



# His Mansion

A newsletter from  
First United Methodist Church  
of Southbridge

*"In my Father's House, there are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you..."*

MAY 2020



*"When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That's what came into the church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost."*

*David Wilkerson,  
The Cross and the  
Switchblade*

## Reminder:

We meet for worship at 9 am and enjoy fellowship, coffee and treats afterwards



## FROM PASTOR SABINA'S DESK

Dear friends in Christ,

Time has been flying by... or not! I have to say I miss worshipping in the church sanctuary, with the beautiful organ music and people praying and singing together! We have been "meeting" on Facebook every Sunday morning for a live worship service but it is still not enough, isn't it? The good news is that other people from the community have been joining us online. We have been averaging 45 every Sunday. Now if only some of these people would come to our church after the current situation goes away... Let's leave that part in God's hands!!

Beside worship, I have also set up two other events on Facebook live:

- Story time for the young and old every Monday at 3:30 pm (story plus discussion and prayer)
- Devotional time: Every Wednesday at 3:30 pm. I usually read from the Upper Room and then discuss the content.

And, of course, we are continuing our Bible study every Monday at 6:30 pm. We are now closing on the Old Testament and I am looking forward to starting on the Gospels!! We are using the Zoom internet meeting platform, which has been wonderful as it allows to have a full discussion while in the comfort of our own homes.

We are still serving "grab 'n go" meals on Mondays and Fridays at 5pm, and have volunteered to cater lunch for three days at the tent St. Luke's Guesthouse set up to quarantine the homeless population showing symptoms of the Covid 19 virus. That's 48 lunch bags!! I am very grateful to the team at Worcester Fellowship for their donations of cold cuts, chips, etc., as well as \$150 cash, which will help with our hot meals!!

Last but not least, as you may already know, one of our members, Carol, passed away from the virus. Please keep her family in your prayers. She will be dearly missed.

*Stay blessed, stay safe!*

*Pastor Sabina*



# May

Lord, help us to be cheerful  
and make others happy  
to meet us.  
Help us to be so true to you  
that we are a strength to others.

Prayer of the month

*Oh Yes!* IT'S  
**FREE**

Hungry?  
Lonely?

Please join us  
for our free  
weekly meals  
Mondays—5

pm

Fridays—5 pm

On the menu (examples):

Soups, chili, spaghetti and meat sauce, casseroles,  
BBQ, salads, bread, fruits, ice cream and other  
desserts.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Until further notice, meals will be “to-go”.  
Please call Pastor Sabina if you need a meal to be  
delivered to you during voluntary quarantine.

WE ALL

NEED HELP

SOMETIMES

Lots of people are  
feeling stressed, anxious,  
or depressed right now.



A program of your local United Way &  
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IF THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911

JOIN US FOR  
**BIBLE STUDY**



"Come out of the clutter and clanging of our culture and discover the peace of meeting the God of the Bible in the pages of His Word. Engage Bible Studies take you verse by verse into the richness of the Scriptures in ways that impact your heart and illumine your mind."

**"Bible 101" every Monday at 6:30pm**

**(dinner will be served)**

**Come and learn the basics of the Word of God!**

**Important Note:**

**Until further notice, our weekly Bible study will be held online using Zoom. If interested in joining us, please let Pastor Sabina know so she can provide you with a link to the meeting.**

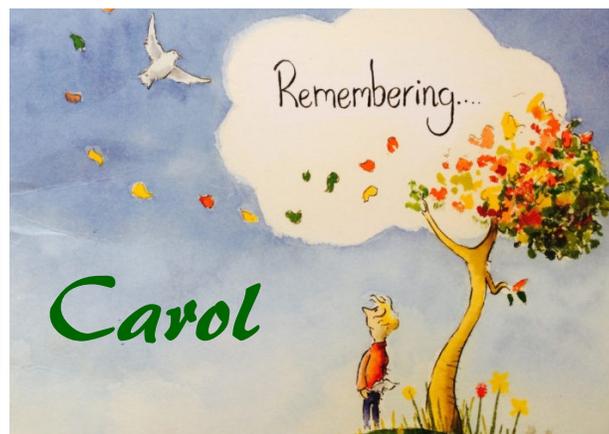


**CHURCH  
ONLINE**

Do you miss attending worship? Well, in these  
uncertain times, two things remain certain:  
God and your church!

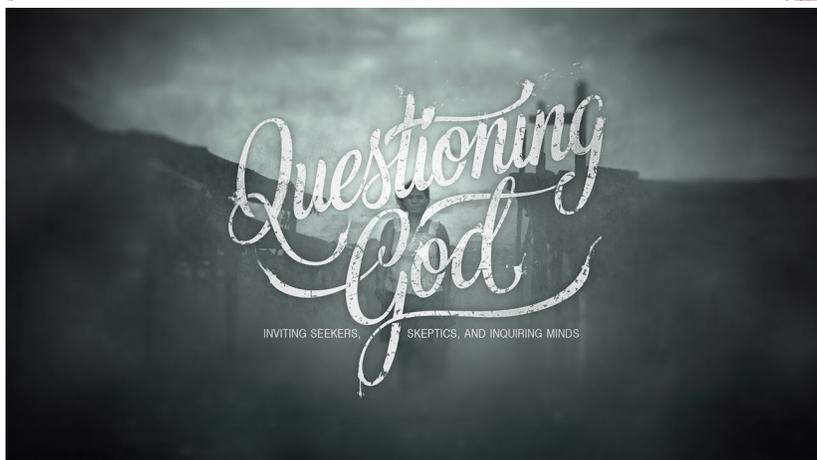
Join us for Church at 9am on Facebook!!

Go to The Southbridge First United Methodist Church  
Page and just watch!!



## WHAT IS PENTECOST?

- 50th day after Easter
- The “birthday” of the Church
- Acts of the Apostles chapter 2:
  - Story of the original Pentecost
  - Jews from all over were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish feast.
  - On that Sunday, ten days after the Ascension of Our Lord, the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary were gathered in the Upper Room, where they had seen Christ after His Resurrection:
  - Christ had promised His Apostles that He would send His Holy Spirit, and, on Pentecost, they were granted the gifts of the Spirit.
  - The Apostles began to preach the Gospel in all of the languages that the Jews who were gathered there spoke, and about 3,000 people were converted and baptized that day.



Why is there evil in the world?  
 Why did my child die?  
 If there is a God, why...

Have you ever asked questions about or to God? Are you a doubter? A seeker? A skeptic? What kind of questions?  
 Why do bad things happen to good people?  
 Why am I here?  
 If I am saved, do I need to go to church? Do I need to do good deeds?  
 Are the Ten Commandments still applicable today?  
 Do we have free will or is our life predestined in advance?  
 What about heaven?

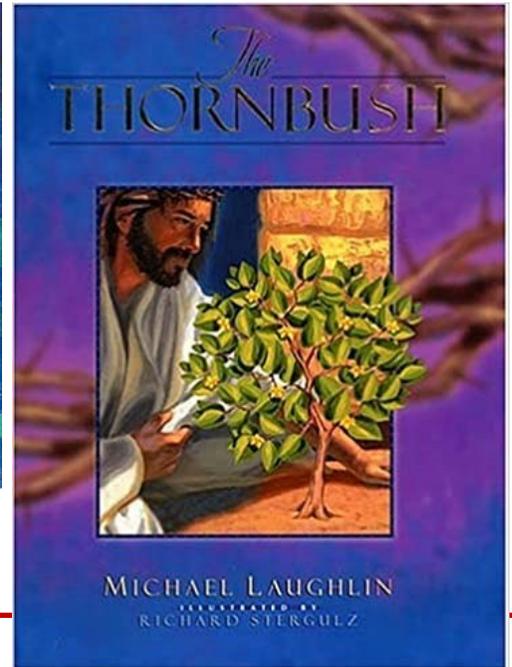
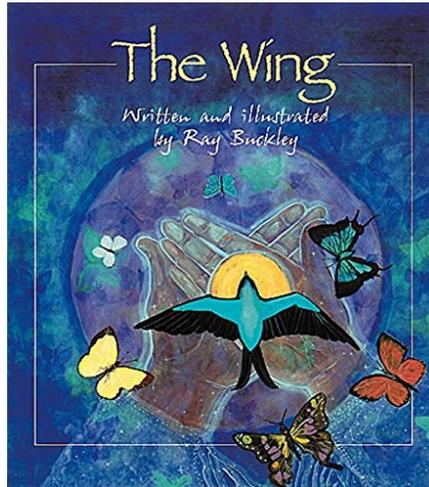
Well, brace yourself! We will be starting a new six-week sermon series this coming Sunday: "Why? Questioning God". Join us to be challenged, to learn more and maybe to find some answers...

Sundays at 9 am live on Facebook!

# What's going on at the church?

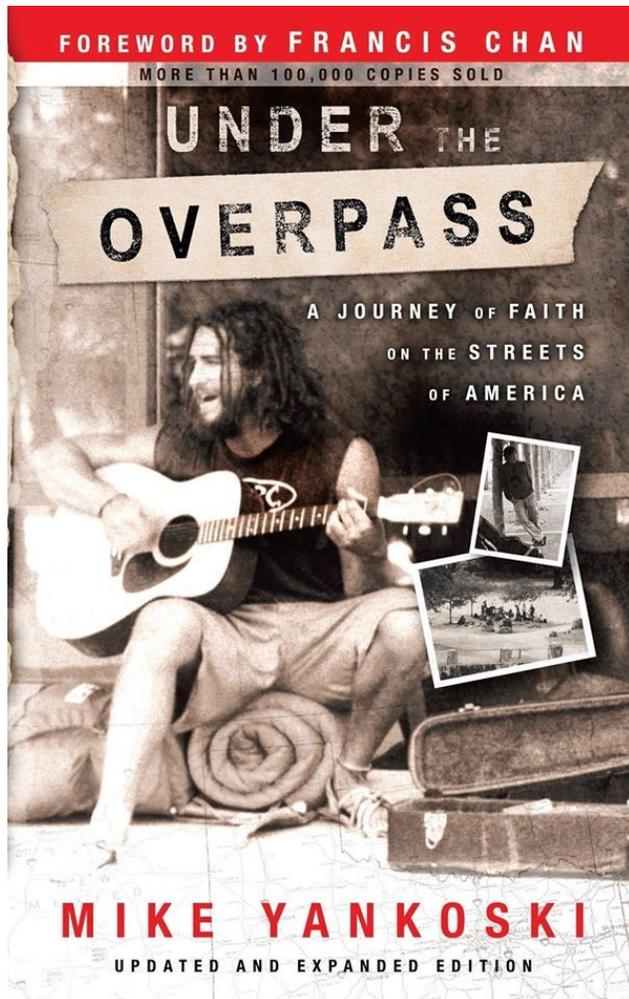


*Pastor Sabina's at home worship space!*



*Children's books we read live on Facebook*

### Book we reviewed during a Wednesday online devotional



I finished reading this wonderful book. Most of my ministry has been to the broken and especially to the homeless and the addicts. The book opened my eyes even more, especially as it relates to faith. Here is a quote:

An ongoing struggle to find safety, a place to sleep, a bathroom, and food becomes dehumanizing for anyone. One experience at a time, a person's sense of dignity and sense of self-worth gets stripped away. Blithely allowing this terrible stripping to occur is a blot of the conscience of America, and especially on the conscience of the church. If we as believers choose to forget that everyone, even the shrunken soul lying in the doorway, is made in the image of God, can we say we know our Creator? If we respond to others based on their outward appearance, haven't we entirely missed the point of the Gospel? Christ cared a lot about the simple dignities. He stopped to talk to lepers, and touch them with healing. He prepared meals for strangers. He rescued outcasts. He wept with those who wept. Of course, the issue isn't entirely defined by our response. The consequences of substance abuse, poverty, and irresponsibility have left countless men and women on our streets without a single outward shred of dignity. But Christ is not deterred by that. As C.S. Lewis wrote: "Christ has died for

men precisely because men are not worth dying for: to make them worth it." To me, one of the best things about the Gospel is that Jesus proclaims and restores human and eternal worth for everyone who believes, regardless of what a person might look or smell now, no matter what's crawling through his hair. And because this Christ, each of us has both the ability and the responsibility ("response-ability") to do the same.

Amen and Amen!! Pastor Sabina

## Intercessory Prayer in the midst of the spread of COVID-19

O God our Healer, show your compassion for the whole human family that is in turmoil and burdened with illness and with fear. Hear our cry, O God,

### Listen to our prayer.

Come to our aid as the coronavirus spreads globally, heal those who are sick, support and protect their families and friends from being infected. Hear our cry, O God,

### Listen to our prayer.

Grant us your spirit of love and self-discipline so that we may come together, working to control and eliminate the coronavirus. Hear our cry, O God,

### Listen to our prayer.

Make us vigilant, attentive, and proactive in the eradication of all diseases, malaria, dengue, HIV & AIDS, and others [may be named out-loud or in silence]... that create suffering and often result in death for many people. Hear our cry, O God,

### Listen to our prayer.

Heal our self-centeredness and indifference that makes us worry only when the virus threatens us, open ways beyond timidity and fear that too easily ignore our neighbor. Hear our cry, O God,

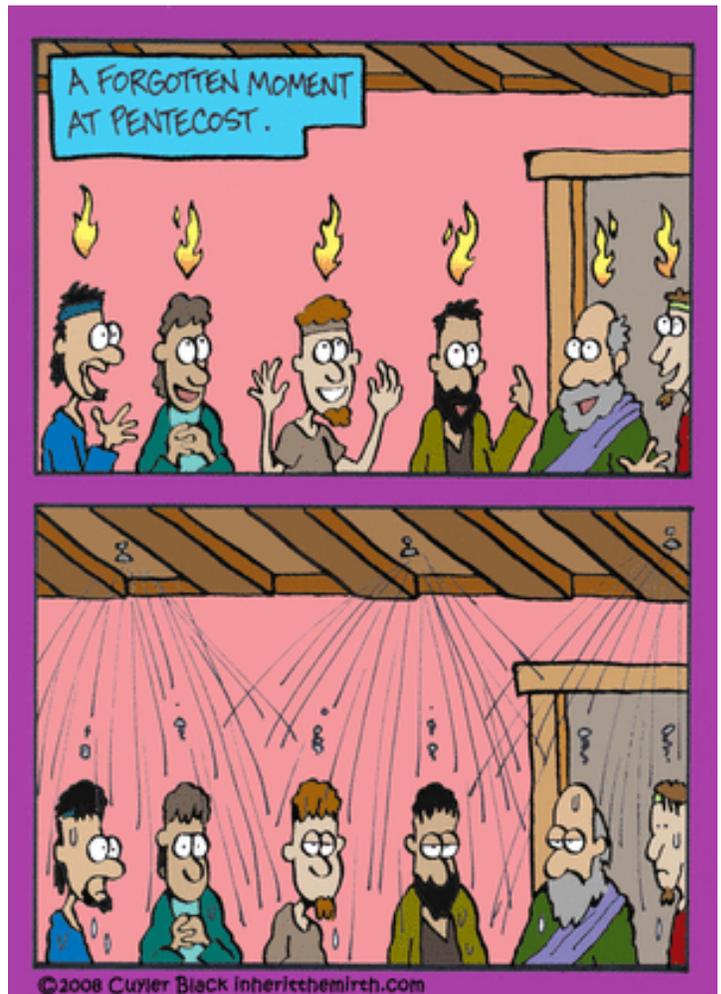
### Listen to our prayer.

Strengthen and encourage those in public health services and in the medical profession: care-givers, nurses, attendants, doctors, all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families. Hear our cry, O God,

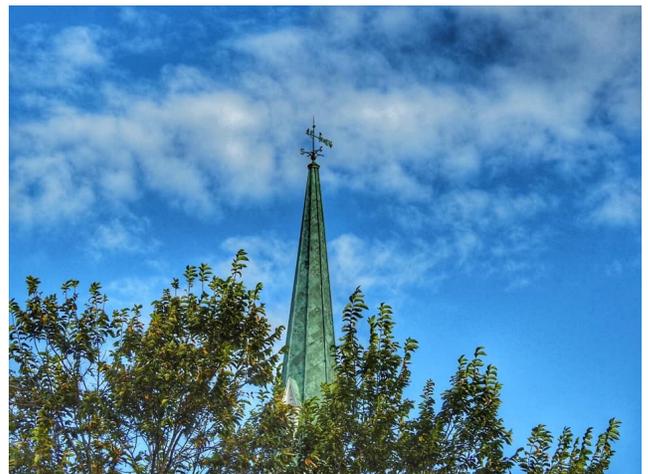
### Listen to our prayer.

Inspire, give insight and hope to all researchers focused on developing a vaccine. Hear our cry, O God,

### Listen to our prayer.



*Lunch bags for St. Luke's Guesthouse Tent*



## THE STORY OF PENTECOST

### Acts 2 (The Message Translation)

#### A Sound Like a Strong Wind

When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were thunderstruck. They couldn't for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, "Aren't these all Galileans? How come we're hearing them talk in our various mother tongues?"

Parthians, Medes, and Elamites;

Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia,  
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,

Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene;  
Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes;

Even Cretans and Arabs!

"They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!"

Their heads were spinning; they couldn't make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: "What's going on here?"

Others joked, "They're drunk on cheap wine."

#### Peter Speaks Up

That's when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: "Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren't drunk as some of you suspect. They haven't had time to get drunk—it's only nine o'clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen:

"In the Last Days," God says,

"I will pour out my Spirit  
on every kind of people:

Your sons will prophesy,  
also your daughters;

Your young men will see visions,  
your old men dream dreams.

When the time comes,

I'll pour out my Spirit

On those who serve me, men and women both,  
and they'll prophesy.

I'll set wonders in the sky above  
and signs on the earth below,

Blood and fire and billowing smoke,  
the sun turning black and the moon blood-red,

Before the Day of the Lord arrives,  
the Day tremendous and marvelous;

And whoever calls out for help

to me, God, will be saved."

"Fellow Israelites, listen carefully to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man thoroughly accredited by God to you—the miracles and wonders and signs that God did through him are common knowledge—this Jesus, following the deliberate and well-thought-out plan of God, was betrayed by men who took the law into their own hands, and was handed over to you. And you pinned him to a cross and killed him. But God untied the death ropes and raised him up. Death was no match for him. David said it all:

I saw God before me for all time.

Nothing can shake me; he's right by my side.

I'm glad from the inside out, ecstatic;

I've pitched my tent in the land of hope.

I know you'll never dump me in Hades;

I'll never even smell the stench of death.

You've got my feet on the life-path,

with your face shining sun-joy all around.

"Dear friends, let me be completely frank with you. Our ancestor David is dead and buried—his tomb is in plain sight today. But being also a prophet and knowing that God had solemnly sworn that a descendant of his would rule his kingdom, seeing far ahead, he talked of the resurrection of the Messiah—'no trip to Hades, no stench of death.' This Jesus, God raised up. And every one of us here is a witness to it. Then, raised to the heights at the right hand of God and receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he poured out the Spirit he had just received. That is what you see and hear. For David himself did not ascend to heaven, but he did say,

God said to my Master, "Sit at my right hand

Until I make your enemies a stool for resting your feet."

"All Israel, then, know this: There's no longer room for doubt—God made him Master and Messiah, this Jesus whom you killed on a cross."

Cut to the quick, those who were there listening asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers! Brothers! So now what do we do?"

Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is targeted to you and your children, but also to all who are far away—whomever, in fact, our Master God invites." He went on in this vein for a long time, urging them over and over, "Get out while you can; get out of this sick and stupid culture!"

That day about three thousand took him at his word, were baptized and were signed up. They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers.

Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.

They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved.



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**Sundays 9 am: Live worship on Facebook**

**Mondays:**

**3:30 pm: Story time live on Facebook**

**5 pm: Free meal**

**6:30 pm: Bible Study on Zoom**

**Wednesdays: 3:30 pm: Devotional live on Facebook**

**May 31 9 am: Pentecost service**