

August 28, 2020

Dear Paragould FUMC,

THIS SUNDAY: “Good News for Tough Times: Romans 8-13” This Sunday is our last week for our recent sermon series on Romans. We end with the encouraging and challenging words of Romans 13, *“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers.”* In these paragraphs we hear echoes of Jesus' most simple teaching, ‘love one another’ but Paul includes an additional emphasis on urgency. Urgency is not the same thing as being hurried. The college basketball coach John Wooden said, “Be quick but don’t hurry.” To be in a hurry means that we are anxious we will not complete our tasks or goals before dreaded and unmanageable deadlines. The Christian life is not marked by a need to hurry because the timelines are in God’s hands. However, we should live, or rather love, with urgency. We must wake from the sleep of our former lives and focus on our opportunities to practice Christian love. Now is the time! Join us this Sunday at 9am & 11am!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL COLLECTION We are moving ahead with our annual effort, though with a few caveats. **First**, only buy these things if you are already shopping and have easy access to the requested products. Do not make a special or untimely shopping trip. **Second**, if you would rather make a monetary donation in support of back-to-school you can mark your gift to the church and we will get that money to our local schools. **Third**, school administrators have suggested that COVID-19-specific donations would be appreciated. You can drop off supplies at the Welcome Center during office hours. It is our responsibility and joy to help care for our neighbors and children.

Face Masks | Face Shields | Hand Sanitizer | Boxes Facial Tissues | Pocket Folders | Wet Wipes | Black, Blue, Red Pens | Backpacks | Washable Markers | Highlighters | Glue Sticks | Rulers | Spiral Notebooks | Loose Leaf Paper | Crayons | Black-erase Markers | Blunt Scissors | Cap Erasers | Quart/ Gallon Ziplock Bags | 3 Ring Binders | Composition Journals | Pencils | Bottles of Glue

IN-PERSON WORSHIP & ACTIVITIES FUMC & ARUMC remain in “Stage 2” regarding reopening. I thank those who are attending and supporting in-person worship. FUMC’s safety measures mirror similar guidelines in all other public spaces. If you are wondering about coming to church, I want you to feel welcome and comfortable. We are creating a safe environment. If you have questions or feedback about our ministries and COVID-19, please contact me.

As a reminder, below is a summary of what to expect when you return to in-person worship.

+ You must pre-register to attend the 9am & 11am worship services via the church’s website (fumcparagould.org/register) or by calling the church office each week.

+ Live-streaming, radio, and television access continue

+ Everyone in the facility will wear a facemask except those speaking or singing.

+ You can download the order of worship from fumcparagould.org/homeboundrelaunch.

+ As services end, we will make our way outside as quickly as possible.

+ Children are welcome, but no childcare will be available.

ARUMC ORDINATION & COMMISSIONING In lieu of the typical Arkansas Annual Conference Ordination service during the state-wide summer meeting, a smaller service will be held this Sunday at 4pm at St. James UMC in Little Rock. Rev. Chase Burns has been recognized as a “Provisional Elder” by the

Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. This means he has now officially begun his “residency” in preparation for full ordination, a process that takes multiple years. As part of beginning residency, provisional members are “commissioned” at Annual Conference. This does not mean they are ordained, but it does mean they are recognized and set apart for this new calling on their life and ministry. You can watch the live-stream of the service via the Conference’s Facebook page (facebook.com/arkansasumc/) Sunday at 4pm to see and celebrate Chase’s commissioning. ARUMC Bishop Gary Mueller will be leading the service including Holy Communion. Tune in!

Grace & Peace,

Rev. Dane



1. Order of Worship, 9am Service, Aug. 30
2. Order of Worship, 11am Service, Aug. 30

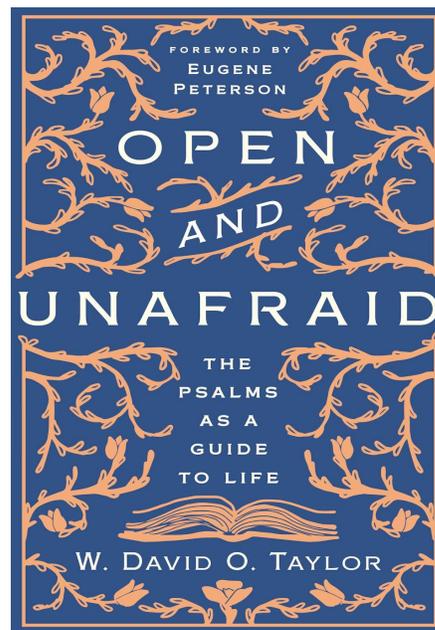
Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life by W. David O. Taylor

Adult Study | 8 Weeks | Sept. 9 - Oct. 28

12noon @ Worship Center

6pm @ Worship Center & Streaming Online

A few years ago, David Taylor made a splash online with his short documentary titled “Bono & Eugene Peterson: The Psalms” created by FULLER Studios of Fuller Seminary. Taylor was finishing his doctoral work while I was attending seminary at Duke Divinity School. Bono, of course, is the lead singer of the Irish rock band U2. If you are familiar with U2’s music, you have recognized the Christian themes in their lyrics including their hit song “40” based on Psalm 40, “I waited patiently for the Lord, He inclined and heard my cry, I will sing, sing a new song.” Bono shares that his life of faith has been shaped by author and pastor Eugen Peterson who is best known for his contemporary translation of the Bible known as *The Message*. The 20 minute conversation between Bono, Peterson, and Taylor is enlightening and encouraging. [Watch it here!](#) Peterson wrote the foreword and Bono wrote an endorsement for Taylor’s book, *Open and Unafraid*.



You have heard me celebrating the Psalms through our “A Psalm A Day” scripture and prayer initiative. As I write this, we are finishing up August, the first month and first fifth of these scriptures. My concern for the Psalms is practical and personal. On a practical note, the Psalms are the prayer book of the Bible and have been the central spiritual guide to Christians for centuries. I cannot imagine shaping a Christian faith outside of regularly reading and praying the Psalms. I think this is of utmost importance for our church and its members, especially in this time of dislocation and abnormalities. Personally, the Psalms mean a great deal to me. Prayer is not something that comes natural to me and so I feel deeply indebted to helpful guides including the Psalter. My spiritual life has been strengthened and deepened by learning and praying the Psalms. Though, admittedly I am still a beginner in developing a Psalm-based prayer life.

This is a really helpful book in understanding the patterns and teachings of the Psalms. *Open and Unafraid* is different from our typical curriculum and video series. This is a theological book, endorsed and

celebrated by seminary professors. But it's also an edgy book with illustrations from everyday life.

We will use this book for an 8 week study of the Psalms, roughly reading two chapters per week. You'll find it informative and a great compliment to our "A Psalm A Day" prayers. We will offer the study Wednesdays, Sept. 9 - Oct. 28, at 12noon & 6pm. We will meet in the Worship Center, wearing masks, and spread out for safety. You'll need to register your attendance each week the same as Sunday worship. The 6pm study will be streamed online similar to Sunday worship for those who feel safer at home. Books will be available at church.

For what it's worth, I would encourage you to read and use this book, even if you don't attend one of these studies. You might consider using it for your own group study. If your Sunday School class has not been meeting or has been meeting with no curriculum, you could reconnect by reading this book in this season. You could meet in-person at church in a safe way, or at someone's home (perhaps outside?), or online video chat.

I'm looking forward to growing with you by reading and praying the Psalms and with the help of Taylor's *Open and Unafraid*. Please join me in this study!

- Rev. Dane