

FROM THE BANKS OF THE CURRITUCK SOUND

The E-Mail Newsletter of Sharon United Methodist Church

275 Poplar Branch Road

Poplar Branch, North Carolina 27965

Susan C. Lindblade, Pastor

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PASTOR'S THOUGHTS:

I celebrated a birthday this week. Not an especially noteworthy event, such as those ending in the numbers five or zero, but special just the same.

Sixty-seven years old. I don't feel older. I can see a fleeting bit of grey on my temples, which my hairdresser kindly keeps under control. But, when I look at photographs of "then and now," I really see it. I am getting older! And so, I ask myself: Does that mean I'm getting wiser? Have I learned any lessons along the way that help me make more sense of life here and now?

Am I getting more spiritual? As the years pass, do I discern that which is transient from that which is eternal? When I was a child, I wanted things and thrills, and, of course, I wanted it right now. Now that I am older, do I have a longer sense of vision that focuses on things that are lasting and eternal?

Am I getting a better sense of priorities? Time has brought a wonderful understanding that everyone I meet is important and has upon them the fingerprint of God. At the same time, as the years pass, do I remember that there are a handful of people who give me life? Am I careful not to neglect the few who feed my soul, family and friends who allow me to be myself, warts and all, and who love me anyway? As I age, I have learned that I cannot do all things, but there are certain things God has gifted (and thus Called) me to do. Am I learning to prioritize?

Am I willing to claim joy? Whereas it is imperative to be serious in a world with such complex and demanding issues, it is unfaithful to sacrifice joy. Unfaithful? Yes, I think so – especially since Jesus said: **"I have come that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"** (John 15:11). Have I learned to set aside some things that feed my soul and make me smile?

Have I learned to love? Ultimately, that's why we are here. It is really that simple. Again to quote Jesus: **"This is my commandment, that you love one another" (John 15:12)**. It is why we were created. I hope to be successful, happy, meaningful, noticed...but, in order to find life that is authentic, the one thing I have to be is loving. Day by day, am I willing to find ways to put love into practice for people? Anything less than that, I've missed the point of being alive.

There's an old phrase we love to throw around: **"You're not getting older: you're getting better."** Well, I am getting older. But, at the same time, I hope I am also getting better at figuring out why I am here and at living into that. I can't get the previous years back. If I could, there would be much I would do differently. Today, however, I can follow new paths and make new commitments. And if I do that every new "today," then I will create a whole host of meaningful tomorrows...and maybe, just maybe, getting older will actually mean getting better, too!!

Love, Pastor Susan

NEW BIBLE STUDY BEGINS TUESDAY, AUGUST 23

10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

As we live into our new Vision initiative at Sharon Church, our first Bible study will focus on Discipleship from a distinctively Wesleyan perspective. The study is entitled: ***A Disciple's Path: A Guide for United Methodists by Jim Harnish.***

Prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness...this is what we commit to when we become members of The United Methodist Church, and it's a big step. But ***A Disciple's Path*** helps us look beyond membership, presenting an engaging approach to discipleship from a distinctly Wesleyan perspective. Discipleship is an ever-growing faith journey. Through daily reading, Scripture and personal reflection, this study will enable us to take a good look at who we are as Jesus' disciples, how we use our unique God-given gifts, and ways we can grow to be a witness to Christ's love and light in the world.

Here at Sharon, we are trusting in God's direction to rebuild this church in service and spirit. Join us at one of two classes to be offered: 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. each Tuesday in the Youth Building. The course will run six weeks through September 27. Be a part of the exciting new growth here at Sharon Church!!

GOLF TOURNAMENT - AUGUST 27

Mark your calendar now for the 19th Annual Sharon UMC Golf Tournament on Saturday, August 27 at The Carolina Club in Grandy. This tournament is held in honor of the late Henry Donski, who started this golf tradition and Sharon Church continues this event.

The \$75 per player includes greens fees, cart fee, range balls, a buffet lunch, trophies for the top three teams in each flight, and prizes, prizes, prizes! Mulligans (one per player) will be available for \$5.00 each. You may enter your own foursome or the Chairman will pair those who do not have a foursome. The tournament will be flighted based on a total team handicap. The number of teams and range of team handicaps will determine the number of flights. So that we can fulfill our commitment to the Carolina Club, we request your player fees (\$75 per player; \$300 per foursome) with your tournament application.

If you are not a golfer, please pass this word on to your neighbors and friends. For more information or applications, contact A.B. Donski, Tournament Chair at 252-722-4344.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW CERTIFIED LAY MINISTER

Sharon Church is honored by the recent recognition of Jeanne Murray as a Certified Lay Minister in The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. On Sunday, August 14, Mr. John Hall, our Conference Lay Leader, will be our guest speaker at Sharon Church and we will have the opportunity to celebrate Jeanne's call in lay ministry during our worship service.

To receive certification, candidates receive specific training to prepare them for this form on ministry. 1) *Call and Covenant for Ministry: Understanding of theology and call for ministry, exploring spiritual gifts, and developing a ministry covenant.* 2) *The Practice of Ministry which involves four sections: Leading Worship, Preaching/Sharing Faith, Discipleship Ministries, and Caring for a Congregation.* 3) *Organization of Ministry which gives focus on the leader's task of organizing a congregation for mission and ministry and* 4) *Connection for Ministry: United Methodist theology, practice, and polity.*

Jeanne is living out her CLM gifts in working closely with Pastor Susan here at Sharon in taking the lead with a number of new ministries we are initiating as well as through her involvement in leading the Conference UMW online Book Club. She was featured with other UM clergy and laity in a video produced by the Conference called #BeUMC.

NEW BOOK CLUB TO BEGIN TUESDAY, AUGUST 23

If you are looking for a fellowship group where our focus is feel-good, light reads, then this group is for you! Sometimes it's hard to read when your mind is preoccupied with other things – and these books will be perfect when you just want to read a book that helps you feel happy, entertained, relaxed and uplifted by the moral of the story.

We're calling it THE ESCAPE BOOK CLUB and this group will be led by Pastor Susan. We'll meet every six weeks in the Fellowship Hall at 1:00 p.m. for a light donation lunch and discussion. The books will be purchased through Amazon at a moderate cost and midway through the six week period, Susan will have the books available for purchase.

Our first book will be ***Driving Miss Norma*** by Tim Bauerschmidt and Ramie Liddle. When Norma Bauerschmidt was diagnosed with terminal cancer, she was advised to undergo surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. But instead of confining herself to a hospital bed for what could be her last days, Norma – newly widowed after 69 years of marriage – rose to her full height of 5 feet and told her doctor, “I’m 90 years old. I’m hitting the road.” ***Driving Miss Norma*** is a charming, joyful chronicle of her experiences on the road with her retired son, Tim, his wife, Ramie, and their poodle, Ringo – from a hot air balloon ride to her first ever pedicure, to meeting strangers who became friends and bonding as a family in ways they never expected.

Our reading through the end of the year will include:

September 27 - ***The 30,000 Mile Cat: Travels Across America*** by Ginnie Hansen

November 1 - ***Tuesdays with Morrie*** by Mitch Albom

(Not exactly light reading, but a book club classic none the less)

December 6 - ***The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*** by Barbara Robinson

If you would like to secure a book and be a part of The Escape Book Club, please email Pastor Susan at sclindblade@gmail.com and plan to join us on Tuesday, August 23 for lunch and an afternoon of smiles.

VISIONING GOALS FOR SHARON UMC

During the worship service on July 10, we celebrated and consecrated our Visioning Goals for Sharon Church. Following a time of intentional prayer, our congregation was invited to meet to discuss ministry needs in our church and community. From this list, our Church Council placed these goals in order of priority.

Sharon Church is now underway with a roadmap for new ministries which, we believe, is the direction God intends for us to follow. As Pastor Susan reminded us on Vision Sunday, she is intent to lead us into days of optimism and a renewed sense of purpose. “Years from now, when we look back on this season, my prayer is that what we are starting today will be our finest hour. A turning point in the history of Sharon Church” she said.

Our vision leans heavily on DISCIPLESHIP as we commit to grow Sharon Church by taking time to develop and disciple our people. The second component is OUTREACH/EVANGELISM/MISSIONS. When our members met to share where they discern God’s direction is leading us, there were three definite responses: 1) To be intentional in hiring a Youth/Children’s Pastor. 2) Be an Inclusive Church and 3) Show Christ in all areas of life as a church.

Please keep this list of our Vision Goals and pray daily as we seek to follow God’s lead in the future.

VISIONING GOALS FOR SHARON UMC

Goals are listed by target start date and will be on-going

2022

- Participation in Emmaus Walks
 - The walk to Emmaus is a three-day weekend retreat for spiritual renewal
- Book Club facilitated by Pastor Susan – fun and inspiring reading

- First Responders Recognition Sunday (September 11)
- Cookies for First Responders at Christmas
- One Day Mission Trips
 - Gleaning
 - Place of Possibilities in Aulander, NC
- Other available missions
- Develop a Men's Ministry and reactivate United Methodist Men
- Disciple our Leadership through support gatherings and spiritual retreats
- Provide a hot meal for power crews and other first responders following a hurricane
- Discipleship Bible study groups

2022-2023

- Layette Kits – World mission for Sierra Leone, West Africa
- Emmaus support through reunion gatherings
- Start Young Adult Fellowship and Sunday School Class
- Start One Room Sunday School Class for children
- Annual Stewardship Campaign to include faithful giving of finances and time to enable ministries and enhance generosity in all of our lives
- Seek Duke Endowment Funding for the following ministries:
 - Explore Duke intern to help in establishing youth and children's ministries
 - After School Enrichment and Tutoring Ministry
 - Meal program for Dr. W. T. Griggs Elementary students in need
 - Work with Dr. W. T. Griggs Elementary School to establish a Community Garden to enhance learning opportunities and to provide fresh veggies to be shared with the community

2023

- Once a month community meal
- Movie Night Under the Stars
- Concerts
- Discipleship Groups
- Annual Women's Retreat
- Offer Community Service Hours through Clerk of Court
- Have a luncheon following the First Responders Recognition Sunday and host a Community Teddy Bear Drive for First Responders to share with children following a traumatic incident

2024

- Continuing Education opportunities through COA (GED, Healthy Cooking, Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous)

2025

- Holy Grounds Coffee House
 - Convert the Computer Room into a cozy, onsite Coffee House with sofas, tables, good Wi-Fi and cool music each Friday night. Make it the place to come to in Poplar Branch to meet friends or bring a date. Offer reasonably priced coffee, a Smoothie of the Week, and homemade goodies. Proceeds earned to go toward a community mission.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- August 10 - SPRC Meeting, 10:00 a.m. in Youth Building
- August 15 - Caregivers Support Group, 1:00 p.m. in Youth Building
- August 16 - Trustees Zoom Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
- August 21 - UMW Penny & a Prayer offering to be collected
- August 22 - Finance and Church Council Zoom Meetings, 6:00 p.m.
- August 23 & 30 - Bible Study, 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. in Youth Building
- August 23 - The Escape Book Club, 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
- August 27 - Golf Tournament, 8:00 a.m. at The Carolina Club in Grandy
- August 30 - Red Wagon Ministry, 4:30 p.m. at Lower Currituck Food Pantry in Grandy, (Volunteers needed)
- September 11 - First Responders Recognition Day in Worship Service
- October 8 - Community Fun Day, 9:00 a.m. on the Sharon Church grounds
Food, Games, Craft Exhibits, Fun for all ages
- October 31 - Trunk or Treat in Sharon Church parking lot

✓✓✓ New E-Mail Newsletter feature next month: “Getting to Know You”