



Dove of the Desert

Dove Tales

Vol. XXXII Issue 4
February 2021

"Increasing Love for God and Neighbor by Going Deeper, Reaching Farther, Transforming Lives"

VALENTINE
FROM GOD



*For God so loved the world
that he gave his one and only
Son, that whoever believes
in him shall not perish but
have eternal life.*

John 3:16





In the 1st Century world, those who were sick had few options.

The first thing they could do was try a folk remedy. These varied from sensible potions and remedies to downright dangerous “fixes.” Many of these folk remedies are still practiced today in the industrialized world and most are completely ineffective, especially with serious diseases and injuries.

The second option a sick person could do was to pay for a physician to see them. This was costly and was not much more effective than the folk remedies. Most Greek physicians in the 1st Century followed the teachings of Hippocrates, who you can connect the Hippocratic oath of modern practice of medicine to. Hippocrates developed and taught the principles of *Humorism*, a belief that human health is defined as the perfect balance of four fluids, or humors. It was holistic, in that it saw the need for balance between the mental and physical, but the interventions by physicians often involved bleeding and draining of fluids, which would regularly result in a worsening condition. Treatment was expensive, and therefore only accessible to the privileged.

Another option for sick people in this world was one or many religious healing practices. Every ancient religion had extensive teachings on healing, and most of it cost money, or more. With these limited and ineffective options, sickness in the ancient world changed a person’s identity.

Sick people would stand out in a village. They were often visibly scarred or marked. Lepers were required to announce their coming by shouting or ringing bells. Most sick people became beggars, or wholly dependent on their family members for food and shelter. Being labeled “sick” condemned a person to low status in society.

The identity of a sick person in Jesus’ day also carried with it the association of God’s judgment. In this society, most illnesses were linked to some sin or indiscretion, rather than a scientific cause. In Jesus’ ministry, he confronted some of these beliefs, showing how widespread they were.

All of this helps us to understand more what is going on with Simon Peter’s mother-in-law in the Gospel of Mark (1:29-39). She has a fever and is so weak that she cannot get out of her bed. Her condition worries the disciples, and so Jesus is rushed in to see her. Maybe a fever would not warrant such concern (though in our current context, many of us have a heightened concern for each other’s health), but it certainly did in Jesus’ day.

Jesus touches her hand. The son of God on earth reaches out with his flesh and blood hand and holds hers. She rises up at once and the fever leaves her. All in all, It is not a dramatic scene; there isn’t any music or fanfare. There aren’t any spells or incantations. There is only a hand touching another hand. There is only Jesus reaching out to this sick woman.

After that, we are told that she starts to serve them. She now has the strength to offer the customary hospitality to her guests. Her identity is no longer a bedridden, fevered person, but a gracious host to a visiting teacher and his disciples.

And then the zombies attack. Wait. Is that not in your version of Mark? Well, not *real* zombies, but a horde of sick, demonized, and injured people swarm Jesus, begging for healing. What we saw happen to Simon’s mother-in-law, we see happen to a multitude in the village.

Jesus reached out his hand to a sick woman.

Now he reaches out his hand to the multitude.

Even still, he reaches out his hand to us now.

Jesus is here to heal us. Jesus is here to restore us to the community we lost. Jesus is here to restore us to a place of service to our community, so we can find dignity and purpose again. This is what Jesus does: he brings people back to wholeness and health. Jesus can bring *us* back to wholeness and health.

But all this healing takes a toll on Jesus; he disappears in the dark of night to pray. On these occasions of nighttime prayer, we are seldom told the content of Jesus’ prayers. They seem to be a conversation between the beloved son and his father, an intimate dialogue that may seem incomprehensible to the disciples or us. I have conversations with my son right now, private ones. They aren’t the kind that are solving any global problems, or even fixing ones at home. They are just silly, often trivial conversations, and I cherish them. They fill me with an inner love and strength that I can go out and face a day with. I hope that’s what God’s conversations with Jesus were like.

The only time we know the content of Jesus’ private, nighttime prayer is in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed. On that night, he strained and writhed under the weight of what he was called to do as the Son of God.





Pastor Louie



As I sit down to write this article, I am laughing at myself. I had been asking God "What should I be writing about this month in the Dove Tales article I am supposed to write?" I am laughing because of my struggle with this but then I woke up smiling because the Holy Spirit spoke to me loud and clear...

Today, January 6 (Day I am writing article for February) is Epiphany, the Christian season where we celebrate the coming of the light into the world. I do not plan on making this article a political article, but I am being led to share how a "New Light" has come and it is time for each of us to turn to it and move forward, not looking back to the many dark days we faced this past year. **(I am sorry to say that as I write this, at this moment our Senate and House Chambers are being broached by protesters).**

First, when I went to bed last night, I went with the same feeling I had after watching election returns for the past several elections. Then, when I awoke, I was informed by the election returns I saw, that a new day had brought results showing that a change was going to take place because of two Democrats apparently being elected in Georgia. That means leadership in the Senate will move from one political party to another. The November Presidential election also brought the same result. Why, you might ask is Dove's Pastoral Care minister talking to us about politics? It is because I believe each of us has been under immense pressure coming from our friends, family and neighbors who might not be politically in the same place you have been. I don't know about you, but I am tired of this and want a NEW BEGINNING. I want to believe that the majority has spoken, thus I will give our new government a chance to govern without me being a thorn. **(New Addition with the events of today at Capital)... No matter where you are politically, "Did you ever think the events of today would ever occur in the U S? It is TIME for ALL of US to move forward and be a light, a light that follows Jesus saying, "Enough is Enough! I will no longer be a part of this in any way..."**

Another light is now shining with the certification of numerous Covid-19 vaccines, yet there are those who are trying to tell us that it is not safe, thus they won't take the vaccine. There are those who feel that wearing a mask is a political statement and they are not going to be forced to do so. My prayer for all of this is that this NEW LIGHT, this Epiphany will change what has been. Dear Ones, I know that we are all struggling with the things I have mentioned above in this article and I have no question that I might have offended some with what I have written, which has not been my intention. I hear those saying Politics does not belong in the church. Yes, I said I do not mean this article to be political but when I read it to Joyce she said, "It is Political whether you meant it to be or not."

So, if I have offended anyone you have my apology. What I hope and pray for is that you and I will begin to think of how we can be a Light in a Dark World, one who is a follower of the Prince of Peace. The question I want you to ask is, "How can I make a difference in my life and in the lives of others? Am I willing to let go and move on? Enough questions already, it's time to move ahead. Please know that I will continue to be in prayer for each of you. May it be a year of good health and sanity from this moment forward for us all.

Shalom,
Louie



Pastor Dave



He pleaded for the cup to pass from him, even as he accepts God's will for his life. This glimpse of Jesus' prayer life may not be identical to all those other nights he prayed for hours in the dark, but we can be sure it was intense. Jesus' sense of mission empowered him to do the work God had called him to do. When he is exhausted, he goes off and prays in the night, and he comes back renewed.

Perhaps we do not so much need rest as a renewed sense of our mission and calling by God. Perhaps more people would experience wholeness and healing if we spent more time in the dark with God. It was how Jesus found strength, and many Christian saints through the ages found time alone with God to be renewing and refreshing. Perhaps in this season of waiting for the campus to reopen, or relearning how to engage with the community of faith, there is healing that we can hand to Jesus to lead us through.

Jesus is reaching out his hand to us today, calling us to a life filled with service and community. Jesus is praying for us (John 17) so we might have the strength to go into the dark with God and wrestle with our calling and mission. Jesus is with us, going before us, into the world God loves so much.

Welcome to the season of Lent in the year 2021, church. Let us seek what God has in store for us together.

Blessings,
Pastor Dave



Finance



2020 This update brings the financial year to a close for which the Finance Committee is extremely grateful for continued faithful giving by the Dove community. Without the sustained giving of our church community, Dove's financial resiliency would not have been possible during such a challenging year. We know that similar challenges remain in 2021, however, we are extremely fortunate to be entering the year in a much stronger position than we ever could have imagined thanks to the blessings of everyone who was able to offer financial support and prayers for Dove.

From a numbers perspective, the final 2020 year-end figures for Dove resulted in income of \$673,267 vs. expenses of \$637,616 for a final net income of \$35,650. The final net income was significantly more favorable in comparison to the original budget projection due to the excellent efforts of our committees and staff as great stewards of Dove's expenses as well the faithful contributions of our Dove community throughout the year.

Thank you for your continued support. Your church is truly blessed by your giving.



West District Training



Lay Servant Ministries ~ “Discover Your Spiritual Gifts” ~ Advanced Course via Zoom

Taught by Pastor John Fairchild from Lakeview UMC in Sun City

Two ZOOM Classes will be offered in mid-February, one during the day and one evening/Saturday morning class. We are trying to reach more people offering both day and evening classes.

With COVID-19 only becoming worse, we believe that the future of in-person classes will not be possible for quite some time. We want all of you to be safe and will endeavor, through ZOOM Classes, to provide the same high quality Lay Servant Ministry Classes we have always provided in the West District.

We want to hear from you, on your needs for future classes, so please contact me with any questions.

To register for the classes: go to dscumc.org/lay-servant-ministries-training-sessions

The class is \$15 and includes “Your Spiritual Gifts Inventory” mailed to your home with your registration. Please register as soon as possible.

Thank you and I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

The Daytime Session is:

February 17, 18 and 19, Wednesday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. to Noon

The Evening – Saturday Session is:

February 18, 19, and 20 Thursday and Friday 5:30 – 9 p.m. and Saturday the 20th from 8:30 a.m. to Noon

The last half hour of both classes of the last session will be Holy Communion and graduation.

Blessings,

Betty Stewart

Betty Stewart, West District
Lay Servant Ministries Director
bettyboop491@cox.net preferred way of communication
Cell # 480-658-7713



Fellowship Opportunities



We will let you know when Fellowship Opportunities Resume



The **LUNCH BUNCH** meets the 1st Thursday of each month for good food and fellowship. Please call: 623.931.4283 for reservations or information. Newcomers are always welcome! *(Currently not meeting.)*



DOVE MEN'S BREAKFAST meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month for a time of devotion, prayer, and fellowship. Please join them at **8:00 am on Saturday, February 13** via Zoom! Please R.S.V.P. to Louie Lyon, 623.238.8455 or e-mail CarePastor@doveofthedesert.com and he will send you the Zoom information you will need to join the event. Don't forget to have your coffee and breakfast ready along with your Bible!!



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY meets the 2nd and 4th of each month from 9:00 - 10:00 am in Room 7. The group knits or crochets shawls, baby blankets, lap blankets, prayer squares, and other items to be given to Dove members and others in need of comfort. For information, please call *Mimi Griffiths* at 602.762.6709 or at mimig7852@gmail.com.

(Currently working on projects from home.)

OTHER FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Many other opportunities exist for fellowship at Dove, including Adult Sunday School classes, Tuesday Talks, Women's Bible Studies, and Dove's musical groups including Celebration Singers, Dove Notes, Folk Group, and the Bell Choirs, Prime Time Live! plus many more. Please check the calendar found on the Dove website.



PRIME TIME LIVE!

is the Dove of the Desert adult fellowship group and includes all Dove adults: married, single, young and young at heart. We meet the 3rd Friday of each month at a member's home and enjoy the evening together with food, fun and Christian fellowship. The host supplies a main course, attendees bring sides and dessert. *(Currently not meeting.)*



Board of Church and Society

Did you realize that ANY felony conviction can be a "life sentence"—even for a small amount of marijuana in AZ? Once you have been incarcerated, every time you apply for an apartment or a job or to vote, you are asked about convictions. It is easier to buy a house than rent—EXCEPT for the cost, something which is difficult with poor job prospects. The cycle continues. We have an exceptional opportunity to hear from women who have been incarcerated in Perryville and have turned their lives around in spite of this "life sentence." Please join the Board of Church and Society for a Zoom presentation by the Arouet Foundation Storytellers on Tuesday, February 9 from 8:30 to 9:30. To register, please contact Nancy Nonini at nnonini19@gmail.com



The Conference Task Force on Economic Inequality will be holding a Zoom presentation on Economic Inequality and Education on March 4, 7:00-8:30 pm. We will be discussing questions such as: How does funding affect learning opportunities for schools? What resources could create a more equitable learning environment? What do we know about the funding of students with disabilities? What policies or legislative action should we be aware of? Watch for more information in the coming weeks.



Prayer Line



Missions

For a daily prayer and devotion with Rev. Louie please dial **602-375-PRAY (602-375-7729)**

Please send all prayer requests to Rev. Louie at carePastor@doveofthedesert.com

Please deliver directly to the Mission
Donations for St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
Pet Food & Supplies to Animal Shelters
Justa Center Donations
UMOM Donations



More Missions



Please enjoy the following letter from Elizabeth Leggett, the Riner Office Administrator, thanking Dove for their donations of gift cards at Christmas. Let me thank you for your generous donations, which help First Glendale assist so many others.

Rebecca Curless
First United Methodist Church of Glendale

Dear Jim, and the Dove of the Desert UMC Congregation,

Thank you for your very generous donation of gift cards this Christmas. Your donation allowed us to provide 40 food boxes with a week worth of food, a Christmas dinner and gift cards. All the families received gift cards, but some of our families that have faced extra challenges this year we were able to help with additional cards to assist them through exceptionally challenging times.

One family that comes regularly to the panty had an extremely difficult holiday. The father went into the hospital before Thanksgiving for surgery, came home but was readmitted to the hospital before Christmas with pneumonia and is still in the hospital. We have helped this family with extra food and gift cards to help support this family through a time of crisis.

We have been helping a single mother of five who we first met when her 7-year-old daughter was in Phoenix Children's Hospital before Thanksgiving. The daughter passed away, and the mother lost her job for taking too much time off. We helped her with Christmas presents for her 5 year old as well as food and gift cards to help purchase food and jackets for the older children. She did get another job, but she still faces one challenge after another. Just after Christmas, her 16-year-old son had his appendix rupture. After a week in the hospital, he has been released and is back home.

We still have some gift cards, which will allow us to provide an extra level of assistance to those who need to purchase shoes, prescriptions or other essentials.

In addition to our Christmas family boxes, we prepared 60 gift bags for our homeless population. Each bag contained ready-to-eat food, a blanket, hat, gloves, underwear, socks, a ground cover, raincoat, hygiene products, and a small denomination gift card to the 99-cent store, which is the nearest store to our church.

On Monday and Tuesday of each week, we provide sack lunches to 30-40 people daily, and in addition, we provide 30-40 homeless food bags per week, as well as countless bottles of water. We also provide utility bill payments to over 150 families per year.

Thank you for your continued support of the Brad Riner Assistance Office, which has been in operation for over 45 years. Your continued support allows us to help the many people who are struggling to put food on the table.

Elizabeth Leggett
Brad Riner Assistance Office



Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study ~ meets weekly on Zoom. We have a time of fellowship from 9:30 to 10 am, study begins at 10 am to 11 am. Join us as we dive into timely, relevant, scripture, based book studies.

Contact Nannette Carr at nannettecarr@gmail.com or 602-621-1665 for the zoom link.



The Care Ministry Team wants to give a special welcome to Mary Clark, the new Coordinator for our Pet Care Ministry.

Any donations for the first quarter (January, February, and March) will go to Arizona Humane Society, an ethical no-kill organization. If you would like to contribute, please indicate you are giving to Pet Care Ministry.

During fourth quarter 2020, our Dove congregation donated \$231.84 to Sun Valley Animal Shelter along with numerous pet items given at the "Fill the Shelves" drive-thru event. We appreciate your continued support of our furry friends in Dove's community.

Mary Clark, Coordinator - 602.615.5078



Condolences to:

Judy Francies and family on the death of her husband, Bob

Cortney Fulk and family on the death of his wife, Emily

Paul & Carolyn McClendon and family on the death of his father, Barney

Joe & Liz Pierotti and family on the death of Joe's mother, Claudia

Larry Holtsclaw on the death of his wife, Lee

Dan & Susan Allen and family on the death of Susan's father, Dennis Arend

John & Pam Dunphy and family on the death of Pam's mother, Jean McEachern

For these churches:

- Ajo Federated Church
- Calvary UMC, Phoenix
- Chino Valley UMC
- Christ Community UMC, Avondale

What Bible says about Valentine's Day?

1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends; let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Dove of the Desert UMC
7201 W. Beardsley Road, Glendale, AZ 85308
Rev. David Wasson, Sr Pastor
 SrPastor@doveofthedesert.com
Rev. Louie Lyon
Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation
 CarePastor@doveofthedesert.com or 623.238.8455
Director of Music:
 GregRamsey@doveofthedesert.com
Choral Director: Lovita Christianson
 Choirs@doveofthedesert.com
Bell Choirs Director: Brent Fike bfike2@cox.net
Youth Director: Greg Ramsey gr@gopiano.com
Children & Family Director: Jan Ramsey
 SundaySchool@doveofthedesert.com
Nursery Childcare Coordinator: Susan Duncan
 susan@visualizerset.com
Dove Tales Editor: Colleen Centner
 4dovetalesumc@gmail.com
Office Manager: Robin Lemkuil
 DoveAdmin@doveofthedesert.com
Administrative Assistant:
 MartiBetts@doveofthedesert.com
 Phone: 623.572.7334, Fax: 623.572.8973
 www.doveofthedesert.com
 www.facebook.com/doveofthedesert
 Twitter: @DoveUMC

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Dove of the Desert

**United Methodist Church
7201 W. Beardsley Road
Glendale, AZ 85308**

Return Service Requested

Sending February Blessings to:



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