

Friday Letter April 19, 2024

Good Friday Friends,

Yesterday we were in the mid 80's, and today my phone says our high will be 63. Only in Missouri! And I do love Missouri! I pray you all are having a great week getting your gardens ready, enjoying the spring air and getting closer to God every day.



I'm excited our Zoom Gathering is just a week from tomorrow! April 27th at 9:00 a.m. from the comfort of your home or wherever you can join us. Remember if you don't have access to the internet, you can call in. We will check in with each other, talk about the coming events, and have a heartfelt Bible Study from the Just Women, the first one of the 2024 with our own Judi Linville at the helm. Judi has a way of opening the doors of our minds to the scriptures, and the questions, and the stories we read.

This time is our first study from the new 2024 Just Women Study. If you don't have one read the scriptures, read the questions, and you can join the conversation.

Embracing Life, Through the Looking Glass; seeing the world through the eyes of faith! Our first study comes from Sandyha Jha, the scripture references are from Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5 and Leviticus 19:18. Her questions to ponder:

1. Who is the biblical ancestor who tried to engage people different from them in a loving way? If you could ask them questions, what would they be? What might be their responses to those questions.
2. Who in the community is different from you, who don't know well, who have you had conflict with? Who from the Bible might be able to relate to your situation and what might their advice be?
3. Activist Grace Lee Boggs of Detroit talked about " putting the neighbor back in the hood. " Thinking about that last story, are there any small acts that could help you connect more deeply with your own neighbors so you're all in a relationship with each other?

An Old Friend, David Stotts, shared with me what is happening in Monett.

“At 1st C.C. here in Monett we have started an exercise ministry. Fitness Faith and Fellowship. We have started this to get the more mature among us to get fit and improve "our" Lord's Temple! So many are allowing the Lord to live in a shack rather than a temple. Very gentle exercise 30 minutes 2x a week, followed by a devotional, and then a light but healthy lunch. 10:30 to 12 noon on the average

We have reached out to several outside the congregation, and some have experienced a great deal of improvement. One has put away the walker. Another has been able to do their shopping pushing a shopping

cart rather than riding one. Another has regained a good deal of balance. What better way to reach out into the neighborhood than to help folks maintain or regain mobility in their lives while sharing the Gospel and your faith?"

Doing something in your church you'd like to share? Let me know, let Susan know. We can all benefit from each other's knowledge and experience.

From the Weekly Update:

Threads of Joy Recap

Our Threads of Joy events were an enriching experience! Groups gathered across the Region at our churches in Dexter, Mexico, Bolivar, and Gallatin. Participants shared information about those of their ministries that are life-giving and making an impact in our communities. We identified our greatest challenges and then began to collaborate towards a first step of action. We worshipped together, and ended our time with communion. We will gather again in St. Joseph for lunch on the Friday of our Regional Assembly (August 9) with more updated information about our Rural Ministry Network. Thanks to all who hosted and participated in these events!

Olivet CC Celebrates 150 Years

Olivet Christian Church in Columbia is celebrating its 150 years of ministry with various events throughout the year. This Saturday the 20th from 10am to 1pm is a Community Carnival and all are invited! The day will include games, train rides, a bouncy slide, prizes, and more! This is a free event and will be held rain or shine.

Three Webinars for Thriving Together

Thriving Together is workshop series for congregations that is made possible by the Lilly Foundation at Lexington Theological Seminary. Coming up on April 20, April 27, and May 4 are Encountering Whiteness (led by OGMP's Rev. Dr. April Johnson), Understanding Whiteness, and Dismantling Whiteness respectively. All are free but registration is required. This is an excellent continuing education opportunity.

50 Years of Hiking Against Hunger

Congratulations to Memorial Boulevard Christian Church in St. Louis as they hold their 50th Annual Hike Against Hunger on April 27.

Over the years 904 individual hikers have walked 31,712 miles, raising more than \$550,000 for projects in 30 different countries around the world!

Camp registration is open so choose your program(s) and get signed up!

Regional Assembly in St. Joseph August 8-10 will be coming soon. Be sure to save the date!

Camp scholarships are available. Applications are due May 15.

News From the Farm:

A while back we had our fields seeded and fertilized and the leftovers we had spread on our front field and everything we could see from our front porch. So, needless to say we can almost see the grass growing! A continuous job for the mowers. And we can view the grass even better from our newly finished addition.

We have been so excited; we had the last side of our wrap around porch completed this last week. It has been in the works for a little over 20 years. When we first built our home, our loan was for a certain amount, and we ran out of money when it came to finishing the wraparound porch. So, we are thrilled with the completed porch that we can enjoy.

Yes, 20 years is a long time to wait, isn't it? I remember my grandmother telling me to have patience. I guess as a child, I lacked that gift. But standing outside looking at this completed work I'm reminded of the words, "good things come to those who wait".

We are reminded in the book of James that good things come to those who wait. When we wait on, or for something, maybe we place a higher value on the outcome, maybe this makes us more patient, reminding us, every good gift comes from above. We're often told to be careful when we pray for patience, because God will help us learn patience.

Have a beautiful, joyful, week of spring!

Blessings,
Pastor Jennifer

Jennifer Long is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Disciples Women

Time: Apr 27, 2024 09:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85103457025?pwd=cE9jT2JzWEJ0MUZRUXQ0ZFdkcVgrUT09>

Meeting ID: 851 0345 7025

Passcode: 859436

Dial by your location

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kd8tPzkIro>

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Micah 6:8 Message: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor,
be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously— take God seriously.
C.S. Lewis : "Believe in God like you believe in the sunrise. Not because you can see it, but because you can see all it touches."