“Life is like a Box of Chocolates!”

By the time many of you read this article, you will have had your own personal experience with a “Box of Chocolates.” During the time of this writing people around the world were being reminded of Valentine’s Day. A time when candy makers across the country were busy preparing boxes upon boxes of chocolates.

The thought of a box of chocolates reminds me of the above quote from a favorite movie “Forrest Gump”. This quiet, gentle giant of a man became famous within communities he had never dreamed of, such as the All-Star Football Team, The United States Army and the Seafood Business. Looking at Forrest’s humble/troubled beginnings; he had an IQ of 75, he was socially awkward, and he was often referred to as stupid. This is not the type of person society would consider as being “one of the cool kids” or “high school jock.” I would dare say he would be labeled “a mis-fit.”

Life was like a box of chocolates, for Forrest, because he didn’t always know what he would get during his life’s journey, yet he never gave up and he became a blessing to others.

Our current Sermon Series “Building Community” is a reminder that the world’s view of individuals and community is not God’s view. Genesis 1:26 reminds us that humanity was created in “their image…their likeness” (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) so that we may be in community with them and with each other. God also had a greater purpose in mind as he used Abram and those who would follow to be the greater community. For Genesis 12:2 said it best “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; … and you will be a blessing to others.” The focus and greater purpose of the Christian Community is to share the blessing of God’s love with the Forrest Gumps in our lives, as well as the jocks. Just as a box of chocolates is made up of many different types of candy, we, the Body of Christ, “are many parts, but one body.”(1 Corinthians 12:12)
Not every community experience will be the same and some may seem less than ideal. We are called to participate in, not dictate or control the lives of others, as was shared in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book, Life Together. Yes, there will be times of brokenness, but we still have the promise and hope that is made available to all of us through God’s Son – Jesus Christ.

The twelve disciples who traveled with Jesus, were from diverse backgrounds; some were fishermen, some were tax collectors, while others were sinners. And yet, they lived together in community with one main purpose in mind – to follow Jesus. Jesus lived in community with the disciples and later with those who would follow him, with one main purpose in mind – that all would have a chance to eternal life – because of God’s love for us.

Jesus looked at everyone as having the same opportunity of a future with God through the reconciliation offered through Jesus. Just as Forrest’s mother told him, he had to decide what his future would be, we also have the opportunity to decide whether we will accept the future God has for us.

Yes, life is like a box of chocolates, very often not knowing what we will get. However, living our life as a blessed community of God, while blessing others, is sweet, like a box of chocolates. 

Blessings, Pastor Brenda

---

**Positive & Negative Religious Coping**

“Religious Coping” involves drawing on religious beliefs and practices to understand and deal with life stressors. Over the past 2 decades, both researchers and counselors have turned their attention to two forms of religious coping, namely: Positive & Negative Religious Coping. We’ve learned that individuals who rely on Negative Religious Coping to deal with stress exhibit worse overall mental health, higher levels of depression and lower life satisfaction. Positive Religious Coping, on the other hand, promotes hope and optimism. It is associated with better outcomes for both physical and mental well-being.

Here are a few examples of Positive & Negative Religious Coping:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Religious Coping:</th>
<th>Positive Religious Coping:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. God has abandoned me.</td>
<td>1. God will help me stay strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I’m being punished</td>
<td>2. I will seek God’s love and care now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’m angry at God &amp; life is unfair.</td>
<td>3. I’ll seek God’s help to let go of anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Life is meaningless.</td>
<td>4. There is a lesson here for me to learn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding how you cope with difficult life stressors can provide good self-insight, areas for personal growth, and opportunities to employ healthier forms of coping.

Dr. Tom Swisher is a pastoral counselor at BUMC. He can be reached in confidence at swishtom@gmail.com or (443) 996-6659.
Are you part of a G.I.F.T. group at Bethany?

It is an easy way to learn more and connect with other people. There are over 20 groups that meet at a variety of days and times.

For a list of groups, check the church website: www.bethanyum.org

Or contact Tim Ferrell: timferrell@comcast.net

ConneXion Pointe!
Interested in joining the Bethany family? We want to help!
Join us on Sunday, March 24th from 12:00pm – 4pm.
Lunch provided. RSVP to Tim Ferrell
TimFerrell@comcast.net

Parenting Through the Phases
for parents of kids from birth through 12th grade

Your kid is changing every week! Just as you begin to figure them out, they shift or move on to a new rhythm, a new habit, and a new opinion. It can make the responsibility to shape a child's faith and character feel overwhelming. But it doesn't have to.

Don't miss out! To join this six week small group series email Pastor Cathy. cathy@bethanyum.org

Go to: http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/celebrating-what-makes-us-united-methodist to view the video on Celebrating What Makes Us United Methodist or view the online version of the Beacon at: http://www.bethanyum.org/newsletter/ for links to this and other websites.
A **Missions Fair** was held between services on February —. Information was available about a variety of missions at BUMC. Did you know that Bethany is active in local, regional and international missions both with the United Methodist Church but also other organizations. There are so many opportunities—why not join with others in our community? Start by clicking: [http://www.bethanyum.org/ministries/service-and-mission/](http://www.bethanyum.org/ministries/service-and-mission/) The church office can also provide information.
Tagging Instead of Bagging!

Scouting for Food is taking place on Saturday, March 23, starting at 8 a.m. This year, Scouts in Howard County will be distributing door hang tags instead of bags to be better stewards of the environment. Please re-use bags you have at home to make your donations of unexpired, non-perishable food in non-glass containers and place them at your door or mailbox. Scouts will come collect your donations starting at 8 a.m. Bethany UMC’s food pantry and 24 other food pantries in this county benefit from this food drive. Many thanks for your consideration and generosity. If you have questions, please email scoutingforfoodnpd@verizon.net

Cold Weather Shelter

Our guests arrived in the evening to a warm welcome by our hosts and Grass Roots. Many hands provided meals, laundry, transportation and a clean safe place to sleep.

An Alzheimer’s Support Group for Caregivers is scheduled on the 2nd Saturday of every month 10-11:30 am at BUMC. The group meets in Dr. Tom Swisher’s office located at the rear of our White Chapel building. It is sponsored by the Maryland Alzheimer’s Association and is facilitated by Dr. Swisher and church member, Nora McCallie Tripp. For more info contact Dr. Swisher at (443) 996-6659 or Nora McCallie Tripp at (415) 297-1030.

Thomas K. Swisher, J.D., Ph.D.
swishtom@gmail.com
443-996-6659

Endowment Committee Plans Informational Luncheon

Many people reach retirement age having received much more information about accumulating money in 401(k), IRA, 403(b) accounts, etc. than they have received about how to handle those funds once they retire.

The Endowment Committee is planning an informational luncheon session for March 31, after the 11:00 service to discuss this topic.

This session will cover the financial risks associated with retirement and strategies to deal with those risks. We will look at several of the widely-recommended spending guidelines and annuities. This session is not about investment advice or avoiding a financial planner, but it may help you to ask better questions of the professionals in those areas.
Shrove Pancake Breakfast

March 3
9 AM—12 NOON

We will serve a pancake breakfast in Fellowship Hall after every service that day beginning at 9 a.m. with an expected clean up around 12 noon. A free-will offering with a suggested donation of $5 per person will be taken with proceeds going to missions. There are many opportunities to volunteer and to donate items to make up a great celebration. Sign up HERE. Please direct questions to Sori Meredith.

Soup’r Sundae
A Faith Community Partnership event

Donate a themed gift basket and/or gift cards (available between services in Fellowship Hall) toward this fundraiser in support of Grassroots Crisis Center.

Place donations in bin labeled “Soup’r Sundae” in Mission Central, Fellowship Hall through March 10th.

Soup’r Sundae is March 17th, 11 AM-2 PM at Wild Lake HS cafeteria; Columbia. This family friendly event features all-you-can-eat soup and ice cream sundaes plus a silent auction for gift cards and themed baskets. $20 adults, $5 children under 12.

Food, entertainment, raffle and silent auction!

Enjoying a Pancake Breakfast While Helping to Feed Others
Shrove Pancake Breakfast designated mission

For many years, Bethany received a shipment of potatoes at holiday time for the Thanksgiving baskets and the Adopt-a-Family programs. In 2018, the Society of St. Andrew completed a grant year and didn’t have enough to make all the normal shipments. We had to buy potatoes instead. Our community has benefited from this project and its efforts.

At the pancake breakfast being held on Sunday, March 3, we will be asking for a free-will offering with a suggested $5 donation per person. Proceeds resulting from the pancake breakfast will go to the Society of St. Andrew and its potato project.

Potato & Produce Project

We salvage tractor-trailer loads of potatoes and other produce that are rejected by commercial markets or potato chip factories due to slight imperfections. Usually, these rejected loads end up at local landfills. Through the Potato and Produce Project, the Society of St. Andrew is able to redirect these 40,000-45,000-pound loads of fresh, nutritious produce to food banks, soup kitchens, food pantries, low income housing areas, local churches, and other hunger agencies for distribution to the poor. In 2018, our Potato and Produce Project collected and distributed 6,874,961 pounds of fresh produce.

Because this produce is donated to us, the Society of St. Andrew pays only for the transportation and packaging of the food—we make an amazingly low 9 cents per pound! That means we can provide food to the nation’s hungry for about 3 cents per serving!

Why it Works

The Potato & Produce Project is successful and extremely cost-effective for two simple reasons:

First, the food we receive is donated. This food is not marketable for cosmetic reasons, but is perfectly edible. We do not buy the food we distribute. Our costs are for the transportation and packaging of the food we receive.

Second, we operate in conjunction with existing food distribution organizations, such as food banks. We avoid duplication of effort in order to gain efficiency and to cut costs.

Sori
When my son was young he was a terribly picky eater. We tried everything to get him to eat what we were eating, or a part of what we were eating, or the green leaf of a vegetable every now and then. All to no avail. The advice we got was to “wait him out,” and honestly we tried. The problem was that unless the food available to him tasted good to him, he just wouldn’t eat. And he was okay with that. But we weren’t. Not only because nutrition is one of those key ingredients to health and thus a major parental responsibility, but also because as his blood sugar plummeted, he was less and less fun to be around. So we learned to have foods on hand that he would eat.

The problem was, his taste buds were constantly changing. As soon as I noted a new food trending to his palate, I would make sure we had an ample supply on hand. At one time Ellio’s frozen pizzas were at the top of his list, so I made sure the freezer was stocked. I noticed one of the area groceries had them on sale so I doubled our supply. Just about the time his taste buds moved on to something different. We were still finding Ellio’s frozen pizzas in our freezer four years ago.

Kids are constantly changing. It’s something they are really, really good at! And while we couldn’t predict what my son was going to enjoy eating next, or when that change was coming, there are some predictable ways kids change. For example, we know a newborn is growing, growing, growing and the thing for infants and toddlers to learn is that someone is going to feed them and change them, comfort them – they need to learn that they are safe. We know preschoolers and Kindergartners and first graders have this developing sense of belonging and want to know if they are still loved even when they misbehave, they have this constant need for attention. We know Fourth and Fifth graders are all about friends. Sixth graders are concerned with who likes them and who they like. Seventh graders start to ask questions of themselves: who am I? Ninth graders wonder “where do I belong.” Eleventh graders want to know “How can I matter right now?” And Twelfth graders are busy wondering “what will I do next?” Kids, and their focus, are constantly changing.

And the thing is, just when you think you’ve got the one phase figured out, your child has moved on to the next one, and unless we are intentionally paying attention, we will have missed the opportunity to connect with our kids in the phase they are currently in; that’s important if we want to help them discover and shape the answers to the questions they are instinctively asking, if we want to influence who they are becoming.

To that end, I wonder how intentional we are now or might be about The Who we want our kids to become. What are the values, the character traits we want them to own as they leave our homes and go out into the world, and how can we be building that in them now, addressing them now in the phase the kids are in now, so that as our influence with them begins to dwindle, these values and character traits are firmly rooted? Maybe you’ve been proactive about thinking these things through, but I don’t believe most parents are: we get so caught up in the day to day that it’s hard to come up for the 30,000 foot view. But that’s what we’re inviting you into.

Based on the Parenting Through the Phases resources published by The reThink Group, which also publishes our Sunday Fun curriculum, our Spring Family Fun Parent sessions will focus on four critical conversations we believe are important for parents to have in every phase of their child’s development: Healthy Habits; Sexual Integrity; Technological Responsibility and Faith. We hope these will spark ideas for additional conversations you can have with your child as you help them grow into the adult you raising! Check out the website for more information, or call me… I’d love to share more about this!  

Shalom, Pastor Cathy

PS. Because I know some of you are concerned, my son AND his taste buds grew up! He is over 6 foot tall and at 23 has become the most amazing cook at home, making his dinners from scratch, using farm fresh, organic ingredients (and green vegetables!). Like I said, kids are always changing!

---

**Friday Family Fun Night**—March 22nd, 6:30 PM

For more information and events check out the church website: [www.bethanyum.org](http://www.bethanyum.org)
Sunday Worship Times – 8 a.m., Chapel; 8:55 a.m. & 11 a.m., Main Sanctuary;
Rev. Andrew Cooney, Sr. Pastor • Rev. Brenda Lewis, Associate Pastor

March 2019

**Recurring on Sundays**

8, 8:55 & 11 AM—BUMC worship
9:00 AM—925 Youth (Middle School)
9:30 AM—Sunday Fun (preschool - 5th grade)
10:15 AM—Youth Choir Rehearsal
10:30 AM—Carol Choir Rehearsal
10:30 AM—Cherub Choir Rehearsal
11 AM—Sunday Morning High Schoolers
11:30 AM—Sunday Fun
5:30-8:30 PM—Youth Sunday Nights (Chapel)

**Special Events in March**

3/2, 9-noon Live stream of Special Session of the General Conference, Fellowship Hall
3/3 Shrove Pancake Breakfast
3/6, 7-8 PM-Ash Wednesday service in Chapel
3/10 Daylight Savings Time
3/10 Bit O’ Bethany
3/17, 11-2 PM-Soup’r Sundae, Wild Lake HS
3/22, 6:30 PM-Friday Family Fun Night
3/24, 12-4 PM-ConneXion Point
3/31, noon-2 PM Endowment Committee Informational luncheon
3/31, UMCOR Sunday celebration with activities between services

For an up-to-date listing of all activities at BUMC, please check out www.bethanyum.org