
Murray Presbyterian Messenger

September 2024



Murray Presbyterian Church

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

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

Featured This Month: **Fall Kick-Off**



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



Upcoming Events

Sundays

10:00 am: Morning Worship

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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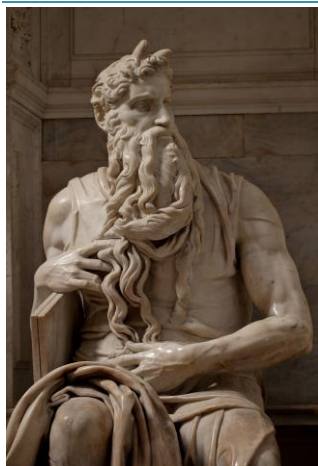
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We've all got a story. There's our personal life story. But we also tend to interpret our own individual life experiences within the framework of what literary theorists sometimes call a "metanarrative." There's some overarching storyline or belief pattern that gives structure and meaning to our individual experiences. Talk to anyone going through an addiction recovery process in a twelve-step program and you're apt to encounter a distinctive nomenclature and way of telling one's story. Social media posts and popular

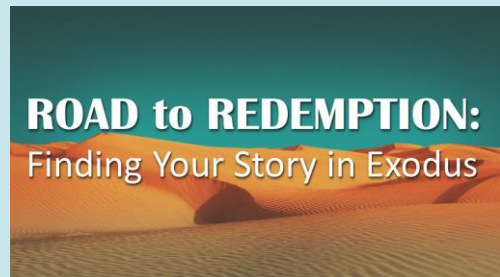
culture in general are awash in the language of "therapy speak." Other people's story is wrapped up in a group identity and the dynamics of privilege, oppression, and empowerment.

Those interpretive grids may have their place. But for people of biblical faith, there's one overarching narrative that trumps all others. It's the biblical drama of salvation. And in its original form, it goes back thousands of years—to the story of Exodus. Last year at this time, we went through the early chapters of Genesis and looked at how they provide what we called "the contours of a biblical worldview" (an overall biblical understanding of ultimate reality and the human condition). Exodus then gives us the pattern for how we experience salvation and enter into a relationship with the God of the Bible.

It's a pattern that shapes everything that follows. *The New Testament is utterly replete with Exodus imagery!* It's how the earliest followers of Jesus came to understand who he was and what his death on the cross was all about. Redemption. Deliverance. Atonement. Sacrifice. All straight out of Exodus! Why else was Jesus crucified right smack in the middle of the Passover celebration, with the words of Exodus ringing in everyone's ears? No wonder a study guide in the Keryma Bible Study series describes Exodus as "the gateway to the Bible."

Exodus doesn't just give us the key to understanding Jesus. It also provides the template for our experience of salvation. The late Dr. Timothy Keller used to tell the story of a turning point in his understanding of the Bible that took place the summer between his college and seminary years. He was with a group of other students, sitting on the floor of R. C. Sproul's house in Ligonier, PA, listening to a talk by the British Old Testament scholar Alec Motyer. Like a lot of Christians, Keller had casually assumed that the two testaments present different paths to salvation. In the Old Testament, people were saved by keeping the law. Then, the New Testament came along and introduced a way of salvation by grace through faith.

Upcoming
Worship Opportunities
Fall Sermon Series



What does it mean to be a Christian? Look over the following list of themes from the book of Exodus—stages in the Exodus journey. They should all be features of our lives! As Christians, we're on the same spiritual pilgrimage. Join us this fall as we trace these steps together and find ourselves along the Exodus "road to redemption."

- Sept. 8:** "Starting Out in Bondage" (Exodus 1:6-22)
- Sept. 15:** "Encountering the Holy" (Exodus 3:1-14)
- Sept. 22:** "The Reality of Judgment" (Exodus 7:1-5, 9:13-21)
- Sept. 29:** "Sacrifice of a Substitute" (Exodus 12:1-13)
- Oct. 6:** "Evil's Decisive Defeat" (Exodus 14:5-9, 13-14, 21-31)
- Oct. 13:** "Guidance Through the Wilderness" (Exodus 13:17-14:4)
- Oct. 20:** "Experiencing Provision" (Exodus 16:1-15)
- Oct. 27:** **Rev. Dr. Michael Elliott**
- Nov. 3:** "Claiming a New Identity in Community" (Exodus 19:1-6)
- Nov. 10:** "Obeying a Set of Standards" (Exodus 20:1-17)
- Nov. 17:** "Worship at the Center" (Exodus 25:1-8)
- Nov. 24:** "Having an Intercessor" (Exodus 32:7-14)

But that night, Sproul asked Prof. Motyer about the connection between the two testaments, and his response (as Keller always recounted it) went something like this:

“Think about it. Think of what an Israelite would say on the way to Canaan after passing through the Red Sea. If you asked an Israelite, ‘Who are you?’ he [or she] might reply, ‘I was in a foreign land under the sentence of death and in bondage, but I took shelter under the blood of the lamb. And our mediator led us out, and we crossed over. Now we’re on our way to the Promised Land, though we’re not there yet. But he has given us his law to make us a community, and he has given us a tabernacle because we must live by grace and forgiveness. And he is present in our midst, and he will stay with us until we arrive home.’”

Motyer then added: *“That’s exactly what a Christian says—almost word for word.”* Through Jesus, we’ve taken the Exodus story and made it our own!

That will be our focus in Sunday morning worship services over the next several months. We’ll be retracing the steps in the Exodus story—but not just in order to rehash an episode of ancient history. First and foremost, we’re retelling the story of the Exodus in order to claim it as our story! The goal is to see ourselves in the narrative.

So I hope you’ll be with us as often as possible. I hope you might consider re-reading the Exodus story for yourself. Maybe you’ll even want to check out some of the monumental film adaptations or great musical compositions (like Handel’s oratorio, *Israel in Egypt*). Let’s get ready for a deep dive into Exodus and discover what it has to say about our walk of faith!

Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Denise Ayers

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Class of 2026

Tanner Miner

Kyle Nickels

Deacons

Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Class of 2025

Ryleigh Hill

Stacey McConnell

Karla Remmers

Vacation / Study Leave

On a personal note, thank you to everyone who supported the ministry of our guest preachers during my absence from the pulpit. Thank you for the prayers and well-wishes extended to us and to John as he is embarking on a new adventure in life. We got him settled in at the University of Richmond! Also, a word of thanks for accommodating my request for an end-of-the-summer study leave. I spent a week in a remote, rural location immersed in Exodus commentaries and sermons by other preachers. The result is the fall sermon series laid out in this newsletter.

Friday Nite Bites



The start of a new school and the return of Friday night football at Cougar Stadium means Friday Nite Bites is back! Following every varsity home football game, students are invited to stop by the church building for free food and refreshments and a time of enjoying each other's company. Fifty-eight students filled the social room after the first game on August 30. Future Friday Nite Bites gatherings will be on Sept. 6, Sept. 27, Oct. 11, and Oct. 18.

Blessings on Abigail

August 11 was a special day of celebration as we officially welcomed the newest member of our congregation to the fold. **Abigail Tauriel Drift**, infant daughter of Erin and Isaac Drift, was dedicated to the Lord on her first birthday. On behalf of the session and Christian Education team, Elder Denise Ayers pledged our support to the Drift family as they seek to raise Abigail in the Christian faith, and we (along with them) look forward to the day when she professes her personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

Sharlyn Deterding, *Team Leader*
Deb South, *Session Rep.*
Christina Dolvin
Linnea Hill
Julie Nickels
Sherrill Konfrst
Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

Kyle Nickels, *Team Leader*
George Collins
Melanie Honaker
John McConnell
Stacey McConnell
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*
Sharlyn Deterding, *Session Rep.*
Dave Friedli
Linnea Hill
Norm Koester
Gary Reike
Michael Stahl

Back to School Supply Drive

BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

It is time to fill the Cougar Convenience Corner

Please help us fill the Cougar Convenience Corner at Conestoga Jr.-Sr. High School and provide school supplies to Conestoga Elementary students and teachers!

NOW-SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

Suggested Items to Donate:

- Chapstick
- Deodorant
- Body Wash
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Flossers
- Small Tissue Packs
- Razors
- Feminine hygiene products
- Dude Wipes
- Hair ties
- Socks
- Mechanical Pencils
- Pencils
- Dry Erase Markers
- Folders
- Notebooks
- Glue Sticks
- Sharpies
- Colored Pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Folders
- Prepackaged Snacks
- Easy Mac
- Oatmeal Packets
- Cup-O-Soups

YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED!
MPC MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Tote for donations is in the rear of the sanctuary.



On August 20, our presbytery's Nicaragua partnership committee received the devastating news that the Nicaraguan government is shutting down 1500 nonprofit organizations and seizing their assets. Among the targeted organizations is our partners' pastoral committee in La Concepción, CEPAD (the Protestant council of churches that facilitates our partnership), and the Presbyterian Church in Nicaragua. Harold Blandon, who preached at our church exactly one year ago, has been the delegations coordinator for CEPAD. Our presbytery is expediting the transfer for funds for this year's school uniform project and the sewing collective is speeding up production, anticipating that their equipment could soon be confiscated. Prayers are desperately needed by our partners and the long-suffering people of Nicaragua.

Property and Finance



Thank you to the Burgs

"The Lord knows what we're doing. You don't need to call attention to it." In typically modest fashion, that's how Steve Burg responded when asked about getting a picture to use in the newsletter. But we do need to acknowledge the generosity of Austin Burg and his father, Steve, in volunteering their services to mow the grass on the church property and take care of other landscaping tasks. The church's well-manicured grounds are a splendid testimony to their efforts.