

Living Water

A Monthly Publication of the

FIVE RIVERS DISTRICT

From Your District Superintendent

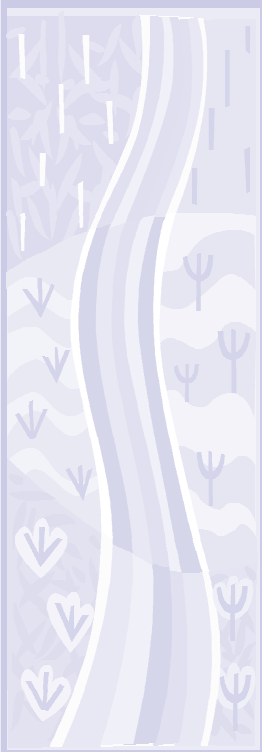
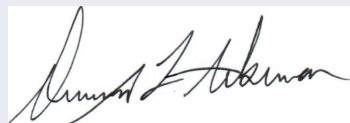
Makarios (Greek): blessed, happy

I have been swimming in the Greek pool with this word as I have been exploring and studying the Beatitudes from the fifth chapter of Matthew. It seems inconsistent to believe that those who are poor, or mourn, or are meek, or those who hunger and thirst, or those who are persecuted can be blessed or happy. It is a little easier to see the blessed reality experienced by those who are merciful, or pure in heart, or peacemakers. But hearing - "*Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*" - makes it hard to feel blessed or happy.

In this passage, Jesus is sharing his vision and understanding of the Kingdom of God. This was the heart of his message throughout his ministry. His teaching often turned upside-down the thinking of the world. This is true for the idea of blessedness. The sinful nature of humanity has made us see blessedness in ways that do not really make us happy. We often see material riches or comfortable surrounding as "blessings." But Jesus is sharing a way of understanding what real happiness is and should be. We have all heard the sound and long standing advise about doing the right thing. As a Christ follower, we are being advised about what the right thing truly is for us. Helping usher in the reality that God intends for creation is always a blessed endeavor. To do what God has created us to do is the definition of abundant life. This sometimes means that we will not experience the prosperity that the world tells us brings happiness (*in spite of what some prosperity preachers on TV would have us believe*).

Blessedness is being connected with and involved in the purpose and intentions of God. Christ made these things clear for us in his ministry. First among them is the effort to make disciples of Jesus Christ. People who will come to understand the value of doing what it takes to achieve the reality that God intends. People who do the right thing. People who will seek to achieve a world of peace, righteousness, life, mercy, humility, and grace. All under the loving guidance of our God.

So, may you be blessed and happy as a follower of Jesus Christ.



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February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

District Events:

- Feb. 4-6 DS is in Appointive Cabinet in Wichita
- Feb. 12th DS is in Appointive Cabinet Video Conference ~ 8:30 a.m. to noon
- Feb. 17-19 DS is in Appointive Cabinet in Wichita
- Feb. 25 DS is in Appointive Cabinet Video Conference ~ 8:30 a.m. to noon
- Feb. 27 Clergy Meeting, Ottawa 1st, 9 a.m. to noon
Cokesbury representative, Erin Kincannon-Emler will have a display of new materials available for 2014

Clergy Birthdays



5R Prayer Calendar

Rev. Connie McKee	February 3rd	Feb. 2	Lawrence 1st Rev. Tom Brady
Rev. J C Kelley	February 8th	Feb.9	Pomona/Vassar Rev. Kathleen Symes
Pastor Ron Bell	February 23rd	Feb.16	Eudora Rev. Lyle Seger
		Feb.23	Iola Wesley Rev. Trudy Kenyon Anderson

“Caring for People, Without Losing Your Mind,” workshop held at Wellsville UMC

By Marvé Ralston

Wellsville United Methodist Church hosted a workshop featuring Rev. Steve Sewell on December 10th. The title of the training event was “Caring for People, *Without Losing Your Mind*”.

Sewell began with a short video clip that brought home the message; when you are under extreme duress, you often seem unable to pick up on the simple things that might help you.

He used John 16:33 as a starting point.

³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” NIV

Part of his message was about our often preconceived idea that we are to “fix” someone. He stressed that we actually are most helpful when we “companion” them.

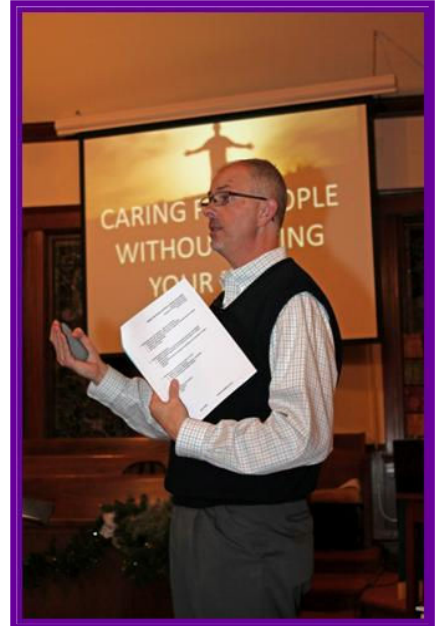
We should help folks come to a point of “reconciliation” versus resolution of their issues. How can they work on their own healing process?

Often we are simply to be the presence of God to folks. We need to help them find a place of suspension (a safe, comfortable place). This enables them to rise above their current circumstances.

The first rule of caregiving is “self care”. You cannot be an effective caregiver if you are in need of help yourself.

He stressed accepting boundaries and knowing your own limits with regards to caregiving. We need to have references of referral in place. We are to give referrals when helping is over our head.

If you are in a caregiving or helping situation you need to take advantage of a support group. They will be **your** “suspension”.



Sewell stressed that if you don't have a Caregivers Guild in your community, you might be just the person to start one. It can be as simple as just getting together to share concerns, resources and fellowship/supporting one another.

Rev. Steve Sewell currently serves as Chaplain at Crossroads Hospice, St. Joseph, Missouri.

Sewell has many other seminars that he can provide in support of pastors and laity alike. He can be contacted at 816.262.9066 or contactsewell@gmail.com.

How many of us will be involved in some type of caregiving in our lives? This is greatly increasing as an emerging issue.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2014/01/26/health-care-insurance-caregiver-family/4588095/>



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Cultivating Christian Discipleship

Characteristics of Vital Congregations

Great Plains Bishop Scott Jones and his Cabinet are evaluating ministry effectiveness based on eight characteristics of a healthy congregation.

1. **Worship attendance** - How does your church's worship attendance relate to what's happening to the population of your community? In a declining community, stable worship attendance is a success. In a growing community, declining attendance is not success.
2. **Professions of faith** - How many people, other than the members of the confirmation class, came to Christ through profession of faith?
3. **Social action** - Is your church involved in social action projects appropriate to your community?
4. **Sunday school attendance** - Are the people attending worship connected to a small group experience like Sunday school where they are fed or feeding others spiritually?
5. **Growing dollars** - Is the church spending more each year in ministry?
6. **Growing percentage for mission** - Is the church spending more each year on being in mission outside the congregation?
7. **M&M's paid in full** - Is the church paying its full commitment to the connectional mission of the church?
8. **Commitment to excellence** - Are we giving our best to the Lord in service in all aspects of our ministry?

A vital congregation has:

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Gifted, equipped and empowered lay leadership
- Effective, equipped and inspired clergy leadership
- Small groups
- Strong children's programs and youth ministry

From the "A Call to Action" report. <http://www.greatplainsumc.org/characteristicsofvitalcongregations>