
The Joyful Noise

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This month I want to talk about something near and dear to my heart. And that is: how we ought to treat one another. What I have to say applies not just to “church people.” It really applies to how any person ought to treat any other person. However, it should especially apply to those who claim to be followers of Christ, because Christ called people to an even higher standard of living and loving than was the “norm.”

Specifically, I'd like to talk about two things: one has to do with the things we say, and the other has to do with who is the right person to say something to. What I have to say is pretty common-sense stuff, we probably all already know it. But, because we are human, it's easy to forget. So I think it is good to have a reminder once in a while.

So – the things we say: they have a lot of power. Words can heal, and words can hurt. It's so easy to say things without thinking. Whether or not they are our own opinions or thoughts, or we are repeating something someone else has said, it is so easy to talk first and think later. It seems to just be human nature, and I'm as guilty of this as the next person. The Biblical writer, James talks about how difficult it is to “tame” the tongue. He writes in James 3:7-8

For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. Now, saying the tongue is “Full of deadly poison” might sound a little extreme to us. But we can certainly do damage with the things we say, even if that was not our intention at all, especially if what we say gets picked up and repeated and sometimes changed or added to until it has taken on a life of its own.

I started by saying this is something near and dear to my heart. That's because I've experienced this myself lately. Something I said months ago was reported back to me because I was being criticized for having said it. I was quite surprised, because what I actually said and what was being *said* that I said were very different. But that's what often happens when people start repeating something they hear. It's like the old game of Telephone where you sit in a circle and one person whispers something to their neighbor, and it gets passed around the circle until it comes back around. It nearly always comes back almost completely different than it started. I made up a completely unrelated scenario than the actual one, but here is an illustration of how this kind of thing happens:

Suppose, at a church soup supper, I've just eaten a bowl of Chili, which Lady A made. It is delicious, but since it has green pepper in it, and green peppers and I don't get along well, I've left them at the bottom of the bowl. The person next to me says, “Isn't Lady A a great cook?” And I say, “Yes, the chili was delicious!” And then, instead of just leaving it at that, because I'm wondering if the person talking to me has noticed that I didn't eat it all and I feel I need to justify why, I add, “But green peppers don't agree with me very well.” Now, why what I think of Lady A's chili would need to be a topic of discussion throughout the church and larger community I don't know, but for some reason, the person I made the comment to repeats it to someone else. Only instead of saying, “Pastor thought Lady A's chili was delicious but she left the green peppers because she doesn't care for them.” She says. “Pastor didn't like the green peppers in Lady A's chili.” Which gets repeated as “Pastor didn't like Lady A's chili.” And so on, until months later, I find out that I am being criticized because I said, “Lady A is a terrible cook.”

As I said, this is a completely made-up scenario, but it is the kind of thing that happens, and probably the final outcome is that not only is everyone mad at me for having said such an unkind thing, but now Lady A is so offended that everyone thinks she's a bad cook that she might leave the church. At the very least, she's not volunteering to cook anything again. Ever.

We need to think before we speak. Even though what I originally said was not unkind, it had the potential to be taken that way, especially when repeated and reinterpreted numerous times. The 1st rule should be to follow the old adage, “If you can't say something good, don't say anything at all.” And, the 2nd rule should be, if someone forgets to follow the 1st rule, don't make things worse by repeating (and perhaps reinterpreting) what they said. You can stop it by letting what was said die instead of giving it a life of its own by sending it on. Scripture calls us to treat each other with kindness: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one

another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.” (Eph.4:32) “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12) Being the source of, or the perpetuation of something unkind is not who we are to be, either as just ordinary “nice” people, or as followers of Christ.

There are some good reminders for us out there. One is the often quoted statement:

“If you propose to speak always ask yourself, is it **true**, is it **necessary**, is it **kind**.”

I looked into the history of this quote, and it has been attributed to everyone from Buddha to Socrates. Bottom line is, it’s been around a while, and it is wise advice. For those of you who like poetry, the question was also expanded and put into a poem long ago:

“Is It True? Is It Necessary? Is It Kind?”

by Mary Ann Pietzer, published in 1872

Oh! Stay, dear child, one moment stay,
Before a word you speak,
That can do harm in any way
To the poor, or to the weak;
And never say of any one
What you’d not have said of you,
Ere you ask yourself the question,
“Is the accusation true?”
And if ’tis true, for I suppose
You would not tell a lie;
Before the failings you expose
Of friend or enemy:
Yet even then be careful, very;
Pause and your words well weigh,
And ask if it be necessary,
What you’re about to say.

And should it necessary be,
At least you deem it so,
Yet speak not unadvisedly
Of friend or even foe,
Till in your secret soul you seek
For some excuse to find;
And ere the thoughtless word you speak,
Ask yourself, “Is it kind?”
When you have ask’d these questions three—
True,—Necessary,—Kind,—
Ask’d them in all sincerity,
I think that you will find,
It is not hardship to obey
The command of our Blessed Lord,—
No ill of any man to say;
No, not a single word.

For those of you who prefer acronyms, the original question has been expanded and put into the acronym “THINK” to give us questions to think about before we speak. Whatever reminder is helpful, we need to use it; to think before we speak, either our original thoughts or repeating what we heard someone else say.

Finally, on who is the right person to say something to: I’m thinking specifically about when people hurt us or fail us or for some reason we have a complaint against someone. (Either for something they said or did, or something that they should have said or done, but failed to.) Who is the right person to say something to? The person you have a complaint against. One on one. Person to person. Jesus himself gave instructions on this. In Matthew 18:15a he says;

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone.”

“The Message” version of the Bible puts it more directly:

“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you.”

This is the biblical advice, so it has to do with life within the church, but the same should hold true of all our relationships, not just those within the church. If you have a problem with someone, go to them directly. Talk it out in honest, direct conversation. Jesus goes on to tell what the next step should be if the person refuses to listen to you or the situation isn’t resolved; you then bring another person into the conversation. But you don’t start there. You don’t tell a third party about what someone has done or failed to do without first going directly to the person and talking to them about it.

Again, I’ve experienced this first hand as your pastor. I am human. Sometimes I forget things. Sometimes I don’t get everything done that I should. I sometimes make mistakes. I sometimes don’t know every need. If I have failed, hurt or offended you in some way, then come to me and let me know. Talk to me. Don’t go to someone else and tell them how I’ve failed or offended you, come to me. One example: a month or 2 ago someone told me that they heard that someone in town was unhappy with me because I failed to provide pastoral care when they had been dealing with a health crisis. First of all, I didn’t know the person was connected to our church. Secondly, I had no idea the person was having any kind of health problems. It would have been far more helpful (to both of us) if they had talked to me directly about the issue instead of telling others about it.

Whether you are dealing with me as your pastor or someone else as a friend or family member or neighbor or acquaintance, talking *about* the person who has offended you with someone else isn’t nearly as effective in resolving the issue as talking *directly to* that person. In the second place, it goes back to treating one another with kindness. It isn’t kind to be talking to others about an issue that you have not first tried to resolve by talking directly to the person involved. The problem is, it takes more courage to talk directly to the person you’ve been

Before you speak:

THINK

- T – Is it true?
- H – Is it helpful?
- I – Is it inspiring?
- N – Is it necessary?
- K – Is it kind?

hurt, neglected or offended by. What if it is a difficult conversation? What if the other person gets offended by what you have to say? Well, that's possible. But it is just as likely that the other person doesn't even know what they've done and would really appreciate having a conversation about it so the issue can be resolved.

Again, just like all of you, I'm human, I don't always think before I speak, even though I know I should. I don't always go directly to the person I have a problem with, even though I know I should. I sometimes forget to "practice what I preach." So, I'm reminding myself, along with all of you, what we are ALL called to be and do as followers of Christ. We're called to be kind, to be honest, to "Speak the truth in love" as they say. In short, we're called to relate to people as Jesus would. Not an easy task for us mortals, but one we all need to be working on. After all, if we as "church people," as those who proclaim Christ, can't learn to do it, what hope do we have for the rest of the world?

Pastor Kathy

PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED

If you have recently moved, changed your mailing address, your **email address**, phone number, **or are only using cell phones**, please contact the church office with the current information. **Thank you!**



If you would like to be included in the **Weekly Prayer Partner EMAIL** which includes scripture readings, prayer requests, birthdays, and weekly reminders, please email or call the church; especially if you have not received these lately. If you have email, but do not receive information from the church this way, please give your email address to the office. We may not have it, and it's important that we do going forward so you can stay updated. Thank you.

HOSPITALIZED

Please contact the church office or Pastor Kathy if you know a member has been admitted to the hospital. With the new privacy laws being strictly enforced there are many times we are unaware of hospitalizations. We would rather get ten calls than none at all. Thank you. **Prayer concerns** can be called into the office (472-2324) or emailed to the office at rockrapidsumc@premieronline.net or Pastor Kathy at kathysides@hotmail.com and they will be sent out.



Praise God~

- ☺ Emily Sides- Adoption Day 16 years ago (Jan. 13th)
- ☺ People who bear one another's burdens.



Prayers~

- ✂ Continued prayers for Dave & Barb Fegan.
- ✂ Helen Boeve caring for husband Henry at home.
- ✂ Prayers for Dick Johnson- father of Pam Attig- had a stroke and is in a rehab center in Bloomington, MN
- ✂ Our Country-wisdom for leaders in DC
- ✂ Family of Duane Larson-Pastor of Spirit Lake who passed away suddenly.
- ✂ Barb Middle- praise for successful surgery & prayers for continuing recovery.
- ✂ Greyson Austin- bowel obstruction surgery- recovering
- ✂ All the kids sick with RSV
- ✂ Daxton DeGroot- at Omaha Children's Hospital
- ✂ Dave Kwikkel- cancer treatment
- ✂ Jen Elbert- recovering from fall
- ✂ Bonnie Netjes- surgery at Mayo
- ✂ Nephew's family
- ✂ Marlys Brown



February Birthdays & Anniversaries

01~ Dan Dean	11~ Quintin Sprock	22~ Marvin Peterson
02~ Pam Attig	16~ Judy Griesse	23~ Sean Van Berkum
03~ Renee Hasche	16~ Martina Peterson	25~ Colleen Wall
04~ Greg Stubbe	17~ Polly McDonald	26~ Nathan Herman
05~ Mitchell Broesder	17~ Margaret Shurr	27~ Emily Sides
06~ Damarkus Borman	18~ Dean Schweitzer	28~ June Waagmeester
10~ Sarah Halse	19~ Ashley Schweitzer	29~ Dave & Kae Warren
10~ Brenda Vande Weerd	19~ Dan & Cindy Dean	

*We apologize for any omissions or incorrect information. Please contact the office with the correct/missing information. Thank you!

Reminders and Announcements



Community Bingo will be held the 1st Friday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Rock Rapids Health Centre. All are welcome.



A big thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and for the donations this month for the Meal Ministry.

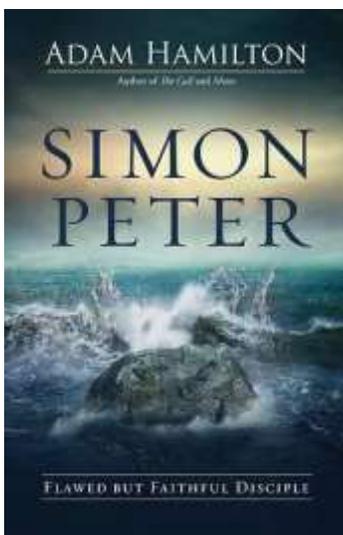
6-week Lenten Study Being Offered

Choose from Sunday Mornings or Wednesday evenings during Lent.

Wednesdays from 6:00-7:00 March 6th through April 10th

Sundays after worship from March 10th through April 14th

He



left everything to follow his teacher and possessed a passion that would change the world. That's one way to describe Peter. Here's another: poor, uneducated, quick-tempered, and full of doubts and fears. Doesn't even sound like the same man. And that's the point of *Simon Peter*, a six-week adult Bible study by Adam Hamilton. Peter was just an ordinary guy who heard and followed God's extraordinary call. Discover how you, too, have special gifts, talents, and abilities that God can use to make a difference today.

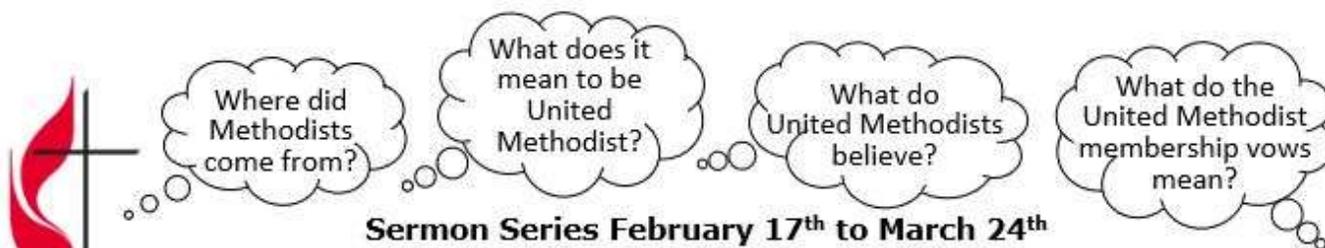
Chapters Include:

1. The Call of Simon the Fisherman
2. Walking with Jesus in the Storm
3. Bedrock or Stumbling Block?
4. "I Will Not Deny You"
5. From Cowardice to Courage
6. The Rest of the Story

Books are \$14.29 at Cokesbury. Please let Amber know by February 12th if you would like one ordered for you.



Reminder about giving to the United Methodist Women from UMW treasurer Judy Griesse:
For anyone who would like to pledge or give to the United Methodist Women, now is the time!



Sermon Series February 17th to March 24th

If you've ever asked yourself these or other questions about who we are and where we've come from as United Methodists, don't miss the 6-week sermon series on our history and beliefs. Whether you are new to our denomination or have been a Methodist all your life, you may learn something new about what it means to be called a United Methodist.



Join me Sunday, February 10th at 5:00 in the Church Library
for a time of information and conversation.

As some of you may already know, the United Methodist Church is holding a Special Session of General Conference February 23-26th. The Conference web site contains the following summary:

The Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church will be held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri where hundreds of delegates from around the world will gather to receive and act upon a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops. They will seek a way forward on the issues surrounding LGBTQ persons. The 32-member Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church.

The Iowa Annual Conference will be represented by elected Clergy and Lay delegates who will vote on a series of measures that hope to unite faithful United Methodist who differ on these issues, but agree on our mission as a denomination.

More information about the Special Session of the General Conference, including the final report from The Commission on a Way Forward and a summary of the three plans that have come out of the Commission's work can be found on our Conference website: www.iaumc.org

I would like to have the opportunity for interested persons to get together to have a time of informal conversation about the Special Session of the General Conference and the issues surrounding it. Please join me Sunday evening, February 10th. If you are not able to come at that time, I'd be glad to visit with anyone about it at a time convenient for you.

Pastor Kathy

**2018 ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
ROCK RAPIDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

November 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Members of Ad. Council: (Names of Absentees underlined)

Randy Waagmeester – chairperson; Al TeSlaa – Member at Large; Kim Waagmeester – Christian Education; Shawn Wibben- Treasurer; Rhonda Menning – Evangelism & Lay Member to Annual Conference, Evelyn Baldwin – Financial Secretary & Stewardship/Financial; Patty Halse – Lay Leader; Judy Griesse –Memorial Committee; Kelli Docker – Missions; Tom Vinson- S/PRC; Kim Waagmeester – SS Superintendent; Heather Heimensen- Youth and Finance/Stewardship; Lainn Menning – Trustees; Kathy Van Berkum – Worship; Kathy Sides – Pastor; Sonya Peterson- Communications

CALL TO ORDER / PRAYER

Randy called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Motion to approve: Evelyn Baldwin

2nd: Lainn Menning

OLD BUSINESS

Safe Sanctuary – Ask Jerry Birkey about the process of a background check for Sunday School teachers. Patty Halse made a motion to approve the Safe Sanctuary policy for 2018 with the provision to transfer their background check from their employer; second by Rhonda Menning.

REPORTS:

EDUCATION/Kim: Kim will distribute Safe Sanctuary policy. Christmas program December 9 at Sunday worship service.

THIRD AVENUE YOUTH UPDATE/Heather: Youth will be shopping for Operation Christmas Child.

THIRD AVENUE SQUARED UPDATE/Kathy: No report.

EVANGELISM & WORSHIP/Rhonda & Kathy: Increase bags of food from 50 to 60 bags in George; increase bags in Rock Rapids from 150 to 165 bags. Invitation to church is attached to bag. Matthew 25 Fund of \$1200.

Rhythm of Bethlehem – December 2 at 6:30 p.m. with Soup Super from 5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

One Way Up – December 9 at 6:30 p.m.

TREASURER/Shawn:

FINANCE SEC/Evelyn & Heather: working on Stewardship Campaign. Letters were sent out this week with estimate of giving cards to be collected on Sunday, November 18.

Endowment fund interest – \$616.00 to Missions, \$554.00 to Trustees and \$62.00 to Education.

Your Buck Starts Here donation – Olivia, James and Dean - \$370 from our church.

LAY LEADER/ Patty: New Mission Statement – Growing Disciples of Jesus Christ. Believing, Belonging, Becoming, Blessing. Randy Waagmeester made a motion to approve; Sonya Peterson seconded.

Committee Schedule to consider was distributed by Patty. Bring thoughts back to the Ad Board in December regarding monthly meetings.

MEMORIAL/Judy: Gifts – A gold framed picture of Christ was given to the church earlier this year by Harriet (Marra) Schemmel in memory of her parents, Bill and Anna Marra, former members of this church. This picture is currently hanging in the church office.

Two pictures painted by Kay Wall were given to the church by Tom and Colleen Wall when they moved to Waterloo. These paintings are hung in the Quilters Room.

Ask to note these gifts as memorials to the Memorial Committee. Mary Peterson will send a thank you to the Marra family and to Tom and Colleen Wall for these gifts with approval from the Ad Board.

Need to recognize these memorials during All Saints Sunday.

MISSION/Kelli: Will discuss Mission Trip. Last year for Rainbow Covenant in it's current form.

SPRC/Tom: Meeting scheduled on December 10 with Ron Carlson, District Superintendent.

TRUSTEES/Lainn: Trustees report has been updated for the Charge Conference.

PASTOR/Kathy/Amber: Communion at the care centers was served the first Sunday in November. It is being served whenever Pastor Kathy has the Sunday afternoon services, with Kathy Van Berkum assisting.

Peer Mentoring Group in Storm Lake. Visits at Premier Estates.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE/Sonya: Flyers for Rhythm of Bethlehem were sent to local churches by Amber. One Way Up Christmas Concert flyer will be sent out to congregation.

UMW: Met on Sunday, November 11. We had Thank Bank offering. All Circles gave their portion, which is sent into the conference. UMW will meet January 13, 2019.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ask for Lay Leader and Finance Committee Chair. Phone numbers should be updated for individuals on committees.

Ryan Christenson asked SPRC to complete survey for pastoral expectations.

Next Meeting - January 2, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.