"Stop doubting. Just believe!"

Ever been told this? Maybe you had a sincere question about the authenticity of God’s Word, proof of Christ’s existence or evidence concerning how the world was created by God. Sometimes well-meaning, yet sincere people will tell you that faith without questioning is the right way to go about things.

My story is different. Profound faith, faith to build a life upon would not have been embraced if doubt had been removed from the toolshed of my thinking, praying, seeking. My understanding is that it’s not bad to have doubts, as long as those doubts fuel pursuit of answers and does not disable a person spiritually.

A healthy walk towards deep faith for many engages the inquisitive mind. Some of the great saints of Christianity and Marion Methodist would not have become such if they had not listened to the views of unbelievers, examined various life theories, philosophies and worldviews that were incongruent with the Gospel. For many, it is in the pursuit of something else that we find answers to that which we need.

Some would never arrive at faith in Christ if they did not do their own theological inquiry, searching and seeking for the truth, asking questions. Many men and women need to ask questions that go far beyond what they could express or were afraid to raise in Church School.

Some of these questions long the road lead us to doubt. We wonder if what we have heard is true, if God is still active today in such a broken world and like millions before us, we doubt. Importantly, having doubts isn’t always synonymous with not believing. In fact, doubt—being made here is that doubt dealt with, not as something that spiritually handcuffs you but gives opportunity to seek guidance from mentors, God’s Word and the Holy Spirit often helps grow faith, not collapse it.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:24-25, “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.” There seems to be a serious “don’t doubt” message here. The mind is to focus on the Word of God that is our foundation. Doubt is to flee, but there is more here.

The reason for Jesus’ statement is about a present storm, not a tranquil and calm day. The house is standing in a storm, and storms do not go unnoticed in our lives. We can’t help watching every year as some “storm watcher” records a tornado bearing down on his/her location. Eventually they invariably say, “we have to go, let’s get to the shelter.” Their timing and wisdom aside, they know they have a shelter, a place of protection nearby.

The storm is an important element in our focus. Regarding faith, it’s the storm, the shaking, the real questions that bring evidence to the fortitude of a foundation. Without the storm in life, we won’t be able to tell whether our faith is truly founded on Christ or not. Questions and doubts can lead us closer to Christ, if we truly seek the truth. As God promises in Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

We can have doubts without being unbelieving. Many people in the Bible known by their faith had questions of their own. Abraham asked God how he would become a great nation and God gave him an answer through Isaac. Gideon asked for assurance through a sign and God miraculously worked through a fleece. Rahab asked for assurance of her safety and God worked through a scarlet cord.

Doubting faith that seeks for evidence, signs and truth will always work better than blind belief that simply just “receives,” not knowing whether we are receiving false teaching or verified truth. There is nothing wrong with having doubts as long as it leads us to search for God instead of running away from God. We can doubt and still believe. We can question and still find answers. You need to know that.

Pastor Mike

Questions We Really Have - Am I Bad If I Have Doubts?

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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 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 we enter the Holy season of Advent, pray for the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and give us a spirit of waiting and preparation for the birth of the Holy Child, the promised Messiah, who has come to save us from our sins.

Job Opening

Marion Methodist is seeking a Part-Time Nursery Coordinator. This position is responsible for providing leadership and recruiting volunteers for the Church Nursery. The Nursery is a vital component of our Hospitality Ministry.

Key duties include recruiting, training, and overseeing a team of qualified volunteers to staff the Church Nursery. Also, ensuring the nursery is clean and organized to accept children.

A complete job description can be found at marionmethodist.org/available-positions/jobs.

Interested applicants should email a letter of intent and resume to Kelsie DeReus at: kdereus@marionmethodist.org.

A NOTE TO OUR YOUNG PIANO STUDENTS

Starting Sunday, December 9, we invite our youth who take piano lessons to share a Christmas carol during the offertory at our church services. It does not have to be memorized. You will be playing the beautiful Steinway piano on the chancel. Diane and Simon will be on the chancel to assist as needed.

Service Times Available:
Sunday, December 9th, Older Youth: 10:15
(younger youth are in Sunday School program)
Sunday, December 16th, 8:15 & 10:15 services
Sunday, December 23rd, 8:15 & 10:15 services
Sunday, December 30th, 8:15 & 10:15 services

If you wish to participate and/or you have questions, please contact Diane Beach at auntyd88@aol.com

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What is a pledge and why does it matter?
You may already have received in the mail a letter that came with a “Pledge Card.” Some of you have been pledging to support the ministries of the church for years and you expected it, are glad for it and probably are ready to mail or bring it to church. We do hope that you bring your pledge to worship and offer it to God by December 16.

Some of you might be perplexed and are wondering what a pledge is and why you are being asked to pledge. Simply, a pledge is what you promise to give to the church in 2019 to financially support the ministry and mission of Marion Methodist. Please pray and consider giving and how you can give gifts that represent yourself and your gratitude to God through Marion Methodist.

Gift Card Giving
Part of our Advent tradition at Marion Methodist has included donating gift cards from Kum & Go, Fareway and Walmart to provide assistance to people in our church family and community throughout the year. The cards can be used to purchase food, clothing items, household items, or gas to get to work, look for work and go to appointments.

As you are doing your shopping in the next month, please consider purchasing a gift card or two, for any amount you choose, from one of these businesses. Place them in the offering plate any Sunday this month, or drop them off at the downtown church office. Your generosity will bless people in many ways throughout the year who are struggling to make ends meet.

Thank you to the Linn County Sheriff’s Department!
On October 27th, members of the Linn County Sheriff’s Office presented the A.L.I.C.E./Active Shooter training to approximately 40 members of the Marion Methodist Church. The 3-hour presentation included a classroom presentation and concluded with hands on scenarios. It is unfortunate that this training needs to be done… but there are now 40 members of the Church that have the tools to act in such an event. This training will be presented again, it is worth a Saturday morning to attend.

December 9 at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary
No matter the age or cause, losing a child is a life altering experience. We hope you will join us at this hour-long memorial service on December 9 at 7:00 pm where each family will have an opportunity to light a candle in honor of the memory of their beloved child.

If you wish, you can display a photo of your child on the Memory Table. Please place it on the table by 6:45 p.m. You can also bring an angel ornament to hang on the tree during the service.

TV Broadcast
Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcasted 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.

Meal Schedule:
12/5 - Zio Johno’s
12/12 - Kettle House Bakery

Powerhouse meets every Wednesday. From 5:45 pm to 6:15 pm we have a Family Meal (Free Will Offering) and from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm we have activities for all ages.

Preschoolers: Kids may forget what you say - but they remember what they discover on their own. Get them “Hands On” with God’s Word. (Room E30)

Kindergarten - 5th Grade: Meet a Jesus that is real and relevant in your everyday life! Discover Jesus in you. (Room E10 & E60)

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

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

Nursery: Offered in the Nursery

Fill Your Body • Fill Your Heart • Fill Your Head

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Nursery: Offered in the Nursery
Our Congregation Shares Its Concern & Christian Love...

DEATHS:
November 7: Bob Shireman, husband of Shirley Shireman
November 10: Leslie Smock, brother of Leon (Leah) Smock

BAPTISMS:
November 10: Leslie Smock, brother of Shirley Shireman
November 7: Bob Shireman, husband of Concern & Christian Love...

Our Congregation Shares Its Concern & Christian Love...

Our Congregation Shares Its Concern & Christian Love...

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 the office items to be published. We ask that you honor the deadlines listed below:

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<th>Date Arrived in Mail</th>
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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.

December: Pudding and Gelatin Mixes
January: Macaroni & Cheese
February: Canned Fruit
March: Peanut Butter
April: Macaroni & Cheese
May: Toilet Tissue

BIRTHS:
November 25: Tate William-Homan

WEDDINGS: