



The Bridge

*10:00 a.m. each Sunday: Intergenerational Devotional

*10:10 a.m. Religious Education for all ages

* The adults are studying the Old Testament.

February 5: "Open Your Heart; Open Your Mind"-Reverend Claudia M. Frost- When we open our hearts to love, we transform not only our own lives for the better but we are able to transform the world around us. In this time when many people are living and speaking from an energy of fear, we need more than ever to explore the energy of love and what it means to live our lives with open hearts.

February 12: "Awe"-Lay Service-based on an article, "Feeling Awe May be the Secret to Health and Happiness" by Paula Spencer Scott. Awestruck: Altered in an instant by an electrifying emotion, that spine-tingling feeling you get when gazing at the Milky Way or listening to music.

February 19: "Breaking Down Walls"-Reverend Claudia M Frost- There's much talk lately of building walls, but what about the walls we create that can leave us isolated? What keeps our personal gifts hidden and devalued? Our belief in Universal salvation is founded on the belief that beneath the core and essence of all life there is sacred unity. What does this have to do with our congregation and our faith?

February 26: Reverend Justin Lapoint

Dates to Remember

February 19: Board Meeting following service and covered-dish lunch.

February 18: 11:00 a.m. Lunch at Albertson Fox Hunt followed by AUW take home sale at the church. Everyone is welcome!

February 23: Musical Concert at 7:30 p.m. following covered-dish supper at 6:30 p.m. Music will be provided by the George Oliver family. Please come and enjoy the good food and music!

"To ease another's heartache is to forget one's own.": Abraham Lincoln



FEBRUARY 20: PRESIDENT'S DAY

"Happiness depends more upon the internal frame of a person's own mind than on the externals of the world.": George Washington

Claudia's Comments

February thoughts turn our attention to Valentine's Day, Black History month, President's Day and often the beginning of Lent after Mardi Gras or Carnival in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast. (2017 Ash Wednesday occurs March 1st)

Additionally, this year I invite us all to take time for savoring life. The Christmas holiday rush and festivities are over and the decorations packed away for another year. This is a perfect month for savoring life by taking time to nurture both heart and soul. Savoring life is something that can enrich us every day and set a good habit for 2017 and the rest of your life. When thoughts turn to matters of the heart, it's a perfect reminder for learning to savor and celebrate life.

Savoring is defined as *attending to, appreciating and enhancing positive experience*. Let us remember to live in the present...appreciate the small things, and savor the joyfulness of life. Savoring usually applies to eating good food, but we can savor anything. Savoring is about learning to live in the "now"; fully enjoying the gift of each moment. Some cultures and families are more adept at savoring life than others. I find I need regular reminders to slow down and take time to be in the moment.

Someone said "pleasure lies in the heart, not in the happenstance". I find that when I take time to savor life...to revel in the joy of the moment...consciously make a mental note of special experiences I want to remember...a touching moment or a beautiful view like a rainbow or a spectacular sunset...I add to memories I can enjoy even when things in life aren't so grand.

One of the aspects of savoring life requires us to get in touch with our senses. We need to slow down and savor what we eat...notice the smell, the taste, the textures. I learned in my Weight Watcher's meeting recently that applying Mindful Awareness to eating can be a key factor in both weight loss and enjoyment of food. That means putting down our cell phones, your book or turning off the T.V. Paying attention to enjoying the food and company you are with if you aren't dining alone is essential.

Part of savoring life involves celebrating good fortune with others. A wise person wrote "Savoring life is like a glue that bonds people together and is essential to prolonging relationships." When good things happen, don't be afraid to laugh out loud, shout for joy, jump up and down.

Expressing our gratitude and "counting our blessings" are a natural part of savoring life. Savoring anything teaches us to be mindful and stop procrastinating...to live in the present moment and fully enjoying the gifts of life. Let's go buy some tulips and watch them open their petals; go out and blow some bubbles with the children; enjoy a walk with your dog. Buddhist wisdom teaches: *As you walk and eat and travel, be where you are. Otherwise you will miss most of your life.*

Here's to savoring life in 2017!

With Love, Hope, and Joy,
Claudia