

On the Journey ... at St. John's

November
2022

St. John's United Church of Christ
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Daily Meditations

We enter into Advent the end of this month. I challenge you to open your heart and prepare your minds by doing these thirty-second meditations each day.

1. (Read these words as if Jesus were speaking to your soul) Receive My Love in full measure. So many of My children limp through their lives starved for Love because they haven't learned the art of receiving. This is essentially an act of faith: believing that I love you with boundless, everlasting Love.
2. All of nature changes daily. Only the human mind can refuse to grow.
3. George R. Kirkpatrick may have written one of the finest explanations of religious discipline that the language has yet to see. He said: "Nature gave us two ends—one to sit on and one to think with. Ever since then, a person's success or failure has been dependent on the one they used most."
4. There is no possibility of conversion if there is no willingness to reflect on the present but only to enshrine the more comfortable, familiar and controllable past.
5. Not even the spiritual life is changeless. On the contrary, nothing really requires more humility from us than the willingness to open ourselves to the unknown so that God can complete in us what has been begun. Iona's song "Birds of Heaven," warns us what happens when we try to capture God in one time, place, one way: "Catch the bird of heaven / Lock him in religion / Look again tomorrow? And he will be gone."
6. It is easy to get stuck somewhere along the way of life, to settle down into spiritual apathy, to assume that things will always be as they are now. That's called arthritis of the soul.
7. We talked about how easy it is to settle into a lifestyle of accumulation, to get used to buying and buying and buying, and then living in homes that are bursting with stuff we don't need, can't find a place for, shouldn't have bought in the first place. What would it take to live simpler, more responsible lives, with less waste and clutter. To be thoughtful consumers instead of rabid accumulators.

- 8.** Did you ever have one of those days where the whole idea of God was just too much to think about? As if trying to “get a handle” on God was like trying to kiss the moon? If the mystics are right (and usually they are because they see things much differently than we do) then you were probably closer that day to God than any other day in your life. How is this possible, you ask? How can God be close to you (or you to God) when God seems so far away or not at all? . . . This is my answer to you: God is a mystery of humble love. It is a mystery that you cannot reason or try to figure out. You must simply live in the mystery.
- 9.** Life is not an exercise in spiritual gymnastics. It is one long, unending attempt to put on the mind of God wherever we are, whatever happens to us on the way. We are not here to pray our way out of life’s challenges. We are here to grow through every one of them into spiritual adulthood
- 10.** A wise physician said, “The best medicine for humans is LOVE.” Someone asked, “If it doesn’t work?” He smiled and answered, “Increase the dose.”
- 11.** Lean on, trust in, and be confident in Christ. The more challenging your life circumstances, the more you need to affirm-and lean on-your confident trust in Jesus. During difficult times, your natural tendency is to rely heavily on your own understanding. However, your human understanding is not up to this task; it will fail you time and again.
- 12.** It is easy to think that because you can’t do something extraordinary, you can’t do anything at all, that if you can’t overhaul your entire life in one fell swoop, then you might as well do nothing.
- 13.** Faith is not what gives us the tricks it takes to control God.
- 14.** Reflect on Isaiah 55:8–9 which proclaims that God’s ways and thoughts are higher than our own. God’s vision and purpose is greater and more welcoming than our own. No one is outside the circle of love. When we resign from being God and align ourselves with God’s emerging vision, we can experience true humility—not claiming to know the truth fully or condemning others for their falsehood. We can expand the circle of love, letting go of the need to be “right,” and trusting that God will give us insight and inspiration in our relationships with others. Letting go of our own need to focus on differences, we learn to share our common humanity and become God’s companions in healing the world.
- 15.** Christians are called to be separated from the world in which they live. Make a list of five ways that your Christians faith distinguishes you and your faith community from the culture around you.
- 16.** (Read this reflection as if Jesus is speaking to you) The nature of hope is that it refers to something in the future, something not yet. So you need to wait patiently for me to fulfill my promises. If patience is not your strong point, remember that it is a fruit of the Spirit. You can ask the Holy Spirit to help you wait hopefully in my presence. Waiting is often a boring task unless you have something interesting to do or someone interesting to be with. When you wait in my presence, rejoice that you are in the company of the Creator and sustainer of the universe.

17. The United States is now spending more each year on armaments than was spent in any year before. People demand that the government “interfere” in nothing and pour money into the armament industry and provide strong police for “security.” But stay out of everything else! No interference in medicine, mental health, education, etc., etc. Never was a country at once shrewder and less wise-shrewd in nonessentials and lunatic in essentials. How does your personal theology reflect on how you see our government’s role.

18. Take one of the gospel stories of Jesus that you can recall. Imagine yourself in the story. Who would you be most comfortable portraying? What are you hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting?

19. Sometimes we need to really wrestle with the meaning of parables Jesus used. It is not enough to rely on a Pastor’s or anyone else’s interpretation. Read the following story. What does it mean? Talk to others. Research it yourself. If you are a person who knows the internet, “Google it.” Spend time with it. Reread it several times.... (Luke 17:7-10) Jesus taught us saying: “Which of you, with a servant plowing or minding sheep would say to him when he returned from the fields, ‘Come and have your meal at once’? Would he not be more likely to say, “Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you; when you have done all you have been told to do and say, ‘We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty.’”

20. There is an Indian proverb that says that everyone, every person is a house with four rooms, a physical, a mental an emotional, and a spiritual. Most of us tend to live in one room most of that time but unless we go into every room every day, even if only to keep it aired, we are not a complete person.

21. Reflect on Ephesians 3:16-19 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, through faith. And I pray that you being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

22. On a piece of paper, record some past sins that have separated you from others and from God. Now contemplate any current sins that may be standing between you and God and record them as well. Offer the paper as your sacrifice to God and burn it. Take the ashes outside and blow them into the wind. If burning is not an option tear the paper up till you can tear no more and throw the scraps out.

23. “God desires the dignity and full development of all human beings.” Take a deep look at your own prejudices and opinions. Does your personal development match the goal of God, or are you much more limited in your ability to love all? Are you only loving according to your own standards? Pray for the eyes and mind of God to be within you.

24. The story of what a scapegoat is (Leviticus 16:21-22) He (the priest) is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and transfer it on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all the sins to a solitary place and the man shall release it in the desert. Who do you lay sins upon because it is easier to find a scapegoat than face your own shortcomings?

25. We live in a time of excess. Despite the poverty that remains in our world, for most of us, hunger doesn’t stand a chance in our lives. Self-imposed limits on our desires will benefit not just our bodies, but our souls as well. (1Cor 9:27) “I discipline my body and bring it under control, for fear that after preaching to others I myself may be disqualified.” Before judging others, we must examine our own hearts and minds. Only then will we realize we are not above people but equal in our shortcomings.

26. Patience is the calm acceptance that things can be happen in a different order than the one you have in mind.

27. Real conversion is a life-changing event. Anything else is nothing but an attempt to remain what we are while we pretend we are not.

28. (written by Shauna Niequist) One of the most cracked-up, errant beliefs is that skinny people are always happy. I think I would be happy all day long if I were skinny. If something upset me, I would just look down at my long, skinny legs-happiness! I know this is crazy talk. I’ve crossed a fine line and moved over into that territory where you can’t be happy unless you have just that thing you want, no matter what else you have. Instead try cultivating a deep sense of gratitude of groundedness, of enough, even while longing for something more. Practice believing that God knows more than I know, that he sees what I can’t, that he weaving a future I can’t even imagine from where I sit today.

29. There is no such thing as an incorrect life path, for on this journey (faith) you cannot “not get” where you are going. It is simply a matter of speed—merely a question of when you will get there.

30. The word of God was not a commandment, but a covenant. Do you know the difference--- it starts with love.

Meditations from the work of Sarah Young, Joan Chittister, Richard Rohr, *Sister Iliia Delio*, Neil Donald Walsh, and several other internet resources.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE

November 20th will be our Thanksgiving Service.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve services will be at 3 pm. We took a survey of the congregation and decided that Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be recorded services only.

BETTY LOU'S PANTRY

Please bring in non-perishable items for Betty Lou's Pantry. We will also have an offering plate up front for monetary donations for this special collection.

Once again, we are collecting monies for the Betty Lou's Pantry Christmas Project. They are collecting money to give every child and senior a \$50 gift card. Please put your donation in the offering plate or mail into the church. Please clearly mark Betty Lou's Christmas.

The deadline is November 21.

THANK YOU!

Just a note of extreme gratitude for all the ways you all have supported me during my parents' crisis. Also thank you for all the Pastor's Appreciation cards and notes of support as we continue discussions with Chestnut Hill about a shared pastorate. Blessings, Pastor Teresa



ONLINE GIVING

Online giving is now available through the app tithe.ly. Go to St. John's website, click on **give**, and then follow the cues. Credit or debit cards are accepted on our secure site. An email receipt of your giving will be sent to you.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Richard E. Kuhns, 86, of Emmaus, died at home, surrounded by his loving family, on Saturday, October 22, 2022. He and his wife, Donna M. (Sames) Kuhns, celebrated 64 years of marriage on October 18. Born in Allentown, he was the son of the late Albert and Myrtle (Schaffer) Kuhns.

He was a member of St. John's United Church of Christ in Coopersburg. Richard was the original owner of Se-Wy-Co Beverage Co. in Lower Saucon Twp for several years and later worked as the manager of Link Beverage I n Coopersburg.

Survivors: Wife; Son, Donald R. Kuhns and his wife Diane; Daughters-in-Law, Joy Kuhns and Ann Kuhns; Sister, Barbara Kennedy; 5 Grandchildren; and 10 Great - Grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a Son, Dale A. Kuhns in 2017; Great-Granddaughter, Angel Schell; and Step-Mother, Anna Kuhns.

Services: 10:30 a.m. Monday October 31, 2022 at Bachman, Kulik & Reinsmith Funeral Home, 225 Elm Street, Emmaus. A viewing will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Sunday and 10 to 10:30 a.m. Monday in the funeral home. Interment in Jordan Lutheran Cemetery in Orefield.

Contributions: May be made to the American Cancer Society, 3893 Adler Place, Suite 170, Bethlehem, PA 18017 and St. John's UCC Coopersburg

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NOVEMBER MILESTONES TO CELEBRATE

Happy Birthday

- 12 Lenore Bamberger
- 13 Brian Fegley
- 29 John Ruby

Happy Anniversary

- 3 Bryan & Maureen Urmy
- 8 Donald & Diane Kuhns

Please help keep this listing up-to-date by contacting the office with additions and/or corrections! Thank you!



CRAFT NIGHT

November 7 and 21 from 6-8 in our Fellowship Hall. Bring your craft and supplies and join us for crafting and light conversation. Even if you would like to bring a puzzle and have others work on it with you, you are welcome. Contact Pastor Teresa at RevTeresaMartin@outlook.com with any questions. See you then!



PLEASE REMEMBER OUR WEBSITE
(STJOHNSCOOPERSBURG.ORG) OR OUR FACEBOOK PAGE
(ST JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, COOPERSBURG)
HAS UP-TO-THE-MINUTE CHURCH INFORMATION



You shop, AmazonSmile donates! Generate donations for charity while you shop using AmazonSmile, at no extra cost.

Do you have family and friends who shop on Amazon Smile? Ask them to list Saint John's United Church of Christ, Coopersburg as the charity. Every time they shop the church receives a donation based on a small percentage. This is at no cost to those who place the orders. Please share this with everyone you know!

St. John's United Church of Christ
538 Thomas Street
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www.stjohnsuccoop.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OUR MISSION:

To know and share the love of God through worship,
fellowship and outreach to the community.



November