

# His Mansion

A newsletter from  
First United Methodist Church  
of Southbridge

*"In my Father's House, there are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you..."*

MAY 2021

JOIN US FOR OUR  
**SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
@ 10.00 AM

We are currently  
worshipping  
online and in-person.



*"I remember my mother's  
prayers and they have  
always followed me.  
They have clung to me  
all my life."*

*Abraham Lincoln*



twitter

@Pastor\_Sabina

## Pastor's Corner

Dear friends in Christ,

I have been delaying writing this article and I feel guilty about it. Maybe I chose to focus on your reactions instead of justice. Anyway, here it comes.

I want to be up front about the very ugly, very large elephant in the room: White people have been resistant to doing the real work of racial reconciliation. But I think we need to confront that, and do it now. High-profile cases of black-targeted police brutality in 2020 and 2021 have intensified the urgency of having those difficult conversations. Let me be blunt: What we are seeing is the systemic murder of brown people by the police. We cannot sit back and pretend it did not happen. And that is but a symptom of systemic racism in our country.

*"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no waters."*

Jeremiah 2:13

Yes, I am brokenhearted and ashamed of the sin of racism as a white Ameri-

can pastor. Yes, the sin. Everything that falls short of God's will is a sin.

I think the Bible is pretty clear. In my opinion, when God created human beings in Genesis, he created people in his image, and after he created them, he said this is very good. So we know that every single person in God's eyes has value, and that value is equal. Right now, I do not see a world that matches what God intended or designed. As God's people in this day in age, we have to be people who are fighting for what God intended and desired. We have to be willing to say when a particular group of people have not been valued, have faced injustice, have faced oppression, we have to be willing to say this group matters.

Why can't we sit down and talk without starting to get defensive if the phrase "white privilege" is mentioned ("I am very poor, there's no such thing as privilege!")? Why don't we want to be educated? Why do we get defensive ("I am not a racist!")? And why do we deny that racism exists in our country (please see chart on page 2)?

The Bible is pretty clear when it comes to hospitality: If you are the majority culture in an area and an outsider comes into that area, you have to treat that person the same way you would treat your neighbor.

(continued on page 2)

# Pastor's Corner

(conclusion)

That person has the rights of a citizen. And that person should be treated with love and care because that's what God wants. And yes, I am saying that people of color are those strangers, and are being welcomed by white culture.

Yes. We are the ones who made them "Other." People whose skin color, whose sexual identity, whose culture, are different, these become strangers to us. But God says you have to treat them the same way you would want to be treated. Jesus doubles down on this idea. To God there are no such distinctions.

So what do we do now? What should we do?

To listen more than speak. To provide more presence than to preach. To try to help rather than hurt. Jesus would be on the side of healing. That's what he did. He knew how to heal people in all different situations. We have to become more and more conscious of how different life is for brown people.

We repent of our own brokenness, committing to root out, and fight the sin of racism wherever we find it. We hope the body of Christ will lead the way in pursuing peace and reconciliation in our community, country, and the world and our own church.

There's work to do. But we can't delay. God is calling us to do this now. And believe me, this is not some kind of temporary movement. This is the future. We haven't seen anything yet. We're just getting started. Stay Holy, Stay Safe, Stay Blessed.

With peace, gratitude and grace,

Pastor Sabina

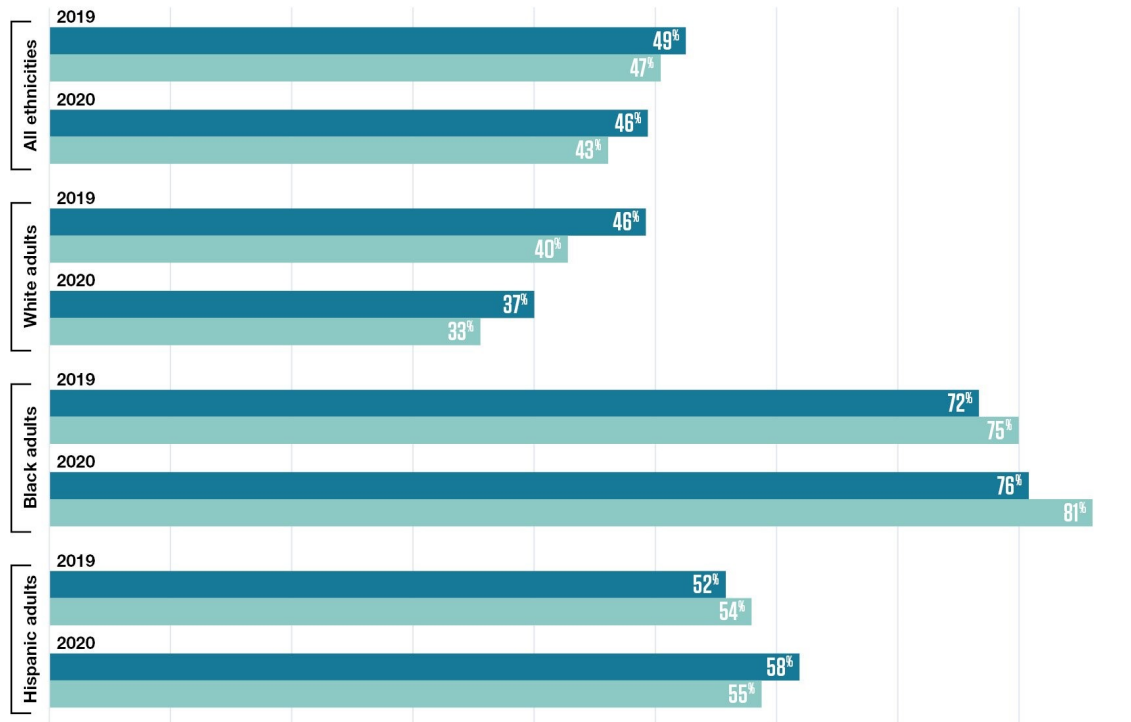


## CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF RACE RELATIONS IN AMERICA, BY ETHNICITY

Barna

DO YOU THINK OUR COUNTRY HAS A RACE PROBLEM?  
% WHO SAY "DEFINITELY"

● All U.S. adults ● Self-identified Christians





**Carol's  
Closet**

**FREE CLOTHING/HYGIENE PRODUCTS/BLANKETS/FOOD**  
The closet is open!! Donations appreciated!!

## Happy Mother's Day

"She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue." PROVERBS 31:25-26



## Prayer of the Month



Dear Lord, today I turn to you to give you thanks for my mother. With your own gift of life, she bore me in her womb and gave me life. She tenderly, patiently cared for me and taught me to walk and talk. She read to me and made me laugh. No one delighted in my successes more; no one could comfort me better in my failures. I am so grateful for how she mothered me and mentored me, and even disciplined me.

Please bless her, Lord, and comfort her. Help her loving heart to continue to love and give of herself to others. Strengthen her when she is down and give her hope when she is discouraged.

Most of all, Lord, on this Mother's Day, give my mother the graces she most needs and desires today. I ask you this, in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior forever and ever.

Most of all, Lord, on this Mother's Day, give my mother the graces she most needs and desires today. I ask you this, in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior forever and ever.



If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it. - GENESIS 4:6-7 MSG

# May

## 31 DAY SCRIPTURE WRITING PLAN

EACH OF THE SCRIPTURES BELOW TAKES TEN MINUTES OR LESS TO COPY OUT. COMMIT TO SPENDING TEN MINUTES EACH DAY LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE AS YOU SIMPLY COPY THESE TEXTS OUT OF YOUR BIBLE.

### Week 1

DAY 1- COLOSSIANS 1:3-7  
DAY 2- COLOSSIANS 3:15-17  
DAY 3- 1 THESSALONIANS 5: 15-22  
DAY 4- DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9  
DAY 5- JOHN 14: 1-4  
DAY 6- JOHN 14:15-21  
DAY 7- PSALM 27: 1-5

### Week 3

DAY 15- ISAIAH 55:8-13  
DAY 16- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-14  
DAY 17- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:15-21  
DAY 18- JOHN 15: 1-5  
DAY 19- JOHN 15:6-11  
DAY 20- JOHN 15:12-17  
DAY 21- PSALM 126: 1-6

### Week 2

DAY 8- PSALM 27: 6-14  
DAY 9- PSALM 91: 1-8  
DAY 10- PSALM 91: 9-16  
DAY 11- PSALM 23: 1-6  
DAY 12- PSALM 121: 1-8  
DAY 13- PSALM 67:1-7  
DAY 14- ISAIAH 55: 1-7

### Week 4

DAY 22- PSALM 19:1-6  
DAY 23- PSALM 19:7-14  
DAY 24- PSALM 73: 21-26  
DAY 25- ISAIAH 40: 1-6  
DAY 26- ISAIAH 40:7-11  
DAY 27- ISAIAH 40:12-17  
DAY 28- ISAIAH 40: 18-21

### Week 5

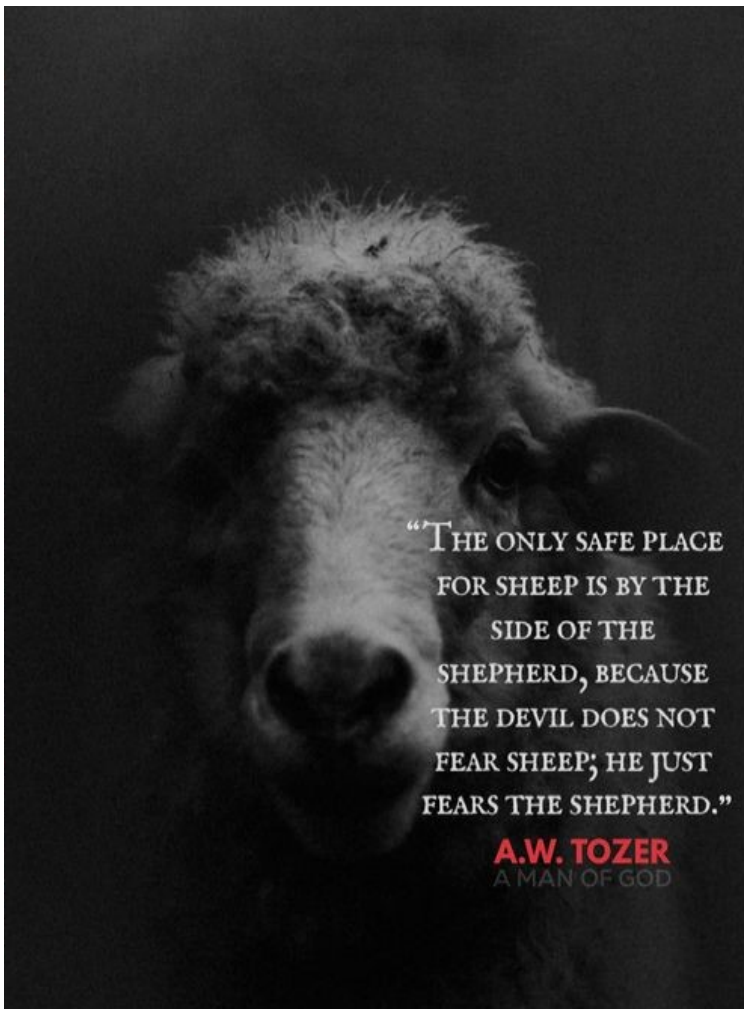
DAY 29- ISAIAH 40:22-26  
DAY 30- ISAIAH 40: 28-31  
DAY 31- CHOOSE YOUR OWN VERSES

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Psalm 119:18



It is with deepest regret that we announce the death of long-time member Richard "Dick" Harwood. He will be missed.



“THE ONLY SAFE PLACE  
FOR SHEEP IS BY THE  
SIDE OF THE  
SHEPHERD, BECAUSE  
THE DEVIL DOES NOT  
FEAR SHEEP; HE JUST  
FEARS THE SHEPHERD.”

**A.W. TOZER**  
A MAN OF GOD

**Peace  
with Justice**  
SUNDAY May 30, 2021

“You received a Spirit that  
shows you are adopted...  
With this Spirit, we cry,  
'Abba, Father.'...  
We are God's children.”

—ROMANS 8:15-16 CEB

[www.ResourceUMC.org](http://www.ResourceUMC.org)

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors  
The people of The United Methodist Church

## What's Pentecost?

If you go back to the Old Testament, you will discover that Pentecost was one of the Jewish feast days. Only they didn't call it Pentecost. That's the Greek name. The Jews called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. It is mentioned five places in the first five books (Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16).

It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of the month of May or sometimes in early June. Here's the way you figured out the date of Pentecost. According to the Old Testament, you would go to the day of the celebration of Firstfruits (another festival), and beginning with that day, you would count off 50 days. The fiftieth day would be the Day of Pentecost. So Firstfruits is the beginning of the barley harvest and Pentecost the celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest. Since it was always 50 days after Firstfruits, and since 50 days equals seven weeks, it always came a "week of weeks" later. Therefore, they either called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks.

There are three things you need to know about Pentecost that will help you understand Acts 2.

- 1. Pentecost was a pilgrim festival.** That meant that according to Jewish Law, all the adult Jewish men would come from wherever they were living to Jerusalem and personally be in attendance during this celebration.
- 2. Pentecost was a holiday.** No servile work was to be done. School was out. The shops were closed. It was party time.
- 3. There were certain celebrations and sacrifices and offerings which were prescribed in the Law for the day of Pentecost.** On Pentecost, the High Priest was to take two loaves of freshly baked wheat bread and offer them before the Lord. The wheat bread was made from the newly harvested wheat.

In short, Pentecost in the time of the Apostles was a great and grand harvest celebration. The streets of Jerusalem were clogged with thousands of pilgrims who had come from every point of the compass to celebrate the goodness of God and the bringing in of the wheat harvest.

## PALM SUNDAY



## PENTECOST

COME HOLY SPIRIT COME

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

*Acts 2:1-4*

## EASTER SUNDAY



## ONE MATTERS Discipleship Award *Winners*

This year, our own little church, First UMC, has been recognized. In 2020, despite Covid, we had 4 professions of faith and 2 baptisms, a significant percentage given the size of the congregation. More than 70 percent of the UMC congregations in the United States did not baptize anyone age 13 during the last few years, and 55 percent did not baptize anyone age 12 and under, according to the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA). In addition, 50 percent of local churches did not have any professions of faith.

Each year, the New England United Methodist Conference, in partnership with Discipleship Ministries, recognizes churches that are living into the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In particular, the One Matters Award is given to churches that had no professions of faith or baptisms in the previous year to having at least one of each.

The award comes with a plaque recognizing the achievement, and a check in the amount of \$1000.



Because Annual Conference is online this year, these awards will be recognized in a pre-recorded video. Pastor Sabina will share the video after the conference (towards the end of June).

### *Verse of the Month*

**I praise you because  
I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made.**

PSALM 139:14



## FINDING GOD AT THE MOVIES



### **SERMON SERIES!**

**Star Wars  
Dead Man Walking  
Saving Private Ryan  
Cinderella  
It's a Beautiful Life**

## STORY OF AN HYMN

### "Because He Lives" written by Gloria and Bill Gaither.

God sent his Son, they called him Jesus; he came to love, heal, and forgive;  
he lived and died to buy my pardon, and empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

Refrain:

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow; because he lives, all fear is gone;  
because I know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives.

How sweet to hold a newborn baby, and feel the pride and joy he gives;  
but greater still the calm assurance, this child can face uncertain days because he lives.

Refrain

And then one day I'll cross the river; I'll fight life's final war with pain;  
and then as death gives way to victory, I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know he reigns.

Refrain

When Gloria and Bill started their family in the sixties, racial tensions were tearing the country apart. Civil rights activists had suffered and some had been killed. The Vietnam conflict was claiming thousands of lives, and tensions boiled over on university campuses. Many young people were growing disillusioned and 'dropping out.'

"In this climate, Bill and I sought to write songs with lasting answers to the turmoil of the human spirit. But in the fall of 1969, several things happened to test the reality of our own convictions. We realized we were expecting another baby. Though we had always intended to have another child, we weren't planning on a baby so soon. My body hadn't quite recovered from the last pregnancy. Making matters worse, Bill contracted mononucleosis, which left him exhausted and depressed.

"This combination of national turmoil and personal trouble discouraged us, and we occasionally asked each other, 'If the world is like this now, what will it be in fifteen or sixteen years for our baby? What will

this child face?'

"While pondering and praying about these things, we came to realize anew that our courage doesn't come from a stable world, for the world has never been stable. Jesus Himself was born in the cruelest of times. No, we have babies, raise families, and risk living because the Resurrection is true!

"Our baby arrived safe and sound, and we named him Benjamin, which means 'most beloved son.' A few weeks later 'Because He Lives' was born in our hearts and poured from our souls.

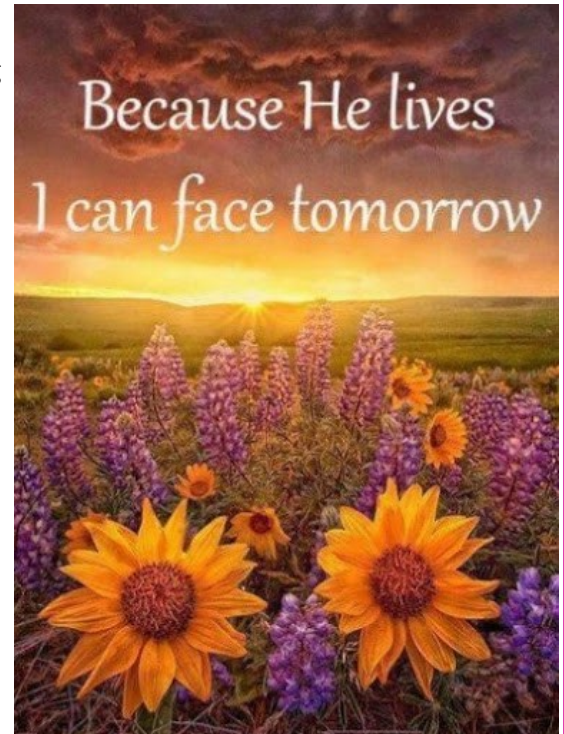
"Over the years this song has reassured us that our Lord's resurrection is the central truth of life. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow. Many times since, as our children grew, our business life changed, our fortunes shifted, or our direction clouded, our family has found assurance in this very personal song. "It's 'our song' but we're grateful others have loved it too."

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:17

"There is hope in your future, says the Lord."

Prayer:

Hear us Risen Lord, Our resurrection and our life. O Lord, our hearts overflow with sounds of exultation and victory. We will say it again and again, "Jesus has triumphed! Jesus is exalted!". This is your doing, O God, who is our strength and salvation, yours alone, And it is marvelous in our eyes.





449 Main Street  
Southbridge, MA 01550  
508-764-6501  
fumcsouthbridge.org  
fumcsouthbridge@gmail.com  
Pastor Sabina Terrades  
pastorsabinaterrades@gmail.com



## His Mansion

*A newsletter from  
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*“In my Father’s House, there are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you...”*



<b>Sundays</b>	<b>10 am:</b>	<b>Worship service at the church and live worship on Facebook</b>
<b>Mondays:</b>	<b>5 pm:</b>	<b>Rosilda’s Kitchen (Free meal)</b>
<b>Wednesdays:</b>	<b>6:30pm:</b>	<b>“Bible 101” small group</b>
<b>Fridays:</b>	<b>3:30 pm:</b>	<b>EspreSoul</b>
	<b>1 pm—6pm:</b>	<b>Carol’s Closet</b>
	<b>5:00 pm:</b>	<b>Rosilda’s Kitchen (Free meal)</b>
<b>Saturday:</b>	<b>10 am—2 pm:</b>	<b>Carol’s Closet</b>