

The LFUMC Messenger

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the Lewiston First Methodist Church

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The Messenger
January 2016

Pastor's Path - "Come to the Dark Side"

By: Rev. Chuck Cram

Like millions of other people over the Christmas holidays, Heidi and I had the chance to catch the new Star Wars movie. Like most of the others, we found the film to be enjoyable on a number of levels and even nostalgic as many of the scenes and situations seemed to mirror the original film released so many years ago. Sometimes it is fun to just suspend reality for a couple of hours and enjoy the fantasy world and the classic struggle of good versus evil.

Unfortunately, there are also millions of Christians who have been taught that this fantasy isn't as far from the truth as I believe it is. The classic struggle of good versus evil morphs almost seamlessly into a spiritual struggle of the same kind. Lucifer, the king of darkness, the devil, and spiritual demons that possess and create havoc are very real in the minds of many.

I mentioned this as unfortunate because I believe this idea and belief system is not only misguided and dangerous, but it also diminishes the Divine. Don't misunderstand, there is plenty of evil in the world and people who participate in bad behavior, but that is a different manifestation of our humanness than actually believing the evil has some power.

In the Star Wars saga the "Dark Side" is able to utilize and access super natural powers to control people, move inanimate objects, cause people to quit breathing and a host of other fantastic attributes that lend themselves nicely to Hollywood special effects. But once you leave the theater, that fantasy should be replaced with a thoughtful and reasonable approach to spirituality.

But for many, the fantasy and the accompanying fear persist.

Almost everything that I believe to be true about God can be verified or observed in some way in nature and even science. It all works together and the forces of nature, science and common sense are not at odds with Divine creation or the even the Bible. As long as the Bible is read through the lens of what I think is proper interpretation and relevance, but then again, what I think is good for me doesn't necessarily have to be good for you. But what I believe concerning this fantasy of good versus evil doesn't line up with the Hollywood version of the story; for many there isn't much daylight between Hollywood's storytelling and the Bible's. As I said, almost everything I believe to be true about God can be observed in nature and through science, and this part of my belief system is no exception.

For starters, darkness is not a thing; darkness cannot be measured, increased, manipulated or created. Darkness is a condition we use to describe the absence of light. It is nothing more. There is only light. When you remove light, darkness has the appearance of increasing, but only in the

SPECIAL DATES TO REMEMBER

- JAN 6 - WORSHIP COMMITTEE - 5:30PM
- JAN 12 - SPRC MEETING - 6:30PM
- JAN 13 - SALVATION ARMY DINNER - 3PM
- JAN 14 - TRUSTEE'S MEETING - 6PM
- JAN 21 - UMW - 10AM
- JAN 23 - MEN'S BREAKFAST - 9AM
- JAN 28 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - 7PM

WEEKLY MEETINGS

SUNDAYS

- BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL 8:30AM
- ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL - 9:15AM
- CHOIR WARM-UP - 9:30AM
- WORSHIP - 10:30AM
- COFFEE SHOP - 11:30AM
- YOUTH GROUP BIBLE STUDY - 12PM

MONDAYS

- PREACHER'S PUB - 10AM
(WESLEY ROOM)

TUESDAYS

- BIBLE DISCUSSION - 10AM



Thank You's

In the world of Methodism it was a unique situation that allowed Heidi and I to be present during the worship service and fellowship following on Stephen Johnson's last Sunday with you at Lewiston First. After the worship service and during the coffee fellowship time I remember Stephen making a comment that he had never encountered a congregation that cared for each other as much as this one. I know he meant it when he said it; but now I know from experience exactly what he said is true. Your level of care and compassion is extraordinary.

Through all of the surgeries, doctor visits, and waiting for test results there has been an almost constant stream of cards, phone calls, text messages and of course prayers that have made this time much less anxiety producing for us. Thank you everyone! We also received a wonderful gift at Christmas which made our Holiday much brighter! It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be your pastor and to have such an opportunity to learn from those around me.

Thanks so much.

Chuck & Heidi

I was just wanted to give a big thank-you to the individuals that helped decorate for advent: Larry & Gayla Ballantyne, Melody Boardman, Kathy Forge, Mary McNish, and Pat Heimgartner. A very special Thank-you to Camille Lame for donating the beautiful poinsettas. Also thank you so much to those who helped take down the decorations: Larry Ballantyne, Kay Walker, Melody and Monte Boardman, Herb Hobbs, Bill Schrupp. Thank-you, Pat Schrupp

Amen! Let's Eat!

Our church cookbook went on sale on December 5th and sales have been very good. The unsold books will be kept at the church and can be purchased through the church office. The price will remain at \$20.00 per book. They should make great gifts for weddings, showers, birthdays, etc.

As you use your book, you may notice some typos or errors in the recipes and if so, please make a note of it by page number and the error detected and give it to one of us on the committee. We will be making a correction list that will be available to you so you can correct your book.

Also, Lois Chesnut has made an index of the recipes and the person who submitted them. Copies will be available by email from Lois or the church office.

After paying the expenses we have earned approximately \$1300.00 which has gone into the church general fund. When the remaining cookbooks sell (about 70 cookbooks), those funds will also go to the church. Thanks for your support.

Cookbook Committee - Sally Davies, Sue Driskill, Mary McNish, Gayla Ballantyne

Dear LFUMC Friends,

How my heart has been warmed and my spirit strengthened by your outpouring of caring in the passing of my beloved Bert and my subsequent medical crisis! You are true channels of God's love and caring. I've often commented on how frequently and generously LFUMC folds expressed appreciation and now is another chance to tell you how much I appreciate YOU. Thank you so very much!

I join you in prayers for those in the church family who are also suffering, of whom I've just heard. May God keep us all in divine, perfect peace.

With much love and many fond memories,

Betty Smith

Pastor's Path - (continued)

sense that more light has been remove. Thus, every time Snoopy begins another new novel with the familiar phrase; "It was a dark and stormy night", everyone knows what that means. There are in fact nights that appear darker than others, but the darkness itself has not increased, there is simply more light absent from the scene than on less dark nights.

In the world of science and nature there is only light that actually exists; darkness is not an actual thing, it is a condition. I believe the same situation can be found in our spiritual world as well. As the prologue of the Gospel of John so eloquently depicts, "that life became the light of world, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness shall not overcome it."

I believe this is helpful to absorb and contemplate when the world around us is so quick to reject and alienate others based on religion, color, nationality or fear. Can we not look for the light that is in everyone rather than perpetuating a Hollywood myth that those we fear have gone to the Dark Side? Food for thought.

Chuck

2015 Outreach Committee Christmas Project Home of Hope Foster Care

Our Christmas Outreach project is completed. We were able to provide many articles of clothing for some of the children in foster care. With your help, we collected shoes for boys and girls, all kinds of warm clothing for girls 6 and 7 and a large collection of clothing for premature babies. We even had a large bag of stuffed toys to send. We also collected \$780 in donations to Home of Hope.

We wish to thank everyone who provided clothing and/or donations to help these foster children at Christmas time.

As always, you were very generous and giving to others!!

Sally Davies and Barb Maple, Outreach Committee



Betty Pardue

Wanted to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. She also wanted to let you all know that she has a new address at Royal Plaza and would love to have some visitors.

Betty Pardue
2870 Juniper Drive
Apt 239
Lewiston ID, 83501



It's time for Taco Bar again on January 31st during coffee shop after church. Taco meat and shells will be provided. Please bring taco fixings or salads. Birthday cake will be served to celebrate Rita Mills' birthday on Jan. 30 and Lynn Ballantyne's birthday on Feb. 1.

Hope you can join us.
Rita and Gayla



NEW YEAR, NEW IDEAS

This year Chuck and I have decided to publish the newsletter quarterly instead of monthly. One reason we have come to this decision is that we are producing a calendar that will contain dates and times of all monthly meetings and coming events. Those should be out soon so keep an eye out. I would also like to utilize the back side of the prayer list more, so if there is something that just can't wait for the newsletter we can use that space instead.

Also changing this year is the email address for the church office. The new one will be more in-line with our new website; I will make sure there is a big announcement when that change takes place but wanted to give you a heads up. We are definitely open to suggestions so please let us know what you think and if you have any more ideas let us know.

Happy New Year!

Arrie

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Church Office Hours for 2016
Monday - Friday
10am-2:00pm

We welcome you to Lewiston First United Methodist Church! Our church is always open to all the children of God in all our wondrous diversity.

Our Services are lively, informative, thought provoking and relevant to the challenges of living in the 21st Century. It is our view the warmth of the Spirit will be evident every time we gather for worship, Bible discussion or a small group Discipleship gathering. We hope the love of the Divine will bring you comfort and serenity in our sometimes stressful and chaotic lives. Thank you for taking a minute to look over this newsletter and we hope to see you again in the near future, so you can *share our view!*



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

02 - Arabells Bringman
03 - Jill Ralstin
06 - Larry Nystrom
11 - Kendall Forge

13 - Susan Mahan
15 - Herb Hobbs
16 - Olene Teel
17 - Carley Lawrence

21 - Steve Combellick
26 Frankie Anderson
28 - Doris Olin
30 - Rita Mills

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU FROM LFUMC!

REMINDER!

The food bank still needs your donations this holiday season. Save a trip and bring your donations to the church and leave them in the shopping cart in the Narthex and we will take them down to the food bank.

Volunteer Needed

We need someone to take the coupon booklets, accumulated from the Tribune, over to the Asotin County Library in Clarkston. Please contact Becky Riendeau if you are interested.

NEWSLETTER MAILING!

Returning to bulk mailing to send the newsletter to home addressees is being evaluated. In the meantime, if you know of anyone who is unable to get to worship on Sunday or does not have an email address, please let Arrie know and she will put a copy in the mail.

January Service Schedule

Greeters:

03 - Gayla & Larry Ballantyne
10 - Barbara & Leonard O'Brien
17 - Mary Jacobs & Doris Ann Winschell
24 - Lois Woelfel & Frankie Anderson
31 - Steve & Kathy Forge

Ushers:

03 - Donna Weaver & Lois Woelfel
10 - Larry Dean & Patti Mills
17 - John Stalter & Herb Hobbs
24 - Charlie Baker & Bob Sitton
31 - The Forge Family

Liturgists:

03 - Robbin Stewart
10 - Liz Chavez
17 - Doug Crook
24 - Venessa Stedman
31 - Patty Mills

Counters:

03 -
10 - Fred Weaver & Cottie Hood
17 - Larry Butts & Lois Chesnut
24 - Larry Ballantyne & Leonard O'Brien
31 - Lois Woelfel & Carl Paulsont

Accompanists:

03 - Laureen Trail
10 -
17 - Laureen Trail
24 -
31 -

Coffee Shop:

03 - Potluck
10 -
17 -
24 -
31 - Taco Bar