
Murray Presbyterian Messenger

March 2023



Murray Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409

www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Lenten Journey Continues



Wednesday Evening Soup Suppers and Bible Study

Take the Lenten Challenge (Gospel of John reading plan)

Maundy Thursday Worship

(See all the details on page 5)

Murray Presbyterian Church, Murray, NE
(402)235-2754
www.murraypresbyterian.org



Upcoming Events

Sundays

9:00 am: Adult Sunday School

10:00 am: Morning Worship

Feb. 22 7:00 pm: Ash Wed.
Service

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plates during worship services, mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at www.murraypresbyterian.org. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

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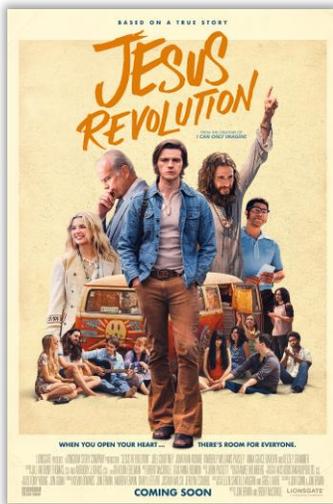
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When I started out in our church's Baptist Youth Fellowship (BYF), it was a rather staid affair. We were virtually all the offspring of church members. On Sunday evenings, we donned our jackets and ties or dresses (depending on gender), sat in the rows of wooden chairs in a Sunday School classroom, and sang choruses like "Do, Lord" and "Christ for Me," as Miss Blair accompanied us on the piano. The officers sat a table in the front of the room and, at some point in

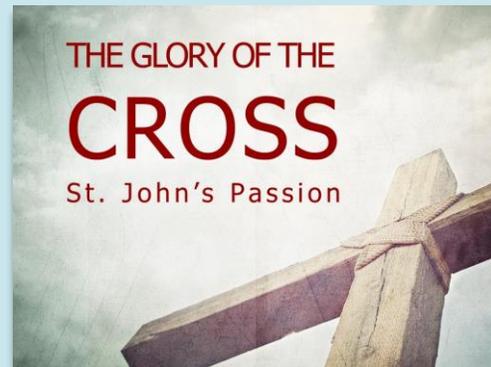
the meeting, the minutes were read and approved. There was a devotional. We gathered around the table for a prayer circle and then closed with the Mizpah Benediction.

But then, sometime in my early adolescence, a development took place that shook up our staid, comfortable church routine. An establishment called the Jesus Christ Coffeehouse opened up on the main street through our neighborhood of Philadelphia. Soon, young people from the community, including students at the local high school, began congregating there and many of them started experiencing life-changing spiritual conversions. A teacher who noticed the transformed lives of his students went to the coffee house to investigate—and he wound up committing his life to Christ. We began holding testimony services at the church, and scores of young people would come and bear witness to how Christ had saved them out of a life of drug addiction or some other troubled past.

The churches that were open to what God seemed to be doing in our community experienced a spiritual re-awakening. The perfunctory altar call at the end of the service (usually an opportunity for people to walk forward and declare their intention to join on a letter of transfer from some other church) became a time when people were coming to make first time professions of faith. In the past, all the local church youth groups would periodically come together for Christian Endeavor hymn sings. Now, the various churches were organizing contemporary musical ensembles with instruments like guitars and drums. Youth events were re-energized by newcomers who brought fresh spiritual passion.

What we were witnessing in our little section of Philadelphia was a local manifestation of a movement sweeping the country—and now depicted in the film, *The Jesus Revolution*. Even if I remained one of the jacket-and-tie, hymn-singing traditionalists, I'm glad I had at least a brief

Upcoming Worship Opportunities Sermon Series for Sundays in Lent



Our focus on John's gospel continues during the Lenten season with a series using passages from the second half of the book (chapters 13-20), sometimes called "the Book of Glory." (chapter 13-20)

Feb. 26: The Glory of Universal Appeal
(John 12: 20-33)

March 5: The Glory of Humility
(John 13:1-15)

March 12: The Glory of Sacrificial Love
(John 15:9-17)

March 19: The Glory of Submission
(John 17:1-5)

March 26: The Glory of Moral Authority
(John 18:28-38)

April 2: The Glory of Fulfillment
(John 19:23-30)

April 9 (Easter):
The Individuality of the
Resurrection (John 20:11-17)

exposure to that spiritual awakening. It left a lasting impression on me. But by the time I was in high school, the real energy had dissipated. Before shutting down, the coffeehouse had become a notorious hangout and a nuisance for the local police precinct. But I've often wondered about all those young people who underwent such a dramatic, life-changing experience and gave such compelling testimonies. Did they develop a mature Christian faith and go on to lifetimes of discipleship and service? Or was it a passing fad?

Spiritual mountaintop experiences can be very powerful. But they ultimately need to be translated into long-lasting forms of discipleship. In the gospels, there's an account of a literal mountaintop experience, when a handful of Jesus' disciples witnessed his so-called transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8). And they responded the way we customarily respond to spiritual mountaintops—they wanted to "freeze the moment in time" by building little shelters and staying there (vs. 4). But Jesus rejected the idea. They had to go back down into the valley, where there were hurting people (like a boy who was evidently an epileptic). For Jesus, it was the moment when he embarked on the journey to the Cross.

It's been gratifying in the past month to see signs of a fresh spiritual awakening among college students—first at Asbury University and then (by way of a ripple effect) at other schools. Only eternity will reveal the full impact of what is taking place. But we earnestly hope that this movement of the Spirit produces true and lasting fruits of revival. That's certainly been the track record of authentic revivals in the past, which have provided an impetus for church expansion, social reform, missionary ventures, and other major spiritual breakthroughs.

Our own congregation is arguably the by-product of powerful spiritual awakenings. It was organized in the immediate aftermath of the Layman's Prayer Revival (starting in 1867). And although I can't prove it, it appears to me as though that revival movement may have precipitated the denominational merger that led to Rev McCartney's Nebraska mission. In the early 1890's, the Lord sent revival to our congregation and so many people came to faith that a new sanctuary had to be built—the one in which we are still worshipping.

What the Lord has done in the past, he can do again! We're grateful for the faithful prayer warriors who are beseeching God every Monday evening to send a fresh spiritual awakening to our village and to protect it from spiritual threats. May all of us be open to renewal in our lives and see fruits of lasting change.



Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2023

Denise Ayers

Melanie Honaker

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Dave Friedli

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Deacons

Class of 2023

Delaney Deterding

Dana Stahl

Ann Wieringa

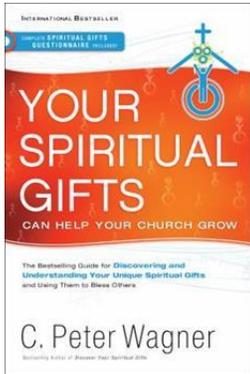
Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Adult Sunday School



The adult Sunday School class continues looking at the important topic of spiritual gifts. What gift (or gifts) have you been given to build up the body of Christ—and how can you use them most effectively? Using resources from renowned missiologist C. Peter Wagner, participants in this study have the opportunity to use an assessment tool to discover their own gifts and are exploring the 28 ministry gifts mentioned in the New Testament. The class meets Sunday mornings at 9:00 am

Confirmation & Adult Inquirers Class



A **confirmation class** for high school students is now underway.

An adult **Inquirer's Class** will be meeting Sunday mornings at 9:00 am starting on **March 19** (with a break for Palm Sunday and Easter). This class is designed to prepare people interested in joining the church by profession

or reaffirmation of faith. But it is open to anyone interested in exploring basics of the Christian life, what the church is all about, and what it means to be a Presbyterian.

Mission & Outreach *Melanie Honaker, Team Leader*

SENCA Food Pantry



Help a local family in need enjoy a traditional Easter dinner this year with your contributions to the SENCA food cart in the rear of the sanctuary. Non-perishable items for an Easter dinner are March's theme. Keep filling the cart!

Litter Clean-Up

The next litter clean-up along our adopted stretch of Highway 1 will take place on **Saturday, March 25**. Meet on the parking lot of Conestoga Jr./Sr. High School at **10:00 am**. All supplies are provided!



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

Linnea Hill, Team Leader

Amanda Anderson
Jeff Anderson
Adam Gillaspie
Rebecca Gillaspie
Sherrill Konfrst
Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

Melanie Honaker, Team Leader

George Collins
Sydney Honaker
John McConnell
Stacey McConnell
Deanne Slaffer
Dana Stahl
Ann Wieringa

Christian Education

Denise Ayers, Team Leader.

Sharlyn Deterding
Kathy Friedli
Julie Nickels
Linnea Hill

Properties and Finance

Kenny Drake, Team Leader

Dave Friedli, *Session Rep.*
Michael Stahl, *Session Rep.*
Sharlyn Deterding
Norm Koester
Gary Reike
Jerry Slaffer

Join the Lenten Journey

Wednesdays in Lent: Soup Supper & Bible Study



If you haven't yet attended a Wednesday night soup supper and Bible study, you're missing out on a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and spiritual enrichment during the Lenten season. A simple meal of soup and bread is served starting at 6:30 pm. At 7:00 pm, we open with a brief evening prayer liturgy followed by a short teaching on John's gospel delivered via video by influential pastor and author Adam Hamilton (United Methodist Church of the Resurrection,

Leawood, KS). For the remainder of the hour (up until 8:00 pm), Rev. McConnell offers additional insights and leads a discussion on the evening's topic from John's gospel. The series continues every Wednesday evening up until March 29. Join us when you are able!

Take the Lenten Challenge!

There's still plenty of time to read through the gospel of John during this year's Lenten season. If you're following the reading plan, it's again included on the last page (also available in a pamphlet on the back table of the sanctuary). You can use your own Bible, or you are welcome to take a copy of John in the modern-language New Living Translation from the back table. A study guide is available at:

https://mbbc.org/uploads/images/project119_gospel_of_john. Other resources are on the church website <http://www.murraypresbyterian.org/lenten-challenge/>). If you haven't started yet, remember the average reading time for the gospel of John is about two hours—about as long as it takes to watch a movie.



Support the One Great Hour of Sharing



This year's One Great Hour of Sharing campaign is underway up through Easter. An annual tradition in the Presbyterian Church for over 70 years now, proceeds from this special offering are divided between the Presbyterian Hunger Program (36%), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (32%) and Self-Development of People (32%). From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, these programs all work together to help individuals and communities in need.

Maundy Thursday Service

Make plans to attend the traditional service for Maundy Thursday, to be held this year on April 6 at 7:00 pm. Along with hymns, scripture, and reflections, this service concludes with the Lord's Supper, as we remember how Jesus instituted this meal on the night he was betrayed and arrested. Remembering our Lord's passion and the message of the Cross is an important prelude to the Easter celebration.



Take the Lenten Challenge: Gospel of John Reading Plan

Week 1

Wednesday, February 22 | John 1:1-28

Thursday, February 23 | John 1:29-51

Friday, February 24 | John 2:1-25

Week 2

Monday, February 27 | John 3:1-36

Tuesday, February 28 | John 4:1-26

Wednesday, March 1 | John 4:27-54

Thursday, March 2 | John 5:1-29

Friday, March 3 | John 5:30-47

Week 3

Monday, March 6 | John 6:1-24

Tuesday, March 7 | John 6:25-71

Wednesday, March 8 | John 7:1-53

Thursday, March 9 | John 8:1-30

Friday, March 10 | John 8:31-59

Week 4

Monday, March 13 | John 9:1-41

Tuesday, March 14 | John 10:1-42

Wednesday, March 15 | John 11:1-57

Thursday, March 16 | John 12:1-19

Friday, March 17 | John 12:20-50

Week 5

Monday, March 20 | John 13:1-20

Tuesday, March 21 | John 13:21-38

Wednesday, March 22 | John 14:1-31

Thursday, March 23 | John 15:1-17

Friday, March 24 | John 15:18-27

Week 6

Monday, March 27 | John 16:1-15

Tuesday, March 28 | John 16:16-33

Wednesday, March 29 | John 17:1-19

Thursday, March 30 | John 17:20-26

Friday, March 31 | John 18:1-40

Week 7

Monday, April 3 | John 19:1-16

Tuesday, April 4 | John 19:17-42

Wednesday, April 5 | John 20:1-18

Thursday, April 6 | John 20:19-31

Friday, April 7 | John 21:1-25

Study Guide:

https://mbbc.org/uploads/images/project119_gospel_of_john

