

Pearls & Pigs!



You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him. Hebrews 11:6 (TLB)

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

During Jesus three-year ministry, He spent a majority of His time with the twelve disciples. This seemingly limited approach to ministry resulted in twelve spirit-filled men turning the world upside-down. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus called the disciples who followed him to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). This commission to make disciples is your primary mission on this earth and is accomplished through going, baptizing, and teaching. First, you must be actively pursuing discipleship relationships.

Second, baptism is an ordinance to profess faith before the church for the purpose of being recognized and integrated into the church. You are to have your discipleship relationship within the context of the church. Lastly, teach them all that Christ commanded. You are to pass on the doctrines and practices of the faith.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Matthew 7:6

The word “pearls” is the Greek word margarites. You may find it interesting to know that this is where we get the names Margaret and Margarita. Since Jesus uses the example of pearls in this verse, let’s talk about pearls for a moment.

Pearls are not easily found. To obtain the richest and most beautiful pearls, a diver must dive again and again and again and again. Then after lifting the shells from the sea floor, they must force open the mouth of each shell and dig through the tough meat of the muscle, poking and searching for the tiny white pearl that was formed over a long period of time. These pearls are precious, rare, valuable, and hard to obtain.

This is how you should view the things God has done in your life. You can’t put a price on what you have learned through your life experiences as you’ve walked with Him. Like precious pearls, those life lessons are immeasurable in their value because they cost you something. They weren’t the result of shallow swimming. You had to go deep into God to obtain those spiritual treasures.

Each time you open the door to those treasures and begin to share them with someone else, you need to remember that you're sharing your pearls with that person. The counsel and advice you're giving may be free to them, but it has cost you everything!

How to become a "FAT HOG" for Jesus is a teaching for those who have a strong desire to be more Christ-like in their lives and how to be a more dedicated Christian.

Perhaps seeing that title as an acrostic and coming to understand what it stands for will help:

Faithful
Available
Teachable
Holy
Obedient
Growing

Now let me ask you, wouldn't you be a better Christian and church member if you could be more faithful, available, teachable, holy, obedient and growing?

That's why I want to help us all become **FAT HOGs!** So, what we'll do for the next six weeks in our devotionals and worship services, is explore those characteristics one by one with the goal of becoming a **FAT HOG** for Jesus!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may my faith in You and Your abundant promises be ever increasing each day.

Monday, 27 July 2020 - FAITHFUL

Faithfulness of God's People

Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years." (Read - Genesis 5)

From the Bible, we know that Enoch was Adam's great-great-great-great grandson (and Noah's great grandfather) who lived a holy and faithful life to the Lord. He also becomes the father of Methuselah, the longest-living man. Throughout his three-plus centuries on earth, he has numerous other offspring. Enoch is also only one of two people taken straight to heaven, escaping death altogether.

- What did I learn about God from this story?
- What did I learn about humanity in this story?
- What did I learn new in this story?
- How does this story inspire you to follow and be faith to Jesus?
- What will you do differently this week because of this story?

Prayer: Lord, help us to live our lives in faith. Empower us to respond to your call to follow you wherever you lead. Amen.

Tuesday, 28 July 2020 - FAITHFUL

Faithfulness of God's People

Noah: A Man of Faith. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.” (Read Genesis 6 & 7).

The story is very familiar to many people, and is often neglected by adults who leave it marooned in Sunday School, but perhaps we can look into it afresh and think about its different angles.

Noah and his three sons took 120 years to build the ark. All of this time, Noah kept telling everyone that God was going to judge unrepentant sinners by causing a world-wide flood. One hundred and twenty years is a long time to keep trusting God and building a huge boat while everyone around you is mocking your efforts; but it paid off since they were trusting the one true God. God gave very specific instructions on how to build the ark. Noah followed the directions exactly because he trusted God. When the boat was finished it would be the size of a large ocean freighter.

- How did Noah show his faith in God?
- How specific were the instructions God gave?
- Describe the size of the ark.
- Do you see any similarities between the people of Noah's day and now?

Prayer: Father, help me to trust and believe that I am loved by you, and to see the ways you have been providing for me in my life. Amen.

Wednesday, 29 July 2020 - FAITHFUL

Faithfulness of God's People

Noah: A Man of Faith. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.” (Read Genesis 8 & 9).

- Do you think that the fact that God shut the door has any importance?
- How do you think you might look differently at the rainbow?
- What kind of comfort might you find in the covenant God made with Noah?
- Now that humanity has a chance to start over and have as their forefather the man of faith Noah, will they do better?
- Do you think that at last now they will remember that God honors faith and judge's rebellion?

Prayer: Lord, as your prophets, may we share your message of grace and truth with the people around us. May others hear and see Christ in us. Amen.

Thursday, 30 July 2020, Friday, July 31, 2020, August 1, 2020 – FAITHFUL

Living by Faith - A Scripture Reading — Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-12, 24-31, 39-40

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. — Hebrews 11:1

In this chapter of Hebrews, we find a long list of people whom we could call “heroes of faith.” These are descriptions of people whose faith in God showed in their actions as they lived out their everyday lives. Faith is intended to be lived out.

Abraham and Sarah trusted God's promises to take them to a new land and to give them descendants. It took a long time for these promises to be fulfilled, but they trusted God, and he fulfilled those promises.

Moses trusted God to guide him in leading his people out of slavery in Egypt. It took a long time and a lot of hard work, and through a series of miracles God delivered the people. Then Moses served God for many more years, bringing God's law to the people, setting up the worship of God, and teaching the people how to live God's way (Exodus 12-40).

Rahab, an outsider, declared her faith in God and became one of God's people when the Lord took them back into the land promised to Abraham. She became one of the great, great-grandmothers of Jesus. (See Joshua 2:1-21; 6:25; Matthew 1:1-6.)

As we live our lives, let us do so in faith. Often, we need the confidence and assurance of what we cannot see. Our faith will be made sight when Christ comes again. He is the one who has saved us from our sin. He is the one who is faithful, so we are called to live out our lives in response to him.

Prayer: Dear Lord, how we praise and thank You, and worship You for Your greatest of all gifts, in sending the Lord Jesus to be our Saviour and Friend and for dying in our place on the cross, to pay the price for our sins. Thank You that when two or three are gathered together in Your name You are there in our midst. And thank You Father, for the many blessings that You shower over each one of us day by day. Give us grateful hearts and a willingness and desire to share with others the grace and mercy that You have showered on us day by day, without measure. Help us Lord, to demonstrate Your great love and grace to all those that cross our paths today. May we be ready and willing to be faithful witnesses of You and to give an answer for what we believe, so that many may also come to know You and to accept Jesus as their own personal Saviour and friend, because they saw Him in us. Help us to edify and uplift other members of Your body and in all things to be Your hands and feet, Your eyes and ears and Your heart of love in all we say and do today. In Jesus' name, amen.



(May) Christ dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Pastor Clarissa

5th Avenue UMC,

I am so grateful for the blessed years I have spent with each of you, my 5th Avenue Family & Friends, for everything we've shared and every chance we've had to grow. My humble pleasure and joy have been to care for, pray for, serve, cry for and especially love each of you more with each passing day. The best of all of us is still required to make an impact for Jesus in our church and community, as we lead by example wherever we go to love and pray for one another.

These many slow-moving months is not what we expected for the beginning of our new decade, but we're taking the high road as we look at this pandemic as a lesson where we can imagine our new normal, dramatic new ministries, relationship bonding events, rather than be angry and discouraged.

Yes, these many months have revealed and I finally understand there are things we don't want to happen but we have to accept, things we don't want to know, but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go. The return of days of abnormal fear, panic, anxiety and hopelessness with towering ramifications on human health, financial security, social life and future goals have slithered back into our already broken lives.

Once again homes, even Christian homes are welcoming returning companions of fear, loneliness and stress. As social and spiritual interactions are upset, not by choice but by circumstances beyond our control, we are forced once again to adapt.

Finally, as we get energized, motivated for the work of showing people the way to Christ, let's learn the art of pivoting. In pivoting, we let go of our old reality in favor of a new holy dream. Sisters and Brothers let's run toward change and not away from it, facing our fears and uncertainties head-on. Pivoting is hard in real life. It requires that we be flexible or nimble. Are you willing and ready to for novel information which challenges our formerly held traditions and breaks open any stereotypes which we might believe. Pivoting demands embracing change and becoming comfortable being uncomfortable. What burden do you need to set aside in order to embrace God's unfailing love?

As we begin our new appointment year, Brother Martin and I thank each of you for pivoting with us as we impact the lives of all the people we encounter today and tomorrow, remembering the words of Jesus from John 13:35: "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Eighteen local congregations are being recognized for their efforts meeting requirements of the **Rainbow Covenant in 2019**. A certificate, which normally would have been presented at the Annual Conference, is being sent to each of the congregations, lauding their support of local, conference, national and global missions.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT -
Elmwood UMC
New Centerville UMC
Tainter UMC
Trinity UMC of Elk Mound
NORTHEAST DISTRICT -
Salem UMC of Fond du Lac

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT -
Columbus UMC
Liberty Pole UMC of Viroqua
Platteville UMC
Trinity UMC of Richland Center
Viroqua UMC

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT -
Asbury UMC of Janesville
Bristol UMC
Christ UMC of Watertown
Community UMC of Cedarburg

Emmanuel Community UMC of Menomonee
Falls
5th Avenue UMC of West Bend
UMC of Whitefish Bay
Yorkville UMC

Annette H. (Williams) MacFarlane of Mission Texas, Almond, Wisconsin, and formerly of West Bend, WI died at the age of 83 on Monday, 13 July 2020 at her 2nd home in Texas.



Annette was a lifelong member of the Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church of West Bend.

Celebration of life will be held at Phillips Funeral Home Chapel (1420 W Paradise Dr. West Bend) with Rev. Clarissa Martinelli presiding on Monday, August 10th, 2020. Visitation 11:00-12:45 and service at 1:00.

PRAYERS & CONCERNS

- Ms. Norma Chitwood has been placed in hospice care.
 - Mr. Ted Meilahan, for restoration of strength and mobility after a fall.
 - Ms. Doris Mohr, for healing and strength after a fall.
 - Mrs. Barb Koehler and Family on the passing of Mr. John Koehler. Funeral plans are being arranged for August 29, 2020.
 - Mrs. Dot Edison and Family on the passing of Mr. Robert Edison. Funeral plans are pending; to be held in Illinois.
 - Mrs. Jerri Bowerman and Family on the passing of Mr. James "Jim" Bowerman.
 - Ms. Carrie (Anthony) Kuhaupt, on the passing of her father, Mr. Charles "Chuck" P. Pischke.
 - Ms. Linda Green - more chemotherapy. (Sister of Ms. Debra Matthies)
 - Ms. Nancy Whitson - prayers for healing.
 - Mr. Dennis Liepert - prayers for continued healing.
 - Mr. Bob Krell - prayers for healing.
 - Mr. and Mrs. Roger and Nobi Sacia restoration of strength and healing.
 - Mr. Steve Siebenaler - continued healing. (Son of Mr. & Mrs. Allan & Janice Liepert-Kempf)
 - Those that find their cupboards empty.
 - All those that are caring for others.
 - 5th Avenue Pastor, Staff, and Leadership.
 - Prayers for all Wisconsin clergy that reported or returned to new appointment. Also, for the clergy that have moved from active ministry to retirement.
 - Our World - Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world" John 16:33
 - Those you lift up in the secrets of your hearts:
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The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.