We care greatly about 100% of our children at Marion Methodist and those who are indisputable. Child’s faith development, the conversion rate to an adult disciple of Jesus Christ is and faith growth necessity. Statistically, in a family where the father is involved in our children’s programs by July 1, 2020.

The vision is that fulfilling quantifiable expectations will challenge you, me, us to fulfillment of their membership vows; prayers, presence, witness, gifts and service. The pathway has been a wonderful assessment tool for learning, it must have helped us select curriculum and solicit class leaders. There are improvements available to make.

While the “pathway” has been a wonderful assessment tool for learning, it must be broadened. This winter and spring, with the ideal of growing a more holistic understanding of discipleship, definitive “marks” will be added to each category on the path. These “marks” likely will include quantifiable activity around a person’s understanding of discipleship, definitive “marks” will be added to each category on the path.

Connect our Discipleship Pathway to “Marks” of a Disciple by Easter 2020. Several years ago, during the Healthy Church Initiative, our Discipleship team worked very hard to design a “Discipleship Pathway.” This pathway has been very useful for leaders to evaluate where they are on their spiritual growth path and it has helped us select curriculum and solicit class leaders. There are improvements available to make.

Develop a strategy with specific focus on growing the volume of male volunteers in our children’s programs by July 1, 2020. This is not a tag, it is a conversion and faith growth necessity. Statistically, in a family where the father is involved in a child’s faith development, the conversion rate to an adult disciple of Jesus Christ is over 90%. Statistically, churches that have a wealth of men present in the Christian education programs of young children and adults, have a conversion rate of boys to adult disciples quadruple those of churches who do not. These are the facts and they are indisputable.

We care greatly about 100% of our children at Marion Methodist and those who may be drawn to our church because there are faithful dads and dudes working alongside the tireless and faithful women who have long piloted our programs for children. Men, I challenge you to make our plan fail by volunteering to lead some kids before we get our plan in place. Teach them proper tackling techniques or how to hit a curveball (etc.) because it is good bonding time and we like to do stuff like that. Teach them and their little friends about Jesus and they and the Lord will be pleased, of this I am sure.

Advance and grow our congregational care ministry and our hospitality teams. The body of Christ has the responsibility to care for their people. Twenty two hundred souls call Marion Methodist their spiritual home. Some have become home or care facility bound. Others have spiritual and emotional aches. All need love and attention. We have teams that visit people, call people, deliver communion, care for the bereaved and many other types of caring ministry. This year we aim to grow this ministry and I ask you to pay attention to where this can go if you are called to care for some of those in our church family. Our hospitality teams (welcoming, ushering, fellowship) have saturated the Center and the Sanctuary with a “Welcome home” and “We are glad you are here” vibe. Now, after 20 months in the REC Dr. facility we understand how we need to grow these ministries. Again, if you are a “happy to be here” kind of person and have passion for hospitality, watch our various publications for new opportunities.

Gracefully lead the congregation to a position of faithful maturity following General Conference 2020. It is simply true that the United Methodist Church in its current iteration is not sustainable. Most recently, the mainstream press has raised the current presenting symptom (how the church views holy sexuality) as “the” issue that will split the church. Indeed, the church is broken regarding how to faithfully move forward on holy sexuality – and the long-standing divisions are much deeper. Deep division regarding the authority and role of the Bible, the person and ministry of Jesus, the primary purpose of the Church in society, and the institutional structures necessary to fulfill that purpose are in fact the baseline issues.

Since 2014 when these concerns began to bubble at a much faster rate than previously, I believed it to be clergy malpractice not to keep you informed of the tension within our denominational family. painfully sometimes. Still, all along I have said, “Marion Methodist is a good enough church and strong enough in faith that we can find a loving and mature way through what might come.” Recently one of my friends wrote, “The United Methodist Church may split but that does not mean our congregation needs to.” I agree.

No one really knows what the 800+ delegates of General Conference – the only body that can speak for our entire denomination – will actually do. What we do know is that we will seek to thoughtfully, lovingly, faithfully move forward and God will help us find the way he desires us to walk.

If you want to know more about the “Plan of Work” or want to read it all, ask any staff person or email jwildman@marionmethodist.org and she will happily send you a copy.

Pastor Mike

Marion First United Methodist Church
5050 REC Drive
Sunday Morning Worship
8:15 AM
Spiritual Traditional - Sanctuary
Pathfinders Outreach - Room E60
9:15 AM
Fellows - The Center
Children’s Fellowship and Adult Classes
10:15 AM
Contemporary Praise - Sanctuary
Children’s Sunday School
Upcoming Sermons
February 9 - Hostile World - Faith - Philippians 3:1-14
February 16 - Relationships - Ephesians 5:21-6:4

For any information needing to be published in the Marion Methodist newsletter, please contact the church office.
(jwildman@marionmethodist.org)
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.

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, enough food and warm clothing and transportation to get to appropriate shelters. Please pray for children and families who struggle with providing food on days school is not in session or on weekends.

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

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All our teachers are wonderful, and this week we would like to give a special “Shout Out” to the following Children’s Ministry volunteers:

Luann Byerly (8:15 Outreach)
Craig Collins (9:15 Fellowship, 5th & 6th Grade Sunday School)
Pam Melick (Wednesday Night Worship & Outreach)
Alex Mussman (Kindergarten Sunday School)

Thank You!!!

ASH WEDNESDAY
Wednesday, February 26
6:30 PM
Sanctuary

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

Meal Schedule:
2/12 - Dairy Queen
2/19 - Zio Johno's

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.

Watch LIVE at 10:15 AM
Go to our YouTube channel or online at MarionMethodist.org/watch/live
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.

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.

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.
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 items to: wildman@marionmethodist.org with "articles for marion methodist" 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**
--- | ---
2/21 | 2/12
3/6 | 2/26
3/20 | 3/11
4/3 | 3/25

Pantry Partners for Marion Food Pantry

We help folks in need by supplying items for the Marion Church 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.

**February:**
- **February:**
  - **Canned Fruit**
  - **March:**
    - **Peanut Butter**
  - **April:**
    - **Macaroni and Cheese**
  - **May:**
    - **Toilet Tissue**

**June:**
- **Soup**

**July:**
- **Macaroni and Cheese**

The More We Know, The More We Care

This article and ones to follow will be looking at some of the more common physical and mental challenges that people face affecting all aspects of their daily lives. While not comprehensive in any way, these articles are meant to be a conversation starter, a way to open eyes and hearts to issues that people face day every day often hindering their full participation and enjoyment of work, school, community and church. The hope and intent is that as we learn more and are able to begin to know and understand one another better, we will be encouraged to extend more compassionate care and reach out to love one another in more meaningful and helpful ways.

The first, and broadest, look will be at chronic diseases and conditions, defined as any disease lasting 3 months or longer. This spectrum of conditions covers a wide range of life altering and long-lasting illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease (COPD), strokes, Alzheimer’s disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease. The list includes arthritis, asthma, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and mood disorders such as anxiety and depression. More can be learned about each of the diagnoses. They are all defined as long-term health conditions that may not have a cure. Chronic diseases, which are manageable in some cases:

- Are projected to affect approximately 157 million Americans, with 81 million having multiple conditions
- Account for 83% of all deaths
- Are responsible for 76% of all physician visits

Also, in the year 2005, $2 trillion dollars were spent on public and private health care and of that amount more than 75% went toward the treatment of chronic health care services.

This is a big deal! For those who live with chronic diseases, it affects every aspect of their daily life - home, work, health care and also participation in and ability to feel like a contributing member of their family, social circles and their church. For those not affected by a chronic illness, it’s hard to comprehend the challenges of frequent rounds of medical appointments and changes in medications and treatments, adjustments that have to be made when expecting to return to work. For those who live with a chronic illness, a full night of pain or distress can make it impossible to get out of bed in time to get to work, meetings, or meet personal or social obligations. When we see someone at church every Sunday, or through Facebook, or some other social media, and think to ourselves, "What is happening?"

2. What barriers does your chronic illness create in your day-to-day life?

- Barriers for me are limited walking distance, stairs, standing and heat. MS slows me down. The amount of time to get dressed, cook and limited house cleaning. If I don’t get a full night’s rest or have a bad night sleeping, I have trouble with walking and balance the next day.
- Inability to work a full time job, which in turn affects me financially and causes me to give less to the church financially.
- Before and during treatment (both cancer and heart 12 years ago/today), physical limitations prevented me from participating in activities. After treatment I was able to return to my previous lifestyle. Surrounding myself with Christian friends, attending church, and staying in Bible study prevents negative thoughts from taking over.

3. What would you like your church family to know about chronic illness and how best to reach out to you?

- It’s not “it’s just a phase”. My lifestyle didn’t lead to or develop my disease. I don’t want people to feel sorry for me. There are volunteer activities I would consider joining but realize that they won’t fit well with my health and that’s OK.
- If it looks like I can use some help standing, opening a door or something else the help is appreciated.
- People asking how I’m doing and praying for me is good. Human nature also seems to cause people to look at someone who appears physically capable of everyday tasks, and assume there is nothing wrong. Also: I think some people who know I have a chronic illness, assume I can do things and are afraid to ask, instead of letting me decide if it’s something I should or should not do.
- I wanted to feel like my life was normal—just as it had been before my diagnosis. Nothing seemed real—I kept thinking I would awaken soon, out of this frightening adventure. How could the world go on as usual when everything was turned upside down in my life? Could I be cured? Cancer diagnosis terrified me. Meeting with friends who have experienced the same diseases or those gifted with mercy helped me immensely.
- For me, constant prayer is the best way to reach out and comfort. Even if I try not to dwell on it, my medical issues are always at the back of my mind. Some people don’t want anyone to know when they are fighting a disease, but I’m just the opposite. Talk to me about it helps—and if people know my situation, they are more than happy to pray for me. Twelve years ago when I faced my first heart valve replacement, I remember Pastor Billie telling me that I was covered in prayer. That gave me a peace I’ll never forget.

So, what is our response as their church family? How can we reach out and care for those around us when we don’t always know the challenges they’re facing on any given day? Getting to know one another, having conversations to begin the process of sharing pieces of our lives may make us more vulnerable to another, but will also open doors to deeper, more meaningful avenues to share love and concern. When you see someone who’s struggling, or seems to be having a bad day, kindly ask if there’s any way you can be of assistance. If someone needs to talk, be ready to listen. And remember, just because things look okay on the outside, doesn’t mean all is well on the inside. The effort it takes to get to church, a meeting or other event may be more than could be managed that particular day. Let’s extend our love, care and concern to those around us in all the ways we can, as often as we can and try to understand situations from another’s perspective. Remember, the more we know, the more we care!