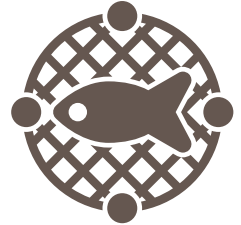


MARCH 2024 | NO.3



THE FISHNET

ZACHARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Everyone should have a favorite Bible character. And if you're really a liturgical nerd, you should have a favorite character for every liturgical season. My favorite Lenten character is Nicodemus. He's sort of obscure and not really "out front", but his story is our story for Lent. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a part of the religious elite, which, in effect, put him at odds with Jesus - Nico's people were not a fan of Jesus and all the trouble he was causing. Nicodemus' story is captured throughout the Gospel of John, where he makes three appearances:

1. The first is in John 3. Nicodemus is curious about Jesus. He goes to visit Jesus under the cover of nightfall - he is scared someone might see him and rat him out.
2. The second time is John 7. By this time, Nico has learned more about Jesus. I'd like to think the Holy Spirit has been 'working on him', as the old preachers used to say. He reminds the Sanhedrin (religious judges) that everyone deserves their day in court - we should not judge someone before they are allowed to speak.
3. The final time we see Nico is after Jesus has died. He is one of the ones who come and anoint the body of Jesus pre-resurrection (John 19).

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

That is a pretty incredible arch for a character. He begins with doubts, fears, anxiety, even fear for his life and ends claiming his love for Jesus in a most intimate way in the full light of day - no longer worried or afraid.

In essence, this, too, is our invitation for the season of Lent. To let go of ourselves and claim with full assurance the life that comes from knowing and giving ourselves to the God of Nicodemus.

Imagine the risk. Imagine the consequences.

How often do we allow the risk, consequences, anxiety, and fear to hold us back from being fully who God made us to be fully who God needs us to be in and for this world?

May you discover your inner Nicodemus throughout this Lenten Season. May you give yourselves fully to the mysterious grace and love of God. May you be unafraid to share your faith. May you bloom and grow where you have been planted. And may the beauty of God within each and every one of you, shine the Light of Christ so brightly that others can't help but notice the Christ in you.

Rev. Austin

ISERVE 2024

The annual iServe Survey is out for 2024! Please make sure everyone in your household completes a survey so we have an accurate roster of servants and areas of ministry you wish to fulfill your service to the church. Copies of the survey can be found in the Lobby of the Sanctuary or on the Welcome Table in the Fellowship Hall for the Pathway Service.

You may also complete the form online:

www.zacharyumc.org/iserve



STUDENT MINISTRIES

SUNDAYS 4-6PM

Before I even officially began my job as Student Ministries Director at Zachary United Methodist Church, I was told to reserve the weekend of February 16-18 for Happening. I didn't know what to expect but I knew it had to be something special to have heard about it from so many members and parents.

This has been the first time that I have been a part of a congregation that has had multiple members approach me to tell me that they are willing to fully sponsor any youth that want to attend the retreat. I knew I should be expecting something great for the youth but still had no idea what to expect. Little did I realize how much God was going to fill my spiritual cup along with everyone else's. I had the honor to witness the growth of our two youth who attended over the span of a weekend. God is at work through the youth of our Methodist churches and it was obvious over that short time together. I believe this is a small spark that our student ministry needed to begin to grow comfortable with one another and look forward to the ways in which we see the Holy Spirit continue to work going forward through youth group gatherings on Sundays and our fun events.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Wednesday
Night Supper

FIRST WEDNESDAY
OF THE MONTH

LITTLE SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Opens March 15th

Active Church Participants
Receive Priority Placement &
\$100 off tuition/month

zacharyumc.org/littleschool



ZUMC Youth

MOVIE NIGHT

7 PM 9 PM



Saturday, March 2



FUSION ELEVATE

March 15-17 Church Youth Groups
Grades 9 thru 12

Senior High Retreat



Worship & Devotions,
Gaga Ball, Zip Lining,
Nine Square in the Air,
Bonfire and more!

Register by March 7, 2024

\$135/PERSON

www.TheWesleyCenter.com/fusion-events

Church Council Update

zacharyumc.org/leadership

We begin 2024 with great hope for our congregation and for our Church Council. In working with Rev. Austin, we have reimagined the way we will conduct Council Meetings throughout 2024. Instead of Council Meetings becoming a “reporting mechanism” by which we simply report on what has been done in the past, we want to shift the narrative to dream and collaborate about our future together as a congregation. At each meeting, we will discuss attainable congregational goals, avenues for accomplishing our mission, discern better our unique vision for being a church in the heart of Zachary, and we will discuss together specific questions centered around our ministry efforts at ZUMC.

Everyone is invited to attend these meetings - the more voices the better!

There is an old wisdom saying that goes like this:

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Let’s go forward, together.

Upcoming Church Council Meetings:

April 15, 2024 – 6pm

May 13, 2024 – 6pm

June 17, 2024 – 6pm

****All Meetings Held in the Church Office Conference Room****

A LENTEN BLESSING BY KATE BOWLER

FROM "HAVE A BEAUTIFUL, TERRIBLE LENT"

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. –Philippians 4:6 (niv)

I hold my thoughts on a leash, dragging them around. Didn't I do something really stupid this morning? Probably. What did I say again? Oh, let me pull that around too. I revise and revise, stew and replay. I am fairly certain that somewhere out there people are probably pretty annoyed at me, at the very least.

Does your mind churn too? What category of thoughts take up too much space? Family, work, dating, love, kids? Or are your worries more diffuse, fogging up a clear mind for no particular reason? When I am trying to release these worries to God, I imagine that, instead of a leash, I am holding a series of helium balloons. Each carrying its own weight. And, oh look, I just let go. Now they can float around the ceiling at will. If I need one later, I can fish for it, but, truly, who needs another worry?

Let's bless our anxious hearts with a peace that God is particularly good at giving.

God, it doesn't seem possible to align my anxious self to your word that says to me: "Don't be anxious about anything." Because I'm already stewing. I'm a worrier, and you already know that. So here we are. And here I am, being what I am.

God, open your heart to mine and pour in your peace. Let your mind flow into these scattered thoughts that seem to want to cling to worries And coalesce like metal filings to a magnet. I need your spirit to bless me with a calm that isn't mine to create.

Bless all my stubbornness and allow me to, wonderfully, just give up for a moment. To stop fighting my own needs and concerns.

And if I can barely do it, bless even the trying to try (for that's roughly all I'm able to do, and I smile to think that even this pleases you).

Bless my will to will that anxiety be lifted away, that when worries arise, I can say to them, "Go on, keep rising all the way to God who can handle this." I'll pray them up, up, up, and away.



EASTER SERIES: “LIVING IN A POST RESURRECTION WORLD”

One of the central messages of the Christian faith that is most often overlooked is that Christ is present in and through all things, which means that everything is sacred and every moment is holy. From Easter to Pentecost, we will explore the good news that Christ is risen - not just physically from the grave some two thousand years ago but in every aspect of our lives and world - and how to live in awe of the mundane moments of ordinary lives. This series begins with focusing on the resurrection of Jesus, a single person, and leads us to Pentecost, where we understand the way in which the entire faith community and indeed the world is resurrected in the Spirit of Christ.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 24TH

POTLUCK AND EGG HUNT FOLLOWING 11AM SERVICE

MAUNDY THURSDAY - MARCH 28TH

6PM - ZACHARY UMC

GOOD FRIDAY - MARCH 29TH

6PM - BLACKWATER UMC - “THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST”



ZUMC FISHING TRIP

April 5-6

Register by March 24th
225-405-0077



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