



MINISTER'S REMARKS

We who live in temperate climates, the children of Earth's changing seasons, harbor not-quite-forgotten apprehensions about the season of ice. Very few generations separate us from the people who had to be vigilant, thrifty, and clever to survive the winter. Over the millennia of our existence, humans have devised ways to deal with the dark season, some practice, some fanciful — fire, shelter, clothing, and gathering together to celebrate, tell stories, and exchange energy in the forms of food and gifts. We are still at it. Our methods have changed, but our motivations are very similar to those of our distant ancestors. We too want more light, but instead of setting a tree ablaze, we hang strings of white and colored bulbs from the trees and roof-tops. We want more energy so we too roast a beast or a pumpkin. We want more festivity, so we gather the family, invite friends, meet at church (yes, indeed!)

Now that we are more aware of the dangers of over-using the resources that Earth provides, we adjust our celebrations again. We try to be more mindful to reuse, repurpose, recycle, etc. In that spirit, might we consider gift-shopping at our local charity stores — Salvation Army, Goodwill, and the various church bazaars and charity re-sale shops. In turn, these stores up-cycle our money into good work, so it's a double gift! Gift-giving need not cost so dearly if families agree to exchange only previously-owned or humorous or ?? items. For instance, one family agreed to exchange annoying gifts, which resulted in many whistles and drums for the children! Another family, during a very difficult time, gave just the idea of a gift — pictures of what they would give if they could. They even made and decorated the envelopes to hold pictures of yachts, diamond bracelets, houses, horses, and tickets to the Super Bowl and World Series. The exercise freed their imaginations to heights of extravagance in the expressions of their love.

And why buy expensive holiday wrapping paper? There are more interesting options that re-use what you have or are gifts in themselves: old maps, newspaper, a yard of fabric, boxes and tins, bandanas, scarves, pillow cases, napkins, paper bags. And for ribbons: recycled silk ties, scraps of yarn, strips of fabric, elastic hair ties, etc.

Sometimes the humble gifts are the most memorable, the most to be treasured. I have received several such gifts that bring with them both past and future, since they were already old when I received them, and they will outlast me and go on to join others' lives. They remind me that I do not **own** them or anything else. They are visitors to my life, or perhaps I am a visitor to theirs. Meanwhile, they grace my days. Wishing everyone less plastic and more meaningful gifts this year — to give and to receive,

Blessings, Armida

P.S. If your family is far away, or if you are grieving, holidays can be difficult. Sign up at church to come for lunch on Sunday, November 27 at my home, 100 West Summit Avenue, Stockton.

CO-MODERATOR'S REPORT

The Board of Trustees is working with the Rockford Church to fine-tune our contract with them regarding the newsletter, order of service, and website. We will print the order of service ourselves and are making adjustments to the newsletter process. The deadline for articles for the December newsletter will be November 20 at 5 p.m. See the notice elsewhere in this newsletter. We hope to streamline the process for both Rockford and us and save some money as well. You may have noticed a few changes around church. The landscaping has been cleaned up, the TV cables have been hidden, and the child care area has been organized and improved. Also, there is new artwork displayed upstairs. If you have any suggestions, talk to Ted or me. See you in church!

Mark Haman, Co-moderator

WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Your Worship Committee is planning an exciting line-up for November. We hope that you will agree and join us for our as many of our services as you can.

November 6 Our guest speaker will be **Johanna Lemon**. Johanna is currently working with Americorps for the city of Stockton. She was also a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco. She will share her observations of Morocco's culture. We will have the opportunity to ask her questions about her experiences.

November 13 Rev. Armida will kick off our annual pledge campaign inviting us to support our beloved community with her sermon entitled "The Sermon on the Amount: Noticing the uses and abuses of Money". Our fall potluck brunch will follow immediately.

November 20 Mark Haman will share the words of Elizabeth M. Strong, as she discusses the "Theology of Evolution".

November 27 Rev. Armida will be back in the pulpit. The topic for this Sunday is "Whoever You Are: Do we/Can we Really Welcome Everyone?"

We hope you will agree that November is filled with services that you won't want to miss.
See you in church!

CHURCH NEWS

Women's/Ladies' Retreat

Mark your calendars now!

Friday afternoon November 18 to Saturday afternoon November 19

Sinsinawa Mounds Retreat Center

What a beautiful place!

What a perfect time for some "Me Time"

before the Holiday Hullabaloo

Session leader – Our own Armida

Sign up at church or call/email Linda Weeder 815-777-0875



Many thanks to everyone who continues to support the Freeport Area Church Cooperative with donations of personal items and toilet paper. Though our donations have been increasingly generous the FACC always runs out of these all-important items quickly as there is great need in our community. Please continue to give generously and know how much our contributions are appreciated!

FACC – CANDY FOR CHRISTMAS

For the last two years our church family has donated Christmas Candy to top off the food baskets that FACC prepares for Christmas distribution. The wrapped candy that you donate is repackaged into small bags, as many as 125 or more. (Sally, Joan and Perry have acted as the “elves” in the candy store.) Of course, ham and sweet potatoes are very important, but imagine the smiles for those who see the treats as well.

The candy collection box will be in the Patterson Room. Please fill it up with WRAPPED Christmas candy through November.

Thanks to you all for your continued support of the FACC mission to those in need.

90th Birthday Celebrations



Jean Logemann celebrated her 90th birthday in style with an open house hosted by her family at the church on Sunday, October 9. It was great to see Jean and her family! Also celebrating 90th birthdays recently are Betty Rausch and Morris Blair. Happy Birthday to all!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! CAN YOU GUESS WHERE?



We need volunteers for these important roles at our church! Please sign up at the volunteer table in the Patterson Room!

HARVEST POTLUCK DINNER

Our Annual Harvest Potluck Dinner and Pledge Drive Kickoff will be on November 13th, immediately following our Sunday service in the Patterson room. Please bring a dish to pass and table service. This is the time of year that we celebrate the bountiful harvest season and the many things we have accomplished as a congregation. We urge all members and friends to attend. A short program will be presented and pledge cards for 2017 will be handed out. Please give serious thought as to what your financial contribution for next year will be and make every effort to attend on November 13th.

WHO CARES? WE DO!

We have no crystal ball, no magic grapevine to tell us when you or someone you know is in need of extra attention. So please, if you or someone you know could use a call, a card, or a visit, please contact Armida (815)990-8200 or revinres06@yahoo.com

Are you by yourself this Thanksgiving? Come to dinner with one of our church families; call Armida.

Dealing with the Holidays November 27, 12:15 p.m., 100 West Summit Avenue, Stockton. Armida hosts a luncheon for anyone who is grieving or alone this holiday season. We will discuss ways to cope and enjoy.

If you would like to help the Care Committee by sending cards or making phone calls or visits, let Mark Haman or Ted Davenport or Armida know. Many thanks!

GOING BACK TO STANDARD TIME

Remember to turn your clocks **back** one hour (for example 8 p.m. becomes 7 p.m.) on the evening of Saturday, November 5th.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Attention: The newsletter deadline will always be the 20th of the month at 5 p.m. Please get your notices and articles to Ted (tkdavenport@hotmail.com) or Mark and Sheila (haman@att.net).

CHURCH CANCELLATION PROTOCOL

With winter just around the corner, it's time we advise everyone on the policy for cancelling church. It's the co-moderator's responsibility to call off any church function in the event of bad weather or any unforeseen situation where we can't have a scheduled service of any type. For future reference, this procedure will be in place and these television stations will be contacted. From the Quad Cities: 8-WQAD, 6-KWQC, 4-WHBF. From Rockford: 23-WIFR, 17-WTVO, 13-WREX. The safety of our members and friends is paramount, so use good judgement when the roads become unsafe for travel. Feel free to contact the co-moderators with advise or questions. Mark Haman (815)777-0493 and Ted Davenport (815)238-8781

AUTUMN SONG

Wendell Berry's meditation on a clear-cut forest leads us into a praise poem for the trees that will return, if we let them. This song is in our hymnal.

Slowly, slowly, they return
To the small woodland let alone:
Great trees, outspreading and upright,
Apostles of the living light.

Patient as stars, they build in air
Tier after tier a timbered choir,
Stout beams upholding weightless
grace
Of song, a blessing on this place.

They stand in waiting all around,
Uprisings of their native ground,

Down-comings of the distant light;
They are the advent they await.

Receiving sun and giving shade,
Their life's a benefaction made,
And is a benediction said
Over the living and the dead.

In fall their brightened leaves, released,
Fly down the wind, and we are pleased
To walk on radiance, amazed.
O light come down to earth, be praise



Soul Matters/Spirit Journey November 2016

What Does It Mean To Be A Community of Story?



There are no true stories; we are making up every one of them. ~ Pema Chodron

There are only true stories. We are discovering the truth in them. ~ Christina Baldwin

Think about every memorial service you've attended. When they read the eulogy about the person's life and accomplishment that is just the "what" of their life. The thing people want to hear at a memorial service, the thing that brings comfort, stirs memories, invites tears

and laughter, are the stories. The novelist Edmund White says "when a person dies a library is burned." The stories become the "how" of a life, and that is how, over time, we remember the person who is gone. ~ Liz Hill, Soul Matters minister

We come from a long-line of spiritual relatives who agreed with Shakespeare that "All the world's a stage," but then went on to clarify that it's an improv show to which we've all been invited.

So fate and freedom? This month is much more about the tension between these two than one might have thought, leaving us with questions like: Are you an actor conforming to the scripts handed to you? Or have you found your own way of becoming a director, a screenwriter, an author? How are you struggling right now to regain control of the storyline of your life? How are you and your friends working to regain control of the storyline of our community? Our country?

Or maybe control is not your work. Maybe your spiritual work is about finding a new storyline. Maybe retirement, divorce, illness or the empty-nest has closed the book on one story and is inviting you to leap into a whole new narrative. Does that leave you excited about what's to come? Scared? A bit of both?

Whatever it is. Wherever you are at. Don't give the storyline away. That's the message of our faith. And hopefully the gift of this month.

- Scott Tayler

Spiritual Exercise

A: Your Plot Twist: Unexpected events happen to us all: for good or for ill. Remember one, think on it, choose an object that represents it, and place that object where you will see it. Share the story and object with your group, and what you will do with the object from now on.

B: Your Six-Word Faith Story Describe your personal religious journey/story in six words!
Here's some inspiration found from all over the internet:

"Seeking him who loved me first."

"Born Jewish. Discovered bacon... still Jewish."

"No more Sunday school. Sleeping in."

"I've fallen and finally got up."

"Fairytale. Thought. Deliberation. Reason."

Awakening. Atheist"

"Prayed every night; no one answered."

"I pray. She answers. Each time."

"Brainwashed, manipulated, guilty, awoke, objected, rejected."

"Filled the emptiness; Emptied the fullness."

Come to your group ready to explain your six word spiritual journey story. And feel free to use a few more than six words.

Session plan

Chalice Lighting

5min

Storytelling is dangerous to those who profit from the way things are because it has the power to show that the way things are is not permanent, not universal, not necessary. Having that real though limited power to put established institutions into question, imaginative literature has also the responsibility of power. The storyteller is the truth-teller. ... We will not know our own injustice if we cannot imagine justice. We will not be free if we do not imagine freedom. We cannot demand that anyone try to attain justice and freedom who has not had a chance to imagine them as attainable. ~ Ursula K. Le Guin

General Check-In

10min

Question: *What's a story (novel, movie, etc) that you've enjoyed or struggled with this month?*

Exercise - Each person share their responses. After sharing, discussion.

35min

Conversation - a question that “grabs” you, and answer.

40min

1. What genre is your current life's story? Are you living a mystery? An adventure story? A romance? A thriller? Is it a half-finished manuscript stuck in writer's block? Are you in the midst of going back and re-writing the ending?
2. What stories did your “elders” pass down to you? Have you cared for them and passed them on as those elders hoped?
3. Who do you tell your secret stories to? If the answer is “no one,” might it be time to find someone?
4. How do you use story? When you tell stories, what is most often the purpose? To connect? To entertain? To heal? To conceal? To remember? To pass on? To teach? To gain power? To say thanks? Were you surprised by your answer?
5. Are you faking a story right now? Are you following a storyline that isn't really you? Does anyone else notice? Do you want them to? What's your plan for bringing this false story to an end?
6. What story did you walk away from? All of us think about that other life — that other story — that we turned down for the one we have now. Whether you regret your past choice or not, that road not taken doesn't ever really go away. It continues to be part of our story.
7. Are stories dangerous? Can a story control others, limit their options? Can imaginative fiction make new possibilities? What is our social/national story? What might it mean to “tell it slant”?
8. Stories of fantasy and science-fiction are often ways to playing with big and different ideas. Do imagine a very different world? What are the questions you are being asked in these stories?

Check-Out - What's your take-away about “story”? Gratitude for this time? **5min**

Closing Words:

Stories are told as spells for binding the world together. ~ John Rouse

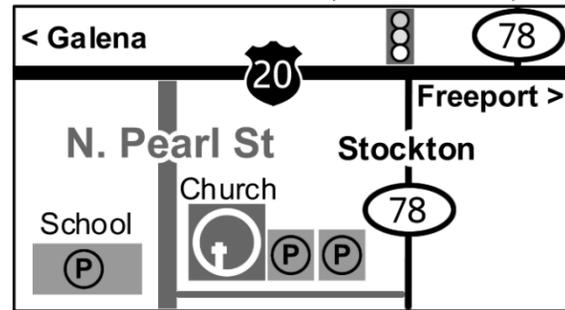
The truth about stories is that that is all we are. ~ Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*

CALENDAR – NOVEMBER 2016

- November 6th, 10:30 a.m. - Johanna Lemon, *Time in Morocco*
- November 13th 10:30 a.m. – Rev. Armida, *The Sermon on the Mount* and our Annual Harvest Potluck Dinner and Pledge Drive Kickoff
- November 14 6:00 p.m. Board of Trustees (Visitors welcome.)
- November 16, Noon, Worship Committee (Call Alice Ericksen for location.)
- November 18-19 Women's Retreat at Sinsinawa Mounds
- November 20th 10:30 a.m. - Mark Haman reads Elizabeth Strong's *Theology of Evolution*
- November 20th 5:00 p.m. Newsletter Deadline
- November 27th 10:30 a.m. Rev. Armida, *Whoever You Are: Do we/Can we Really Welcome Everyone?*
- After the service, 12:15 p.m. Lunch at Armida's house. "Dealing with the Holidays" Limited seating.

CHURCH INFORMATION

219 N Pearl Street, Stockton, IL



Wheel chair parking and elevator access is available from the rear parking lot.

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

CHILD CARE EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

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