



Holy Covenant UMC Newsletter

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**Worship With Us
Online!**



**Join us Sunday at
10:30 am at the
[Holy Covenant
United Methodist
Church Facebook
page](#)**

**Pastor Carol, Shaun,
Helma and Mandy will
lead us in worship.**

Plastic Bags Needed

Our mat makers are staying busy making sleep mats for the homeless. If you have plastic grocery bags you would like to contribute, please contact Lois Eaton at loiseaton@verizon.net or 214-862-8683. You

Issue: #179

April 3, 2020

A Message from Pastor Carol



Faith is Greater Than Fear

The Story of Abraham and Sarah Becoming God's Blessing to the Nations

Genesis 12-22

The story of Abram and Sarai, beginning in Genesis 12, is not so much about defining God as it is defining humanity. God is a God of blessing but it can only be realized if the people of God are willing to work for it. What is the blessing promised to Abram?

I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)

Abram and Sarai lived in Har'an his home for 75 years. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, God invited Abram to enter into the work of becoming a man of faith through which he would be blessed. Abram and Sarai begin the story of God inspiring a single couple to become more than they imagined - a blessing for all the families of the earth. Abram and Sarai passed through many dangerous lands and were in harm's way most of the trek to reside in a place that only God knew. Both gave into doubt and fear with each challenge, conflict, alienation, delayed blessing and death.

God's covenant with Abram

15 After these events, the LORD's word came to Abram in a vision, "Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your protector. Your reward will be very great." 2 But Abram said, "LORD God, what can you possibly give me, since I still have no children? The head of my household is Eliezer, a man from Damascus." 3 He continued, "Since you haven't given me any children, the head of my household will be my heir." 4 The LORD's word came immediately to him, "This man will not be your heir. Your heir will definitely be your very own biological child." 5 Then he brought Abram outside and said, "Look up

may leave your bags by your front door and Lois will pick them up.

Update from ECDP

When the Lord Closes a Door...



Governor Abbott has closed Texas Public Schools through the month of April. In cooperation with the government's and the United Methodist Church's effort to contain COVID-19, ECDP has also closed our doors. We have closed the doors, but we have opened windows of learning. Through the month of April, ECDP will be posting online classes for our students through the Bloomz app. Our goal is to make this stressful time a little easier for families by giving them creative ways to play and learn as well as keeping their children connected to their school friends and teachers.

COVID-19 has drastically affected the way the world works. Online preschool is not the best way to do

at the sky and count the stars if you think you can count them." He continued, "This is how many children you will have." 6 Abram trusted the LORD, and the LORD recognized Abram's determination to be faithful.

Determination to be faithful is absolutely the hardest thing we will do in our lifetimes. To allow fear to be managed by faith in an invisible and very quiet God sometimes seems naive. The story of Abram and Sarai gives witness to the work and motivation required to be transformed by faith. In fact, God gives them "new" names to represent the shift in their characters - Abraham and Sarah.

This is a time of great upheaval, isolation, potential poverty, illness and even death. How naive it would be to strive for faith when it seems that God is disinterested in the plight of all of God's people. But is God?

11 I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Many generations later, the descendants of Abraham and Sarah allowed faith to fade and fear to drive their decision-making. Their land was in desolation and all seemed lost. God was not disinterested. God invited them into the work of faith just as God had "Father" Abraham.

Many generations later, God invites us into the work of faith. The work of meditation and prayer to soothe our spirits, reading the Bible to be encouraged by the resiliency of faithful people, contemplating on the intent of a blessing and accepting the unknown of our destination. It would be easy for us to focus on what God "should" be doing during this pandemic but then we reject the blessing of God - the work of faith. God does not interfere with the natural world, political regimes, economic systems or religious identities. God calls to us to know peace and hope when it seems naive. May our naivety be a blessing for all the families of the earth.

Blessings,
Pastor Carol

Pastoral Care Number

469-487-8432

Please use this number to share any pastoral concerns.



preschool. ECDP prefers to teach in community, in messiness, and especially in play. However, we have a new environment for now, and we are determined to bloom in it. Please pray for our teachers, students and their families as we untangle this difficult quarantine web and try to make preschool a safe and fun place at home. There is still so much of the school year left, and we are missing some of the fun things we love to do - Royal Feasts, Pancake Breakfasts, Spring Programs, Water Day, Parent Conferences, and Mother's Day Teas. So much of our year has been hijacked. Our spirits have not been hijacked. We are choosing joy and are sharing it with our students. We'll find creative ways to bring joy to our school families.

So we've closed the doors, but we've opened windows. We're enjoying time home with our families. We're enjoying calmer schedules. We're enjoying more time for creativity and home organization. We're cherishing our relationships. We're giving more time to God and prayer. We're staying home AND moving on! God bless you all and keep you safe!

How to Support Holy Covenant



In light of the current shelter-in-place orders, the leadership of Holy Covenant is taking measures to cut costs including canceling our landscaping, turning off sprinklers and thermostats, etc. Some costs cannot be cut, however, including basic operating expenses, our loan repayment and payroll. We ask that you continue to give to Holy Covenant during this time in whatever way works best for you. If you currently place your offering in the plate on Sundays, please consider mailing your check or giving online at hcumc.org. You may pay through your bank's online bill pay options, and even set up a recurring payment system.

Another option is to download the GivePlus app from the App Store or Google Play, choose Holy Covenant and you'll be able to make your contributions from your mobile device. The app is free to download and install.

You can also support Holy Covenant while you shop with Amazon. Simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile. Select *Holy Covenant United Methodist Church* to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation.

Rob's Ramblings

Hi, Rob Evans back with another ramblings. Did you ever consider why we use grape juice in our communion service rather than wine as its portrayed in the Bible.

In the 1800s, churches used wine as grape juice. But the raw grape juice was stored at room temperature and the result was fermented grape juice or more properly wine. This caused a problem for churches not wanting to contribute to the epidemic of alcoholism. Many churches simply eliminated communion from their worship. Other churches tried making their own unfermented sacramental wine for communion. Other churches substituted water in lieu of wine. Still other churches continued using wine to be Biblically correct.



In 1864, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church entered into the conversation when they approved a

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In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Sharyn Yetman's family; the Luce family; Roy Evans; Susan McAnally; Jeriann Bayley; Sharyn Yetman; Jim McKee; Charles Holley; Betty Morse; Carlos Ponce; Susie Ponce; Mary Phillips; Barbara Taake; Shelley Fincke; Barbara Wright; Aletha Craven; Mary Harrison; Florence Richter; Tyler Ackerman; Jojo Sain; and Mike Gilbert.

Our Loved Ones in the Military

KeNi Gaines, Zach Glass, Jake Oliver, Antonio Ramirez, Ashton Rudolf and Diana Rudolf.

report from the Temperance Committee that recommended "the pure juice of the grape to be used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper." That didn't solve the problem but just left up in air.

A few years later the communion steward at Vineland Methodist Episcopal Church set out to provide unfermented sacramental wine. He was what we would call a rabid zealot on this matter. His name, by the way, was Thomas B. Welch of Welch's Grape Juice. He worked for years seeking a way to pasteurize raw grape juice to keep it from fermenting.

The popularity of his grape juice was aided by the growth of the temperance movement and their concern over using fermented wine for communion. By 1876 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union refused to receive the sacraments in churches using wine. This movement (WCTU) consisted largely of women from the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Then in 1880 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church made two changes in the Book of Discipline. The first change allowed "churches to see that the Stewards provide unfermented wine for use in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Alcohol-free communion was to be available in every church. The second change made the first change mandatory. "Let none but the pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used in administering the Lord's Supper, whenever practicable.

Thus, the Methodist church was in the forefront of alcohol free Lord's Supper.

Peace
Rob Evans



The logo features the words "Holy Covenant" in a large, black, cursive script. To the right of "Covenant" is a stylized red flame. Below "Holy Covenant" are the words "UNITED METHODIST" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

**meeting Christ in our local community
to serve our children and youth**



We are welcoming and open to all people;
black or white or brown, you are welcome here;
rich or poor, young or old, you are welcome here,
gay or straight, citizen or sojourner, you are welcome
here.

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