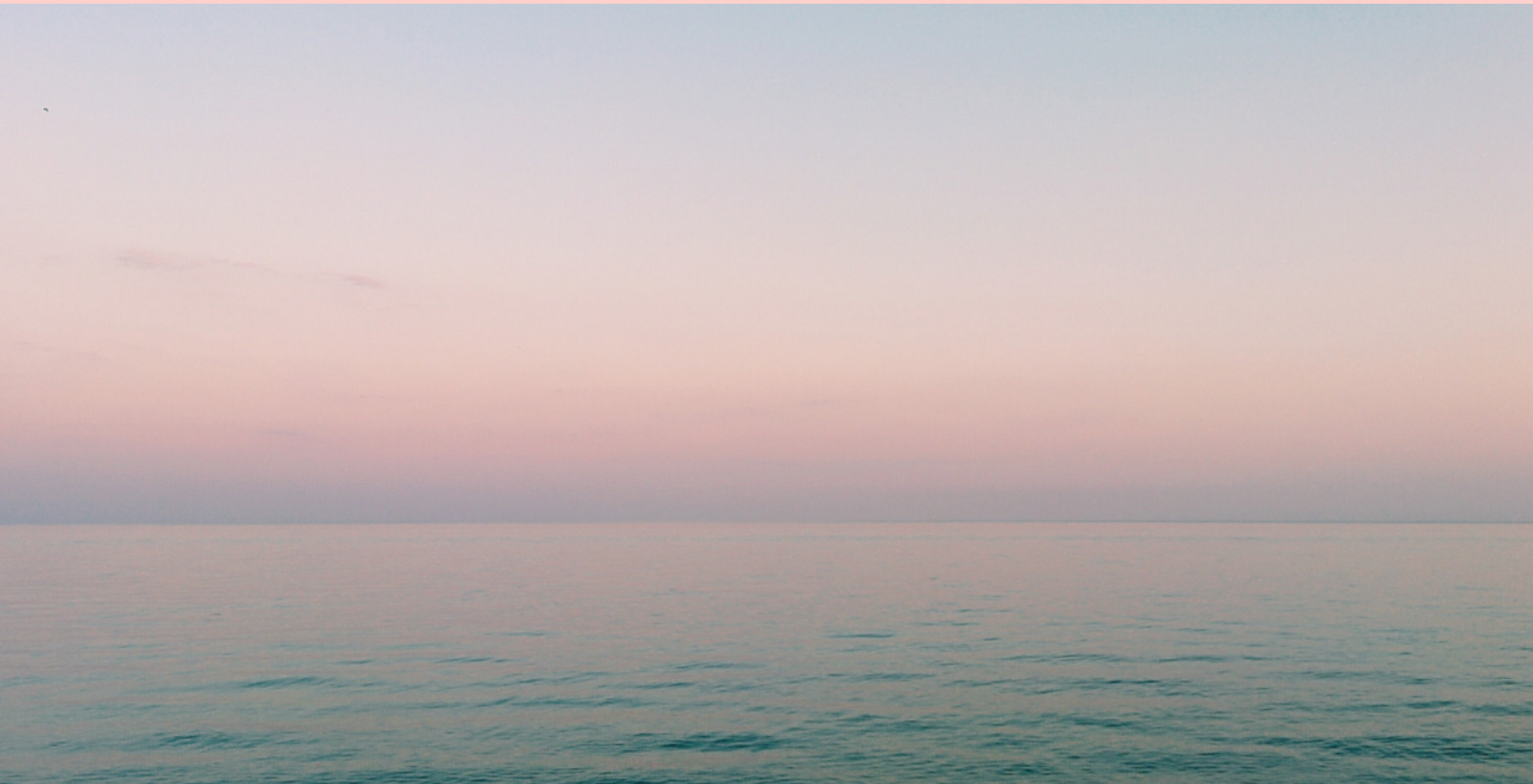


Weekly Newsletter



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A Message from Our Pastor

"PLEASE DON'T CALL ME THAT"

The recent news leak that *Roe vs. Wade* may be overturned soon by the Supreme Court of the United States has unleashed yet another intensely divisive and passionate fracas amongst Americans of good faith. I, like perhaps many of you, have been struggling to put my thoughts into words. Here's my best effort at this moment.

I believe that every person should have a right to determine what happens to their own body, including whether they carry a pregnancy through to term, or not. Scripture says, *"Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it. And spirit to those who walk in it" (Isaiah 42:5)*. God the Creator gave us life and spirit, thereby imbuing us with our selfhood and therefore choice. But please don't call me Pro-Choice.

I also believe that every child is precious, including the unborn. Scripture says, *"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13)*. But please don't call me Pro-Life.

It seems to me that the decision to terminate a life growing inside your own body is one that is so intensely personal that it must not be mandated or denied by the government. When does that life begin? When a tree is still an acorn, it is not called a tree yet. When a child is still a collection of fetal cells, is it a child? If not, then when are there enough elements of life to call it a child? I do not have that wisdom. Yet, we value every new life as precious in the sight of God's eyes. For me, this issue is not of a singular dimension, black or white, right or wrong. Instead, it is a prism, with many facets to consider, each one throwing a different light on the matter. Sadly, every side is limited in its view and refracts the light to its own ends.

With issues like this one, I turn to my faith to help me. The United Methodist Social Principles have a set of guidelines that help illuminate what God is already doing in our lives. While they are not RULES, they are described as “clearly marked signposts on our journey toward living fully into God’s gracious love for the world.” They offer guidance and illumination in our current context. They are written by the elected representatives from every United Methodist Conference who, every four years, do the work of General Conference. They do not come down like tablets from the mountain. They do carry the authority and wisdom of our tradition, which of course is subject to change as life changes.

On the matter of abortion, the Social Principles say:

“Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child” (page 30).

Our United Methodist website (umc.org) goes on to elaborate:

These statements, and others, place the United Methodist position on abortion firmly on the spectrum of life-based ethics rather than choice-based ethics. Life-based ethics place life at the center of guidance regarding situations where there may be conflicts. Life-based ethics call for as much life as possible to be honored and preserved in such situations. Choice-based ethics place the sovereignty of a person's right to choose at the center of such arguments.

United Methodists affirm the sanctity of unborn human life. We similarly understand that the pregnant woman is also a life of sacred worth, and that there are circumstances in which there may be "tragic conflicts of life versus life." This may happen to any pregnant woman, anywhere, at any time during her pregnancy.

*Critical to preserving life is ready access to proper medical care. This includes access to medical care that may include abortion when that is the way to preserve **the most life possible**. That is why the Social Principles affirm that "in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers."*

Additional official statements of The United Methodist Church express the denomination's life-centered ethics.

- The United Methodist Church does NOT affirm abortion as a means of birth control.
- We also "unconditionally reject" abortion as a means of gender selection or eugenics.
- And we reject late-term abortions except where the mother's life is in danger, or in cases of severe fetal abnormalities incompatible with life.

I appreciate that our church affirms the complexities of life-altering decisions and works toward offering God's grace to all:

While we understand the need for women to have access to safe, legal abortions, we also "mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates." We encourage ministries that reduce unintended pregnancies, such as sex education, access to voluntary family planning, contraception, and "initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe."

Finally, United Methodists are committed to ministering with those who have had an abortion, providing support and encouragement. Whatever situation led to a decision to abort, there is always much loss, and much need for healing.

Whatever happens next in our country, I hold tightly to the middle ground, with all its hues of gray, grateful that we always swim in God's grace.



Grace and peace,
Pastor Sharon

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

LIVING STONES

This program is for children, 4-years-old to 6th grade, to learn about God and is held during worship (10:30 am - 11:30 am). Each Sunday in worship, the children will be called forward for a blessing and then will go to the Discovery Room. Children may wear masks. There will be games, stories, snacks, and prayer. We look forward to seeing you every Sunday!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This year's Vacation Bible School will be June 6-10 from 5 to 8 pm for children 4-12 years old. Our theme is Food Truck Party. People who enjoy working with children are needed to carry out a variety of jobs, from playing games to preparing food. Sign up [here](#) or email directorchildren@websterum.org to sign up!



Shae Parsons



YOUTH MINISTRY

May 15 - Pastor Paige's Baby Shower

May 22 - Stations and Mission Trip Meeting! We will gather for an end-of-semester stations evening. We will reflect on the past school year and look ahead to the upcoming summer.

Youth Ministry meets on Sundays from 5:30-7:30 pm!

Contact directoryouth@websterum.org to connect with Pastor Paige

VOLUNTEER IN MISSION TEAM "FEEDING UKRAINE"

Our VIM team was hard at work at Midwest Mission Distribution Center helping to prepare 48,000 fortified rice meals. Here you see us in our assembly lines, blessing pallets of 30 boxes of 40 rice meal packages, and our team taking a break outside.

Jan McCurley



CALLING ALL GRADUATES...

We will celebrate our graduating students, of all ages and curriculums, on Sunday, May 15th. Are you graduating from an educational endeavor?

Email secretary@websterum.org with the name of the graduate and where they are graduating from before Friday at 8 am.



DONATE TO FEED UKRAINE

\$1 makes a bag to feed 6 people

\$40 makes a box to feed 240 people

\$400 makes a layer of boxes to feed 2,400 people

\$1,200 makes a pallet to feed 7,200

Ways to Donate:

- Cash or check made payable to Midwest Mission
- Click [here](#) to donate through our website under "Feeding Ukraine - Midwest Distribution Center"
- Click [here](#) to donate on MMDC's website under "Ukraine Relief"
- Text Ukraine to (855)589-1314



WUM PROVIDES WORSHIP AT BETHESDA DILWORTH

On **Sunday, May 15, 2022**, our fully vaccinated and masked volunteers will return to Bethesda Dilworth (BD) to lead worship. Since returning in May of 2021, it has been a joy to worship again with the residents of this skilled nursing facility. Because we only provide the half-hour chapel service one Sunday every other month, changes occur. In March we worshipped in the dining hall, but this month we will be back in the chapel. At 2:00 pm volunteers gather in the chapel on the second floor to receive assignments from Chaplain Michael Tooley and then disperse to escort residents who use wheelchairs. The half-hour service begins at 2:30.

At BD we have the reputation of singing a lot because we begin singing beforehand. By 3:30 pm we have finished returning residents to their rooms. If you would like to volunteer this month or be added to the e-list of volunteers, please contact Beth Anderson, at #314-781-9923 or TrebleCross1980@gmail.com.

RESUMPTION OF SEEKERS' SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

The Seekers have resumed our in-person gatherings. We are studying James W. Moore's book entitled *Do Your Best and Trust God for the Rest*. Moore talks about the idea that God doesn't expect us to be perfect. God simply asks us to be faithful, and God will do and be what we cannot.

The class is led by Deane Looney. There will be no homework since we will read and discuss the chapters during class time. We meet on the second floor of the Education Building. **Please join us at 9 am Sundays. Everyone is welcome!**



AFGHAN DRIVE-THRU SUPPER CLUB

Saturday, May 21st @ 5-6 pm

Webster United Methodist will be hosting Welcome Neighbor STL on Saturday, May 21st. Welcome Neighbor STL hires immigrants from other countries to create meals in a host kitchen using recipes from their homeland. These meals present an opportunity for immigrant families to share knowledge and skills that are unique to them. It is also an opportunity for us to get a glimpse into their culture.

The fundraising efforts can set them on a path of greater independence and confidence in their lives here in the USA.

Meals are boxed and sold to those who have placed orders in advance through the website. The money raised goes to the cooks and WNSTL, and the leftover food goes to the immigrant community.

On the 21st, our cooks will be from Afghanistan. Purchase your tickets (\$30 per meal) through their website [here](#). You must purchase your tickets ahead of time via the website. Then, drive through our parking lot between 5 & 6 pm on Saturday, May 21st to pick up your meals.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The Garden of Eden welcomes volunteers to work during this busy (and hot) week.

This week, community garden hours are:

Friday from 5 - 6:30 pm

Saturday from 4:30 - 6:00 pm

There are usually hours earlier in the week. To find out about those in time to join, send Kristen Leslie an email at kleslie@eden.edu and ask to be added to her email list.

And a special invitation: They need to make a manure run to a horse farm in Ballwin. If you are available on Saturday between 1-4 and want to join Kristen as she shovels manure (cured, so not stinky), email her for details.



Click [here](#) for more information on their website.



Click [here](#) for their website.

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

Clyde and Carol Gilker; Margaret Christensen; Linda Redmore; Tammy Schultz (Gordon Ballam); Pat Murphy (Paula Murphy); Clare Wilson, mother of Olivia and Lane; Ordith & Richard, Margaret Skouby's parents; Diane Steenbergen, Gene Morse's sister; the family of Chris Murphy (Connie Kroenung); allergy sufferers; for the growth of the church; for aging parents; for mothers, grandmothers, and those wanting to be mothers; for parents; for grandparents; for the people of Ukraine; and for all to be vaccinated.



NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

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

CHURCH SPACE RESERVATIONS

If you want to schedule a space for your group, check the calendar and send your request to admin.communications@websterum.org to schedule all usage!



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

- Worshippers are welcome to choose their own seats in the sanctuary.
- Masks are now optional within our building.

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