



Early one Monday morning in the spring of this year, I was sitting on the Fairhope Pier with two things in hand. One was a fishing pole. The other was a paperback copy of a book whose title is worth the price on its own: *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace* by Miroslav Volf. The fishing pole didn't bring much of a return that day. I was hooked by the book, however, and a big idea that has continued to reel me in ever since:

Unlike gifts received from Santa Claus, whose gifts are the end of the story, God's gifts oblige us to something further. To what do God's gifts oblige us? What is the nature of obligation? How do we make the transition from self-centeredness to God-given generosity? (Volf, p. 39).

At first, I must admit that I stumbled on the notion of "obligation." At our core, most of us do not like to be told what to do by anyone (not even God!). So how do God's gifts oblige us? And what might possibly motivate us to respond in a way that is inspired not by guilt, but grace? Clearly, there is room to grow in our understanding of how God gives and for what purpose.

In thinking about this, we are going to spend several weeks in worship experimenting with a particular formula:

Acceptance of Obligation + Surrender to Love = Joyful Obedience

Christian obedience should always be based on surrender to a person, not simply acceptance of an obligation. That person is Jesus Christ! Thus, the 'abundant life' requires a surrender to love, not just submission to duty.

Too often people only see Christianity in terms of rules and morality—a system of obligations and prohibitions. This entirely misses the point of Christ following. Christian obedience is more like what loving families give each other than what soldiers give their superiors. At their best, families demonstrate their love for each other by doing for one another out of adoration and delight. And so it should be with Christians and their God.

"Far from being incompatible with obedience, surrender provides the motive for obedience. We should obey God because he has won our hearts in love. If he has not, our focus should not be so much on obedience as on knowing his love. For once we get that solidly in place, obedience begins to take care of itself" (*Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality* by David Benner).

Is it time to fall in love all over again? How wonderful that would be!

My prayer for the people of Fairhope United Methodist Church throughout this series is that Paul's encouragement to the church at Colossae will be true for us as well:

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving (Colossians 2:6-7).

Much Obligated,

Darren



FAIRHOPE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

October 31, 2021

8:30am Service

PRELUDE

The Day is Surely Drawing Near

(Praetorius)

WELCOME AND MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

God said, "Let there be light."

And there was light.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

And the light shone in the darkness.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world."

And the light shall not be quenched.

OPENING PRAYER

Come, Lord Jesus, here where we have gathered in your name. We need to hear your voice and learn of you. Speak to us of gentleness and strength. In your compassion, draw us into your merciful embrace. Hush the distracting thoughts clamoring for attention in our minds. Center our spirits in your peace. Open our hearts to your wise teaching, that we may grow wise and strong in the ways of your kingdom. Amen.

*HYMN OF PRAISE #428

For the Healing of the Nations

*THE APOSTLES' CREED

*GLORIA PATRI

OFFERING

I Surrender All

(arr. by Eithun)

*DOXOLOGY

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Faithful God, your love stands firm from generation to generation,
your mercy is always abundant.

Give us open and understanding hearts, that having heard your word,
we may seek Christ's presence in all whom we meet. Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Colossians 1:24-29

HYMN OF PREPARATION #430 *O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee*

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 25:1-13

SERMON

"Much Obligated...to Participation"

Dr. Darren M. McClellan

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN #432

Jesu, Jesu

SENDING FORTH

POSTLUDE

Lord Keep us Steadfast in Thy Word

(Praetorious)

Assisting in Worship Today:

Dr. Darren M. McClellan, Rev. Ontonio Christie, Rev. Laura Parker

Acolytes: Darby Jones, Savannah Grace Jones Crucifer: Elliot Determann

Music: Tom Hood, John Richardson, FUMC Handbell Ensemble

Media and Sound: Peyton Phillips, Colin Richardson



We love knowing you were here today. Thank you for choosing to worship with Fairhope UMC! If you are a member, regular attender or a visitor, scan this QR code and register your attendance for today.

Prayers for the People

Medical personnel and first responders

Sympathies:

Family and friends of **Virginia Trego**.

Martha Booth in the death of her aunt, Joan Wyatt Smith.

Norma and Bud Walden in the death of her uncle, Kenneth Wilkins.

Wanda and Rusty Winfree in the death of her uncle and aunt, Faye and Roger LeGros.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

November 7 Time Change (Clocks go back an hour) "What Is In a Name?" Dr. Darren McClellan (Sanctuary) | Rev. Laura Parker (Gathering)

On this All Saints Sunday, we will be remembering the lives of those in our congregation who have finished their course in faith in the past year, and gathering around the Lord's Table for Holy Communion.

November 14 "Honor Day"

Dr. Darren McClellan (8:30 Sanctuary) Dr. Darren McClellan (Combined Service in the Christian Life Center)

This is a day of celebration! On this day, we will offer our thanksgiving for the honorable service and sacrifice of our Veterans, we will honor our future as we recognize the new babies in our congregation over the last year, and we will honor our own commitment to God and each other through the consecration of our financial pledge for 2022. Dinner on the grounds will follow immediately after the 11:00 service. It will be a glorious day!

Here is a brief summary of our current stewardship:

Offering Received October 24, 2021 - \$29,811

(Online - \$8,359 ~ Mail/Personal delivery - \$21,951)

For those of you who would like to bring your offering to the church, we have a mail slot located in the door across from the glass doors in the breezeway entrance of the education building. Thank you so much for your continued support to Fairhope United Methodist Church. Jeff White, Business Administrator

WEDNESDAY SUPPER AT FAIRHOPE UMC

5:00PM-6:00PM / NOVEMBER 3, 2021



MENU

WHITE CHICKEN
ENCHILADAS

FIESTA RICE

BLACK BEANS

CORNBREAD

\$5 FOR ADULTS
\$4 FOR CHILDREN
MAX \$20 PER FAMILY

PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH
OFFICE OR GO ONLINE TO
MAKE YOUR RESERVATION
251-928-1148

WWW.FAIRHOPEUMC.ORG

Fairhope UMC Welcome Dinner

New Members & Visitors

December 7, 2021

6:00 pm | Fellowship Hall

One of the things we love to do at Fairhope United Methodist Church is make new people feel at home. We are opening the doors wide for hospitality and hosting a dinner for new members and visitors on Tuesday, December 7th, at 6:00 pm. Pastors, staff and volunteers will be present for you to get to know, as well as other folks who are somewhat new to our family. Please join us for this fun and informative event. *Childcare can be provided upon request. RSVP to the church office by calling (251)928-1148 or online:*

<https://www.fairhopeumc.org/article/fairhope-umc-welcome-dinner/>

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

"PASTOR'S CLASS" UMC 101 ~ Next class is Wednesday, November 3

All are invited to join Pastor Darren for an interactive Bible study and discussion of the historic theology, beliefs, and mission of the United Methodist Church. This class meets in the Fellowship Hall immediately following supper on Wednesdays, 6:10-7:10 pm. No registration necessary. Please note: Nursery can be provided upon request for children 4 years and under.

New Beginnings Sunday School (Phil Webb's Class) is temporarily relocating to the Parlor of the CLC beginning this Sunday.

Invitation To Join The Church

Present this to the pastor during the last song.

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

_____ Joining by Transfer of Church Membership

Transferring from: _____

_____ Joining by Profession of Faith (have not previously been baptized or a member of a church).

_____ Joining by Reaffirmation of Faith (have been baptized but not sure last church where membership was held).

If you are not yet ready to join but would like more information about church membership, contact one of our pastors or attend **Coffee with the Pastors on Nov. 14 @9:45 am (CLC-FH)**.

Stay connected!

THE LINK

Weekly Newsletter

OCTOBER 24, 2021

WE SEND THIS BY
EMAIL WEEKLY
NOT ON OUR EMAIL LIST?
SUBSCRIBE USING
THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR
PHONE CAMERA:





JOIN THE CHRISTMAS CHOIR!

Tom is making plans for the Fairhope UMC Christmas Cantata and is in need of NARRATORS and SINGERS! Don't want to sing year round but want to make a JOYFUL noise at Christmas?

JOIN THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA CHOIR!

Here are a few details:

Name of the Cantata:

*What Sweeter Music: A Festival of Carols
by Mark Hayes*

Date of the Cantata:

Sunday, December 12 (Traditional Services)

Rehearsals:

Wednesday nights @ 6:30 pm (Sanctuary)

Have Questions? Interested?

*Contact Tom Hood, Director of Music Ministries,
tom.hood@fairhopeumc.org*

CARING MINISTRIES

All Saint's is next Sunday, November 7....

We will be honoring members who have died since last year's All Saint's Day in all the morning worship services. Be in prayer for the families in this reflective time.

Support Group Meetings....

Stephen Ministry Supervision meets in person Monday, November 1 at 6:00 pm in B-114. If you are in need of a Christian friend who can be a sounding board and walk alongside you in challenging times, contact Dr. Ann Pearson, Stephen minister Leader. Ann will be happy to connect you with a Stephen Minister.

Caregiver's Support Group meets Tuesday Nov. 2 at 9:30 am in the Church Library. For a Zoom invite, please contact Dr. Ann Pearson ann.pearson@fairhopeumc.org.

Opportunities to be in service....

We will be making church wide deliveries to our members in November and December. Dates are not confirmed for these deliveries but we would love to know if you might be available. Contact Dr. Ann Pearson at ann.pearson@fairhpeumc.org or call the church office 251-928-1148.



Sunday School (3 yr-6th grades)

IMPORTANT UPDATE: This Sunday (October 31), ALL CLASSES will meet in the Pier Room.

Online registration remains open for the following Wednesday night programs – the link is provided below!

If you have an interest in serving in one of these programs, please contact Jenna Hood, Director of Children's Ministries at 928-1148. As always, you do not need to have a child in children's ministries to serve!

Children's Choir: K-6th grade | Wednesdays, 4:15-5:00pm | *Wesley Hall (Ed Bldg, 1st floor)

We are currently preparing to sing in the Choir Christmas Program on December 12th at the 8:30 and 11:00 am traditional services.

SWIFT: 5th & 6th grade | Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30pm | Attic (CLC, 2nd floor)

Topic this week "What if Jesus is a lunatic?"

* Students will learn and know how it feels to own their faith. Each week they grapple with a specific question about faith, relationships, choices, and search God's Word for answers. This group engages in large and small group discussions, mission projects, free-play in the gym and social get-togethers!

* New friends always welcome! Pre-registration is greatly appreciated.

JOIN US FOR PIER & PIER34



PIER & PIER34: K-4th Grades | Wednesdays, 6:00pm-7:15pm

Wesley Hall (Ed Bldg, 1st Floor)

Topic this week "Game of Life: Memory"

K-4th graders are invited to join us for "The Game of Life: Learning to Live by God's Rules." This fun series uses classic family games to teach all about living for Jesus! All Pier & Pier34 kids will gather together in our large group experience and enjoy energetic worship, our Bible story & message, and participate in some exciting opening games. Then, we will split into our Pier & Pier34 small groups and learn how to apply what we have just discovered to our lives through activities and discussion! It is going to be so much fun. Grab a friend and make plans to be there! Pre-registration is greatly appreciated!



ACOLYTES IN ACTION

Have an acolyte that loves to serve? We want to see our #acolytesinaction! We are so proud of our kids for serving in this way. So, take a picture of your acolyte serving and send it to Jenna at jenna.hood@fairhopeumc.org to share on our children's Insta page or post it on your own Instagram account for us to see! Don't forget to tag @fairhopeumc_childrens_min and use the hashtag #acolytesinaction! We can't wait to see all of our wonderful acolytes!



Sign up at www.fairhopeumc.org/wednesdayprograms



Sunday Night Youth//6:30-8:00pm

(November 7, 14, 28)

***No Youth on 10/31 or 11/21**

7th-12th grade

Sunday Night Youth takes place almost every week and includes: worship, games, free time in the gym, dinner and so much more. We provide an opportunity for every student in grades 7-12 to worship together with one another and we give them space to build relationships. We can't wait to see you there! There's no need to register and you can always bring a friend. We hope to see YOU this Sunday night! Parents, if you'd like to know more about what youth series we are studying. Simply download the PARENT CUE and read the email updates that are sent out at the beginning of every new series. We provide discussion starters and new ideas on how to continue the conversation and growth at home.



Wednesday Nights//6:30-7:45pm

7th-12th grade

Community Groups are for students in grades 7-12. We provide an opportunity for every person committed to attending C-Groups to grow deeper in their faith with a community of believers their own age to support & pray with them. Our C-Groups meet 6:30-7:45pm on Wednesdays.



Do you need to get plugged-into Student Ministry? Students and Parents, you can keep up with all that is going on in our area of ministry and get the news first! You can follow us on social media & receive text messages customized just for Student Ministry information. Follow these simple steps below:

Instagram: @fairhopeumc.youth

Facebook: @fhsaltstudents

Text Message Reminders: Text the word "Saltstudents" to the number "43506"

SAVE THE DATE

DISCOVERY WEEKEND 2022

FEB 11-13, 2022

Discovery is a 43-hour spiritual retreat designed for Middle School students held on our church campus and led by High School students and Adult Mentors. Registration for 7th-8th grade participants & 9th-12th grade High School leadership will open on October 1! Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details. If you'd like to help in an adult leadership role, please contact our DW Directors, Larry or Megan Smith.

CONFIRMATION 2022

Begins January 9th

12:30-2:00 pm

Registration for our upcoming Confirmation Class will be emailed to parents of current 7th graders on November 7. The class begins on Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 12:30pm with an orientation which will include lunch for students participating in the class and their parents. Please watch for the registration link in the bulletin and through our social media accounts.

Note: A requirement for our Confirmation Class is to participate in Discovery Weekend. The important details can be found below. Please save this date as well.

MIDDLE SCHOOL//DISCOVERY WEEKEND

February 11th-13th, 2022

Discovery is a 43-hour spiritual retreat designed for Middle School students held on our church campus and led by High School students and Adult Mentors. Registration for 7th-8th grade participants & 9th-12th grade High School leadership will open on October 1! Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details. If you'd like to help in an adult leadership role, please contact our DW Directors, Larry or Megan Smith.

HIGH SCHOOL//SKI RETREAT

January 14-16, 2022

9th-12th grade

Join the high school youth for a Ski Retreat to Beech Mountain, North Carolina. The cost is \$350 per person and the deposit of \$100 is due no later than December 7th, 2021. The price includes snow tubing, skiing, hotel, travel and breakfast. You will need money for lunch and dinner daily. We meet to leave 3:30 pm on Friday and return Sunday by 10:00 pm.