

Joyful Notes



Pastor's Message

As I sit here reflecting on life, I am aware of God's presence. My prayer in this time of solitude comes as part of a desire to grow in awareness of God's presence, with the hope of continuing to remain open to God's Spirit. It is in this place, when I can give myself permission to go to a quiet place, where I may hear God who whispers the message of a divine invitation. It is the kind of invitation that involves making a space and place in my day, where I am watching for God. It is a time of waiting and listening for the Lord Jesus who guides my steps. In fact, I can even pray, at whatever times I remember to say it, "Teach me your way, O Lord, lead me on a level path."

I do not know what it means exactly, for the Lord to "lead me on a level path," but I am learning that when my thoughts are drawn away, and I choose to redirect my focus and interests away from whatever God is saying at the moment, I start to flounder, and the path on which I am walking becomes unbalanced.

It seems that whenever the parts of my day that require various

levels of attention, become the most important, I feel this distance from God, and yet, even more importantly, it seems at that point, I am on a path that is difficult to see, and even more challenging to follow. The awareness of living in God's presence takes practice. I am not talking about practicing the way you practice the clarinet every day when you are 10 years old, nor is it the kind of task you might include among other tasks on our "to do" list for today.

To practice the awareness of living in God's presence is more about simply paying attention. Then, when you least expect it, as you are going about the day, attempting to complete all of the tasks on your list, you may have the experience of "having a thought about God," if only for a moment. Trust that such moments come from our Lord, whose desire it is for you to always know and believe that Almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, is walking beside you when the day goes well, and shares your burden when the frustrations that come from living in this world are starting to close in on

(continued on page 2)

Join Us For Prayer & Share!

Pray & Share is meeting on Fridays from 11:00 to 12:30 by Zoom and in person outdoors with social distancing at Carolyn Hammer's located at Benjamin Young Inn, 3652 Duane Street in Astoria.

Currently, the group is reading and discussing the book "Me and White Supremacy".

All are welcome to join. If you would like the Zoom information for Prayer & Share, please contact Holly at 616-890-7942.

Please mail in your weekly offering

Keep in mind that the church still has monthly bills to pay during this time of shelter in place.

At this time there isn't revenue coming in from our building use groups as well. Sue Hicks makes a deposit of offerings each week.

Thank you for giving by mail!

**Giving
by mail** 



Pastor's Message - (continued from page 1)

you.

It is when these moments of awareness occur, that you can mirror the words of the psalmist who says simply, "Lord, lead me on a level path," and then just go on with your day. When it happens again, say the same thing. Such experiences will lead you to become increasingly aware of God's presence. In another place, the psalmist writes, "the nearness of God is my good." How great is it that just being open to your thoughts about God, no matter how fleeting, affirm to us the nearness of God, in every moment and with every breath we breathe.

In this moment, I give thanks to God for each of you, and the family we call the Astoria First United Methodist Church, and for God's love

for everyone, a love that lasts forever. So, as we continue our journey together, we enter a new month, but before the month begins, we enter a new day, and each day represents another amazing, miraculous, spectacular day, the Lord has made just for you. You are God's beloved children and this day has been prepared for you, and this same God, will stay beside you and bring you to the day's end. So, let us rejoice and be glad in this day, even as our Lord Jesus prepares us for tomorrow.

All are Welcome, Always!

- Pastor Michael

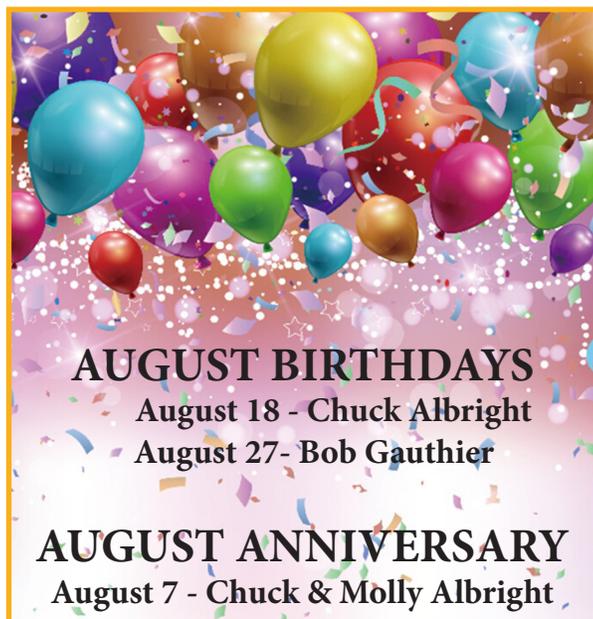
Cascadia District Opportunities to Connect with Wendy and One Another

As we continue to be the church and doing ministry in these challenging times, I want to continue the opportunity for virtual gatherings of laity and clergy. These gatherings will be an opportunity to get to know one another better, address challenges you are facing and celebrate what is going well. I will also share updates from PNW and OR-ID. Given this is summer, these will not be every week. I look forward to sharing in this time together!

**Tuesdays :
August 11**

**Clergy, LLP and Lay
Assigned Gatherings:
at 9:00 am -- Let's have
Coffee/Tea Together**

Laity Gatherings at 7:00 pm
- Rev. Wendy Woodworth,
Cascadia DS



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS
August 18 - Chuck Albright
August 27- Bob Gauthier

AUGUST ANNIVERSARY
August 7 - Chuck & Molly Albright

The Way, the Truth and the Life

I am the Way
so just follow Me,
Though the way be rough
and you cannot see.

I am the Truth
which all men seek,
So heed not false prophets
nor the words that they speak.

I am the Life
and I hold the key
That opens the door
to Eternity.

- Helen Steiner Rice



**Share stories,
pray requests &
announcements
with us!**

**Our newsletter is a great
way to keep in touch, especially
at this time
during the pandemic.**

**You are encouraged to
submit news by the 20th
of each month to share in
our newsletter!**



We will be offering services via ZOOM every Sunday at 11:30 am until we can meet in person again.

Watch for email updates for Zoom Worship Service Invitations and the Order of Worship!

Invite your family, friends & neighbors. All are welcome.

Thank You, God, for Little Things

Thank You, God, for little things
that often come our way-
The things we take for granted
but don't mention when we pray-
The unexpected courtesy,
the thoughtful, kindly deed-
A hand reached out to help us
in the time of sudden need-
Oh, make us more aware, dear God,
of little daily graces
That come to us with "sweet surprise"
from never-dreamed-of-places.



- Helen Steiner Rice

2020 Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference Session

Wednesday, September 16th via Zoom

What does Love Require?

Do No Harm:

Fighting COVID-19

Do Good:

Dismantling Racism

Stay in Love with God:

Reimagining Life Together



During this time of COVID-19 pandemic social distancing, the **2020 Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference Session** originally scheduled as an in-person meeting in June had to be cancelled.

The Bishop recently issued a call for an online session on the afternoon and evening of **Wednesday, September 16th via Zoom**, the videoconferencing application.

The regular 2020 session of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference will meet remotely online from 2:30-4:30 and 6-8 p.m., PT, 3:30-5:30 and 7-9 p.m., MT, Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

Please hold this date on your calendar.

Registration information will be available on or about August 1, 2020 and conference materials will be available about August 15.

Astoria First United Methodist Church's lay member to Annual Conference is Sue Hicks.



Astoria First United
Methodist Church

1076 Franklin Avenue
Astoria, OR 97103

Request Service Requested

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the church office and all activities at church have been suspended until further notice.

As Pastor Michael is available to respond to pastoral care needs by phone 541-499-9703 or in person.

Bishop: *Elaine Stanovsky*

District Superintendent: *Wendy Woodworth*

Pastor: *Rev. Michael Avila*

Administrative Assistant: *Lynette Vollmer*

Astoria Lay Leaders: *Chuck Albright & Sue Hicks*

Finance Chairperson: *Sue Hicks*

Lay Member to Annual Conference: *Mary Frances Gunn*

Visit us on Facebook!

Web site: www.unitedmethodistastoria.org

Church Office: 503.325.5454