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New Year and New Plans

We always have our New Year's resolutions. We list either bad things we want to stop doing, like eating, or good things we want to begin, like a diet. Well, that's me at the moment.

One great new idea is to read the Bible throughout the year. I love to hear the stories of church members who one year begin the task to find out it has been a joy. They love what they have learned. The reading of God's word daily becomes such an important part of one's life that it becomes hard to fathom not being in God's word daily.

The Bible is available to us in so many ways and is so easy to read and understand. It was not always like that? The Bible was written in three different languages. It was written on three different continents. It is non-linear, meaning that its books are not chronological. For hundreds of years, every word in the Bible was written in capital letters and everyone letter was side by side. There were no punctuation marks and vowels were omitted. If we looked a Genesis written in English, it would have started like this: NTHBGNN-NGGDCRDTTHHVNSNDTHRTH

In the 13th century, chapters were introduced by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Over the next 200 years the Bible was copied by hand. In 1448 Rabbi Nathan startled the world by breaking the Old Testament into verses. The New Testament was divided into numbered verses in 1551 by a French printer. He was doing a side by side three column translation when he got the idea. He was rushed for time, and some say he numbered the verses while riding on horseback from Paris to Lyons. This would explain the odd divisions because of the jostling of the horse. Regardless that is the basic verse layout we have today.

The Bible was written from around 1700BC to about 100AD and has endured over 3000 years. Many scribes worked by candlelight and used quill pens to translate and copy it over and over. Finally, thanks to a Catholic archbishop, a Jewish rabbi and a Protestant printer, "NTHBGNNNGGDCRDTTHHVNSNDTHRTH" was turned into, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Today we take this marvelous book for granted. How amazing that God's word is in our language, divided into books, chapters, verses, and has punctuation for easier reading. There are so many easy to read translations that are faithful to the original text. Let's use this amazing resource and dig into God's word in the new year.

Blessings,
 Hale



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Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

THE PATH FORWARD JANUARY 2023

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5
A CONVERSATION WITH
REV. JAY HANSON

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11
A CONVERSATION WITH
REV. DAVID THOMPSON,
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
COASTAL GEORGIA DISTRICT

JANUARY 12 – FEBRUARY 21
COVENANT OF PRAYER FOR 40 DAYS

EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEW YEAR!

MAT PILATES
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY
9:15 AM IN BAILEY HALL
\$40/MONTH

SIT FIT!
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY
10:15 AM IN BAILEY HALL
\$40/MONTH

FOR CLASS DESCRIPTIONS AND
TO SIGN-UP, VISIT
WWW.SIUMC.ORG/EXERCISE

Celebrating Our Members!

Sunday, January 22

During worship and a special Coffee Hour on January 22nd, we will celebrate our members! We will recognize our long-time church members, including our founding members, as well as our newest members of SIUMC.

Disciple 2 Bible Study

Everyone is invited to participate in Disciple 2 Bible Study in 2023. This study series will be focusing on Genesis, Exodus and Luke, Acts. It will be a 34-session study beginning January 10 – May 2, a summer break, then August – December 5, 2023. You do not have to taken Disciple 1. Rev. Rob and Gayle Grotheer will serve as facilitators for the study. Email rob@siumc.org to sign up.

Special Words from SIUMC Staff**Paul Chant, Director of Music Ministries**

My career as a church Director of Music (organist and choir director) began on January 1, 1978, exactly 45 years ago, at St. Paul's United Church in Perth, Ontario, Canada. I directed the choirs and played the organ and the piano for two Sunday morning Worship Services every week. Perth was 50 miles away, so I drove more than 200 miles (two roundtrips) every week. I was twenty years old, a full-time university music student, and destined to be a lifelong church musician, making a joyful noise to the Lord. I followed in my mother's footsteps.

For my entire adult life, I have known the words to two well-known and beautiful hymns written by Frances Ridley Havergal, 1836-1879, including "Lord, Speak to Me" and "Take My Life and Let It Be." In celebration of my 45 years being a church music director, and because it is the beginning of a new year, it is appropriate that I share with you the words that she wrote for "New Year's Hymn."

*Standing at the portal of the opening year,
words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.*

*Refrain: Onward then, and fear not, children of the day;
for his Word shall never, never pass away.*

*For the year before us, O what rich supplies!
For the poor and needy living streams shall rise;
for the sad and sinful shall his grace abound;
for the faint and feeble perfect strength be found. (Refrain)*

*He will never fail us, he will not forsake;
his eternal cov'nant he will never break.
Resting on his promise, what have we to fear?
God is all-sufficient for the coming year. (Refrain)*

Many thanks and blessings for a safe, happy, and healthy New Year,
Paul

**Rev. Rob Grotheer,
Associate Pastor**

Henri Nouwen wrote of "being God's beloved." We begin to think first of other people's lives. We see that they are as beloved as we are. "One of the profound experiences of the spiritual life is that when you discover yourself as being the beloved son or daughter of God, you suddenly have new eyes to see the belovedness of others." (Discovering our gift through service to others speech, 1994).

Mark 9:33-35 tells us of the Disciples arguing which of them was the greatest. May we learn from the Disciple's mistake. May we find a new life in this new year.

Prayer: Lord, in these days of the new year, take away our desires to be the best, the greatest, the first, the most famous, the most popular, the wealthiest, the most powerful. Instead, grant us a true spirit of repentance and a willingness to be the last, the least, the lowliest, the poorest, the smallest, the least important. Amen.

AND SO THE ADVENTURE BEGINS!**SIUMC CHILDREN AND YOUTH****First Friday Event**
Friday, Jan 6th at 6pm

Families of all ages are invited to the Pavilion for an evening of fellowship. Families are asked to bring a finger food to share, and the church will provide a platter of chicken tenders. We will have a fire in the pavilion for smores and lots of outdoor activities for children including GaGa Ball, basketball and a few big group games.
We hope you will join us!

Confirmation Class

Confirmation is the process for our young people to learn more about the Christian faith and what it means to be a member of a church. Students currently in 5th through 7th grades are asked to participate as well as older youth who have not yet gone through Confirmation. Confirmation will meet every Sunday for 10 weeks starting Jan. 22nd from 5-7pm. Students will also participate in a Confirmation Retreat the weekend of March 3rd-5th. Please email emma@siumc.org to register your student.

YOUTH SCHEDULE
6th - 12th grades

Wednesday, Jan. 11th
6-7:30pm
Youth Night

Friday, Jan. 20th
7-8pm
Bonfire

Wednesday, Jan. 25th
6-7:30pm
Youth Night

SIUMC MISSIONS AND MORE**Ladies Book Club**

The Letter Keeper & The Record Keeper
by Charles Martin
Wednesday, January 25 at 10:30 am

All those who enjoy reading Christian fiction are invited to participate in the Ladies' Book Club. In January, we will be discussing books 2 and 3 in the trilogy by Charles Martin (we previously read and discussed book 1, *The Water Keeper*, in November). If you would like to join the group for the discussion, please purchase or download the books to complete for before we meet on January 25.

Volunteers Needed!

If you're available to help with any of the following, please call the church office at (912) 598-8460.

- Coffee Hour - volunteers are needed to serve quarterly to prepare and set-up coffee and refreshments on Sunday mornings.
- Parish Voice labeling - volunteers are needed at the end of each month to prepare our newsletter for mailing.

**Honduras Mission Trip**
March 2023

Our missions committee has scheduled a mission trip to Honduras. We are looking for a team of 8-12 people (both older youth and adults) willing to travel the week of March 13, 2023. The mission team will work to build 2-3 simple structures and also build relationships with the people in the community. Please contact Michelle for additional details about this mission opportunity.

Flower Guild Interest Meeting

If you are interested in learning more about the Flower Guild, there will be an informal meeting on January 24th at 10:30 am in the Parlor. Jane Cook will go over how to become a helper, how to arrange the flowers, and what we do with them after church on Sunday. For more information, call Jane Cook at 912-677-0481.