

First United
Methodist
Church
of Fort Lupton
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8.27.26

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Message
"A Time to Rest"
Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

Scripture: Mark 2:23-28 (CEB)

²³ Jesus went through the wheat fields on the Sabbath. As the disciples made their way, they were picking the heads of wheat. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to Jesus, "Look! Why are they breaking the Sabbath law?"

²⁵ He said to them, "Haven't you ever read what David did when he was in need, when he and those with him were hungry? ²⁶ During the time when Abiathar was high priest, David went into God's house and ate the bread of the presence, which only the priests were allowed to eat. He also gave bread to those who were with him." ²⁷ Then he said, "The Sabbath was created for humans; humans weren't created for the Sabbath. ²⁸ This is why the Human One^[a] is Lord even over the Sabbath."



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR CHURCH

NO HASSLE GIVING

Have your donations automatically come out of your bank account.

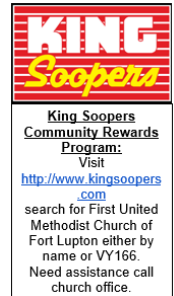
Contact Church Office or Church Treasurer for information



Safeway cards -available downstairs after worship



[DONATE TO THE CHURCH ONLINE.](http://www.kingsoopers.com)



What's Happening

Wednesdays

9.2.26 Noon Worship Planning
7:00 pm Choir
9.7.26 Office Closed – Labor Day

Wednesdays

9:30 am Wednesday Bible Study



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

Jan. 1 - July 31, 2026 Financial Update	
Income	\$ 111,311.57
Expenses	\$ 116,178.84
Revenue/(Loss)	\$ (4,867.27)

*Income includes \$9000 interest from Endowment



**JOIN US FOR
THE PARADE**

We will be participating in the Trapper Days Parade on Saturday, September 12, 2026, and everyone is invited to join us.

Walk alongside Pastor Lee or ride in the church van whichever works best for you.

We are also collecting candy donations for the parade.

Contact church office if you are interested.



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!



A Season for Everything: A Time to Seek

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.

These words are well known to many, and they can be reassuring. Up until this passage, Jesus has been teaching some pretty demanding things. He has been teaching about God's way of living versus the dominant culture's way of living, addressing things like anger and retaliation (which you heard about in Dr. McDermott's message last week), adultery and divorce, tithing, love for enemies, the use of money, judging others, worry, and the hardest one of all...fasting. At the same time, he has compared God to a kind parent, saying that God is not going to deny his children what they need. And so, in this passage, he is offering the reassurance that when the disciples turn to God for help, or seek wisdom, and so on, that God is not going to withhold it.

But, these words of Jesus are not always reassuring. What about unanswered prayers? If you have ever prayed for something you badly wanted, and it didn't happen, I can imagine that this is one of those passages that feels uncomfortable. It might even make you angry; it might even make you doubt what Jesus says. And if you haven't experienced an unanswered prayer yourself, you have probably prayed alongside someone who has. Unanswered prayers are one of the biggest challenges to a person's faith, and one of the hardest questions to answer as a pastor. Yet I believe in the power of prayer, and I know people of great faith who make prayer a daily part of their life who also attest to the power of prayer. And not people who have had an easy life either! So what gives? What keeps us coming back to God?

One perspective on prayers that are not answered the way we want them to be is that God's timing and God's vision is different than ours. There is a joke about this. A man asks God “What is a billion years to you?” and God replies, “A split second.” So the man asks, “Well, how much is a billion dollars to you?” And God replies, “A mere penny.” The man then asks, “In that case, Lord, how about giving me one penny?” And God replies, “Sure, wait a second.” Or you may have heard the one about the man praying to be rescued from the rising flood waters. Someone in a boat comes along and tells him to get in the boat, and he says “No, I have faith that God will rescue me.” The waters continue to rise and he climbs up on his roof, and a helicopter comes along to rescue him and he says “No thank you, I have faith that God will rescue me.” So he waits, and waits, and cries out to God “Why haven't you saved me?” And God replies, “I sent a boat and a helicopter.” God's vision is often different than what we have in mind, and our expectations can blind us to the ways God is at work. God's timing is different than ours. I have heard that God answers our prayers with yes, no, or not yet. All of these things lead us to believe that God is not listening to us. But Jesus assures us God is listening, and not just listening, but responding. He says “Ask, and you will receive.” But he doesn't say “and you will receive exactly what you want.”

Yet, in the big stuff of life, when we do not get what we truly hope for...for the disease to be cured, for the pregnancy to last, for the loved one to make it through the accident okay, and so on...knowing that God has a different sense of timing provides little consolation. Comments about God having different plans are not helpful. God is still there though, listening...listening to your deepest needs, in the darkness. Guiding you, step by tiny step, back into the light.

Prayer makes a difference. We too often try to do life on our own. But even daily life is easier with God, let alone the big stuff. I pray with every sermon that I write, for instance. I pray to begin my day, and I pray for God's guidance and wisdom throughout the day. And I notice a difference in how I feel and function in my days if I get out of my prayer habits, whether it's skipping my morning prayers, or forgetting to pause and pray during the day. Now, I am not one to explain divine mysteries away by science. However, I think science and divine mysteries go hand in hand. While there

isn't a way to explain in scientific terms the "mystical" effects of prayer, or *how* God listens and answers prayers, there are measurable physiological and psychological shifts that occur that directly improve mental and physical well-being. Brain imaging studies show that regular prayer alters brain activity and restructures neural pathways. Prayer lowers activity in the brain's fear and anxiety center. It activates the prefrontal cortex; this area governs focus, emotional regulation, and decision-making. It slows the heart rate and relaxes blood vessels. It reduces cortisol and adrenaline levels (and reducing cortisol is all the rage right now). Now, if information like this seems to take all the fun out of the mystery...or seems to take God out of the equation...just remember who it is that created us and our amazing minds and bodies in the first place. God is in the details of every way that prayer affects us. God *created* us to be in relationship with him.

When we seek the divine presence in our lives, we will find it. But we must seek, ask, and knock on the door. This is ours to do. The purpose of a regular, daily prayer practice is to deepen your awareness of God in your life and nurture your trust in God. Take time to seek regularly, even if there is not something specific you are looking for. This cultivates a personal, intimate relationship with God that will sustain you in difficult times, and that brings joy and gratitude in the everyday. Ask, search, and knock are not stages in prayer. They represent different ways of praying, or different ways of creating time with God. Prayers will resemble different forms at different times.

First, there are the prayers that use words. These are about talking to God. There are prayers of petition, where you are asking something of God. It can be for healing and safety, or guidance and wisdom, for instance, for yourself or someone else. Prayers of petition are especially helpful when there are issues beyond your grasp or control, such as war or poverty. There are also those prayers that, when prayed repeatedly, are helpful in shaping you as a disciple. Often these are traditional, written prayers, such as the prayer of St Francis, the Serenity Prayer, the Thomas Merton prayer, and of course, the Lord's prayer. But you can use your own words...maybe there is a mantra, an affirmation, some kind of phrase that is helpful to you during a certain season in your life. Monastic communities have used chanting for centuries, which is simply a short request or words of praise repeated over and over, like the *kyrie eleison*, or "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy." Chanting has shown to have a calming effect as well as provide some focus as you talk to God.

And let's not forget prayers of lament. So often, we feel like we have to have it all together before we go to God in prayer. We tend to approach God as though God will judge us if we are anything but cheerful and hope-filled. We avoid God when we are ashamed. But God never asked this of us; this is something we expect of ourselves. Maybe ingrained from early in life. The act of naming what troubles us is Biblical. The book of Lamentations in the Hebrew Bible is an example of this. In the book of Psalms, you'll also find psalms of lament. And scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible are other examples of crying out to God. Scholar and bishop N.T. Wright says this about lament: "The point of lament, woven thus into the fabric of biblical tradition, is not just that it's an outlet for our frustration, sorrow, loneliness and sheer inability to understand what is happening or why. The mystery of the biblical story is that God also laments....As the Spirit laments within us, so we become...small shrines where the presence and healing love of God can dwell."

If this sounds intriguing, here are some ways for you to join in the centuries old faithful practice of lamenting. It doesn't have to follow a certain type of structure, but it can help to look at psalms of lament or the book of Lamentations as a guide. You start by inviting God in, then name what you are feeling. Tell God what you feel and why you feel it. Then welcome those feelings and sit with them. Trust God with your pain. Express your trust in God's plan, but it's also okay to talk to God about your doubts or questions. Then share with God what you hope will happen and ask for it. You might even find words of praise and gratitude coming to you. And then spend some time in quiet with God.

While prayers with words are important, I often find it is the praying without words that has the biggest impact on me. Listening is just as important as talking. Sometimes even more important. I would say listen twice as much as you talk, at least. Listening to God does not mean you will hear a distinct voice or see a sign like Moses or the prophets did. It might. Usually though, God's voice comes through in more subtle ways, ways that we might not notice if we are not actively listening. Listening takes practice. There are ways to incorporate regular listening into your days or weeks to gain this practice. And even if you are not listening for something specific, taking time to simply be present with God will shape your life for the better.

If you ask a group of people where they feel most connected to God, many of them will say it is in nature. If you are one of these people, some form of getting outside regularly is a form of prayer. This summer has been tough for me and many others, as being outside has not been pleasant. Bringing elements of nature indoors can keep a connection to the outside, especially if you are someone who cannot get outside.

Being in nature...simply being in it and paying attention to the leaves, or birds, or sky for instance...is like other forms of contemplative prayer. Silent prayer and meditation are contemplative practices. Centering prayer is a type of meditation that has very old roots in Christianity. In centering prayer, the goal is to just be in the presence of God. There is a method to it; in fact, there are books and classes about it. If you are interested, let me know and I can give you some resources to learn more about it. If there is enough interest, I would be happy to teach a class! Regardless of the method though, what you are doing is clearing your mind as much as possible so that you become more aware of God's presence. You will not be able to completely clear your mind; it is impossible not to have thoughts. You are just attempting to not get latched on to those thoughts, and let them pass by like clouds. You are creating space for Christ to dwell within you; you are centering yourself in God. And there are other forms of silent prayer and meditation similar to this. You may have even discovered an app for it.

Other types of ages-old contemplative practices give you more to do, more to work with. Lectio divina, which means divine reading, is a way of going deeper into scripture. Lectio divina also has a method, but in a nutshell, you begin by slowly reading a short scripture passage, noticing what catches your attention. You then spend time in silence, asking God to reveal to you what the word or phrase is trying to teach you. You repeat this, reading and spending time in silence three or four times. Visio divina is the same process, but instead of reading scripture you are looking at an image, maybe a piece of art, a picture or a religious symbol. Audio divina is the same but with music. Again, these are all methods I would be happy to talk more about. Finally, contemplative prayer does not have to mean sitting still. There are walking prayers, breath prayers, and movement prayers.

Well, I have done enough talking about prayer, so let's share in a time of prayer together to close. The Examen is a way of reflecting upon where God has been with you; it can be done at the end of each day or at the end of the week. As we are beginning a new week, let's take some moments to look back at the previous week. If you are praying the examen on your own, you would probably spend 10 minutes or more doing this. I will speed things up in this instance. You can follow along with me with your eyes open or closed, whichever is more comfortable for you. If you keep your eyes open, find a focal point and let your gaze soften. First, settle yourself, find a comfortable seated position, and take some deep breaths. Invite God in. Ask God for the grace to pray, for God's light to shine on you to help you see and understand. Now, name those things for which you are grateful in this past week. Try not to name just the things for which you think you should be grateful. Let things slowly come to mind. Maybe some courage you were given, or a solution that appeared out of nowhere, or an unexpected helper. Next, look back at your week. Review the events. Once you get through the highlight reel, pay attention to the other moments. Where did you experience God? Where did you feel separate from God? What were the problem areas: something you did to get in God's way...something you feel guilty about. Ask God for forgiveness and to show you what to do differently. Finally, look ahead to this week to come. Where do you need God's help? What do you want from God? You might want to close with more words of gratitude. Amen.

Take time to seek, often. ⁷“Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door is opened.” Thanks be to God. Amen.

Carol's Corner
By Carol McDermott

I wasn't expecting a "gully washer" this weekend, but maybe God decided to take our cumulative prayers for rain and just let us have it all yesterday! We are thankful, though. Hopefully the hail did not damage crops in the area. Mart and I were in Estes yesterday at our trailer and missed the excitement, but did see a mountain covered by a light coat of snow or possibly hail some distance from where we were on Fall River Road. Today we had a wonderful service, even though the storm took out the internet at the church so the service could not be live streamed. Annette Kokoszka had the Children's sermon and had a great lesson about opening a package to discover what is inside, based on Pastor's sermon text, Matthew 7:7-8. The kids were awesome, as always and it was a great time. Mike Wilbur sang a beautiful song titled "Flowers" which said that sometimes we are in a period in our life where it seems that the heavens are made of brass and our prayers just bounce off of the walls. In the song God replies to a desperate prayer that even when blue skies and hillsides feel so far away, saying, "Child I'm planting seeds. I'm a good God and I have a good plan, so trust that I'm holding a watering can and someday you'll see that flowers grow in the valley". What a beautiful thought. Thank you, Mike.

Pastor Lee's sermon was titled "A Season for Everything: A Time to Seek" based on Matthew 7:7-8. Look it up, it's just a gem. She pointed out that in Jesus' ministry he has been preaching some pretty demanding things about God's way of living contrasted to our culture's way of living. In this passage He talks about God as a kind parent who is not going to deny His children what they need. She said that sometimes it's hard to understand these words when there may be unanswered prayers. We've probably all experienced the silence when we are pleading for God to act, but it doesn't happen and these unanswered prayers can be the "biggest challenge" to our faith. Yet, Pastor said she believes in the power of prayer. Sometimes our prayers are not answered when we expect them to be or how we expect them to be. God's timing and vision is different from ours. This is not much consolation when we are praying and waiting. Prayer does make a difference. She said she notices a difference in how her day goes if she misses her prayer time. Prayer deepens our awareness of God and nurtures our trust in him. Scientific studies have demonstrated that regular prayer alters brain activity and restructures neural pathways. When we seek God's divine presence in our lives, we will find it, but we must seek, ask, and knock on the door. There are different ways of praying. Some prayers use words as we talk to God with our prayers of petition.

Some prayers are full of grief or sorrow (lament) when we name what troubles us such as the prayers of David in the Psalms. We can trust God with our pain, and acknowledge our doubts and questions.

Listening is also a part of prayer when we just sit in the presence of God. Pastor offered some helps, if you are interested in developing this part of your prayer life. This message was rich in expanding the scope of our prayer life and closeness to God. She closed with these words, "Ask and you will receive. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. Whoever seeks, finds. And to anyone who knocks, the door is opened. Thanks be to God. Amen."

Pics to Enjoy!

Sunday Worship Service

Annette sharing Children's Time.



Mike blessing us with his special music.



Pastor Hugh presenting the church family with a gift.



Clete & Gloria ushering.

Pastor Lee," Whoever seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door is opened." Thanks be to God. Amen.

Fellowship Time



September Birthdays

Reed Kopfman	09/03
Kassandra Osborn	09/04
Betty Carter	09/04
Jennifer Anders	09/05
Elise Shaffer	09/05
Kacey Purifoy	09/09
Shayla Stryker	09/09
Ron Brown	09/10
Laurie McCartney	09/12
Jim Roedel	09/13
Dale Hunt	09/14
Kathleen Payne	09/14
Orly Ruiz	09/16
Barb Irsik	09/18
Kathy Nelson-Purifoy	09/18
Diana Howard	09/20
Justin Leyba	09/21
Brian Howard	09/21
Jim Jr. Roedel	09/24
Ino Duarte	09/27
Willa Lewis	09/28
Gabby Norby	09/29
Lissa Hood	09/30
Carrie Ann Honstein - Rosales	09/30



September Anniversaries

Brian & Ashley Bueker	09/10
Judd & Tina Ceretto	09/24



September 2026

SUN 30	MON 31	TUE Sep 1	WED 2	THU 3	FRI 4	SAT 5
9am Worship Service	9am Stephens Ministrie		9:30am Bible Study 12pm Worship Planning			
6 9am Worship Service 9am Communion	7 Office Closed Labor Day	8	9 9:30am Bible Study	10	11	12 Trapper Days
13 9am Worship Service 10:15am Hawaiian Luau	14 9am Stephens Ministrie 6pm UMW	15	16 9:30am Bible Study	17	18 5pm Youth Group	19
20 9am Worship Service 9am Children's Sunday : 10:15am Adult Sunday S	21 9am Stephens Ministrie	22	23 9:30am Bible Study	24	25 5pm Youth Group	26
27 9am Worship Service 9am Children's Sunday : 10:15am Adult Sunday S	28 9am Stephens Ministrie 7pm Ad Board Meeting	29	30 9:30am Bible Study	Oct 1	2 5pm Youth Group	3

Click link for full calendar
<https://fumc-fortlupton.org/calendar/>