



FUMC Loveland

May/June 2023

Senior Newsletter

This issue and the next will combine two months at a time. I will resume monthly issues in September!

Sharing Our Stories (Part 2)

By Rev. Lee Anderson-Harris

A few years ago, I sat down with a woman who served as a WAVE (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) during WWII. I wanted to hear more about her experience, so I asked if I could come for a visit. She shared her memories and showed me photos, and she told me that she hadn't thought about this part of her life in years. She enjoyed revisiting those days. And, she was surprised that I was interested; she didn't think of her service as that important, but I thought it was. I like to think it was a good visit for both of us.

What are those stories in your life that you have tucked away, that may need your attention? Who can you talk to and share your stories with? God delights in each one of us. He is there for all of our stories, and bears witness to them. But not just witness...God is a part of those stories, often behind the scenes in our attention.

This issue continues the theme of reviewing our lives and sharing our stories. I asked Leah Johnson, an active member of the life of both FUMC and Union, to share about her experience of writing her own story (she even published it!). Read what she has to say on the next page. Clay Carter is leading more autobiography writing groups this summer, and there is more about that in this issue.

I so often hear people say after a memorial service that there was a lot they didn't know about a person when he or she was alive. But telling our stories is not just about allowing other people to get to know us better. There is healing found in the connection that is made when we listen to other people's stories. A colleague of mine started a new church that was based entirely on having people tell part of their life stories. She found that when people hear that there are others out there with similar experiences, with the same thoughts and feelings and struggles and joys, they find that they are more connected to other people than they thought they were. They find a greater sense of belonging in the world. In an age when loneliness and feelings of isolation are on the rise, sometimes leading to devastating consequences, this is no small matter. God designed us to be in connection with one another; this is where miracles can happen.

I hope you find inspiration to write your story, or talk to someone about your life, or even start a small group with friends, neighbors, or in your living facility that delights in telling and hearing each other's stories, as much as God delights in you!

Contact Me

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Telling My Story

By Leah Johnson

I set out to write *Finding Fantastic Joy* in August 2020. After going through big life changes and realizations, I knew I had a story to tell. I felt this overwhelming calling to do it. I have stated that it was, in fact, divine intervention, as the story just flowed out of me. Creating pages of authentic truth, telling my story of trauma and addiction and how those experiences led me to an eventual place of joy. To live a life of contentment, continue spiritual growth and relative happiness.

At the same time, as I set my intentions to write the book, I often thought: "Who am I to write a book?" "Who will care about my story?" "I have no business writing a book." But something kept me plugging along and hitting the next milestone, eventually finding myself published and an Amazon Best Seller for a time.

All that back and forth I faced while writing was wiped away momentarily when I was reminded why the accomplishment mattered most. Why I did it in the first place.

As Frankie, my at the time 8-year-old daughter, looked at my book for the first time, turning the cover over and seeing my photo on the back, she exclaimed, "Wow! Mom, this is cool." As 5-star reviews came in the early days of my book being published, that was the best 5-star review and undoubtedly one of the most meaningful. And one day, she will read the book, and I know the story will matter to her.

I realize even more that while our stories matter, it is more about who they are for and their purpose. My mother passed away ten years ago in May. She died when I was 30, and now that I am a parent myself, I realize how little of her story I knew. My book will tell you how toxic our relationship was, and I have now moved past all that, forgiving her and sharing nothing but love. What I long for more than anything these days is to know her story, who she was, what she believed in her soul, and the events that unfolded to make her the person she was. I have certainly come to a place where she was doing the best she could, but I realize how little I know about my mom, and now that she is gone, how permanent that state will always be.

So when we talk about our stories, we must remember that we have an authentic truth to share that truly matters to someone, whether via the written word, a video, or a photo scrapbook with captions. The best legacy we all have to share is our stories, our authentic truth, to help inform those who come after us and the foundation on which they grow.

Leah Johnson is the author of *Finding Fantastic Joy: How Building a Self-Advocacy Campaign Led Me Out of Darkness*. She attends activities at FUMC regularly and lives just down the street with her husband, Mike and their two amazing kids, Frankie (9) and Nolan (6).



An invitation to personal growth from Clay Carter:

In 2016, I discovered the books of psychologist James E. Birren, a pioneer in gerontology. In 1950, he created the first section on aging in the National Institute of Mental Health. In 1965, Birren went to the University of Southern California where he founded the Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center. In 1989, Birren moved to UCLA, where he remained as the Associate Director of the UCLA Center on Aging until he retired in 2003. He then founded the Birren Center for Autobiographical Studies and created an approach that he included in his book, *Telling the Stories of Life Through Guided Autobiography Groups* (2001), J.E. Birren & K. Cochran.

This is the approach and material that I have been using in twelve Life Stories autobiography writing classes since 2016. An obvious benefit is a thoughtful record of important aspects of your life, which is likely to be a treasured gift to family and friends. The project also results in benefits to the writer, such as awareness about areas that have been partially forgotten, development of confidence in coping skills, rethinking of crucial experiences, modified attitudes about self and significant people, increase in reasons for hopefulness, and opportunity to learn from other group members.

As I have shared time and life stories with seventy-five different people, I have witnessed profound responses to the process of writing, listening, and telling their stories.

I will be convening a ten-week Zoom class and a ten-week class that will meet outdoors during warm weather. Times and places will be determined after classes are filled. Each class will be limited to six people. Curriculum materials will be provided free of charge. No charge for participation in the class. Required: (1) an email address for receiving weekly material, (2) a device to access Zoom (smart phone, electronic tablet or iPad, computer).

I will host a Zoom session on **Monday, May 1** at 10 am for anyone who would like to ask questions or make sure they can access the Zoom session. Contact Clay for the Zoom link.

For more information or to enroll,
contact Clay at pclaycarter@gmail.com or (970) 616-9686 (calls or texts).

1st Friday Lunch Bunch

Friday, **May 5** at noon

Coy Hall Doors open at 11:30 \$5 per person

AND

Friday, **June 2** at noon

Dwayne Webster Veterans Park, 401 W 13th St, Loveland; shelter #2

Everyone brings a dish. Chicken, lemonade, water, paper plates, napkins and plastic ware provided.

Sign up at the Ask Me Desk, or if you are unable to sign up at the church please call or email:

LOIS BEERS – 970-460-4346 OR lebeers@comcast.net

PAT COBB – 970-613-9625 OR anniebody@yahoo.com

May, June, and early July Birthdays

<u>May 2</u> Ed Frey	<u>May 20</u> Tom Schaeffer	<u>June 6</u> Rob Proctor	<u>June 21</u> Norman Coleman Kay Jones
<u>May 3</u> John DeMallie Bill Eads	<u>May 23</u> Don Markow	<u>June 8</u> Leroy Cline Kathy Dufur	Vernon Maelzer Val Rhodes
<u>May 4</u> Debbie Doyel Stephanie Dye	<u>May 24</u> Caryl Doolittle	Margaret Sumner	<u>June 23</u> Deb Adams
<u>May 6</u> Diana Fearn Harriett Piersel	<u>May 27</u> Dorsey Deines Jed Pancoast	<u>June 10</u> Rex Berg Terry Gruber	<u>June 24</u> Eldon Haines
<u>May 7</u> Virginia Senter	<u>May 28</u> GlennaDene Cline	<u>June 11</u> Martha Johnson	<u>June 25</u> Dave Mills
<u>May 9</u> Nancy Sale	<u>May 30</u> Mary White	<u>June 12</u> Doug Mannering	<u>June 26</u> Jane Gill
<u>May 12</u> Eunice Chambers Roger Williams	<u>May 31</u> Dale Cameron	<u>June 13</u> Reuben Wilbur	<u>July 2</u> Fran Bostwick
<u>May 13</u> Jeanne Burns	<u>June 1</u> Betty Maupin	<u>June 14</u> Bonnie Coleman Bob Gindlesparger	<u>July 3</u> Jodi Moore Russ Steen
<u>May 16</u> Colleen Cameron	<u>June 2</u> Darlene Lowe	<u>June 15</u> Patty Leech Kay Neckel	<u>July 4</u> Rich Stiverson
<u>May 18</u> Jim Combs Bob Lee	<u>June 4</u> Bob Crossman	<u>June 18</u> Lois Ashcraft Shirley Coffman Sue Mullins	<u>July 5</u> Reda Darnell Larry Hagan Laurie Mullins
<u>May 19</u> Jack Gill	<u>June 5</u> Bob Oswald Garry Perry	<u>June 20</u> Pat Cobb	<u>July 8</u> Robert Coffey Dennis Lewandowski Steve McMillan

Women's Fellowship

FUMC Women's Fellowship will meet Thursday, May 25 at NOON in West Coy Hall. Any questions or comments, please contact Darlene Lowe at aldarlowe@gmail.com