The mission of the Church is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Let’s Do Something Weird

The Lead Pastor of Marion Methodist is advising every member of the congregation, and all of our friends, to do something really weird, beginning this fall.

The “normal” condition for the average American includes debt, no savings, minimal retirement and a paycheck-to-paycheck way of life. It is “normal” for 75% of the couples in America to argue about household finances, arguments that often lead to great division in the relationship.

It is “normal” for 78% of Americans to not have $1000 in savings and “normal” for 68% of us to need to borrow money for an emergency costing $5000 such as a car repair or oral surgery.

It is “normal” to not want to talk about money in or around church even though over 800 Scriptures address money, debt, discipline and wealth building. Jesus talked about money a lot – more than he talked about prayer, heaven, hell or salvation. In all honesty we would like our church to be “normal” and just leave this alone.

We can’t.

This fall, Marion Methodist is going to do something WEIRD. Rather than have a fall campaign asking you to pledge money to the ministry of the church, we are going to take a deep dive into one of the most profound spiritual issues in our lives; managing the money we have been entrusted.

Ministry that is genuine helps people with their real needs. We may never see a man by the road needing a Samaritan to help him, but we all know lots of people living the “normal” American life – BROKE and desperate.

So, it is time to help ourselves, our family, friends and neighbors find a new normal. The church should lead the way, and it can be life changing – IF – we commit to being really “Weird.”

So, FREEDOM is coming to Marion Methodist in the fall of 2019. FREEDOM is going to be “weird” in that we are going to push the pause button on some of our regular ministries until Advent to focus fully on this effort.

FREEDOM is going to be “weird” because some of you are already free and are being asked to support the emancipation of others with your prayers and presence at classes you think you don’t need. (I guarantee something will impact, inspire or amuse you at every session).

The central piece, of what I pray will be a life changing journey for many of our friends and members into the weirdness of faithful money management, is Financial Peace University. Financial Peace is a 9-week program that will guide us in managing our money, communicating with your spouse about money, getting out of debt, saving for emergencies, retirement and much more. It is saturated with Biblical teaching, practical helps and is inspiring.

I invite you to get weird with us this fall.

Pastor Mike

Visit Us Online

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itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/marion-methodist/id562893153

Upcoming Sermons
July 14 - Connect - Summer Games Sunday

Marion First United Methodist Church
5050 REC Drive
Sunday Morning Worship
8:15 AM
Spiritual Traditional
Kid’s View - Room E60
9:15 AM
SMASH Time Fellowship - The Center
Church School for children and adults
10:15 AM
Contemporary Praise - Sanctuary
Children’s Sunday School
These items also may be donated. (briefs not bikinis) - and two one-gallon Ziplocs. All finished pads will be included in a one-handled material, or cash would gladly be accepted. If you can't come but would like (319-573-2350) and tell us what you'd like to do. You are willing to cut, pin or sew, please contact Elaine Coppock (319-826-1118) or Jan Dickinson (319-573-2350) and tell us what you'd like to do. Bring a salad to share for lunch. It will be fun and very rewarding. If you can't come but would like to help, donations of bright cotton, flannel, PUL material, or cash would gladly be accepted.

All finished pads will be included in a one-handled bag with a bar of soap, washcloths, underwear - girls size 10, 12, or 14, or women's size 5, 6, or 8 (briefs not bikinis) - and two one-gallon Ziplocs. These items also may be donated.

**SEWING DAY SCHEDULED**

Girls in underdeveloped countries miss a week of school every month due to a lack of proper supplies for their periods. Disposable pads aren't a solution, so washable, reusable pads were designed.

Sowers Circle plans to have a sewing day on July 26th from 9-3 in Room 100 to make these pads. If you are willing to cut, pin or sew, please contact Elaine Coppock (319-826-1118) or Jan Dickinson (319-573-2350) to find out what you'd like to do. Bring a salad to share for lunch. It will be fun and very rewarding. If you can't come but would like to help, donations of bright cotton, flannel, PUL material, or cash would gladly be accepted.

**Denomination Ready to Multiply?**

Because I do not believe in surprising congregations, it is important for you as United Methodists to know the following. Pastor Mike

The Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church made clear that our denomination may be ready to multiply. Reaction to the 2019 General Conference decision to maintain the traditional understanding of marriage, ordination and biblical interpretation was so harsh, rapid and organized that it clarified for many of us who our 50-year-old denomination may multiply into two or more new threads of Wesleyan Christians.

Our meeting in early June had the task of electing delegates to the denomination’s 2020 General Conference (the only body that can speak for the church) and, in an unprecedented and masterful political move, progressives claimed every seat on the clergy and lay delegations. The body also voted to defy the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church and reject the work that culminated in a vote for the Traditional Plan of General Conference. I must open my eyes to something I have ignored. I must recognize that I am a woman of the Church, the people who are set in this position of authority; and we must not allow anything to deflect us from this, however good the cause, however great the need.

I shudder if the way forward for me is not as a Methodist, something I've been my entire life. But if that is the path, I must submit. I pray for God to show us all the way forward to be a true movement of people, whose primary focus is making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Reflections on General Conference**

Please allow me to share a revelation that has come to me since attending the 2019 Iowa General Conference. I must open my eyes to something I have ignored. I must recognize that I am a woman of privilege. Despite growing up relatively poor, one of seven children and the daughter of an auto mechanic who at times drank too much, I recognize that I was privileged to live in the United States and to be given the gift of Methodist Sunday School, VBS, youth group and church camp. This foundation in Christ gave me a privilege that, due to current trends, most of the youth of today will not receive. I am privileged today, despite the national decline in church growth, to be a member of Marion First, a vibrant and strong movement of God in our local community. However, I fear this privilege has made me guilty of apathy, of burying my head to what is happening in our larger church.

This year marked my second annual conference. I wish I could say I went into the event with high hopes of Christian camaraderie, uplifting testimonies, and effective decision-making. But I had no such expectations. Why? Because I had watched some of General Conference on the live satellite stream.

As I sat at the conference this year, I realized just how broken we are. The church is bleeding money, budgets have been cut and yet we spent hours legislating on matters of firearms, abolishing ICE, the climate crisis, plastic pollution and closing the Iowa Drone Center. Granted these are important issues, but I found myself wondering if I was in the state house instead of a church conference. Many of our forefathers, thankfully, were Christians. America was founded on Biblical principles, our laws based on Scripture.

However when we start focusing more on politics than our spiritual ministry of bringing men and women into a right relationship with one another and God, I wonder if we've gone too far? Marilyn Lloyd-Jones said “Preaching the Word is the primary task of the Church, the primary task of the leaders of the Church, the people who are set in this position of authority; and we must not allow anything to deflect us from this, however good the cause, however great the need.”

What I experienced at Annual Conference was far from an upward trajectory of life-giving renewal, but rather a sign of a failed institution.

Although a decision was made for the Traditional Plan at General Conference, I found out quickly that the issue was far from settled — further testimony that to me shows these two perspectives on human sexuality are incompatible.

In Romans 12:22 we are reminded; “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Why won't we do something about this like, Moses and some of the prophets? Our initial reaction is self-doubt: ‘Sure, this needs to happen, but I’m not the one!’ I believe I must get over that. It’s time to sacrifice, to walk beyond my familiar, easy privileged path and to act extraordinarily. Together, we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us.

Bishop Laurie ordained and commissioned new pastors who swore to uphold the doctrine. However in reality we are in a time of “obey-it-if-you-like-it” treatment of our denomination's defining document.

Now is not the time to be apathetic, submissive, distracted or defeated. It’s up to us to change the course of what is not working at our church. We can't be afraid of change.

"You may feel very secure in the pond that you are in, but if you never venture out of it, you will never know that there is such a thing as an ocean, a sea. Holding onto something that is good for you now, may be the very reason why you don’t have something better.” — C. JoyBell C.

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Marion Methodist feasts on Scripture

Beginning in August 2018 our leadership has encouraged us to memorize scripture. Each month a memory verse has been presented to us to learn. Recently, our leaders took four weeks to “review” what we have learned. One of those exercises had a scripture verse printed on a card and the beginning of the sentence “this verse is important to know because...” Nearly 500 of you have a memory verse has been presented to us to learn. Recently, our leaders took four weeks to “review” what we have learned. One of those exercises had a scripture verse printed on a card and the beginning of the sentence “this verse is important to know because...” Nearly 500 of you have

The following are a few that are representative of your responses for Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.”

It reminds me that I am not in control - God is to trust in him.

I am retiring and I have no idea what my path will take in the future. God has always led me. I am anxious but know he will show his plan to me.

Trust in sometimes the only thing available when making decisions because it is hard to understand what is happening. That has gotten me through much.

Even during difficult times the Lord will always lead you on the right path.

Reflection on General Conference

Let me start by telling you that I’ve been a Methodist since 1987, when our kids started attending Kiddy Kollege in the old church. I truly love our church and the family we’ve been adopted into. I’ve always believed our church leadership has been the difference that has set Marion Methodist apart and after the past 3 Annual Conferences, I don’t just believe it to be true, I know it to be true. We have Bible believing, Jesus loving men and women of God leading us. They preach the Word of God and love us just as Christ loves us. PRAISE the LORD!!

Now - Annual Conference....Webster's defines Annual conference as “a meeting of two or more persons for discussing matters of common concern”. OK, that's close. It also discusses things that are of great importance and maybe not so great importance. Annual Conference is where the leadership of Clergy and Lay Leaders get together to recognize the new clergy and lay leadership, to worship and break bread together. We celebrate those just starting in the ministry and those that are finishing their full time ministry (retiring). But we also discuss the latest social issues. We spent hours discussing gun control and abolishing ICE. In fact, I think we focused on Social Issues more than any other issue.

I enjoy attending Annual Conference as a delegate from Marion Methodist. I get to see people that I haven't seen in a year. I get to be part of the internal workings of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church. But conference was different this year. The decision at General Conference to select the Traditional Plan was not accepted by all. People felt betrayed, hurt, angry...that they lost! Others knew we didn't win, it just caused another wound to the church we all love. We are bleeding, not just money but people. Many are leaving the church. We are hurting. Our beloved Methodist church cannot survive with the division we now have.

FOCUS ON CHRIST - Saturday evening I attended the Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) dinner and I see a path forward. Our local leaders are committed to WCA and its Statements of Biblical Authority, Faith and Moral Principles, found at www.wesleyancovenant.org/about-page. WCA is focused on committing to the authority of Scripture and the Lordship of Jesus Christ and developing a plan for a positive and faithful future. WCA (like me) recognizes irreconcilable differences exist, not just about human sexuality, but also around our understanding of the authority and interpretation of Scripture, and the nature of the church.

Change is coming to the United Methodist Church (to our church). I don’t know exactly what the change is but our local leadership is preparing for that change. Not to worry, the Word will still be preached, celebrations of weddings and funerals will continue. Souls will be saved, lives will be changed by Christ’s love shown to them in our church and our community.

Bishop Trimble once said if we have Much Prayer, we’ll have Much Power; Little Prayer, Little Power.

Keep praying - God is in control

Marion Methodist is Praying for:

N ext to last chance-Israel trip

Rev. Mike and Theresa Morgan are leading a Holy Land pilgrimage January 20-29, 2020. To date, 66 members and friends of Marion Methodist have signed up and made a deposit for this trip. This is a very exciting and wonderful opportunity to grow your Christian faith if you are able and available to go.

Educational Opportunities has asked us to set a cutoff date for registration for this trip so they can begin purchasing hotel rooms and airline tickets. Therefore, August 1, 2019 will be the last day you can sign up to travel with us to the Holy Land. If you’re interested, please email Theresa Morgan ther4605@gmail.com and she can help you with any questions and the registration process.

Watch LIVE at 10:15 AM

Go to our YouTube channel or online at MarionMethodist.org/watchlive

Thank You!

Thank you ALL for another wonderful week of VBS! Whether you volunteered your time, made a monetary donation, brought in supplies, helped set up and tear down, or any combination of these things...I thank you from the bottom of my heart. We shared the love of Jesus with over 200 kids, and we had a blast the whole time! My friends, you are living proof that it takes a village...thanks again, for making a difference for these children.

Dani Showalter, Director of Children's Education and Discipleship

Marion Methodist is a powerful way of caring for each other in our Marion Methodist family. There are several avenues open to everyone – the prayer cards on Sunday morning and the prayer wall which is available 24/7, are two that are used most often. You can have a more active part in entering into prayer for each other. Check out the prayer wall frequently as prayers are submitted there often. Each time you visit, and pray for one of the requests found there, click the “I Prayed For This” tab; more prayers are always better.

As the campers, staff and volunteers scatter and go home from Summer Games, pray that the Holy Spirit will be a strong and guiding force as everyone goes back to their daily lives. May the Spirit’s fire burn brightly in each and every one as they take everything they’ve experienced and share it with everyone they meet.

Marty Labs
Our Congregation Shares Its Concern & Christian Love...

DEATHS:
July 1: Tierney (Oakley) Benesh, sister of Nick (Mary) Oakley

BAPTISMS:
July 7: Hudson Pierce Smalley, son of Matthew Smalley and Megan Spencer

BIRTHS:

WEDDINGS:

The Marion Methodist newsletter deadline schedule

Articles for our Marion Methodist need to be submitted by due date at 12:00 PM. You may email them to: wildman@marionmethodist.org with newsletter in the subject line. Please send any information or images as an attachment. If you do not have access to a computer, you may call or bring to the office items to be published. We ask that you honor the deadlines listed below:

Date Arrived in Mail Date Articles Due
7/26 7/17
8/9 7/31
8/23 8/14
9/6 8/28

Pantry Partners for Marion Food Pantry

We help folks in need by supplying items for the Marion Churches Food Pantry. You may bring the following items to church any time during each month. Please put your contributions in the Mission Depot in the Center or the Church Office.

July: Macaroni & Cheese
August: Peanut Butter
September: Soup
October: Toilet Tissue
November: Cake Mix
December: Pudding and Gelatin Mixes

Meet the Staff

Pastor Mike grew up in Marion attending Marion First United Methodist Church and returned to this congregation as an adult, serving as its pastor for more than 15 years. Pastor Mike believes his role is a calling, and his responsibilities can be summed up as the Spiritual and Administrative Leader of Marion Methodist. It is his job to provide support to staff members so they can manage systems, which also requires great staff and auxiliary people, and Mike will tell you that he is blessed to have just that.

On most Sunday mornings one of the biggest changes since moving to the new building at 5050 REC Drive, is that Mike can actually be found. The greatest benefit of the Center and the beauty of two services is accessibility. Having said that, it’s important for people to know that if they visit with Mike on Sunday morning, it would be helpful to follow up with him in the next few days, since there are many people that he visits with every Sunday morning. Instead of running the maze of halls and squeezing in a few halos between four tightly scheduled services, our staff can now enjoy more space and connection time with those attending Marion Methodist.

Before Sunday services, Mike joins the rest of the pastoring staff about 7:15 in prayer in the Sanctuary. After that he can be found checking in and enjoying a cup of coffee and fellowship. Any given Sunday he may have a baptism, and definitely a sermon on the docket, but he is very much enjoying this aspect of our new space. Mike enjoys teaching and working with youth so Wednesday nights can be a mix of both and takes his day into the later evening hours. Mike also spends a lot of time counseling church members and families, offering a triage type of care when there is a critical situation in someone’s life. Our Pastor is where God needs him to be, and he sees the pastoring of his flock as a blessing and a challenge to fill the purpose of God’s calling on his life. When not on the job, Mike enjoys family time and traveling. Closer to home he keeps himself balanced with some time at the gym.

Pastor Mike is very happy with the progress we have made through this process of building and moving to a new location. Transitioning and occupying this great space has gone incredibly well, but he wants us to know we have only scratched the surface of the lives we will transform through this blessed opportunity. The rollercoasters of life may distract us at times, but Pastor Mike feels we should never lose sight of the fact that there is work to be done for the Kingdom of God.