

“The Teenage Years”

Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.” Luke 2:41-43

This past Sunday was a pretty incredible one in our church and for my family. As a congregation, we confirmed and welcomed into our membership 9 of our youth. Included in this group of 9 were both of our boys (and I managed to hold my emotions together). It was indeed a special time as these 9 sixth through ninth graders claimed the same promises for their lives which were claimed in their names at their baptisms.

This got me thinking about my own confirmation and who I was then, which led me to reflect on my teen and pre-teen years. While my childhood and youth were far from traumatic, you could not pay me enough to relive those years. I find this attitude to be nearly universal when having conversations with others. In a conversation the morning of Confirmation Sunday, I heard several other parents discussing their own teenage years and saying they would never want to relive their junior high experience.

While we were in the midst of celebrating these teens, it reminded me of the responsibility we still have to them. Since it is universally agreed that junior high is a miserable experience (my words, not others) no one would want to relive, those of us who love and care for teenagers (hopefully that’s all of us) have a responsibility to recognize how difficult adolescence can be, especially now, and to do our best to be empathetic. I know I am not always the most lenient and understanding with the teenagers in my house, and that my expectations (and demands) sometimes fail to take into consideration my kids’ daily grind.

We don’t have a lot of information about Jesus’ teenage years. In fact, the only story we have from Jesus’ adolescence is the story of a family trip to Jerusalem for Passover. On this trip, Jesus displayed some teenage rebellion – choosing to spend extra time in the “big city” rather than going back home with his traveling party. When his stressed-out and anxious parents found him, he responded with what would be received as a smart-aleck response: “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49) I can only imagine how hot this statement must have left Joseph and Mary. Beyond this story, the scriptures are silent about Jesus’ life until he is approximately 30 years old. I wonder if the lack of details about Jesus’ adolescence is a reflection of him not sharing those days with his disciples (the ones who ultimately were responsible for the writing of the Gospels)?

I don’t really have any wisdom here to conclude with or any insight to pass along. I just want to encourage you to pray for all the teens you know and love (and maybe those who are hard to love) as they go through days and years we would not want to relive. These are tough days and teenagers need all the love, support, and empathy we can show them.

Blessings,

Chris

From the Board –

In this space, each month a different member of our Church Administrative Board will share with you a little about their work, their desires, and why they serve. This month, Linda Gordon has agreed to share her thoughts and perspective.

I love spring because of the fresh aromas, flowers and trees budding, newly mown grass, scents of rain, and (most of all) because it is a precursor to my favorite season... summer! My husband, on the other hand, prefers the milder temperatures of spring and all the new life (birds, animals) it brings. And, as with other aspects in our relationship, we do not feel we have to agree on everything. That brings me back to the grass. Rob does all the mowing, I think mostly because he does not think I do it "right." He also oversees the lawn care. We have about 1 1/2 acres of lawn (minus his garden), so of course he should have a say in how we care for it. I believe I should have some say as well. Herein is a little problem. We have two lawn services we like; one does a better job with the fertilizing and the other does a better job with weed control. So, we generally have an annual "debate" about which one to use to keep our lawn looking its best.

As I was looking out at our lush (recently fertilized) grass the other day, my mind wandered to Easter and how our spiritual lives are often comparable to fresh spring grass; full, thick and rich with nutrients (and maybe some fertilizer). Our spiritual lives at this time of year have been fed with Lenten traditions; reading special scriptures and devotions, "giving up" something to sharpen our focus, or "centering" on one or more spiritual practices that are especially meaningful during the Lenten season. We typically have special services, activities and music at church in the days leading up to Easter, all directing us to thoughtfully consider the meaning of Christ's resurrection and how it will be reflected in our daily living throughout the rest of the year. Easter itself is full of excitement. . . joyful sermons and music, new clothing, celebratory decorations, Easter gifts, and meals with our families. Certainly Easter is the pinnacle of our Christian celebration and we are left with a feeling of euphoria and wonder at this miracle God created for us. Usually churches are filled with people visiting families or attending services to celebrate this most holy of days.

I was surprised, then, to hear Pastor Chris tell me that the Sunday (or two) after Easter historically are the lowest attended Sundays of the year. One would think it would be just the opposite, with all the emphasis and special festivities we have just experienced! Our spiritual appetites have certainly been fed. But perhaps our spiritual lives go the way of our spring lawns, once the fertilizer wears off. The grass begins to become less plush and beautiful. It becomes thinner, and a few dandelions and other weeds begin to creep in! The focus moves away from having a thick green lawn to other concerns (lawn furniture, flower pots, landscaping, etc.) As I look out over our very green lawn, I pray that all of us can maintain our focus on Christ and the resurrection...which gives us eternal hope, not just at Easter, but every day of the year.

Linda Gordon

UMM Fundraiser Breakfast



The United Methodist Men will hold a fundraiser breakfast the morning of Sunday, May 15th from 9:00 am – 12:30 pm. There is no cost for the meal, but freewill donations will be accepted and benefit various mission projects of the United Methodist Men. Thank you.

Youth Group News



Friday, May 6th: Meeting at the Jackson's Home (7:00 pm)

Sunday, May 22nd: Meeting at the Jackson's Home (6:30 pm)

Recognizing Our Graduates High School or College



Please contact the church office if you have a High School or College Graduate in your family this spring. We would like to be able to congratulate them during an upcoming worship service. Thank you.

Baby Grace



The monthly distribution will be held Thursday, May 19th from 5:00 - 7:00 PM. If you would like to help with the distribution, sorting and sizing, or other aspects of this program, please contact Cindy Koch.

Sagrada Bible Camp



Camp Sagrada has reached out to us requesting our help with transportation of campers. This is a ministry we did in the past. The camp's mission is to reach children with the gospel, whose parents are incarcerated. Campers experience the love of Jesus, and that of camp staff/counselors, in a fun filled natural environment, perhaps rendering them more receptive to the gospel. The camp experience is so important for these children who are burdened by the absence or stigma of an incarcerated parent. We are looking for help on the following dates: June 6 and 10, June 13 and 17, and June 20 and 25.

Each day we will need a team of 2 adults, one of which can drive the Sagrada van, the other to assist. You can volunteer for one day, or one week. Any adult, 18+, is eligible to help with this project. Each volunteer will need to plan on several hours of travel. The Camp Sagrada Van as well as fuel will be provided. Please take a look at your schedule and see if you are willing to make a trip, and if so, which date? There is a sign-up sheet in the east narthex. More information will be provided to volunteers as the dates near. If you have any question, please contact Tim Von Engeln at (660) 882-3348.

A Big Thank You



Thank you to everyone who supported our Blood Drive on Monday, April 25th. They collected 14 units of blood. We will host another blood drive at a later date

Easter Cards for NMUMC Elders & Friends



Our church friends were so pleased with your cards of remembrance during this Easter holiday. Thank you so much for participating in this special endeavor.

May Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 9:00 am TOPS 8:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	3 7:00 pm - Congregational Care Team Meeting, Lounge	4 10:15 am - Women's Bible Study, Lounge 12:00 Noon Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	5 6:00 pm - Praise Band Practice	6 7:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge 7:00 pm – Youth Group @ the Jacksons	7
8 Mother's Day	9 9:00 am TOPS 8:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	10 6:30 pm - NAMI 7:00 pm - Choir Practice	11 10:15 am - Women's Bible Study, Lounge 12:00 Noon Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	12 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Baby Grace Size and Sort	13 7:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	14 8:30 am UMM Meeting
15 9:00 am – 12:30 pm – UMM Breakfast Fundraiser	16 9:00 am TOPS 8:00 pm – Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	17 6:00 pm - Administrative Board Meeting, Fellowship Hall	18 10:15 am - Women's Bible Study, Lounge 12:00 Noon Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	19 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm - Baby Grace Distribution 6:00 pm – Praise Band Practice	20 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm, Wedding Rehearsal 7:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	21 12:00 noon – 5:00 pm Wedding, Church Sanctuary
22 BHS Graduation 6:30 pm – Youth Group @ the Jacksons	23 9:00 am TOPS 8:00 pm – Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	24	25 10:15 am - Women's Bible Study, Lounge 12:00 Noon Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	26	27 7:00 pm - Al-Anon Meeting, Lounge	28
29	30 Memorial Day (Office Closed)	31				



May Birthdays

5 Maryellen McVicker, Julie Schupp
 6 Alison Taylor
 7 Eme Beach
 8 Ricky Taylor
 11 Ted Litton
 13 Ross Hofstetter
 15 Leona Schmidt
 16 Travis Fredrich, Nancy I. Nelson

19 Alan Rohrbough
 21 Zoe Tucker
 23 Jerry Riley
 25 Maddox Beach
 27 Ricky Powell
 29 Tim VonEngeln, Khaden Litton
 30 David DeGraffenreid

