



Millville United Methodist Church

The Dove August 2016

Hello Church,

Fruit of the Spirit: Not in a Vacuum

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” – Galatians 5:22-23

Over the next several months I’m going to use my space in the Dove to discuss the fruit of the Spirit as Paul lists them in the 5th chapter of his letter to the Galatian followers of Jesus. You’ve probably come across these principles more than a few times in your life as an active Christian, depending on how long you’ve been one. The fruit of the Spirit is a timeless principle of faith that’s been addressed in books, studies, articles, and sermons from speakers of all types. Still, I believe that these concepts are worth reflecting on individually and slowly because many of them have had their definitions distorted and lessened over time. Before we talk about them individually though, we need to talk about how the fruit of the Spirit are to be treated and used.

If you’re anything like me, when you were first introduced to the fruit they were basically described as the core of faithful living, things to aspire to in our daily expression of faith. That works well enough until you encounter your first test, and by test I mean going out of your house and dealing with the world. How often is your kindness and goodness tested? How many times a week is your

gentleness and self-control stretched a bit thin? We all have those people, situations, and other trials in our daily life that genuinely put our faithful living through the ringer. If I leave the house in the morning and set the goal of being the most gentle, warm, and loving person anyone will come across that day I know I’m doomed to fail. So what are we to do?

Well, these principles aren’t wrong. I don’t believe Paul was setting up all of the followers of Jesus in his time and after to fail. The best solution I see is redefining how we treat the fruit of the Spirit and expanding our discussion of them. This is actually based in what Paul writes only a couple of verses before the one quoted above. Paul tells the Galatians, “The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like” (5:19-21a). We see that from the very beginning the fruit of the Spirit were never intended to be ideals to clamor for in some kind of trial-free vacuum. Paul knew what the life of the believer was like then and could imagine what it would continue to be like for a very long time.

We are connected with the early church in having to face countless trials, temptations, and struggles in the world around us and even within our own communities. Claiming Christ doesn’t make the world around us perfect and our lives free from trouble. A heart full of the

love and grace of Jesus means that we have a foundation stronger than ourselves and a vast array of help at our disposal to never have to face anything alone. Think of the fruit of the Spirit as tools to help us rely on God and turn to Him every time we need the Lord. Or as that from God with which we can arm ourselves to overcome that which wants to overcome us every day.

I encourage you to take inventory of your daily struggles and temptations and assign whatever fruit you need to each one. That way whenever you come across any of them instead of being frantic or wondering what YOU can do, you'll be prepared with the gifts of your Father in heaven to meet all of them head on. Next month, we will see what love truly has to do with it! God be with us all as we continue on our way to perfection.

Blessings and Hope,
Pastor Brad

Lay Leadership and Nomination Committee

Hello Friends,

This month our Lay Leadership and Nominations Committee will be covering the Administrative Council. If you have any questions, concerns, or feel like you are being led to serve on this committee Pastor Brad will be more than happy to answer any questions and talk to you more about them!

The **Church Council** shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be

amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference (§ 244).

Mission and Ministry - Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

- a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.
 - b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and interreligious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women.
 - c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; Lay Servant Ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.
 - d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church (§ 258.1).
 - e) The nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities shall include consideration of (i) the election of a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, (ii) establishing a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources, and (iii) encouraging intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.
- Meetings* - a) The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.
- b) In order for the council to give adequate

consideration to the missional purpose of the local church, it is recommended that the first agenda item at each meeting be related to its ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness. The administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church will then be given attention. It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.

Other Responsibilities - It will also be the responsibility of the church council to:

- a) review the membership of the local church;
- b) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;
- c) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;
- d) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations);
- e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.

Membership - The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as defined in ¶ 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program

ministries of the church as outlined in ¶ 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
- b) the lay leader;
- c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;
- d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
- e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
- f) the church treasurer;
- g) a lay member to annual conference;
- h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
- i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
- j) a young adult representative
- k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
- l) the pastor(s).

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What is the Finance Committee?

Expectations for the Finance Committee

An effective finance committee proposes a budget; then raises, manages, and distributes the financial resources of the congregation to support and strengthen the mission and ministry of the congregation.

Qualifications for the Finance Chair

The finance chair benefits from one or more of these spiritual gifts: giving, faith, wisdom, administration, discernment, helping, leadership, exhortation (encouragement), teaching. Useful skills and experience for this position are the ability to listen to and communicate with people of all ages; skills and interest in financial budgetary matters; a passion for financially

supporting the mission of making Christian disciples for the transformation of the world; and the ability to work with individuals and ministry teams.

The finance chair should be knowledgeable in basic financial matters and understand how to search for new revenue sources. These skills can be supplemented by others on the finance committee, if needed.

The finance chair should have a biblical understanding of stewardship and management of all resources that God gives and provides. Your congregation's committee on nominations and leader development may establish additional specific standards for this position.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

The finance chair works with the leadership team chair, the church staff, and other ministry leaders to fulfill the mission of the church. The finance chair works with the trustees to handle designated gifts and bequests in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*. This person will guide the work of the finance team through the year, including planning agendas and presiding at meetings.

The finance chair will gather all budget requests to be reviewed by the committee, inform the congregation and pastor(s) about the church's financial situation, and recommend to the church council any changes that need to be made in the budget after it has been approved. The finance chair is accountable to the charge conference through the church council.

Responsibilities of the Committee

The finance committee annually compiles a complete budget for supporting the mission and vision of the local church and submits the budget to the church leadership team for review and adoption. Throughout the year, the finance committee recommends any changes to the

approved annual budget to the church leadership team.

The finance committee is responsible for developing and carrying out plans to raise enough income to support the budget that has been approved.

The finance committee should, individually and corporately, engage in spiritual practices that build a relationship of attentiveness to God's will and direction; and hold one another accountable so that their decisions and actions fulfill the mission and vision of the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The finance committee recommends to the church's leadership team policies and procedures for management of church funds, and then implements the approved processes regarding administration and disbursement of funds.

The finance committee arranges for an annual audit of financial records and makes a report of this audit to the charge conference.

In congregations where there is no stewardship chair or committee, the finance committee has the responsibility to develop and implement a plan for year-round generous living within the congregation to include, but not limited to, an annual stewardship emphasis.

The finance chair and committee members are accountable to the charge conference through the church council.

How to Get Started

1. Study *UM Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2013-2016: Finance*
2. Participate in training experiences offered by the annual conference, local United Methodist Foundation, local banks and schools, or online at the Discipleship Ministries.
3. Talk to your pastor and other leaders to understand how your financial leadership

role in advancing the vision for ministry in your congregation, especially how to set funding priorities aligned with your church's mission and vision.

4. Set aside time for specific prayer, expressing your concerns, joys, observations to God and listening for God's direction for your leadership. Ask God for direction in the wise management of the congregation's financial resources and to increase knowledge and understanding of stewardship's role in forming Christian disciples.
5. Soon after you are elected, convene a meeting of the finance committee to assess the present situation and plan for the coming year(s).
6. Talk with people in your congregation who have (or have had) responsibilities similar to yours. Get acquainted with leaders of financial institutions where congregational funds are deposited and keep abreast of the changes in financial processes (institutional regulations as well as cultural change such as the trend toward electronic money management). Recruit others in the community and church to help you in fundraising, finance management, and teaching financial stewardship.
7. Evaluate the current budget and record keeping processes of your congregation and implement improvements where needed.

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Aging Faithfully

Aging Faithfully will again host Cookie BINGO on the second Tuesday of the month...August 9th...at 10:00 am in Wesley Hall. Coffee & donuts followed by free BINGO. See you there.

When is the last time you visited our nation's capitol? We are looking to see if there would be interest among the congregation in renting a bus to take a group of 25 to 30 of us to Washington DC for a day of sightseeing. Details are not yet confirmed, but we are thinking about late September or early October when the weather is comfortable.

* Bus to leave MUMC in the morning probably on a Tuesday or Thursday.

* Drop us off near the National Mall from where the whole group, or smaller groups can walk (or take the local shuttle) to the various war memorials, the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, The White House and /or one or more of the Smithsonian Museums.

* We'll meet at a specified time for bus pickup and return ride.

* Stop on the way home, perhaps at one of the casual waterfront restaurants at Kent Island for dinner.

* Cost estimate for the bus only is in the \$40 to \$50 range. The Washington attractions are free and meals are yours to pay for.

* Questions or suggestions - please talk to Joe or Elizabeth or Brad or Nancy.

Forgiveness – Part 1

By Ed Thornton

Forgiveness is directly associated with the nature of our relationship with God. According to scripture, forgiveness is directly connected to the covering of sin. Interestingly, the NT also talks about being *forgiven* in financial terms. It suggests that the debt was settled by another.

What does the OT tell us about God's forgiveness?

Read Psalm 32

David is the author of Psalm 32. While he was a great king and walked with God for much of his life, we also know that he committed adultery and murder. When David speaks, he does so as a sinner who has been forgiven. He wrote this psalm to help us know that no matter what we have done we can be fully restored and completely forgiven.

Psalm 32 tells us three things about the gift of forgiveness: the happiness of forgiveness, the heaviness of sin, and the help of God

The Happiness of Forgiveness

The very first word of Psalm 32 is "blessed." It has a very rich meaning that is hard to capture in with just one word. The word *blessed* means to be happy or to be blissful. It also has the connotation of a self-contained happiness. Self-contained in that regardless of what is happening to us externally we can be truly happy internally.

In this Psalm, David uses three words to describe sin – transgression, sin, and iniquity. "Transgression" depicts a defiant disobedience toward God, a revolt against the Almighty. "Sin" means to miss the mark of God's expectations either through acts of commission or omission. "Iniquity" means a crookedness, deformity, or perversion.

The point of using these three different words is to remind us that all types of sin and wrongdoing can be forgiven. We defiantly disobey, we miss the mark, and we're inherently deformed. Yet because of God's forgiveness no matter what we've done, we can be forgiven.

David also used three words to express the fullness of our forgiveness – forgiven, covered, and not counted. "Forgiven" means, "to lift a heavy burden and carry it away." Our transgressions are carried away. "Covered" refers to that which is concealed. In forgiveness our sins are put out of sight from God. "Not count against". God does not count our sins against us and in their place he has imputed the righteousness of another. God erases our sin-debt from the books as if it never happened. No wonder David refers to the blessedness of forgiven transgressions, the covering of sins, and the erasing of our iniquities.

Next David talked about the heaviness of sin

In verse 3 of this Psalm he says: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.” David is reflecting upon those times when he chose to keep quiet about his sins. When he tried to ignore his iniquities his bones felt like they were decaying. The word “groaning” was used to describe the roar of a wounded animal, or the growl of a bear.

David tells us that his groaning went on all day long continuously without letting up. David recalls feeling like his strength was sapped, his energy evaporated as in the heat of the summer. When David could find no relief in any other way, he said in verse 5 of the Psalm, “Then, I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’ -- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.” Instead of concealing, David is now confessing. He first acknowledged his sin by stating the obvious – he is a sinner. Then he stopped trying to cover them up confessing his sins to God.

He takes personal responsibility by using the personal pronouns my sin, my iniquity, my transgressions. Here David repeats the three words for sins he used in verse 1. He acknowledges his sin, he does not cover up his iniquity, and he confesses his transgressions to the Lord. Notice that he doesn’t deny, minimize, or blame someone else. He simply calls his sin what it is “sin.” It’s not an error, a mistake, or a lapse in judgment. He doesn’t argue about the fact of his sin. He confesses his sins to the Lord. But confession is more than merely informing God that we’ve sinned. It also involves a turning away from our sins, repentance.

Finally David talks about the help of God

David sees God’s help in three ways:

First God’s protection, when we turn to God in confession He will protect us. God will keep us from trouble and surround us with songs of deliverance.

Second God’s instruction, God promises to instruct us and teach us in the way we should go. The blessing of protection is wonderful but it would be incomplete if it were not accompanied by His direction. What good would it be if He guarded us from destruction but didn’t tell us which way to go to change our lives?

Third God’s joy, when we realize our sins are forgiven we can’t help but break out into spontaneous expressions of joy. Those who know their sins are covered can leap for joy.

Remember Psalm 32 tells us three things about forgiveness:

The happiness of forgiveness

The heaviness of sin

And God’ help with protection, instruction and joy.

I am your creator. You were in my care even before you were born. Isaiah 44-2

Poem written by Russell Kelfer

You are who you are for a reason.
You're part of an intricate plan.
You're a precious and perfect unique design,
called God's special woman or man.
You look like you look for a reason.
Our God made no mistake.
He knit you together within the womb,
you're just what He wanted to make.
The parents you had were the ones He chose,
and no matter how you feel,
They were custom-designed with God's
plan in mind,
And they bare the Master's seal.
Know that tramma you faced was not easy.
and God wept that it hurt you so;
but it was allowed to shape your heart
so that into His likeness you'd grow.
You are who you are for a reason,
you've been formed by the Master's rod.
You are who you are, beloved,
because there is a God!

