Minnehaha United Methodist Church Service Bulletin
This is Church | March 15, 2020

Greeting

Prelude

Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer (inclusive)
Our Creator, God in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom. come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
.Kin-dom represents a hope for God’s realm where we are all in community with one another.

Children’s Sermon

Passing of the Peace (Non-contact version)

HYMN #251 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 21:1-6

Message – “Spiritual Fitness: Laughing”

Traveling Music
“Keep on the Sunny Side”
The Carter Family

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† Denotes The United Methodist Hymnal (red)
. Denotes The Faith We Sing (black)

Worship Personnel
Rev. Becky Sechrist, Pastor; Jenia Strom, Program Director of Children, Youth, and Families; Alex Rack, Choir Director; Anders Nelson, Organist; Tim Siefkes and Josh Espinosa, Second Service Band Leaders; Nicholas Sabah, Communion Steward
Practices for Laughing

- **Stretch your imagination to look for humor.** It is possible in almost every situation. And realize that humor is not the same as laughter or telling jokes. The world is filled with people who tell jokes--mostly at the expense of others--but who have no sense of humor.

- **Spend time with people who have a sense of humor;** their perspective will be contagious. Spend time with people who laugh at themselves. Anyone can laugh at another’s stupidity; it take a special gift of self-awareness and self-consciousness to recognize folly in ourselves.

- **Practice laughing.** Psalm 2 says that God laughs. What God does must be good for us, too, so look for occasions to laugh and then do it. Laughter loosens up the diaphragm, which is in contact with all the other vital organs of the body. When we laugh, all these other organs are massaged. It could be that our spirits get massaged, too.

- **Take a five-to-ten minute laugh break every day.** Why not? We already take refreshment breaks, and there is general consensus that humor is refreshing. Read one of the books connected with the humor of Pope John XXIII. It was he who once wryly reminisced that there are three surefire ways to lose money--carousing, gambling, and farming--and that his own father had chosen the most boring route.

- **Realize that an alliance exists between laughter and communication with God.** The American novelist Frederick Buechner traces his interest in religion to a sermon by George Buttrick. In that homily, Buttrick proclaimed that Christ is crowned in the hearts of believers “among confession and tears and great laughter.” It was the phrase “great laughter,” says Buechner, that caught his attention and held it.

- **The last suggestion may be the most important of all:** **Look for humor in the Scriptures.** The Old and New Testaments brim with humor that we often overlook because of patterns of conditioning that are hard to break. Be prepared to be surprised. Relax. Read the Bible open to the possibility that something new is happening--that God lives in laughter, lightness, freedom, spontaneity, and some unfamiliar places. And refuse to believe anyone who tells you otherwise.

*Adapted from* Spiritual Fitness: Everyday Exercises for Body and Soul by Doris Donnelly.

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**Welcome Friends**

The Minnehaha church family is happy to welcome today’s guests, wherever you may be in your personal faith journey. We strive to live in the way of Jesus Christ, sharing God’s love on a daily basis regardless of race, sexual orientation or faith history.

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**In Our Prayers.**

- **Hospitalized:** Gary Claude (Sue Claude’s father)
- **Transitional Care:** Andrew Nordloef
- **Undergoing Cancer Treatment:** Scott Christianson (son-in-law of Mary Doelz); Ray Ryan (brother of Peggy Anderson); Elaine Luzzi (sister of Peggy Anderson); Kay Lintz (Jan Hougen’s sister); Joan Ellison; Jordyn Meskan (Elaine Chadwick’s niece)
- **Partnership Family:** The Dauds & Omars

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**A New Way to Auction**

A BIG SUCCESS
WE RAISED $6,000!
THANK YOU

Tesla for a year, Stay at a 5 star Spa, Dinner for 6, 8 Karate Lessons, 2 Dragons for 5, Boat Ride for 6, Original Portrait Painting & More!

Saturday, March 7 • 11AM – 1PM
LENT AT MINNEHAHA 2020
Consider bringing the following donations to Minnehaha according to the schedule below or at anytime during the Lenten Season.
March 1st-7th: Toothpaste and Toothbrushes  
March 8th-14th: Toilet Paper  
March 15th-21st: Soap – Bar Soap, Shampoo, and Conditioner  
March 22nd-28th: Deodorant, Razors, and Shaving Cream  
March 29th-April 4th: Feminine Hygiene Products & Newborn-Sized Diapers  
Palm Sunday, April 5: Food Donations  
Financial Donations always welcome

LENTEN PERSONAL DIGNITY DRIVE
TO BENEFIT THE MINNEHAHA FOOD SHELF

Our Easter Garden
The Sanctuary will be decorated with flowering spring plants Easter morning. To contribute, please complete this form and bring/mail it to the church office or place it in an offering, with your payment, by March 30.
Given By: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

Suggested donation $20. You may give more if you wish.

Given in:
☐ Memory of  ☐ Celebration of  ☐ Honor of  ☐ Other

__________________________
(please print)

(Plants may be taken home after the 11:00 Easter service or during the following week.)
In February 2019, a special General Conference of the United Methodist Church met to discuss and pass legislation solely dealing with LGBTQ issues. The result is that a small portion of the Traditional Plan was passed, and those pieces went into effect on January 1, 2020. The highlights are:

- Pastors who perform same-gender weddings are now subject to a minimum penalty if they are found guilty in a church trial. A one-year suspension for the first offense, and a termination of your credentials (you are no longer allowed to be a clergy person) for the second offense.
- Boards of Ordained Ministry are not allowed to approve candidates for ordination if they do not meet ordination standards on sexuality (i.e. are identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual). And, those Boards of Ordained Ministry are required to ask candidates about their sexuality.
- Bishops are not allowed to ordain candidates that they know to be lesbian or gay, even if the Board of Ordained Ministry has approved them.

Needless to say, as a Reconciling Congregation, these have been disappointing moves.

From January – May, when the next General Conference meets (here in Minneapolis), we are joining with thousands of other congregations in #ResistHarm, a movement to work and pray for change in the United Methodist Church.

In March, our theme is Lament. You may have noticed the rainbow flags along our railing when you came in. During the month of March, we have “planted” these 48 flags for the 48 years that we have had restrictive policies specifically in the United Methodist Book of Discipline (our rule book). We will take the flags down on Palm Sunday in anticipation of the resurrection.

We are utilizing the blue and rainbow stoles made by Mary Pow in the wake of the special General Conference. The blue is for the color of Minneahaha, and the rainbow represents our continued commitment to inclusion. We also have our rainbow logo on the wall of the sanctuary, bearing our signatures that we commit to remain together as a congregation as we face forward into whatever inclusive future is before us. Our adult faith forums will look both at the history of our denomination as well as the future. We will discuss the various plans for separation, and we will talk about what we might do in the wake of a decision to split, and what we might do if no plan passes General Conference.

You are invited to participate in faith forums, conversations, actions, and in prayer.

Background on General Conference

With few exceptions (like February of 2019) General Conference meets every 4 years. General Conference has about 800 delegates from all over the world. Delegates are elected, and each area gets to elect a proportional number, depending on United Methodist membership in their area. Minnesota has 2 delegates going to this General Conference. About 45% of the delegates come from countries outside the United States. Of those, about 80% are from countries in Africa. Delegates are ½ clergy and ½ laity. Bishops preside over the meeting, but have neither voice nor vote. Although only delegates may speak and vote, anyone can attend General Conference. There is room for observers at the Convention Center, and the proceedings are also livestreamed.

General Conference is May 5-15, 2020. The first week is generally set aside for the work of legislative committees, and the second week is generally for full plenary. Legislation to be considered by General Conference had to be submitted by September 18, 2019. All the legislation has to be translated into multiple languages before it is released. It is now available online.

The United Methodist Church will split, in some way, shape, or form, following this General Conference. There are at least 6 plans submitted for how we might formally split. If none of them pass, then there will be groups who split off anyway.

Late Agreement

In early January, a group of 16 United Methodists, representing diverse groups within the denomination, announced that they had come to an agreement on a proposal for a divide within the United Methodist Church. If you want to find the full legislation, it is called “Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation” and can be found through many websites. It is 9 pages long, and there are also FAQs that can be found. The Minnesota Methodists website should have easy links to these documents.

In essence, this plan allows the more “traditionalist” or “conservative” part of the UMC to break off and form their own denomination. They would be given $25 million in denominational assets. Whoever does not vote to break off would then remain in the UMC, which would also dedicate $39 million to support “communities historically marginalized by the sin of racism” over the next 2 years.

Since this proposal was not submitted by the September deadline for legislation, the protocol will need to be brought to General Conference through other parliamentary means.

A new General Conference would be held within the next year to determine a new set of rules for the post-separation UMC. It is generally understood that restrictions on LGBTQ clergy and officiating same-sex weddings would be lifted at least regionally, and possibly for everyone.

In the meantime, the signers of the document agree to not file charges against clergy or candidates for violating rules around LGBTQ issues between now and when the post-separation denomination gathers. This does not prevent others from filing charges, but the signers ask all bishops to put these charges into “abeyance” until after General Conference. Not all bishops have agreed to do this, and, in fact, charges have been filed against a clergyperson and are being processed in the Virginia Annual Conference by that bishop.

Resist Harm