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Methodist
Church
of Fort Lupton
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8.20.26

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Message

“A Time to Seek”

Rev. Lee
Anderson-Harris



Scripture: Matthew 7:7-8 (CEB)

7 “Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door is opened.



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH

NO HASSLE GIVING

Have your donations automatically come out of your bank account.

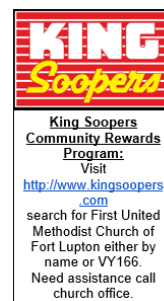
Contact Church Office or Church Treasurer for information



Safeway cards -available downstairs after worship



[DONATE TO THE CHURCH ONLINE.](#)



What's Happening

8.24.26 Monday 7:00 pm Ad Board Meeting

Wednesdays

9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study

**We now have a lock on the dumpster.
The code is 2011.**



Silent Auction: Brand-New Traeger Grill

A brand-new Ridgeline XL Traeger Grill (still in the box) has been generously donated to the church, and we will be offering it through a silent auction.

If you'd like a chance to bid on this item, signups a silent auction sheet will be located in the dining room following the worship service.

The last day to place a bid is 8.23.26.

All proceeds will go directly to our operational fund, which supports the day-to-day ministries of our church.

The poster features a vibrant tropical background with palm trees, a sunset over the ocean, and various Hawaiian-themed decorations like hibiscus flowers, a tiki mask, and a ukulele. The text is arranged in a central, eye-catching layout with different fonts and colors to emphasize the event details.

Aloha!

— YOU'RE INVITED TO A —

HAWAIIAN Luau

HONORING OUR AMAZING
CHURCH STAFF & VOLUNTEERS!

We are blessed by the many people who faithfully serve with love, time, and talent. Please join us as we say “*Mahalo*” (Thank You!) for all you do!



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

✿ Immediately Following
✿ the Worship Service

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL



Enjoy a delicious Hawaiian-inspired lunch, tropical decorations, fellowship, and an opportunity to express our *appreciation!*



Whether you are a staff member, volunteer, or simply want to come and show your appreciation,

✿ *everyone is invited!* ✿

Mahalo
FOR YOUR HEART
FOR HIS WORK!

Wear your favorite Hawaiian shirt or tropical attire if you'd like!

ALOHA,
FELLOWSHIP,
GOOD FOOD,
AND HEARTFELT
APPRECIATION
AWAIT!



Season for Everything: A Time to Mourn & Heal

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (CEB)

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! He is the compassionate Father and God of all comfort. ⁴ He's the one who comforts us in all our trouble so that we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble. We offer the same comfort that we ourselves received from God. ⁵ That is because we receive so much comfort through Christ in the same way that we share so many of Christ's sufferings. ⁶ So if we have trouble, it is to bring you comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is to bring you comfort from the experience of endurance while you go through the same sufferings that we also suffer. ⁷ Our hope for you is certain, because we know that as you are partners in suffering, so also you are partners in comfort.

We continue in this sermon series to look at our lives in terms of seasons, and you'll recognize some phrases from the well-known passage in Ecclesiastes in my sermon titles. In my sermon today I am going to name a few books. These are all books that have had an impact on me, and I would encourage anyone to pick them up. I have printed some handouts that have these book references, and you can pick them up. If we run out, and for those watching online, please email me or call the office and I will send you one.

A season that all of us wish we could avoid is loss. But living means loss. We all lose loved ones to death, and we ourselves die. And there are many more losses in life. We lose people to divorce, estrangement, mental illness, incarceration, addictions, dementia. Life cycles bring loss and change. And then there are the losses that are harder to name, what are sometimes called ambiguous loss. Loss of a dream. Loss of identity or way of life. Loss of dignity or independence. And there are miscarriages. Abandonment. Betrayal. Abuse. Loss of innocence when you realize the world is not what you thought or hoped it would be. This is a normal part of maturing into adulthood, but even as adults we are blindsided and confronted with ugly realities we'd rather not see. Sometimes these losses are named and recognized, and you know that you are grieving because of a loss you have experienced. But many losses go ungrieved, maybe even unnoticed. We know we must pick ourselves up and move forward. But parts of ourselves get left behind when we do this.

Author Stephen Levine speaks of the losses we accumulate in life, from the seemingly trivial to the overwhelming, in his book *Unattended Sorrow*. He writes of a chronic, low-level suffering that lies beneath the surface from unresolved grief. One of the chapters of the book is titled "Every day we lose something," and in it he writes, "Loss is the absence of something we were once attached to. Grief is the rope burns left behind, when that which is held is pulled beyond our grasp. I know very few people who are not grieving at some level. Feelings of loss don't go away; they go deeper" (p. 9). This is why I speak of the importance of taking time to grieve; of taking time to name even losses that seem trivial. Losses only seem trivial because we compare our experiences to others' and think "It could be much worse" or "I don't really have anything to be sad about." And that might be true. But at the same time, it is also okay to hurt, because that is part of being human. We feel what we feel.

Dr. Alan Wolfelt is a specialist in grief and loss who I have followed for a long time. In fact, he has a center in Fort Collins called Center for Loss and Life Transition. He has written many books on various topics of loss, and I encourage you to look up his center, where you can see the list of his books and order them, or find grief support. One of these books is called *Understanding Your Grief*, and in it he defines "healing" in terms of grief. He wrote, "To heal in grief is to become whole again, to integrate your grief into yourself and to learn to continue your life with fullness and meaning." So when I talk about healing, this is what I mean. Healing doesn't mean the grief, or memories, or the hurt, go away completely. When you have lost someone, you love, for instance, you will never forget them. When you have experienced trauma, there will always be times when you feel broken again. But healing means it gets better and you learn to continue your life with fullness and

meaning. Dr. Wolfelt writes about the Ten Touchstones of Grief. Touchstone One is "Open to the presence of your loss." This is the first step because it is key to healing. If we close ourselves off to the Loss and all that it brings with it, we close ourselves off to the healing. He wrote, "Your pain is the key that opens your heart and ushers you on your way to healing."

We live and breathe a culture of independence, and like in any culture, there are positives and negatives to this. Grief is seen as an independent experience. And this is true in some ways; first, we all grieve differently. Alan Wolfelt talks about the "grief print"; similar to a thumb print, no two experiences are exactly the same, even if the circumstances are the same. Furthermore, no one can carry our grief for us. The only way through is through, not around. We must carry our own burden. But we don't have to carry it alone. First, we have Jesus...God in flesh, who knows what it means to suffer and die, who knows what it means to grieve, and who is the only one who has the power to rise from death. With him, we can rise too from the sting that death leaves. And, we yoke ourselves to Jesus to help shoulder the burden. This doesn't take it away, but it lightens the load.

Second, we have community. Let's look at another of Paul's letters, from Galatians chapter 6. Verse 2 says "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." And then in verse 5, Paul writes, "For all must carry their own loads." Did he just contradict himself? No, he is talking about community, and that when one member suffers, all suffer. But each person must still go through what they are going through. No one can do it for you. And no one is exempt from suffering in life. But we fulfill the law of Christ by acting in love and joining people with their suffering. Like Jesus, we help lighten the load by bearing witness to the grief and pain. Being seen and feeling like you, matter is a basic human need. Grief and loss is compounded when we are alone in it.

Compassionate witnessing is a term that author Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger uses in her book *Bearing the Unbearable*. She writes about the importance of community as well as the importance of the gospel in healing from loss and trauma, because, to quote, "there is a great deal that human beings cannot bear alone" (p.32). She talks about interdependence, and wrote, "Thus, when we see another's need, we are to support him in a spirit of gentleness, not deceiving ourselves that we are better than others" (p.35). She is clear that not just anyone can provide the kind of compassionate witnessing that helps heal, rather than does more harm. When someone has experienced a wound, there is a risk in talking about it. People often hold back because of this. We can be trustworthy people by listening and holding space for the hurt, rather than offering platitudes or advice, or asking intrusive questions out of our own anxiety, or switching the focus to ourselves and our own stories. The emphasis is on witnessing...seeing, hearing, standing alongside someone. And it is true that not everyone is able to do this. But we still need others to get through the hard stuff in life. This is the blessing that a community, of some kind, provides.

It is also true that community can be the cause of suffering. After all, we are called to be the body of Christ, but we are all, each of us, both sinners and saints. We each hold both light and shadow. We do things to hurt people, often inadvertently, and it is usually through the power of words. Out of our own need and brokenness, we say something harsh, we criticize, we make people feel less-than. We gossip; we spread rumors and half-truths. And because we trust and love each other, the wounds can cut even deeper. It's important to remember that none of us sees the whole picture of someone's life. None of us sees what's on the inside of another person like God does, we don't even fully see what is inside ourselves. And none of us has the whole story. We see only glimpses. Flora Slosson Wuellner is retired clergy in the UCC who has written incredible books that focus on the inner healing that Christ offers, and she wrote a whole book on this topic called *Release: Healing from Wounds of Family, Church, and Community*. She teaches about both the gifts and the burdens of being in community, and one of the questions asked in the book is "Is it at all possible to love and share deeply with any community, without taking on its darkness, especially if we expect

to share its gifts?...The deepest shadows are thrown by the highest mountains. Communal bodies that lay upon us the heaviest burdens often confer the richest potential gifts upon us" (p. 38). In other words, yes there are hardships with being in community, but this is what we will experience in any community. The gifts are also there. And the only way to exempt yourself from the difficulties of being in relationship with other people is to avoid being in relationship, and this brings the heaviest burden of all.

Again, from *Bearing the Unbearable*, the author writes, "God alone can bear the sins of the world and not be destroyed by them. God alone can fully witness the horror and the terror of what human beings are capable of inflicting on one another....While God calls human witnesses to partake in this ministry, it is first and foremost God's ministry into which human beings are called to participate. It is God's Spirit who opens human hearts to hear and to respond to the suffering of others" (p.40). With God's help, we can be a community that brings healing and be "partners in comfort". But only with God's help. All of Paul's letters were written to communities of faith with his guidance on how to live as a community empowered by Christ. There is a reason for this: it is challenging. It does not come easy. We do it because it is so rewarding, but we will stumble. While we open ourselves to receive God's grace, we can also practice forgiving ourselves and forgiving one another for our shortcomings.

Let's return to our scripture for today, from Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth. Boy, these Corinthians must have really struggled. Paul reminds us that God is the compassionate and comforting father. And I want to pause here and say that it is okay to think of God as mother too. Both are true. God is bigger than all of our descriptions, and God is mother and father and more. So if you are in need of comfort and compassion, and it is hard to receive that from an image of a father, know that you are not alone in that, and leaning on a mother God might help.

So, Paul teaches, God is our compassionate comforter. And we receive our healing from God's Spirit, from Christ, so that we can then bring comfort to others. In this paragraph, we hear again that being in community means suffering with our siblings, but also giving and receiving comfort with our siblings. And this brings healing. A word of caution: we often want to bypass the receiving so that we can get to the giving. But we all must receive care and healing.

We have to enter our grief and sorrow. We cannot go around it, it only goes deeper. We have to take time to grieve, and open ourselves to Christ's healing touch so that we can heal, and become stronger. This is not just for our sake, but for the sake of others too. Wounded people whose wounds are still bleeding end up wounding more people. But those who have been wounded and heal, those with that tough scar tissue on the inside, can give compassionate witness like no other, am I right? There is a well-known quote from Ernest Hemingway that speaks well to this: "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places."

Here are some final quotes from *Bearing the Unbearable*: "God bears for us the full weight of both sin and death...We need not stand by helplessly witnessing the suffering and dying of those we love; we have a God to whom we can entrust them in life and death. For Jesus Christ is not simply a human companion who comforts us by suffering trauma alongside us...He alone bears the sin of the world, and he alone bears it away...On our behalf and for our sake, he takes human depravity into his own divine heart in order to transform it, so that it no longer has the power to separate us from God" (PPI 3-14). It is no accident that our God is one who suffered. We don't have a God who remains separate from humanity, who sits on a throne in the sky looking down on us and keeping his hands clean. No. We have a God who became incarnate in a suffering Jesus, and who keeps being incarnate, who keeps showing up in our messy and broken world and messy and broken lives. God enters our wounds in order to heal them. And God's Spirit enables us to be stronger together, for our sake and for the sake of the world. Praise be to God.

REVENGE: JUSTICE: FORGIVENESS

Marty McDermott

August 16, 2026

New Living Translation Matthew 5:38—48.

"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do.

REVENGE:

Revenge starts with that gut feeling of anger we get toward another person, when we or someone we care about has been wronged. We might think or talk about getting even. We might carry a grudge for years and often seek a way to "make things right." We have heard about people taking "the law in their own hands" often with disastrous results. This is how the "Wild West" is often characterized in folklore. Once the cycle of getting even starts there is often no peaceful resolution.

I remember when my brother and I would get into a spat over something trivial and one of us would hit the other.

"Now we are even," he would joyfully announce.

"No we are not," I would retort, "you hit me harder than I hit you."

So, I would hit him back, but just a little bit harder, for good measure. Then I would announce, "There, now we are even!"

And so we would hit back and forth and somehow could never agree on when we were even.

The idea of getting even can get carried away. There can be times when the feelings of anger and revenge are so overwhelming that we resort to actions that are unthinkable.

The scriptures are filled with such stories.

Remember the story of Cain killing his brother Abel out of jealousy?

Remember the story of Joseph being sold as a slave by his angry brothers?

Remember the story of Moses killing an Egyptian task master who was beating a fellow Israelite?

Read the headlines today. It is not much different: Road rage, endless law suits, gun violence and nations at war refusing to negotiate peace while hundreds and thousands of innocent people die.

I opened Microsoft Edge on Thursday the afternoon of 6th: As I scrolled down a few pages and here are some of the headlines I read.

1. Fight between Lobster Boats as man cuts off teen's air supply.
2. Colorado Couple Formally Charged in Road Rage
3. Man kills wife in front of 7-year-old daughter.
4. Florida man arrested after attacking his sleeping sister with a machete.

I wonder, "What is wrong with people who act this way?" "Where is there moral compass?"

If it were not for governments, which God has ordained, we would be like that ancient scripture that described the Israelites at one time: "In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes."

NLB Judges 21:25.

Revenge and violence is a terrible mechanism for achieving peace and productivity in a family, nation or society.

JUSTICE:

What is justice? I looked this up on the internet. Here's what I found:

"Justice is the moral and philosophical idea of fairness, equality, and right behavior. It means treating people in a way that is right and fair according to the law and moral rules."

Moses received a law directly from the hand of God that was designed to accomplish this very thing. People who had conflicts with each other were governed by what the law said. Judges would apply the law to determine what was fair and right.

The law said for example:

"Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely. If no further injury results, the man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman's husband demands and the judges approve. But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise. Exodus 21:22-27.

I am somewhat amused when I see trial lawyers advertising the money they get for their clients and at the same time say, "Our goal is to obtain "justice." Somehow in the back of my mind, I wonder if their goal is to get wealthy in the process. If those same lawyers were advocating for the widows, the orphans and the aliens, as the Law of Moses suggests, I would be more impressed.

Did you ever watch Judge Judy? She brings two legal rivals together with the notion of providing a ruling of justice. Both have agreed to abide by her decision, While much of this is theater or entertainment, I am always interested in the response of the rivals after her decision. I can not remember one time where both parties were happy with the justice they received. Nearly always, one feels like they did not receive justice. Imagine if the rivals shook hands, hugged and smiled with thumbs up stating that it was a "winwin" for both parties.

While justice is better than injustice, it is still a weak mechanism for bringing opposing parties together... such that both are happy with the outcome. Yes, I am thankful for the laws we have and our system of Justice. I know it is not perfect and many do escape being brought to justice. Yet, when I read about what goes on in other countries, I'll take my chances here.

FORGIVENESS

Our Savior, Jesus Christ once preached a sermon with the most radical ethic you can imagine. Jesus knew about the chaos of "Revenge" and the weakness of "Justice" to unite, heal and restore people at odds. Listen again to what he said: It was from our scripture reading this morning.

"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Wow, those are heavy words and can imagine many scratching their heads as they wondered, "What in the world is this guy saying?"

What Jesus is saying is that God is forgiving and he wants us to do the same. This indeed is a bitter pill for those of us who harbor a grudge, carry a chip on the shoulder or gloat when our adversary stumbles and gets a little of their own medicine.

Learning to forgive is not easy and it can be a long and arduous process. It takes the Grace of God to help us. Yet many have been able to forgive when they have been wronged.

Nearly 20 years ago one of our members walked down the aisle carrying a hatchet. He announced that he was burying the hatchet. He had been carrying a grudge for years with another member of our church. That morning those 2 men reconciled their differences and put the words of Jesus into practice.

In 1993, a teenager named Oshea Israel shot and killed 20-year-old Laramiun Byrd at a party both were attending in Minneapolis. Israel was sentenced to 25 years behind bars for second-degree murder, while the mother of the victim was sentenced to a life without her only child.

Byrd's mother, Mary Johnson, looked at her son's killer in the courtroom and struggled with feelings of anger and resentment. However, Mary Johnson's faith compelled her to forgive, so she told the young man that she forgave him, even as she struggled with the bitterness inside.

Still, the anger failed to subside. After many years of fighting her emotions, Johnson made the fateful decision to reach out to Israel, arranging a meeting at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater.

"I don't know you and you don't know me," Johnson recalls saying. "You didn't know my son and he didn't know you, so we need to lay down a foundation and get to know one another."

The conversation that ensued proved cathartic for both Israel and Johnson. They talked about Johnson's son. Israel acknowledged what he had done, and asked through tears for Johnson's forgiveness. He also asked her for a hug.

When the meeting concluded, and Israel had returned to his cell, Johnson reflected in awe about what had just happened. "I just hugged the man that murdered my son," she said to herself. "And I instantly knew that all anger and animosity, all the stuff I had in my heart for 12 years ... was over."

Fast forward to today. Israel was released from prison in 2010, and has become very close to the mother of the man he killed. Johnson describes Israel as her "spiritual son," and looks forward to seeing him graduate from college and potentially get married—two things she never got to see her biological son do. In January, Johnson got married, with Israel walking her down the aisle.

But the closeness between Johnson and Israel is more than just emotional and spiritual—it's also geographical. With Johnson's approval, Israel moved into the apartment immediately adjacent to hers.

In 2005, Johnson founded From Death to Life, a non-profit group committed to promoting healing through forgiveness for those who have been impacted by violent crime. Israel often joins his "spiritual mother" to share their story of reconciliation.

Did Jesus practice what he preached?

Yes he did. On the cross he declared:

"Father forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

Every Sunday we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Do we mean it?

By God's grace we do mean it and he can make it happen in our lives.

Amen

Carol's Corner 8.09.26

By Carol McDermott

I was hoping I could talk about some nice soaking rains this past week, but unfortunately just more hot weather. Enough already! We'll see what this next week brings! We had a wonderful service in church today with a great group there. Marty McDermott had the Children's sermon and talked about comforting someone when they are troubled and grieving and had some nice pictures to illustrate his message. It was a nice intro into Pastor Lee's sermon "A Time to Mourn and Heal", based on 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, one of my favorite passages in the Bible. It says God can use tough experiences in our lives to help someone else who is experiencing a similar challenging time in their lives as we reach out to them to help them through it all. Nonnie Hunziker sang a beautiful song "Mercies in Disguise", the words of which speak of how a tough time can become a blessing, or a "mercy in disguise". Beautifully sung and thoughtful words.

Pastor Lee said this sermon was a continuation of her series that has had us look at our lives in terms of seasons. She said one season we would all like to avoid is "loss", but living means loss. She gave examples of "losing someone through divorce, estrangement, mental illness, incarceration, addictions, and dementia". As she spoke, I could think of loved ones and friends who have experienced some of those losses and I am aware of the grief and challenges they have faced through it all. She mentioned "ambiguous loss" – loss of a dream, loss of identity or way of life, loss of dignity or independence, miscarriages, abandonment, betrayal, abuseyou can think of many other losses as well. She said part of this is maturing into adulthood, but even adults can be blindsided with unwanted challenges. Pastor mentioned some books that have helped her in her ministry and counseling including one by Stephen Levin in his book "Unattended Sorrow". Just the title gives you an idea of his message about chronic, low-level suffering that lies beneath the surface from unresolved grief. He says that not taking time to grieve and to name our losses doesn't make the grief go away, it just goes deeper. She also mentioned Dr. Alan Wolfelt who says "to heal in grief is to become whole again", to "learn to live with fulness and meaning". He talks in his book about the "grief print", similar to a finger print. No 2 experiences are exactly the same even if the circumstances are the same. No one can carry the grief for us. The only way is through not around. Yet, we don't carry it alone. Jesus walks with us and carries our burdens. We also have community – when one person suffers, we all suffer. There is such richness in this sermon and I would encourage you all to watch it on Facebook or web page. You will be blessed. It included so much information and encouragement. I've spent this afternoon trying to process it all. We closed the service with the song "Through It All" by Andre Crouch which speaks of how Jesus walks with us through life, carries our burdens, and helps bring us peace through it all. I came away so blessed and challenged to bring peace where peace is lacking, to bring healing where healing is lacking, and to bring comfort where comfort is lacking. God help me to be the person You want me to be.

"Through It All" by Andre Crouch

I thank God for the mountains, and I thank Him for the valleys,

I thank Him for the storms He brought me through.

**For if I'd never had a problem, I wouldn't know God could solve them,
I'd never know what faith in God could do. Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've
learned to trust in God. I've learned to depend upon His Word.**

Carol's Corner 8.16.26

By Carol McDermott

Rain, rain, good soaking rain! How thankful we are. Even if it means fighting with a pesky umbrella, I am so thankful! Today the blessings continued in church as we gathered to sing praises and worshiped together. Nonnie Hunziker had the Children's sermon and talked about the sermon title, Revenge, Justice, and Forgiveness, based on Matthew 5:38-48. She had the children talk about challenging times when they have been wronged and how to deal with it. She always has such good insights! Jack Clancy sang one of my favorite songs, "It Is No Secret" and accompanied himself on his guitar. He is so very gifted and blessed us all.

Marty McDermott had the sermon today titled "Revenge, Justice, Forgiveness". He discussed "Revenge" – citing some examples from his own life when he and his brother might have a disagreement between them and then starting "hitting" each other back and forth. Each thought they were "even" after hitting the other. As you might expect, they could never agree when evenness had occurred! He talked about how feelings of anger and revenge can be so overwhelming that people resort to unthinkable actions. There are Biblical examples of Cain murdering Abel, Joseph being sold into slavery due to his brothers' intense jealousy, and Moses killing an Egyptian task master who was mistreating a fellow Israelite. He said if you go onto the Internet and just look at the headlines, they are full of revengeful actions by people... often people who would normally never resort to such drastic actions.

Then he talked about Justice. While better than Revenge, it still has many shortcomings. He cited Judge Judy's program where she would hear a case between two parties and decide which one was in the right. As you can imagine, neither party was entirely happy with the judgement reached by Judge Judy. He talked about all the ads advertising law firms who claim to be the best at protecting clients' rights – but perhaps their real goal is making money off of someone else's misery.

Lastly, he talked about forgiveness. The unquestionable example of this, is Jesus' sacrifice on the cross where He bore our sins and was the mediator between a Holy God and the sinful human race. Jesus introduced the whole concept of forgiveness so completely, that we are without excuse, if we refuse to forgive another person when they ask to be forgiven. We probably can all think of circumstances where it would be a huge challenge to forgive someone, we know who has mistreated us or someone we love. Unfortunately, the scripture does not say "except in this or that case you don't have to forgive". Unforgiveness can be like a cancer in our soul and body and can leak into other areas of our lives and affect other relationships. The act of forgiving is powerful and freeing and can even heal physical conditions related to stress and anger. This was a tough sermon to hear. I think most of us can think of excuses for carrying a resentment or grudge, but it is not productive and does not result in the response we may want from the other person(s). Someone once said that "Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die." (quote attributed to Nelson Mandela and Carrie Fisher). I am going to have to spend some time processing this. Marty said we pray every Sunday "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us". We say it from memory, but may all need to reexamine those words to make sure our life and actions back them up. A lot to think about this week, for sure. Blessings to us all as we work through relationships and heal, where needed.

Pics to Enjoy!

Sunday Worship Service 8.9.26



Carol and Marty, our magnificent musicians



AW! We love our littles.



Marty sharing Children's time.



Nonnie blessing us with special music.

Pastor Lee, "A Time to Mourn & Heal"



8.16.26 Worship Service

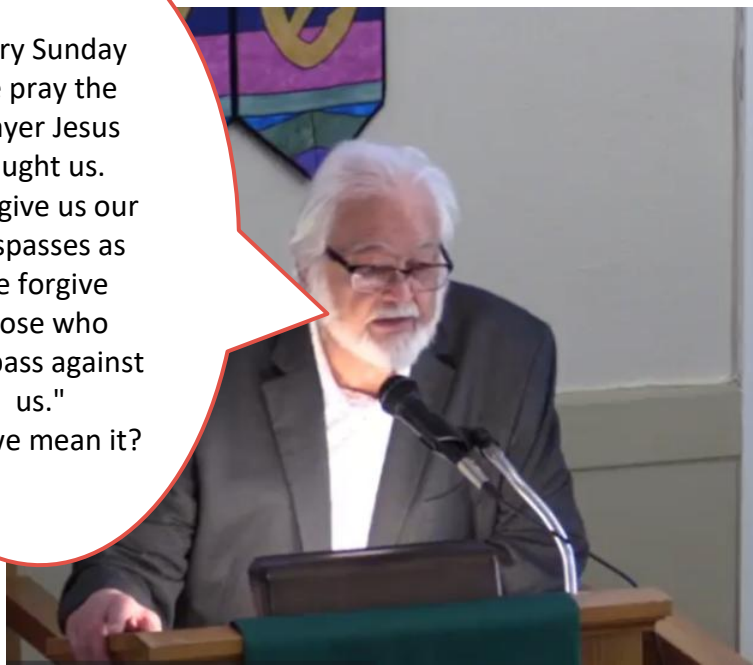
Jack singing "It Is No Secret"
for special music.



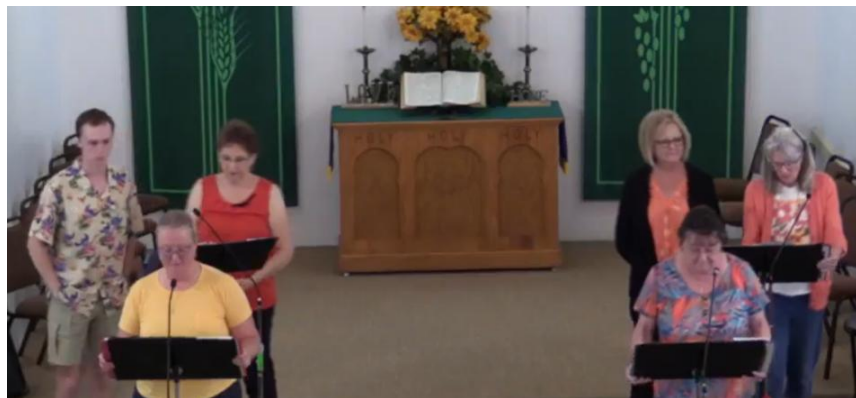
Nonnie sharing Children's Time.



Every Sunday
we pray the
prayer Jesus
taught us.
"Forgive us our
trespasses as
we forgive
those who
trespass against
us."
Do we mean it?



Our Praise Team



Marty sharing the message.