



The UMW Voice

The Newsletter of Bozeman's United Methodist Women

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Spiritually Speaking

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I spent a few hours this weekend decluttering parts of my home. As I added things to the pile for donating—kitchen items, extra bedding, knickknacks—I frequently hesitated. Maybe I'll need this one day, I thought. Or maybe I'd like this again if I just move it to a different room.

Holding on to things conflicts with my desire to clear space in my life. It makes me wonder what else I hang onto. My need for approval, my perfectionist tendencies, and my old stories all come to mind. I know I need to let go of my old stories so God can transform my life to fit His story.

And this process of clearing out the old begins, I believe, with confession and forgiveness. We don't talk much about confession—or sin, for that matter—these days. I want to avoid guilt as much as the next person, but the solemn truth is that I am not holy. I need God's help to become the person He wants me to become. I know God loves me as I am, and I also know God wants me to draw closer to Him. What creates distance from God is sin, and what bridges that distance is confession.

Memories from my Catholic childhood include kneeling in a dark confessional waiting for the priest to slide open the window so I could tell him how I'd fought with my brother, lied to my parents, and said a bad word. I also remember how light my heart felt when I left the church after having said my five Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys as penance.

I don't miss that childhood ritual, but sometimes I do miss that lightness of spirit. Psalm 51 says *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.* What I've rediscovered is confession, this time a personal and sincere statement of sorrow for my actions (or inactions), a request for forgiveness, and a prayer for help in doing better next time. I know I can come before God this way as often as I need to because his infinite mercy and love are always available to me. And then I can move forward instead of getting stuck in guilt and shame.

Just as I know I will need to clear out my cupboards and closets again, I know I will need to ask God's forgiveness over and over. Grace comes from knowing He will grant it whenever I ask.



Illustrating God's Love through Art

Women in Bozeman UMW gathered in the fireside room at Aspen Pointe March 7 to enjoy learning and fellowship over delicious goodies and beverages provided by the chef. Pastor Deb Christine, who had recently traveled to El Salvador, told the group about internationally-known artist, Fernando Llort. His colorful scenes are found on pictures, ceramics, wooden boxes, and walls of buildings in his native country. He taught people to replicate his simple style as a way for them to earn a living.

Pastor Deb distributed sheets of paper, some with an outline of a Llort-style image so participants could fill them with bright markers, or to design their own picture based on Llort's example. As a former elementary teacher, I delighted in permission to keep my original drawing simple and still consider it great art! Remembering everyone is unique and has an interesting story, we appreciated Pastor Deb sharing her gifts as an accomplished art teacher and artist. --- Jackie Montgomery

Want to learn more about prayer?

Come to the **Annual UMW Spring Luncheon on Wednesday, May 2** at Noon in the Friendship Room. No need to be a member. Guest speaker will be Tish Herries, Conference UMW Coordinator for Spiritual Nurture and Outreach on the topic "Let Us Pray." A deeply spiritual artist, she resides in Missoula and was a member of BUMC and our youth coordinator back in the 1970s/80s. She says we will be discussing and trying to find some individual clarity by seeking answers to: What is prayer? Why do we pray? When do we pray? How do we pray?

Make a reservation with Wanda Myers at jwmyers@yahoo.com or 587-3511 by Friday, April 27. The traditional chicken croissant menu will be served at a cost of \$10.

April 21 - Western Mountains Spring District Meeting at Kalispell Epworth UMC "What does the Lord Require of You?"

Link to registration form: <https://www.yacumc.org/files/websites/www/WM+Spring+registration.pdf>

Upcoming Meetings and Dates to Remember

April 10	Tues	Mission Team Meeting 10am-noon
April 17	Tues	Newly Retired Group, IHOP, 10am
April 18	Wed	Miriam-Ruth Circle, church conference room, 9:30-11:00am Trinity Circle, Fireside Room, 1:15 pm
April 21	Sat	Western Mountains District Meeting, Epworth UMC, Kalispell
April 23	Mon	Inkspots card making 4-6pm at the home of Martha Hendricks myhendricks@icloud.com
April 26	Thurs	Noon Luncheon Group Christus Collegium, 12-1:00 pm
April 27	Friday	Have you RSVP'd for the Spring Luncheon?
May 2	Wed	UMW General Meeting Spring Luncheon, Friendship Room, "Let Us Pray"