



# Buffalo United Methodist Church



November 2020

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

## The Great Letting Go

Bishop Laurie Haller

What's your favorite time of year?" I asked a friend as we were walking.

"Fall. I love this time of year! The leaves are changing, it's getting colder, and the days are growing shorter. I really like the clouds and darkness of fall and winter."

"I'm just the opposite." I said. "I dislike fall and always have. I love light and sun, and when it gets dark so early, it's depressing. Besides, fall was always the time when school started, and as a kid I never wanted to give up the freedom and joy of being outside playing all summer. Summer has always been my favorite season, and I never want it to end."

But there's more to it. A few years ago, I finally realized why fall is challenging for me. Fall is a time of change and movement, and I often struggle with transitions. During the summer, nature explodes with growth, light, energy, warmth, and fruitfulness. Fall, by contrast, is the time when crops have been harvested, fields are plowed under, leaves fall to the ground, and the earth becomes fallow. Wood is chopped, silos are filled, warm clothes come out, storm windows replace screens, and we anticipate hunkering down for the winter. What has been given in such abundance is now taken away.

No wonder I am wary of fall. I don't want to let go of summer, contemplate six months of darkness and isolation, and be forced inside my house, let alone inside my heart, where God waits to teach me patience, hope, and the value of rest and growth.

On my daily walks, I check out the leaves. From a maple tree, I pick three leaves that have not yet made their way to the ground. One is green, one is half green and half red, and one is red. These leaves reflect not

only the progression of fall but the letting go that characterizes the spiritual life.

I confess that I am not ready to yield fully to God. I want to live life on my own terms and remain green forever. At the same time, I yearn to align myself with the fullness of life that God offers. I grudgingly allow myself to turn partly red but keep one foot firmly planted in the life I desire.

I remember John 12:24, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." I turn a brilliant red, offering myself completely to God's cycle of life and death. As I prepare to die to all that prevents me from becoming who God created me to be, my color is a witness to the obedience and trust that guide my life's journey. "The summer ends, and it is time to face another way." (Wendell Berry, "Fourth Sabbath Poem"). . . .

Finally, there is The Great Letting Go, and I fall, playfully surrendering to the ground, where I lie, waiting to be transformed and ultimately reborn in due season. The losing of my life: surrender, emptiness, melancholy. Letting go of possessions, children, perfection, youth, dreams, productivity, relationships, addictions, anger, and old ways of thinking. Completeness in nature. It's done for the season. . . .

Completely free, I am able to see myself and God more clearly. I recite Psalm 8, which I memorized during Disciple Bible Study many years ago, "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

I can't tear my eyes away from the heavens, claiming the beauty and gifts of the darkness in my own

life. "I will love the light, for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness, for it shows me the stars." (Og Mandino)

As I walk, I wonder and ponder, eyes and ears open to God's leading. I ask the hard questions. What do I need to let go of in order for Jesus to fill me up again? Disappointment, bitterness, fear, hopelessness, helplessness?

In the midst of COVID-19, our struggles around racism, worries about the future of our beloved UMC, the health of our local churches, a farm economy that has suffered great losses this fall, and fears around the future of our beloved United Methodist Church, there is a great letting go.

- A hawk glides through the sky. I, too, long to fly free.
- The wind whistles through the trees. I long to follow the wind of the Holy Spirit.
- I rejoice in the warmth of the fall sun, knowing that those precious days are already giving way to the coldness and darkness of winter. God, I long for the warmth of your love in my life so that I can warm the hearts of others. . . .
- I long for the faith of trees firmly rooted in the earth, trees that trust God enough to offer their leaves to death, believing in the new life returning in the spring.
- I long for Jesus to carry me through periods of dormancy, knowing that God can work through me even when I cannot see it. . . .
- I long to say goodbye to what no longer matters rather than cling to what I do not need.
- I long to respond to the persistent call, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1b)

Like nature, I am dying to live. The Great Letting Go.

[The complete text of Bishop Haller's essay, posted on October 26, can be found on her blog "Leading from the Heart" at <http://www.lauriehaller.org/>.]

## What is United Methodist Student Day?

United Methodist Student Day is one of six church-wide Special Sundays with offerings of The United Methodist Church. This event calls upon church members to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The special offering provides scholarships for qualified United Methodist applicants. Traditionally the UMC Student Day is the last Sunday in November. In October Buffalo collected \$130 for World Communion Sunday; let's see if in November we can do equally well in our support of young Methodist scholars.

## General Election Bake Sale

Buffalo UMC is a polling site for the November 3 election, and we will be selling baked goods and other food items. Please deliver your mouth-watering delicacies to the church on Monday, and include a label with the price for each item. And don't forget that two weeks later we will collect cookies for the First Nations November food drive on Wednesday, 19 November. Final note: For the "No Bake Sale" we raised \$320. Darn good job of not baking!

## Buffalo Administrative Board Meeting Wednesday, 21 October 2020

Issues addressed in the Board Meeting:

- The repairs of the kitchen fan have been completed and the bill has been paid.
- A kit for a new all-metal storage shed has been purchased and the building is now being assembled.
- Marlene's grandson Adam has a stump remover and will be hired to remove the hackberry stumps in the north corner of the property and the stumps around the shed.
- The church directory continues to be on hold.
- Bob Fish has agreed to deliver several loads of top soil around the giant oak stump and to reseed that area.
- The Board decided that for our annual support of HACAP we would collect a financial donation to assist a family with children attending Garfield Elementary.
- Due to COVID-19 epidemic, there will be no Taizé service this year.
- The next Administrative Board Meeting has been tentatively scheduled for the third Wednesday in December.

## United Methodist Women

- The October UMW meeting was our first group gathering in over six months. We collected donations for the Marindi Parish Village water project in Tanzania. The money will be sent to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to distribute to the proper officials in Tanzania.
- Jan Kittrell has made over 20 kits for the Mission Ingathering, which occurs on November 7. Bertram UMC donated \$50 to mail the kits and a cash offering of \$175 will also be sent.
- United Methodist Women have chosen Bob and Margie Marrs as recipients of this year's Mission Recognition award. We appreciate their willingness to share their many talents and to help complete ongoing church projects.

# November 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <b>All Saints Sunday</b> 8:45 Worship Service; Charge Conf. (2:00 pm)	2 Deliver Baked Goods for Election Day Sale	3 <b>Election Day</b>	4	5	6	7
8 8:45 Worship Service	9 Spic ' n Span Church Cleaning (9:00 am)	10	11 <b>Veterans Day</b>	12	13	14
15 8:45 Worship Service	16	17	18 Donate Cookies for First Nations	19 UMW Meeting (9:30 am)	20	21
22 <b>Christ the King Sunday</b> 8:45 Worship Service	23	24	25	26 <b>Thanksgiving Day</b>	27	28
29 <b>First Sunday of Advent</b> 8:45 Worship Service	30 <b>Feast of St. Andrew</b>	Thanks to everyone who donated to the Food Bank sweet potatoes, packaged dressing, and crispy onion rings for Thanksgiving meals.  <i>Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. - 1 Corinthians 16:13</i>				

**November Birthdays:** 3 – Kathy Houlahan    7 – Tom Ferguson    11 – Mary Fredericksen

## Nancy Lee Haynes-Carter



A beloved member of our congregation, Nancy Lee Haynes-Carter, 68, died on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2020. A visitation was held at Buffalo on Tuesday, Oct. 20, and the memorial service (and reception) occurred the following Wednesday morning at the church.

Nancy was born Feb. 29, 1952, in Cedar Rapids, the daughter of Albert and Ivean (Dostal) Haynes. She graduated from Prairie High School, Class of 1970. Nancy was united in marriage to Gary Leonard Carter on Jan. 19, 1979. She was a longtime employee of both Farmstead and Cryovac.

Nancy loved doing crafts. She had a kind word for everyone and saw the best in people. Nancy will be greatly missed.

Survivors include her children, Rusty (Tiffany Meier) Carter, Ryen Carter (Rochelle Norton), Tami (Kevin) Votrobeck, Vince Carter (Pam Brink), Kenny (Lori) Carter and Bill (Kim) Carter; siblings, Karen (Robert) Sevier, Pam Divishek, Patty (Mike) Zinser, Rob (Tracy) Dostal and Terry (Ann) Dostal; many grandchildren; and one great-grandson. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gary Leonard Carter; and parents, Albert Haynes and Ivean Dostal.

Per Nancy's request, in lieu of flowers memorials should be directed to the family or Buffalo United Methodist Church.

[This is an edited version of the obituary published in *The Gazette* on October 19.]

## Pastoral Letter

November 1<sup>st</sup> marks "All Saints Day", a church-related holiday not of the Hallmark variety. As is traditional, we will memorialize those church members who have died this year. But it's about more than memorializing those who have gone on before us. It's also about identifying and celebrating those people who live with courage, who change our world in big and little ways, who impact us on some heart-felt level. It's a great time to say "Thank You", even if it's only in our thoughts and prayers.

As a child I learned a 1929 hymn called "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God". It's on page 712 of our United Methodist hymnal (the blue one). I loved hearing about the saints who had "Lived not only in ages past; there are hundreds of thousands still. The world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will." And then it goes on to list people in all kinds of occupations who are saints. Today we might call them essential workers, although that better describes the job that they do rather than the person they are.

Each of us can name a dozen people we have known who have shown us glimpses of Jesus Christ in their lives. Some may be well-known, others completely anonymous. Last night I heard Jimmy Fallon talking

about Corrie ten Boom, the Holocaust survivor who went on to become a well-known Christian author. He obviously had no idea who she was or what she had lived through. In the posted Youtube comments, quite a few people corrected him and pointed out the impact her life and writing had had on them. This month try to give a shout out to one of the saints who has changed your life.

The closing line of the second verse of the hymn says this: "And there's not any reason, no, not the least, why I shouldn't be one too." Embrace being a saint--change the world in one small way this month--try living "as if" you were already a saint. And do it with enthusiasm and joy! Good luck ~Pastor Kathryn

## Annual Charge Conference

Buffalo's Annual Charge Conference is scheduled for Sunday, November 1 at 2:00 p.m. with Rev. Jaymee Burns presiding.

## New Storage Shed

The new storage shed is taking shape even with cold, windy, snowy weather. Thanks for the leadership team of Gary and Judy Hackney and the many hours they have spent in preparation and construction.

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