

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church

February, 2014



Just a Thought.

As I was reading this article in a blog I receive, I thought how appropriate as we begin our prayer ministry along with the rest of the Conference. Please enjoy the words from “What Would the Lord's Prayer Sound Like Today?” Can you think of a way to make the Lord’s Prayer more relevant for today?

What Would the Lord's Prayer Sound Like Today? By JR. Forasteros

Most people who’ve been in church at any point in their lives are familiar with the Lord’s Prayer (or the “Our Father” for my Catholic readers). We find a lot of meaning in reciting the prayer together as a corporate body. For those who love the Church, the language of the Lord’s Prayer can be quite comforting.

But the language of the Lord's Prayer can be impenetrable and archaic. And that's not what Jesus intended.

The Lord’s Prayer is part of Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon is good news to the impoverished peasant class that comprised Jesus’ Galilean audience—farmers and fishermen. And as such, it’s packed full of practical teaching and illustrations lifted right out of his listeners’ daily lives. He talks about relationships, lust, money, worrying about the future and more.

And right in the middle (6:9-13) of this practical, relevant sermon, Jesus talks about prayer. He says (in verse 7), “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! — Matthew 6:7-8 In other words, Jesus is inviting his listeners into a prayer life that’s as concrete and practical as his Sermon.”

Jesus wants their prayers to have more to do with their regular world than their sacred worship spaces.

More accurately, Jesus wants the religion they experience when they gather to worship to be the same life they live when they're working, enjoying their friends or at home with their families.

Jesus wants their religion to be integrated into the whole of their lives, not sectioned off into special days with special language.

So he taught them a different way to pray.

But then us professional church people got ahold of it and turned the Lord's Prayer back into the disconnected, ritualistic language Jesus specifically told us to avoid when he taught us the prayer!

How many of us actually know what "hallowed be thy name" means? When was the last time any of us talked about food as our "daily bread"? Or used the word "trespasses"? (And let the Trespasses vs. Debts battle begin!)

Jesus knew that how we learn to pray matters.

The language we use to talk to and about God will shape whether faith is an integral aspect of our whole lives, or if it's a privatized, sectioned off corner of our lives we only visit occasionally. And the way every church I've ever been a part of uses the Lord's Prayer is backwards from Jesus' intention for it.

Rather than drawing on plain, everyday language to connect us to the God who's working in our plain, everyday world, the now-archaic, pseudo-King James language we English-speakers use to quote the Lord's Prayer ensures that each new generation of Christians continues to find prayer a daunting, intimidating practice.

So why don't we rewrite the Lord's Prayer?

Why don't we translate the language of Jesus' prayer into practical, plain language? As you've no doubt guessed, I took the liberty of doing just that (with a good bit of help from several friends, and Eugene Peterson's [excellent Message version](#).) Here's how I imagine Jesus would teach us to pray if he came to my neck of the woods today.

Our Father, who created and rules the universe,
show us your perfect love so that we may emulate you.
May the world run the way you want it to – just like heaven does.
Keep us healthy with three square meals today
And forgive the wrongs we've done the same way we forgive the people who've wronged us.
Keep us safe – from ourselves and from the evils in the world.
All the political power and authority and fame belong to you, from now until the end of time.

Your Turn: What do you think of my reimagining? How would you update the Lord's Prayer?

Second Sunday “Souper” Bowl

Second Sunday Lunch will be on the 9th immediately after worship. This month The United Methodist Women will provide a variety of soups for our enjoyment. A “love offering” will be taken up to help the ladies with their events for this year. Come and enjoy and warm up with a bowl of soup!

Board of Trustees

The Trustees met on Sunday, January 26th after Services. The discussion was about heating temperatures in the Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary and grounds work. It was decided that both areas would be heated to 53 degrees during the colder times of the year when not in use. All are asked that if you use the facilities to please return the thermostats to the shutdown temperature. The Trustees are looking into having the stone refreshed in the parking and the purchasing of mulch for our landscape areas around the church. Thank you all for helping us maintain our facilities.

Message from Bishop Cho

Bishop Cho has invited all of our Churches to join together in a prayer covenant. Every person is asked to commit to at least one hour each day and be in prayer. Let us join together and pray for each other, our church, and our sister church; Rock UMC, The United Methodist Church, and all of our churches and World Leaders. Let’s make 2014 a year of prayer and recommitment to our Lord and Savior. Remember that a covenant is a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action. This covenant is between you and your God. Let us all join in this time of prayer.

OPEN HOUSE AT THE PARSONAGE

Rev. Jennifer invited everyone to the parsonage for an Open House. Fellowship and food was in abundance on 19th of January and was enjoyed by all who came together as the South Brunswick Charge. We learned that Rev. Jennifer is an excellent host and cook and enjoyed visiting with her, her family and our brothers and sisters from Rock and Olive Branch. Many thanks Rev. Jennifer!

Message from the Council Chair – Jane DiStefano

Happy New Year to each of you. I would like to take just a moment to remind everyone that this is a new year. Its always fun to look back – but don't let the past overwhelm the present. We have done many great things in the past but now it is time to look forward into the great new year ahead of us.

And this year has gotten off to a great start! Many things the council was working on last year have been completed, including the addition of ceiling fans in the sanctuary and our new projector and screen. Our choir, under the direction of Shirley Everest, has grown in many wonderful ways and hopefully you are enjoying their efforts.

Rev. Jennifer has been a blessing for Olive Branch and Rock. Her positive attitude has also moved us forward and lifted our spirits. She has been a joyful addition to our church family.

The council is currently working on a vision statement for the church. And we are planning events for the coming months. We are also planning events to encourage more interaction with our sister church – Rock.

Please remember that our church will only be as good as those willing to work at making it the best it can be. Please come to council meetings and help us plan for the future. I look forward to seeing everyone on March 10th. Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or questions.

– Jane

Church Pantry and Food Distribution

Please don't forget our Church pantry. We added another family this past month to the 10 families we serve on the second Tuesday and Fourth Friday of each month. Our brothers and sisters in the greater community are suffering and need help. We are blessed that Food Lion is willing to provide us with meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. I know you will open your hearts.

Special Event on Prayer

Our District cluster group, Circle 9, will be hosting a Prayer Conference on February 9th from 4:00-6:00 PM at South Hill UMC. Our speaker will be our own district Lay Leader, Johnnie Morris. Please consider joining us for this special event. *Please let Pastor Jennifer know if you will be attending.*

Ash Wednesday Service

A service of imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 5. Please mark your calendar and plan on joining us for this special service as we begin the Lenten Season. As in the past, mid-day worship services will be held during Holy Week and evening services on Maunday Thursday and Good Friday (the week of April 13-18). Please plan on joining us on this triumphant journey with our Lord.

World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 7. Rock UMC will be open from 12:00nn-7:00pm that day. Please plan on coming by anytime during those hours (come, pray, and go) and pray with Pastor Jennifer for our churches, our community, and our world. Let us also use this time to pray for the unchurched and for any personal prayer needs and concerns. Candles will be available to light in memory or honor of a loved one. If the weather permits, we will take a remembrance walk around the Rock Cemetery.

We are United Methodists?

Ever wonder why we; the people who call ourselves United Methodist, do the things we do? What sets us apart? Why is grace so important? What sacraments do we celebrate? What are apportionments? Who is this guy named, Wesley? Pastor Jennifer will be holding a UM 101 class at the parsonage during the month of March. Currently, we are looking at having the class from 2-4 on Friday, March 14, 21, and 28. However, the time and date is still being decided depending on those who are interested. Please let Pastor Jennifer know if you are interested in learning more about the United Methodist Church.

Communion and Baptism on February 2

Please be sure to join us this Sunday, February 2, for worship. It is a special day in the life of our congregation as we celebrate both of our Sacraments; Holy Communion and Baptism. Walter Richard Clary (known to us as Dick Clary) will be baptized and then will be received as a new member into the Olive Branch church family. Please come and renew your vows to the church with Dick and welcome him officially into the family of Christ through his baptism.

Administrative Council Meeting

Our Administrative Council met on the 13th of January. It was the first of our new meeting dates. At the December Council Meeting it was decided that the Council would meet the second Monday of alternate months beginning with the January meeting. Jane DiStefano reminds all Committee Chairs and organization Chairpersons that they are to be prepared to give a short report of their committee activities, and future plans.

During the January meeting a discussion on visioning for the church took place. If you have any ideas of what our vision should be, let Jane DiStefano know. Along with the visioning a call for a Finance Chairperson went out. If you have a wish to help us and have somewhat of a finance background and are a member of the church please contact Jane.

If you have an idea of how we can make OBUMC better, bring your ideas to the council and let's talk about them. We can only be as good as our participation in the way we do things! Council meetings are for each member of our church to be heard.

United Methodist Women

The UMW is scheduling their annual Quiet Day Apart, which is a time for reflection, when the weather warms up. They are, also, planning a "Souper Bowl" Sunday on the 9th. They will be taking a love offering at that luncheon. All women of the church are invited to take part in the missional activities of the UMW.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men are continuing the mission work they are doing. They have three heaters available to loan to those in the community who have little or no heat. They are, now, registered with Brunswick County Social Services as a source of heat in the Gasburg area. If you know of a family or a person in need of heat this winter please call Ed DiStefano, 252-537-5705 or Ray Dyer, 252-308-6792 for assistance. The Men have been planning for this year. At this time we are looking to hold "The Wives and Widows Luncheon" in February.

A stew sale has been scheduled for the 22nd of February. Get your orders in for this warm, delicious stew for these cold days! The price will be \$7.00 per quart.

On the 4th of March we will be doing the cooking for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The hours for that event will be 5-7 pm. Come and celebrate the last day before Lent, Ash Wednesday. We will take up a love offering for this meal.

Our next meeting will be the 15th of February at 8:00AM. Breakfast will be cooked by Ray Dyer and Steve Johnson, and we invite all men of the church to join us for a time of fellowship, breakfast, devotion.

*******WIDOWS AND WIVES LUNCHEON*******

The United Methodist Men's "Widows and Wives Luncheon is now scheduled for Sunday, February 16th at the Kennon House after services. All widows and single ladies of our Church are invited to attend. Transportation will be provided to anyone needing a ride. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex. Please mark your calendars and plan on joining them for this fun time and the opportunity to show our grateful thanks for all they do for our church.

Sunday School

Sunday School is available each Sunday morning. The importance of Sunday School is that, though you may think hearing the word during the worship service will suffice for you, you really need to be in attendance at Sunday School to gather all the information that you can in an open discussion classroom. Jesus' word cannot be totally understood just by listening to a sermon. You have to interact with it and with other Christians to learn what He, as well as the other people of the Bible is saying to us. This is a life long study and you should take part. We are continuing a study on Christian history. Using "The Story of Christianity – Vol 1" by Justo Gonzalez, we are delving into what makes us the Christians through our history. We read and review one chapter each week and discuss what it is all about. It is very interesting and we hope you will join us. Sunday School begins at 10:00 AM

Save Your Empty Ink Cartridges

A continuing mission project headed by Matte Bersch is to gather empty ink cartridges and send them away. The company that they are sent to then sends the church a check. Sooo, please save them and put them in the box in the fellowship hall. All funds go to continuing our outreach. Thank you Mattie!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating birthdays this month:

Lisa (Baird) Horoszewski 1, Linda Dennis 2, Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore 22

Choir Makes a Joyful Noise

And our choir does just that. We practice on Thursday's at 7:00 PM. We are 9 strong at this time and with the help of Shirley Everret we are beginning to learn to read music. Try

that at our age!!! If you feel that you would like to make a joyful noise, please come join us. We are planning for the Lenten and Easter Season. It should be an exciting time for us and the church! Let us all come together to praise the Lord in song at our worship services.

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



'The Prayer of Jabez' retold for a fast food generation. **I Chr 4:10**

This is our newsletter. It is meant to be a way to communicate what your church is doing and what all the organizations are doing both in the congregation and the community. I am sending this electronically via email and copies will be made available for those who need a printed copy.

There are many organizations within our church and I hope they would like to have their achievements, plans, and meetings made known to the entire church. It is my hope that they will ask one of their members to drop a short note as to what they doing each month. The line of communication in the church needs to be open and full of what we are doing at Olive Branch to make disciples in our area. If you would like to send us something, please bring it to church or send me an email (revedumc@yahoo.com) and we

will see that it gets published. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and God bless. Ed DiStefano