

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people.

Volume 58, Number 09

May 9, 2018



Pentecost is Sunday, May 20th!

The color of Pentecost is red. Why is that? Pentecost falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter, and commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' disciples. The Holy Spirit brought power and strength to the disciples so they could carry on Jesus' work.

In Acts 2, this coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by "tongues, as of fire, which appeared among the disciples and rested on each of them," a sign of that power that had come. The color red reminds us of this power coming to the disciples long ago, and to us today. Pentecost is often called the birthday of the church because Jesus' followers went into the world after that day, to share the news of Jesus. Wear red on Pentecost, which is May 20. The message that day will be **Come, Holy Spirit, Come.**



Good Bye & God Bless KANDY DELK!

Please stop by Fellowship Hall Sunday, May 20 between services, and say farewell to Kandy Delk! We'll be honoring Kandy for her six plus years of dedicated service on our staff as Administrative Associate. Join us for cake and beverages, and give Kandy the send-off she so richly deserves! There will be a basket in Fellowship Hall for cards or gifts, or you may bring or mail them to the office before Sunday, May 20.



Website Redesign!

If you haven't browsed St. Mark's website lately, you'll want to take a look at the new contemporary format. You'll find all the original information, in addition to some new features, like fillable online forms, and a new Committee

Portal to file meeting minutes and other documents.

Plus, we have a blog section and the site includes a search feature to make it easy to locate things. It's also "mobile compatible" to make it really easy to register online for classes, or make payments or

donations right from your phone. We think you are going to like it! Watch for more information about new features will be shared in upcoming editions of the **Messenger**.



Mark Your Calendars

Don't miss the opportunity to hear the **Youth Singers, Youth Choral, and Celebration Ringers** from First UMC Colorado Springs perform on Sunday, June 3, 3:00 p.m. here at St. Mark's.

HOSTS NEEDED!

We are also looking for people to host both the youth and adult chaperones. You will find a sign-up sheet and information about hosting on our website at www.umcstmarks.org - upcoming events. You may also contact Susan Putt (susan@umcstmarks.org) or call the church office (297-2062). This is a great opportunity to display God's love and St. Mark's hospitality!



Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Pastor Sharon will be preaching on **Making the Connection: Connecting to Jesus**, May 20 through July 15; two months of sermons talking about the person, life, and ministry of Jesus, the Christ. We are offering several classes throughout the summer that relate to this topic – challenging courses that may bring us out of our comfort zone, but also help us solidify our faith in an exciting way. Some of the book and film studies will also challenge us in living out our faith. Below are just a few of this summer's offerings. Please contact the facilitators if you have questions about these. You can sign up on "The Board" on Sundays or register online at www.umcstmarks.org, classes.

Belief Matters: Incarnation – The Surprising Overlap of Heaven & Earth,

by William H. Williman

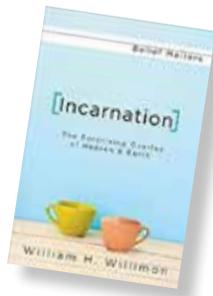
Tuesday, May 22, 6:00-8:00 p.m. (one session)

Facilitator: Judy Boroto

Christ is the Incarnation of God; not only one who talks about God but also the one who is God. The idea that Christ was both divine and human will always be a mystery, and therefore many Christians prefer not to discuss it, saying that what they believe won't change one way or the other. Maybe. But wouldn't learning more about the Incarnation—a major biblical theme—help us think more clearly about our faith and in turn help us to love God more fully?

The doctrine of Incarnation is our human attempt to make sense out of an event that has happened, is still happening – heaven and earth overlapping, interlocking in a Jew from Nazareth who lived briefly and died violently. Then three days later, the women shout, "He's back!" God here, God now.

This is a short book, but full of information, ideas and thoughts. We will have one, two-hour discussion on it. Please read it before the class. Books will be available at the church by May 6 for \$9 or you can search for it on Amazon if you prefer.

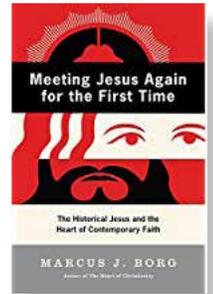


Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith,

by Marcus Borg

Tuesdays, June 5-July 10, Rm 17/18
1:30 p.m. (6 sessions)

Facilitator: Linda Walker



Many of us have known about Jesus since we were children. As we grow and mature, sometimes what we "know" or "know about" Jesus needs to be re-examined in light of our changing understandings, questions and concerns. This was the case for the author Marcus J. Borg, and he shares his story and insights in this fascinating and challenging book.

In Mr. Borg's words, "The foundational claim of this book is that there is a strong connection between images of Jesus and images of the Christian life, between how we think of Jesus and how we think of the Christian life."

Join us on Tuesday afternoons in June and July for a six-session study of this book that has been an important help to those who want to find a meaningful relationship with Jesus and a way to live as Jesus' faithful disciple.

To quote Walter Wink of Auburn Theological Seminary: "In every generation there is a handful of writers of whom it can be said, 'Read everything they write.' Marcus Borg is one of them today, a writer of rare lucidity, original scholarly insights, profound spirituality, and the unusual capacity to connect it all to life in the present. He might just change your mind—or life."

Books are \$10 and will be available at the church by May 6th for advanced reading. You can also search for the book on Amazon if you prefer.

Convicted: A Crooked Cop,

by Andrew Collins, Jameel

Zookie McGee and Mark Tabb

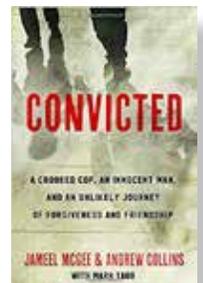
Monday, June 18, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Library

(one session)

Facilitator: Sandi Heilman

A Summer Reading Suggestion!

When a corrupt white police officer knowingly sent an innocent black man to jail in 2005, their relationship had every reason to end in rage and revenge. So how did these two men end up as friends? Discover the answer in **Convicted: A Crooked Cop, An Innocent Man and an Unlikely Journey of Forgiveness and Friendship**. This compelling, true story shows how they grew up just a few miles apart, but in two different worlds. Spoiler Alert: The ending would have been much different if faith hadn't played a part in their story!



continued on page 3

This book, written by Andrew Collins, Jameel Zookie McGee and Mark Tabb, is available in hardcover (approx. \$15), as an e-book (approx. \$10), and as an audio-book (approx. \$20). You're invited to acquire your own copy, read (or listen to) the book, then join Sandi Heilman, as she facilitates a one-time discussion on Monday, June 18, at 7:00 p.m. The study is open to anyone interested, regardless of age. You may indicate your participation by registering online at www.umcstmarks.org, classes. or at the bulletin board in the courtyard on Sunday mornings.

Summer Film Offerings



Want to have fun, fellowship, and discussion in one sitting? Join us this summer for three films, one each month during June, July, and August. They will be adult films that will also have an underlying theme which we will discuss after the showing. The titles are not yet firmed up, but we are looking at Tuesday evenings, from 6:30 to 8:30 (or 9:00) p.m. Keep a watch in future *Messenger* editions for the specifics.

Peace Lab 2018—Vacation Bible School

This is a church-wide event! We need everyone to participate, so look below for ways you can contribute to our children and children around the world.



Prayer Team

We need people praying throughout VBS. You do not need to come to the church; you may pray wherever you are. You will sign up for a 30 minute slot at www.umcstmarks.org - upcoming events, and when VBS gets closer, you will receive suggestions for your praying time. *Thank you for praying for us.*

Missions

Vacation Bible School 2018—Peace Lab. One of the things we will be learning in VBS is that we need peace in ourselves, our communities, and our world. The congregation is invited to participate in two VBS missions:

In Our Community - We will be collecting new and very gently used stuffed animals for children in crisis and distributing them to various organizations so that children experiencing a physical or emotional trauma will have they can hold onto and be comforted. Please begin sorting through your collection, or heading to

the store so that you can contribute to easing the pain of some of the children in our community.

In the World - Kids for Peace (www.kidsforpeace.org) is an organization which is “uplifting our world through love and action.” They help promote kindness and peace by helping children see the impact they can have on the world. One of their campaigns is to build a school in Kenya and sponsor the students. The school is built, and for \$75 a student, we can give a child half of the yearly school tuition, two uniforms, plus breakfast and lunch for the entire year! We are planning to sponsor ten children. *Thank you for helping children in our community and throughout the world!*

Donations

If you would like to donate snacks for children, teens, and adults at VBS, please bring any of the following items to the church office by May 25: Cheerios, chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, raisins, small pretzels, Teddy Grahams, dried fruit, oreos , goldfish, popcorn. Yum! Thanks for contributing to the VBS snacks!

VBS Closing Celebration

The entire congregation is invited to our VBS Closing Celebration on Friday, June 8, at 6:00 p.m.

Summer Choir Opportunities

Easter season is passing by, and Pentecost will soon be here. That means that summer can't be far behind. Here at St. Mark's since the adult choirs get a summer hiatus, we instead have the Summer Choir. This is open to ANYONE who might be interested in singing, even just for the summer and/or to get to know our music program a little better.



The Summer Choir is directed by Sondra Franks. There is NO scheduled rehearsal outside of the Sundays when we sing. First, we meet in the Choir Room at 7:45 a.m. and rehearse one anthem for 25 minutes. Then, we sing that anthem at both the 8:15 and 9:45 a.m. services, and then you are done. The Sundays we will be singing are June 3, June 17, July 1, July 29, and August 12. That's every two weeks. We have had great music in the summers past and if you join us on June 3, we will continue to enjoy making music for the Lord. Hope to see you there.

Sondra Franks



Faith on Stage Theater Troupe is organizing for its second production which will be a mystery dinner theater on Friday, August 17. We need actors, cooks, set up and take down people, and others to help us with this. If you are interested in participating in this production, Contact Rev. Evy (revevy2001@gmail.com) or Margaret (margaret@umcstmarks.org) or come by Rm 23 anytime on June 24 between 8:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to sign up to help.

If you want to act in the dinner theater, you must be available from July 29 until Aug. 17. There will be four rehearsals during that time, and you need to be present for all of them. Let's go!

Quilting with Ties that Bind

We are off to a wonderful start with our new prayer quilt ministry, **Ties that Bind!** We got together on May 7 for our first sew-together. Some of the quilts will be assembled by one person, and others will be put together by a few people. Before we can start to fill requests for the prayer quilts, we have to make some. We hope to have enough quilts on hand to start taking requests later this summer. No matter your sewing experience, a beginning sewer or a long time quilter, we hope you will join us. Men are

welcome to join us, too! There are many different talents we can use, and if you don't want to sew, we will have something for you to do. We will have some sewing machines, some fabric, and threads on hand and will start sewing those



quilts to be given in prayer to those in need of prayer. We will meet on the first and third Mondays of each month in Rm 17/18 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to sew and enjoy fellowship as we work.

There will be no charge to the recipients or sponsors (someone who requests a quilt for a family member or friend) for the prayer quilts. Our prayer quilts are not for sale, they are a gift of prayer. Materials will be purchased through donations or fundraising. Donations of 100% cotton fabric, sewing and quilting items are welcome, as well as monetary gifts (make checks payable to St. Mark's UMC with **Ties that Bind** written in the memo). We hope you will join us, and if you need more information, please contact Ann Dyer (see directory).



Endowment FUND

The St. Mark's Endowment Fund is used to support projects that are not accounted for in the church's annual budget. This could include seed money for new programs and projects, support of discipleship and stewardship programs, or to provide assistance for facility maintenance or major equipment purchases, such as the new playground structure for the Early Childhood Center.

Donations to the Permanent Endowment fund can be made in a variety of ways. One way to give is through outright gifts such as cash, stocks, bonds, property or other marketable assets, such as automobiles.

Questions regarding St. Mark's Permanent Endowment Fund can be directed to info@umcstmarks.org, or to learn more visit the Endowment page www.umcstmarks.org.

ODBALL OFFERING

Sunday, May 13! Every week at laundry time I ask, "How do my husband and I accumulate all these dirty clothes?" Recently, after reading a brochure describing the work of Our Family Services, I thought, "What if I had to provide laundry supplies for a twenty-bed temporary crisis shelter for runaway and homeless youth (Reunion House) and 125 community-based housing units for homeless families?"

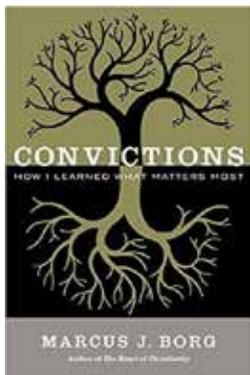


HOW MUCH LAUNDRY DETERGENT WOULD IT TAKE? Last year Our Family Services provided housing for over 1,240 homeless individuals. The generous St. Mark's congregation is being asked to help by bringing a donation of laundry detergent to church next Sunday, and drop it in the ODBALL collection box, in the courtyard. The Missions Committee greatly appreciates your donations!

May Open Minds Book Study

May 18 will be our next and last book study for the spring. We will read and discuss the book, **CONVICTIONS: How I Learned What Matters Most**, by Marcus Borg.

Convictions was written in 2014 and addresses the questions, “Do Christian beliefs still matter? Do they really change us or the world?” According to the jacket description, “Borg encourages today’s followers of Jesus to become more rooted to the deep convictions that can actually lead us to transformation and renewal, both for ourselves and for our world.”



Chapter titles include “Context Matters,” “Faith Is a Journey,” “Salvation Is More About This Life than an Afterlife,” “Jesus’s Death on the Cross Matters—But Not Because He Paid for Our Sins,” “Christians Are Called to Peace and Nonviolence,” and “To Love God Is to Love Like

God”—to name a few. Just the titles call us to think and rethink what we believe—and what difference that can make!

Remember, we gather in the Library at 9:30 a.m. for discussion and refreshments. The date will be Friday, May 18. The discussion is led by Todd and Tyger Penson.

UMW Meeting, May 22

St. Mark’s United Methodist Women will meet Tuesday, May 22, in Fellowship Hall. Please join us at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments and fellowship followed with our program at 7:00 p.m.

Doug Bowers will share his experiences with Kairos Mission. Kairos Prison Ministry is a Christian ministry that addresses the spiritual needs of incarcerated men, women, youth and their families led by lay volunteers throughout the world. ***Kairos is a Greek word meaning in “God’s Special Time” or in the “Fullness of Time” indicating an opportunity for participants in this program to reconsider their life choices.*** Doug will provide an insight into this Mission and the involvement of volunteers through slides and music.



All women and men are invited, and you don’t need to be a member of St. Mark’s UMW or part of our church to attend. Childcare may be requested by contacting the church office on or before Friday, May 18. Should you have questions or need transportation to the meeting, please contact Virginia Tupper (see directory).

Did You Know?

The United Methodist Church Position on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities.



The United Methodist Social Principles are a section of United Methodist Book of Discipline. The Social Principles express the United Methodist Church’s official positions on societal issues, casting a vision for a just and equitable world.

This month, we will examine what the Social Principles say about the rights of persons with disabilities. This particular area falls under the part of the principles that deal with the Social Community. The principles recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological and psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God. It stresses the responsibility of the Church and society to be in ministry with children, youth and adults with disabilities. It urges the Church and society to recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith. The principles call on the Church and society to be sensitive to and to advocate for programs for rehabilitation, and other services that would allow the persons to actively participate in society.

The social principles are extended by resolutions which have been adopted by the General Conference. There are two resolutions which deal with persons with disabilities. The first addresses the United Nations support for persons with disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act. With states and congress attempting to weaken the ADA, it is important to continue to advocate for the rights of disabled persons. The second resolution deals with specific areas that The United Methodist Church can implement the language of the social principles.

Our conference, the Desert Southwest, has a Disabilities Ministry committee which works to implement the principles and resolutions throughout the conference. Here at St. Mark’s our Open Doors committee is working to make our church more inviting to persons with disabilities. Our Board of Trustees conducts an annual accessibility audit to determine how we can make our campus more inviting to visitors with disabilities.

Church and Society committee

Early Childhood Center News

If you have a heart for young children and experience in working with them, we have two afternoon teaching positions open in our St. Mark's ECC program.

If you, or someone you know, is interested, email your resume and cover letter to stmarksecc@live.com. For questions, contact Laurie Walsh (520-797-2925).

A BIG *thank you* to the St. Mark's Permanent Endowment Committee for their contribution to our new playground structure as well as the all the St. Mark's ECC families who supported our fundraising for this important improvement to our school campus.

The children really love the new playground!



THEOLOGY UNCORKED

This message is brought to you by St. Mark's **Church and Society** committee who is: "Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people."

Theology Uncorked Social Justice May Program: **From the Border to Detention: Understanding our Immigration System.** Carmen Smith-Estrada will address these questions based on her work with the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project.

Monday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

St. Frances Cabrini Parish Hall

3201 E. Presidio Rd

(Country Club/Ft. Lowell)

(520) 326-7670 church office

Please bring a donation for wine and snacks.

PRAYER CORNER

We are a praying community at St. Mark's. Besides Sunday worship, you may submit prayer requests by email to prayerchain@umcstmarks.org or from our website www.umcstmarks.org. Also, visit our Prayer Room on campus and leave a prayer on our prayer wall.

Jack Armantrout

Gail Blevins

Jared Bowman & family

Michael Campbell

Donald Chester

Judy Drescher

Erik Frost

Lori Grimsey

Keith & Mary Ann Glazier

Jeanise Hagg

Breanne Hallam

Carolyn Hanna

David & Floretta Harrington

Patricia Keele

Pam Kytola

Karen Linebarier

Joan Pepe

Jim Preston

Daylene Peters

Hazel Roberts

Howard & Gina Russell

Earlene Schock

Marian Shultis

Jim Snedden

Josh Steinman

Carol Underwood

Jackie Vickers

Louise Voelker

Tom Walker

Jim Ward

Dave Webster

Connie White

Lindsay Williams

Yvonne Yare

LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY

Please keep these people in your prayers. Email additions or updates to messenger@umcstmarks.org.

Hank Bautzmann, son of Nancy Bautzmann

Jon Chytka, nephew of Donna Severson

Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Donna Severson

Brandonn Eto, friend of Zirnheld/Compernelle family

Rob Eubank, son of David & Johanna Eubank

Patrick Emmett, son of Julie Wiens

Mike Freeman, son of Ken & Ann Freeman

Garrett Geer, grandson of Ellen Wise

Patrick Harris, grandson of Marilyn Vaughn

Rachel Kester, daughter of Don & Ruth Kester

Chad Long, grandson of Pat Long

Jake Newton, son of Robert & Cheri Newton

John O'Regan, husband of Ashley O'Regan and grandson-in-law of Janet Krug

Brian Osborn, pastor in the DSW Conference

William Putt, son of Harold & Susan Putt

Adam Seia, son of David & Vonda Seia

Jeffrey Shafe, grandson of Mary Langemeier

Jason Smith, grandson of Jerry & Judy Smith

Alex Snow, brother of Shelley Shelton

Clint Staschke, son-in-law of Cliff & June Young

Michael and Karisa Szczygiel, daughter and son-in-law of Joyce Flick

Brianna Walker, granddaughter of Barbara Fradenburgh; niece of Joan Fradenburgh

WASS UP?

May 9, 2018

Volume 19, Issue 9

Confirmation Sunday



UPCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

May 13, 2018—

Confirmation Sunday
Regular Sunday School
Mother's Day

No Youth Group



May 20, 2018—

3:00 to 4:00 Youth Council
4:00 to 6:00 Youth Group

May 27, 2018—

Memorial Day
No Youth Group



Our confirmands will be confirmed in worship on Sunday, May 13.

They have been in class on Sunday mornings since September. They've shared discussions, guest speakers, a retreat, a service project, and several field trips. Most importantly, our confirmands have had the opportunity to discuss their faith in a safe, comfortable environment.

Please congratulate them on their dedication and hard work. Confirmation is open to students in grades 8-12. The next class begins right after Labor Day.

YOUTH COUNCIL

DON'T FORGET— On May 20th at 3:00, the Youth Council will put the finishing touches on summer plans. Anyone can come and share ideas and opinions.



Find us on Social Media!



St. Mark's Youth Group



stmarksumyf

a note from the

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Dates, dates, dates:

Saturday, May 12—SSP Golf Tournament

Sunday, May 13—Confirmation Sunday

Sunday, May 20—Graduate Recognition

May 29– June 1— Middle School Mission

And in the midst of all that 's going on at St. Mark's this month, you're busy at school. More than likely, your parents have plans for you, and you'd like to make a few plans of your own.

I just saw this great quote:

"A busy life makes prayer harder, but prayer makes a busy life easier."

Some of the business that goes with the end of school/beginning of summer is unavoidable, but as Rachel advises, take time for yourself. Take time to pray.

Blessings,

Kim

Middle School Moments

The summer is SO CLOSE. It almost feels like these weeks are going in Slow Motion, doesn't it, when you know the freedom to sleep-in is only a few weeks away? These next few weeks will fly by and crawl, all at the same time. It can be super stressful to study for finals, and take them, especially if you are new to finals. I know many of you will be cramming, and making sure to get those last minute lessons studied. But it's also very important to take care of yourself.

Be sure to take some time for yourself, to spend some time with prayer, and spend time with us! Worship, Sunday School, and Youth Group can all be great places to re-center and forget about the stress for a little while. And just think- when it's all over, we have an amazing summer planned, starting with Middle School Mission- you don't want to miss it!

See you Sunday,
Rachel



Middle School Mission

May 29-June 1

4 days and 3 nights

of service, worship,

and friends!



Sierra Service Project

It's crunch time for the **Golf Tournament!** The tournament is Saturday, May 12th! SSP participants should be looking for donations for the silent auction, as well as individuals or businesses who are willing to sponsor a hole.

Also, the **second payment of \$60** is due now!

Calendar Notes

Sat., May 12

Youth Golf Tournament - Highlands Golf Course
Primavera Meal

Sun., May 13

Mother's Day/Confirmation Sunday
4:00 p.m. No Youth Group

Mon., May 14

9:15 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m. Mark-a-ritas

Tues. May 15

6:30 p.m. Covenant Council

Wed., May 16

Noon - BULLETIN DEADLINE

5:45 p.m. Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
6:15 p.m. Soul Station
6:15 p.m. Common Grounds

Thurs., May 17

Noon - MESSENGER DEADLINE

6:30 p.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m. Moms of Military, Library

Sat., May 19

2:00 p.m. Stauffacher Memorial Service

Sun., May 20

4:00 p.m. Preteens and Youth Groups

Mon., May 21

9:15 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

Tues., May 22

9:00 a.m. Coffee Chat, Old Times Kafe

Wed., May 23

10:30 a.m. Chronic Illness/Pain Support Group
5:45 p.m. Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
6:15 p.m. Soul Station
6:15 p.m. Common Grounds



St. Mark's Messenger

Published bi-weekly

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Rev. Sharon Ragland

Associate Pastor:

Rev. Tammy Hallam

Sunday Worship:

8:15, 9:45, 11:15 a.m.

Soul Station

Wednesday Nights:

Community Meal

5:45 p.m.

Music/Programs

6:15-7:15 p.m.

Dear Church Family...



I'd like to thank everyone who has donated fabric to HeartWorks. Aviva Children's Services is not getting many donations right now. We will need more fabric. We have made 500 bags so far this year.

Thanks, Gale Wenger

Sharon, I received a report today showing that St. Mark's UMC has paid 100% of their apportionments every year since our Conference was formed in 1985. I want to say thank you!

*Rev. Mark Conrad, Missional Strategist & Superintendent
South District, Desert Southwest Conference UMC*

I want to thank my St. Mark's family for all the cards, phone calls, and prayers during my recent surgery and continued recovery. I really appreciate you!

God bless, Phyllis Carlson

You're Invited...

to our open house to celebrate Nick Hiratsuka's high school graduation! We would like to extend an invitation to our Church family to join us at an Open House on Saturday, May 26th from 3:00 - 8:00 p.m. at our home, at 9871 N. Spanish Head Trail, celebrating Nick's high school graduation.

John and Diane Hiratsuka





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Reflections

My mother has been much on my mind these last few days. She passed away in March, 2013. I suppose she's on my mind because of the upcoming Mother's Day, but I've also been thinking about her because of the series we're wrapping up on May 13, **Connecting to Our Past...History of Our Faith**.

My mother grew up in a strict Lutheran church and home, as did I. When I left the church of my birth in my early 20's, I know that my mother wondered what I was doing. As life unfolded, though, she became intrigued with the way my faith grew when Art and I joined the United Methodist Church. She saw me becoming involved in Bible and other studies, hanging out with people from church, and eventually watched me answer a call to ministry. Also, she saw how my faith led me into service in the world. That really intrigued her. She loved, as do I, the interplay of growing in faith in Jesus and out of that faith, working to make God's world better, more just and peaceful. In her fifties, my mother became United Methodist, and was deeply enriched and strengthened by the UMC. She served in United Methodist Women, made beautiful tapestries for altars and banners, sewed for children in

need, made countless crafts and baked goods for sales for missions, and came with us to serve at Primavera Men's Shelter. Those are just a few of the ways she served Christ in the world.

Through all that, she went to classes and studied her Bible and never wanted to miss worship and Holy Communion. She wrestled with her faith through all the ups and downs of her life, not blindly accepting everything she read but questioning and learning and praying.

I think in her heart she was United Methodist—seeking to grow closer to God in Jesus Christ, and out of her faith serving him in the world. Or maybe God made her United Methodist along the way. She loved our church, the UMC, as do I. She saw its faults, as do I. As our UMC wrestles with issues of our day, I trust, as did my mother, that God is in the midst of it and will lead us through, if we are guided by our faith, trusting God to do what God says he will do.

Blessings, with thanksgiving for my mother, Sharon

Next time I will resume **State of the Church** messages.