

Glendive & Wibaux United Methodist Church Newsletter

April 2021



Pastoral Letter

Greetings to all,

Since the beginning of the new year, I've had an unquenchable desire to get out in nature. This happens every winter season for me as I anticipate the hiking and camping season from Spring-Fall. It has reminded me of my hikes, backpacking trips, camping trips with friends and church family, and all the memories we shared in looking at the milky way galaxy on a night hike, seeing a moose for the first time in the wilderness, and hearing about a bear who had learned to open car doors at Rocky Mountain National Park! Being in creation helps remind me God is inescapable.

It is fitting to use this adjective to describe God because not only is it my experience in life, but it is also the title of Psalm 139 in my Bible. ¹O Lord, you have searched me and known me. ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. ³You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. ⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. ⁷Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" (NRSV Psalm 139). To hear about the image of God is one thing but to see the image of God is an entirely different experience. I have loved that through my brief time in Montana this Psalm has come to life as I have drove throughout various parts of Eastern Montana looking for hiking trails or camping spots in the area. It has been my experience as well as I drive through North Dakota on scenic paths looking out at the majesty of creation. This is truly a beautiful part of this country unlike anything else I have seen and experienced before.

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In light of these reflections on nature, I wanted my next sermon series to focus on some aspect of creation. One of the Christmas elves dropped off a wonderful book that I have been trying to read through the past few weeks called, *Message on the Wind: A Spiritual Odyssey on the Northern Plains* by Clay Strauss Johnson. My free time as of late has been minimal at best and I haven't had much a chance to become immersed in the book, however, in my experience of reading this, the book has been more than just ink and parchment collected in a codex. I see the faces of many of you as Clay discusses what it is like growing up in North Dakota and the Plains culture here in this region of the world. I look forward to reflecting on this book the next few weeks and reflecting on seeing the image of God in all God's creation both in nature and in each of us. I will see you upon my return! May the Divine bless you and keep you, whether you're a friend near or a friend from afar!

Thank You's

A big, big thank you to several people this month. First and foremost, thank you to the United Methodist Men for the Easter Breakfast! It was delightful to be in fellowship and all tasty treats were absolutely delicious ranging from casseroles to cinnamon buns.

Thank you to Millie Robinson, George Skerritt, and Greg Hunt! You are all dedicated members to our social holiness on Wednesdays at noon as we gather on the front lawn with our signs promoting our Christian values of justice, compassion, and peace.

Thank you to Bonnie Woods for changing all the paraments at Wibaux UMC and getting me a music stand to hold my chord sheets for my guitar! I love hearing all the stories of the folks who make the various liturgical banners and items around the church!



Care for Creation

Throughout the Spring, I hope to be involved in the community more and more as events take place throughout the town and county since I have received my second vaccination. One of those events is volunteering at Makoshika State Park in honor of Earth Day. On Saturday, April 24th Makoshika State Park is asking for volunteers for a clean-up walk from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. When I spoke with one of the rangers last week, she said they would go across some of the trails closest to the visitor's center, the pavilion, and the disc golf course. I will be volunteering that day and hope some others could join as well! Remember to wear good walking shoes, appropriate clothing, and bring water! Hope to see you there!

Part of the Care for Creation series is inspired by a new understanding of discipleship called Watershed Discipleship. Watershed Discipleship is a form of discipleship which helps us see God's wisdom through an ecological and biological perspective, or simply put, God's creation. The idea with Watershed Discipleship is you learn to take care of God's creation in your neck of the woods through volunteering, taking field guides on hikes, birdwatching, and walks in nature to learn more about your biological and ecological environment, becoming better stewards of God's creation, and being active participants in social holiness initiatives to promote a clean, safe environment for all of God's beautiful creation!

For example, I bought a Florida National Audobon Field Guide and began taking pictures of various flowers, plants, grasses, animals, and seashells to catalogue later as I looked through the field guide to identify the peculiarities of each item I photographed. It helped me become more connected to the environment around me and gave a new, refreshed perspective to my hiking trips. It helped me understand God's place and my place with God in the environments I was exploring, and it helped me connect in a more holistic way as I began to see God in new ways through this new lens.

Part of my Watershed Discipleship this summer will be backpacking. Due to moving last year, I did not get to plan an annual backpacking or any camping trips like I normally do. I am looking to plan a couple backpacking trips, both overnight trips and some more extended trips, throughout the summer with some adventures being in North Dakota & others being in the Rocky Mountains of Montana and Colorado. I want to find a way to share these stories with both churches and both communities, so I will be working diligently to come up with ways for the community to connect with God's creation and with community as we practice our discipleship in our neck of the woods!



Membership & Church History

Andrine Haas and I have begun the arduous and meticulous process of organizing the membership rolls. This will take some time and is a long-term project that she, myself, and some other folks we have yet to invite to the process will be diligently working towards organizing. If you would like to help out, then please let one of us know! We will be organizing a catalogue of information about members like when they joined, if they are baptized, family members, addresses, etc., and we will also be documenting how we have formed this new catalogue for future pastors and lay leaders to easily access the information and understand how it is organized. It seems as if each of the last few pastors had their own way of doing it, and each pastor did some things the same and other things differently. This is common throughout the United Methodist church, but it will be great to have system in place to help lay leaders and pastors add members and add information in the future.

In light of this project beginning, I have a long-term project that I have been brainstorming for the past few months. I would love to compile a collection of stories, photos, list/description of traditions, recipes, and history into a concise Glendive/Wibaux UMC history book. I would like to do this for each congregation as a way for us to show off the many wonderful aspects about each of our congregations and have a guidebook for new members, or any current members, as a way to understand who we are as a congregation and as a reference for future members to go through and see how the church has changed. I think this project could help us understand who we are as well and maybe who we would like to be for the future.

If you would like to help with either project, then please let me know and we can find a way for you to help!



Rummage Sale

A few folks have mentioned they will be meeting over the next few weeks to discuss the Annual Rummage Sale. As we are inching ever closer to being back to “normal,” the Administrative Board has begun discussing ways we can be in fellowship more often. With more and more folks getting fully vaccinated and daily case totals consistently in single digits, we are going to be able to do more and more with our church fellowship and outreach. I know I am certainly excited for this and I know many of you are excited as well. The Annual Rummage Sale is one of those events we are looking to hold again to not just bring in some extra cash flow to help fund some of our ministries, but most importantly, we want the community to know our doors have not closed and Covid has not stopped us from living out the gospel of being in relationship with one another. Let’s get creative and figure out how we can make this and other events possible!

In the meantime, I would encourage each of you to look around your home and see if you have anything you would consider donating to the Rummage Sale. Also, consider if you would like to volunteer with helping out at the event, cleaning before and after, advertising and getting the word out, and the many other ways to get involved in making sure everything runs smoothly and efficiently. Keep your ears open and your eyes peeled for more information in the coming weeks!

April Happy Birthdays



April- 1-Stacey Stanfill

April - 4 Patty Steer

April - 5 Hailey Stanfill

April - 6 Sari Hunter

April - 7 Wei Pai

April - 12 Tim Barthel

April—13 Keith Clingingsmith

April - 17 Emma Doty

April - 22 Diana Notis

Ivan Pai

April - 24 Karmen Neard

April - 25 Jean Mithell



Palm Sunday Photos



Pastor Kevin and youth waving the palm branches on Palm Sunday.



Cayson, Ryker, and Allison talk to Pastor Kevin during church.



Newsletter

Glendive & Wibaux

United Methodist Church

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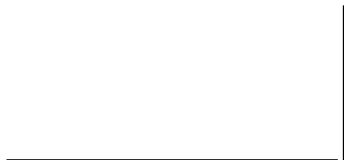
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