The Messenger

Volume 56, Issue 3
March 2022

"This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'"
Matthew 11:10 NRSV

First United Methodist Church—Newton, Iowa

Pastor Paul's Ponderings

"God calls us all to be earth-keepers or gardeners. This is the "first commandment" spelled out in Genesis, to tend the garden and till the soil. In the Garden of Eden we lived in perfect harmony with God, and the earth was our first sacrament. Perhaps this is why we feel most in harmony with God when we are gardening.

Or in the words of Phyllis Theroux, "I think this is what hooks one on gardening; it is the closest one can come to being present at the creation."

The pilgrimage of life is the way back to that first Garden—a pilgrimage that takes us through some other gardens, like the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden of the Tomb. Even so, "there can be no other occupation like gardening, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling," Theroux concludes (Leonard Sweet, *A Cup of Coffee at the Soul Café*).

As I watch the weather gradually getting warmer, and the birds sing a different song in the morning, and the warming soil starts to smell differently, my heart turns to growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers.



I have found that everybody grows something. It might not be vegetables, but we all grow something. Some grow and cultivate music, others' gardens include words. Sometimes it is our family, our children, our grandchildren. Everyone is growing something.

When we grow something, we need to cultivate and tend our plants, or dreams, or hopes, and our lives. If we don't tend to our garden, weeds will come. Distractions will happen, other chores will demand our attention.

What are you cultivating in your garden?

In our Lenten study devotions, we will find and examine how "Lent is a season of spiritual gardening, of inviting God to unearth in us what lies fallow, what needs to be tended, and what needs to die for new life to emerge."

Brene Brown writes "Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty."

Please join us as we cultivate our lives.

Blessings,

Pastor Paul



How to Contact Us

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Email: office@newtonfirst.org
Church Website with Live Stream Link: www.newtonfirst.org

Office Hours

8 AM-4 PM (Monday-Thursday; Closed 12:00 Noon-1 PM)
8 AM-12:00 Noon (Friday)

First United Methodist Church Staff

Paul Smith, *Pastor*
Joy Osborn-Daniels, *Administrative Assistant*
Mel Wilson, *Coordinator of Lay Ministries*
Kraig Holubar, *Custodian*
Dorothy McFarling, *Financial Secretary*
Rachel Faidley, *Director of Music* and *Park Centre Pianist*
Jean Ibbotson, *Organist*

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Sympathies

Our deepest sympathies to Jane Mouchka and Vicki Wright and family on the death of Jane's son and Vicki's brother, Andrew Mouchka; to Merna Rusk and family on the death of Merna's grandson, Jaden Rusk; to Carroll & Jill Simbro and family on the death of Carroll's brother, Kalven Simbro; and to the family and friends of David Ringgenberg.

We wish you an abundance of God's peace in your loss. *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you....Do not let your hearts be troubled."* John 14:27

Hospitalizations

Released: Tamara Holubar

From Your Administrative Council

The Administrative Council has decided to suspend coffee fellowship time on Sunday mornings until further notice due to the continued COVID concerns. Faithful Servant greeting will continue. For further information on worship and church activity guidelines, please visit the website at newtonfirst.org.



Home Mission Sunday

Home Mission Sunday will be **March 6th**. This month, the Salvation Army requests spaghetti sauce and spaghetti noodles. Please put the items in the wicker baskets at the church entrances or bring to the church office during the week. Thank you for your ongoing generosity!

Finance News

Online giving is available for donations to First United Methodist Church. This can be done by going to the church's website (newtonfirst.org) and selecting the "Give" icon; on the next page select the "Donate" button; and on the page "Local Church Giving," necessary information is required for completion. Where it asks to select a church, select Newton, First UMC (558065), from the list. Follow the instructions and credit card information will be needed to complete the process. Online giving is being made possible by the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church. When a gift is made, an email acknowledging the gift will be sent from the Iowa Conference to the church office. *Please note: All online deposits are one month behind (i.e. March giving isn't available to the church until April 15th).*



In an effort to keep the congregation informed, the Finance Committee provides monthly financial reports that highlight budgeted items, expenses, offering, and attendance. The reports are available in the Welcome Center, can be picked up in the church office, or mailed upon request.

Community Meals



Wednesday Night Community Meals are under way from **5:30 PM—6:30 PM** in the church dining room. All in attendance will be seated at tables that reflect social distance. Sacred Heart and First Lutheran Churches rotate weeks of service with FUMC. As food donations are needed, sign-up sheets will be at the Welcome Center. *Note: There will be no Community Meal on March 2nd due to Ash Wednesday.*

Online Worship



If your schedule keeps you from attending worship, join our live-streamed worship services, devotions, and past services by visiting our website at newtonfirst.org or by visiting https://first-umc-newton-iowa.sermoncloud.com/live. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the church office and we will be happy to help you.

Some people are kind, polite and sweet-spirited … until you try to sit in their pew.
Humor to Break Up the Winter Blahs

MARCH 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 GOLDEN CROSS SUNDAY 8:45 AM Worship 9:00 AM Radio Broadcast *(KCOB Radio 95.9 FM or 1280 AM)* 10:00 AM Park Centre Worship	28 2:00 PM Bible Study	1 10:00 AM Worship Planning Team Mtg	2 9:00 AM Staff Mtg 12:00 PM UMW Board Mtg 1:00 PM UMW General Mtg 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service	3 9:30 AM Park Centre Study 7:00 PM Crochet Class	4	5
6 COMMUNION 8:45 AM Worship 9:00 AM Radio Broadcast *(KCOB Radio 95.9 FM or 1280 AM)* 10:00 AM Park Centre Worship	7 2:00 PM Bible Study	8 10:00 AM Outreach/ Missional Service Mtg 6:30 PM Trustees Committee Mtg	9 9:00 AM Staff Mtg 10:30 AM Lenten Devotion 5:30 PM Community Meal 5:30 PM Kids Club 6:00 PM Jubilee Bells 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	10 9:30 AM Park Centre Study 6:30 PM Finance Committee Mtg	11	12
13 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME 8:45 AM Worship 9:00 AM Radio Broadcast *(KCOB Radio 95.9 FM or 1280 AM)* 10:00 AM Park Centre Worship 	14 2:00 PM Bible Study 6:30 PM S/PPRC Mtg	15 ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL REPORTS DUE	16 9:00 AM Staff Mtg 9:30 AM Mary Circle (PJs) 10:30 AM Lenten Devotion 1:00 PM Miriam Circle (PJs) 5:30 PM Community Meal 6:00 PM Jubilee Bells 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	17 9:30 AM Park Centre Study 	18	19
20 8:45 AM Worship 9:00 AM Radio Broadcast *(KCOB Radio 95.9 FM or 1280 AM)* 10:00 AM Park Centre Worship	21 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 2:00 PM Bible Study	22 7:00 PM Administrative Council Mtg	23 9:00 AM Staff Mtg 10:30 AM Lenten Devotion 2:00 PM Park Centre Circle 5:30 PM Community Meal 5:30 PM Kids Club 6:00 PM Jubilee Bells 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	24	25	26
27 UMCOR SUNDAY 8:45 AM Worship 9:00 AM Radio Broadcast *(KCOB Radio 95.9 FM or 1280 AM)* 10:00 AM Park Centre Worship	28 2:00 PM Bible Study	29	30 9:00 AM Staff Mtg 10:30 AM Lenten Devotion 5:30 PM Community Meal 5:30 PM Kids Club 5:30 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Jubilee Bells 7:00 PM Chancel Choir	31 9:30 AM Park Centre Study	1	2

Newton Schools Spring Break

UMW News

As February comes to an end, we are looking forward to our first UMW General Meeting of our 2022 year and decided to check into some mission work within our community. A representative from Discover Hope will be joining us on **Wednesday, March 2nd** at **1 PM** in the dining room to tell us about their mission within our community. We invite anyone in our church family that would like to learn about Discover Hope to join us and give a warm welcome as we learn of their mission and service.

Mary Circle will be our hostess for this meeting, serving refreshments at 1 PM with our program from Discover Hope to follow at 1:30 PM. The executive board will meet prior to the General Meeting at 12:00 noon in the adult classroom off the dining room.

United Methodist Women's Assembly 2022 is coming up May 20 – 22, 2022 in Orlando, Florida. It will be an exciting time for all United Methodist Women around the world. Check out the website at www.assembly2022.org to find out all about it.

Please remember we can still order Terri Lynn nuts online all year long to help with our mission projects. The website is https://fumcnewton.terrylynn.com to order directly; shipping is free with orders over $30. Thank you all for your support as we go forward.

I close with a prayer from the Prayer Guide: We pray that the rushing wind of the Holy Spirit would fan the flame of Holy Fire within us, that our hearts might be warmed to love as you first loved us. May we truly love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen

~ Marcilee Yeager, UMW President

A Prayer for Lent

This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on March 2nd. During worship services that day, pastors in many Christian churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.



Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation, and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," *Genesis 3:19*). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday — and throughout the 40 days of Lent — ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, you know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of your word, so that we may be victorious over the seduction of the Evil One and reach the paschal feast in the joy of the Holy Spirit."

On Wednesday, March 2nd, at 7 PM in the church sanctuary, join us as we share in the sacrament of Holy Communion, and in an act of repentance, receive the mark of the cross in ashes. We hope you will join us.

Daylight Saving Time is March 13th!

Daylight saving time begins at 2 AM local time on the second Sunday in March (March 13th), when clocks spring forward an hour. Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 AM local time on the first Sunday in November, when clocks fall back by an hour.



Mel's Memo



"If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb." You may have heard the saying, but where does it come from? According to search traffic from the past five years, Google reports searches for "in like a lion" and "out like a lamb" spike in early March every year. According to the *Farmers' Almanac*, the weather folklore stems from ancestral beliefs in balance, meaning if the weather at the start of the month was bad (like a roaring lion), the month should end with good weather (gentle, like a lamb). The saying may hold sometimes, the *Farmers' Almanac* explains, because March is typically when we see the transition between winter and spring. I guess we will just have to wait and see. We have already had some crazy weather this year.



March 13th is Daylight Saving Time. I find myself getting used to one time and then in 6 months having to turn it again. I wish we could just leave the time the same all year round!

Make this upcoming Lenten season a time of reflection and prayer beginning on **Wednesday, March 2nd** at **7 PM** for our Ash Wednesday service. We will also have weekly Lenten devotions in the chapel starting **Wednesday, March 9th** at **10:30 AM**. Please come and join us.

I found this and thought it was something to help us remember how to pray during Lent and Easter. Remember the word ACTS.

A-Stands for Adoration
Tell God you adore, praise and worship him.

C-Stands for Confession
Confess your sins and ask him to forgive you.

T-Stands for Thanksgiving
Thank God for the blessings in your life.

S-Stands for Supplication
Ask God to supply your needs and the needs of others.

Don't give up on the person you are becoming!

Happy Easter,

~ Mel Wilson, Coordinator of Lay Ministries

People are funny: They want the front of the bus, the middle of the road and the back of the church.

Humor to Break Up the Winter Blahs



I Spy with My Two Little Eyes…



...**Tim Blount** and **Alan Stout** have provided their time and talents to audit the church books. Thank you!

Unwrap the Gift



At church one Sunday, I noticed a woman carrying a Bible neatly wrapped in colorful ribbon, like a package. My first thought was that she must be giving it to someone as a present.

Throughout the next few weeks, however, I realized that was the woman's own well-used Bible. Whenever a worship service or Bible study ended, she carefully rewrapped the Scriptures with that shimmery strand.

What a great reminder that God's Word is a precious, practical gift meant to be opened and reopened regularly. ~ Stephanie Martin

Winter Policy



If there is a weather-related school closing or early dismissal, all church activities will be cancelled for that day/evening; Wednesday Night Meals may still serve; meal cancellations will be announced on KCOB radio. Weather issues may also affect the time the church office opens and closes.

From the Worship Planning Team



Our team has chosen a theme for the coming Lenten season entitled "Cultivating and Letting Go." It is produced by a group of clergy and artists who work under the name "A Sanctified Art."

The following is a description of the theme from one of the authors, Rev. Sarah Are: "For me, the words 'cultivating' and 'letting go' are incredibly rich. They feel like an invitation into that liminal space where I am invited to work on myself, to stand with God and be honest about who I am, what I need, and how desperately I long to be a Christian—and that all feels in character with the spirit of Lent. Thus, I have grown increasingly excited about this series because of its inherent honesty. I am excited about the possibilities for conversations around renewal and growth, rest and creativity, change and new life. I am also excited about the tangible nature of this theme. I hope the series will inspire pastors' preaching and teaching. A congregation could spend half of Lent focusing on the art of letting go, and then half of Lent focusing on the art of cultivating; or you could spend each week thinking of one way to let go in order to cultivate new life. No matter how you do it, I think these words lead us to spiritually rich ground in authentic and holy ways."

Our observance of the Lenten season will begin with an Ash Wednesday service on March 2nd at 7 PM. Devotional booklets entitled "Cultivating & Letting Go" are also available at the Welcome Center. You are welcome to take one for your personal devotion during this special season. As we explore these themes together, we will be offering Wednesday morning Lenten devotional services beginning on March 9th at 10:30 AM in the chapel. These services are open to all, as well as live-streamed through our website. ~ Rachel Faidley, Director of Music

Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Humor to Break Up the Winter Blahs

Scholarships Available

The Iowa United Methodist Foundation is reminding everyone of the availability of scholarships for students from Iowa who are planning to attend a university, college, or vocational institution and also the availability of scholarships for seminary students who are from Iowa and attending an approved United Methodist Seminary. Applications and all required material must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2022 to be eligible. Details may be sent to Iowa United Methodist Foundation, 2301 Rittenhouse St, Des Moines IA 50321. For a complete listing of scholarships available including criteria, applications, and checklist, please go to www.iumf.org/scholarships.

Stephen Ministry

Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., founder of Stephen Ministries in St. Louis, Missouri, knows about grief and caregiving. The loss of his wife was the foundation to all his writings. His experiences have provided an opportunity for him to write about healing remedies. His books have been shaped through careful research with more than four thousand individuals who have known suffering in their own lives. Dr. Haugk listened to their stories, gathered data, and tested and compressed their collective wisdom into gems of compassion and understanding for us all to learn from and use. For more information on Stephen Ministries, contact one of our Stephen Ministers or the church office.

Blessings,

Your Stephen Ministers

Planning Ahead for Easter Flowers



Families that wish to give flowers in memory or honor of someone for our Easter service, please let the church office know by Tuesday, April 12th, as they will be listed in the Easter bulletin. Lilies or colored flowers in pots, will be greatly appreciated! Flowers can be ordered from Hy-Vee Floral (641-792-6013) or Fine Things Remembered/Fresh Flowers (641-521-8858), and both will deliver to the church.



March Mission Giving Opportunity

UMCOR Sunday, previously known as One Great Hour of Sharing, will be collected on **Sunday, March 27th**. These donations enable the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health, and peace.

Our Stain Remover



From sanitizers and soaps to solutions and sprays, many products promise to eliminate germs and grime. Unfortunately, they often fall short. Just think how many items in your closet or kitchen have been ruined by stubborn stains.

What if we were that concerned about ridding our lives and hearts of sin? What if we spent as much time confessing and repenting as scrubbing and laundering? The good news is that with one "application" (the cross), Jesus makes us "whiter than snow" (*Psalm 51:7*). Praise be to our unblemished Lamb, the perfect stain remover!

March Birthdays

Birthday blessings to those listed below who are celebrating their special day this month!

Mar 1st – Jeff Eldred
Mar 2nd – Joseph Banfield, Thomas Joswiak, Jennifer Lehrman, Liv Schnathorst
Mar 3rd – Michael Isley
Mar 4th – Carter Birkenholtz, Clara Buckley, Matt York
Mar 5th – Elexa Morrow, Cabe Osby
Mar 6th – Barb DeHaai, Loretta Miller, Drayton Roberts, Linda Roye
Mar 7th – Eric Guy, Nora Iverson
Mar 8th – Vicki Duchene, Jim Liger, Kim Rogers
Mar 9th – Sheryl Ferguson, Vicky Holmquist
Mar 10th – Linda Burns, Dean James, Gary Osborn
Mar 11th – Sharon Fane, Jaya Liebl, Kathy Smith
Mar 13th – Rory Kain, Tonia Montgomery, Sherrie Zellinger
Mar 14th – Brent Bagnall, Joni Bylo, Drew Farver, Aiden Robson, Betty Wright
Mar 15th – Jim Lindstrom
Mar 16th – Mary Ann Reisetter
Mar 18th – Linda Berkey, Robert Ryan, Tammy Seiser, Cindy Tabor
Mar 19th – Gene Scarbrough
Mar 20th – Shirley Birkenholz, Phyllis Cavitt
Mar 21st – Bill Yeager
Mar 22nd – Roger Swanson
Mar 23rd – Clint Welling
Mar 25th – Rhonda Loder, Lila Mendenhall
Mar 26th – Judith Dailey, Roger Etter, Kora Scotton, Parker White
Mar 27th – Carolyn Bell, Bill Landgrebe
Mar 28th – Imogene Bruce
Mar 29th – Stacey Wilson
Mar 30th – Daniel Barcus, Joe Buckley, Kellan Hartgers, Steve Light
Mar 31st – Linelle Eldred, Cindy Seiser, Jack Wright



March Anniversaries

Congratulations to these couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries this month!

Mar 5th – Dave & Shirley Birkenholz
Mar 6th – Gary & Sandy Kaput
Mar 10th – Terry & Pat Ingledue, Scott & Beth Pline
Mar 11th – Allen & Carol Wigans
Mar 16th – Marv & Koni Bunse
Mar 22nd – Sean & Rachael McDermott, Larry & Kathy Milburn
Mar 24th – Alan & Joy Stout
Mar 25th – Roger & Tammy Seiser
Mar 26th – Richard & Mary Beth Spilly, Jr.

Kids Club



Kids Club meets on Wednesdays from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM for children 2 years old through 5th grade; middle school students have their own class; Confirmation students will meet with Pastor Paul as scheduled. The evening does include supper. Please use the elevator entrance and meet in fellowship hall.

Note: There will be no Kids Club on March 2nd due to Ash Wednesday.

A Child's Prayer for Protection



If indeed childhood was ever carefree, it's hardly so now. Some children face bullying, while others deal with rough home lives. Many fret over their performance at school and in sports. News of dangers and tragedies makes parents want to shelter their kids from worldly harm.

Whether real or imagined, childhood anxieties are best confronted in the same way as adult anxieties: through prayer and the assurance of God's presence. Teach this traditional prayer to a young person in your life — and find comfort in it yourself:

God in heaven, hear my prayer. Keep me in thy loving care.
Be my guide in all I do. Bless all those who love me too. Amen

Working for God on earth doesn't pay much, but his retirement plan is out of this world.

Humor to Break Up the Winter Blahs

Just 4 Kids

(And church-loving friends and family!)



A wonderous washing

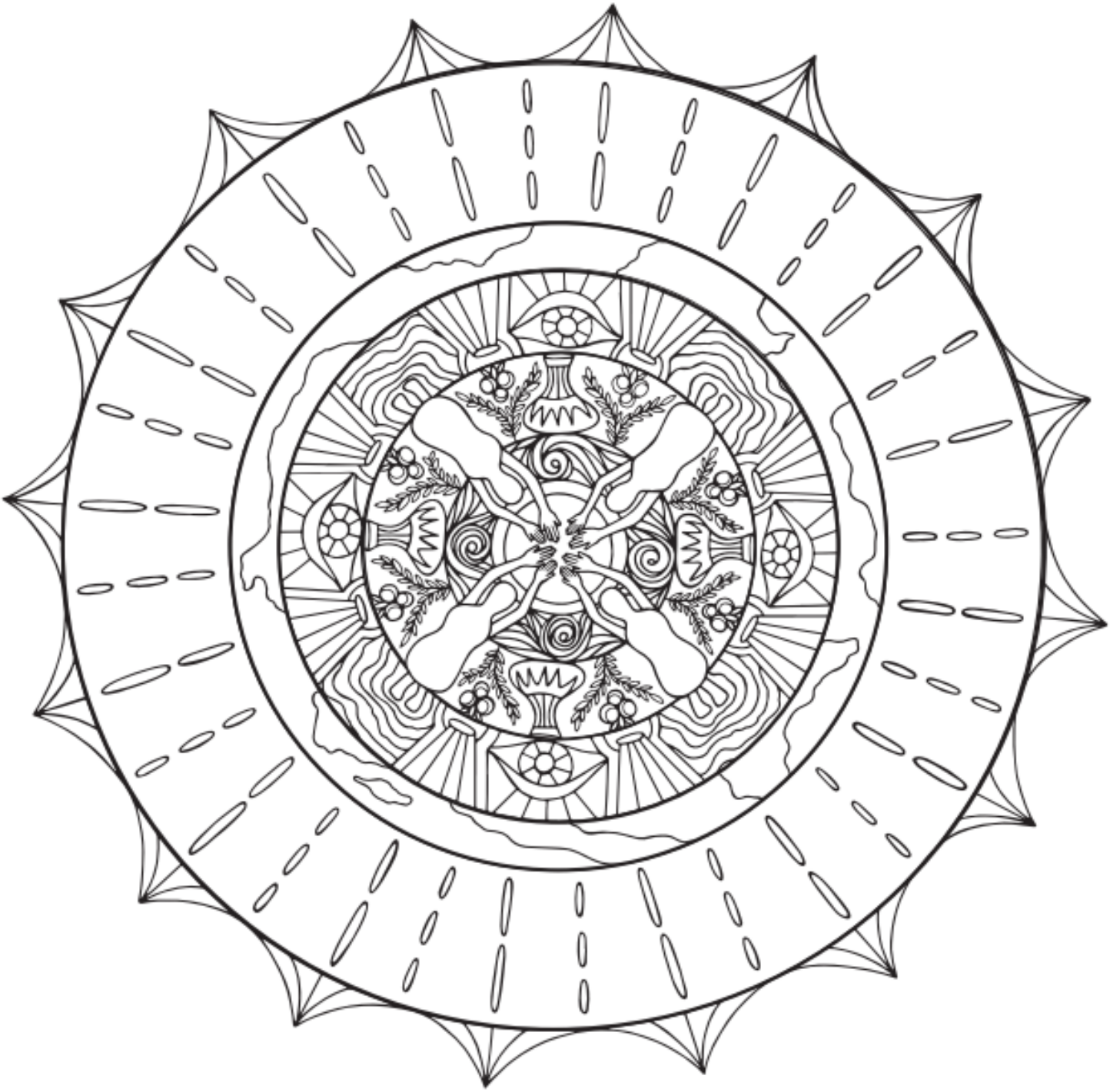
David's prayer of repentance reveals a desire to be cleansed of his sin.

Directions: *Unscramble the words on the left. Then match them with the correct phrases from Psalm 51 (NIV) on the right.*

ETRCAE _ _ _ _ _ _	_____	out my transgressions (v. 1)
HSAW _ _ _ _	_____	away all my iniquity (v. 2)
RSEEROT _ _ _ _ _ _ _	_____	me with hyssop, and I will be clean (v. 7)
WNERE _ _ _ _ _	_____	me, and I will be whiter than snow (v. 7)
TLBO _ _ _ _	_____	your face from my sins (v. 9)
DIHE _ _ _ _	_____	out all my iniquity (v. 9)
NATRG _ _ _ _ _	_____	in me a pure heart (v. 10)
LNSECAE _ _ _ _ _ _ _	_____	a steadfast spirit within me (v. 10)
LBTO _ _ _ _	_____	to me the joy of your salvation (v. 12)
WHSA _ _ _ _	_____	me a willing spirit, to sustain me (v. 12)

Answer: blot, wash, cleanse, wash, hide, blot, create, renew, restore, grant

COLORING PAGE



Invitation to Abundant Life

A Sanctified Art Illustration by: Lauren Wright Pittman | Inspired by: Isaiah 55:1-9 | sanctifiedart.org



2022 1st Quarter (March) FUMC Faithful Servants

Special thanks to all who have committed to serve the church during the month of March. Your service is greatly appreciated! This first quarter schedule was a challenge due to the limited numbers available in the volunteer pool. We are working diligently to get more people to serve! ***If you are unable to fulfill your assigned obligation, please try to find someone to replace you and notify the church office so the correct information is reflected in the bulletin****. If you are not able to find a replacement, please call the church office at 792-4648. As others come forward to volunteer, and in an effort to use as many people as possible, please watch the monthly* Messenger *for any scheduling changes.*

March Church Door Opening/Closing

March 6: Greg & Rhonda Loder and Jerry & Betty Yates
March 13: Jim Marshall and Joy Stout
March 20: Greg & Rhonda Loder and Diane Plumb
March 27: Jim Marshall and Dave Drew

March Coffee Fellowship

Suspended

March Coffee Host

Suspended

March Greeters

March 6: Deb Bagnall (N), Tori Reynolds (S), Mel Wilson (W)
March 13: Sheryl Ferguson (N), Jim & Gina Marshall (S), Pat Drew (W)
March 20: Catherine Osborn (N), Tori Reynolds (S), Mel Wilson (W)
March 27: Deb Bagnall (N), Sheryl Ferguson (S), Gary & Sandy Kaput (W)

March Liturgists

March 6: Pat Riemenschneider
March 13: Jane Hollander
March 20: Tom Hollander
March 27: Larry Hurto

March Van Maintenance

Cindy Tabor

March Technical Engineers

March 6: Koni Bunse (P), Tim Blount (S), Karter Prellwitz-Liebhart (V)
March 13: Christine Dawson (P), Jerry Dawson (S), Tim Blount (V)
March 20: Alan Stout (P), Marv Bunse (S), Koni Bunse (V)
March 27: Koni Bunse (P), Tim Blount (S), Kenny Skinner-Havens (V)

March Ushers

March 6: Calvin Holmquist, Shawn McFarling, Pat Riemenschneider, Wade Sheeler
March 13: Calvin Holmquist, Shawn McFarling, Pat Riemenschneider
March 20: Calvin Holmquist, Shawn McFarling, Pat Riemenschneider, Wade Sheeler
March 27: Calvin Holmquist, Shawn McFarling, Pat Riemenschneider, Wade Sheeler

March Van Assistants

March 6: Rhonda Loder
March 13: Dave Drew
March 20: Rhonda Loder
March 27: Dave Drew

March Van Drivers

March 6: Greg Loder
March 13: Steve Calabro
March 20: Greg Loder
March 27: Steve Calabro



Minutes of Gold

Two or three minutes — two or three hours,
What do they mean in this life of ours?
Not very much if counted as time,
But minutes of gold and hours sublime.
If we would make use of them once in a while,
To make someone happy — make someone smile,
A minute may dry a little lad's tears,
An hour may sweep aside troubles of years.
Minutes of my time may bring to an end
Hopelessness somewhere, and give me a friend.

~ Author Unknown