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PASTORAL LETTER

pastor don

Lent: A Road from Perception to Perspective

You've probably heard the phrase, "perception is reality." I have. I've even said it a time or two.

Perception is your interpretation of the world around you and is unique to you. Perspective is the ability to see the world from outside of yourself, understanding it from the position of the other. Moving from perception to perspective, in my estimation, is kingdom work. And according to Jesus, the kingdom of God is close at hand. He said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near (Mark 1:15). This is good news.

The good news of the kingdom, according to Jesus, has two laws: Love God with all you are, and love all like yourself (Matt. 22:37-40). Jesus invites all of us to follow him from a place of our own perceptions into a kingdom perspective— "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people" (Matt. 4:19)—freeing us from the trap of self-perception into the perspective of others, and into the opportunity to invite others into the same freedom (Romans 8:1-8).

Referencing the prophet Isaiah (6:9), Jesus teaches us that a kingdom perspective is possible if we look and listen with the ears and eyes Jesus gives us.

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' ...blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." (Matt. 13:14-16)

One of my favorite stories of Jesus' interactions with others is found in Luke 7. While having dinner in the home of a Pharisee, and probably lots of other important people, a woman, identified only as "a sinner," begins anointing Jesus' feet with oil and her tears, drying them with her hair, and commences kissing them. Scandalous! "If this man (Jesus) were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner," (vs39) the Pharisee and his companions said. But Jesus turned towards the woman, looked at Simon and asked, "Do you see this woman?" Of course he did. They all did! But they didn't really see HER, they only saw what they thought she was, but not who she was. Jesus invited them on a path from perception to perspective.

We all see the world through our own perception, but Jesus invites us to follow him on the kingdom road to perspective, where the law of Christ is fulfilled: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

I invite you to join me every Sunday beginning February 22nd, for a Lenten journey on the road from self-perception to kingdom-perspective.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8:30am Worship 9:30am Pathway to Faith 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Sunday School 11am Worship 6pm Youth Group 7pm Wesley Foundation	2 1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Choral Society Prac.	3 11am SUAA Luncheon 7pm Christian Education	4 12pm Prayer Circle 5pm Praise Kids 6pm Men's Bible Study 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7pm Praise Band	5 7pm Choir Practice	6 7am Men's Coffee HyVee 12pm Office Closes Noon	7 8:15am Men's Breakfast
8 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Sunday School 11am Worship 12pm Nursery Training 5pm Youth Group 7pm Wesley Foundation	9 10am Sit & Sew 1pm Staff Meeting 7pm Choral Society Prac.	10 11am SUAA Luncheon (Snow Date) 2pm Prayer Shawl Meeting	11 12pm Prayer Circle 5pm Praise Kids 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7pm Praise Band	12 7pm Choir Practice	13 7am Men's Coffee HyVee 12pm Office Closes Noon	14 Valentine's Day
15 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Sunday School 11am Worship 12pm Mardi Gras Pot Luck 6:30pm Youth Group 7pm Wesley Foundation	16 Office Closed 1pm Staff Meeting 3pm Social Concerns 7pm Choral Society Prac. Presidents' Day	17 4pm Missions Committee 5:30pm Finance Comm.	18 12pm Prayer Circle 3pm Nurture Committee 5pm Praise Kids 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service Ash Wednesday	19 5pm DayCare Board 7pm Choir Practice 7pm Habitat for Humanity	20 7am Men's Coffee HyVee 12pm Office Closes Noon	21
22 8:30am Worship 9:30am Coffee Fellowship 9:45am Sunday School 11am Worship 6pm Youth Group 7pm Wesley Foundation	23 1pm Staff Meeting 5:30pm Staff Parish 7pm Choral Society Prac. 7pm Trustees Committee	24 5pm Witness, Hosp. & Communications 6:30pm Church Council	25 12pm Prayer Circle 5pm Praise Kids 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7pm Praise Band	26 7pm Choir Practice	27 7am Men's Coffee HyVee 12pm Office Closes Noon	28 11am Ruth Dove Memorial

DATE	TIME	USHERS	GREETERS (Downstairs)	WELCOME (Upstairs)
Feb 1	8:30am	Lois Bigham & Beth Shryock	Merritt Family	Genie Marshall
Feb 1	11am	Michele Long & Dana Walker	Param & Abha Singh	Dave & Marilyn Eck
Feb 8	8:30am	Bonnie Barker & Wayne Steward	Kessiena Erebi	Laurie Black
Feb 8	11am	Dale Hample & Michele Long	Ben & Kim Lampitt	Jan Armstrong
Feb 15	8:30am	Dennis Danowski & Marlin France	Steve & Janet Hopper	Marilyn Hopper
Feb 15	11am	Sharon Evans & Scott Smith	Kim Smith	Louis Reynolds
Feb 22	8:30am	Jerry Lieber & Beth Shryock		Ginny Kessler
Feb 22	11am	Dale Hample & Janice Monninger	Jon & JoAnn (Hairston) Jones	Sharon Evans



Dennis says you should join us on February 15th at Noon for the Mardi Gras Church Potluck. Take-out will be available by order.





YOUTH GROUP LOCK-IN ▲

Our recent youth group lock-in was a fantastic night of fun and fellowship, with eight students and seven adults coming together for an all-night adventure! The evening was filled with food, laughter and energy as we played Gotcha, table games, charades, and even held a crowd-favorite lip sync battle. As the night turned into early morning, the pace slowed with quiet time and watching movies together, giving everyone a chance to relax and reflect. We wrapped up the night at sunrise, grateful for the connection and community and already looking forward to the next lock-in!

sarah clemente



FOUNDATION FIXES

paul newhall, director

Spring semester is getting ready to start and the Foundation is gearing up for a busy and exciting time. We had a good work day with four students and some volunteers and were able to get some painting done, cleaned and straightened the kitchen and food pantry, and got all the knobs and handles put on the cabinets in the kitchen. We have some other projects coming up that will continue to make our building more inviting and accessible.

We've been applying for some grants to help pay for some bathroom upgrades. We'll be replacing all the vanities and updating some of the other parts of each one. The current vanities are from when the building was built in the 70's and we need to look a little more current. The grant will cover the cost of the vanities, but if you'd like to donate towards the paint and other fixtures it would be appreciated.

We continue to serve meals twice a week and generally average feeding 25-40 students weekly. Victory Baptist Church

just provided a meal for us and we have a number of other churches and individuals that cook for us.

We're updating our food pantry and have been told by our students that they'd like more dried beans, jasmine rice, canned meat, pasta, and these types of food items. 10-16 oz. packages seem to be the best size. We also find that personal items - toothpaste, toothbrushes, deoderant, and things like this seem to go well. Cereal, food bars, mac/cheese don't seem to get taken.

Finally, I know that it's the season when many of you are thinking about what to do with your Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's) We have received a number of these and these gifts are extremely helpful in funding our programs and ministries. You can make these donations directly to us or through Wesley Church (please make sure they're marked for us).

We want to say a big thank you to Wesley Church for your support. We couldn't reach the number of students we do without YOU.



SAVE THE DATE

Vacation Bible School is coming July 20-24, and this summer we're heading to Snowball Mountain Challenge!

Kids will embark on an exciting, adventure-filled week discovering what it means to Find Strength in God—through faith, fun, music, games, stories, and hands-on activities designed to help them grow strong inside and out.

Whether climbing life's challenges or learning to trust God in new ways, Snowball Mountain Challenge reminds us that God is our source of strength—no matter the season.

More details and registration coming later—mark your calendars and get ready for an unforgettable week!

MISSION OF THE MONTH:



HOLY CURRENCIES WORKSHOP

WUMC was honored to recently host a ministry workshop welcoming **around 80 pastors and church leaders** from the West District and beyond. The workshop was produced by the Kaleidoscope Institute and led by Rev. Julie Boleyn, an ELCA Lutheran pastor and the Institute's Executive Director. Rev. Boleyn previously served at Unity Lutheran Church in Berwyn, Illinois (2011–2021).

The gathering focused on reimagining sustainability in ministry by moving beyond financial survival and recognizing the many “currencies” already present in our communities—relationships, truth, wellness, time and place, gracious leadership, and money. Through shared conversation and practical tools, participants explored ways to map church assets, deepen community engagement, and prepare for future models of ministry rooted in collaboration and well-being.

We are grateful to be a place where leaders can gather, learn, and continue building the Beloved Community together.



get to know our wonderful

NURSERY STAFF

Hannah Hawkins is a freshman Psychology major at WIU, where she is a member of the Marching Leathernecks Color Guard, the Concert Choir, and the Psychology Club. Hannah works at the Macomb Public Library and loves reading in her free time. This is Hannah's fifth year working in the WUMC Nursery.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Social Concerns Committee

Unfortunately weather canceled our Christmas caroling in December. But the committee hopes the weather will cooperate next Christmas. Thank you to all who signed up and all who offered to make soup. Blessing bags will be distributed to residents at Countryside Care Center in April. We will once again need the congregation's help with the contents. More details soon. The Social Concerns Committee appreciates the congregation's support of all of activities.

sharon evans

Faith-Based Creation Care Committee

The Faith-Based Creation Care Committee has been active for almost two years, and we wanted to share an update on our work and accomplishments.

The committee now includes 15 active members from six churches in Macomb. Together, we focus on caring for God's creation through learning, sharing, and practical action.

What We Do

Write short environmental education articles for church newsletters that focus on

“little things you can do” to care for creation.

Learn together by having members present topics at each meeting, such as composting and plastic pollution.

Share resources and ideas from our churches related to creation care and environmental justice.

Provide information on recycling and other environmentally responsible practices through church newsletters and other media.

Our Mission

Our mission is to work together to examine, educate, and put faith-based creation care into action within our faith communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve as leaders in caring for God's creation. Darlos Mummert and Mary Gillingham represent Wesley UMC on this committee.

How You Can Help

You may have noticed a collection tote in the Narthex for empty plastic prescription bottles. Instead of sending these bottles to the landfill, they are donated to Matthew 25, where they will be reused in other countries. Thank you for supporting this effort!

mary gillingham