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**Weekly Booster**



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| CHURCH STAFF**Pastor**David B. Clark**pastordavid@shen.church****Office Manager**Jeff Hiser**office@shen.church****Pianist**Terry Stafford**Choir Director**Sue Jones**Multimedia & Website**Jeff Hiser**Sunday Media Booth**Kris Anderzhon, Alan Hutchison, Jeff Hiser**Sunday Facebook Host**Craig Harris, **Facebook Contributors**Pastor David B. Clark, Barb Cunningham, Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser**Sunday Praise Team**Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane, Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay, Jeff Hiser, Jodi Anderzhon  |



**Feeling the Presence of God in Your Life**

Have you ever been guilty of holy jealousy?

Maybe you have felt this way watching people in worship raise their hands as their excitement about the words and the music they’re singing swells with every new chorus. You’re standing in the same room, but you’re just not feeling it. When you walk out of the event, you’re not feeling as inspired as others seem to be.

Maybe this same kind of feeling at times translates to the rest of your life. As you navigate all the complex details of your day, you’re looking for guidance and direction and information that you just don’t seem to have. You’re asking for answers and don’t seem to hear anything. What’s more, you don’t know where to find it. You pray, and it seems like your prayers just float off into the atmosphere. You read stories in the Bible that, while interesting and inspiring, don’t seem to apply to your life today.

You feel bad about that, but no matter how hard you try, you just can’t seem to pull out of the Bible anything that you feel is going to help you

***Continued page 2***

 ***“The only person you can change is yourself.”***

***“Money will buy you a pretty good dog, but it won’t buy the wag of his tail.”***

**Reminders**

**October 22nd
Men’s Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.**

**October 23rd**

**Sunday School for all ages – 10:30**

**Confirmation – 6:00 p.m.
HS Youth Group – 7:00 p.m.
Youth Room, Wesley Hall**

**October 24th
Monday Evening Study, 6:30 p.m.
“Who is Jesus” – Fellowship Hall
with Pastor Clark**

**October 26th**

**Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.**

**Choir – 6:45 p.m.**

**October 27th**

**T.O.P.S. – 5:30 p.m.**

**\*\*Worship Assistants are needed for October 30th and November**

**\*\* Fellowship Volunteers needed sign-up in Fellowship Hall**

**Presence of God- Continued from page 1**

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| make good decisions about the next steps of your life: where your child is going to go to school next fall, or whether you should be looking for a different job, or what to do when the spouse you’ve been praying for doesn’t change.Do you sometimes wonder where God is in all of this?Maybe you’ve known God all your life; maybe you’re just now trying to find out more about the God who everyone else already seems to know. In all of these things, it’s important to note and understand two critical realities:1 – God is present in your life in every moment of every day. He is waiting to reach out to you and to help you live your life by the power of his Spirit ([Psalm 39:7-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+39%3A7-10&version=NIV)).2 – Whether or not you’re feeling God’s presence doesn’t negate the truth that’s revealed in the previous sentence.**God’s Presence in the Lives of Biblical Characters*****Old Testament***As you read the stories of Scripture, it’s amazing to see how God shows up at various times and places within those stories.* He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+3%3A8&version=NIV)).
* He spoke to Abram and led him to leave his home and move to an unfamiliar place. In the process, he gave Abram some wonderful promises ([Genesis 12:1-2)](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+12%3A1-2&version=NIV). And God was faithful to those promises.
* He saved Moses from certain death when he was just an infant ([Exodus 2:1-10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+2%3A1-10&version=NIV)). He audibly spoke to Moses through a burning bush and specifically directed his next career moves ([Exodus 3:1-22](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A1-22&version=NIV)), even though Moses argued with him about it. And Moses did what God commanded.

He directed the path of the entire nation of Israel by being physically present in the cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night ([Exodus 13:21-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+13%3A21-22&version=NIV)). ***Continued page 5*** |

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**“No, I am not talking about Twitter. I literally want you to follow me.”**

 **Jesus**

**Volunteers Needed**

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***If you ordered a U.S. Flag from Mac, they have arrived. Call him at 712-246-2844.***

**Church Office Hours**

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| \*\* Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School 10:15Questers (Adults) 10:30**\*\*Chancel Choir** – Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch. | **Monday**9:00-11:0012:00-3:00**Tuesday**9:00-11:0012:00-3:00**Wednesday**CLOSED**Thursday**9:00-11:0012:00-3:00 **Friday**9:00-11:0012:00-3:00 | Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day. |



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| Who pulled hair from his head and beard and sat appalled?a) Ezrab) Nehemiahc) Jobd) Jeremiah***Check page 4 for answers in next week’s booster***  | What did Solomon say is under his bride’s tongue?a) honey and milkb) fragrancec) choicest fruitsd) spices | Which of the following was not a judge? a) Gideonb) Jephthahc) Samueld) Saul |
| **Birthdays** **and** **Anniversaries** |
| Text  Description automatically generated | 23rd – Justin Brink, Katherine Smidt, Jake Williams25th – Toni Graham, Darlene Howard28th – Rachel Myers\*\*See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to office@shen.church |
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***Shenandoah First United***

***Methodist Church***

200 Church St.

Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail

office@shen.church

**Same address – a new look at** <https://shen.church>

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<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church, Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>

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Services are now on our Youtube channel only. <http://bit.ly/3skF0p9>

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\***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: *Terry Stafford***

**Call to Worship**

***Leader: We worship because the Lord stood by us on difficult days.***

***People: Even when we weren’t aware and felt alone.***

***L: We worship because the Lord gives strength.***

***P: Even when we feel so weak.***

***L: We worship because we have been rescued again and again.***

***P: Even when we are afraid that we have lost.
L: Come and worship the God who stands with us in our darkest days and promises to be with us to the end.***

***P: We will worship in hope, seeking eyes to see and hearts to believe in God with us.***

**“And Who is Justified”**

**Old Testament Reading: Joel 2:23-32**

**New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18**

**Third Scripture Reading: Luke 18:9-14**

***Songs***

***Your Grace Is Enough #3106***

***Amazing Grace (My Chains are gone) #3104***

***In Christ Alone #3105***

***I Stand Amazed in the Presence #371***

**Last Week’s Attendance**

**In-Person Worship – 79**

**Online Worship – 13**

***Our Mission*:**

***“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ’s Love.”***

***Our Vision:***

***“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”***

***Answers for Oct 16th are b) Solomon c) Kedar a) Gamaliel***

 ***Quiz Hints – Q1 Ezra Q2 Song of Solomon Q3 1Samuel***

**Presence of God- Continued from page 2**Imagine being one of the Israelites walking through the desert after being held as slaves by the Egyptians! Seeing those physical manifestations of God’s care and concern must have been awe-inspiring.

* He specifically spoke to Joshua, Moses’ successor, to prepare the people to enter the promised land, reassuring Joshua of his care and telling him specifically to be brave and not fear ([Joshua 1:1-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Joshua+1%3A1-7&version=NIV)).

There is perhaps no better description of the way God permeates our lives than the words King David, the author of Psalm 139, wrote to reassure God’s people of God’s deep and enduring love for each one of them:

*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.*

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

*How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you…*

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting* ([Psalm 139:1-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+139%3A1-18&version=NIV), [23-24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+139%3A23-24&version=NIV)).

In this beautiful psalm, we find the model for how we are to see ourselves from God’s perspective: known, cherished, cared for, and given a purpose. In the last two verses, David offers a template for how we should approach God every day: as the all-knowing, all-loving Creator who wants to be as much a part of our lives as our most intimate friends or family.

***New Testament***

In the New Testament, of course, God sent his son, Jesus, to earth to walk with humanity and show us the way to himself. Jesus Christ was the ultimate manifestation of God’s presence with us ([Isaiah 7:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+7%3A14&version=NIV), [Matthew 1:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A23&version=NIV)). The stories of his life are true, as the multiple eyewitness accounts of his life attest.

And as further evidence that God’s presence was with Jesus, the Gospel writers tell us that at multiple points in the ministry of Jesus, God spoke audibly to him in a way others could hear, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” ([Matthew 3:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+3%3A17&version=NIV)); and “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” ([Matthew 17:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+17%3A5&version=NIV)). Again, imagine being present as the voice of the Lord of Heaven boomed out of the clouds! As we read these stories, we begin to realize that God is not distant or uncaring. In the person of Jesus, God offered us a Savior who could empathize with all of our hurts, fears, anxieties, and temptations: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” ([Hebrews 4:15-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+4%3A15-16&version=NIV)).

That’s a real offer of practical help from the One who knows everything we’re going through. That’s what experiencing the presence of God in our lives is all about.

**The Holy Spirit**

When Jesus left the earth after his resurrection, the Holy Spirit came to the believers at Pentecost. Jesus had previously promised this would happen, even going so far as to say he had to physically leave the earth so the Spirit could come to be with those who believe in a very real and powerful way: “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” ([John 16:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A7&version=NIV)).

Jesus himself expanded on this promise in a teaching recorded in [John 14:15-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A15-21&version=NIV) (emphasis added):

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and **he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for **he lives with you and will be in you.** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that **I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.** Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. **The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.**”

And we find this assurance later in that same chapter:

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid** ([John 14:26-27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A26-27&version=NIV), emphasis added).

This is the instruction we’ve been left with: an invitation to participate in the life of the Spirit of the Living God. Just the thought of having such an opportunity can be mind-bendingly intimidating. Perhaps even more so when we realize the power we’re offered is part and parcel of the same power that raised Jesus, who was most certainly dead ([John 19:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19%3A34&version=NIV)), back to life (read about this in [Luke 24:36-49](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24%3A36-49&version=NIV)).

Paul wrote about this power as he opened his brief letter to the Ephesian church:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. **That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come ([Ephesians 1:18-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1%3A18-21&version=NIV), emphasis added).

**God’s Presence in Your Life Today**

Now let’s take a look at practical ways we can actually feel God’s presence in our lives today. The key in all this is that we engage in a personal pursuit of the God who is aching to reach out to us today and be a critical part of our lives.

Just as we might pursue a friendship or a relationship with a potential spouse, so we also need to spend intentional time pursuing God and inviting him into our life. The Holy Spirit is waiting to receive that invitation to enter our hearts and minds and to speak to us through our thoughts and inclinations. Remember, the same resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead is also at our disposal today. But it doesn’t come automatically; we engage with the Holy Spirit as we invite him to engage with us.

Dr. Charles Stanley, in a 2018 sermon preached to the members of his First Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA, outlined some very practical steps for feeling the presence of God through the Holy Spirit in our lives. As he spoke, Stanley asserted, “Our awareness of God’s presence is vital to what he wants to do in our lives.”

He then went on to expand on fifteen different and practical ways we can feel the presence of God in our lives. He asserted that when believers make the commitment to search for God and ask him to engage with us through the power of the Spirit, the following things will be true of us:

1 – He is continually in our thoughts. As we go throughout our day, the Spirit of God is with us in a sort of “holy silence” through his quiet work in our heart and mind. When we’re aware of that, it colors every single event and area of our lives.

2 – We are continually seeking his guidance. God is interested in every single area of our lives, and therefore he has a preference in what types of things we choose to do. Through prayer, we can ask, so we should go ahead and ask! Physically, verbally, asking God for answers will reinforce the reality of the conversation. We should talk out loud if we need to. Then we must listen for his answers, whether they come through people he brings into our life or from our own quiet intuition of what we know to be right.

3 – We must view him as our constant companion. When we are always aware of his presence, we never have to wonder where he is or how he feels about us. Listen! He is willing to speak to us in every single area of our lives. Sometimes those revelations come to us in surprising ways, when God gives us the sense of his direction. We’re aware of the physical presence of others around us; in the same way, we can and should be aware of God’s presence as well. The most powerful, loving being in the universe wants this for all of those who believe in and trust him.

4 – We view everything in the light of his presence. Whatever is going on in our lives has to go on in the presence of God. That reality affects every area of life, as nothing is hidden from God—good or bad. As we actively seek out his guidance and feel his presence, it colors absolutely everything we do during the course of our day. Intimidating? Perhaps, but to the person who desires to follow in God’s path, this is a wonderful reality.

5 – We have peace in the midst of storms. God is there, so we have a reassurance of his presence with us no matter what is happening in our lives. No matter what circumstance we face, the Spirit of God will guide us and direct us. Everything changes when we pursue and cultivate this awareness.

6 – We have a hunger in our heart for the Word of God. If we’re looking to experience more of God’s presence in our lives, we have to turn to the manual for living that he left us. The Bible includes the last word of God to us on the earth. As he inspired the writers, they penned the entire physical message that God wanted to leave with us. That’s pretty amazing, and a critical aspect of pursuing God’s presence involves spending time reading and studying the text of the Bible. God has literally spoken to all of us through the words of the Bible, so reading it ignites us to think about him and starts the day off in the right way.

7 – We have joy in our heart. The Holy Spirit offers an endless supply of power and influence that can literally affect our lives every single day. When we seek first his kingdom ([Matthew 6:33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A33&version=NIV)), everything else falls into place. No matter how difficult the day may be, nothing can mute the joy we have in our relationship with the Lord. And it shows.

8 – We are more conscious of the good things God brings us. The writer of the book of James tells us that “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” ([James 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A17&version=NIV)). Every. Single. One. When we begin to see all of our blessings in the light of God’s generosity, we begin to cultivate a heart of gratitude toward God. Doing so keeps us from the devastating effects of pride and entitlement and allows us to approach our faith as Jesus taught us: like children ([Matthew 18:2-4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+18%3A2-4&version=NIV)).

9 – We feel a continuing dependence upon God. As we nurture our relationship with our ever-present, ever-loving Father, we begin to depend on him for support, encouragement, teaching, and direction. As we read the Bible and pray to him and participate in the fellowship of believers, our dependence on him grows to the point that we can’t live without it. Why try to make our own way in life when we have a divine leader who absolutely knows what is best for us?

10 – Prayer is a priority in our life. When we pursue God’s presence in our lives, we talk to God all the time. Quietly or out loud. At the dinner table or in the middle of a traffic jam. When we talk, our heavenly Father listens.

11 – We continue to have hope, even when life seems hopeless. When God becomes our hope, we understand the depth of meaning behind what that brings into our lives. Others begin to see it in us, and that kind of far-sighted positivity begins to permeate everything we do and say. No child of God is ever hopeless.

12 – We sift every decision through God’s will. Single. Decision. So instead of stressing out about the next big decision in our life, we begin to approach each new situation with a peace that God’s leading will come through. When we’re living in the awareness of his presence all the time, our lives become less hectic and more peaceful.

13 – Our worship is more real and rewarding. Why? Because our worship happens all the time, every day, in every circumstance of our lives; not just in a worship service on a particular day of the week.

14 – We walk in obedience to God as a way of life. When we realize sin is a choice we can choose to avoid, we are set free to do what God wants in our lives. Sometimes we accept sin as being normal, but integrating all of these practices into our lives shows us that sin is a choice, and we can actually choose not to sin. If we live with a sure knowledge of the presence of God in our lives all the time, why would we want to disobey? What will we gain through sinning against him? And yet we’re imperfect people living in an imperfect world, so when we stumble or falter, we are forgiven and can keep walking in his presence.

15 – We have a stronger, more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the wonderful end result of all of this pursuit.

*[Note: this sermon is well worth taking the time to watch for yourself. It’s available through In Touch Ministries’ YouTube page; just search for the sermon entitled “The Awareness of God’s Presence” that was preached on January 24, 2018.]*

Those who trust Jesus alone for their salvation don’t have to wait for heaven to have a relationship with Jesus. Deepening our trust in and reliance on him brings the kind of peace that others who have yet to accept him can only dream of. All of this is offered to us as a free gift; accepting that gift brings us one step closer to a life lived with the assurance of his love, which brings a pervasive sense of peace and deep, enduring joy.

**So Now What?**

Taking the time to pursue a relationship with the God of the universe fills our lives with all kinds of wonderful realities. When we begin to understand who we are based on what he has told us about ourselves through the pages of Scripture, we also begin to understand that we are God’s beloved sons and daughters. We are chosen by him, accepted by him, loved by him, and held forever in the palms of his hands.

Remember what it was like to be a child and to be aware of the presence of your parents? However wonderful or imperfect that relationship was, we are offered a more perfect relationship every day in the life God offers. Perhaps you have children of your own; understand that God feels about us the same way we feel about our own kids. As we care for and love them, we begin to understand just a fraction of the kind of affection God has for us. As we are a loving, caring, guiding force in their lives, so also God wants to be the same for us.

The apostle John gives us the final word in this regard: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” ([1 John 3:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A1&version=NIV)).

How amazing is that? That’s the kind of presence the God of the universe has in our lives—he acts like a loving, caring father does to his own children. Because “that is what we are!”

By Mike Vander Klipp, Senior Editor in the Zondervan Bible Group of HarperCollins Christian Publishing.

Students, grades 7-9, are invited to the journey of confirmation beginning this coming Sunday at 6:00 pm. We will learn about and put into practice our Christian faith. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to attend our first meeting to learn more about our confirmation program. If you have any questions, contact Pastor David.

The Angel Quilters group decided to stop getting together to make quilts. We have lots of material to give to anyone interested. We also have a sewing machine and batting for a small donation. Notify the church office, Sue Burchett, Lois Anderson, or Janet Jones if interested.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Future of the UMC Informational meeting. Our denomination is and has been in the national news and people are watching how we work through our differences regarding LGBTQ inclusion in the church. Recognizing that our church (and our community of Shenandoah) consists of persons with diverse theological, political, and social views, we begin a difficult and long journey to discern how we are the church in the 21st century in Shenandoah, IA.

When I first arrived, I preached several Sundays on life in the wilderness; on how to follow God when we don't know where we are going. This is where we get to put those lessons into practice. It is uncomfortable to sit with uncertainty. We want a "silver bullet" that will fix everything. Since we are uncertain about so much around us, we might stop listening to others so that we can feel more certain about our convictions. We are in an uncertain time; we are in the wilderness, and it has something to teach us if we are open: REST, RECONNECT, and RENEW.

While we desire a quick resolution, what are ways that you can find REST and slowness in the coming weeks? Discernment requires listening for where Spirit is moving. We cannot do this unless we slow down and sit in silence.

While our convictions may drive a wedge between those that have come to a different opinion, how might you find ways to RECONNECT with others in the church? Discernment requires getting outside of our heads and listening to others. Even if you have different theological views, might you have similar values and a similar love for this community?

When we feel anxious, it is comforting to stay with what we already know, even if what we already know is no longer working for us. Spirit makes paths where there previously was no path. What practices of RENEWAL can you participate in that might open your eyes to new paths that are emerging?

Concerning the meeting this past Sunday, there were several specific follow-ups and next steps for our church that I wanted to address:

1. There will be discernment gatherings in which we, as a church, will be able to listen and dialogue with one another to discern the church's next most faithful step. We will continue our discussion with a discernment gathering in January (TBA). The driving question for us will be: "What might it look like for persons to have different conclusions about LGBTQ inclusion in the church and still be the church together at First United Methodist Church of Shenandoah?"

2. There was a request for definitions of some of the more technical language from the presentation. I will be working on that in the coming weeks and will publish that via the booster and printed copies in the church.

3. My role as the pastor is to not do the discernment for you, but to be a guide in the discernment process. If there are resources or information that would help you personally, please let me know. If you need someone to vent to because these past 6 years of the UMC trying to resolve this issue is becoming too frustrating, I am here. If you have questions or want to dialogue through anything, I am here.

This will be a long and difficult journey, but that is what creates the possibility for it being one of the best journeys we can take.

May God be present with us in the wilderness; may Christ be our guide; and may Spirit open new paths.

Pastor David B. Clark