

Monday Night Bible Study to begin new class

The Monday Night Bible Study will begin a new study on Monday, Feb. 18 at 6:30 in the parlor. Anyone is welcome to attend; a sign up sheet will be in the narthex. The new study is by Adam Hamilton and is entitled “Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times.

The author draws on recent research, inspiring real-life examples, and biblical insight as we discuss fear, failure, feelings of insignificance, loneliness, finances, aging, illness, and dying - to name a few areas. The Bible tells us 365 times, “Do not be afraid.”

Let’s learn together and discover more of what God has to tell us about understanding and countering our fears. If you have any questions, please contact Diana Phillips

February Birthdays

- 4.....James Macrander
- 5.....Patricia Patterson
- 6.....Jane Rorex
- 7.....Devi Harper
- 9.....Lacey Sorrill
Lane Stiltz
- 10.....Rene Strubbe
Patty Cook
- 11.....Joan Quigg
- 13.....Louis Vaché
- 15.....Benjamin Belzer
Carol Smith
- 17.....Shirley Gish
Charlene Anderson
- 19.....Matt Tomlin
Mary Tomlin
- 28.....Wendy DeBolt

February Anniversaries

- 6.....Ron & Joyce McAllister
- 12.....Kelly & Billy Latham
- 14.....Richard & Barb Fernandes
- 18.....Scott & Emily Calhoun

1. True - From II Corinthians 9:11, Paul writes, “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” Giving of every gift is an expression of thanks to God for his blessings and a commitment to see that the work of God is successful.

1. True - Unscriptural means a practice without Biblical authority. Confirmation is practiced for those children who are of the age of accountability, old enough to take the vows for themselves and make their personal profession of faith.
(from truediscipleship.com)

STEWARDSHIP STUMPERS ANSWERS: from page 4

K.I.C.K.S. Updates

Acolyte schedule

- Feb. 3 - Andrew Cooley
- Feb. 10 - Jack Borgman
- Feb. 17 - Matthew Hinkle
- Feb. 24 - Noah Borgman

Teaching schedule

Preschool/Toddler Classroom

- | Date | Teacher/Assistant |
|---------|--|
| Feb. 3 | Diana Phillips/Wendy DeBolt/
Debbie Belzer |
| Feb. 10 | Diana Phillips/ Wendy DeBolt /
Linda Tribble |
| Feb. 17 | Diana Phillips/ Wendy DeBolt /
Cindy Claussen |
| Feb. 24 | Diana Phillips/ Wendy DeBolt /
Help Needed |

Elementary Classroom

- | Date | Teacher/Assistant |
|---------|---|
| Feb. 3 | Rachael Borgman/LuAnne Woodrum |
| Feb. 10 | Rusti Cummins/ Karmen Birdsell |
| Feb. 17 | Catherine Pritchett/Ashley Westenberger |
| Feb. 24 | Angi Freitag/Amy Stidham |

UMW Reading Program Updates for 2019

A 2019 UMW Reading Program selection is Eleanor: “The Faith of the 20th Century’s Most Influential Woman” by Harold Evan Smith. It is placed in the category of Leadership Development. If you haven’t already guessed, the book is a spiritual biography of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Eleanor is remembered as a formidable First Lady and a tireless social activist. Often overlooked, however, is her deep and inclusive spirituality. Her personal faith was focused on Jesus and fueled her commitment to civil rights, women’s rights, and the rights of all “little people” marginalized in American society.

This book provides insight into one of America’s most famous women, particularly the spiritual influences that made her so active in social justice issues.

2013 is the furthest back that UMW Reading Program books count towards the 2019 total. The book, “*Plain Wisdom*,” by Cindy Woodsmall and Miriam Flaud is a 2013 book in the category Nurturing for Community.

Woodsmall writes voluminously in Christian fiction and centers her books on Amish life. Miriam Flaud is an Old Order Amish woman who invited Woodsmall to visit her. Their friendship grew and they began to realize that they had many things in common. *Plain Wisdom* is a collection of events in their lives from early childhood to the present.

They share the lessons they learned, insights they’ve discovered, words of wisdom, Amish recipes and plenty of humor. This year is your last chance to read this book and have it count on your Reading Program! Check it out!

UMC Reading Program Books

Anyone who likes to read is invited to borrow one of the UMW reading program books. It’s FREE. The books are on the UMW shelf next to the piano in the parlor. Excellent books are available on a variety of topics. Diana Phillips, Roberta Randorf or Martha Vaché can suggest a good book for you.

February Circle Meetings

FHS Circle: Wed. Feb. 13, 6:30 pm

Hostess: Terri Benz

Ruth Circle: Wed. Feb. 20, 1:30 pm, parlor

Hostess: Mary Dalton

Hope Circle: Thurs. Feb. 14, 1:30 pm, parlor

Program: Book sharing

Spirit Circle: TBA

UMW Business Meeting

The next UMW business meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor. We will finalize plans for our Salad Luncheon and Mother Daughter Banquet. All women are invited.



UMW Love visits

Centenary’s United Methodist Women’s Love Visits will be on Wednesday, February 6. We will meet in the parlor at 9:00 a.m. to prepare plates of cookies and fruit to take to Centenary members and friends.

This is always a wonderful day of fellowship for both those visited and those doing the visiting. Having more volunteers is always helpful. Please join us.

Please bring cookies (even if you can’t be here that day). We like to have a good variety of cookies. Cookies can be left in the parlor during office hours.

If you have any questions or know someone to add to the list of those we visit or send cards to, contact Jarice Crenshaw or Sally Stock.

**Centenary United Methodist
Memorial/Honorarium Gift Form**

In Memory of _____
In Honor of _____

For the following special occasion:

- ___ *Birthday* ___ *Mother's Day*
- ___ *Anniversary* ___ *Father's Day*
- ___ *Wedding* ___ *Veteran's Day*
- ___ *Christmas* ___ *Other* _____

Please use this gift of \$ _____ for:

- ___ Centenary - General Fund
- ___ Centenary - Building and Grounds Upkeep
- ___ Centenary - Missions
- ___ Designated Projects (*See back side.*)

Make checks payable to: Centenary UMC

Date of donation: _____ Check # _____
 Donated by: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Please send a gift card to the following honoree:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State _____ Zip code _____
 Put in newsletter ___ Do NOT put in newsletter _____

CENTENARY	GIFT GIVEN TO	AMOUNT
	Bell Tower/Steeple Fund	
	Children's Activities	
	Elevator Upkeep Fund	
	FUSION/Youth Fund	
	Music Fund	
	Pavilion Fund	
	Organ Reservoirs Fund	
JACKSONVILLE		
	A Cup of Cold Water (Local Emergency needs)	
	H.E.L.P.S. Ministry Outreach	
	JACIL	
	Jacksonville Area Food Center	
	Jacksonville Salvation Army	
	Jubilee Habitat for Humanity	
	New Directions Warming/Cooling Center	
MIDWEST		
	Baby Fold, The (Normal)	
	Chaddock (Quincy)	
	Cunningham Children's Home (Urbana)	
	Lessie Bates Neighborhood House (E.St. Louis)	
	Midwest Mission Distribution Center (Chatham)	
	Red Bird Mission (Kentucky)	
	Volunteers in Mission	
INTERNATIONAL		
	Church World Service/CROP	
	Heifer Project	
	UMCOR (United Methodist Com. on Relief)	
MISSIONARIES		
	Mark & Rebecca Smallwood/Red Bird School	
OTHER		
	Name: _____	

Future UMW dates

Love Visits: Wed. Feb. 6, 9:00 am
 IGRC UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat: Feb. 15/16,
 Chatham UMC, Speaker: Barbara Wooldridge
 Business Meeting: Tues. Mar. 7, 6:30 p.m., parlor
 LaMoine Dist. UMW Mini-mission, Sat. Mar. 9
 Union UMC, Quincy
 Host Cluster Lenten Fellowship: Sun. Mar. 10
 Clean Church Kitchen: Mon. Mar. 25, 9:00 a.m.
 Salad Luncheon/Bazaar Prep: Tues. Apr. 2
 Salad Luncheon/Bazaar/Bake Sale: Wed. April 3
 Cunningham Festival of Quilts: Fri/Sat, Apr. 5/6
 Urbana
 LaMoine UMW Spring Mtg: Sat. Apr. 27, Hull UMC
 Mother-Daughter Banquet: Mon, May 13, 6:30 pm.

UMW membership

All women in the Centenary family are welcome to be a part of our United Methodist Women. UMW members may participate in a circle or be a member-at-large. You don't need to be a member of Centenary to join UMW. Contact me or any UMW officer for more information.

- Jarice Crenshaw Membership, Nurture and Outreach

Spiritual Growth Retreat

Countdown: A Contemporary "Top 10" will be the theme for this year's IGRC UMW Retreat. It will be held at the Chatham UMC on February 15 and 16 from Friday evening to Saturday afternoon. Our own Barbara Wooldridge will be the speaker.

Registration forms are available from UMW officers or the church office. The cost is \$65 per person if staying at the Baymont Inn. The commuter fee is \$20. Registration deadline is January 21st.

UMW February Challenge

Consider using a non-chemical de-icer on sidewalks and driveways this winter. Salt and sand are not good for the environment, especially our animals. A product called Magic Salt, a liquid spray called Ice-Clear and another called Ice Melt are non-corrosive and much more eco- and animal friendly.

-Terri Benz Education/Interpretation

Missions Committee shares recent cards of thanks

Thank you for the \$150 donation to the Spirit of Faith Soup Kitchen. We pray that you receive a one-hundred-fold return. Polly Pulley.

Thank you for your contribution of \$400 to JACIL. As you know the state funds which not-for-profit agencies receive can be spent only as approved in the grant agreement. Agencies must rely on contributions such as yours to provide the funds to supplement the grant activities. Your contribution will help us continue helping people live independent lives. Peggy Davidsmeyer, Executive Director

Food Center News

The December Food Center report showed 93 families served for food orders; a total of 192 people at a cost of \$9,164.02. 396 families were served extra bakery; a total of 1,085 people at a cost of \$6,803.79. The churches contributed \$2,638.98 in money and \$1,115.75 in food donations.

The Centenary spring food drive will be from March 10 to 24.

Cheryl TerHark
 Food Center Representative



Church Camp

Camping opportunities

It is cold outside, but it is not too early to begin planning for next summer. Attending United Methodist church camp can be a life changing experience. Children, youth, and families have a chance to make new friends, experience the out-of-doors while having fun, and becoming closer to God.

Our IGRC offers many different types of camps. You can choose from an air-conditioned lodge, to cabins, to tents. Some of the types of camps include: family camps, to horseback riding camps, to water camps, and to canoe camps.

The 2019 Camping Guild which gives information about all the camps is available from Kevin Hinkle or online at <http://www.igrc.org>.

Centenary will help pay the cost of camp for youth.

PASTOR

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Therein lies the problem, trying to satisfy ourselves. This issue should be about what pleases and glorifies God. There is a long list of virtues and actions which we can find by reading the Holy Scriptures which detail 'How to Please God.' The Bible also gives us a list of all the people who were able to please God. Want to know if your name is on that list, it isn't, neither is mine. That list contains one name, Jesus the Christ.

I love this passage of scripture for reasons I will get to in a few paragraphs. Let me first address the part of this passage that seems to be the rallying cry for both sides of the Way Forward issue. Jesus speaks one sentence that both sides cling to. *"Then neither do I condemn you,"* Jesus declared. *"Go now and leave your life of sin."*

One side says, *"See, Jesus will not condemn."* The other side says, *"See, Jesus tells us to go and sin no more."* Welcome, you are in the same cross hairs as the Way Forward Commission. How have we reduced all the sayings of Jesus down to this one statement? It is one sentence – and we have even split that.

I have never been a proponent that the United Methodist Church (UMC) must remain unified. Yes, I would like to see that happen, but if we cannot agree maybe each theological group should go their own separate ways. Paul and Barnabas went their own ways upon reaching an unsettled impasse. Jesus seemed to separate himself from the other shepherds of Israel with his proclamation that He was the 'Good Shepherd.'

For me, the split is not the issue, but more the deeper reasons for splitting. We want to split because we are not happy. If we cared about what made God unhappy we would end our sinful ways immediately, but we don't do that. We look the other way when it comes to our sin, so we attack other people's sin. It's easier, and at least we feel like we are getting something accomplished.

So let the UMC split, or let it remain unified, neither addresses accomplishing God's goals as long as we are still trying to accomplish ours first. So we end up yelling at each other about God's will, as if it were our own. Can you say with 100% assurance that you know God's will? If you said yes, you're braver than me because I wouldn't say that.

That brings me to the reason this passage is one of my favorites. One of the most overlooked parts of this scripture passage is Jesus bending down to write something in the soil, twice. If we knew God's will 100% we would know what Jesus wrote. He bent down two times and I don't believe that Jesus does anything just by chance, there was a purpose in his dirt writing actions.

Imagine the Lord on the floor of the General Conference in St. Louis, bending down to write something during one of the inevitable 'stone throwing sessions.' Would anyone notice? Would anyone look to see what he wrote? Would their own earthly agendas prevent them from witnessing a great blessing right before their eyes?

He didn't seem to take too long, so he probably didn't write out a lot of words, maybe just an image. Perhaps the first time he drew the image of a heart, then the second time he bent down he drew a vertical crack running right down the middle of the heart from top to bottom? I don't know. Nobody knows. That image, like the sentence in John and like God's will, is always up for our interpretation.

One thing is clear in this passage, and that is how Jesus feels about people throwing stones at each other for incorrectly interpreting God's will. Let's not assume we are God, instead let us believe that God loves us, all of us. Let us be in earnest, honest discernment about what God wants from the UMC on this decision, instead of telling God that our way is the best way.

Blessings,
Pastor Mel

Lord,

Please guide me in your will and help me to know your heart in matters that exceed my understanding. Help me to have the compassion of Jesus in dealing with others, especially those I see as 'other' than me. As I journey to Heaven let me walk humbly and lovingly with my brothers and sisters and allow them to see the Christ in me.

Amen.



Photos by Pastor Mel

Worship services were canceled at Jacksonville Centenary on Sun., Jan. 13 due to the snowfall that left up to 16" on snow according to some reports. Pictured above is the snow depth total on Pastor's Mel's Driveway. It showed nearly 14 1/2" of the white stuff.

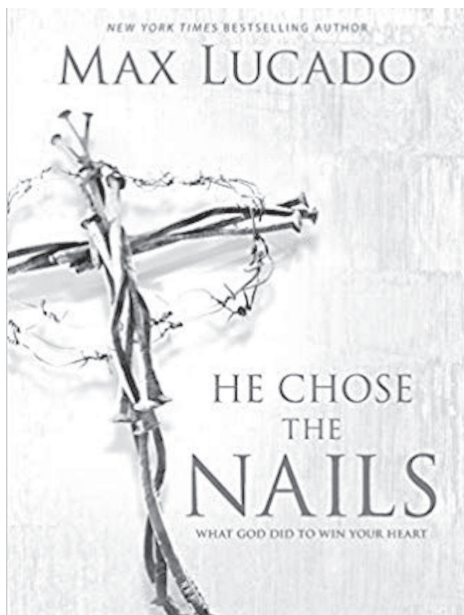


Ash Wednesday

Pastor Mel and the Worship Committee are planning an Ash Wednesday service for Wednesday, March 6, 7:00 p.m.

Come and join the journey to the cross from the very beginning of Lent.

- Music
- Message
- Pardon and Confession
- Imposition of Ashes



Pastor Mel's Bible Study for Lent

"He Chose the Nails" by Max Lucado

6 sessions

Dates: March 7, 14, 21, 28 & April 4 & 11

Time: 1 p.m. or 6 p.m.

Cost: \$7.00

Name _____

Phone _____

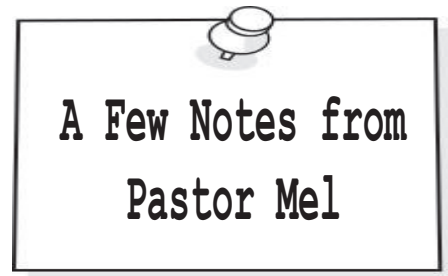
Email _____

1 p.m. or 6 p.m.

Childcare will be provided for the evening classes.

Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. These gifts came not wrapped in paper but in passion. They were not placed around a tree but around a cross. They were not covered with ribbons but sprinkled with the blood that Christ shed on our behalf.

Centenary United Methodist Church December 2018 Fox Trust Donations



Organization Requesting Funds and \$ Amount Approved

Big Brother Big Sister of West Central IL.....	\$100.00
Chaddock’s Children’s Foundation.....	\$150.00
Cunningham Children’s Home.....	\$125.00
Educational Day Care Ctr.....	\$100.00
Grounds of Grace.....	\$50.00
HELPS Ministry Outreach.....	\$150.00
JACIL (Independent living).....	\$100.00
Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood house.....	\$125.00
Midwest Mission Distribution Center.....	\$100.00
New Directions Warming Center.....	\$125.00
Prairieland United Way.....	\$100.00
Red Bird Missions.....	\$150.00
Spirit of Faith Soup Kitchen.....	\$150.00
UMCOR - Disaster Response USA.....	\$125.00
Centenary UMC Youth Group - FUSION - Mission Trip...\$1,000.00	
Cup of Cold Water - For Heavens Sake Circle.....	\$500.00
Jacksonville Area Community Food Center.....	\$1,500.00
Pastor Helping Hand Account.....	\$600.00
Camp Care-A-Lot.....	\$150.00
Crisis Center Foundation.....	\$500.00
Grace UMC - Take It to the Streets.....	\$500.00
In His Service.....	\$50.00
HELPS Ministry Outreach - Our Yess Group.....	\$150.00
Midwest Youth Services.....	\$400.00
The Salvation Army - Christmas Angel Tree.....	\$100.00
Prairie Council on Aging DoorBell Dinners.....	\$300.00
Total Requested or Approved.....	\$7,400.00

The Fox Trust board looks financial requests in this order:
Missions first, requests by Centenary members second, and those
from outside sources third.

***We are never nearer Christ than when
we find ourselves lost in a holy
amazement at His unspeakable love.
— John Owen***

It’s the beginning of a new year and I would like to report on what is happening within the Centenary leadership committees. I want you to know how diligent your leaders are in organizing, planning and implementing the vision God has given to us. This a quick report from the committees that have met so far. I hope to bring more reports to you next month from Ad Council, SPRC, Finance and Education and Worship.

Evangelism - This group will be taking on a new direction in 2019 with a focus in true evangelism which is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Stewardship - This committee is once again focused on helping the congregation fully utilize and understand their spiritual focus in the area of stewardship. Those areas are: Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service and Witness.

Trustees - The trustees are looking at completion of the pavilion project in 2019. They are also undertaking, with the help of the Jacksonville Police Department, a plan to help keep the congregation safe. They are looking at several ways to implement new plans to accomplish this goal. If you are interested in knowing more about church safety, please let Pastor Mel know, You do not need to be a trustees to help in this area.

Missions - The focus of Missions Committee is always to put others first. In 2019 the group is looking to organize a year long plan of helping people locally, statewide and internationally. This committee will make these needs available to the congregation on a monthly basis.

Office of Outreach and Growth - Kevin Hinkle, Director, is working alongside me with plans he has discerned from God to keep the focus centered on spiritual growth of membership and helping them to become fully developed disciples.

Centenary United Methodist Church
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February 2019



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Lifting Up Jesus in the Heart of Jacksonville

The people of Centenary invite you with open arms to visit to our church.
It is our hope that you will stop in to worship with us and hear God's word.
If you have troubles, and want someone to listen and to pray with you, we will.
We're here with open hearts, open minds, open doors and God's love to freely give away.