

Good News and good news

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If you offer...

by Judi Sweeney

Monday morning I slept in until 7:10 am. I dragged myself out of bed, made coffee, went into the back room and greeted Jack, who was already awake. It took me a good half an hour to really wake up and come up with one of my least favorite daily questions to Jack, "What do you want for breakfast?" Now, you need to understand that Jack has particular tastes (and distastes), so there isn't a really long list from which he can choose. I tried to get by choices that would create a half hour's work (or more) in the kitchen by adding, "I'll make anything with the cinnamon bread we already have." Still no answer, but I knew he was thinking. I added (without thinking it through), "I can make toast, or French toast." The minute it was out of my mouth, I knew what he would choose – French toast. So, I dragged my tired self with an unhappy face out to the kitchen to make it. (Now he did offer to have toast as he saw me dragging myself to the kitchen.) I made the French toast, but I didn't make it with a very Christian attitude.

My parents always raised me with the idea that if you gave someone a set of options, and they chose one of the options *you gave them*, then you needed to give that option to them with joy – not sighing, not complaining, not dragging off to do it. One Mother's Day, I offered to do any chore my mother asked of me that day. The key word was "any." I didn't think about that, and my mother asked if I could clean the bathroom for her (she had run out of time the day before). Immediately, these words came out of my mouth, "I hate cleaning the bathroom!" My mother's quiet response was, "But you said you would do anything." That stopped any further discussion, but honestly it didn't affect my attitude. I pouted through the entire clean-up. Later, we talked about how important our attitude is when we offer to give something or do something for someone else and they take us up on our offer.

Continued on page 4...

Missions Update

SEND International

John and Susan Edwards of SEND International have been missionaries to Japan for over 30 years. They are some of the most recent additions to our missions' support. (Our church funds missions through donations specified for missions. The money going to these missions does not come from the church budget.) They frequently send out newsletters to share what they are doing and to ask for specific prayer support. Included are a few of the stories from their recent newsletter. Contact Sharon Combs for more information.

"Our regular gatherings at Hikari House (our house) have been wonderful for deepening relationships. For several months now during our Wednesday morning Tea Time, Susan chooses a scene from "The Chosen" and prints out the corresponding Bible passage in English and Japanese. We watch the video clip, read the scripture, and discuss Jesus. In March, we watched a clip from the old "Jesus" video of Jesus' death and resurrection. Two of our guests, both adult women, had never heard this story before. One has commented that the video clips have helped her to understand the Bible better. One local believer often prepares a song to sing. One simple Japanese song about how wonderful Jesus is was written by a sickly eight-year-old child. Our guests were moved by this child's faith."

The day before Easter, we planned an outreach event for children at our church in neighboring Murayama city. (There is only one child who semi-regularly attends our church.) Nineteen children came. Two middle school students left early but the rest stayed. They played games, got some snacks, and they heard the story of Jesus' death and resurrection expertly told by two members of the church. Many of the children and even a couple mothers had never heard about this before."

good news...

These are the birthdays of people age 65 and older and couples with anniversaries from May 6th through May 23rd.

Birthdays:

Bob Banthin	May 7
Linda Ostiguy	May 7
Celia Daniels	May 9
Bruce Arnold	May 19
Nancy Olson	May 23
Gretchen Mollins	May 23

Anniversaries:

Mark & Joan Hume	May 6
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Annual Baptism Service June 23, 2024...

Our annual Baptism Service will be held at the Sweeney's home on Lake Wickaboag in West Brookfield at 2 pm on Sunday, June 23rd. Baptism in our church is the individual choice of a person who has made a personal decision to publicly affirm Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. The decision to be baptized is made by the person after the person has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Baptism service is their public proclamation of this faith. Babies and small children are dedicated by their parents in our church.

If you or your older child wish to be baptized, please see Pastor Joe or any Diaconate member as soon as possible. Please also talk to us if you have any questions.



\$12
Chicken
Dinner

Memorial Day Chicken Barbecue

\$5 / free
Hot Dog
Meal

Memorial Day

Chicken Barbecue

Eat-in or Take-out
Full Chicken or Hot Dog Meals
Tickets go on Sale May 1



Tickets for

Memorial Day Chicken BBQ (and Hot Dog meals)

Now on sale before
and after church



Members for 75 Years!

Congratulations to the following active members of our church family who joined us in membership 75 years ago!

Pauline Dwelly
Berkeley Burnham
Mary McGrail

Blue lettering indicates those groups that have updated information.

Adult Sunday School Class

This adult Bible Study meets weekly during the school year from 9:30 - 10:15 am in the Conference Room. Starting on January 21st, the class will be taught for awhile by Patti Barney using the book *Psalms 91*.

Monday Morning Women's Bible Study

Meeting weekly at Phyllis Cobiski's home at 23 Gilbert Street from 10 - 11:30 am. The group will be starting a new study called "Breaking Free" on January 8th. Contact Pauline Dwelly for information.

Women's Monday Afternoon Bible Study

This group recently started a new study using the book *Grounded in the Faith* which has twenty-four low prep, in-depth sessions to ground believers in the basics of their faith. Topics include justification, sanctification, evidence for the inspiration of the Bible, the Trinity, God's attributes, Jesus' humanity and divinity and much more. The cost of the book is \$20. Contact Susan Gainley.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 6 to 7:30 pm. The group meets in the Parlor. Contact Karen Bessette for more information.

It's All About Jesus

This Bible Study group meets to learn more about Jesus through the Scriptures. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Contact Jade Ford for more information.

Men's Bible Study This group is currently in the final books of the Torah (Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Working through the Bible with a Bible Study entitled *The Essential 100*, we're discovering the 100 most inspirational passages in God's Word that truly identify the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. The men meet on Tuesdays



from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Conference Room. Contact Brian Roth for details.

Understanding Spiritual Gifts - Zoom

This Zoom Bible study biweekly on Wednesday nights from 6:45 pm. They are Studying Spiritual Gifts, a study by Kay Arthur (available on Amazon). Contact Marcia Cummings to get a Zoom invite for the class as well as for more information.

Christian Yoga • Balanced in Him

Meeting every Wednesday night in the parlor. Contact Holly Kularski for information.

Prayer Group

This group meets weekly on Fridays at 9:30 - 11:00 am in the Conference Room. Contact Nancy Olson for details.

Celia Daniel's Bible Study

This Bible Study meets in the Multi-Purpose Room on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Contact Celia Daniels for more information.

Sweeney Bible Study

We continue with our life application Bible studies. Our next meetings will be on May 9th and 23rd. Contact Judi Sweeney.

Living Single - NEW

This new group for singles aged 30+ meets on Thursday nights. On first and third Thursdays in each month, they meet in the Conference Room. On 2nd and 4th Thursdays, they do activities in the area. Contact Bridget Reynolds for details.

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Study

The monthly men's breakfast and Bible Study is on the second Saturday of each month. Contact Dale Wadsworth for information. **The next breakfast is May 11th at 8:15 am.**

Drawing Closer

The Bible Journaling Group will meet in the Multi-Purpose Room from 9:30 - 11:00 am on Saturdays. Contact Deb Arnold.

Parents of Little Ones Bible Study

This new group will meet at the Hulsebus' home on the first Saturdays of the month. This group is starting a new study called "Grace Based Parenting" by Dr. Tim Kimmel. Please reach out to Brian or Jessie for more information.

Jr. KICK

This group for students in grades 6 through 8 meets from at 2:00 to 3:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Ignite

This group for high school students meets from 4 - 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Sharing Christ Through Cards

Watch the newsletter for the next session.

Joy 'n Hope

The Cancer Care Ministry supports people with cancer as well as their caregivers. They also pray for people whose life is impacted by cancer each month. See Melanie Silva Fortier for more information.

Age 4 - Grade 2

Jesus Loves the Children...

by Jade Ford

This week at Sunday School we talked about how much Jesus loves the children, and how he encourages us to have a childlike faith. We talked about Jesus being our friend, and how He loves to spend time with us. "But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14



Grade 3 - 5

The Wise and Foolish King...

by Sue Caron

After prayer, the students listened to the story of King Solomon. When he first became king, Solomon loved the Lord (like his father David had) and walked in His ways. God told the young king that whatever he asked for he would have. Solomon wanted to be a good ruler, so he asked for wisdom. God was pleased with Solomon. He gave Solomon a palace and riches as well.

He wanted Solomon to build His temple. It took 13 years, but he did it. As time went on, Solomon married. He married again and again. He eventually had 700 wives! The worst part was that many of his wives worshipped pagan gods, and Solomon began to worship them too. Solomon's reign was seen as successful by the people. Sadly, his heart had been divided, and before long, his kingdom would be too.



Age 4 - Grade 2

The Tax Collector...

by Crystal Caron

On May 5th, our Bible story was about Zacchaeus the tax collector. When we asked if anyone knew who he was, one student offered, "He didn't file his taxes!" Now we all know he was over-charging and keeping the extra tax money, but even those who've stolen or made bad decisions can still be a friend of Jesus because "God loves everyone!" We can change our ways, too.



Meeting Dates ***Vacation Bible School*** ***for Helpers and Teachers***

If you are called to help out at Vacation Bible School this summer (July 22 - 26), please make note of these meeting dates. The meetings will be held from **6:30 - 7:30 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room in the Church Office Building.** The meeting dates are:

May 8 • June 12 • July 10



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Attitude Adjustment

The first obvious place to go in the Bible to study this idea is in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver." Obviously, I didn't do that this morning. I wasn't cheerful when Jack chose exactly what I had offered. Looking at the context of that verse shows that Paul actually understood this, "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." If we actually offer a series of things to someone else that we have decided in our hearts, then we should do what they decide on from our list of offers. But we can't do this reluctantly or under compulsion. We should do it with joy, with a cheerful heart. When we act in this way, God gives us "all grace" to complete the task, even if it is hard for us.

But where do we go from here? Do we never offer to help out a person if that offer would cause us distress, time, effort, money, etc.? What if it was the Holy Spirit who sent a "niggle" of a suggestion to your heart and mind, an idea that said, "Offer your time to help that person.?" What if you have to give up something that you have in order to lovingly meet the needs of others? Paul, in Philippians 2:14-16 offers us part of the answer, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that

you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain." We are to be a shining light to the world, an example. Our grumbling and complaining ruins the light of the Church to the rest of the world. Isn't it twice as bad because we actually offered to do something in the beginning, but now we complain about what it "cost" us?

With Mother's Day coming this weekend, I can't help but wonder how much better my mother would have felt if I had cleaned the bathroom with a smile. I recently read a quote that made me remember all of this lesson, "When you start thinking about reasons to complain, think instead of someone you can bless." And if that doesn't sink in completely, consider this – Jesus offered to die for us so that we would not be eternally punished for our sins. He didn't complain. He didn't roll his eyes. He didn't fight back or even state His case to those who hated Him. Many, many years before, Isaiah accurately prophesied how Jesus would handle His own death and the salvation He had offered each of us in Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth." No matter what He had to go through, no matter the pain, He joyously gave of Himself...for us. That must be our model for giving to others.



Spring #2
CLEAN UP
Saturday, May 25th
8:30 am - 12:30 pm
We'll be cleaning up the Green and parking lot so everything is ready for the Memorial Day Chicken BBQ on May 27th.

Updates: Blessings to Babies... by Pauline Dwelly

We need to update the numbers of different baby items that were given earlier this year. In addition to everything listed in last week's issue, here are some updates:

- 56 outfits (instead of 19)
- 2 knit sets for babies
- 2 \$200 checks for car seats
- 1 bag of baby food went into the Fundraiser

Thanks for Milk Money and More...

In the last issue of the newsletter, we asked for cash donations to help the Food Pantry purchase fresh milk, butter and eggs – especially for the families with children. Our church family's response was beyond even our hope. Praise God...



JARS Café

by Annie Shea

Some of you may have heard that Sujoy Spencer and I are working on opening a breakfast/cafe here in North Brookfield. It has been a life-long dream for the both of us, and we have been planning this for the last two years.

God waited for the perfect timing and the perfect place. We looked at a few places last summer, but nothing felt like the perfect place. I was laid off from Morning Star Christian Bookstore in February, and a week later 23 Summer Street was up for rent. I texted my favorite realtor, Lene, and asked if she could get us in to see it. We were in that afternoon. Both Lene and I (and Sujoy on FaceTime) said that it was perfect. The next step was to talk to the building inspector to see if the space was allowed to open as a café, and it just so happens that he was in his office that same night. Lene and I talked with him, and it was all good! God has been with us every step of the way and things are moving, not as fast as we like sometimes, but they are moving. We are still working on getting it ready for the Board of Health to come in, and we are hoping and praying we can open sometime this month.

Please pray everything comes together and we open soon. Please come and see what we have been doing here and get a free cup of coffee and free muffin.

We want to also thank those who knew and were praying and are still praying. We want to give a very special thank you to Lene Guertin who helped find this awesome place and especially to Joe and Richard, our biggest supporters. Thank you all for your future support.



Luke 13:1-21

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