



THE WITNESS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1610 PRINCE ST., CONWAY, ARKANSAS, 72034

A Look at Historical Development of the Use of Altars, Liturgy

(Clarification of portions printed in Part 1 of the series Altar Arts, regarding the ancient use of altar curtains in the Western Church, the function of the Iconostasis in the Eastern Church, and how each reflects the historical development of normative liturgical practice)

By Jason Saugey, Director of Worship Ministries:

Christian liturgical practice has, from the time of the Early Church, developed organically, shaped both by renewed theological understanding and the reading and diligent study of sacred Writ, as well as by a host of other cultural and social factors. Regardless of denominational nuance, what can be termed in an immensely broad sense as modern Christian Liturgy is, at its heart, no recent invention. Rather, how we worship today is the current stage in a continual, millennia-long process of reform, counter-reform, and reform of reform. This process is our solid foundation, and it anchors, transforms, and bolsters our faith: in word, gesture, posture, and song.

Notable voices speaking on Liturgy are not its creators, but merely those who sought and seek to shape it for the worshiping communities of their own eras, one building upon the other. None of these ever has existed or exists in a vacuum, and neither do or did any of the practices they may have encouraged or suppressed. Liturgy by its nature demonstrates the connection and relationship through time and space both vertically and horizontally: among members of the worshiping assembly (the people of God) and between the people and God.

To start, this important caveat: it is of no service to any discussion of liturgical development to deride or ridicule previous liturgical norms for any reason as being in error or worthless, as much as it is to dismiss, for example, 18th century medical practice wholly as "bad science", due to its



lack of 21st century biological and chemical understanding. What had been, constitutes nothing more than the groundwork of what is now possible. Without it, there would indeed be no Now Possible.

To understand better the sound reasoning for the unique reverence paid the altar and its rites from a liturgical perspective in Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and into the early years of the Reformation, both perspective and context are furnished by ancient Hebrew practice as regards worship in the Temple of Jerusalem.

The Holy of Holies was the Sanctuary of God, the very place where God dwells. Until the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 under the command of Roman emperor Titus, the Sanctuary housed the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred vessel containing the Tables of the Law, the rod of Aaron, as well as some of the Manna which sustained the Israelites on their journey in the desert.

See **ALTAR** on Page 3

Welcoming Rev. Miranda!

Our new associate pastor, Rev. Miranda Hornsby will join us on July 2 for her first Sunday as our Pastor of Discipleship. We are so excited to have Rev. Miranda joining our team and about the future God has in store for us as we work side by side for the sake of Christ's Kingdom. Rev. Hornsby's welcome reception will be July 9 in the Fellowship Hall and she will preach her first sermon on July 16!



Sunday Worship

In-person:

8:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary
9:05 a.m. in the Great Hall
11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

9:05 and 11 a.m. services are livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube

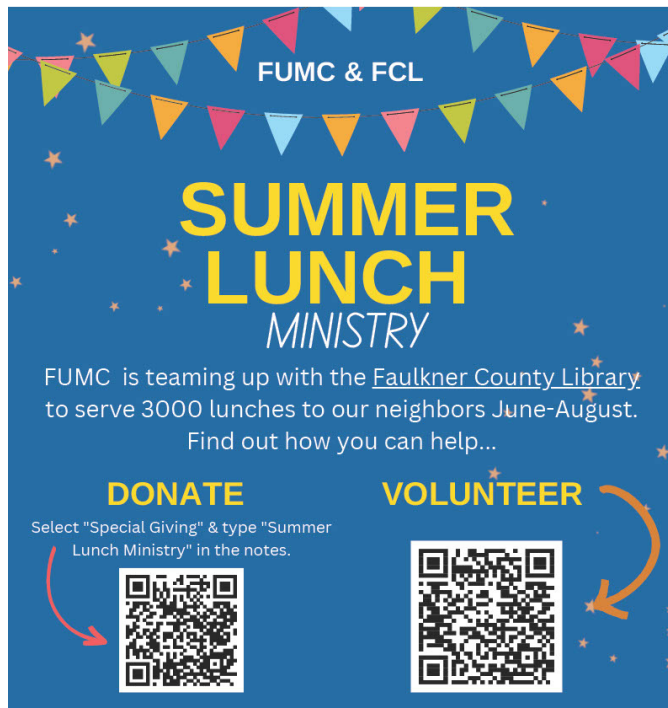
UPDATE to the Summer Lunch Ministry

If you have not yet had an opportunity to donate towards the Summer Lunch Ministry, there is still time and need.

The number of attendees has grown substantially over last year, and FUMC volunteers asked if we might do more. With the help of our volunteers and the Library Staff last week, we provided 120 meals per day (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) rather than just 100.

With your assistance, we can continue to provide community members with 360 meals per week through the rest of the summer. Thank you for your support!

Use the QR Codes below to donate to the effort or to volunteer.




FUMC & FCL

SUMMER LUNCH MINISTRY


FUMC is teaming up with the Faulkner County Library to serve 3000 lunches to our neighbors June-August. Find out how you can help...

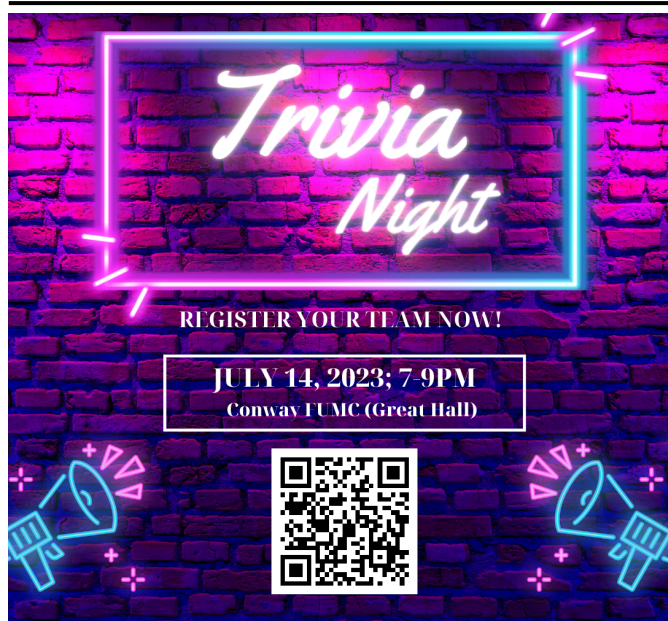
DONATE

Select "Special Giving" & type "Summer Lunch Ministry" in the notes.



VOLUNTEER






Trivia Night

REGISTER YOUR TEAM NOW!

JULY 14, 2023; 7-9PM
Conway FUMC (Great Hall)



STEP RIGHT UP!!
COME ONE, COME ALL!
TO WOW CAMP 2023

THE GREATEST SHOW

FUN FOR ALL AGES!
REGISTER TODAY!

MONDAY, JULY 10 - WEDNESDAY, JULY 12

9:00 AM - NOON

PLUS A FAMILY FUN CLOSING CARNIVAL CELEBRATION

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12TH 6:00-8:00 PM



REGISTER HERE

<https://conwayfumc.shelbnextchms.com/external/form/45897dfc-6f32-4375-a330-da9e87d32246>

REGISTER HERE

2024 Guatemala Mission Team Information Meeting

Sunday, July 16, 4:30 pm
Church Library



Help build fuel efficient stoves for Mayan families

No construction skills needed – only a willingness to learn

Spanish not necessary

Share the love of Christ in ways that make a Christian difference.

Must be 18 years or older

Trip dates: Feb. 17-25, 2024



ALTAR from Page 1

This Sanctuary was a tent of meeting, as were the burning bush, the Sinai peak, the mountaintop of Jesus's transfiguration, and any place where God interacts with human beings. The Holy of Holies was the seat of Living Mystery, so majestic, that anyone emerging would glow, according to Scripture, with the light of God.

Only the high priests entered the Sanctuary of the Temple, and it was closed off by a veil, which as Gospel teaches, was torn from top to bottom when Jesus gave up the ghost at the Skull Place. This was the moment when all gained access to the Sanctuary, when Priest became Victim, closing for ever the gates of hell and opening for eternity the gates of heaven.

The use of the ciborium (a ceiling or "tent" of sorts above a Christian altar supported by columns or posts) and riddel curtains about the altar in some places was not a practice seeking to deny the people access to the Sacred Mysteries or to conceal some closely held secret. These helped make real in liturgical time -- which still today is seen to transcend cosmic time enabling direct participation in Sacred Mystery -- the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and the rending of the Temple veil. The riddels allowed partial view of the altar, and the Real Presence might be seen to emerge from within a tent of meeting, alive and active among the people.

In the liturgical reforms of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), a similar concept is made clear by the prescribed posture of the subdeacon, who at the consecration and elevation of the host and chalice, wears about the shoulders a large rectangular vestment called the humeral veil, which at that moment is brought up about the face to shield direct gaze upon the Divine, an action that recalls the seraphim from Isaiah 6, who veiled their faces from the presence of God. So too in this Rite is the normative posture of the people to maintain "custody of the eyes", that is, keeping the head bowed with eyes focused downward, not looking about, until the moment when they physically receive the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar, kneeling at the rail, a practice still observed to this day even within some Protestant traditions, which embrace the doctrine of the Real Presence.

More commonly in our Protestant understanding, the ancient practice of the veil persists. Not as a riddel or a humeral, but as the fair linen that conceals the sacred elements until just before the start of the Great Thanksgiving, when they are made holy.

Within the Anglican Communion, what is termed the Oxford Movement, most associated with John Henry Newman in the mid-19th century, sought among other things, to revive richly symbolic ancient liturgical practice within the then modern context. During this period of liturgical renewal (described by some as a "reclamation"), modified riddel curtains and similar hangings called Dossals reappeared in some new church constructions, not necessarily to function as they had in the long past, but to pay homage to ancient custom. The Oxford Movement heavily influenced what today is termed Anglo-Catholicism.

In the Eastern Church, the altar is not exposed as it is in Western establishments, both Roman and Protestant. It stands typically in an apse, an area clearly designated the Sanctuary not by a curtain, but by a physical construction called the iconostasis. The iconostasis is clad on either side by holy images, icons, of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints, whose presence is contained in and which emanates from them. Interaction with icons is direct interaction with the holy personage depicted. Their creation is a mystery, not painted, but written, dictated to its author onto a surface. Further, icons are not written with the human senses and imagination, but are believed to originate in the mind of God.

The iconostasis, paneled with the inhabitants of heaven, is seen not to divide from, but to join the Sanctuary (heaven) with the church on earth. Its main entrance, the Beautiful Gate, is not only the

entrance to the Sanctuary, but the very gate of heaven. Thus the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is truly and visibly the Bread of Heaven, as this is the Bread that comes from the Sanctuary of God.

The use of icons in this way, and the iconostasis are not integral to worship in Western Christianity. Although icons exist in the Roman Church (most notably the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help) and may serve as inspiration to prayer and vehicles of devotion even for many from among various Protestant traditions, they are not venerated as they are in the Eastern Church.

By the mid 11th century, the heightening disagreement between East and West regarding these images and their use, resulting in widespread iconoclasm (literally, the smashing of icons), produced the first major schism in the Church Universal, the Great Schism of 1054, establishing two major branches of Christianity: the Roman Catholic (Western) and the Orthodox (Eastern) Churches.

The Liturgy is the work for the people. Its Greek etymology refers to a public gift offered for community benefit, "Donum" in Latin. Through the ages, sometimes gradually, often with more immediate, far-reaching effect, Liturgy has transformed, expanded, and contracted according to the needs of the worshiping community. Certain practices have been suppressed, others rediscovered and reinstated, the obsolete jettisoned altogether, or core elements retained and reformed to become more congruent with theological thought.

Thanks to the inscrutable Wisdom of the Liturgy, however, nothing is ever destroyed or lost entirely. New principles of worship and rubrics merely supplant older ones from time to time, which in turn are retired, becoming part of the history of a vibrant, living, and worshiping Church.

And, since nothing is ever really lost, the Church reveres in these a precious treasure: the ability to trace from ancient times and even further from the past the roots of how it is we worship. In this way, all worship, Liturgy, developed from this ancient heritage is forever contemporary. For all which has been handed down is relevant to the Now: the God who is the focus of all our sacrifice of praise is themselves timeless and so too our Liturgy by whose largesse through the working of the Holy Spirit, all believers gain access to the Divine Presence each time we enter the Sanctuary for worship.

In understanding and acknowledging the wealth of the Liturgy to which we are heirs and of which we, the worshiping assembly, are her servants, we may come better to understand our Now, and that it is this same ancient Wisdom that lays out our future, and ultimately points us home: to the true Sanctuary, which we hope some day to attain, the very Beatific Vision, to dwell with all the Saints in light.

But for now, we see through a glass darkly.

(The final part of our Altar Arts series will be published in the July Witness magazine.)

A Series of 'Summer Shorts' With Pastor Nathan

Join Pastor Nathan for "Summer Shorts: A lecture series on various Christian topics," at 6 p.m. Wednesdays in July.

Starting July 5, we will explore various topics relating to faith that we often don't have the opportunity to do so.

July 5: "Early Christian history"

July 12: WOW Camp (no "Summer Shorts")

July 19: "The Origins of Satan"

July 26: "The Reformation and why it matters"

August 2: "John Wesley and early Methodism"

Feel free to pop in and out as you desire. Each lecture stands alone so don't worry if you miss one!

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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle at Conway FUMC

FUMC's United Women in Faith unit is reviving the church's recycling efforts and ways of becoming better stewards of God's earth.

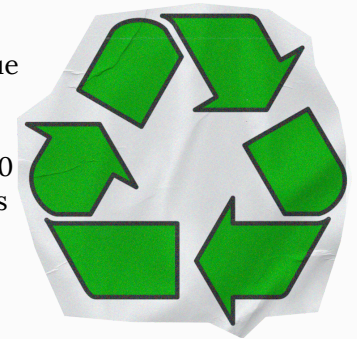
FUMC was a pioneer in the City of Conway's Recycling Program, so we should continue to carry that torch and be an active and supportive participant. We plan to start phase 1, focusing on paper and cardboard collection for recycle and/or reuse then recycle.

Did you know that 50 to 70 percent of business waste is made up of paper and 45 to 50 percent of the paper printed in offices ends up in the trash? Also 93 percent of paper comes from trees and 40 percent of all wood pulp goes toward production of paper products.

We are asking that everyone join in to help with these efforts. Watch for more information, look for and use the recycle cans throughout the church, and follow the strict guidelines set by Conway's Recycling program to avoid contamination. We will be posting guidelines by each recycle can.

One way to help: Place all church service bulletins and meeting handouts that you do not wish to keep, in the blue recycle cans as you exit the room. Please do not include any shiny or coated paper.

Thank you for being a RECYCLE PARTNER!!



First United Methodist Church Staff Directory

Senior Pastor -- Nathan Kilbourne
Executive Pastor -- Dede Roberts
Dir., Music/Worship Ministries -- Jason Saugey
Co-Dir., Children's Ministries -- Catherine Gatlin
Co-Dir., Children's Ministries -- Jules Koen
Director, Lay Ministries -- Kisha Bumpers
Director, Youth Ministries -- Zach Schrick
Campus Dir., Wesley Foundation -- Amy Shores

Assoc. Dir., Music (Praise Band) -- Stuart Holt
Assoc. Dir., Music (Children) -- Linda Ball
Church Administrator -- Jill Hankins
Business Assistant -- Todd Burris
Supervisor, Hospitality Ministries -- Ed Spears
Financial Assistant -- Laura Bounds
Communications Assistant -- Colleen Holt
Kitchen Coordinator -- Kathleen Caruthers

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