



BREATHING UNDER WATER

A SPIRITUAL PATH ROOTED IN 12 STEPS

We are changed not by effort, but by openness to grace.



FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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VISITORS

If you are new to Faith United Methodist Church, welcome! We encourage you to complete a guest card available from a welcome host. Please drop it in the offering chest or hand it to one of the welcome hosts following the worship service.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Faith offers a variety of accessibility resources for your use, including large-print hymnals and Bibles, magnifiers, printed versions of the sermon, FM wireless assistive-listening devices, and noise-cancelling headphones. These items are available on the white bookshelf at the Sanctuary entrance. Please feel free to use whatever you need and return the items after the service. If you have any questions, speak with the welcome hosts at the Sanctuary entrance. You may also contact Jennifer Young, Faith's Accessibility Coordinator, at young.jennifer@gmail.com to request additional accommodations.

Sunday, August 16, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER

Centering

Prelude: *Amazing Grace from Well-Tempered Jazz* (1998)

Ann Bartlow, organ
Mark Hayes b. 1953

Welcome Mike Coppersmith, Leadership Board member

Call to Worship Brian Jones, Liturgist

One voice: God's mercies are new every morning.

Many voices: Great is God's faithfulness.

One voice: We come not because we are finished—

Many voices: but because God is still forming us.

All: God, meet us where we are, and lead us toward wholeness.

Opening Prayer

Brian Jones

One voice: Patient God,
soften what has become rigid within us.
Help us become willing
to release what harms us and others.
Teach us humility rooted in grace,
not shame. Amen.

Confession and Pardon

Brian Jones

One voice: God of compassion,
we confess how resistant we are to change.

**Many voices: We cling to old patterns.
We protect familiar wounds.
We want transformation without
surrender.**

Silence

One voice: Make us willing.

**Many voices: Open us to your mercy.
Shape us slowly into people of love.**

One voice: Hear the good news:
God is patient with us.
Grace continues working within us even now.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and being made new.

Many voices: Thanks be to God.

Passing the Peace

WORD

Anthem: *Menuet from Petit Suite* (1886 - 1889)

Ann Bartlow and Kay McCarty, piano
(piano duet for four hands)
Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 36:25–27; Luke 5:12–16 Brian Jones

The first scripture can be found on page #805 in the Old Testament of the pew Bible. The second scripture can be found on pages #62-63 in the New Testament.

Children's Message

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Message

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

*Hymn #593: *Hear I Am, Lord*

Congregation; Ann Bartlow, organ

WONDER

Invitation to Reflection

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

**All: God, meet us where we are,
and lead us toward wholeness.
Amen.**

Invitation to Offering

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Offertory Prayer

Brian Jones

WHAT NOW?

Prayers of the People

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

The Lord's Prayer

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*Hymn #140: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

Congregation; Ann Bartlow, organ

Sending Forth

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Postlude: Prelude and Fugue in E minor from *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues for Organ* (1730 - 1750)

Ann Bartlow, organ

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Altar flowers are given this week by Bruce Werber in loving memory of his parents, William W. Werber and Ailcey J. Werber, and his aunt and uncle, Susan W. Hill and Dan W. Hill III.



We continue with our series, *Breathing Under Water: A Journey Toward Wholeness*, based on a book by Father Richard Rohr. Last week we remembered that grace grows strongest in honesty. Today we dive into the themes of readiness and humble asking.

As we journey together toward wholeness, we remember that we can breathe, even breathe underwater, because the breath of God is always with us.



ATTENDANCE

Please take a moment to scan the QR code—whether you are a guest or a member—so we know that you joined us today!



Everyone Sign In!

OFFERING

We are not passing an offering plate currently. An offering box has been placed on the welcome table in the Narthex. You may also scan the QR code to the right to give online.



Give today.

ARTFUL REFLECTIONS ON BREATHING UNDER WATER

Sunday following worship



Has Breathing Under Water inspired any creative reflection? If you missed our earlier watercolor gathering, we'd love for you to join us today after worship in room 103 and explore our theme through color and brush. And of course, we'd love to see our earlier "painters" return.

THE GOOD NEWS, FALL ISSUE

Faith's quarterly e-newsletter, *The Good News*, will be released early next week. The Fall issue highlights several exciting new programs and provides updated details on a variety of ministries, including the Choir and Youth Ministry. You'll also find Pastor Laura's reflection, the 2nd Quarter *Faith & Finance* report, a gallery of photos, and much more!

If you are not currently receiving our digital communications, please contact the church office at office@FaithWorksHere.com or call 301-881-1881 to be added to our mailing list. Faith is also happy to send printed newsletters by mail upon request—just let us know.

BULLETIN INSERT

Each week, a bulletin insert is included for you to carry with you as you leave worship. To learn more about the *Breathing Under Water* series scan the QR code.



FAITH UMC WORK DAY

Saturday, August 29 from 9:00 a.m. - noon

Calling volunteers of all ages! Join us as we come together to care for our church building and grounds. Together we'll tackle a variety of projects to repair, refresh, and maintain the spaces that support our worship, fellowship, and ministry. We'll gather first to assign tasks, and then get to work. No special skills are required—just a willingness to lend a hand!

Please wear clothing that may get dirty. Faith will provide water and snacks. Whether you're able to lend a hand for an hour or stay through the morning, your presence will make a meaningful impact. As we care for our church home together, we strengthen our community and help keep Faith a clean, welcoming space for all.

Need a little motivation?

Members and friends of Faith gathered in February for a winter work day that included painting, cleaning, replacing light bulbs, etc. Join us on the 29th to continue the care of our church!



FELLOWSHIP TIME RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER

Begins September 7 following worship

After a summer hiatus, Fellowship Time will return in September. We are seeking hosts to sponsor this time to gather as a community following the service. As the host, you are asked to set out tea, coffee, lemonade and paper products (all provided) and to bake or purchase bite-sized treats. Cookies, brownies, cheese and crackers, fruit and other snacks are all welcome. Please scan the QR code to choose a date.



Fellowship Time

FUMC COMMUNITY GARDEN CONTINUES TO FLOURISH

Under the leadership of Celina Schmidt, Sara Romeyn, and Janelle Veazey, the FUMC garden is growing and producing vegetables. All Faith folks are welcome to join the team.

Right now, our greatest need is volunteers to water and harvest crops. Scan the QR code to sign up. Currently, the zucchini, squash, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant are ripe and ready!



SERVING US TODAY

Altar Guild for August: Jane Rall

Audio Visual Volunteers: Chuck Spencer & Debbie Spriggs

Congregational Welcome: Mike Coppersmith

Liturgist: Brian Jones

Money Counters: Carol Dismukes & Jane Rall

Nursery Caregivers: Jane Rall & Tessa Ricketts

Online Host: Linda Pickle

Welcome Hosts: Bill & Lloydie Zaiser

FAITH UMC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell, Pastor | Ann Bartlow, Organist | André Coleman, Tenor Section Leader | Keshika Dias, Facilities Manager | Valerie Kunsman, Office Administrator | Tessa Ricketts, Nursery Staff | Suzanne Smedberg, Youth Ministry Coordinator | Kim Webster, Financial Manager | Dr. Michael Wu, Music Director

BREATHING UNDER WATER: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER

Steps 6 & 7: Becoming Willing

KEY IDEA: We are changed not by effort, but by openness to grace.

Transformation begins in willingness. This week, as we continue our exploration and shared conversation about “Breathing Under Water: Spirituality and the Twelve Steps,” we dive into the themes of readiness and humble asking. Asking God is a mysterious and powerful act. In the Lord’s prayer, we ask for our daily bread. In our daily living, we ask God for wholeness and to open our hearts to the work God is already doing within us.

Below are some questions for you and your family and friends to consider, through contemplation, journaling, or in meaningful conversation.

1. Prayers of petition, when we call out to God for help, are one of the most common forms of prayer. What experiences do you have with prayer? What role does a sense of “entitlement” and/or humility play when you ask something of God? Why is the act of asking important?
2. Change starts with a willingness to move out of the places where we feel stuck, to move beyond shame and resistance, and embrace an understanding that God’s grace is at work in our lives, even when the change we seek seems slow and uncertain. What advice or wisdom would you offer someone who is seeking to understand how God can change people and transform the world?
3. When we pray, we don’t ask to change God, but to – honestly and sincerely – have God change us. When is a time in your life when you have truly “let go, and let God”? What did this “surrender” feel like? What keeps you from turning things over to God? How might you more deeply align your life with God’s will?

In *Breathing Under Water*, Father Richard Rohr writes: “Don’t dare go after the faults yourself or you will go after the wrong thing – or more commonly, a clever substitute for the real thing. God removes our shortcomings and fills us with something much better, more luminous and more satisfying.” What do you sense in your life is the “real thing” that God might be calling you to address?



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a response to the reflection question.

Father Rohr also writes, “How we do life is our real and final truth, not what we believe.” This week, reflect upon what you believe and care about most deeply, then, with your beliefs in mind, take one positive action that makes a difference. Be a living prayer.



FROM AGE TO AGE: Sharing Intergenerationally

God is always at work in our lives and the world. It's important to sometimes stop and notice how God changes things and the good things God offers by taking a moment for gratitude. Our lives are gifts, we can respond with appreciation and thanks.

As a family or individually, it's good to intentionally pause for praise and thanksgiving. You may wish to put a jar or box on a table and, each day, people can write down what they're thankful for on a slip of paper and place it in the jar. At the end of the month, read them aloud. Or, at bedtime, simply ask one another, "What made you smile today?"



There are many creative ways to note and share your blessings. The important thing is to intentionally adopt "an attitude of gratitude" and help each other recognize that God is present.

INVITATION TO MYSTERY

Our feelings about change and growth are big. Faith is big. God is even bigger. This week, think large. On an oversized piece of paper, draw, doodle, paint, collage, write, or in any way you feel creatively inspired, explore the many paradoxes of faith, the opposites, dichotomies and mysteries that shape our lives.

From light to dark, action to contemplation, freedom to obedience, simplicity to complexity, strength to weakness, grace to works, doubt to certainty, mourning to joy, and a hundred other points on life's continuums, let your imagination run wild as you explore how faith is defined by the coexistence of seemingly opposite ideas and emotions. Where do you find the presence of the Holy Spirit amid this experience? How can you trust grace more deeply as you open yourself to God to grow in humility, courage and compassion? Faith, it's said, comes alive in paradoxes, apparent contradictions that resolve into deeper spiritual truths.

These paradoxes can be invitations into a deeper relationship with God. What paradox resonates with you today?

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE *BREATHING UNDER WATER* SERIES AND TO ACCESS MORE RESOURCES SCAN THE QR CODE.

