

News From The Rock

January 2021

Solid Rock United Methodist Church • Warren, Indiana

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

In-person worship suspension extended

A task force formed at the last Solid Rock Administrative Council meeting has determined that, due to the continued high rate of Covid infections in the community, suspension of in-person worship should be extended. The suspension will continue through January 17, with the hope that the infection rate will be reduced enough to resume on January 24. The Solid Rock Administrative Council is scheduled to meet on January 19 and will evaluate the plan at that time.

Alternative worship options include:

- Links to prerecorded services will continue to be posted each Sunday morning on our website and Facebook page.
- This prerecorded service will be broadcast on FM 87.9 to the parking lot Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Additionally, you may request a printed copy of each week's sermon or a DVD of the prerecorded service. If you wish to take advantage of one of these options, please contact the church office at 375-3873.

Calling Ministry

During these challenging times it is easy to forget that we are still a connected part of the body of Christ. Sometimes a simple phone call can make all the difference in the world to someone who is feeling lonely or forgotten.

Solid Rock is organizing a phone minis-



try. We are looking for persons willing to make phone calls to members of our church family, just to check in and see how they're doing and whether they have needs with which the church might assist. If you are willing to participate in this ministry, please call the church office at 375-3873 to express your interest. After we have compiled a list of participants, you will receive a list of individuals and families to contact.

Thank you for prayerfully considering this ministry opportunity.

Solid Rock Bible Study

"Have a Blessed New Year" is your greeting for 2021. Blessings are from the Lord and are more permanent than our feelings of happiness/depression. The apostle Paul urged the early church to encourage each other. With this in mind, our weekly Bible studies look

forward to each Sunday sermon by Pastor Paul Burris. In the first days of the church, there were many obstacles to the spreading of the Good News of Jesus. In these current days of difficulty, take time to read God's Word and seek ways for that Word to impact your life. Following are the scriptures for the Sundays of January.

- Sunday, January 3: Micah 6:1-8, "My Life" (do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God)
- Sunday, January 10: Mark 5:1-20, "Unshackled" (what is your name?; tell others of God's mercy shown to you)
- Sunday, January 17: Mark 6:30-44, "Faith Sharing in Service" (feed the

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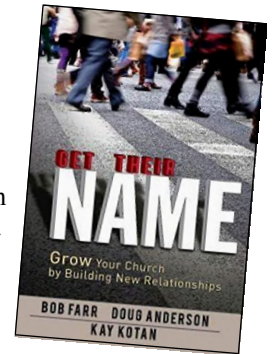


In Matthew 28:18 Jesus instructs his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations...." Christ is speaking to his followers through the ages. Therefore as followers of Christ it is up to us to figure out how we live out this command in our church and our daily lives.

Starting January 17th I would like to invite you to join me in a study of the book *Get Their Name: Grow Your Church by Building New Relationships*, by Bob Farr. I will be preaching on this topic through Lent. This study will be a part of an effort here at Solid Rock United Methodist church to define our mission of Making Disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To do so we will need to set goals and identify strategies that will equip us to reach out to the unchurched in our community.

You can purchase a copy of the book at Amazon.com for \$10.99 (there are a number of used copies as well for a cheaper price). If you have any questions about obtaining a copy of the book, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am posting several excerpts from the book in the newsletter for you to ponder as you prepare for this important time in the life of our church. It is my prayer that you will open your hearts and minds to God's leading through this process.

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Our Vision: Sharing and experiencing the life-giving message of Jesus, to restore wholeness and build an intentional community of hope, relationship, and purpose for everyone.

COVID-19 Hurts. But the Bible Brings Hope.

In times of trial and trouble, many Americans turn to the Bible for encouragement. And with good reason, according to a new study. In the middle of a global pandemic, a contentious election, and social unrest, the American Bible Society (ABS), with assistance from Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program, found a strong correlation between Scripture reading and hope.

Frequent Bible readers rated themselves 33 points more hopeful than irregular Scripture readers did in two surveys of more than 1,000 people done six months apart. The study also found that people are more hopeful when they read Scripture more frequently.

News From The Rock

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Warren, Indiana 46792

www.solidrockumc.com

Worship Schedule

Sunday School at 9:00 (temporarily suspended)

Worship at 10:00

at 485 Bennett Drive, Warren

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Church Office

Office Phone: 375-3873

Monday - Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Closed Friday

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News deadline for the February newsletter: January 24

On a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 being the most hopeful, Americans who report reading the Bible three or four times per year scored 42; people who read monthly scored 59; weekly, 66; and multiple times per week, 75.

People who never read the Bible are slightly more hopeful than those who rarely read it, according to the study. But non-Bible-readers are about 5 points less hopeful than those who read Scripture on a monthly basis.

Bible reading—along with other forms of community and discipleship, such as going to church or participating in a small group—appear to contribute to people's sense of well-being and happiness, said Tyler VanderWeele, director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

"The churches have an important and profound role in contributing to people's well-being in general—and especially so during this time," he said.

The findings are consistent with other studies on the impact of religious affiliation and human flourishing, according to VanderWeele. People who attend church and read their Bibles tend to be happier, are less likely to die by suicide, and have a greater sense of purpose in their lives.

This two-phase study is unique, though, because it assessed people before and after the coronavirus pandemic hit the US. The first survey was in January and the second was in June, when the total number of confirmed cases passed 2.5 million and the World Health Organization tallied more than 125,000 American deaths.

The most interesting data, from the viewpoint of ABS, was how the Bible, church, and Christian disciplines seemed to help people through this dark period. This data showed that the decline in the measures of human flourishing were less pronounced in people who were reading their Bibles regularly and participating in church, either in person or online.

Scripture engagement seems to have peaked right after COVID-19 started—the highest it's been in years—but then it dropped significantly toward the end of June. This is a common trend when people go through trauma, according to Scott Ross, who works on trauma healing with churches at ABS. While many will turn to the Bible for answers in unsettling times, they often stop reading faithfully after a while. What's happening now looks like society-wide response to trauma, in a way.

But the evidence shows that Americans who actively engage with the Bible and in corporate worship score higher on every measure of human flourishing, including

better mental and physical health and a deeper sense of character and virtue.

They even have a greater sense of financial and material stability compared to those who don't attend church or engage with the Bible.

Christians are also measurably more hopeful.

On the 1-to-100 scale, non-Christians scored about 50, non-practicing Christians

scored 57, and Christians who regularly participate in the life of a local congregation scored 66.

—by Adam Macinnis,

Excerpted from *Christianity Today*



An ongoing goal

Still searching for a New Year's resolution? None is more worthy than becoming Christ-like. In fact, 19th-century evangelist Henry Drummond calls it "the only thing in the whole world worth caring for."

Two modern-day authors offer more insights. Stormie Omartian points out that we're either making

progress or backsliding on this goal. "There is no neutral position in the Lord," she writes. "You are either becoming more like Christ every day or you're becoming less like him." And followers of Jesus must keep the goal always in focus. Christ-likeness is our "eventual destination," writes Rick Warren, but the "journey will last a lifetime."



Live in the light

Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, "How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or 10 years from now?" There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step — what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.

The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all our shadows away.

—Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*

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See you Sunday,
Pastor Paul

Get Their Name

After consulting with more than four hundred churches throughout the country, we have observed that the primary focus for most evangelism effort is on recovering inactive members. Evangelism becomes passive, waiting for them to come, being polite when they arrive, helping them to join our organization, and then trying to get them to come back if they quit attending worship or giving money. This hands-off style of evangelism is not working—and has not worked for more than fifty years!

We must help people in our churches move past the fear of inviting or sharing faith with others and move toward an active, passionate missionary lifestyle. We must recapture our missionary soul as professing Christians in America. We must learn what we have been afraid or ill equipped to do.

We can't keep waiting for people to arrive at our doors. We have done this for too many years. This passive behavior goes against the missional roots of our Christian faith. We have gone from being outwardly focused to being inwardly centered. This static and inward passivity won't work in a secular world where the gospel must be actively demonstrated to be communicated.

How We Get Evangelism Wrong

Observation One

Inwardly focused churches tend to define and practice evangelism as "reconnecting disconnected church folks."

Observation Two

Outwardly focused churches define and practice evangelism as connecting the unconnected folks to Jesus and then to the church.

Observation Three

The pool of church-ed people to connect with is dramatically shrinking, while the pool of the unchurched, never-connected population is growing exponentially. This is especially true among the millennial generation.

Observation Four

Early denominational movements focused on unconnected folks, while the es-

tablished churches of the day focused on and supported the folks who were already church-ed when they arrived in America.

These movements become institutional over time, and they focused on membership rather than discipleship. The mainline churches were dislodged from the center of American culture by the upheaval of the 1960s. The situation became further confused by the resulting rise of religious conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s. This led to the American polarization of religious liberals and religious conservatives, which in turn led to the disaffection of youth from religion in the 1990s and 2000s. The mainline churches as a result are bewildered and unsure about how to proceed through an accelerated state of decline.

If any denomination is to have a future, it must reconnect to the biblical purpose and mission of making new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. To accomplish this mission, it requires us to be once again people who widely, continually, and fervently share their faith in Jesus Christ with those who do not yet have such a faith. This sharing must occur in relevant ways, without being obnoxious, so that they might have the possibility to come to this life-transforming and saving faith.

—Excerpted from *Get Their Name: Grow Your Church by Building Relationships* by Bob Farr, Doug Anderson, and Kay Kotan ©2013 Abingdon Press. Used with permission.

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crowds with what you have; pick up the leftovers)

- Sunday, January 24: Exodus 18:1-27, "Faith Sharing in Groups" (gather others to help: who fear God, who are trustworthy, who hate dishonest gain)
- Sunday, January 31: Acts 8:4-8, "Faith Sharing in Worship" (proclaim Jesus, overcome unclean spirits, bring wholeness with joy)

Please take note of Pastor Paul's urging to enter into a new church-wide study of "Get Their Name" to move us into new ways of outreach to a broken world with the good news of Jesus. The Lord is with you! Revelation 22: 20b, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

-Joe Haney, Contributor

Donation Options

Your continued financial support of Solid Rock is appreciated. Here are some giving options for those not attending in-person worship.

1. Mail a check to: Solid Rock UMC, P.O. Box 322, Warren, IN 46792.
2. Most banks have online banking options, which are usually free of charge. These can be set up as one-time payments or scheduled ongoing payments. Contact your bank for details.
3. Donate online or by using a mobile app. Solid Rock has enabled giving via Vanco GivePlus. Donations can be made using checking or savings accounts or credit/debit cards. To get started, simply go to solidrockumc.com and click on "Donate."



solidrockumc.com



November Financial Update

General Fund Receipts.....	\$17,080
General Fund Expenses	\$9,998

Sufficient for the day

John Newton (1725-1807), author of "Amazing Grace," wrote: "We may easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed for it. But the load will ... be too heavy for us, if we carry yesterday's burden over again today, and then add tomorrow's." This maxim might be easy to dismiss unless we knew about Newton's troubled life.

Having been pressed into naval service and then slavery, Newton was finally rescued but became a slave-ship captain. He faced abuse, contemplated murder-suicide, suffered a stroke and was caught in a storm. When he cried out to God, the waves subsided, prompting a spiritual conversion for Newton, who became a priest and abolitionist.

We never know how God will transform our sinful past into future good, but we can trust he will. That adds power to Newton's advice, which echoes Jesus' words: "Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34, ESV).

Numbering our days

To fix what they call a disorganized date-tracking system, professors Steve Hanke

and Dick Henry have developed a "permanent calendar." On it, January 1 is always a Monday, so holi-



days and birthdays occur on the same day every year. The 364-day calendar eliminates leap years, time zones, Halloween and every Friday the 13th. Instead of leap days, "every five or six years, we'll have an extra week at the end [of December] when you can party," says Henry.

Because the permanent calendar is predictable, it reportedly would save money and time. Yet despite almost two decades of work, the idea hasn't taken off.

However we track our lives, we do well to remember this prayer: "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ... Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:1, 12 NIV).

A Prayer for Peace This Year

Father, I know that you are all-powerful, that you are Sovereign, and that nothing is too difficult for you. Yet



today, I still struggle with worry and fear, still carrying the same burdens leftover from yesterday. It's hard to shake it off even though I'm desperate to leave it fully in your hands. Please lift all the things that are weighing me down, right off shoulders and heavy heart, and give me the peace that only you can provide. I know that you care for whatever concerns me, and your ears are open to my prayers. I know that you understand my struggles, and you see right where I am, even on the days I feel that no one notices. Guard my heart and mind in you today, as I meditate on your words and truth.

—Debbie McDaniel on crosswalk.com

