

**May
2022**

Sumner Center UMC Newsletter

13135 Cty Rd 102, Stewartville, MN

55976

(Physical Address)



Pastors Notes...

Easter people raise your voices

Sounds of heaven in earth should ring.

Christ has brought us Heaven's choices

Heavenly music let it ring

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Easter people let it sing!!

Yes, we are children of the resurrection, and every day is Easter day!

So, what does that mean?

In His dispute with the Sadducees about the resurrection, Jesus makes an unusual statement: "...they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection "

What, then, does it mean for us Christians to be "children of the resurrection"? It means that to be raised to everlasting life has become part of our nature, our genetically programmed spiritual destiny. God has made provision for our weakness, not to give us an excuse to sin more, but to encourage us to hold on to Jesus. Just hold on and keep the faith. When this brief life is over, the new will begin.

But to be "children of the resurrection" also means something for right now. It means God intends our present existence to be characterized by vitality, power, and joy. Jesus says that everyone who believes in Him - who really and fully commits and submits to Him - has eternal life now.

Children of the resurrection! It's exciting for later, but the Good News is we do not have to wait! We can make the choice to also live for Him right now. Are you willing to give your time to Him right now?

Easter People raise your voices!

Come Home and Praise His name!

**Worship:
Sundays
In Sanctuary at 10:30am
&
Sumner Center UMC Facebook Page**

Pastor Bridget Sheely

Cell: 507-923-6247

bridget@countrywidecarriers.com

**Visit our Church Website at:
<http://www.sumnercenter.com>**

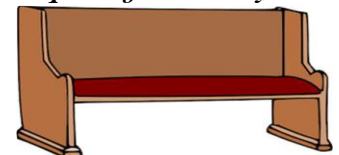
**Donations may be sent to our mailing address:
25378 151st Ave
Spring Valley, Mn 55975**

Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ:

If you have items you would like to be published in the newsletter, please contact Pastor Bridget by the 3rd Thursday of the preceding month by emailing your information to: bridget@countrywidecarriers.com Or by bringing your information to her at the church.



*The Lord has reserved
a pew just for you!*



Calendar of Events

(Subject to change and/or be added to as the need arises)

May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1  Worship 10:30 am	2	3	4	5 <i>National</i> ***DAY OF*** PRAYER	6  7
8  Worship 10:30 am	9	10	11	12	13
15 Worship 10:30 am	16	17	18	19	20
22 Final day to drop off: Love Offering & UMCOR kits Worship 10:30 am	23	24  Minnesota Annual Conference 2022 May 24-25 Aldersgate Day	25  Minnesota Annual Conference 2022 May 24-25	26  Ascension Day of Jesus Christ	27
29 Worship 10:30 am	30  Memorial DAY	31			

What is Aldersgate Day? Aldersgate Day is celebrated on May 24 (or the Sunday closest) to commemorate the day in 1738 when John Wesley experienced assurance of his salvation. Wesley reluctantly attended a group meeting that evening on Aldersgate Street in London. As he heard a reading from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, he felt his "heart strangely warmed." Wesley wrote in his journal that at about 8:45 p.m. "while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I

did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Our Mission of the month



Where the Love Offering will go...

West African Family and Community Food Shelf

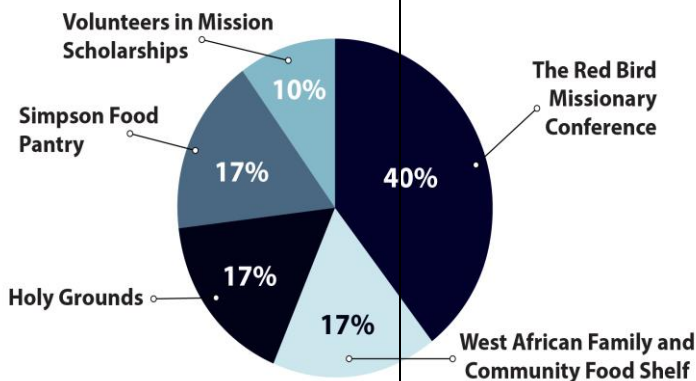
Brooklyn UMC in Brooklyn Center started a culturally-specific food shelf to serve its neighbors, primarily West African immigrants and low-income families. Recently, the food shelf has seen increased need among other nationalities and ethnic groups, like South American, Caribbean, and Asian immigrants. The food shelf serves over 75 families each week and about 4,000 households per year.

Your donations will provide household items, hygienic products, and culturally-specific food items to this community.

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+++Volunteers in Mission Scholarships

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (VIM) participants of every age serve in all 50 states and more than 100 countries. Most teams from Minnesota spend up to two weeks working on hands-on projects in construction, disaster response, teaching, health care, and packing supplies for overseas shipment. Team members pay their own way, and every year, 10 percent of the Love Offering goes to help offset the cost for first-time participants.



The Red Bird Missionary Conference



The Red Bird Missionary Conference, which is undergoing a revitalization process and will soon be called Central Appalachian Missionary Conference, is a United Methodist community in the eastern Kentucky region. It acts as a hub to transport volunteers, ministry dollars, and hope to the places where they are needed most.

The 2022 Love Offering funds will be used for disaster response after recent severe flooding damaged churches and homes.

All donations need to be brought to the church no later than Sunday, May 22nd. So they may be

Holy Grounds

A ministry of Centenary UMC in Mankato, Holy Grounds serves a warm breakfast to 40 to 50 people, six mornings a week.

Holy Grounds has become an important resource in the community for relationship building, food security, and a place where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

Your Love Offering gift will support the purchase of a new convection oven and provide needed funds to shift into post-pandemic ministry.

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Simpson Food Pantry

Simpson Food Pantry has been meeting the needs of food-insecure neighbors in South Minneapolis for 50 years. Demand has tripled since the start of the pandemic. The 2022 Love Offering dollars will come at a most opportune time—as the aging Simpson building will be razed to the ground, the food pantry is searching for a new location.

delivered during annual
Conference.

The art of letting go

[Cindy Gregorson](#) director of ministries and clergy assistant to the bishop for the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

April 13, 2022



Rev. Cindy Gregorson's vision board for 2022.

I made a vision board at the beginning of 2022. It is not a practice I usually engage in, but there was within me this tug to create some

visual reminders that would anchor me in the year ahead. So I sifted through magazines and other items I had around, cutting out phrases and pictures that spoke to me. In large letters in the middle of my vision board is the phrase *"the art of letting go."* I see it every morning as I start my day and every evening as I go to bed.

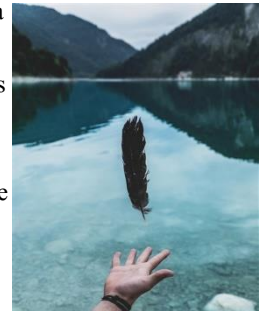
I feel as if I have been on a journey of letting go for several years now. It started with my cancer diagnosis when I was confronted with my mortality. Not long after, I let go of being a homeowner. I didn't realize how unsettling that would be to my sense of self because isn't owning a home the American ideal? Then came the pandemic and needing to let go of having a predictable life. And now the separation of The United Methodist Church that we have long talked about has finally arrived. You would think I would have this art of letting go figured out by now. But as I have started working with a couple churches requesting to leave the Minnesota Annual Conference, I realized I still have some work to do, and this daily reminder on my vision board is timely indeed.

I have always stood in the middle and tried to hold people together, to find common ground. I was invested in finding ways that we could stay together and stay strong and thought perhaps we, in Minnesota, could be a beacon to the whole United Methodist Church and show how to be church together differently. But I find myself needing to let go of my vision of how that might happen. Some churches and clergy are choosing to leave. That is a reality I need to accept. I personally grieve that we have not been able to find a way to be together in ministry in the midst of our difference and diversity. For me, it reflects the fracturing and divides occurring throughout our world, and I believe the church is called

to live a more excellent way—a way of love. And yet, I also recognize that we are not better and stronger if people are fighting or if we are holding each other to something out of our historical connection rather than a shared vision of the future. It just increases the animosity. So I have had to let go.

There is an interesting spiritual concept called attachment. It is the idea that the root of our suffering is our human nature to become attached to people, things, ideals as the source of our happiness. We become anxious trying to protect ourselves from losing them and losing our sense of self with the accompanying grief and pain. The spiritual practice is to learn how to stay awake and present to all of life, to be open and connected in relationships, to be engaged in the work of justice and creating a better world—all without allowing ourselves to become so attached to any particular outcome as our source of identity or happiness. In other words, to cultivate the art of letting go. That takes a lot of spiritual maturity!

I have found that the ability to let go has a direct correlation to how much I am able to trust God. If I can truly trust that God is working for good in all things, then it doesn't have to be my way. If I can believe that out of death does indeed come life, then I can let go of my uber sense of responsibility to save things or fix them.



This letting go does not mean I just throw my hands up in the air and say "okay, God, it is all on you." And it doesn't mean we don't have commitments and responsibilities to one another and the communities to which we belong. But rather, I remember that there is more going on here than I can see or know, and I trust that there are many other hearts and wise people in the room and the Spirit is moving among us. So my task is to show up, be fully present to all that is. To pay attention. To listen. To sense where God might be leading. To speak my truth in love. To put my voice into the conversation but not as the only voice. To act in ways that are loving and respect the agency of others. And then to let go of the outcome, trusting that what I have offered is enough, and trusting that God has got the whole world in God's hands and somehow, it is going to be alright.

Anthony DeMello, the Jesuit priest who wrote much about this spiritual work of letting go our attachments offered this wise word: *"I have no fear of losing you, for you aren't an object of my property, or anyone else's. I love you as you are, without attachment, without fears, without conditions, without egoism, not trying to absorb you. I love you freely because I love your freedom as well as mine."*

Isn't that how we all want to be loved and treated? It is a good

word for me as I navigate my own personal relationships, and as I walk these days in The United Methodist Church where beloved friends and colleagues may choose different paths and where the church I have known for so long goes through radical

transformation. We will not be the same. That I need to let go of. But at the same time, I trust that God will love us through it, and we will have the courage to love each other into whatever is ahead.

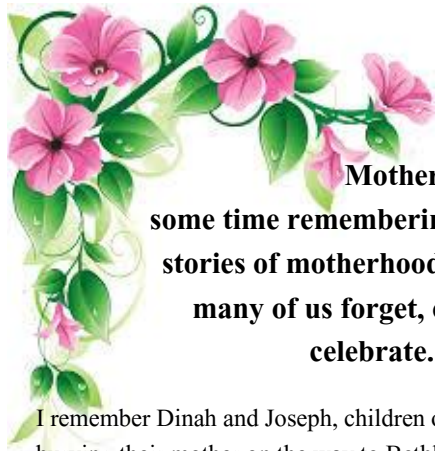
Name: _____

Date: _____

Springtime

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vibrant	umbrella	tulips	sunshine	spring	springbreak	showers
seeds	rainbow	rain	rabbit	puddle	picnic	peeps
pastels	new	nest	may	march	lily	lilac
lamb	ladybug	kite	hunt	holiday	grass	goodies
flowers	eggs	easter	duck	daffodil	crawfish	chocolate
chick	carrot	candy	buzzing	butterfly	bunny	bubble
bonnet	blossom	bloom	birds	bees	basket	april



**In honor of
Mother's Day, let us spend
some time remembering the many biblical
stories of motherhood — stories that too
many of us forget, or lack words, to
celebrate.**

I remember Dinah and Joseph, children of Jacob and **Rachel**, burying their mother on the way to Bethlehem and leaving her grave behind. I know too many children who have faced this day, suddenly without their mother.

I remember **Rachel, Sarah, and Elizabeth**, and I have celebrated with every friend who held her newborn child and found it to be simultaneously the greatest gift and the hardest task.

I imagine the hundreds of women who never merited a name in Scripture because they were unable to bear children to pass on the family faith. I know too many women facing miscarriage, infertility, and loneliness.

I remember **Rahab, Deborah, Joanna, and Phoebe** — women whose work surprisingly outweighed the need to record whether or not they had children. Were they childless by choice, by circumstance? Were the names of their children lost to a history that found them unimportant? Were they shamed in their lifetime for putting work ahead of family?

I remember **Jochebed** mother of Moses and the daughter of Pharaoh, linked and yet so separate. One gave up her child to save her child, and one took in a child despite the risks. I remember all the women who have given up their children in the hope of better life for them. And, as one who may one day join their ranks, I remember every woman who has made family through adoption, who has taken in a child “not her own,” because bone of bones is not always how a family is made.

I remember **Naomi**, demanding, “Call me ‘bitter.’” I remember the unnamed wife of Job. I know too many women who buried their children, lives lost unbearably early.

I remember **Dinah**, the daughter of Jacob, and **Tamar**, the daughter of David. I know too many women whose bodies, sexualities, marriages, and children should be a source of joy, instead corrupted by someone else's sin.

I remember **Hagar**, and **Tamar** the wife of Er, women whose only hope for protection and care lay in having a child with a man who was not married to them. I remember that Hagar was sent into the wilderness to die, her son Ishmael at her side. I know too many women raising their children alone, and remember the women

whose destruction has become a footnote while the men made history.

I remember **Rebekah**, and her twins Esau and Jacob already at war within her. I remember she chose a favorite son, just as her husband had. I know too many children who bear the trauma of parents who, perhaps, did what they thought was right and did the best they could, and scarred their children's hearts for life.

I remember **Hannah**, her heart so wounded by the abuse of her husband's other wife that she wept at the altar of God until she could not speak — and how Eli, the holy priest, assumed she must have been drunk to pray so hard. I know too many women whose heartbreak has been turned into a weapon against them.

I remember **the woman at the well**, silenced and shunned by divorce. I know too well the wretched freedom found in divorce, the messiness of new life with a broken heart.

I remember **the foreign women** described in Ezra and Nehemiah, the wives of God's people, who came home with their husbands to rebuild the temple only to be cast aside by men claiming to be righteous and pure. I remember how many mothers have been made homeless or landless, often for reasons beyond their control, and how powerful men have turned them into pawns to be manipulated and ostracized.

I remember **the Syrophenician woman**, alone, unsupported, and persistent beyond comprehension on behalf of her dying child. I know too many women whose demands were mocked or pushed aside, whose insistence on justice and equality meant others soured their lips.

I remember **Mary Magdalene**, the first preacher of the resurrection, soiled by centuries of slander that turned her from wide-eyed witness to reformed harlot. In her testimony, she gave birth to the church. I know too many women whose gender, sexuality, history, and bravery has been used against them and the gospel they proclaim.

I remember **Mary the virgin**, a teenage girl, cradling her stomach with wonder, answering the shock of a miracle and the sureness of societal judgment with a simple and determined “Yes.”

And I remember **Eve**, the mother of all, bone of the bones of the man of dust, her name a reflection of the Hebrew word for life.

*I remember each woman who has found an inner
courage to face impossibility. May the God who
mothers each of us be a source of life for all who long
for hope*