



Salem Presbyterian Church
www.salempresbyterian.org

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A New/Old Spiritual Practice

Dear Friends,

In the Service for the Lord’s Day, I have been mentioning spiritual practices that attune our lives to the movement of the Holy Spirit and sustain us on a daily basis. Acts 17:28 reminds us that in God we “live move and have our being”—but for most of our waking breathing hours, we are not conscious of this reality.

During Advent, to be announced, we will be exploring prayer practices from antiquity starting with Lectio Divina, which originates from the spiritual practices of the 3rd and 4th century Desert Mothers and Fathers. St. Benedict (480 -547) endorsed Lectio Divina and the 12th century Carthusian monk Guigo II developed a “four rung” Lectio Divina process: lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio.

In our sacred reading, we will use an Advent text to give us an opening to move deeper into the epic story of the birth of the Christ child.

Next month, I’ll write more on spiritual practices to whet your appetite for Advent. I am looking forward to taking this journey with you!

Peace,

Beth

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The Stained Glass Window

September / October 2011

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We welcome your ideas and submissions for the newsletter! Please contact Trina Brown about what you would like to see.

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A Conversation with Julia Dyer

Julia Dyer was born and raised and attended school in Salem, Indiana, and she was the middle of three children. Her mother was very active at First Baptist Church, teaching Sunday School, and Julia loved going to church when she was little. She felt very nurtured by that church family growing up. She was baptized there, regularly attending Sunday School and church and young people's groups.

Julia attended college at Indiana University. After graduating in 1945 she lived and worked in Louisville, Kentucky. Her first job there, in 1945, was working for the Home Service Division of the American Red Cross. Julia met her future husband Ivan while in Louisville. While Julia and Ivan were dating, Julia became a live-in nanny for John and Gwen Davenport, who lived in the Mockingbird Hill area of Louisville. Mr. Davenport was an importer/exporter and Mrs. Davenport was a novelist. She is best known for her novel *Belvedere*, published in 1947, about an English butler who takes a job as a nurse and baby sitter with an American family in Louisville. The novel inspired a series of movies and a television show called "Mr. Belvedere." Julia recalled that the Davenports treated her like family.

After a year of working at the American Red Cross, Julia attended graduate school at the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. She and Ivan married in October 1947 and she worked for the Family Service Organization until she was four or five months' pregnant with the first of their four children, Anne.

Julia told me that she and Ivan became Presbyterians in an interesting way. Ivan had grown up in a Disciples of Christ church and Julia in the Baptist church. In their second year of marriage they were living in Oldham County and were visited by a Presbyterian minister of the Goshen Presbyterian Church that was very close by. Julia said, "He was an attractive man with a lot of pizzazz and he said, 'You know you really should put your membership together. I would like it if you would come to the Presbyterian Church and join us.'" He was suggesting they both join the same church rather than each continue in the denominations they had been raised in. They visited the church and both found it to be very meaningful, and so they joined.

Julia said, "If you go to a Presbyterian church you can almost be assured to have a well-educated, informed minister. And you can expect a church to have a certain amount of decorum. There are many things to recommend it to you, and it's orderly and has good government." Julia said that in the Presbyterian Church there's not a lot of gamesmanship or politicizing, and that it's a very inclusive church where diversity is honored. She said, "People are willing to listen. They might not agree with you but they will listen."

Ivan and Julia lived in the Louisville area for ten years but moved to Royal Oak, Michigan, near Detroit, in 1957 when Ivan made a career change. They lived in Michigan for over 30 years and Julia loved it there. In 1970, after 20 years of Julia's staying home to raise their children,

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A Conversation with Julia Dyer (continued)

and with two children already in college, she decided it was time to go back to work. She took a job as a case worker and counselor with Oakland County Juvenile Court. Julia told me, “Working with young people was stimulating and exciting. It was challenging working with both delinquents and with children who were neglected and abused.”

Julia and Ivan purchased a condominium in Treasure Island, Florida, in the early 1970s. They went there to take vacations and Julia still lives there part of each year in the winter. She finds the transition easy between Salem and Treasure Island because her friends in both locations greet her so warmly, as if she'd never left.

Julia retired in 1985. She told me that the first year after she retired she regretted it, because she had loved her job so much. Ivan knew he didn't want to stay in Michigan after retiring and had great fondness for Salem. Their friends Ed and Elinor DeJean had informed them that the Bush property in Salem was available and they thought it would be a good buy. They purchased the property in 1986 and on it they constructed the home in which Julia now lives. Ivan was very involved in the building of the home, working closely with the architect.

Even after moving to Salem in August 1987 Ivan had continued to work and commute every 10 days or so to Michigan for a consulting firm he established with a friend and colleague. Julia and Ivan early on became members of Salem Presbyterian Church. She remembers that Reverend D. Jo Lowell was the pastor when she and Ivan began attending.

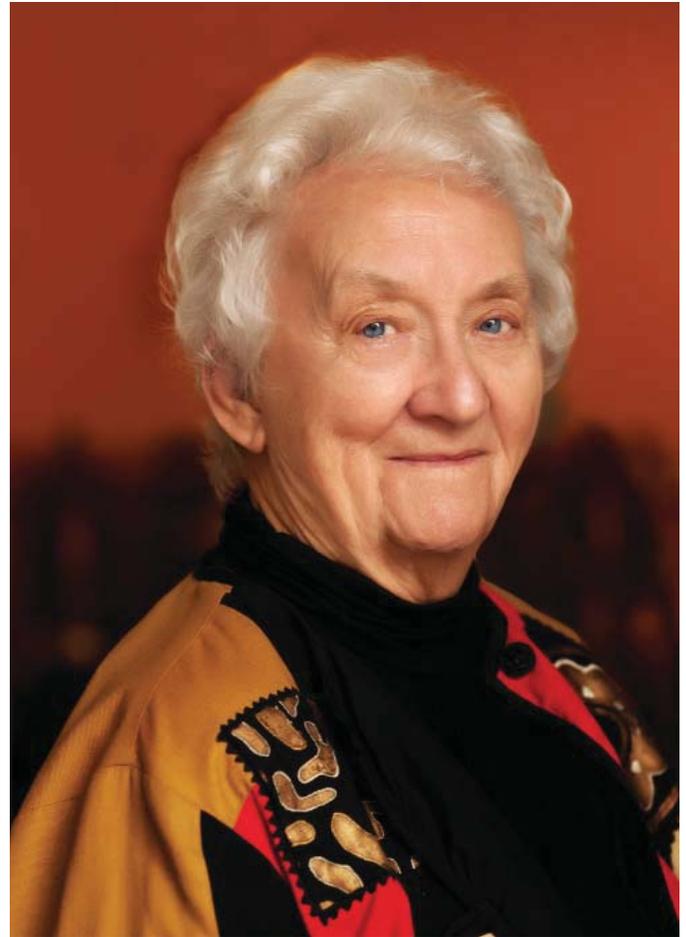


Photo by Vickie Saewert

By the time Ivan ceased his work with the consulting firm, Julia said he did not have an opportunity to enjoy retirement because he was diagnosed with lung cancer and died within a year, in 1993. His memorial service was held at Salem Presbyterian Church and since Salem Presbyterian didn't have a regular pastor at the time, a pastor from the seminary led the service.

Julia remembers that the Wednesday evening gatherings began when Bill Peterson was the pastor of Salem Presbyterian. She told me she was a part of a peace group that would meet on Wednesday nights at the bowling alley where meals were served at that time. Then they'd continue a discussion in the parlor at church. Then

the bowling alley discontinued meals and so everyone started bringing their own dinner to the church.

Julia said Bill Peterson started to meet with them and thought it would be beneficial if they would use the time to discuss his sermon from the previous Sunday and the upcoming Sunday's sermon he was working on. Julia told me, "Occasionally there's something that's really helpful and meaningful and speaks to the core of us."

Julia has no family living in the area and the Salem Presbyterian Church family has become her extended family. She said, "Having no family here at all, it represented something very stable and very dependable in my life. I really look forward to our Wednesday night. I truly do because it has represented something more than what it is."

Church has always played a vital role in Julia's life. She told me about a women's group she was a part of in Royal Oak that met in people's homes and did Bible study. She said, "It was an awakening experience for me. It brought home to me how important small group study is to your own personal growth." She's a great proponent of adult Sunday school and Brown Bag has become very close to that for her. Julia said, "I am a great believer in adult education and I think we ought to be committed to a lifetime of growth and exploration and trying to enlarge our spiritual horizons. I enjoy anything that I feel is stimulating and challenging."

When I asked Julia why church is such a vital part of her life, she responded, "You can't avoid the fact that it's habit. There's a certain amount of just having done this all your life." But she went on to say that church is about the people and that "making your connections there is what's really important."

Julia finds it distressing that today's youth are not as involved in church. She said there's so much for the youth to do these days and church has become a low priority. And she has seen some adults get burned out from volunteering with their churches. Julia explained that sometimes churches,

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Worship and Music Ministry

Chairperson: Richard Clark
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October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<p>2</p> <p>World Communion Sunday. Communion will be served.</p> <p>Liturgist: Cathy Huey</p> <p>Communion elements: Wendell and Trina Brown</p> <p>Ginger and John Morris (883-2017) are the contact people for Coffee Hour for October.</p> <p>Betty Stanley's Birthday</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Wendell Brown's Birthday</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>9</p> <p>28th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Service of Commitment for our pastor, Beth Walden-Fisher. Reception immediately following the worship service.</p> <p>Liturgist: David Beck</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Zach Morris' Birthday</p>
<p>16</p> <p>29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.</p> <p>PYOCA Picnic after worship service.</p> <p>Liturgist: Tom Fihe</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>23</p> <p>30th Sunday in Ordinary Time.</p> <p>Liturgist: Jeanne Bedwell</p> <p>Patti Parkey's Birthday</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Julia Dyer's Birthday</p>
<p>30</p> <p>31st Sunday in Ordinary Time.</p> <p>Liturgist: TBD</p>	<p>31</p>	

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1
5	6 Gena Morris' Birthday	7	8
12	13	14	15
19	20	21 Connie Kenninger's Birthday	22
26	27	28	29

A Conversation with Julia Dyer (continued)

in their effort to involve new people in church activities, put them in positions that require too much of them and “they don’t give the person a chance to grow in their faith in a way that will make them better in leadership roles.”

It was exciting for Julia to see when Salem Presbyterian embarked on the Flourishing Congregations program, and she believes our church family makes “a real effort to make people feel at home when they come to our church.” And she is encouraged by what she sees as Salem Presbyterian’s new emphasis on families and children. She said our new pastor Beth Walden-Fisher makes it comfortable for kids to come to church and visualizes our church five years from now as having children and youth programs in place.

Julia sees the focus on families as being very important and she realized how important the church was to her when she and Ivan began to have children. She told me, “One of the things I think was a real eye-opener is when you start having children and you realize your own inadequacies. You know you need more than you’re able to provide for that child as a parent. And I think that that became important, that the church under-girded you.”

- Julia Dyer was interviewed by Trina Brown. If you would like to interview a church member for the newsletter, would like to be interviewed, or have a suggestion for an interview, please contact Trina Brown at trinab@blueriver.net, or by phone at 883-5689.

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