
The Parish Voice



Nappanee United Methodist Church

MidNovember 2023

It Has Been a Blessing!

By: *Pastor Mary Hubbard*



It has been a blessing working with you all. I have been impressed with the variety of outreach and service that you do, for people far away and people nearby.

I have been impressed with your kindness, toward one another and toward me.

I have been impressed with the comments after the worship service – that so many of us

work on, trying to make it meaningful and even moving – Steve, Joanna, Sandy, Bruce, Diana (and lately Amy), David, Allison, Sue, Jo, Kathy, ALL the choir, the Worship Leaders, the Scripture Readers, and the acolytes. Hours and hours are put into preparing and presenting each Sunday, and you get it. You listen, you sing, you pray, and together we give the gift of worship to God and reap the gift of worship from God.

This church is filled with good people. You have a gift – and I hope you appreciate it.

Thank you for sharing this gift with me.



Thank You!

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am so appreciative of the cards, emails, texts, phone calls, but especially your thoughts and prayers. The knee replacement surgery went well and I am on the path of recovery and rehab. I love my church family!

-Kent Schwartz



Reminder

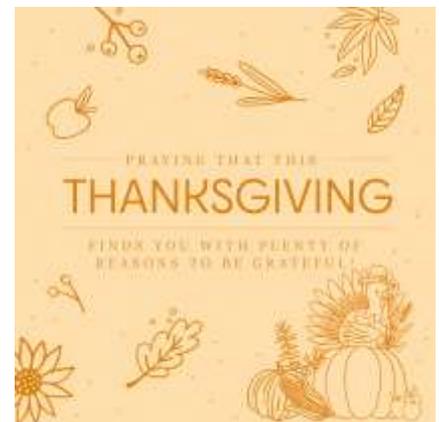
The Detwilers are going to place an order for gift cards other than Martin's. Check the list at the Welcome Center. The gift cards will be here in time for Christmas.

United Methodist Student Day

On November 26, there is a special giving Sunday. The money you gift supports the United Methodist Student Day scholarships. When you give, you enrich ministry and help connect students to their faith.



The office will be closed on Thursday, November 23rd, for Thanksgiving. The bulletin will go out on Wednesday, November 22nd.



Knowing Christ and Making Christ Known

Is It Like Jesus?

By: Pastor Mary Hubbard

A few Sundays ago I preached on the familiar scripture where Jesus is asked “What is the greatest Commandment?”. That question and Jesus’ answer (love God with everything you have and everything you are, love others like you love yourself) have resonated with me since. Elsewhere in this Newsletter I’ve listed a couple of books that have informed my understanding of God’s message to us – what we call the Bible, which translated, simply means The Book.

Jesus’ answer could be The Answer, it is so important. A near-contemporary of Jesus, Rabbi Hillel, when asked the same question, answered in a slightly different way; “Whatever is abhorrent to you, do not do it to someone else. This is the greatest commandment; the rest, all the rest of the laws, are commentary.”

St. Paul wrote that the greatest gift of God, the greatest thing we can organize our life around, is love. It intrigues me that an old translation uses an outmoded word for this – “charity.” Which is kind of neat, as it is love in action, giving of one’s self or substance and receiving nothing in return; “It’s going to charity!” we say, as we pack up our excess stuff for Goodwill.

Sometimes we err in judgment, and judge instead. While there are types of judgment Jesus lauds, they might be more accurately translated as “discerning right from wrong.” The kind Jesus decries is “judging to condemnation.”

It’s easy and sometimes sort of fun to condemn others. Makes us feel good, superior, even righteous. But we are out of line when we do that.

Episcopal Bishop Gene Robertson wrote, “It’s funny isn’t it? That you can preach a judgmental and vengeful and angry God and nobody will mind. But you start preaching a God that is too accepting, too loving, too forgiving, too merciful, too kind... and you are in trouble.”

I have come to believe that taking the Lord’s name in vain is not really using God or Jesus as curse words or exclamations; it is when we use the Bible, that Holy Book, as a weapon to beat others.

C.S. Lewis wrote, “Those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.”

Upon reflection, none of us want to torment others. None of us want to use the Bible to beat others up.

A Facebook meme that came across my stream struck me; “Whenever Christians say ‘But is it Biblical?’, I get uneasy. Smashing an enemy’s infant against a rock is ‘biblical.’ I’m much more interested if it is like Christ.”

Let us be wise as serpents and gentle as doves, and love like Jesus loved. Even such a one as I...



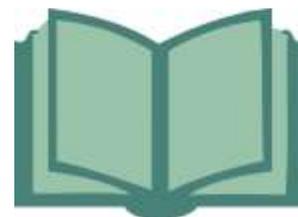
No One Asked

I’m going to list them anyway – a couple of really good books about the Bible and a good book (nonfiction, and the footnotes are as interesting as the text) that shifted my understanding about race in our country.

Making Sense of the Bible; Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today, written by Adam Hamilton, a United Methodist pastor.

The Good Book; Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart, written by Peter Gomes, former Chaplain at Harvard.

The Warmth of Other Suns; the Epic Story of America’s Great Migration, written by Isabel Wilkerson, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer.



Church Conference

There will be a Church Conference following worship on Sunday, December 3rd. There will be a vote on selling the property to the East of the church. Every member has a voice and every member has a vote. Our December Pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Schrader, will preside over the meeting.