



CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Weekly Newsletter

April 6, 2021

Sunday, April 11th @ 10:30am: Holy Humor Sunday! Pastor Jack's message is "Holy Cheer! Christ is Here."

Sunday, April 18th @ 10:30am: Native American Ministries Sunday. Pastor Jack's message is "Just Imagine."

From your computer or smartphone, watch at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/live or at facebook.com/waterfordcumc/events.

Dear Central Church Family,

As I mentioned in the message from Easter Sunday, we are called to love. In the words of the Queen song, we are called to "find somebody to love." It's a call that God gives to us in response to love bursting from the tomb that first Easter morning 20 centuries ago. The thing we have to remember is that Easter is a season, not a day; and the resurrection is a lifestyle, not a one-time event.

It is our task during these days after Easter to continue to ask the question, "What would we do in order to honor Christ for what He has done for us?" Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) If we want to honor Jesus, we should keep his commandments. Was Jesus talking about the Ten Commandments? Was he speaking about the 613 religious laws and codes of conduct of his day? Were those his "commandments?"

It seems to me that Jesus made it clear that "his commandments" were quite simple. The very nature of God is love. First John 4:8 tells us, "Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." Love is at the core of Jesus' ministry. We are told to love one another (John 15:12), love our enemies (Luke 6:27) and Jesus told us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27) Jesus, in teaching us to love said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:12-13) As it turned out, that's exactly what Jesus ended up doing; he laid down his life for his friends. I mean, Jesus was all about love; he was just going around constantly asking "can anybody find me somebody to love?"

I had a lot of fun connecting the resurrection story of Jesus with Queen's song, *Somebody to Love*, this past Easter Sunday. I hope you had some fun also. This next week will be our fourth annual Holy Humor Sunday—we're going to talk about the cross being foolishness to those who do not know the wholeness that comes from following Jesus. It will be a light-hearted worship experience as we seek to poke fun at death and celebrate the resurrection life Christ gives to each of us! I look forward to being with you in worship. Be safe friends. Continue to wear your mask, wash your hands and watch your distance.

Because of Christ,
-Pastor Jack

Save the Date!

Thanks so much for giving feedback about our Creating a Culture of Calling program (C3). There is still another great opportunity to engage with C3—a virtual conference on Thursday, April 29th from 7pm–9:30pm. "A Calling Spirituality: Following God into new Callings" is a time to reflect on where God is calling you in your life and hear from Rick Steves. Rick Steves is a travel guidebook author, TV and radio show host, and Lutheran. Rick's callings to travel changed dramatically as the pandemic shut down the globe. Come hear Rick's reflections about calling and reflect on your own. More information for connecting with the event will be provided in future newsletters and in our Facebook Group.

Central's 2021 Missional Initiatives

A few weeks ago you learned about Central's upcoming 2021 initiatives. There are still opportunities to grow in your faith by participating on one of these committees. To recap, these initiatives are:

- Engaging with Remote Worshipers
- Expanding Central's Congregational Care System
- Expanding Central's Hunger Ministries
- LGBTQ+ Inclusiveness

If you'd like to get involved, please contact the church office via email or phone at (248) 681-0040 or indicate your interest on the online connection card you fill out after Sunday worship. You can also learn more about each of these initiatives and indicate your interest by visiting our website at WaterfordCUMC.org/centrals-2021-missional-initiatives/.

Z-Chat with Your Central Friends

Bob Swartz is leading Zoom fellowship sessions on Thursday evenings at 7pm. Nothing is required for these sessions; just a chance to check in with your church friends. [Email Bob \(racerbob@comcast.net\)](mailto:racerbob@comcast.net) for the Zoom link if you'd like to participate.

Scholarship Applications are Available

Scholarships applications for high school, college, and skilled trade students can now be accessed on our church website at WaterfordCUMC.org/forms/. The application deadline is May 3, 2021. These scholarships help Central Church members reduce the financial burdens of their continued education and are funded by memorial gifts and generous members. If you would like to establish a continuing education scholarship in your name, please contact the church office at info@waterfordcumc.org or (248) 681-0040.

Camp Scholarship Applications are Available

Because of the past generosity of this congregation and the cancellation of the 2020 summer camping season, we do not need to take a special camp offering this year. To apply for a scholarship to attend camp during the 2021 season, please complete the form found at WaterfordCUMC.org/forms/.

Song of the Week

I hope this week finds you both in good health and spirits as well as reflective over all the lessons we can learn in our reflection and celebration of Holy Week. The events of the week from celebration to persecution to willing sacrifice to joyful resurrection are a special invitation as we are often invited to imagine our role during this week. Were we the disciples, the soldiers, the Pharisees, or one of the throng who loved Him early in the week and persecuted Him by Good Friday? Very few of us will admit to ourselves that we could've been any one of those, but perhaps most likely in the throng of people. As we are brought to empathize with Jesus as He walks the path of Holy Week, so we can use this example as a means of empathy for any who are persecuted and with work, find our place among the faithful rather than the throng.

This week, I wanted to continue on the topic of Asian-American awareness. It is too large of a topic for one Song of the Week, and I only hope I can do some justice to the topic by dedicating two of them. I addressed stereotypes last week, but what I left out was one of our biggest failings as a nation, the internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during WWII. This is a moment where we failed because of the most common reason for failing to be empathetic and just...because of fear. Fear is such a powerful motivator to each of us at an instinctual level that it is often a source of clouded judgment throughout our lives, without our even realizing it. Advertisers and politicians know how to capitalize on this to motivate us to buy products, get our vote, or to support policies. And it works because if someone can tap into our fears, we cannot fully engage our rational brain in decision-making. In the worst hands, this is a technique that can lead a normally caring individual to advocate for reprehensible actions. We saw it in Germany under the Nazi regime, but we in America were never immune to it either, and lived out this fear in WWII by rounding up families, some of whom had been in America for generations, and sending them to internment camps while turning a blind eye as many of them lost their property and businesses as a direct result of our actions. But when we give into fear it harms us as well. It takes courage to look fear in the face and find compassion, but that is what we must do if we want a better world, a more perfect union, and to be able to advocate for our best policies and security in the midst of a crisis. Because there are always those who use fear to take advantage of a group, and it was no different in 1942.

In order to understand this aspect, we must first acknowledge that though the stereotype taught otherwise, the Japanese farmers that came to California brought specialized skills (much like Latinos today) derived from farming on an island where space is in short supply. As a result, their farming skills helped them to overcome policy and pricing

roadblocks to become independent owners who supplied almost 10% of America's crops. Their efficiency and hard work grew the value of their farms to \$280/acre as compared to the average rate at the time of \$38/acre. And before the call for internment, the Japanese farmers were expected to supply 40% of crops needed for the war effort. But then Pearl Harbor happened, and within hours of the bombing, Austin Anson, a Californian farmer and head of the Salinas Vegetable Grower-Shipper Association was on a plane to Washington where he spun tales of Japanese-American sabotage and urged the federal government to remove anyone of Japanese descent to internment camps. But his intentions were opportunistic rather than genuine, and he is quoted as telling the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1942, "We're charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do. It's a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown men. They came into this valley to work and they stayed to take over." He saw an opportunity to utilize a nation's fear for his own gain and advocated to persecute a whole population to get it done. And it was allowed to happen...why? Because not enough men and women of conscience spoke up to say that it was wrong. At the time, I'm sure many people thought it was the right thing to do and that it made us safer. But did it? Remember, they were expected to produce 40% of the crops for the war effort. Remember the stories of Victory Gardens? In my white family, they were talked about with pride. I have a lot of farmers in my extended family, and they all felt a lot of pride and patriotism on how well they grew crops to feed themselves, help families in their own towns, and give advice about how each of us who lived in the suburbs could better farm the plots of land we had. My family was all in on Victory Gardens, and I grew up hearing about it. But they were really a response by a government who now realized that locking up a large portion of our most effective farmers made us less secure in the war effort and as a nation. We had to find a way to soldier through when one of America's greatest strengths was cut abruptly because of the fear of its own people.

This is just one of the great contributions of Japanese-Americans, and just one reason why giving into any fear of people diminishes our capacity to be great, be kind, and to live out the promise that Easter brings. We can look back on this episode of history and think that it is far away, but there are many who are still living who spent time in those camps, perhaps the most notable being George Takei who played Sulu on the original Star Trek. It is closer than we think and we are seeing a continuation of that persecution playing out before our eyes. As we are brought into Jesus' story of being both celebrated and persecuted, let us see Him in each other person in our nation and our world. We know what's right and what's wrong in how to treat people, and I know each of us would rather picture ourselves a disciple than a member of the mob. Be kind in all you do, whether at church, around town, or in the policies you advocate. We should never again allow a population to be persecuted if we are to fulfill the promise that we are brought through Jesus.

[Maihime - Shinobue Sato \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R24BT9S1hGE\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R24BT9S1hGE)

With Love,
-Kevin

Connect with Central

Central's Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/waterfordcumc>. Find the upcoming live stream worship service and recordings of previous services, faith development videos and daily inspirations.

Central's YouTube Channel - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn5n6YzaUUu9lqei6z-bg_g. Find recordings of past services, choral and dance recordings, Pastor Jack's weekly devotionals and more.

Central's Facebook Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/waterfordcumc/>. A private group that allows members to support one another with posts and inspiration.

Central's Website - <https://www.WaterfordCUMC.org>. Find recordings of sermons, upcoming events, the latest COVID re-opening plan, Central's member directory (login code CUM51) and the worship attendance form.

There will not be a newsletter next week, April 12th. Watch for the next issue on April 19th.