



The Steeple

January 2021



FROM OUR PASTOR

Here we are in 2021, and the pandemic is still the big thing that sets the conditions of our life. Last March, when we began to realize how serious this was, I expected it would be over by May and we'd be back to normal summertime events (travel, picnics, sports, etc.). It didn't happen that way, of course, and we're still uncertain when it will be safe for us to drop the masks and be together at work, at school, at recreation. Many of us can hope to be vaccinated soon, but we're told the virus is mutating in unexpected ways.

In this congregation, our 2020 vision is in the rear view mirror, but there's not much interest yet in planning for 2021. I sent out an email to generate discussion about Lent, and several responded that it's too soon to think about that. They may be right.

Meanwhile, though, as I look back over 2020, I have to say I'm impressed with what's happened here. We didn't have any worship service the last two Sundays of March. I heard stories of congregations seeking other ways to worship than gathering indoors, but I was a bit demoralized and figured we didn't have the resources to do anything like that here.

But we started up again on April 5, using the parking lot as our sanctuary. As the weather warmed up, we transitioned to the area around the pavilion. Then the weather turned cold, and most of you have been able to participate via the screens. By the time we gathered again for a half-hour Christmas Eve service outside, it felt like this congregation was still very lively.

So I'm pleased with how this has turned out so far. If some of you want to give me credit for bold pastoral leadership in this time of crisis, go right ahead. But the dirty little secret is: I deserve none of it. The worship life of our congregation has survived 2020 due to the creativity, flexibility, initiative, and energy of Heather Reichgott, Mark Hudgik, and Jim Corey, and it's due as well to the persistent determination of Ann Felsentreger in keeping the communication flowing. And while that was going on, the trustees managed to sell the parsonage and build a new ramp behind the education wing.

And it seems we've so far done these things safely. Some other congregations have become coronavirus hotspots, and along with the obvious health impact, they've also experienced a lot of regret and finger-pointing. I'm proud of the way our trustees and church council handled the situation here. They had a joint meeting on October 13 and concluded that safety had to override our urge to be together indoors.



Zoom is a poor substitute for in-person, indoor worship, but it's way better than doing nothing. So let's not allow discouragement to overwhelm us. Let's do what we can, when we can, for our families, our jobs, our church. May 2021 be for you a year of rich and surprising blessing from God.

Rev. Peter Milloy: 413 310-5027 Church office: 413-532-0500 Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
e-mail: churchoffice@thesteepleinthefalls.org web site: www.thesteepleinthefalls.org
Dr. Heather Reichgott, Minister of Music Ann Felsentreger, Secretary
Neighbors Helping Neighbors: 413-437-7593



WORSHIP

The service will be live on Zoom. If you have any question or problems you can contact Mark Hudgik , call or text 413 474-0079.

**You are invited to the South Hadley Methodist Church
Sunday worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom**

To join the live service go to the church web site is:

www.thesteepointhefalls.org

The video of the service will also be available on our Facebook page thanks to Mark Hudgik.



LAY LEADER - it's amazing how it comforts me!

Well, that was a year for the books, don't you think? So much drama, so much angst. There is plenty to complain about. Please don't be offended when I say CUT IT OUT!

Much in life is out of our control. In fact, just about everything is out of our control, so we often have to simply deal with what comes. There is one thing we can control, and that is our attitude. Certainly, we are influenced by all that surrounds us, but we can choose how to respond. Staying under control when we are angry or frightened can be difficult, but it can be done, and we are stronger and more effective for it.

A universal challenge we all face is death and illness. There has been so much of both in the last year, and more will come this and every year. How do we handle these? This is a personal journey for me, as I am walking her last weeks with someone who is like a daughter to me. Clearly, there is not a way to banish sadness with our attitude, but for our own mental health we must find a way to handle grief.

There is a person in my life who is fond of quoting scripture as a way of trying to comfort someone. I don't find that to be helpful at all. We need people around us who will cry with us and acknowledge that this is sad, hard, and completely out of our hands. We need people who will just 'be' and not necessarily do, because the only thing we really want is to make it go away.

That said, our faith is important in times of grief. God is the ONE we can count on to 'be' and not crowd us. God won't quote scripture to us, or urge us to eat when we don't feel like it. God is there for us to lean on for strength, courage and reassurance. There is a song in our hymnal that goes, ♪“...God will take care of you, though every day, o'er all the way...”♪. I find myself singing it when I am afraid and it's amazing how it comforts me.



Bottom line- keep an eye on your attitude and don't let the world make you a cranky, miserable person, because 2021 will bring more challenges.

Happy New Year
Mary Lou



Secret Santa: The Spirit of Christmas



Our UM Women with the help of our church and community helped families have a merry Christmas by purchasing and wrapping gifts for the children. We put smiles fifty-eight children from So. Hadley and more from Granby. We were able to give each family a Big Y gift certificate all because of your generosity.

Thank you to all who are helping to make this happen. You are amazing.

CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS



Carol Brunelle, Carol Szulc, Eunice Mittler, Harry Thomas, Beth Dietz, Pauline Kiakis, Samantha Snopek, Adele Reynolds, Bev Pead &

Family, Doug & Dee Brooksbank, Frank Hudgik, Dave Fanaras, Tom Deren, Tim O'Donnell, Vinnie Deitner, Darlene Dout, Tom O'Dea, Bob & Viola Mortimer, Colleen Mortimer

CASSEROLES

Eight casseroles were delivered in December to Kate's Kitchen. Casseroles will be delivered at 9:30 a.m. on January 24. If you need your casserole picked up call Ann 695-1212 and make arrangements for your casserole to be picked up curb side.

STEEPLE LIGHTING



The steeple is lit during the month of January:

-In loving memory of Winifred & Francis Cerruti by Donna & Don Barre & Family.

- In hopes that 2021 will be a better year for everyone by Alan Dout & Family

If you would like the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00. The deadline is the 25th of the month. More than one person/family may participate.

LATOYA MONIQUE 2012
"IN *Happy* MOMENTS, PRAISE GOD.
IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS, *SEEK* God.
IN QUIET MOMENTS, *trust* GOD.
IN EVERY MOMENT, *THANK* God."

PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY: CASSEROLES FOR KATE'S KITCHEN



Who: Will **you** join us by making a casserole for Kate's Kitchen

When: Once a month or whenever you can? This month's casseroles are **due January 24th.**

What: Cook one pound of some sort of pasta, add pasta sauce, add ground meat or turkey, and maybe cheese.

How: The UMW provides a pan and asks that the casseroles be frozen and then put in a plastic bag. You can bring it to church any time during the month and put it in the freezer.

Why: To do the work of God by helping feed hungry people.

Thank you for any help you can give towards this mission project. The casseroles are much appreciated. If you have any questions call Ann 695-1212 or email the church office.

Epiphany - Twelfth Night Word Search

Find the hidden words associated with January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany also known as Three Kings Day or Twelfth Night.

X P P B E P I P H A N Y T O T S A E F
I U L Y Q B N H T M O V D L E V W N F
W M I W Z A A G D T A E J U G B I M G
N A P M C L S V T L E N E G N V S L N
U R P A C T N Y Y R O S G B I F E M I
Y Y K T M H I U H U N G E E K X M J R
M C Z T K A G T B E S T F A R M E L E
O S T A R S H H C N H U U D C Q N Q F
T E V Y E A T N A L E I S W T K B L F
H Z E H K R I R E M Q E N E Z N J R O
E I L U H K R H K E T V U A J M A Z O
R M Z P N J E H K Y A N K Q F Y R E U
S X Q A M M N L O S R E Y E S A B G L
E R R A C H R I S T M A S T I D E A O
R F G G O D W E C U H X G G H A X M B
U I N U D L I H C L F T H I L C R O H
S U U G G Y O M V Y K H F U F A Y H D
A S X H Q I T A C Z R C C L P T O I W
E S V H A N A F E B A L M S E N S M Y
R R O I H C L E M Y J L A G R W X Q D
T Q M Y R R H B A X Y C T V M E T E J

BABYJESUS
BALTHASAR
BETHLEHEM
CASPAR
CHILD
CHRISTMASTIDE
EPIPHANY
FEAST
FRANKINCENSE
GIFTS
GOLD
HOMAGE
KING
LABEFANA
LOSREYES
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MOTHER
MELCHIOR
MYRRH
NIGHT
OFFERING
QUEEN
STAR
THREE
TREASURE
TWELFTH
WISEMEN

MAKE 2021 BETTER THAN 2020

This is a list from an email Joanne Milloy forwarded to me (Mary Lou) and I liked it so much I thought I would share it. It is entitled 12 Simple Decisions to Make 2021 Better than 2020 from the blog, becomingminimalist.com

1. Smile more.

I think we all miss seeing smiles in public spaces. Once the masks are off, decide to show more of those pearly whites every chance you get.

2. Complain less.

2020 was a year of dealing with life-and-death issues on an almost daily basis. In some ways, all the things we used to complain about seem so small now. So let's decide to no longer complain about the small stuff.

3. Appreciate more.

I thought 2020 would be the year I got everything I wanted. Now I know 2020 was the year to appreciate everything I have. Decide now to carry that forward into 2021 and appreciate all the good around us in a more intentional way.

4. Connect more.

In 2020, we lost the ability to connect with others in-person—at coffee shops, churches, restaurants, concerts, sporting events, and even some family gatherings. Let's never overlook the opportunity to connect with others again.

5. Own less.

When everything is taken away, we see what is most important. When it comes to recognizing what activities contribute to quality of life, accumulating physical stuff pales in comparison to the actual life-giving pursuits we are being forced to go without. Decide now to own less in 2021.

6. Encourage more.

2020 was a hard year for everyone! And all of us needed encouragement from time-to-time. Let's give it freely in 2021—whether people ask for it or not.

7. Waste less.

Seems like we all learned the value of another day and another opportunity—because too many had their last one taken from them in 2020. Let's decide now to not waste any day, any moment, or any amount of energy remaining.

8. Thank more.

Decide now to say “thank you” more often. You will be blessed, and the recipient will be blessed. Win-win.

9. Compete less.

One thing is for sure—we're all in this world together. As a result, it's too easy to see the world as competition against one another. Instead, let's remember we're on the same team, all trying to be the best versions of ourselves. If you want to compete, compete against who you were yesterday rather than the stranger down the street.

10. Understand more.

Not only was 2020 marked with a global pandemic and economic downturn, in many parts of the world (including my own) it was a year of political strife and division where a difference in opinion was often regarded as a difference in principle. It rarely is. Everyone will benefit—both sides—if we decide now to argue less and understand more.

11. Save more.

With the overnight shutdown/collapse of many businesses and a worldwide economy, 2020 showed the importance of having some financial savings in reserve. If you haven't made saving a priority, decide to do it now.

12. Love more.

Love your spouse. Love your kids. Love your friends. Love your co-workers. Love your neighbor. Love. The world needs more of it.

What does 2021 hold? I have no idea.

But with these 12 decisions as my resolutions for 2020, I'm ready for just about anything. Because life is more than the circumstances surrounding me.

PRAYER

God of glory,
We bless your holy name that is worthy to be praised,
The God of Ebenezer, who has carried us through thus far,
The God of Emmanuel, who is with us now and always,
The Light of life, you who were made flesh in Jesus Christ, have filled us with the light of your Word.

Most of us have missed a "traditional" Christmas Eve service where we pass the candlelight to each other and sing "Silent Night" holding up our candles with the heartfelt prayer that we may become bearers of light to this world.

O Lord, we pray we won't miss the true meaning of Christmas, which is worth more than our rituals or traditions. May we celebrate in remembrance of your coming in Jesus Christ to dwell within us. Forgive our stubbornness when we resist your entering into our hearts, and for having little trust in you when our world seems dark. Help we who are living in despair to discover the light emanating even in the

darkest times of our lives. Open our eyes to see the Light of Christ surrounding us. We believe that Christ's light, which overcame the darkness, will also dispel the darkness in us and around the world, bringing joy to the world and peace on earth evermore.

From your fullness, may we receive your grace upon grace and allow your light to dwell in us to the fullest. May your brightness shine through us and onto our families, neighbors, communities, and to the ends of the earth. May the Word continue to inspire our minds and transform our lives as we pass on your light, so that others may know the power of your redeeming grace and love. Glory to God! Amen.

"It only takes a spark to get a fire going;
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing
That's how it is with God's Love; Once you've experienced it
You spread the love to everyone; You want to pass it on" (UMH # 572)

*Rev. Taesung Kang, Granite District Superintendent
Based on John 1:1-18*



SOUTH HADLEY METHODIST CHURCH

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.