

First United  
Methodist Church  
MARCH 2016

# THE HERALD

LISTENING TO GOD'S HEART FROM THE HEART OF THE CITY



## Wilderness

IF YOU'VE EVER FELT LIKE YOU'RE GOING THROUGH LIFE ALONE, HAVE NO FEAR. LOOK INSIDE TO FIND STORIES THAT WILL INSPIRE YOU THROUGH YOUR "WILDERNESS" AND WAYS YOU CAN HELP OTHERS THROUGH THEIRS.

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

It wasn't that long ago that I found myself in the wilderness. It wasn't a physical wilderness, but it was more of a spiritual wilderness. I stood up in front of the congregation I was serving at the time and said, "I feel dry. I feel empty. I feel like I'm just going through the motions."

We cannot separate our physical selves from our emotional selves, or our spiritual selves. Those parts of us are interconnected, and I knew that to be true. As I was saying these words to my congregation, I knew that I was in the midst of an ugly separation and divorce. I was emotionally raw. Due to several different encounters with my ex-wife, I was full of fear. I couldn't sleep at night, spending several months on the couch, because I could no longer sleep in the bed we had shared. It was hard to get up and go to work every morning – and it felt like work, not ministry. Sure, I stood up to preach sermons, planned worship, counseled people, taught Bible studies, led music rehearsal – but I knew I wasn't really there.

I was in my own wilderness, and I felt despair. I felt like I was going through it all alone. Everyone in my congregation knew that I was separated and going through a divorce (it has been publicly announced), but I didn't talk about what I was experiencing with my congregation. I didn't confide in friends. I talked about it with my counselor and with my parents, but that was it. I was out there, all alone, wandering, just making it through day by day.

I discovered, as I slowly began to find my way through the wilderness, that I was not at all alone. I began to come in contact with friends who had fallen by the wayside during my marriage, only to discover that they had had similar experiences. We found companionship and ways to support one another on the journey. I found that I had supportive colleagues with whom I could trust my story. One day, I knew that I would make it out of the wilderness, because I wasn't alone.

Maybe you're going through the wilderness right now. Maybe it's with a family member, or as you journey through the grief of losing a spouse. Maybe your wilderness is a place where you feel far from God. I hope you can tell from the stories in this newsletter that you are not alone. God walks with you, and support exists around you. Find ways to live into that support, and trust that you will eventually come out of the wilderness.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jay



# OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

BY KAY ALBIN



How do I begin to write about a journey that I kept a secret for 45 years? My “wilderness” was my own home. My children gave me love and a purpose for living, but the man in my life made me feel invisible, worthless and like his slave. It was amazing that I could raise a family, hold down a job with authority and not have the strength to stand up to him on my own behalf. The one thing I never let him have control of was my connection to the church. My kids grew up, went to college, got married and started families. Now we were home alone and things kept going downhill for me.

When I finally knew that I was at my breaking point, my concern was that I was letting God down. I had promised to love, honor and obey until “death do us part” and I could not keep that promise. I felt like a total failure in His eyes. But here is the miracle. God was with me, guiding me through circumstances that made it possible to finally have freedom and peace. It was a total shock to everyone when I announced that I was starting a life on my own, and dealing with all the repercussions has been challenging. I am trying every day to overcome my quiet nature and feelings of insecurity. I no longer have to live a lie! Sharing this story has been a big stretch for me because it’s a subject I don’t talk about. My heart is filled with love to all who helped me along this journey.

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS OF HOLY WEEK WITH FUMC!

We join together in the wilderness the week of March 20-27, where as a congregation, we celebrate and remember the events of Holy Week. We will travel with Jesus on the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday at 9:00 am. On Maundy Thursday (March 24), we will gather with our brothers and sisters at Otterbein UMC at 7:00 pm for worship, remembering the Passover meal, communion, and Jesus' betrayal. On Good Friday (March 25), we will gather for a community Good Friday service at First Baptist Church at 7:00 pm, remembering the passion of our Lord. This service will feature LTC's *Camerata Illiana* as the music group leading worship; several of our staff participate in that ensemble. Finally, we will celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Sunday, March 27, at 9:00 am with a festive worship service. Following worship, there will be an Easter egg hunt in the education building for our elementary students. There will also be a light brunch for the children and their parents.

### HUNGER IN THE WILDERNESS

It's hard for many of us to imagine. Even if we don't feel we have a large income, most of us have no trouble finding something to eat. We go to a restaurant; we go to the grocery store; we cook in our homes. If we're about to run out of groceries, we still manage to scrounge up something that nourishes our bodies. Our NOW program certainly helps to alleviate some hunger concerns in our community, insuring that our youngest have food to eat throughout the weekend.

Hunger occurs throughout the world, and there are programs like Feed My Starving Children (Highland Church of Christ hosts an annual event for them at LTC) or Stop Hunger Now which provide nutritious meals for families all over the world. But what about here at home? Illini Fighting Hunger is associated with the University of Illinois Wesley Foundation, and leads a number of packaging events throughout our region, inspiring other college campus to fight against hunger.

Thanks to our youth's concern for hunger, they will be hosting a packaging event here at the church during their meeting time on Sunday, March 6, at 6:00 pm. They'll have a light dinner, then turn to packaging rice with Illini Fighting Hunger immediately afterwards. Rice is a key component of our food pantry's stock, and Pattie Murphy has shared that their rice supply has recently been depleted. Our packaging will help feed many families in the Robinson area. Want to help? Our costs for the rice and packaging materials are about \$600. Please consider donating to cover costs, or come and help the youth package that evening. Feeding people can help to move them out of a wilderness place in their lives. Won't you join the youth in making a difference?

# ON THE JOURNEY

### ARE YOU IN THE WILDERNESS?

What's God's purpose for your life? Do you feel like you're sometimes out in a spiritual wilderness? Knowing your spiritual gifts and how to use them in ministry can help you know God's purpose. The lay leadership committee is hosting a free spiritual gifts workshop on Sunday, March 13, from 1-4:00 pm. It will be held in Asbury Hall, and childcare will be available upon request. Please sign up at the welcome center by March 3, so that adequate materials will be available.

### HELPING THOSE IN THE WILDERNESS

Do you know someone who's gone through a traumatic health issue, where they have had to have CPR or an AED used? It can be scary if you witness a heart attack, choking, or any other medical emergency. You can be prepared to help someone by coming to a CPR/AED training on Sunday, March 13, during the Sunday School hour. Kristy Veenstra will be leading this class. If you are interested in learning how to help someone through the wilderness of trauma, please sign up at the welcome center.

### JOURNEYING WITH THE YOUTH

UMYF meets Sunday, March 6, at 6:00 pm. We'll have dinner together, and then package food for Illini Fighting Hunger. On Sunday, March 20, we will have dinner and watch a movie at the church.

One of the ways we want to move forward with youth ministry in 2016 is by offering some small groups for youth. Currently, the education committee is thinking about offering a group for middle school girls, middle school boys, high school girls, and high school boys. These groups would meet weekly for breakfast, lunch or dinner (to be determined by the group and their leaders), and have devotions/Bible study, prayer, conversation. If you would be willing to help facilitate one of these groups, please contact Shannon Goebel or Pastor Jay.

# MARCH

## BIRTHDAYS

- 3/1 Pat McMillan  
3/2 Beverly Harness  
3/4 Stephanie Correll, Patty Lycan, Allison McGahey  
3/5 Joe Cooper  
3/7 Susan Rodgers  
3/8 Beth Johnson  
3/10 Marcia Schmidlin, Chad Veenstra, Edy Treadway  
3/11 Bernice Kibler  
3/12 Lane Utterback  
3/13 Bill Damron  
3/15 Thelma Gifford  
3/19 Dorothy Fasig  
3/22 Jonathon Murray, Jerry Lee Crozier Jr.  
3/23 David Correll, Joann Stram, Julie Thomas  
3/25 Nathan Devonshire, Barbara Bell  
3/28 Erin Thompson  
3/29 Betty Thompson, Nina Davis  
3/30 Mark Correll, Tammy Jones, Luke Anderson

## ANNIVERSARIES

- 3/23 Charles & Nancy Young

## PRAYER CONCERNS

Charlie Clark; Donita Holmes; Jerry Phillippe; Vicki Lewis; Bernie Limper; Margie Moore McNamara; Jim Currie; Greta Rich; Eleanor Laswell; Debbie Doom; Peg, John, Jeremy, and Greg Markello; Ruth Rice; Nora Busby; Ashley Reed; Tom Carrow, Carolyn Enlow Nickum; Jay Holtzouser; Ken Martin; Jennifer Null; Tom Willey; Carol Wolf; Wilma Johnson; Betty Boyd Hippler; Neema Mutayaba, Heather Johnson; Lynn Ewin; Alan Sebens; Gary Albin; Samantha Brown; Levi Damron; Dr. K. Renee Hamlet; Michelle Kohlmeyer; Lois McConnell; Larry Stein; The women attending the jail ministry and their children; Debbie Nichols; Cathy Frakes; Trisha Mason; Wally Treadway; Nellie McCall; Henry Treadway; John Poland; Lois McConnell; Kwyn Goebel; Kjormoe Family; Donna Schmidlin; Nancy Young; Bea and Floyd Brinkman Sr; Monica Wright; Linda Shapland; Elizabeth Ann Widener

## JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE



Do you ever wonder where First UMC is headed in the next few years? We want to invite you to join us for our 2nd Wednesday dinner at 5:30 pm on March 9. We will have a catered meal, and reservations will be accepted through March 7 at the welcome center or by calling the church office. The menu will be chicken and noodles, mashed potatoes, green beans, broccoli and cauliflower salad, homemade yeast rolls, and cobbler. Tea and lemonade are provided by the church. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$3 for children. Following dinner, we will break into small groups to share about some of the exciting plans coming for FUMC down the road. Make sure you're a part of what God is doing here!

## WALKING BESIDE THE OUTCAST

One of the most difficult things for some of our NOW students is being able to be clean. Not everyone has access to soap, shampoo, and other body products. We have the opportunity to walk beside our kids each month with the "Just One" collection. When students come to the Kids' Shopping Day in August, they will have the opportunity to pick up some of these basic hygiene items. While what we offer them will not last for an entire school year, it will provide them with the opportunity to be clean, better engaged in school, and build relationships with their peers. For March, our item is deodorant. Please bring your men's and women's deodorant (full sized, not travel) and place them in the "Just One" donation container outside the church office. Thanks for walking with our kids!

## RHS CARES PANTRY

God's hand is at work again and calling us at FUMC to help! This time God has called us to help serve Robinson High School students needing additional help with personal toiletry items, school supplies, and occasional food items. The RHS Cares Pantry will be up and running within the next few weeks. The concept is that any student needing something can come to the school counseling office and get what he needs with no questions asked. Students won't need to meet a certain criteria such as free lunch or homeless to access items from the RHS Cares Pantry. Students' needs often arise with varying circumstances that most of us may never understand. The need is great at the high school level with some students having to take care of themselves all the time or in a minute's notice.

The RHS Cares committee needs your help to start this project and to keep it going. The committee will be collecting monetary donations and various toiletry items. Monetary donations can be made to Robinson High School with the subject line: RHS Cares and given to Janelle Oxford at church or mailed to RHS c/o Janelle Oxford. Receipts for tax purposes will be supplied for monetary donations. A collection barrel will be in the Narthex for the month of March for donated items. The committee will be rotating the barrels among the churches in Robinson a month at a time. FUMC and St. Elizabeth's have been the first volunteers. A complete list of items will be posted next to the collection barrel. At this time the local dentists have done an excellent job providing toothbrushes and toothpaste, so we do not need those items. Any other personal care items such as body wash, shampoo, conditioner, brushes, wash cloths, loofahs, deodorant, shaving creams, razors, laundry detergent pods, hand sanitizer, wipes, dental floss, mouthwash, feminine products, socks, etc.

Thanks for helping the RHS Cares project! The outpouring of love and support from FUMC has helped many children and adults in our community and around the world. God is at work through this congregation and will continue to call us to serve more need in this community. We must always remember, "To whom much is given, much will be required" (Luke: 48). If you want to learn more about the RHS Cares project, needs of high school students, or simply want to volunteer somehow, please contact Janelle Oxford, Antje Pippin, or Michele Elliott.



# MARCH 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 6:00 pm Disciple II	2 3:00 pm Kids' Club 4:30 pm NOW Bagging 5:30 pm Trustees meeting 6:30 pm Worship Committee 7:30 pm FCA	3 9:30 am Disciple II 5:30 pm NOW Pampered Chef Fundraiser 5:30 pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:00 pm Handbell choir	4	5
6 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 4:00 pm Lenten Study 5:00 pm Wesley Foundation gathering 6:00 pm Youth dinner & packing event	7 9:30 am Chrismon Ladies	8 6:00 pm Disciple II	9 3:00 pm Kids' Club 5:30 pm 2nd Wednesday Dinner 6:30 pm Visioning Groups	10 9:30 am Disciple II 4:30 pm NOW bagging 6:00 pm Jail Ministry 6:00 pm Church Council 7:00 pm Handbell choir	11	12 IGRC Fellowship of UM in Music & Worship Arts Handbell Festival
13 8 & 11 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am AED & CPR Training 10:15 am Sunday School 1:00 pm Spiritual Gifts Worship 2:30 pm Heritage Health 4:00 pm Lenten Study	14 9:30 am Chrismon Ladies	15 6:00 pm Disciple II	16 3:00 pm Kids' Club 6:00 pm Lay Leadership	17 9:30 am Disciple II 4:30 pm NOW bagging 6:00 pm Jail Ministry 7:00 pm Handbell choir	18	19
20 8 & 11 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 4:00 pm Lenten Study 6:00 pm Youth Dinner & Movie Night	21 9:30 am Chrismon Ladies	22 4:30 pm NOW bagging	23 3:00 pm Kid's Club 5:30 pm Trustees meeting	24 6:00 pm Jail Ministry 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday worship at OUMC	25 7:00 pm Good Friday service at First Baptist	26
27 EASTER 8:00 am Chancel Choir 8:15 am Handbell Choir 8:30 am Children's Chimes 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Easter Egg Hunt	28 9:30 am Chrismon Ladies	29 6:00 pm Disciple II	30 3:00 pm Kids' Club	31 9:30 am Disciple II 4:30 pm NOW bagging 6:00 pm Jail Ministry 7:00 pm Handbell choir		

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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