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From the Pastor's pen...

I love trivia, so let's play a little Christianity trivia...

1. In April 1855, who was the Sunday school teacher who told Dwight L. Moody how much God loved him and influenced him to convert to Christianity?
2. Who was the lead evangelist at a revival meeting in 1934 who inspired Billy Graham to make a commitment to Christ?
3. Who did Martin Luther King, Jr. describe as his spiritual mentor?
4. What was the name of the hymnist who wrote over 8000 hymns?
5. What fellow member of the Holy Club invited John Wesley to start open air preaching in Bristol in 1739?

How many did you know right off the top of your head? If you did not know many or all of them, there is no need to be embarrassed. Some of these people are lesser-known names in Church history. Some of them are probably unknown to most of us. But, Church history would be missing some pretty important people and hymns if these lesser-known or unknown people had not done what God called them to do.

Why does God call some people to places of prominence and others to obscurity? That is not for us to know. But, here is what we do know for sure. He has called each one of us to do one thing...tell others about our experiences with Jesus and what He has done for us.

Fanny Crosby did it in the 8000+ hymns she wrote – even though she was blind! Moody Bible Institute would not exist today if an unknown Sunday school teacher did not tell Dwight how much God loved him. The Billy Graham Crusades may not have happened if a certain evangelist had not preached on the night Billy Graham attended a revival in 1934. The Civil Rights Movement may never have happened if an educator had not been a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. The Methodist movement may never have happened if George Whitefield had not encouraged John Wesley to try open air preaching in Bristol.

So if you think you will be a “nobody” in the history of Christianity, you will be in good company. People may not know your name in 30, 60, or 160 years, but God knows your name. He knows that you were the one to count the offering on Sunday mornings – or figure out how to get that microphone working for the worship leader – or clean the gum off the carpet in the sanctuary – or set up chairs for a memorial service – or write that monthly tithe check even when you were unemployed. God knows you did what He called you to do so that His name might be made known.

So, please listen carefully. God called you to be exactly the person you are. So, just keep doing what He created you to do. And along the way, tell people your experiences with Him and how He has changed your life. You never know the plans God has for the person with whom you share your life story.

“And some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary” (1 Cor. 12:22 TLB).

-Pastor Merry



From Debbie Mitchell, Prayer Coordinator

Developing a prayer life can be one of the most influential disciplines a Jesus follower could inspire to. Part of a prayer life is learning to just “be” in God’s presence, learning how to quiet our minds and just “be”. The old wineskin was praying to prove we are spiritual and praying trying to get God to do things for us. The new wineskin is prayer being communion with God just being with Him and knowing Him. That sounds wonderful you say but HOW?

Here are some things I found in my readings to get you started:

1. **Solitary place.** -get away from people and distractions.
2. **Stop all noise-** shut the door...don’t let noise intrude.
3. **Stop motions-** stop fidgeting, planning, thinking about other things.
4. **Silence your thoughts-** hush your inner and outer self...when a thought intrudes push it away saying “not now, later.”
5. **Slow down-** give yourself time to slow down your pace.
6. **Sweep the clutter-** put away the piles around you that will cause a distraction.
7. **Set aside the to do lists and the “urgents”-** the Lord will be with you to take care of these once you have been quiet with Him.
8. **Surrender yourself-** physically laying down, breathing deeply, focusing on relaxing your muscles can be helpful.

This will take practice and be very difficult at first. Try setting a 3 minute timer. When you feel your mind and heart are not still during that 3 minute period start the timer again. As you practice you will find yourself able to “be” in His presence quicker and remain longer and you discover how rejuvenating it is which in turn will make you hunger for more.

Open Door Lunches

I want to give thanks to all who come on the first Wednesday of each month to support this ministry. Everyone is more than welcome to help and serve the Open Door Mission with us. Our hands were made to serve, even with peanut butter and jelly making them sticky.

Tom Rende, Coordinator



Hospitality

You may have noticed the cafe area has been a little busier the last couple weeks after service! Take a moment after church to engage in fellowship with friends while eating some delicious morning refreshments.

*Dylan Soule,
Hospitality Coordinator*

Missions Update

The Free Methodist World Missions website provides many resources including news about our missionaries as well as prayer calendars so that you can pray for specific needs around the world. Check out the January Heartbeat at <https://fmwm.org/> for stories of hope and the monthly World Missions Prayer Calendar.

Here are a few highlights from the Free Methodist World Missions Hotline:

- Africa – Praise God for three families who want to be part of a new church plant in Bouynebelle, Cameroon. Ask the Father to give wisdom to the two leaders beginning this work as they train and disciple these families.

Bishop Lubunga of the Democratic Republic of Congo begins traveling in February to lead 13 annual conference meetings. Please pray for his safety and security.

- Asia – Pray for the upcoming Thailand Annual Meeting scheduled for February 2-3. Ask the Father to give clear vision, unity, and encouragement as the mission district moves to Provisional Annual Conference status.

The Free Methodist Church in Creative Access-VN mourns the passing of one of its faithful pastors this past week. Pray for the church and the pastor's family.

- Europe – Pray for international missionaries Algent and Erjona Bregu, serving in Albania. They are currently using the Discovery Bible Study method to reach their neighbors and community. Pray particularly for the group of ladies Erjona leads.

- Latin America – Latin America Area Director Dr. Ricardo Gomez and a team of leaders from Latin America will gather in Colombia for a vision and planning retreat this weekend. Pray for the safety and health of all those traveling to attend the meeting. Pray that as they work together, God will lead them and renew their spirits, giving them wisdom and igniting a passion for the mission of the Free Methodist Church in Latin America.

Please pray for two of our international missionaries in Latin America. Yaneth Aguirre (Bolivia) fell and injured her shoulder, requiring surgery. Susana Castro (Colombia) had a biking accident last week and broke her arm. Pray for healing and for their physicians and family members assisting them in their recovery process.

- Middle East – Pray for Area Director Dale and his wife Dawn as they travel in this region during the next two weeks. Ask the Lord to give them safety, good health and strategic connections.

For the most recent Weekly Prayer Hotline and Monthly Prayer Guide, go to <https://fmwm.org/pray/>.

Kirk Kettinger
World Missions Coordinator



Happenings in the Life of Our Church

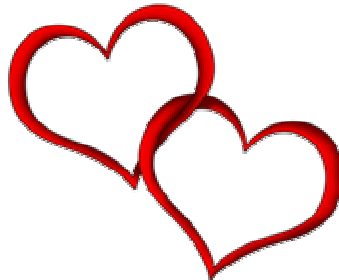
Ladies Ministry

The ladies enjoyed another great time of fellowship and finishing up projects and remembering the great creativity of our Creator!! Stay tuned for the date of our February event! All ladies are welcome!!!

Joyce Jarvis & Pam Rende,
Coordinators



The ladies were joined by a little helper in January!



The Men's breakfasts continue two Saturdays a month. These are sometimes flexible, for instance, if lunch works better at times. We will begin discussing having a men's outing before spring - possibly bowling or some other activity depending on the weather. If anyone has a suggestion, please contact Mark by text (585-365-3388), FB Messenger, or email (markalessi2@yahoo.com). Thank you.

Mark Alessi, Coordinator



2023 Powerhouse Youth Retreat Grades 9-12

Please keep the teens and leaders in prayer for the upcoming retreat.

