



The Steeple

November 2022



FROM OUR PASTOR

As I'm writing this, I wish our doorbell would ring. It's Halloween night and in our neighborhood, no one comes around. When we lived in Westfield, we would get dozens of kids and we loved it! We really miss the excitement of the little ones, the boredom of the older ones having to walk them around, and of course having to eat the leftover candy in the bowl. Maybe there's a rumor going around that we give out homemade muffins that I bake. Come to think of it, that would keep me away too!

When we think of November, what is the first thing that comes to mind? I bet you said "Thanksgiving", right? Isn't it sad though that giving thanks is relegated to November instead of every month of the year? There's no question that we face unprecedented times of division and political unrest. Covid unraveled the fabric of fellowship and community into what came to be known as 'social isolation'. The war in Ukraine has levied barriers and sanctions that have rocked the world's energy supply, cost of living, and inflation rates unseen in decades. There's no denying the struggles we face. The question I pose however is, is that all there is?

Let us take another look around. The dazzling colors of creation as trees and flowers unveil their majestic beauty is proof there is a God. You can shower at will; just turn the faucet and there is all the water you want. Open your door and take a stroll without the fear of air raid sirens or roadside bombs. Go to your local grocery store and decide between 42,000 different types of cereal. Well, that may be an exaggeration. What about the freedom to openly worship your God without fear of reprisal?

There is so much to be thankful for, all year long. There will always be struggles and challenges but knowing God loves us for who we are – exactly as we are – we truly are blessed! And speaking of blessings, how about all the saints that have gone before us that will never be forgotten? Although our faith is strong and we believe there is no pain and suffering in the room Jesus has prepared for us, we are never ready to say goodbye. So give thanks for the time we did have to share together, the laughs, our cherished memories, and even the difficult moments that sometimes draws us even closer.

Let us enter November not as the month of Thanksgiving, but in awareness, a sense of gratitude that will last all year long. As you read this newsletter, give thanks for our family of faith, our community in fellowship, the love and acceptance we have for each other. May we always remember that the blessings we have received are not for us alone but to be shared with all those in the kingdom of God. Giving thanks begins with 'giving' to those in need. The gift we give of ourselves is how we are defined as Christians; a smile for someone who is sad, a hand to hold for someone alone, a hug for someone grieving, a visit to someone at home, food for the hungry, a prayer for the sick, a prayer for those we dislike. The Book of Matthew tells us "...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...". To me, I will always give thanks for

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you, this beautiful church, and the honor to be your pastor, teammate, and friend.

For all those who are suffering, lonely, and have lost their sense of purpose and need, always remember that God loves you for who you are, exactly as you are – and so do we. Should you need someone to reach out to, an ear to vent to, or just a presence to know you are not alone, I am only a call away.

FROM OUR LAY LEADER

I recently read a fascinating story about a statue of a woman holding her hands high above her head. In her hands was a pedestal, on which was a boll weevil. At the base of the statue was the inscription, “In profound appreciation of the Boll Weevil and what it has done as the herald of prosperity this monument was erected by the citizens of Enterprise, Coffee County, Alabama.”

This seems very strange because in the early 1900’s that little bug wiped out the entire cotton crop across the South, devastating the livelihood of everyone in that part of the country. This begs the question, why would anyone erect a statue to honor the boll weevil, going so far as to call it the “herald of prosperity?” Answer: In 1916, two farmers planted peanuts. Eventually, cotton joined peanuts as a cash crop, thanks to the federal government’s program to eradicate the boll weevil.

  This brings to mind a song that I have been known to sing out loud when I have been in a dicey situation, ♫ “God will take care of you, through everyday, o’er all the way, He will take care of you, God will take care of you.” ♫ God is faithful to us, whether we return that faithfulness or not.

The story of the boll weevil is one of God’s work in the world. God doesn’t cause tragedy and disasters, but he does bring revival. We all have gifts, through which God works his wonders. Witness the farmers who were inspired to plant peanuts. Remember Moses bringing the Hebrews out of slavery. God doesn’t have a magic wand, but he does have us to be his hands and feet in the world.

The town of Enterprise celebrated the boll weevil because that bug’s work laid the foundation for great prosperity in the South. Of course, that thankfulness grew after the people saw the beauty that eventually grew from the darkness. We don’t know what good might grow from the dark times in our lives, and some unknown future blessing does not help us at the time. However, in the meantime, we can use our gifts and graces to help someone else going through hard times, giving them something to be thankful for while warming our own heart.

Wishing you a thankful Thanksgiving,

Mary Lou



CELEBRATION, CONCERNS & MORE



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

† Carol Brunelle, Beth Dietz, Pauline & George Kiakis, Samantha Snopek, Adele Reynolds, Doug & Dee Brooksbank, Dave Fanaras, Tim O'Donnell, Lily Marion, Kathy Washburn, Darlene Dout, Mark Hudgik, Jessica Guarnera, Renata Cournoyer, Heidi Barta, Lucy Huegli, Marion Winters, Althea Viamari, Andrea Schlachter Kelly & Steve Camp

STEEPLE LIGHTING



The Steeple is lit during the month of November by Lois Felsentreger in loving memory of my husband, John.

If you would like the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00. Forms are in the back of the sanctuary or call or email the church office at office@UMCSouthHadley.org. More than one person/family may participate. parparticipate.



PRAYER

Let us therefore proclaim our gratitude to Providence for manifold blessings — let us be humbly thankful for inherited ideals —

and let us resolve to share those blessings and those ideals with our fellow human beings throughout the world.

On that (this) day let us gather in sanctuaries dedicated to worship and in homes blessed

by family affection to express our gratitude for the glorious gifts of God; and let us earnestly and humbly pray that He will continue to guide and sustain us in the great unfinished tasks of achieving peace, justice, and understanding among all men and nations and of ending misery and suffering wherever they exist.

— President John F. Kennedy



THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

Come worship, give thanks for all that's good in our lives and pray for the future on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 20. You are invited to help those in need by bringing non-perishable food or a financial donation for Neighbors Helping Neighbors.



While hunger is a year round issue, the upcoming holidays tug at our heartstrings and we tend to be more aware at this time of year. As you consider what you might bring to be blessed on November 20 we suggest you might mark each month of your calendar and make either a food or monetary donation to any of the feeding ministries in our area on a regular basis. **"Whatever you did for one of the least you did for me."**

BAKE SALE

UWF BAKE SALE is back!

Sunday, November 20 9:00 a.m.



Why: To raise money for the Methodist's Women's Mission Projects

Who: Everyone can Participate

How: Bake, Buy or Donate

Why: To help support the United Women in Faith missions.



Grab & Go

It's comfort food time!

Mac & Cheese

with Slice of Ham

November 18 5:00 to 5:45 p.m. \$12.00



Macaroni & cheese with Ham

Blond Brownie Beverage

To order: **call: 413 532-0500 Text 413 695-1212**

email: office@UMCSouthHadley.org

Include your name, phone & number of meals

THE CASSEROLES FOR KATE'S KITCHEN ARE DUE NOVEMBER 27

Thanks to all who helped, 19 casseroles were delivered in October to Kate's Kitchen.
Thank you to Carol & Tom Deren for delivering the casseroles.

Everyone is invited to help.

All are invited to **join the United Women of Faith** on November 9 at 10:00 a.m. on zoom. Lois Felsentreger will lead us in devotion. Contact Ann at office@UMCSouthHadley.org and she will send you the zoom link.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHRISTMAS CAROL Here's the info:

DATE: December 17th TIME: 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: Pine Grove Condominiums

MEET: 80 Pine Grove Drive (Kathy's unit)

Spread music for about 1 1/2 hours. Any questions, call Kathy Washburn at 413-537-0119



UMW: HATS, MITTENS, SCARVES

It's time to start knitting and buying mittens, hats & scarves. We will have a Christmas tree to hang the hats and mittens on. We will deliver them to those in need and many will be used for the Secret Santa gifts. New are best but slightly used are welcome. All sizes are needed. This small mission project has been going on in our church for what seems like forever and the children and adults who are cold appreciate the hats and mittens.

BE A SECRET SANTA – How can you help?

'Tis the time for the Secret Santa for Christmas program. We have children who will need gifts, and that means we need more people to shop and money too. Last year we helped fifty-four children have a happy Christmas.



You can help by:

Buying gifts for 1 or more children

Wrapping on Sunday, December 11 before and after worship

Donating money to help pay for gifts - before December 4

There is a Wish Card for each child. Some want toys, some want clothes or boots. The 'wish cards' will be available November 20th or sooner. Your help is always welcome.

If you have question or would like to help, talk to Ann 413-695-1212.



For too many local children this Christmas, stockings hung by the chimney with care will be empty. Too many local parents will be heartsick that they can't give their children a Christmas with the pleasant surprises.

If you know of a family who will go without gifts, give their information to Ann. Names and all information will be kept confidential.

Catch the spirit of Christmas and become a Secret Santa.

- CELEBRATE DIVERSITY -

All are welcome - loved for who you are, exactly as you are.

Join us for worship or join in one of our missions.

United Methodist Church

Of

Holyoke, South Hadley & Granby

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, MA 01075

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m. in our Sanctuary and on Zoom

Pastor Joe DeGrande 413 237-6823

Pastorjoe.umcsouthhadley@gmail.com

My office hours are Tuesday from 10:00-3:00 and Thursday 10:00-2:30 p.m.

My door is always open so please stop by.

Should something be weighing heavy on your heart, I'm only a phone call away - no matter what day or time.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen are due

November 6: 6:00 p.m. SPRC with D.S. Rev. Megan Stowe
7:00 p.m. Annual Church Conference

November 8: 6:30 p.m. Education meeting on zoom

November 9: 10:00 a.m. United Women in Faith on zoom

November 15: 6:30 p.m. Church council & Trustee

November 17: 10:00 a.m. Make dessert for Grab & Go meal

November 18: 5:00-5:45 p.m. Grab & Go Supper

November 20: 9:00 a.m. UWF Bake Sale is back!



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.



