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Life @1st Church

905 Glendale Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 11

November 2020

Rambling Thoughts of a Pastor by Pastor Paul

According to a medieval legend, God once sent two angels to the earth on a special mission, with each one of them carrying a basket. One angel was assigned to gather up all of the prayers of petition, and the other was assigned to gather up all of the prayers of thanksgiving.

The first angel returned very quickly, and her basket was filled to overflowing with requests. "Ah, yes," reported this angel, "the people of God have remembered well the Bible's counsel: 'Ask, and you shall receive.' " Yet the second angel was gone a long time, and when she finally returned, her basket was nearly empty. "I had a hard time finding people who pray prayers of thanksgiving," she said quietly.

Like everyone else, I too have plenty of petitions to place in the first angel's basket, including a petition for peace, justice, harmony and prosperity in America after the election. I have a petition that God will inspire and empower each of us to be not part of the problem but rather part of the answer which I believe is forever and always blowing in the wind, that wind which is the Holy Spirit of God. I have a petition that all of the subtle systemic aspects of racism will be both honestly recognized and courageously overcome. I have a petition that every protest will clearly seek to address the problems which all of us have created together and which all of us need to correct together without creating distractions that lead us away from this task. I have a petition that we will seek what Martin Luther King, Jr. once called a "double victory" of freedom for oppressed and oppressor alike and that each and every protest will always be ultimately rooted in that divine love for all humanity which casts out human fear. And I have a petition that we will all recognize the truth the Franciscan monk Richard Rohr expressed when he wrote, *"If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it."*

At the same time, I do not want to neglect the second angel's basket, as we are all often tempted to do. I want to give thanks for a God who steadfastly refuses to give up on any of us—a God who is forever and always at work for good: forming, reforming, and transforming the world, the church, and every human heart. I want to give thanks for the privilege of being called—along with all my sisters and brothers—to be not passive spectators but active participants amidst the ongoing struggle for peace with justice in our personal relationships, our neighborhoods, and our world. I want to give thanks for the strength God graciously promises to us amidst that struggle. And I want to give thanks for churches such as First South Charleston United Methodist which, for all its flaws and foibles, still offers the world a glimpse of people who keep humbly seeking to learn to live together in love.

Yes, I have my petitions, but I also have my prayers of thanksgiving ... and not just on the fourth Thursday in November.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Paul



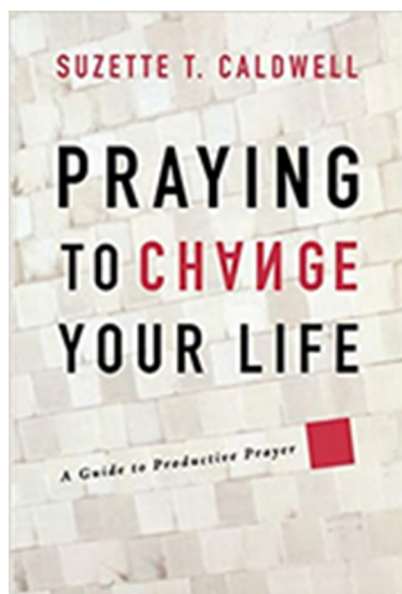
United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Peace, Love and Books November 2020

by Teresa Matheny

Praying to Change Your Life: A Guide to Productive Prayer by Suzette T. Caldwell (Author), Pastor Kirbyjon H. Caldwell (Foreword)

This is not your grandmother's prayer book!



Praying to Change Your Life is an action-oriented, results-driven, how-to guide for believers that glorifies God, transforms lives, and increases the power of your prayers.

Through instruction, prayer exercises, personal stories, and testimonies, you will learn what prayer is, why you should pray, who you pray to, and how to pray using the six categories of the model prayer: Our Father who art in Heaven... You will discover that:

- * Prayer was created for God's purposes, not our own.
- * Prayers need to be God-centered.
- * Prayers can enhance their relationship with God.
- * You can increase your "prayer productivity rate."

Author and pastor Suzette Caldwell shares her many years of studying and teaching prayer with you. She answers nagging questions that many believers have and empowers pray-ers to pray more effectively.

Revolutionize your prayer life today with this proven, effective set of principles!

*****edited from forward:** As you read *Praying to Change Your Life*, you will experience the Lord's desired intent for prayer – interactive, vibrant, and powerfully effective communication. Pastor Suzette's liberating revelation about The Model Prayer (also known as The Lord's Prayer) can literally transform how you pray, why you pray, and what happens when you pray.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This book is located on the United Methodist Women reading cart in the church library.



Memorial Gifts

Frances Neff Memorial Fund:

Anonymous gift

Paul Smith Memorial Fund:

Karen Johnston

First United Methodist wishes to thank all who have honored our loved ones with a donation to our church Memorial Fund.

Memorial gifts are often given at the time of a person's death instead of flowers. It is a way to say that the person was important and will be missed. But memorial gifts do not always have to come at a person's death. Some people also like to make memorial gifts on the anniversary of someone's death or at other times in remembrance of someone close.

Some gifts can be given to honor someone who is still alive. It is a celebration of one's life at an anniversary, birthday, or just to say thanks.

Donations can be mailed to the church advising if the donation is in memory of a deceased person or in honor of someone.

Men seek partnership with Montrose Elementary

In keeping with the goal of doing at least one outreach project every month, the First Church men are pursuing a partnership with Montrose Elementary School. As a first step in establishing the partnership, the men provided a pizza lunch to all of the school's faculty and staff on Oct. 15.

In a letter to Principal Hedge, Men's President Mike Warwick wrote, "Thank you for your dedication and flexibility in educating our future leaders. If there is anything we can assist you with in your efforts to continue providing a quality education to the students at Montrose, please let us know."

Also during October, Warwick contacted the folks who are organizing a women's shelter at the former Rock Lake Pool property. The men have offered to assist with the project.

The next meeting of the First Church men will be at 9 a.m. Nov. 7 online, via Zoom. All First Church men are automatically members of the United Methodist Men. If you have not received an e-mail with an invitation to the meeting, e-mail George Hohmann at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or call him at 304 419-1916.



Thank You

I appreciate all the effort that Pastor Paul and staff have put in to keep us all safe during this uncertain time. I know that is probably what 95% of the congregation thinks and would say.
Barbara Warwick

Dear Pastor Paul and Worship Team,
Thank you so much for your spiritual leadership during this unprecedented time. On Sunday mornings, I still feel connected to our church family even though we are not physically together. I appreciate the great lengths to which you all have gone to make worship happen and to make it meaningful. God bless you all.
Love,
Sara Hampton

Pastor Paul, Jenny, Pat, Mike, Carrie and George:
My Sincere thanks for all the work you have done and continue to do to provide worship services for our congregation. You are appreciated more than you know.
Jeri Whitten

Thank you Pastor Paul and Kathy for creating an opportunity for me to worship with you and my family from miles away!! So thankful for your messages and the opportunity to be part of them each weekend.
Sara Jane (Grimes) McMullen

Pastor Paul,
Thanks for all the work you have done and continue to do for First Church. You have brought new light to this church through your leadership. You and Kathy are true blessings for all of us. May God continue to bless you in whatever life brings your way!
Love,
Kathy Parsons

I am thrilled Pastor Paul has developed an on-line/telephone church service. Thank you, Pastor Paul, and the team for making this an available option. It has demonstrated we are able to have church using multiple avenues other than in-person. Your hard work and creativity is very appreciated from my point-of-view!
Peggy Kourey

Continued on page 5

To the Worship Committee:
Thanks to all of you who help
put it all together for our
online Sunday service. Dur-
ing this crazy time, you have
helped us to “stay in church.”
Our church is lucky to have
talented people such as you!

Kathy Parsons

First Church is very blessed to
have Pastor Paul as our minis-
ter. His love and support for
First Church shows in every-
thing he does for our church. I
am not only thankful to have
him as my minister but as a
boss. Paul is always there
when I need advice and help in
the office.

Linda Nehr

I am so grateful to you, Pastor
Paul and all the faithful members
who have worked so hard and giv-
en so much to make it possible for
our church family to continue to
worship together during this
changing time. I feel so fortunate
to be able to continue to connect
with my brothers and sisters in
Christ, if only in spirit. Many
thanks and blessing to all.

Mary Kirkhart

Pastor Paul and the Worship
Committee,

We really appreciate the time
that all of you spend in prepara-
tion for the sermon on Sunday.
Larry and I have been watching
virtual church every Sunday. We
are very fortunate to have caring
people that are attending to
things that need to be done, even
though we are not actually in
church. Pastor Paul does
an excellent job on his sermons.
I was at the bank yesterday and
the man who works there had an
interesting perspective about vir-
tual church. He felt like God
was moving people to watch vir-
tual church each Sunday. He al-
so reminded me that church is
not the building. "It is the people
who are the church." He felt like
more people worldwide would
be led to Jesus. Since we are
older we will probably continue
watching virtual church. Again,
we want to thank Pastor Paul
and the Worship Committee for
making this possible. We always
enjoy the special music that Pat
prepares for Sunday.

Larry and Nancy Wolfe

November Prayer by David Biondi

Almighty and eternal God, with the coming of November we find ourselves rapidly approaching what has come to be known as the "holiday season." In just a few short weeks we will be celebrating Thanksgiving Day -- a most special observance in which we are called to reflect upon and heartily appreciate the multitude of gifts and blessings which you have so generously bestowed upon us. Keep us ever-mindful, O God, of how important it is that we should strive to cultivate an unshakable spirit of gratitude in our lives regardless of whatever our circumstances should happen to be. Maintaining

such an attitude of appreciation is particularly essential in times such as these when the coronavirus pandemic continues to rage on, necessitating so many changes and adaptations to our lives and lifestyles. Help us to persevere, O God, and to place our wholehearted trust in you such that we would never fail to offer up to you our praise and thanksgiving for your abiding presence with us and for your goodness and grace in and throughout our lives. This we pray in the precious name of your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Thought to Ponder:

Never be afraid to trust an *unknown* future to a *known* God.

Gardening: No wonder it's so popular

by George Hohmann

Gardening can be safely done during the pandemic. It provides physical activity. It offers an opportunity to be outdoors. And you get to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

No wonder it's so popular!

The 2020 growing season is winding down but Community Gardeners are still harvesting green peppers, kale, collard greens, turnips, okra and several other vegetables.

Get in on the enjoyment and physical activity! Reserve your 2021 Community Garden plot today. E-mail George Hohmann at g.hohmann48@gmail.com or call him at 304 419-1916.

Hike for Hunger by Teresa Matheny

October 4th turned out to be a beautiful day for Heart + Hand's Kay Hall Hike For Hunger. The show of support from area churches is always gratifying to see. All proceeds from this walk go to the Food Pantry at Heart + Hand. With the added concern of Covid-19 the need has been great this year to help our community with their food supplies.

Those participating from First Church included: Donna and Clark Haynes (they walked virtually), Jeri Whitten (she participated in the opening ceremony then walked virtually), Judy Hurd, Holly and Dave Biondi, Jim and Caryle Snyder, Mike and Sandy Warwick, Barbara Warwick, Teresa Matheny, and George Russell (I hope I didn't leave anyone out!)



Mark your calendars for next year - it's always the first weekend in October!





THE NUTS ARE IN!!



The United Methodist Women of First Church are once again selling fancy whole pecans. Cost is \$11/bag. If you prefer, you can stop by the church between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and pick up a bag or two. We are almost sold out of our first order and have ordered additional cases.

Celebrations, Etc. at 518 D Street in South Charleston (owned and operated by our own Pat Burchett) is selling whole pecans, pecan pieces, salted almonds, walnuts, deluxe mixed nuts (with no peanuts), and chocolate covered pecans for the United Methodist Women of First Church. Stop by and stock up on some additional delicious treats and say hello to Pat. Cost for all will be \$11/bag.

Go nuts and help support the UMW of First Church and our local mission projects.

Prayer Request Changes Announced

A phone call list has been established for those that do not receive emails for prayer requests. Those on the list will receive a phone call on Thursday from the church advising prayer requests received during the week. If we have a death in the church or a serious situation for prayers, a phone call will be made immediately. No phone calls will be made if no prayer requests are received during the week. If you would like your name added to the phone call list, please call the church office (304-744-3211). Prayer requests will continue to be sent via email as they are received.

Prayer requests are to be sent to 1stumcsc@gmail.com or call (304-744-3211). To have your prayer concern mentioned during the upcoming Sunday service the request must be received by Wednesday. Prayer requests received after Wednesday will be read the following week. Prayer requests will be read for two weeks unless we are notified otherwise.

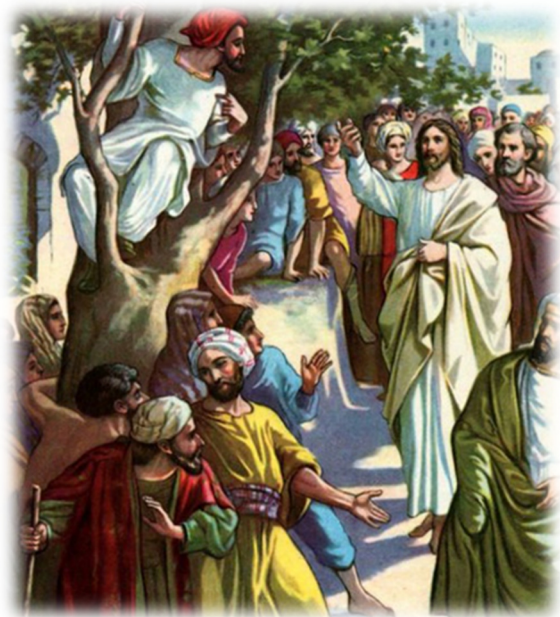
Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

Stewardship begins with gratitude ... gratitude for who we are in Christ, gratitude for the salvation he has won for us on the Cross, and gratitude for who he is and all his gifts to us. As stewards, we recognize that we are completely dependent on God for all we have and need and that, as we offer thanks for God's gifts, we also strive to use them in ways that please him.

Testing your knowledge of Scripture

Can you identify who from Scripture is in the Sycamore tree?



If you said Zacchaeus, you were right. Do you remember how Jesus changed his life and his attitude toward his wealth (Luke 19:1-9)? Prior to meeting Jesus and experiencing Jesus' love and the forgiveness of his sins, he lived for his money. After Jesus changed his heart, Zacchaeus lived to please the Lord. This was demonstrated when he gave away half of what he owned to the poor and four times the amount to those he had cheated. Are you handling your resources in such a way as to reflect a relationship with Jesus?

Does God Need Stewards?

As stewards, we acknowledge God as the creator and owner of all things. What God has entrusted to us, we are to manage for him according to God's purpose. Because we are merely caretakers of God's property, we, through our giving, are simply returning to God what he has already given to us. The Psalmist wrote, "... *every animal of the forest is [his] and the cattle on a thousand hills*" (Psalm 50:10). With God's vast resources, God does not need our offerings. "*I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens*" (Psalm 50:9).

Neither are we sharing "our" talents. Those, too, are gifts from God. The most eloquent preacher cannot work faith in the heart of the believer (1 Corinthians 12:3). The most skilled doctor cannot heal (Psalm 103:3). Each believer possesses at least one gift to be used serving others, but these gifts "*he has received*" (1 Peter 4:10) from God's gracious hand.

Does God need our gifts to accomplish his will? Did He need Moses' staff to part the Red Sea or Joshua's army to fell Jericho? Hardly! Does God need the preacher or teacher to impart his Word or the researcher to find a cure for cancer? Not really. "*For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength*" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Even time is something over which we have no control. "*My times are in your hands*" (Psalm 31:15). We cannot choose the time of our births or our deaths (Hebrews 9:27). James tells us that all our plans are boasting and bragging. He wrote, "*Instead you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'*" (James 4:14-16).

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God is not bound by time. *“For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night”* (Psalm 90:4).

No, God does not need our money, our gifts, or our time. However, we are privileged to be chosen by God to be his stewards. God has called us to give of “our” resources, “our” money, gifts, and time.

He calls us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, provide hospitality to the stranger, clothe the needy, and care for the prisoner (Matthew 25:38-40). We are to comfort as we have been comforted (Luke 11:4).

Let us, as stewards in this age, humbly consider the privilege God has given us by calling us to serve others with his gifts.

**Being Stewards of God's Light**

As God changes night into day, so he brings us out of spiritual darkness into his light. *“You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light”* (Psalm 18:28).

As God's redeemed people, we find courage in the words of Psalm 27:1, *“The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?”* God's light outshines all other light: His light guides us, his light protects us, and his light saves us.

Being a light means more than going to church. It means more than busyness in church work. Being a light means to share Jesus so others will come to know Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.

A Stewardship Illustration

A pig and a hen were strolling amicably down the street when they saw a sign in a lunchroom window reading:

DELICIOUS HAM AND EGGS.

“Isn't it grand,” said the hen, “that together we can give human beings something that delights them?”

The pig frowned, “Yes,” he said, “but you're giving out of surplus; for me, giving is a real sacrifice.”



From that point of view, most of us have not reached the point of sacrificial giving. At times God asks us to give until we can truly feel the giving. Giving sacrificially usually includes one of the following:

A rearrangement of priorities.

A change in lifestyle.

A forfeiture of something valued.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!

HEART + HAND CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS 2020 by Teresa Matheny

FOOD INSECURITY – The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. This term was first used in 1977.

In this strange and worrisome time of COVID-19 our church will still be preparing 60 baskets for the Heart + Hand Christmas Food Baskets. With job losses and shortened hours for some there is probably a greater need than ever before. These food baskets go to families in our neighborhood and community that need a little help during the holidays. Not only do we provide items for a holiday meal, we also try to include enough food to get families through the school Christmas Break. We want to help make the holiday time a little brighter for those in our own community and you can help by providing some of the items from our Heart + Hand Christmas Food Basket list. **Last year we tried something new and are going to continue that this year – in addition to our regular list of non-perishable items, we are requesting you bring certain items on certain Sundays. *See below.** All other non-perishable items will be brought to the church by Sunday, December 6. Our basket packing will be Friday, December 18 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Distribution of baskets will be Saturday, December 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We always need volunteers for these times so come to the social hall for fun and fellowship as we help our neighbors. And of course, social distancing and masks will be required. If you would rather contribute monetarily, of course you may do so. Make your check out to First United Methodist Church and write on the memo ‘Christmas Food Baskets.’

Jesus said, *“I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.” They asked “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty and did not help you?” He answered, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”* Matthew 25:42-45

| | |
|-------------|--|
| November 1 | Breakfast Cereal |
| November 8 | Fruit Juice 46 oz. (like Juicy Juice) |
| November 15 | Peanut Butter 2 lb. and Jelly 32 oz. |
| November 22 | Spaghetti Pasta 2 lb. and Spaghetti Sauce 26 oz. |
| November 29 | Cake Mix and Frosting |
| December 6 | Hamburger Helper |

Other items that can be donated are:

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Applesauce – 15 oz. | Flour – 5 lb. | Soup (canned) |
| Cookies | Ketchup – 36 oz. | Sugar |
| Corn Muffin Mix | Mayonnaise – 32 oz. | Tuna (canned) |
| Crackers – 16 oz. | Mustard – 20 oz. | Vegetable Oil |

For your convenience, there will be boxes in the Narthex as well as in the hallway to place donated food items.

As always, thank you for your participation in this worthy cause. Questions? Call Teresa Matheny 304 – 744 – 1903.

A Message From Pastor Paul



Will you help with a Live Nativity Scene 2020? This would be set in our parking lot at the corner of Central and Staunton. The scene will be a drive by or small crowd viewing. We could offer hot chocolate and cookies in a package with brochures on Christmas and First UMC activities.

Please call the church office if you are willing to help with this Christmas Joy Project. I need planners, production crew, stage builders, actors, directors, bakers, hosts, cleanup crew and general roadies.

Call 304-744-3211 or email wvpastorpaul@gmail.com

SAY YES! By Nov 5.

November Celebrations

Birthdays

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01 Lincoln Ratliff | 16 Wesley Buckley, Jenny Schenck |
| 04 Kathy Judge, John Ratliff | 19 Karen Johnston |
| 05 Sean Harter | 20 Nicole Biondi Kaufman |
| 06 June Wilson, Kathy Moore | 23 Thomas Russell |
| 08 David Neff, Allison Young | 26 Thomas Anderson |
| 10 Barbara Buckalew | 28 Zeke Hampton |
| 13 Darick Biondi | |

Anniversaries

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 02 Ralph and Pat Burchett Richard and Elisha Holleron | 20 Jerry and Ann Gieseke |
| 03 David and Beverley Neff | 21 Harold and Fern Swisher |

Do you have an event you want to advertise on our church website, **southcharlestonfirstumc.org**? Send your information and a picture, drawing, cartoon, etc. to Barbara Brown at **cbpnuts@aol.com**. We can post information on the Home page and Event page. Just let us know what you would like to highlight and we will make it happen.

Church Website: southcharlestonfirstumc.org

Did you miss an online service? Want to see the service again or share with family and friends? Visit: <https://www.youtube.com> and enter FUMC South Charleston into the search bar to locate the recorded sermons. We have over 22 recorded sermons to view.

Know someone who would like to follow our service, but doesn't have Facebook or internet service? Try our Sermon by phone option. Sermons are uploaded and available all week at anytime. **Call 1-304-223-3080** to hear our latest sermon.

life @ 1st Church

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