

**RESTORE** your soul**How's Your Spirit?**

By Joy Elliott

HOW'S YOUR SPIRIT? Now either that's a great question or a tough question for you. That was the question my friend Beth asked as we chased little Eli (my one year old) down the mall. My response to her question was, "Terrible". I wanted to respond with, "I am SO seeing God working, I am hearing His voice, and I may have even seen a burning bush", but the excuses I have made for not truly focusing on my sweet Jesus has burdened my spirit.

Lent was a new concept for me when I became a member of FUMC 14 years ago. I have learned that Lent is a 40 day time period dedicated to preparing yourself for the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the single most important event in the history of the world.

Lent is a time for repentance, reflection, and soul searching. For some it will be a time of fasting from certain foods, drink, entertainment, electronics, etc... anything that could be given up in order to spend that time or energy focusing on Jesus and the life He gave us through His death.

For me, I am going to fast from excuses. When I hear myself saying, "I don't have time to slow down and truly listen to God, I have got to make life happen", I will stop what I am doing and allow the Holy Spirit to guide me. When I hear a song that doesn't glorify God, I will stop making the excuse that it's just a song and find a song that glorifies Him. When I reach for a brownie while making the excuse that I deserve it, I will stop and find a healthier choice that will enable my body to thrive.

I believe when I see my Beth as Easter approaches and we are shopping for our

dresses (but really we will be chasing Eli), she will ask, "How's your spirit"? I will be able to say, "Girlfriend, I see God working. I have given up my excuses and I am spending more time with Him. I hear His voice through the Scriptures and through friends like you. He is so faithful and His presence is right here in my soul directing each step of my journey." What was your answer when I asked, "How's your spirit?" Join with me during this Lent season, February 22 to April 17, in preparing our hearts for the celebration of the LIFE JESUS GAVE US.

To contact me go to [joyelliott@me.com](mailto:joyelliott@me.com). To order my book; a 40 day devotional called "The s'WORD' and more BS" go to... <http://www.theswordandmorebs.com/>

**ENGAGE** in women's events**February 19—Women's Ministries Council Meeting,**

Rm. 110, 12:00-1:30 p.m. Lunch provided. Reserve lunch with Cindy Praesel—**This will be our only meeting this year.** Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Your input is valuable.

**March 1—Deadline to sign up for a secret sister for 2012.**

Email [cpraesel@fumcwaco.org](mailto:cpraesel@fumcwaco.org)

**March 4—A Women's Lenten Experience**

Cedarbrake Retreat Center—Belton, TX  
Sunday, 2:00p.m.-6:00p.m.  
Reservation required. See information on front page.

**March 11—My Sister's Keeper, Rm. 110**

2011 Secret Sister Revealing—12:00 noon —Lunch \$7

**April 7—Easter Egg Hunt**

Poage Park—10:30a.m.

**May 13—Mother's Day**

Celebrate with the special women in your life!

**Summer**

**June 11—Girlfriends for Christ**—Six weeks women's home groups begin. *Living Victoriously in Difficult Times* by Kay Arthur and Bob and Dan Vereen

**July 8-12—Vacation Bible Study****Women's Discipleship Opportunities**

**James: Mercy Triumphs**—a Beth Moore Study  
Midweek: Wednesdays Jan. 11—Feb. 29—6:00-7:00p.m.  
Facilitators: Adair Bowen/Carey Pryal Room B2  
Mondays: Jan. 23—Mar. 19—9:30a.m.  
Facilitator: Kathy Brooks Room 211

**Forever Touched**—study of significant women in Jesus' life  
Midweek: Wednesdays Jan. 11—Feb. 29—6:00-7:00p.m.  
Facilitator: Leise Wells Balcony Room



### My Sister's Keeper (secret sister ministry)

Bless, encourage and uplift another woman of FUMC and get the same in return!

Sign-up Deadline March 1  
[cpraesel@fumcwaco.org](mailto:cpraesel@fumcwaco.org)

For more information contact Cindy P. at [cpraesel@fumcwaco.org](mailto:cpraesel@fumcwaco.org)

**NURTURE** others**United Methodist Women Today**

A new look on the purpose of UMW  
By Cheryl Willis

Have you ever wondered what United Methodist Women were all about? Many people have no idea who we are or what we do here at FUMC and around the world. UMW members have been turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world for over 140 years. Our purpose is to be a community of women to know God, to develop a creative supportive fellowship, and to expand the concept of missions through participation in the global ministries of the United Methodist Church.

Membership is open to any woman who has the desire to belong and participate in the global mission work of the church. We welcome all who want to combine fellowship with study, worship, and outreach. Membership in this organization will offer you the opportunity and resources to grow spiritually, to become more deeply rooted in Christ, and the ability to put your faith into action.

There are several upcoming events at the local, district, and conference level available to all interested women. They will provide you with a **new outlook on the purpose of UMW**. They are as follows:

- The Chapter for Racial Justice Event—*Sing a Rainbow*—at Woodway UMC on Feb. 18. The event will explore how racism affects so many of the problems we are facing in the world today such as maternal health, domestic violence, and human trafficking. This is a conference event involving women from across central Texas.
- Our Central District Spiritual Growth Retreat will be held at Mr. Zion UMC on April 14th. There will be a guest speaker, fellowship luncheon, and in the afternoon the group will head to Laura Edwards Christian Learning Center for an afternoon of cleaning and repair. This would be a great opportunity for mothers and daughters to spend some time in community service together.
- The UMW Luncheon for the Central Texas annual Conference will be on June 5th at the Waco Convention Center.
- On a local level, as a member of the Vines

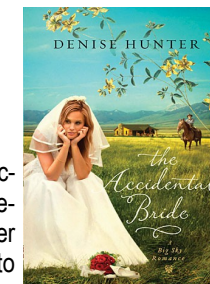
of Life Evening Circle, I would like to invite you to join our group on the 4th Monday of the month at 6:00pm at the church. Kay Huggins is our president. We have a wonderful group of ladies that come together for spiritual growth, service to missions, and fellowship. A goal of our circle is to continue our work for missions in various ways that involve the opportunity for participation not only by circle members but also the greater church body of women. Watch for information regarding upcoming mission opportunities sponsored by Vines of Life.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in a UMW circle, please contact Cindy Praesel at FUMC and she will connect you to the UMW resource that can serve you best.

**EDUCATE** and grow**Resources and Inspiration****Christian Fiction Resources:**

A Book Review by Michelle Vasquez

*The Accidental Bride*, by Denise Hunter is a spectacular story of love, loss, forgiveness, and redemption. Shay is a struggling single mom. Her only concern is her daughter, Olivia, and trying to hold onto their ranch which has been in her family for generations. When Shay agrees to be a part of the annual Founder's Day Ceremony, her friend, Miss Lucy, sets her up for the surprise of her life. However, everything goes wrong. Or does it? This might just be the answer to everything for Shay.

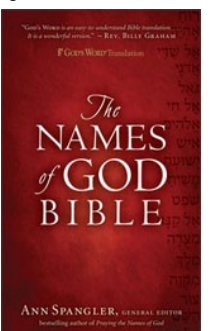


This is book two of her Big Sky romance series, following *A Cowboy's Touch*. It is sure to be one of my favorites for 2012! One of my favorite authors, Denise Hunter grabs right to the heart with each of her books. Her characters are flawed human beings just like the rest of us, making it easy to relate to them. I always enjoy her books. They never disappoint me and I actually don't read a lot of romance. Don't be fooled by the romance. She tackles tough stuff in her stories and her characters face hard, real-life problems that I can relate to. If you have not read her books yet, I hope you will check this one out.

For more reviews: visit my new blog at <http://lifeinreviewblog.wordpress.com>

**Resources for Study/Reflection/Devotionals:**

**The Names of God Bible**, edited by Ann Spangler, is an excellent resource to use alongside your daily devotions. It is written in GOD'S WORD translation and is a resource that brings deeper understanding to the many names of God, offering the reader history and meaning. Features include promises associated with certain names and the key names used through each book. For example, *the Good Shepherd—promise of great comfort and the image of Jesus as protector of wayward people*. This is an excellent resource for a deeper understanding of the many names of God.

**What is a labyrinth?**

A labyrinth is a pathway that you walk along. There is only one pathway, and it acts as a mirror to one's life. Cedarbrake Retreat Center, the site for our Lenten Experience, has a labyrinth on the grounds. Come join us for a wonderful journey—Sunday March 4.

*Walking the labyrinth clears the mind and gives insight into the spiritual journey. It urges action. It calms people in the throes of life transitions. It helps them see their lives in the context of a path, a pilgrimage. They realize that they are not human beings on a spiritual path, but spiritual beings on a human path.*



—From *Walking a Sacred Path*