

January 28, 2015

The

Springs



SAND
SPRINGS
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

Rev. Don Tabberer



a note
from the pastor

"The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers." (Acts 2:42, CEB)

On Sunday, January 25th we began a new series called, "Prayer Makes a

Difference" with a message entitled, "Is Anyone Listening?"

I know that many of you were with us in worship that day and heard some of what I want to share today, but I am so convinced of the importance of this topic that I hope you will bear with any repetition. As I said in that message, our prayer life reflects our view of God. A person who constantly prays, asking God to be active in their life reflects the belief that they desperately need God in everything. On the other hand, a person who never stops to pray reflects the belief that God is irrelevant in their everyday life. For me, this is a vitally important subject for us to understand.

We are embarking on this "prayer initiative" to help us all rediscover the importance of daily prayer. It may help to remember those first followers of Jesus that we hear about in the Book of Acts. They "devoted themselves" to spending time together so they might learn from Jesus' disciples who offered them stories and teachings they had received directly from Jesus. They shared meals together, an early precursor to our practice of sharing The Lord's Supper, as well as a model for how important Christian fellowship is to our faith development. And they devoted time to their prayers.

It is hard for us to imagine what it must have been like for those first Christians to try to obey what Jesus commanded them in a culture that was so hostile and unwelcoming to them. Their difficult circumstances are what caused them to be so passionate and dedicated to their prayer life. They realized that their very survival depended on God's protection and care for them. They believed that they were called to be bearers of God's Good News and they knew they could not be successful without God's help. So they prayed.

In 21st Century America it may be hard for us to imagine this kind of absolute dependence on God. We live in a culture that is much more dependent on technology and commerce than it seems to be on God. We live in a culture that is more subtly hostile to the Good News we bear. We seem to have less to fear and less urgency about our mission. To find

situations closer to the church in The Book of Acts we need to look into other parts of the world that we are less familiar with and, therefore, less aware of than our own.

North Korea, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria – That is the "Top Ten List" of countries where Christian persecution is at its worst today. (If you'd like more information, visit: www.opendoorsusa.org).

These are places where Christians are in the minority and are facing violent persecution for their faith. These are people who understand the early church perfectly. They pray constantly for guidance, courage, and deliverance. They gather and devote themselves to the teaching of the disciples, to share meals, and to pray. They get it.

The website I referenced above offers this description of Christian persecution: "Christian persecution is any hostility experienced from the world as a result of one's identification as a Christian. From verbal harassment to hostile feelings, attitudes and actions, Christians in areas with severe religious restrictions pay a heavy price for their faith. Beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death are just a few examples of the persecution they experience on a daily basis."

We may never find ourselves in a position to fully comprehend what it means to be persecuted for our faith, but we must remember that 1 Corinthians 12:26 says that we are one body. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Our culture may not technically persecute its Christians, but there are plenty of examples of hostility toward our message. We should be in constant prayer for Christians around the world that we may all find more receptive ears to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pray that we may all be strengthened for the mission

I believe that we should seek to be part of the group described earlier whose life reflects the belief that they desperately need God in everything. By demonstrating this belief in a constant and powerful prayer life I think we will find the only way "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Praying for all of us,
Pastor Don



**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 28
5:30 p.m.
FAMILY LIFE
CENTER**

Please join us for an evening of fellowship & delicious food!

Watch for sign up sheets in the narthex the next two Sunday's. You can sign up to bring chili and/or desserts as well as set up and clean up help.

All donations will be used to purchase supplies for our Restore Hope Missions Projects.

book from a previous study that you would like to share, please let me know. Virginia (918-245-9248)

**PRAYING BACKWARDS
Transform Your Prayer Life
by Beginning
in Jesus' Name
February 22 - March 29 - 5:00 p.m.
(Led by Virginia Baldrige)**



**Praying at Noon
for Daily Bread**

Noontime doesn't need to mean only taking time for a quick sandwich. You are invited to participate in a daily prayer initiative. Originally founded as "Pray Down at Noon" by a Houston, Texas pastor, this initiative is spreading throughout the country as a way to remind all of us of the need to pray regularly. The idea is to set the alarm on your cellphone to go off at 12:00 Noon each day as a reminder to pray The Lord's Prayer. Imagine the sound of all those alarms going off at the same time every day and the thrill of knowing that people all over our community are praying at the same time.

Christians have prayed this simple, yet profound prayer for centuries. This powerful initiative can be a point of unity for all of us across denominations to bridge the divides of doctrine and polity that seem so evident in Christ's Body. As this initiative spreads, more and more people of every denomination are participating and creating an enormous chain of prayers that begins at noon each day, regardless of time zone. There is a Facebook page to help promote this idea globally: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lords-Prayer-at-Noon/962036040489931>

We are asking you to begin this initiative on **Sunday, January 25, 2015**, as part of our worship series on prayer. We are also inviting all other Sand Springs churches to participate. Once this habit is formed, it is an easy practice to maintain for a lifetime.

Someone's Praying, Lord...

Isn't it interesting how God works? We're beginning a 10-week emphasis on PRAYER in our church, and our Adult Bible Study in Sunday School has had lessons on prayer during the past 4 weeks. Perhaps that means God wants us to "dig a little deeper" in our prayer life. We're told that "Prayer is the expression of our relationship with God. When we pray, we are invited to give ourselves away, that is, we are called to turn our eyes and our attention on the holiness and presence of God so that our lives might more fully reflect that divine and loving spark." (Randy Cross, district superintendent living in Rapid City, South Dakota.) He also says that prayer is not an effort to get God to do what we want, but it should be an opening of our hearts to God's will and hope for us.

Let's go for the Spark! I know God will honor our efforts when we do. You are invited to come to the church each Tuesday morning at 10 and pray with us as we lift up our church, our church family and others who might need to be brought into God's healing light.

Another opportunity to "dig a little deeper" into our prayer life will be offered. A small group study, "Praying Backwards" by Bryan Chapell, will be held for six Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m., beginning February 22. For more information, or if you have a



Kidzone

The children are continuing work on their scrapbooks as they learn the stories of Jesus. This is such a fun lesson series and something the children really enjoy. If we haven't seen your kiddo in a while, we hope to see them

soon!

Enjoy the awesome weather this week! We'll see you Sunday!

YOUTH MISSION TRIP

This year our Youth will be going to St. Paul, MN for their summer mission trip. This will be a great time for them to work with other students in an urban setting where they will work with younger children in a VBS-like environment; they will spend time working at a senior citizen's center; and they will have the chance to participate in some work site projects as well. This is an exciting trip for our youth and a big undertaking for their adult sponsors. We need your help to make this a reality. Throughout the spring we will have a number of fund raising activities like the Super Bowl Subs, Spaghetti Dinner, and Pie Auction that have become traditions here. We also have set up a scholarship fund where you can make direct donations for our students. You may designate gifts to this fund by writing "Youth Scholarship" on the memo of your check or you may give to this fund via our website and the e-giving QR code app on our church bulletins. Please pray about what you may be able to give to our students this year to help them grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Day Spring and Disciple – Youth Summer Camps:

This summer we will once again be sending our youth to summer camps for Junior and Senior High students. Disciple Camp is for Junior High and Day Spring is for Senior High. Gifts made to the Youth Scholarship Fund will also be used to provide camp scholarships for our youth after the mission trip is completed. We really need your help to make these programs a reality for our students. **Thanks!**



Holy Communion

Just a reminder: We celebrate Holy Communion during both worship services on the First Sunday of each month. For those of you who wish to receive communion more frequently, we also celebrate this sacrament at 9:45 am every other Sunday. Between first service and Sunday school, we gather in the Sanctuary for a brief communion service and share the Lord's Supper together. Please join us.

Also, if you or someone you know would like to have communion brought to you at home when you are unable to attend worship, please contact the church office and we will arrange for a communion minister to bring the elements to you and celebrate the sacrament in your home.

Please Keep In Prayer

Ruth Weaver, Martha Scudder, Billie Schmidt, Destinee Tackett, Darryl Muse, Tristan Schwartz, Irene Stogsdill, Owen Johnston, SSUMC, Mrs. Frank Dudek, Paul Waldschmidt, Clare Caldwell, Bob Hula, Unspoken Requests Sylvia Johnson

Sunday Lists

Sunday Volunteers—February 1

Visitors Center & Coffee-Harmony
Head Usher-11:00 a.m.-Eddy David
Child. Church-8:30 a.m.-Kingdom Kids
Child. Church-11:00 a.m.-Jami & Lisa & Caleb
Counters-Janie Moore & Kent Warkentin

Sunday Volunteers—February 8

Visitors Center & Coffee-Harmony
Head Usher-11:00 a.m.-Eddy David
Child. Church-8:30 a.m.-Kingdom Kids
Child. Church-11:00 a.m.-Jami & Kat Katzung
Counters-Diana Pond & Jack Vest

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
FLC-Family Life Center * Unsponsored Event

Wednesday, January 28

7:30 a.m.-Men's Breakfast—Crescent Café
6:00 p.m.-Chancel Ringers
6:30 p.m.-The Awakening Youth-FLC
7:00 p.m.-Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 29

7:00 p.m.-Karate at FLC *

Friday, January 30

5:00 p.m.-FLC in use*
7:30 p.m.-Karate set up*

Saturday, January 31

Karate Tournament-FLC*

Sunday, February 1

8:30 a.m.-Modern Worship; 11:00 a.m.-Classic Worship
10:00 a.m.-Small Groups
Super Bowl Sub Pick up

Monday, February 2

7:00 p.m.-Boy Scouts-FLC

Tuesday, February 3

10:00 a.m.-Intercessory Prayer Group
1:00 p.m.-Staff Meeting
6:30 p.m.-Cub Scouts-FLC
7:00 p.m.-Praise Team
7:00 p.m.-AI-Anon-Upstairs

Wednesday, February 4

7:30 a.m.-M/W Breakfast-Crescent Café
6:00 p.m.-Chancel Ringers
6:30 p.m.-The Awakening Youth-FLC
7:00 p.m.-Chancel Choir

Thursday, February 5

7:00 p.m.-Karate-FLC*

Friday, February 6

5:30 p.m.-FLC in use*
7:30 p.m.-Boy Scout Pinewood Derby set up-FLC

Saturday, February 7

Boy Scout Pinewood Derby-FLC

Sunday, February 8

8:30 a.m.-Modern Worship; 11:00 a.m.-Classic Worship
9:45 a.m.-Communion Service
10:00 a.m.-Small Groups
3:00 p.m.-2nd Monday Book Club

Monday, February 9

Newsletter Week-All articles due by 11:00 a.m.
7:00 p.m.-Boy Scouts-FLC

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