

Weekly Newsletter



WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

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A Message from Our Pastor

Friends,

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Amid the Christmas tree trimming, present wrapping, and all the fa-la-la-las, comes the tragic footage of rare December tornados ripping through the Midwest Bible Belt, causing catastrophic death and destruction in Illinois and Kentucky. Just two weeks before the celebration of the Christ Child, people are desperately trying to locate their loved ones buried beneath the rubble. What is happening here?

In ancient times, it was the prevailing thought that if we are obedient to God's law, we will be blessed richly. If we suffer, that must be God's punishment for failing to be obedient.

These thoughts leave sufferers and the grief-stricken wondering, "What did I do to deserve this? Did I offend God or do something so bad that this is my punishment? Why is this happening to me?"

But friends, that is not Biblical. The Bible definitely does NOT teach that those who follow God will have a life of comfort, safety, and riches. What we find in the Bible are lots of stories of people whose faith and trust in God got them through their suffering. God's presence in their lives provided comfort, strength, and hope in the face of misery. The fact of the matter is, good things happen to bad people, and bad things happen to good people.

In coming to us in the Christ Child, Jesus revealed the heart of our Creator God. In kneeling to wash his disciples' feet, Jesus was loving, gentle, humble. In restoring a bleeding woman to her community, Jesus was compassionate and caring. In feeding the hungry throngs who came to hear him speak, or restoring sight to the old blind man, or sanity to the crazy guy living in the village cemetery, Jesus was responding to human suffering.

In sharing the Gospel message of love until it put Him on a cross, Jesus was doggedly faithful to build a bridge between God and humanity for the sake of His love for us. This is who God is...this is how God loves. Not by fear or punishment, but by sacrificial love.

Why erratic December tornados would come racing through the Midwest is yet to be determined, but they are not an act of the god revealed in Jesus Christ. Far more likely, it is related to acts of humankind that have sadly led us to global warming and more acute weather events.

Where is God in all this? God is with us.

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel," which translated means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23



Grace and peace+

Pastor Sharon

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

LIVING STONES

Our children's Sunday program shifts to the sanctuary until January 2nd. We invite children and their parents to participate every Sunday and for the family-friendly Christmas Eve Worship Service on December 24th at 4:30 pm where the children will journey to find the Christ Child.

FAMILY NIGHT AT THE GARDEN GLOW



YOUTH MINISTRY

DECEMBER CALENDAR

December 19 - Main Event. We will splurge for a Christmas event to play at the arcade and do some other fun things!

Dec. 19 at 9:30 am - Acoustic Sundays in the youth room on the third floor. All youth-aged folks attending worship are invited to the Youth Room on the 3rd floor for Sunday morning snacks, fellowship, and conversations. Come enjoy your friends, food, and some quiet jams.

December 24 - Live Nativity reading at 4:30 pm. Please plan to arrive at the church at 3:30 pm to prepare for a reading of the Live Nativity.

December 26 - No Youth! Enjoy all of your Christmas presents & your families. BE SAFE!

**ALL EVENTS WITHIN THE CHURCH REQUIRE A MASK! **

Contact directoryouth@websterum.org to connect with Pastor Paige

THANK YOU, MARCH TO THE MANGER PARTICIPANTS!

I would like to thank the following for participating in the March to the Manger:

Angel: Caitlyn Kremer

Mary: Kate Grumke

Three Kings: Greg, Connie, and Lucy Kroenung

Reader: Theresa Grumke

Joseph: Kyle Pyatt

Shepherds: Joyce, Paityon, and Ely Simpson

Soloist: Clay Grumke

Ellen Hendrickson and Megan Gesse did a masterful job refreshing and refitting the costumes. It was Megan's first time helping and she got thoroughly immersed when Ellen couldn't help beyond the first day because of a family emergency. Megan quietly stepped up and was of great assistance.

Thanks to Gene Morse who constructed the stable and the Tuesday Guys for setting it up. Also, this year he gets an extra Kudo for making the miniature manger that we needed due to COVID precautions.

I hope you found it a moving and inspiring morning as we celebrated this joy-filled Sunday of Advent.

Lettie Morse



THE NEW KING SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



A VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



The King Sunday School Class will begin a new study on January 2, 2022. We will be reading and discussing Max Lucado's book titled *Grace - More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine*. Lucado writes, "Grace is God's best idea. His decision to ravage a people by love, to rescue passionately, and to restore - what rivals it?" Come join us on Sunday mornings at 8:45 am via Zoom. If you are interested, please contact Earl Jones at aemjjones@att.net. All are welcome!

Earl Jones



CHRISTMAS VESPERS



Dear Church Family,

For more than 30 years, the Alumni Vespers Choir has performed Christmas Vespers. With the pandemic that has not been possible. However, there is a small group of singers for whom Christmas would not be complete without some of the songs of the season. Sunday evening, December 19th, at 7 PM, they are going to gather in the sanctuary to sing the music they love with people they love. This is not a concert! It is more of a shared experience. It will be very casual. Instead of a community audience, we are inviting Friends and Family to join us. We think of the WUM family as part of our family as well!

So if you are hungry for a taste of the music of Christmas, please join us on Sunday evening for this casual musical get-together.

We would love to have you!

Barb Strich



A MESSAGE FROM THE JUSTICE TEAM

The Webster Equity Bridge and the Alliance for Interracial Dignity are sponsoring a community-wide book read of *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee. Let's dive in together!

This community-wide book study will explore the social and economic costs of racism that all of us pay. Author Heather McGhee shows that racism is the understory of many problems in America, from rising student debt to collapsing infrastructure. She discusses how the false notion of a "zero-sum paradigm" has resulted in a mindset among many white Americans that they'll suffer if Black Americans make gains. The book illustrates how this way of thinking has led to negative consequences in education, housing, labor, political representation, and the environment. Ultimately, McGhee makes the case for racial unity, which would result in the enrichment of all Americans.

More information regarding where to check out or purchase discounted copies of the book and register to join a discussion can be found at the website tinyurl.com/63119reads or allianceforinterracialdignity.org. If interested, fill out the blue connection card on Sunday to receive more information or connect with Carolyn Redmore (cdredmore@aol.com).

CELEBRATE LORD'S ACRE 2021!

One year ago we had just completed our first "Lord's Acre Reinvented" due to the pandemic shutdown of most in-person events, and although the campaign successfully raised needed funds for many agencies, we were all praying things would be back to some semblance of normal by now.

However, a year later we found ourselves still challenged by COVID-19, and the need again for an altered Lord's Acre 2021. My team and I are so proud and joyful that Webster United Methodist once again rose to the occasion and donated so very generously!

This year from mid-to-late October until the end of November, I am delighted to report that **we raised \$6,240.00** for our covenant church Chiphongo United Methodist Church in Mozambique, and our well-loved and deserving local agencies! I am grateful from the bottom of my heart for the many who shared their talents of wood-crafting, sewing, knitting, quilting, candy and jelly making, pie & cake baking, designing children's birthday cakes, and cooking everything from a chili dinner for 6, appetizers for one year, and smoked salmon, to homemade sweets tucked into a lovely wine & cheese basket. Our donors responded with loving and generous enthusiasm! **Besides our Mozambique commitment of \$1400, the funds will be shared among these recipients: LifeWise, Epworth, Webster Rock Hill Ministries, Shepherds' Center, InExcelsis, and Metropolitan Congregations United.**

Most gratefully,

Jan McCurley & The Risk-Taking Mission & Service Team



CONFIRMATION



This is a message for Young People, Grades 6-9 (but Adults can read it too).
Confirmation begins in January! (Get these dates on your 2022 Calendar)

When you were small, your parents and the church likely made promises on your behalf at your baptism. Now you may be ready to claim the name of “Christian” and take membership vows for yourself.

“Confirmation” is a time set aside for young people, typically grades 6-8, to learn, experience, and explore what they believe and what it means to be a person of faith, and more particularly, to be a part of the Body of Christ at Webster United Methodist. The experience of Confirmation culminates with a special Sunday when you will stand before the church and take your vows of membership, but in your own voice this time.

Pastor Sharon and Pastor Paige will lead the Confirmation class. Occasionally, Pastor Josh will be able to join us too. We will gather from Noon-2:00 pm on Sundays beginning January 9th, through April 3rd. I would like to set Confirmation Sunday on April 24th.

Participation is key and the expectations are high. There will be lunch and a 30-minute Parent(s)/Confirmand Orientation Meeting on January 2nd, in the Fellowship Hall, beginning at noon. Please be there (and bring a parent or two) if you are seriously ready to explore your faith and your connection to the extraordinary body through which Jesus is transforming the world...the church!

Grace and peace+
Pastor Sharon



FORMING FAITH ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Join us at 7:30 pm on the Wednesdays of Advent to study biblical passages related to the birth of Jesus. You can attend in person in the Space Room/Zoom Conference Room, or virtually through Zoom.

Sign up now on our [website](#), or email assistantpastor@websterum.org for a Zoom Link.

Pastor Josh



"POWER PLAY GOALS FOR KIDS" DONATIONS FOR LIFEWISE



LifeWise has been selected as one of four charities that will participate in the Ameren Missouri and St. Louis Blues Hockey "Power Play Goals for Kids" program!

Each participating charity is guaranteed a \$1,000 donation, yet the charity receiving the highest number of votes via an online voting contest will receive \$500 for every power-play goal made during the season. There are five more months to the regular season, so that total has nowhere to go but up!

We all know LifeWise is a winning organization! Now it's time to let St. Louis know and help them be the winner of the Power Play Goals for Kids program!

There are several things you can do:

1. First and foremost, cast a vote DAILY! Voting ends on January 31st. Voting once a day means 62 votes for LifeWise! All you need is a valid email address to vote.
2. If you have a Facebook and/or Twitter account, share your vote to your news feed or story so your friends and followers gain awareness of the contest and of LifeWise (that's a win-win!)
3. Ask your family, friends, and co-workers for their votes, too.

It's easy to vote ... simply go to www.amerenmissouri.com/blues and click "Vote Now." To vote, simply enter your email address, select LifeWise, and cast your vote. Once you've cast your vote, you'll receive a confirmation screen, where you'll have the option to share your vote to Facebook and/or Twitter.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

LifeWise StL
(Submitted by Roger McCurley)

OUR ADVENT CANDLE OF JOY



Third Sunday of Advent
Michelle Hostmeyer, Olivia, and Lane

We await the Christ Child with great Joy!



NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

All articles and submissions must be sent to secretary@websterum.org and admin.communications@websterum.org by Mondays at 10 am to be in that week's newsletter.

CHURCH SPACE RESERVATIONS

It is important for us to schedule specific dates, times, and rooms in our church building. Be sure to email secretary@websterum.org and admin.communications@websterum.org to schedule all usage!

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

The Sydlowski Family; Margo Petracek; Sharon, Mike, Sarah, & Alex Vreeland; Haley Day; Liston Jent (Deanna Jent); Kellow Family & Mary Beth (Paula Murphy); people traveling for the holidays; people affected by the tornadoes; victims of violence; and expanding the reach of the church; Ellen Hendrickson's sister Marilyn; prayers for a car for Pastor Gloria Kawang; Mia Murphy & Family; Ron Wright (Bev Mesey); Alta Kopetzky (Marcia Kennon); Paulette Carr (Helen Fuller); and for all to be vaccinated.

THANKSGIVINGS

Kyle Pyatt & Kate Grumke moved into their new home this week.

CONDOLENCES

Condolences to Sharon and Mike Vreeland and children, Alex and Sarah, as they mourn the loss of her mom, and Alex and Sarah's grandma, Dee Gottshall, who passed away Saturday, December 11. A visitation will be held Saturday, December 18th, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at Kutis Funeral Home in Affton, with a memorial at Kutis beginning at 3:00 pm.

Prayers & thanksgivings will remain in the newsletter for two weeks.

To have your prayer requests included, please contact us using the:

*Connection Card (online or in person)

*Prayer Requests (on our website)

*Email secretary@websterum.org

*Contact one of our pastors



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

The current requirements are:

- Worshippers are welcome to choose their own seats in the sanctuary.
 - Please maintain appropriate physical distancing.
- Out of a desire to protect others, including children who have not yet been vaccinated, we need to keep our masks on throughout worship.
 - Reservations are not required.

Thank you all for your continued support of our church family.

-Pastor Sharon and Tom Pacatte (Chair of Safety Team)