

Fern Prairie United Methodist Newsletter
November-December 2025

Ponderings from Pastor Don:

UNKNOWN

I am not a baseball fan. It requires patience to watch for hours even with pitcher and batter clocks. It also demands endurance to sometimes wait decades to see one's beloved team reach the world series. So I wish to honor those fanatical diehard fans of professional baseball's perennial underdogs like the Seattle Mariners.

Over the years I have gently hassled Mariners fans for their loyalty to a team that has infrequently managed to get into the playoffs (5 times in their 48 seasons). Undeterred, a stalwart Mariners fan's reliable rebuttal to my playful ribbing is remarkably consistent: "YOU NEVER KNOW." Yes, that's one word.

They often insist that the Mariners have a chance to prevail even when player performance and pitching prowess are generally far below more historically favored teams with more formidable and costly rosters. They contend that the Mariners have a chance for greatness even when their stats are sometimes underwhelming and the prospects are bleak.

Their statistical, mathematical or actuarial skills may have been lacking, but they offer an inspired answer — YOU NEVER KNOW. It's true. When you go to a ballgame, YOU NEVER KNOW. One night, there may be scoreless for umpteenth innings (boring!) and the next night, it may be 18-17 in nine innings (slightly better!).

Of course, we don't know who will win the World Series. There are certainly those with expertise who can guess more reliably than I could. But even with their careful calculations and expert analysis, the outcome is still unknown. That gap between the known and unknown is where hope resides. That hope persists on opposing sides until the contest is decided. Then the dispirited fans of the losing team will reluctantly concede defeat and dejectedly replace YOU NEVER KNOW with NOW I KNOW.

I think the phrase YOU NEVER KNOW captures the vagaries of life in general. Most of us intrinsically know that life is unpredictable. Events are often random. Fate is uncertain. Chance is unreliable. Life is capricious. Defeat, failure and loss are common. Yet despite sometimes demoralizing odds, we can still leave ample room for unexpected blessings and good fortune. Miracles do happen. Surprise and serendipity can upset calamitous forecasts, upend solemn predictions and reverse dire prognostications (remember the defeated women who expected to see a bloodied corpse but encountered the triumphant Jesus instead).

Conditions on this planet are increasingly dire and precarious. We live on a forbidding world that is populated with countless people poisoned by forbidden sins. And the beleaguered Christian charged to shine their light of love and charity in a world of corruption, injustice, hate, prejudice, gluttony and more may lament and wonder if the opposing side is winning. Sometimes we may feel like David facing Goliath minus the slingshot. But we need not despair. We can keep our faith and hold onto hope like Mariners fans do. YOUNEVERKNOW what God will do,

Our Lord is still rooting for the underdog and intervening on our behalf to prevail over every formidable opponent. The Holy Spirit still equips us to fearlessly face our adversaries unafraid. And our loving Savior who defeated death and darkness still assures us that God will win. So we can be confident that one day we will have glorious victory in Jesus.

Will that promised final victory happen this year? Next year? A decade from now? YOUNEVERKNOW. Meanwhile, stay strong. Don't lose hope. Keep the faith.

PS The Mariners suffered a stinging postseason defeat that will be felt for some time. Yet I imagine some fans are already hoping for a favorable season next year. YOUNEVERKNOW. We can hope...

Calender of upcoming events:

November- Featured collection items for Treasure House this month are non-perishable foods. Please place them in the bin in the fellowship hall by the 23rd for delivery.

2- Brook Aurich, speaker

9- Rev. Tom Tucker, Holy Communion

16- Doug Wood, guest speaker

23- Christmas hymn sing-a-long and hanging of the greens

***Potluck chili feed!**

30- First Advent Sunday study series and lighting of the Advent wreath

***All are invited to a luncheon hosted by our friends at Camas UMC immediately following our worship service**

December- Featured collection items for Treasure House this month are new socks and hats. Please place them in the bin in the fellowship hall by the 21st for delivery.

6- (Saturday) 2:00-5:00pm A visit with St. Nicholas at the church. Invite your friends and family for stories, cocoa, cookies, and photo ops! Please bring a new, unwrapped toy to donate to the local C.A.R.O.L. Drive, sponsored by Camas Fire Department.

7- Second Sunday of Advent study series and lighting of the Advent wreath

***Cookie exchange (bring 2 dozen cookies if you would like to participate) and caroling at Lacamas Creek Post Acute in Camas following our service**

14- Third Sunday of Advent study series and lighting of the Advent wreath

21- Fourth Sunday of Advent study series and lighting of the Advent wreath

23- (Tuesday) 6:00pm Christmas Eve Eve Service

28- Rev. Keith Hackett, Holy Communion

May the love and peace of Christ fill your hearts during this Christmas season. We hope you can join us in celebrating as many events as you can at our little white church on the hill. If we can fill any needs or prayer requests please let us know!

Our contact email is through our website at: fernprairieunitedmethodist.org

Our online giving link is: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZA35>