

the Chimes

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

WESLEY UMC

May 2021



FROM OUR PASTOR

Pastoral Letter Part 1, the Good Shepherd

One of the images of Jesus is carried in a metaphor of the good shepherd and sheep: Jesus is our shepherd, and we are his sheep. I have once seen and touched the flock of sheep fourteen years ago. I did home-staying for two weeks in Adelaide, Australia, and the homeowner was a farmer. He raised sheep, about 5,200. He made 26 groups of sheep by alphabetic order, and each group had about 200 sheep. One day he brought me to his sheep farm, and I saw a flock of sheep for the first time in my life. I don't remember if my first reaction was "awe!" or "OMG!" How come! The sheep was much bigger than I thought. The sheep image I had was kind of small and cute, but it was not. They kept running here and there. Those sheep seemed to be scared to see me, but I was also scared. I was frozen right there. He was standing next to me, laughing at me.

What's interesting was that in a few seconds, sheep gathered together and ran as a group in order. They were like a troop. Surprised! His little dog, smaller than a sheep, ran this side and that side barking and led 200 sheep and those sheep ran altogether to one direction, and those sheep seemed to hear their farmer's voice just like Jesus says, "I know my sheep and my sheep know me." Wow. As a community of faith, we ought to listen to what Jesus is saying. As Christians, we ought to listen to what the Holy Spirit is nudging at home, at work, and in our community through reading the Bible, praying, meditating, and Bible study. I happened to ask myself, "Am I listening to Jesus?" (Message cont. on p 2)

Church Events

Thursdays: Study group/Nancy P,
6:45pm (Fellowship Hall)

Saturdays: Men's Bible study,
8am (Zoom)

Confirmation classes meet the first 3
Sundays and the 4th Saturday at 6:00
pm (in person) each month starting
in May.

May 1 Church Cleaning Day 8:30 am

May 5 Worship Team 7:00 pm
(Zoom)

May 6 Card Ministry 9:30 am
(Fellowship Hall)

May 11 Trustee Team 6:00 pm
(Fellowship Hall)

May 12 Education Team 6:00 pm
(Fellowship Hall)

Another observation I made was that when sheep move together, they cry a lot. It's like yelling and shouting. I thought at first, "Are they stupid? The dog is tiny, smaller than any of those sheep. But they get scared and run away." But at some point, I felt they seem to communicate with each other. It looked that the sheep in front cry and the sheep behind listen. The sheep behind a cry, and the sheep in front respond. Not just being led by the dog, they seemed to communicate with each other. It seemed that they knew by their instinct or experience that they are much safer and comfortable in a group together. They care for each other. Not only those sheep in the first row, but also the others behind, they were all leaders in their marching. Then the question is, "Are we listening to each other?"

I thought it is like a church. Let's see what Jesus said in John 10: "I'm the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I know my sheep, and my sheep know me." "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice." As a church, we care for each other with our love in our church, work, and community. Jesus says, "I must bring them. ... so there will be one flock, one shepherd," and I believe Jesus would work in order to deliver his love to God's people in us, among us, and through us. Amen.

Pastoral Letter Part 2, Solidarity and Dignity

I want to continue to talk a little bit more about sheep. One of the sheep metaphors in the Bible is the Lost Sheep (Luke 15). It is a well-known parable that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?" It delivers a beautiful image of God who cares so much for each one of us. I can picture God with a big smile holding us tight in God's arms. And it speaks to us that each one of us is so precious before God.

When reading this parable, I'm curious what the other ninety-nine sheep would have thought, when the shepherd goes to find the one lost sheep. What the ninety-nine sheep experience is not simply wasting time or grounding in a location. The shepherd means safety and security from many predators and the quality of life with fine pasture and food. It's more than convenience and, if I were one of the ninety-nine, I would probably complain of the absence of the shepherd. Yet, for saving the lost one, the shepherd chose the inconvenience for the ninety-nine.

I think it speaks a lot to us when it comes to our current context in this Pandemic. As of April 21, 42.7% of the population in the United States got vaccinated at least one dose, and 26.2% fully vaccinated. And now the vaccine is given to more people at the age of 16 and more. As more people got vaccinated, I've met and heard that many people live with less stress and lower their guard. It is very good news that we see hope.

Yet, I believe it is time we think about solidarity with the people around us and respect human dignity. More than half of the people in the United States and many more people worldwide have not received the vaccine. They still live in fear and uncertainty. As we celebrate the vaccine and try to seek the quality of life and friendship, the Lost Sheep parable speaks to us to take care of one another, especially those exposed to uncertainty and fear.

(Message cont. on next page)

(Message cont.)

In that sense, I will continue to wear my mask on and respect the social distance. I'm fully vaccinated, and the additional test proved that I have the antibody. I had a deep concern for over a year that I could have been infected and fear that I could have given any virus to other people. The vaccine relieved my concern and fear. And I will slowly enjoy gathering with my friends who are vaccinated with much less concern and fear.

Yet, I will voluntarily continue to wear my mask and respect the social distance because I learn from the Lost Sheep and Good Shepherd solidarity and dignity. It is like, "I see you. I believe you are precious to God. So, I will walk in solidarity with you and all the people on God's earth." I hope it speaks to you in the same way. And I believe it will hasten the time to have our lives of "new" normal without any or less concern of the virus.

May Worship Schedule

May 2 **"More Than Enough"**
(with Bishop John Hopkins)

May 9 **"Forgiving Families"**
(Mother's Day)

May 16 **"Money and Good Life"**

May 23 **"Waking the Giant in Us"**
(Pentecost Sunday)

May30 **"Jacob's Childhood"**

Children's message

May 2 **Barnabus the Encourager**
with Renee Duncan

May 9 **The Stoning of Stephen**
with Nancy Pitsch

May16 **Timothy is Chosen**
with Carol Cravatta

May 23 **Paul is Shipwrecked**
with Rene Morris

May 30 **God's Story in Our Life**
with Rene Morris

*** The flower calendar has some unclaimed dates still. If you would like to honor someone please contact the church office. The cost is \$20.00 which can be dropped off or mailed. Thank you!**

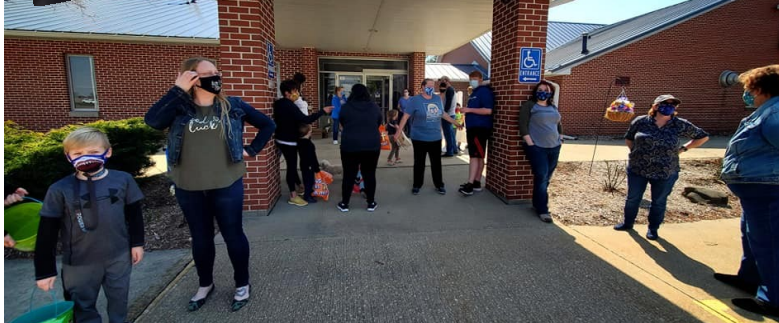
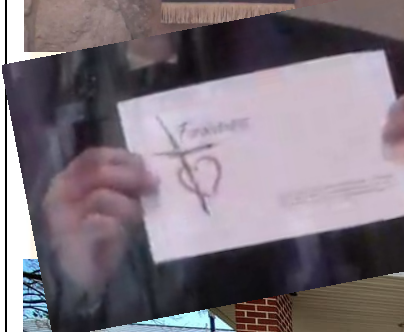
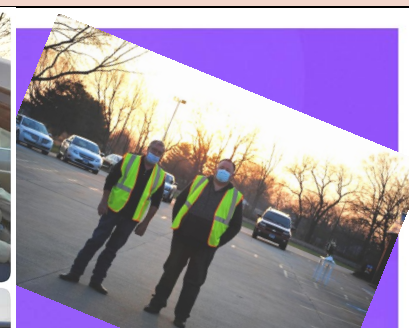




HOLY WEEK



(*Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter*)



ANNOUNCEMENTS and THANK YOU'S

New Address:

Darla Stigall
2503-A Megan Court
Sterling, IL 61081

Church Directory correction:

Janet Palmer's mailing town is **ROCK FALLS**. Please change that in your directory.

Aaron Marken's new address is: 8185-B Spring Lake Road, Savanna, IL 61074

I would like to thank everyone for all the cards, calls and most of all the many prayers during my daughter's final days and her passing. This has been hard, but Debbie's faith made it easier. It is hard to be sad and glad at the same time, I am sad that she is going, but glad she is no longer in pain. My darling daughter is now with Jesus and grandma.

Darlene

Breaking News!

For the first time since early fall, the Greeting Card Ministry Group will be meeting at Wesley, Thursday, May 6, at 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall, wearing masks and socially distancing. Thanks to all who have sent the cards from their homes. The group has a good time and would welcome any others, who would like to participate in this important ministry. No experience necessary. Just come to the church then, and everyone will welcome you.

Additionally, please let Marla, in the church office, know if you have had a change of address. It is always disappointing when one of the cards comes back, and we have no other address. Thanks!

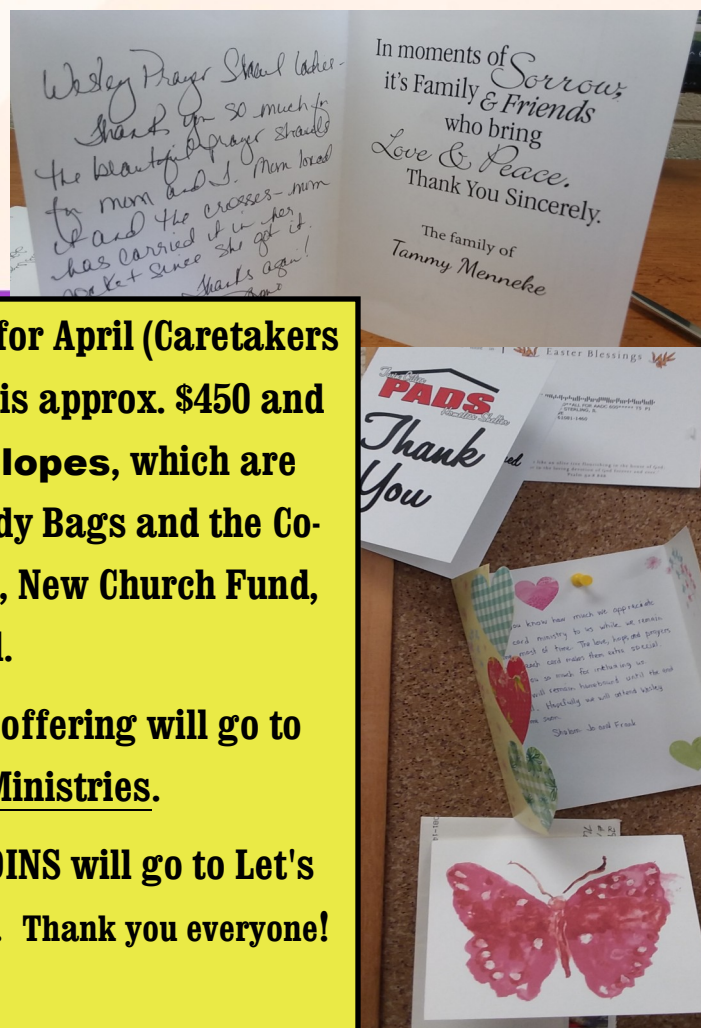
Prayer shawls are available for you or someone, who would appreciate one. Just call the church during office hours, and you can make arrangements to pick one up.

(815-625-1968)

LOOSE COINS for April (Caretakers of God's Creation) is approx. \$450 and the Easter Envelopes, which are split between Buddy Bags and the Copacabana, Bolivia, New Church Fund, brought \$765 total.

May's 5th Sunday offering will go to Native American Ministries.

The May LOOSE COINS will go to Let's Feed Our Children. Thank you everyone!



Let's Feed Our Children

United Way is again looking for help with their summer lunch program, Let's Feed Our Children. Any 18 years old or younger may pick up a FREE sack lunch, no questions asked. In addition to the fruit cups, lunches will be full of kid-friendly food such as PB&J sandwiches, crackers, granola bars, fruit snacks. 15,000+ fruit cups will be needed this summer.

You can help in several ways; bring **applesauce, peach, pear or pineapple fruit cups** to church during the month of May, there is a basket in the Fellowship Hall for them. You can also sign up to pack or pick up and handout lunches. Also, Loose Coins for May will go to Let's Feed Our Children which will help purchase the needed food.

Wesley is signed up for the month of June so here's the schedule

June 1st packing Tuesday 8 to 11 am Also **June 8, 15, 22 and 29**

June 2nd finish packing Wednesday 9-11 am Also **June 9, 16, 23 and 30**

June 2nd pick up and handout lunches 11:30-12:45 Also **9, 16, 23 and 30**



Please contact Roberta Fredericks to volunteer for any of the dates, you can sign up for as many as you want or even just one.

You can reach her at 815-441-0825 by calling or text. Also roberta.fredericks@gmail.com

We absolutely need to cover the delivery and handout which is highlighted so please volunteer.

You can also volunteer for any other dates during the summer by going to www.tinyurl.com/letsfeedourchildren

Congratulations, graduates!

LOGAN AYALA, from Challand Middle School

REID AND RYAN BLACKBURN, from Univ. of Illinois

DEREK FITZANKO, from Reagan Middle School

BOWEN MALLHI, from Challand Middle School

OLIVIA SCHWINGLE, from Sterling High School

NORA TRUEDSON, from Challand Middle School



AND Congratulations to the 2021-22 Illinois State Scholars for

Outstanding Academic Achievement, **Haley Ceruzzi and Tori Stutzke!**

Earth Day Photo Display!!!

**From Earth Day (April 22) to Pentecost Sunday
(May 23)**

For one of the Stewardship that God has entrusted to us, we have a responsibility to nurture God's creation, to promote the need of our collective works as God's co-workers, and to prevent the harm and damage on the earth.



Coming soon! In person Joy Camp for students going into 5th grade next fall through seniors in high school are eligible for this fun & amazing week experience at beautiful Camp Reynoldswood in Dixon, IL. Camp starts the afternoon of June 20th and ends June 26th mid morning. For registration and more details go to

<http://www.reynoldswood.org/>

Contact Nancy Pitsch with questions and for info regarding camp tuition gifts for church members! **815-498-3802**



Summer Gazebo Gatherings for KIDS!

Coming soon!

Events for our SWUMC kids at church, OUTSIDE, with invited adult guests - for example an artist for a painting class, a team of adults with an obstacle course event, a kick ball game, a "scientist" to show & provide experiment fun, a baker to lead everybody baking cookies it's not all planned yet, and we'd like your input! The idea is to reconnect with our kids in fun & joyful ways! You can help by filling out the questionnaire that was emailed earlier, or check with the office for a copy. Thanks!



MAY Birthdays



May 2 Addison Gabrielse
May 3 Bob Allen
May 5 Sue Abate
May 7 Nora Truedson
May 8 Kris Noble
May 13 Renee Duncan, Sue Hayes
May 14 Manorama Hermon
May 15 Chandler Allen
May 16 Erin Graves
May 17 Bryn Gatz

May 18 Mike Ceruzzi, Max Parker
May 19 Carlie Truedson
May 23 Jackson Melton
May 24 Dennis Vetter
May 28 June Teachout, Adalyn Smith
May 29 Jaime Greenfield
May 30 Ed Andersen, Ethan Cravatta
May 31 Tammy Jones

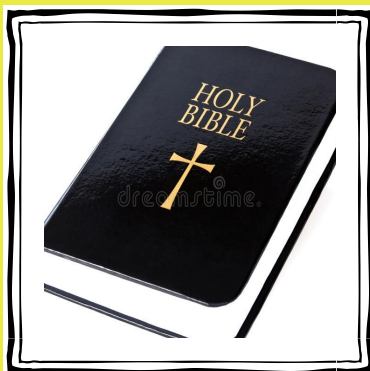


Anniversaries



May 1 Joe & Carol Cravatta
May 10 Steve & Mary Downes

May 26 Brad & Erin Graves
May 28 Mike & Michele Drew



May Liturgists

May 2 Mary Spitzer
May 9 Aaron Marken
May 16 & 23 Amy Poci
May 30 Carolyn Heuck



Wesley United Methodist Church

2200 16th Ave.

Sterling, IL 61081

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wesley United Methodist Church

Phone: (815) 625-1968

Website: www.sterlingwesley.org

Email: office@sterlingwesley.org

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

You are invited to join us for Livestream worship on Facebook/in-person at 10 a.m.

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SterlingWesleyUMC>

Mission Corner

Wesley has always been a mission-minded church. The purpose of this space is to keep the congregation informed of our various mission efforts. We currently are receiving:

- Donations of bedding, small appliances, and other household items to support Trinity UMC and the VA Clinic/Valor Program, as they work to find homes for local veterans. A list of needed items is on the table in the fellowship hall.
- Dish Soap for Bear Necessities, Trinity, and the FISH Food Pantry.
- Travel-sized toiletries for Bear Necessities and FISH pantries.
- Loose coins to benefit: Let's Feed Our Children for May.