



June 14, 2017

SUMMER SPIRITUALITY

At our worship service and church picnic on Celebration Sunday, June 11, I spoke to many children who were able to tell me exactly how many days of school were left before summer. Even when we're done with school, summer often brings a different rhythm to our lives. Summer is a time for rest and play, those holy gifts. Summer can be a time for wonderful spiritual growth, but it can also be a time of spiritual distraction. With that in mind, I offer the following proposals for summer spirituality.

Worship. Summer Sundays at the Hills Church are wonderfully relaxed. In July, we'll focus for three weeks on the book of Exodus. In August, we spend three Sundays sharing worship with our neighbor congregations. Check the schedule and take the chance to worship together in another church.

Sermons on the Website. Out of town? Catch up with the Sunday sermon by listening on the church website. Or stop by when you return and pick up an audio CD of the entire service.

Summer Reading. There are many kinds of books that can be spiritually engaging: fiction, poetry, history, and biography can make us more attentive, compassionate, and loving. I also recommend writers on the Christian faith such as Anne Lamott, Thomas Merton, Marcus Borg, Dorothy Day, Barbara Brown Taylor. Frederick Buechner's book *Beyond Words* is a collection of short entries that can be read once a day, and in any order you want.

Prayer. Prayer can be the Lord's prayer, a simple blessing before a meal, or your own honest words. Anne Lamott suggests praying in the form of "help, thanks, wow," so that prayer includes our experiences of concern, gratitude, and awe. Prayer can also be silence, listening, and awareness. Prayer can be meditation—the conscious practice of simply breathing and being still. And prayer can be music, or laughter, or tears.

These ideas are just a start. I invite you to continue a conversation about summer spirituality with me. What ideas do you have? What gifts have you found?

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster

Senior Minister