Joyful Play Grows Where You Least Expect It

By the Rev. Cheryl Anderson, Pastor

“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”

John 15:11

This month, we will finish our focus on the faith practice of Working for Justice; and for a few weeks before Lent begins, we will change topic to the faith practice of Playing and Living Joyfully. The two may sound like antitheses, but they are not; in fact the two practices inform and enrich one another.

On a recent Sunday, as an example of Working for Justice, I talked about the Simply Smiles mission trip to Oaxaca, Mexico that Jim Esslinger and I participated in about five years ago, with a group from Choate. We helped to build a one-room cinderblock home for one of the families who live next to the Oaxaca City landfill, scratching

Continued, page 2

As we usher in a new month we will transition to a new Faith Practice: Playing and Living Joyfully.

Dance is a great way to practice playing and living joyfully!

Come to our Cabin Fever Community Dance on Friday, February 7, from 7 to 9 pm.

Move your body, shake it up…. You can’t help but smile—or laugh out loud. The music is great, the company the best! Come alone, bring a friend or the whole family! See page 6 for all the details!
out a living by selling recyclables that they have scavenged from the garbage that the city garbage trucks dump every day. This simple home was replacing a corrugated steel shack, set directly on the hard-packed earth with no windows or doors. During the rainy season, the runoff ran right through the house and the family lived in mud. The cement floor of the new house raised the occupants a couple of feet up out of the mud so that the house was weather-tight. It was also built with steel reinforcing rods through the cinderblocks so that the house could withstand earthquakes.

In addition to building twenty-four houses, the work that the Simply Smiles organization has done with the families living by the dump has included helping them to organize to get the best prices for their recyclables and to get electricity and street lights for the neighborhood. It has made it possible for those families to better their own lives.

You might expect it to be a depressing experience to be working in the Oaxaca dump neighborhood among people of such poverty. I don’t know what I expected when I boarded the plane for Oaxaca, but I didn’t expect to have as much fun and enjoy it as much as I did. It was, certainly, a way of life that is foreign to me, but the people we met and worked with lived with dignity and ingenuity and joy. After work each day – or before work – Bryan Nurnberger, founder of Simply Smiles, introduced us to Oaxacan history and culture. One morning, we took our breakfast up to the ancient Zapotec archaeological site of Monte Alban. One afternoon, we quit early so we could go to Dona Rosa’s pottery studio and have a demonstration of the ancient techniques that create the characteristic black pottery of Oaxaca. Another evening we visited a market square where I got to see the work of Oaxaca’s rug weavers and other artisans. On our last night, we had dinner with the families of the two men who were our construction foremen and teachers. To receive our souvenir t-shirt, we each had to eat a deep-fried grasshopper, which is a favorite snack of Oaxacan children.

The combination of immersion in a foreign culture of amazing beauty and history, and the opportunity to play some (however small) part in helping others to better their lives, I found to be joyful play as well as working for justice. I discovered on that trip that joy inspires and energizes justice work; and that the work itself brings joy and appreciation for life. Let’s play. See you Sunday!

Music Ministry

Happy new year from the music ministry at FCC and thanks to everyone that has supported our recent events!

In the month of February we will celebrate Black History Month and also Presidents Day. Join us for continued celebrations as the theme of social justice transitions into Playing and Living Joyfully. We will honor the pillars of American history and celebrate with joy through music.

This month features our children’s choir, chancel choir and our handbell choir.

Join us Sundays at 10 a.m!

~ Pat

Please contact Pat Nicholas at Music@firstchurchwashingtonct.org if you are interested in joining one of the choirs or for questions or praise!
Council Members
Cheryl P. Anderson, Pastor  860-868-0569, ext 11
Michael Gorra, Moderator,  860-868-7852
Phil Farmer, Vice-Moderator/ Stewardship,  860-868-7177
Susan Jahnke, Treasurer, 860-868-7785
Henrietta Small and Peter Armstrong, Co-Clerks,  860-868-7672
OPEN, Christian Ed
Dave Werkhoven, Trustees, 860-868-0054
Wayne Hileman, Deacons, 860-868-7235
John Turner and Annie Baur, Missions, (JT) 860-868-0868; (AB) 860-799-6308
Trish Grinnell, Music & Drama, (TG) 860-799-0190
John Geoghan, Finance, 860-868-6764

“There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world.”  - Robert Louis Stevenson

Deadline for March Journal Content is Feb 15, 2014
The March topic will be “Blessing and Letting Go”.

Affordable Healthcare—Help is HERE!

Enrollment in the Access HealthCT health insurance programs will end in nine weeks. If you or people you know do not have health insurance I encourage you to get them to log onto accesshealthct.com to begin the process of setting up an account now. There is no commitment to pay the monthly premiums until you have sent the first premium payment to the insurance company. AccessHealthCT expects to see a large spike in enrollments as we get closer to the deadline for enrollment.

I have found that there is a high demand for health insurance from both the uninsured and the self-employed who have paid high premiums in the past. After most people complete the application process they usually need a few days to evaluate the policies. After they select a policy it will take about two weeks for the insurance company to process the application. However, when there are spikes in enrollments the insurance companies need more time to process the applications. One consequence of these delays is that people may not have their identification card for three or more weeks after they complete the enrollment and selection of a policy. It is better to get the enrollment process started now so that you do not have to deal with delays later.
Missions and Outreach - *An invitation to Charity and Working for Justice*

Missions Meeting – On Sunday, February 9, 11 AM

After worship, join John Turner and Annie Baur in the parlor for an informal meeting on missions activities. Open to ALL!

We will be discussing both existing and recent past missions activity as well as potential upcoming missions activities. Put it on your calendar and plan to join us!

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**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**Wheels of Greater New Milford needs drivers**, taking people shopping, or to doctor’s appointments, etc. Phone: 860 354 6012

**Association of Religious Communities of Danbury (ARC)** - Needs volunteers (male) to staff overnight homeless overflow shelter and Danbury Congregational Church. Contact John Turner for more information: 860-868-0868


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**Food Bank Donations!**

To honor St Valentine, please open up your hearts to those with insufficient food by remembering to donate a can of beans, a bag of rice, a box of cereal, etc for the food cart on Sunday mornings.

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**A thank you note from the Winsted YMCA’s Winchester Emergency Shelter:**

This is to thank you, your Youth Group, Mark [Hileshorn] and the Men’s Group and everyone else who was involved in the Christmas Party here on December 15.

It’s hard to be homeless. It’s harder to be homeless at Christmas and lack the resources to provide gifts for your children. Our shelter clients struggle with that every year.

The party itself, again this year, was a wonderful event. The fact that so many of you would travel a considerable distance with a tree, gifts, and so many crafts is very moving to our shelter clients and to me personally.

Our clients had fun... which is a welcome change from the drudgery and despair that typically accompanies homelessness.

But the good news is that none of the families who were at the party will be here when next Christmas rolls around. Very few of the families who stay here ever have come back when they leave. We let the families stay a long time, longer than most shelters, but wth children involved, we don’w want them leaving until a viable plan is in place for them to be truly self-sufficient.

So again, my thanks to you, and to all who participated in making this such a nice event.

Best wishes for 2014 and beyond, Bruce Mochan, Housing Manager, Northwest CT YMCA—Winsted
Christian Education

The Faith Practice from February 10 through March 4 is “Playing and Living Joyfully”.

In today's world people of all ages need to give themselves permission to play. We believe God seeks to awaken a playful spirit among us. We invite God into this process as we seek recreation and re-creation. While it can lead us into other things, play is inherently its own reward; the experience of playing and living joyfully is – in its essence – pure hope, delight, celebration and song. Playing and living joyfully moves beyond pre-scripted forms and places. It includes ways of doing justice and moves us outside ourselves into sharing one with another. Joy is contagious; come and play!

YOUTH GROUP / CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation Class meets Sunday, February 9.

The Youth Group will meet at on Sunday, February 23 at 5 PM in the Parish House.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will follow the Faith Practice topic with age appropriate activities aligned with relevant scriptural references. See Beth Lovallo for more specific information on weekly activities she has planned.

Adult Spiritual Practice

See details about a new adult spiritual reading/discussion group to be held monthly at the Gunn Library, beginning February 10.

Grace Fellowship at First Congregational Church

To Meditate

To meditate does not mean to fight with a problem.
To meditate means to observe.
Your smile proves it.
It proves that you are being gentle with yourself,
that the sun of awareness is shining in you,
that you have control of your situation.
You are yourself,
and you have acquired some peace. - Thich Nhat Hahn

God has a funny way with working with your plans for ministry. Cheryl and I started Grace Fellowship almost a year ago and since then we have had a strong group of people who are up for trying different ways to make a conscious contact with their Higher Power through prayer and meditation. We have evolved into a fellowship of people in recovery, those who love to meditate, members of New Beginnings and members of First Church. It isn't exactly how we envisioned our core group membership, but God had other plans. We have evolved into a loving group of people where everyone is welcome, everyone's story is honored, and that the peace that is found through mediation and prayer is sustained. I invite you to come Monday night from 7:00 - 8:00 PM and discover the peace of God from within.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Anne-Marie Davenport at amedavenport@yahoo.com.
**February Birthdays**

- 3 ...... Douglas Urquhart
- 6 ...... Estelle Bronson
- 8 ...... Conrad Weeks
- 9 ...... David Behnke and Dimitri Willert
- 18...... Abbie Gorra

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**Happenings**

**Men's Breakfast** is on Saturday, February 1 at 7 am in Wersebe Hall. All men are welcome!

**“Cabin Fever” Country Dance for All Ages** 7pm Friday, February 7, 2014

Plan a break from the “bleak midwinter” and join us on Friday, February 7 at 7pm in the Parish House Hall. The event is a celebration of fellowship and fun!

Come alone, with a friend or partner, or bring the whole family!

Suggested donations are $10 for adults; $5 for children, and $25 for families. For more information, please call Karen in the church office at 860.868.0569 or email to admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org.

**Pancake Breakfast - Saturday, Feb 8, 7-10 AM in Wersebe Hall.** Tickets can be gotten in advance through the Nursery School: 860-868-1177

**Judea Nursery OPEN HOUSE - Saturday, February 8, 9 - 11:00 AM.**

**Day Tripping Group - Saturday, February 8 - Touring Fascia’s Chocolate Factory!** Breakfast or Lunch before-hand, depending on tour time. Response to MariLyn Roze NO LATER than 10 am on Friday, January 31. MariLyn: 860-868-2398

**Missions Meeting - Sunday, February 9 at 11 AM - Open to All who are interested.** For more information, contact John Turner (860-868-0868) or Annie Baur (860-799-6308)

**Knitting/Crocheting Group Starting—Rainbow Scarf Project!**

Join us for the FCC Knitting/Crocheting Group!

A few weeks ago, Pastor Cheryl began our series on Justice by talking about bullying. She showed us all a rainbow scarf that is meant to represent the pledge to neither be a bully nor tolerate bullying from others. Many of us were moved by the idea of these scarves, and it turns out that there has been a huge interest in making some! So, we’re starting a knitting group!

Don’t know how to knit? No problem! Those of us that do know how are more than willing to teach! We will be having our first meeting at Marty's Cafe on Sunday, February 16th at 3:00 PM. Rainbow yarn will be provided! Bring knitting needles or crochet hooks if you have them.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Pastor Cheryl or Emelie Samuelson. If you want to know more about the Rainbow Scarf Project and its origins, simply search “UCC Rainbow Scarf Project” online and read about what has been done to date in the church.

Please let us know if we missed anyone so that we may update our database!!

Contact Karen at (860) 868-0569 or admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org

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**Celebrating a Birthday**
**February**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>10:00 AM – Worship Svc w/ Communion and Sunday School</td>
<td>11:00 AM Bereavement Group</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30 AA Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 AM - Bible Study</td>
<td>10 AM - Adult CE Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 AM - AA Meeting</td>
<td>10 - 10 AM - Pancake Breakfast to benefit Judea Nursery Sch.</td>
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<td>7:00 PM Grace Fellowship</td>
<td>6:30 PM-NB Divorce Support</td>
<td>6:30 PM - NB Single Life Discussion Group</td>
<td>6:00 PM - Vitality Comm. Meeting (Upper Crust)</td>
<td>7:00 PM - CABIN FEVER Community Dance</td>
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<td>10:00 AM–Worship Svc and Confirmation Class</td>
<td>11:00 AM Bereavement Group</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30 AA Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 AM - Bible Study</td>
<td>6:30 pm Council Mtg</td>
<td>10:00 AM - AA Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 PM - NB Pot Luck</td>
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<td>11:00 Youth Choir Practice</td>
<td>7:00 PM Grace Fellowship</td>
<td>12:15 PM - Rotary Club</td>
<td>2:00 PM ASAP Preschool Art</td>
<td>6:30 PM - NB Single Life</td>
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<td>11:15 AM - Missions Mtg</td>
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<td>10:00 AM–Worship Svc w/ Susan B Anthony Project Guest Speaker Chancel Choir</td>
<td>11:00 AM Bereavement Group</td>
<td>9:30 - 10:30 AA Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 AM - Bible Study</td>
<td>Noon - LSA Clergy Lunch</td>
<td>10:00 AM - AA Meeting</td>
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<td>11:00 AM Deacons’ Mtg</td>
<td>7:00 PM Grace Fellowship</td>
<td>Noon - Meeting House Quilters</td>
<td>2:00 PM ASAP Preschool Art</td>
<td>1:30 PM - Committee on Ministry (LSA) Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 PM - New Beginnings Pot Luck Dinner</td>
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<td>11:00 Youth Choir Practice</td>
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<td>5:00 PM - Youth Group</td>
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<td>6:30 PM-NB Divorce Support</td>
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**Weirdly compatible**

We’re all a little weird. And life is a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall into mutually satisfying weirdness — and call it love — true love.

—Robert Fulghum, *True Love*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ushers &amp; Greeters</th>
<th>Worship Assistant</th>
<th>Welcome Announcements</th>
<th>Child Care</th>
<th>Summer Camp Sunday School</th>
<th>Coffee Hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Dimitri Willert, Judie Gorra*, Maryellen Geoghan, Sarah Jenkins</td>
<td>Michael Gorra and Madeline Gorra</td>
<td>Judie Gorra</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>Debbie Swigart</td>
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<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Lee Parsons and daughters</td>
<td>Carol Glintenkamp</td>
<td>Dan Lovallo</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>Anne-Marie and Jim Davenport</td>
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<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Peter Armstrong and Sue Elliott</td>
<td>Ellen Willert</td>
<td>Sue Elliott</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>Susan Janke and Conrad Weeks</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Karen and Jim Esslinger</td>
<td>Dan Lovallo</td>
<td>Wayne Hileman</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Henrietta Small and Peter Armstrong</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Peter Armstrong, Sue Elliott*, Maryellen and John Geoghan</td>
<td>Carol Glintenkamp</td>
<td>Wayne Hileman</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
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<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Jack and Jane Boyer</td>
<td>Ellen Willert</td>
<td>Ellen Willert</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>Maryellen and John Geoghan</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Cara Michalski and the Lewis Girls</td>
<td>Dan Lovallo</td>
<td>Dan Lovallo</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>MariLyn Roze and Shirley Downs</td>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Susan Jahnke and Conrad Weeks</td>
<td>Judie Gorra</td>
<td>Judie Gorra</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>Ben and Andrew Grinnell</td>
<td>Trish and Katie Grinnell</td>
<td>Wayne Hileman</td>
<td>Shirley Downs</td>
<td>Beth Lovallo</td>
<td>Jim &amp; Karen Esslinger</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

♦ The Communion server marked with an asterisk is assigned to bring the bread.

If you are scheduled and cannot do it for some reason, please make arrangements for a replacement and then notify Karen in the church office. (860) 868-0569 or admin@firstchurchwashingtonct.org
Church Vitality “Tune-Up” Workshop

Members of the Vitality Committee, along with several other members of the congregation attended a Saturday workshop in early January for a “tune-up” on our efforts as well as a start to planning the for the next 6 months. The workshop was hosted by the Southbury Congregational Church, UCC, and our group joined with several other churches in the CT Conference of the UCC as we have been sharing the coaching services of Paul Nickerson in a year-long program. The day was packed with coaching, information and success sharing so our 6 month plan was only begun. The group will meet again on Thursday, February 6, at Upper Crust for a working dinner where we will complete the plan. Any members of the church are welcome to join us. If you are interested in participating, please contact Karen in the church office.

Flowers and Steeple Lighting Memorials

Flowers

Feb 2  Given by Frances Whitehead in loving memory of Robert Whitehead and Deborah Whitehead
Feb 9  In honor of Estelle Bronson’s 92nd birthday, with love from her children and grandchildren
Feb 16 In loving memory of Tom Kaczynski, Sr., given by Karen and Jim Esslinger
Feb 23 Given by Susan Jonas Emerling and Family in loving memory of her mother, Esther Jonas

Steeple Lighting

Feb 2  Given by Isabel Simonds in loving memory of her brother, Sidney W. Rinaldi
Feb 9  OPEN
Feb 16 OPEN
Feb 23 OPEN

Flowers are $65 per week. Steeple Lighting is $25 per week.

Memorials Request Form

Mark a special occasion, honor a loved one with flowers or steeple lighting. Complete this form and forward to the church office with a check marked in the memo field for either “flowers” or “steeple”.

Circle one:               In Honor Of     - or -           In Memory Of          - or -              In Thanksgiving For

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Given by:   _______________________________________________________________________________________________

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS ARE NEEDED for dates marked “OPEN”  
(see schedule on page 8)

Hosts are responsible for setting up the beverages (coffee, tea and juice) main table, putting out snacks (whatever you want – can be as simple as chips and dip, crackers and cheese). Then hosts are responsible for cleanup afterwards. (This can also mean that hosts recruit help from others in that effort!) Beverages, half and half, etc are all stocked in the kitchen, though supply donations are always welcome! Please sign up on the list(s) on the bulletin board in Wersebe Hall (near the kitchen) or email or call the office (860) 868-0569.
Do not waste time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.

—C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

NEVER-ENDING GIFT

Seven days a week, remind someone special about God’s love, the gift that truly keeps on giving.

What you need:
- Large plastic pill box with a compartment for each day
- Construction paper
- Craft glue
- Black permanent marker
- Heart stickers
- Scissors
- Bible
- Pencil
- 7 small treats (fish-shaped crackers, small candies, trail mix, etc.)

What you do:
2. Cut seven slips of paper. On each slip, write out one Bible verse about God’s love. (Examples include Psalm 63:3; Psalm 100:5; John 3:16; John 15:12; Romans 5:8; 1 John 49.)
3. Fill each compartment with a different treat. Then place a folded slip atop each treat.
4. Give away the present. Tell the recipient to open the correct day for a week — and then refill the treats and verses and “regift” God’s love to someone else.

God’s Love

We can’t measure God’s love for us. It starts before we’re born and continues for eternity.

Directions: Down the left-hand column, spell out the name of each number. Then write the circled letters on the blank lines in the right-hand column. Read the words on the right, from top to bottom, to see what Psalm 33:22 (NIV) says about God’s love.

Psalm 33:22, NIV

Twenty-first... put
Tweny-four... you.
Nine... to us.
Eight... our hope.
Seven... even.
Six... twenty-eighth.
Five... Lord’s.
Four... your... God.
Three... with...
Two... love...
One...

Sixty-five...
Sixty-four...
Sixty-three...
Sixty-two...
Sixty-one...
Sixty...

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Puzzle

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Sixty-five...
Sixty-four...
Sixty-three...
Sixty-two...
Sixty-one...
Sixty...

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Four... your... God.
Three... with...
Two... love...
One...

Sixty-five...
Sixty-four...
Sixty-three...
Sixty-two...
Sixty-one...
Sixty...

May
Your
Vital
Judging
Loving
Us.
Laud
Your
Even
Vital
Our
May... ’Tis
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Puzzle

God’s Love

We can’t measure God’s love for us. It starts before we’re born and continues for eternity.

Directions: Down the left-hand column, spell out the name of each number. Then write the circled letters on the blank lines in the right-hand column. Read the words on the right, from top to bottom, to see what Psalm 33:22 (NIV) says about God’s love.

Psalm 33:22, NIV

Twenty-first... put
Tweny-four... you.
Nine... to us.
Eight... our hope.
Seven... even.
Six... twenty-eighth.
Five... Lord’s.
Four... your... God.
Three... with...
Two... love...
One...

Sixty-five...
Sixty-four...
Sixty-three...
Sixty-two...
Sixty-one...
Sixty...

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Reverend Cheryl P. Anderson and Anne-Marie Davenport will lead an uplifting and in-depth 5 part book discussion series, “Feed Your Spirit”, focusing on personal and spiritual growth & development.

First in the series of books to be discussed, is Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind by Roger Walsh, M.D., PH.D. (foreword by his Holiness the Dalai Lama). Filled with stories, exercises, meditations, myths, prayers and practical advice, Essential Spirituality shows how to integrate seven principles into one truly rewarding way of life in which kindness, love, joy, peace, wisdom, and generosity become an ever-growing part of everything we do.

Copies of the books will be provided by the library and will be available at the circulation desk prior to each discussion.

Subsequent dates for the other discussions planned are: Monday, March 10; Monday, April 14; Monday, May 12; and Monday, June 9 – each at 1:30pm.

Second in the series to be discussed is The Five Stages of the Soul: Charting the Spiritual Passages That Shape Our Lives by Harry R. Moody, Ph.D. and David Carroll. This groundbreaking book interweaves 20 years of case studies and research in the field of aging with an exhaustive knowledge of psychology, religion, and literature. Dr. Moody, cofounder and director of the Brookdale Institute of Aging, reveals the spiritual passages that the vast majority of us encounter in life and explores the opportunities those spiritual stages offer us in achieving a sense of inner fulfillment.
A Prayer  (Based on Psalm 30)

There I was, face down in the mud of the playground, but you didn’t let the bullies laugh at me. You picked me up and set me back on my feet.
Thank you.

I felt so sick I thought I was going to die. I don’t think I’ve ever felt that bad in my life. But you were right there beside me, wiping my face with a cool cloth, taking away the pain and helping me to get well again. Thank you.

I was so sad that I cried all night long. I thought I would feel this way forever, but you never left my side. You wiped my tears and rubbed my back and in the morning, things didn’t seem so bad. Thank you.

You picked me up from the mud puddle, you took care of me when I was sick, and you comforted me when I was sad. You took my tears and turned them into a joyful dance. Thank you.