



THE GLAD TIDER

Stevensville United Methodist Church

February 2023



I heard something that inspired and changed me and gave me something to think about for a long time that I certainly would never have encountered had I had to find the source myself. In the feed of podcasts I subscribe to, Malcolm Gladwell's "Revisionist History" shared a recording of another podcast. Reading the title, I hesitated; I wasn't sure I wanted to try something new, much less from a deep dive podcast into popular music. However, being a big fan of Malcolm Gladwell's work and the way his mind connects seemingly disparate things, I listened anyway. I was sure Malcolm wouldn't lead me astray. And he didn't!

Meanwhile, I was in the thick of things during an intensive online class called Practice and Pilgrimage: Spiritual Entrepreneurship. People from all over the country, listening deeply to nudges and callings to craft something new to bring meaning and meet a desperate need, gathered online for a rich class of grand dreaming and learning about very practical, technical tools. For five days we honed our ideas into projects, callings into a message from a local winter's farmers' market to an app for people to find faith communities, to a website, to build a contemporary hymnal to a retreat house. We heard interviews of other spiritual entrepreneurs of EvolVR (virtual reality faith communities), Table Co-working that helps

churches transform their space into co-working opportunities for small businesses, and Chickory Wealth, a financial planning team committed to providing "pastoral care with money." Classmates showed me Chat GPT, which can write my emails!! And they taught me design skills with publisher.

Strangers on Monday, we committed to listening intently to ourselves and bringing goodness into the world that was just ours to offer. That congruency emboldened all of us in our personal work and in championing the other. Each of these examples is a testament to evangelism. Or better still trust. Yes, the

information and ideas shared are totally worth knowing (that's why I'm sharing them with you!) But had I not trusted the messenger, I would have missed out on a lot.

Jesus did this with his disciples over and over. Trust me in the boat that is crashing in the waves. Trust me in this new interpretation of scriptures that is counter cultural and will get me in trouble. Trust me when I say, "I trust you to keep living my message." Jesus lived his life with others so that they would trust the source, which then endorsed all that followed.

Jesus didn't prove that he was right or was better; he built trust through integrity and being congruent. With the Holy, the message of truth and love can come in so many packages, but sometimes we can only appreciate, consider and receive from a trusted source. They aren't the source, but a vital pointer, maybe even guide to the source. How do you use the trust others put in you and to what do you point? You might be the one link toward a great revelation or transformation. And all because of trust.

Walking humbly with our God,

Pastor Sarah



PS: The Podcast that blew off my socks is on "Broken Record" with Malcolm Gladwell and Rick Rubin talking about his new book, The Creative Act: A Way of Being. Trust me.



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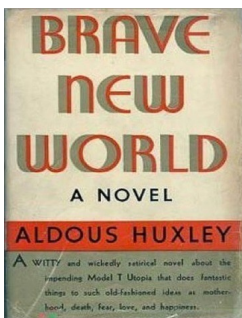
Have you seen the stained glass panels installed in the Fellowship Hall?

If not, take a moment and check them out the next time you are at the church. Chances are most of you will recognize them as the stained glass windows from the old Fellowship Hall.

These were created by one of our members, Sue Ann Mackay, and installed in the eastern exposure of what was, at that time, the new Fellowship Hall under construction in 1989. They were removed and saved when this portion of our building was demolished to make way for the new SELC addition.

As they could not be incorporated as windows in our new building, after much discussion, the decision was made to repurpose them as hanging panels and install them in the present location.

The framing for these panels is re-purposed oak, which was salvaged from what at one time was the communion rail formerly at the front of our sanctuary, and removed during an earlier renovation of the sanctuary.



FEBRUARY BOOK CLUB

“Brave New World” by Aldous Huxley

We will meet on February 12th at 3pm

in the Fellowship Hall at SUMC.



Our Fun and Fellowship group is gathering
at the Fireside Restaurant in Stevensville
at 5 PM on Friday, Feb 17

Come join us for a No Host Dinner

All are welcome ~ Denise Gum 406-370-8981



February 2023 Worship

Feb. 5 — Little Altars Everywhere



How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. — Psalm 84 (from the Presentation of the Lord lection)

Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever. They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright; they are gracious, merciful, and righteous. — Psalm 112: 1-9

Where do you think God's "dwelling place" is? The Psalmist speaks of longing to be in God's "house." Indeed, being in what feels like a sacred place can transform and inspire us. Instead of thinking that finding God requires us to go to a designated place like our church, what if we created spaces that reminded us of the sacred wherever we are? This week you are invited to create an "altar" in your home that can remind you that God dwells in all places.

Feb. 12 — Walk This Way

If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in God's ways, and observing God's commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. — Deuteronomy 30: 15-20

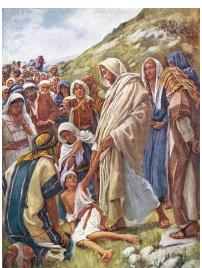
Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways. — Psalm 119: 1-8

Research shows that one of the most effective mood-boosters is moving our bodies. Stretching, walking, and dancing can send feel-good endorphins coursing through us and the change can feel like a light coming on. The Hebrew authors of our scriptures used the metaphor of "walking" in God's ways to help us see the benefits to our spiritual lives of moving toward the goodness of God. This week our spiritual practice will help us see our walking (or any kind of movement) as a blessed gift of God's love in action in the world!



Feb. 19 — Get Up and Don't Be Afraid

While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." — Matthew 17: 1-9



The last Sunday of this series is a time when we remember a mystical moment some of the disciples had with Jesus when he was joined by spiritual ancestors Moses and Elijah on the mountain and God's voice affirming Jesus' work as pleasing. For weeks we have considered the everyday activities of our lives as a way to be nurtured spiritually. Finally, we see the opportunities to encourage each other in the efforts of each day of our lives — "get up and don't be afraid!"



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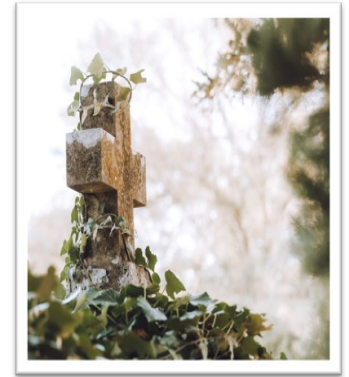
The Way: A Lent of Pilgrimage

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. — Isaiah 43:19

“The Way: You Don’t Choose a Life, You Live a Life.” Lent is a time of reflection and there’s nothing like a pilgrimage to conjure that up. Inspired by passages in the scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads and pathways of life, we will make our “way” together through this poignant season. The movie *The Way* accompanies us as our modern-day inspiration to live the life we’ve been given to the fullest.

Throughout the season of Lent from Ash Wednesday to Easter, we will pilgrimage together in worship, practice for the week, study, and reflection. Consider these different ways to go on the path and become a pilgrim.

- ~Share a story of times you were lost on our journey.
- ~Participate in a Wednesday or Sunday morning study with *The Art of Pilgrimage* by Phil Cousineau facilitated by Pastor Sarah.
- ~Make a walking stick together one Sunday.
- ~Examine what you pack for each day of work, school or grocery shopping.
- ~Share a meal and check on your companions’ feet.
- ~Lay our burdens down at the cross, maybe even let something die.
- ~Pilgrimage to a special sunrise service on Easter.



**On Ash Wednesday, we begin together in worship
with a shared meal, viewing of *The Way* and imposition of ashes.
Start your Lenten pilgrimage on February 22 at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall.**

Preparing for & Reflecting from Worship

February 22, Ash Wednesday: The Way Back

“Yet even now,” says the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.” — Joel 2: 12-13

Sometimes things happen in our lives that cause us to be awakened to a new perspective and we begin to reassess the life road we are following, the directions we are going. Ash Wednesday is a time in the church where we talk of “repentance” which literally means to turn around and head in a new direction. This night will be a movie-night where we will watch *The Way* together, preceded and/or followed by the opportunity to receive ashes in the sign of the cross on our foreheads — a traditional sign of our own mortality and the necessity of making this life purposeful.

February 26: The Wandering Way

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. — Luke 4: 1-2

After Jesus’ baptism, he went on a pilgrimage into the wilderness. A common practice among spiritual leaders of his day, this was a time to dig deep into the humanity of his soul. Along the way he encounters what we all encounter along the paths of life — temptations to stray from the path that God has intended for us. But “all who wander are not lost” — for it is in the wandering that we find our true selves.

Ways to Contact Us

Office phone: 406-777-5443
Office email: steviumc@gmail.com
Pastor Sarah's email: revsarahmerchant@gmail.com
Church website: steviumc.org
Office hours: Tuesday through Friday 9am to 12pm
Sapphire Early Learning Center 406-625-2660
Sapphireearlylearningcenter.com
director@sapphireearlylearningcenter.com

Nursery & Sunday School
For kids during worship
service, 10:30-11:30am

Worship Opportunities: In Person Worship: 10:30 AM . Live Streaming Worship at 10:30 on YouTube Channel & Facebook

Ash Wednesday, February 22 ~ Lent Begins

Small Groups

Cinema Night– February 25. Contact Gina Farnham. Watch 'Seabiscuit'. You can find it on Paramount +, Amazon Prime and Vudu. Food is Mexican and the place is the community center at Kootenai Creek Village.

Stevensville Faith Community Fun and Fellowship Group: Once a month social gathering over dinner or a play or games. Contact Denise Gum at 406-370-8981. The February group is gathering at the Fireside Restaurant in Stevensville at 5 PM on Friday, Feb 17. Come join us for a No Host Dinner. All are welcome.

Book Club– "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley We will meet on February 12th at 3pm in the Fellowship Hall.

UMM– 2nd Saturday at 8am. Breakfast and fellowship. Contact Bob Edgar.

UMW of Faith– every other 3rd Saturday, 10-12 am. Fellowship and mission. Contact Sue Pearson~ UMW Secretary.

Wednesday Bible Study: 10am in the After School Room.



~ CHANGES OF ADDRESS ~
Bulk-rate mail is not forwarded.
If your address changes, if we have it wrong,
or if you no longer want to receive this newsletter,
please let us know.

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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216 College
Stevensville MT 59870

The Glad Tider

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