“The assignment is simple, just tell us what you did, what happened to you from the moment you woke up until the moment your feet hit the floor this morning,” I told the assembled group of adolescents.

“ Weird” “awkward” “why?” is a summary of their responses.

“C’mom, try it, I will go first.” Then I told my story from that cold winter day, then one by one we heard stories.

First, one boy said that just like every day he woke up to his phone alarm, played a game on it for a bit and then his mom told him to get up. He kept playing, then heard his dad coming down the hall and he got right up.

A girl told us how she had to be on the bus really early so she woke up two hours before school to her alarm and got out of bed to practice her instrument. Another said she hit her snooze button 9 times before her mom ripped the covers off the bed and told her to get up. She waited five more minutes and then got up.

Around the room we went, listening, laughing, comparing stories. It was easy; everything that was spoken had happened to the teller and s/he knew the reasons or rationale behind what s/he had done. Every story different, every story authentic, every story interesting.

That is the set up.

After all that, Pastor Mike says “So what did you all just do?”

“We did what you told us to do.”

“True,” I say, “and what you did was testify. You gave your testimony. It was easy, it happened to you, it was your life, you understood what happened the way it happened and you made sense of it all. They were all different – and – guess what, just like you testified to your waking up, you can do the same regarding what you believe.”

It always gets quiet (real quiet) about now.

“Listen, you can all say why and how you believe in Jesus Christ. That is your testimony. It’s a great story and today you get to tell it.”

After a few prodding moments, middle school students are always able to articulate how and why they came to believe in God. Stories of church school, grandparents, moments, middle school students are always able to articulate how and why they believe in Jesus Christ. That is your testimony. It’s a great story and today you get to tell it. “After a few prodding

It always gets quiet (real quiet) about now.

“Listen, you can all say why and how you believe in Jesus Christ. That is your testimony. It’s a great story and today you get to tell it.”

After a few prodding moments, middle school students are always able to articulate how and why they came to believe in God. Stories of church school, grandparents, moments, middle school students are always able to articulate how and why they believe in Jesus Christ. That is your testimony. It’s a great story and today you get to tell it.

“That’s a great story!”

“Have a great one too. You have a testimony of faith or you certainly would not be telling it. You are a part of the unfolding of Christ’s Kingdom on earth. You are a part of the growth of Christ’s Kingdom here on the earth hinges on you telling your story. In this “pre-Christian” era when the fastest growing spiritual populace in the USA declares “no faith,” the ability to articulate our story is critical but not hard. Please, don’t make it hard. The courage to say it out loud might be hard to muster, but you know your story and you can put it to words. Plus, your story is way more interesting and provocative than you think. Many people say, my story is so boring, but to a person who has never heard it, it is not.

One of the most interesting things about Christianity is that it is a social, communicable faith. The bulk of Christians in the world come to Christ because Christians have told them their story. Some of those stories are told a day, a moment, a table grace and bedtime conversation at a time. Others are told more formally when a Christian is asked why and in what they believe. These stories are certainly vitified when the hearer engages with the teachings of God’s Word, the life and work of the church or a specific ministry – AND – faith generally ignites, is always strengthened and reaffirmed as we hear another’s story of faith.

All of this to guide you towards this. An important component of your faith and the growth of Christ’s Kingdom here on the earth hinges on you telling your story. In this “pre-Christian” era when the fastest growing spiritual populace in the USA declares “no faith,” the ability to articulate our story is critical but not hard. Please, don’t make it hard. The courage to say it out loud might be hard to muster, but you know your story and you can put it to words. Plus, your story is way more

That’s a great story!

“You have a great one too. You have a testimony of faith or you certainly would not be wasting 5 minutes reading a church newspaper. So, tell it! United Methodists let break out of our hesitancy for the sake of our friends, relatives, acquaintances and neighbors and tell our story of how and why you came to believe in Jesus Christ. Yours is a great story. It doesn’t need to be cleaned up or perfected, it just needs to be told.

Pastor Mike
Marion Methodist is Praying for:

Prayer 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 request link in the weekly email, are two that are used most often.

Please be in prayer for our administrative committees, particularly those who are coming on for their first year, and for those who have now finished their 3 year terms. Also be in prayer for those who are vulnerable this time of year due to lack of resources, such as warm and safe places to stay and enough food and warm clothing.

Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcast on Mediacom or ImOn Channel 4 at 7:00 PM on Monday evenings. There is a multiweek delay between when a sermon is preached and when it airs on TV.

Registration is open

Summer Games University is a Christian Summer Camp for students who have completed 6-12 grades. This one-week camp is an experiential, relationship-focused camp where students will have the opportunity to learn more about who Jesus is and build relationships with other Christian students.

July 13-17, 2020 at Grinnell College
Register at www.sgu.camp

TV Broadcast

Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcast on Mediacom or ImOn Channel 4 at 7:00 PM on Monday evenings. There is a multiweek delay between when a sermon is preached and when it airs on TV.

Tuesday Mornings at 10:00 AM
Lower Level Carnegie
1298 7th Avenue
Register at www.MarionMethodist.org or call Jen Digmann at (319) 377-4856

Meal Schedule:

1/29 - Kettle House Bakery
2/5 - Hy-Vee

Wednesday Night @ Marion Methodist

Wednesday Night at Marion Methodist is every Wednesday. From 5:45 pm to 6:15 pm we have a Meal (Free Will Offering) and from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm we have activities for all ages.

Pathfinders Worship & Outreach (Preschool - 5th Grade): Focuses on praise and worship for kids. Children will also learn how they can make a difference for the people in our community.

4:12 Youth Group: Junior High Worship 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sanctuary). High School Worship 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm (Sanctuary).

Adult Classes: Come for a midweek boost. Check out classes at www.marionmethodist.org

Nursery: Offered in the Nursery

A New Christmas Eve Tradition

On Christmas Eve, room 100 was transformed into a beautiful chapel, with prayer rails brought in from the sanctuary, quiet music playing in the background and soft, blue lighting that created a peaceful, reflective setting for Holy Communion. Throughout the afternoon, nearly 300 of our church family and visitors came to partake of the sacred elements, to kneel and pray, and spend time in communion with Jesus. Some people came alone, others came with friends or family but all who entered were touched by the moments that they spent partaking of this holy sacrament. These are the words of just two who were there Christmas Eve:

The Christmas Eve communion service was incredibly moving. It was such a deep, emotional, and spiritual moment to be in prayer with my family. This was the perfect way to start out our Christmas Eve church service. Thank you!

It was a touching and spiritual experience. I felt God's presence with me. The Holy Spirit was wrapped around me like a hug. Having my grandchildren participate in that experience was incredible. It truly touched my heart.

If you were unable to partake of communion this past Christmas Eve, please consider making it a part of your Christmas Eve worship this next December. Your Christmas Eve will be greatly enriched!

Pathfinders Worship & Outreach (Preschool - 5th Grade): Focuses on praise and worship for kids. Children will also learn how they can make a difference for the people in our community.

4:12 Youth Group: Junior High Worship 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm (Sanctuary). High School Worship 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm (Sanctuary).

Adult Classes: Come for a midweek boost. Check out classes at www.marionmethodist.org

Nursery: Offered in the Nursery
Providing Spiritual Care

When you or someone you love is receiving medical care, your pastoral staff endeavors to provide the best in Christian love and spiritual care through personal visits and prayer support. The hospitals are endeavoring to protect your personal information, and for that reason, the intake process has changed significantly in the past few years. More times than not, we learn of a hospitalization when someone has already gone home, which diminishes the spiritual care that we truly desire to offer. In order to provide that high level of care we must have your assistance. When you have been admitted or if you are scheduled for surgery please do the following:

Upon registration make it very clear to the person taking your information that you are a member of Marion First United Methodist Church and would like to have your pastoral team notified.

When a hospital chaplain visits you, re-iterate that you are a member of this church and would appreciate a visit from your pastors or ask to speak to one of the hospital chaplains and explain to them that you would like to have your church notified.

Have a family member or trusted friend call the church office at 377-4856, or email the Director of Pastoral Care, Vicki Standley, at vstandley@marionmethodist.org.

Thank You

Marion Methodist,

I wanted to thank you again for the faithful giving to Marion Cares. Without Marion Methodist, we would be much more limited in our ability to provide true justice to our neighbors. This Christmas season we were able to keep two families in their homes when they were facing eviction. We were able to match them to agencies to receive future assistance, but without the ability to hit the “reset button” and get them out of the hole, they would have been lost. Thank you for partnering with us in ministry year after year.

To God be the glory,
Laura Campbell
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Arrived in Mail</th>
<th>Date Articles Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>1/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>2/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>3/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BAPTISMS:

WEDDINGS:

BIRTHS:

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.

January: Macaroni & Cheese
February: Canned Fruit
March: Peanut Butter
April: Macaroni and Cheese
May: Toilet Tissue
June: Soup

United Methodists Divisions in National News

The following is an excerpt from Pastor Mike Morgan’s comments to the congregation on Sunday, January 5, 2020 Pastor Mike Morgan:

The United Methodist Church and our ongoing conversation regarding biblical interpretation, what constitutes holy sexuality and how to effectively witness Christ to the world has been broadly covered by national and local news in the past few days.

Let me comment briefly on what is happening so that our focus this morning can be on the living God and offer you opportunity for deeper conversation as the days go by.

Here is the news. 16 persons which represent the various “positions” on the United Methodist theological spectrum have been meeting over the past few months to construct a proposal for multiplication of the Methodist movement.

The reason it has generated so much press is that many within the U.S. portion of our church feel that a continued fight simply continues to shrink our witness and prevents us from focusing on the main business of the Church, which is to win souls for Christ!

Friday morning (1/3/20) the 9-page document entitled Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation was released. It is accompanied by many pages of frequently asked questions with answers.

There are many pieces, each important, and most importantly, this is a PROPOSAL which will be submitted to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to either ratify or not. As your pastor, I encourage three things:

1. THIS IS A TIME TO STUDY. The document can be found at www.umnews.org. Many of our questions can be answered by studying the document. Inform yourself, anything that is going to happen will happen in plain sight. So please become informed.

2. THIS IS A TIME FOR REFLECTION. Rather than going on a social media frenzy – -after studying the document - test it against scripture, reflect on what it might mean for the millions who call themselves United Methodist Christians and the millions more our church intends to reach for Christ.

3. THIS IS A TIME TO PRAY. Please pray for what may become of this. Marion Methodist is a 179-year-old community of faith. That longevity and the vitality of our ministry has been undergirded by prayer.

So, in Jesus’ name, I admonish you to daily pray for your church. Pray for the General Conference of the United Methodist Church that will consider this in May. Pray for our leaders, pray for us all that we may be faithful. Pray, pray, pray.