



ST. LUKE'S UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
DENTON, MD

THE VOICE

AUGUST 2020

MUSINGS FROM PASTOR DAN

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Several years ago, I was watching a book club program on a local television station. This particular show was intriguing because they were discussing one of my favorite books; Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Intrigue quickly turned to antipathy as the members discussing the book had turned Melville's novel into a love story. Hearing their reasoning behind this "interpretation" of a classic novel was both abhorrent and disturbing. Although these readers articulated their positions cogently and at times with flare, I wondered how they could have



missed the mark so badly. *Moby Dick* is a great story of how one person's vengeance, that of Captain Ahab,

led to an insanity culminating in death to all aboard the Pequod save for Ishmael. Is *Moby Dick* a story of vengeance and death? Yes. A love story? Absolutely not.

In a past issue of *World* magazine, columnist Janie B. Cheaney wrote a piece entitled, *Becoming Readers*. Her column brought the *Moby Dick* issue to the forefront of my mind for she offered a very good explanation for the aforementioned misinterpretation. She noted that literature courses were originally intended to develop a kind of reader who read for purposes of enlightenment. More than reading for entertainment or information, this kind of reader allows the ideas "created by the written language [to] challenge or change us."

She continued to say that, "if 'literature' seems increasingly irrelevant today, it's partly because too many college professors have used it as a tool. They've been busy, as historian Victor Davis Hanson puts it, 'defining the study of literature and history as a melodrama of race, class, and

gender oppression.' Students learn to tell the text what it says, rather than letting the text speak to them. That reduces its relevance and flattens its meaning."

This is a particularly dangerous phenomenon, for if the reader is in control of the text, that is, "telling the text what it says rather than letting the text speak to them," then that written word is reduced to the finiteness of his or her own reasoning, experiences, culture, and traditions. If a reader continually processes the written word in this way, negated is potential enlightenment; for the reader remains within the narrowness of his or her own life, not engaging the text and processing its ideas but defining the text based solely on self.

This is an outgrowth of post-modernity. Within this philosophy, there exists no objective truth. All truth is subjective and therefore defined by self. Therefore, if something is true for one person, it is true, (regardless of any objective contrary evidence) if it is not true for someone else, so be it, that's alright (again, regardless of any objective contrary evidence). Hence, *Moby Dick* becomes a love story.

Invoking an overused cliché, this slippery slope has led some and perhaps many to read Scripture in the same way. That is to tell the Scripture what it says rather than allowing Scripture to enlighten the reader.

Dividing the Bible texts into chapters and verses produced another significant problem to proper interpretation of the Scripture. While these delineations have a wonderful purpose, they have been used to remove the context from the text allowing the reader / interpreter the opportunity to tell the text what it says by linking verses of Scripture together that were never intended by the author(s) to be linked.

Readers of Scripture trained in the chapter / verse mode of Scripture reading alone lose the intent of the author. When Paul penned his letter to the church at Galatia, for example, he believed that his letter would be read completely where-



upon the ideas presented would stand on their own, not piecemealed in conjunction with segments of other biblical texts to produce and justify a different idea. Too often, Bible readers “dig” first and read later. For some, the “dig” is most important and what may ultimately result, as they strive to mine some notion or purpose out of the text that the author

never intended, is heresy. Thus, the intent of the author and its meaning is lost even though the plain meaning often lies right on the surface. Add to this the post-modern view that truth is subjective and that the reader determines what the text means, and you have a formula guaranteed to reduce Scripture to meaningless prattle left to the whims of the day. Destroyed in the process is its actual intended meaning and relevance as the power contained within it is relegated to the myopic finiteness of the reader.

What can be done to ensure that what we read and understand, particularly within the Bible is what the author intended?

Introspection is a key beginning. A reader must first come to understand how he or she approaches a written work. For example, if a certain title or author produces negative emotions or thoughts that inhibit an open-minded reading of the text, the reader is likely to be predisposed to an opinion before reading the first word and will be prepared for a confrontation with the author. It is likely that the reader will glean nothing from the text, even if there is something within the prose with which the reader might agree or find quite profound. There is very little chance for any degree of enlightenment as the reader will not confront the ideas that contrast with their own.

If a reader is antagonistic toward Christianity, reading the Gospel of John (or any of the biblical texts) will not likely produce the desired result the Apostle intended. The reader will likely battle against every miracle, and every word Jesus said. If this reader arrives at John’s purpose toward the end of the Gospel, “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name,” they are likely to disagree for they have been predisposed to battle with the author all the way through the text.

If, however, a reader approaches the text with the intent to engage the author by allowing the author to enlighten them with his ideas and evidences, the reader will finish the text and be able to reasonably process all that John wrote and make a reasoned decision. Regardless of what that decision may be, the reader will have walked with John the Apostle

through a place and time that he wanted the reader to experience. Even two-thousand years later, John can still cause a reader to experience the story of Christ in a way that only the written word can provide.



If the reader undertakes John’s Gospel in the same way the book club undertook *Moby Dick*, then the wonderful journey back to the time of Christ and all of the experiences and teachings offered by Him (recorded for us by the Apostle) will vanish into the limited experiences and indistinct vague understanding of the reader.

Perhaps one way to practice this idea is to read with the intent to be enlightened. Even if we disagree or disparage the written work, our minds will be illuminated to a set of ideas or a story that would otherwise remain unknown. It is rare indeed that we know all things even about a single subject and can therefore learn, even from those with which we disagree. Reading that with which we may disagree also allows us to bolster our own position upon any given matter because it forces us to think about those positions.

I pray that the next time you read the Bible; you will read the whole text and allow the author to take you to their place and time. This is a sound method that will enable you to experience the fullness of all God has to offer in the greatest text ever written, the Bible.

Pastor Dan

Ice Cream Social To Welcome Pastor Dan and Missy July 19, 2020 in Fellowship Hall



REMINDERS:

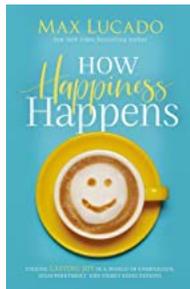
- St. Luke's needs your financial support as much as ever. A self-addressed envelope has been enclosed in this edition of the *Voice* for your use. You can also schedule a recurring payment from your bank or through the church's website at www.stlukesdenton.org/donate.
- Next Leadership Meeting—Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.
- September *Voice* articles, updates, and pictures due Wednesday, August 19, 2020

Adult Sunday School
Welcome Back
September 13
9:40 AM
Rooms 1 and 3

These are tough times. Amid global isolation, economic downturn, and social unrest, could you use a dose of happy right about now?

Join us for a six week series by Max Lucado. We will have DVD sessions followed by group discussions.

We will require the Covid 19 safe practices of face coverings and social distancing.



Any questions contact Louise Webb
louisewebb44@gmail.com

**From our Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry
Tracy Harding**

A mailing will be going out in the next week to our Sunday Schoolers. The packet will include coloring pages, puzzles, scripture, and some words of encouragement.

I am planning a Reconnection get together for MYF in the next couple week. A fun activity and then back to St. Luke's for some ice cream and conversation.

UMW News

Submitted by Becky Schoonover

The UMW are looking ahead to the Fall. The possibility of a church picnic, and the nut sales, will be determined. In October, we will be celebrating Anniversary Sunday.

Prayer Concerns.....

Dana Shaffer, Hugh Butler, Dwight Kimble, Hollis Cartwell, Elaine Nichols, Jenny Jusell, Sylvia Holland, Sheila Orr, Robert Wills Sr, Anne Jusell, Holly Rhodes, Avis Fullen, Damon Clements, Alan and Gloria Vandam, Robbie Lister, Donna Fuher, Julia Roberts, Shannon McCarty, Rose Jarman, Ken Jarman, Samantha Gill, Lisa Dimaggio Barge, Catherine O'Brien, Pat Browne, Laura Johnson, Sue Garrison, Jim Johnson, Sam Knox, Phyllis Harrison, Lew Dodd, Laura Love, Mary Denney, Carol Stockley, Buck Farver, Michah J. Baxter, Kevin Kerr, Pat Lucas, Theotrice Gamble, Gene Wood, Joanne Cutts, Mary Jo Kline, Jean Ernst, David Brown, Julia & Harlem Moore, Krystle Simpson, Kathi Bridwell, Vickie Conover, Brenda Danser, Robert Chappelle, Dale Nygren, Hayden Seman, John Balderson, Don Homesley, Jake Holmes, Ruth Dore, Becky Willoughby, William Weathers, Whittley Gamble, John Wright, Su Jusell-Lappin, Rev. Arthur & Julia George, James Hefner, Jr., Timothy Lee, Delores Giles, Chelsea Whittington, Deborah Tolen, Harry Muir, Conrad Rosemere, Susan Bunker, Tommy Thomason, Steve Sensibaugh, Sr., Scott Olevich, Aaron Gamble, Tim Streckfus, Brenda Price, Brad Cohee, Rob Cohee, Mike Bagel, Sarah Price, Dylan Gunther, Darrell Conley, Kenneth Prior, Barbara Allen, Conner Beish, Chris Fike, & Elaine Friel.

**Sympathy to the families of**

Jim Nanney, Margaret Ann Torbert, Bonnie Thayer

***From Our Music Ministry Director:
Becky Zinser***

During this time of social distancing and COVID rules, St. Luke's has been blessed with volunteers who have offered their musical talents in worship. For this we are so very thankful. Soloists (both vocal and instrumental) and small ensembles have graced our sanctuary. And the Praise Band continues to lead worship at the Ignite Service in Fellowship Hall.

Until Maryland advances to the next COVID stage, this is the music mode in which we will continue. As always, anyone who would like to offer special music in worship should give me a call:

Becky Zinser
H-410-479-2054
C-410-200-8929

ps. Did you know God rejoices over you with singing? ...

The Lord your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with His love,
he will rejoice over you with singing.
Zephaniah 3:17



The Card Ministry

THANK YOU to Bette Shull for keeping the Card Ministry going and sending out love in these times of uncertainty and isolation. It is a blessing to all who receive a card from St. Luke's.



Sexual Abuse Claims in Boy Scouts Bankruptcy

Regardless of how old you are today or when the sexual abuse occurred, you need to file your claim by 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) on November 16, 2020.

The Boy Scouts of America ("BSA") has filed bankruptcy in order to restructure its nonprofit organization and pay Sexual Abuse Survivors. Please read this notice carefully as it may impact your rights against BSA, BSA Local Councils and organizations that sponsored your troop or pack and provides information about the case, *In re Boy Scouts of America and Delaware BSA, LLC*, No. 20-10543 (Bankr. D. Del.). This notice is a short summary. For more detail, visit: www.OfficialBSAclaims.com or call 1-866-907-2721.

Who Should File a Sexual Abuse Claim?

Anyone who was sexually abused during their time in Scouting, on or before February 18, 2020, must file a claim. This includes sexual abuse in connection with Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, or any entity or activity associated with Scouting. Sexual Abuse Claims include, but are not limited to: sexual misconduct, exploitation, or touching, sexual comments about a person or other behaviors that led to abuse, even if the behavior was not sexual or against the law, and regardless of whether you thought the behavior was sexual abuse or not. These acts could be between a: (1) child and an adult or (2) child and another child.

When and How Should I File a Sexual Abuse Claim?

You should file a claim using the Sexual Abuse Survivor Proof of Claim by **November 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**. If you do not file a timely Sexual Abuse Claim, you may lose rights against BSA, BSA Local Councils or organizations that sponsored your troop or pack, including any right to compensation. Only BSA is in bankruptcy. If you have a claim against the BSA Local Councils or other organizations, you must take additional legal action to preserve and pursue your rights.

Your information will be kept private. You can download and file a claim at www.OfficialBSAclaims.com or call 1-866-907-2721 for help on how to file a claim by mail. Scouting participants who were at least 18 years of age at the time the sexual abuse began may also have claims related to sexual abuse and should consult the appropriate claim form at www.OfficialBSAclaims.com.

ACT NOW Before Time Runs Out:



File a Sexual Abuse Survivor Proof of Claim.



If your claim is approved, you may receive compensation from the bankruptcy.



Have questions? Call or visit the website for more information.

If a plan to reorganize BSA is approved, it could release claims you hold against certain third parties, including against BSA Local Councils and organizations that sponsored your troop or pack. Please visit the website to learn more.

Other Support

BSA will fund in-person counseling for current or former Scouts or their family. To request in-person counseling, please call 1-866-907-2721, or email restructuring@scouting.org.

Your information will be kept private.

www.OfficialBSAclaims.com

1-866-907-2721

St. Luke's United Methodist Church Treasurer's Report

For Period January through December 2020 as of June 30, 2020

Description	Annual Budget 2020	Actual Income or Expense To Date	Variance	S/B 50%	Budget through June 2020	Actual Income or Expense To Date	Variance	S/B 100%
				% Budg Used				% Budg Used
Income								
Offerings	250,612.00	110,898.18	139,713.82	44.25%	125,306.00	110,898.18	14,407.82	88.50%
Offerings - Sunday School	100.00	60.00	40.00	60.00%	50.00	60.00	(10.00)	120.00%
Interest Income	25.00	22.17	2.83	88.68%	12.50	22.17	(9.67)	177.36%
Building Use	8,000.00	3,105.00	4,895.00	38.81%	4,000.00	3,105.00	895.00	77.63%
Administrative Building Use	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Income	258,737.00	114,085.35	144,651.65	44.09%	129,368.50	114,085.35	15,283.15	88.19%
Expenses								
Pastor Expenses								
Salary	47,722.00	23,861.04	23,860.96	50.00%	23,861.00	23,861.04	(0.04)	100.00%
Travel Reimbursement	2,400.00	562.03	1,837.97	23.42%	1,200.00	562.03	637.97	46.84%
Cable TV at parsonage	1,600.00	860.40	739.60	53.78%	800.00	860.40	(60.40)	107.55%
Hospitalization/Dental	18,180.00	6,060.00	12,120.00	33.33%	9,090.00	6,060.00	3,030.00	66.67%
Bishop's Retreat	550.00	0.00	550.00	0.00%	275.00	0.00	275.00	0.00%
Continuing Education	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
Pension Plan	9,783.00	3,261.04	6,521.96	33.33%	4,891.50	3,261.04	1,630.46	66.67%
Pastor Expenses - other		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Pastor Expenses	81,235.00	34,604.51	46,630.49	42.60%	40,617.50	34,604.51	6,012.99	85.20%
Staff Expenses								
Staff Salaries	73,580.00	36,391.07	37,188.93	49.46%	36,790.00	36,391.07	398.93	98.92%
Wage and Tax Expenses	7,358.00	4,477.15	2,880.85	60.85%	3,679.00	4,477.15	(798.15)	121.69%
Worker's Compensation	1,092.00	904.00	188.00	82.78%	546.00	904.00	(358.00)	165.57%
Expenses - other		0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	
Total Staff Expenses	82,030.00	41,772.22	40,030.60	50.92%	41,015.00	41,772.22	(757.22)	386.18%
Other Operational Expenses								
Accounting & Legal	200.00	107.43			100.00	107.43	(7.43)	
Annual Conference expense	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%	250.00	0.00	250.00	0.00%
Christian Education/Sunday School	2,500.00	480.31	2,019.69	19.21%	1,250.00	480.31	769.69	38.42%
Conference Apportionments	23,586.00	11,793.00	11,793.00	50.00%	11,793.00	11,793.00	0.00	100.00%
Easton District Office	1,415.00	1,415.00	0.00	100.00%	707.50	1,415.00	(707.50)	200.00%
Janitorial Supplies	1,000.00	197.70	802.30	19.77%	500.00	197.70	302.30	39.54%
Electricity/Oil	18,000.00	7,096.68	10,903.32	39.43%	9,000.00	7,096.68	1,903.32	78.85%
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	5,871.00	2,649.30	3,221.70	45.13%	2,935.50	2,649.30	286.20	90.25%
Fuel (parsonage)	6,500.00	2,110.50	4,389.50	32.47%	3,250.00	2,110.50	1,139.50	64.94%
Grass and Shrubbery Maintenance	3,000.00	485.00	2,515.00	16.17%	1,500.00	485.00	1,015.00	32.33%
Insurance	10,300.00	8,572.00	1,728.00	83.22%	5,150.00	8,572.00	(3,422.00)	166.45%
Maintenance and Repairs	6,800.00	2,571.19	4,228.81	37.81%	3,400.00	2,571.19	828.81	75.62%
Miscellaneous	100.00	745.60	(645.60)	745.60%	50.00	745.60	(695.60)	1491.20%
Music Committee	1,200.00	925.00	275.00	77.08%	600.00	925.00	(325.00)	1,250.00
MYF Program	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
Office Supplies	2,250.00	1,711.71	538.29	76.08%	1,125.00	1,711.71	(586.71)	152.15%
Postage	1,500.00	800.00	700.00	53.33%	750.00	800.00	(50.00)	106.67%
Pastor/Organist, Substitutes	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Pastor's Moving Exp Escrow Acct	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
Stewardship	1,500.00	733.22	766.78	48.88%	750.00	733.22	16.78	97.76%
Telephone	1,500.00	972.78	527.22	64.85%	750.00	972.78	(222.78)	129.70%
Water and Sewer	1,750.00	904.61	845.39	51.69%	875.00	904.61	(29.61)	103.38%
Evangelism	2,500.00	752.80	1,747.20	30.11%	1,250.00	752.80	497.20	60.22%
Worship Materials	1,200.00	437.77	762.23	36.48%	600.00	437.77	162.23	72.96%
Total Operational Expenses	95,472.00	45,461.60	49,917.83	47.62%	47,736.00	45,461.60	2,274.40	95.24%
Total Expenses	258,737.00	121,838.33	96,548.32	47.09%	129,368.50	121,838.33	7,530.17	94.18%
Net Income over Expenses	0.00	(7,752.98)	48,103.33		0.00	(7,752.98)	7,752.98	

The Voice

of St. Luke's
August 2020

St. Luke's UMC Staff:

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Administrative Assistant: Ann Willey

Director of Music: Rebecca Zinser

Christian Education and Youth Ministry

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Nursery Coordinator: Alex Penn

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To:



WELCOME!

Welcome to St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Rev. Dan Gedman