



Special Edition Newsletter

July 3, 2025

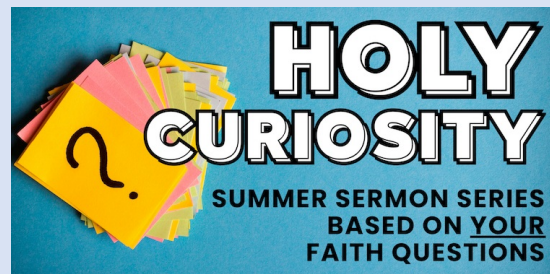
OPEN HEARTS

OPEN MINDS

OPEN DOORS

Dear Beloved Community,

At Open Hearts UMC, our vision is to cultivate a welcoming community to live out Jesus Christ's teachings. One of the ways we are doing that is to create space for honest conversations with our "Holy Curiosity" sermon and discussion series.



Throughout the summer, we'll engage with the questions you've asked, not always with direct answers, but with **biblical wisdom, theological insight, and spiritual tools** that help you explore these questions in a meaningful way. Sometimes, curiosity doesn't lead to a single answer—but it always leads us **closer to God**.

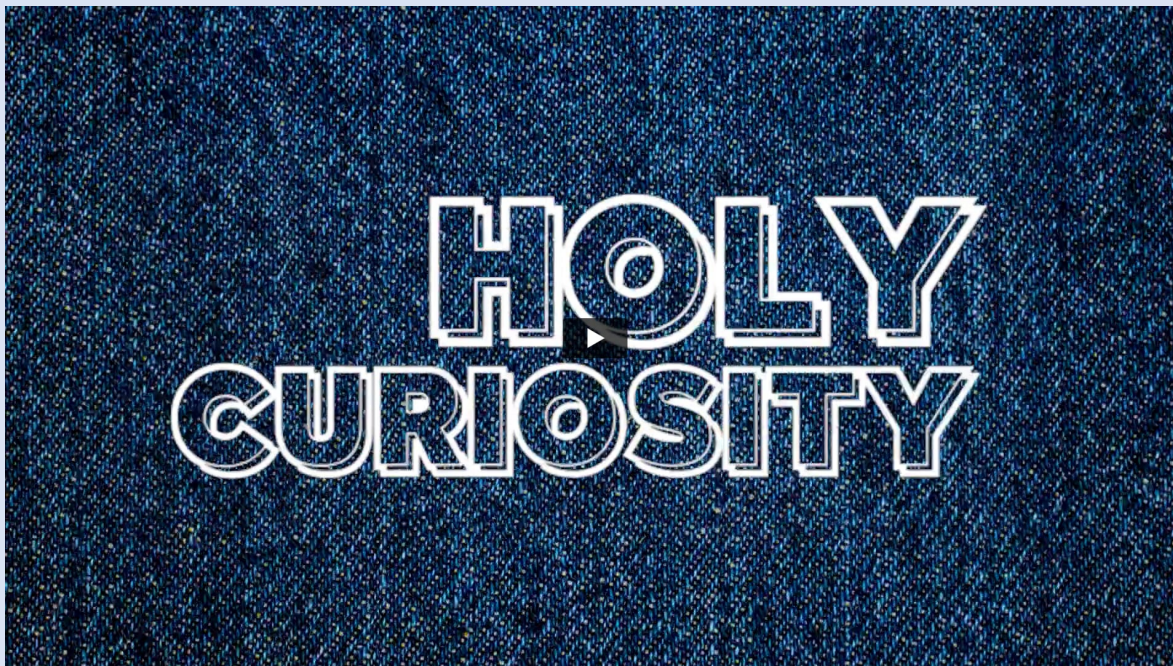
To walk alongside you in this journey, we've invited some clergy friends of Open Hearts UMC to help shape the series and lead **discussion groups** that align with the weekly sermon themes. These groups will be **safe, open spaces** for exploring your faith in community. You'll not only get to interact with trained clergy who bring wisdom and pastoral insight, but you'll also hear from **one another**—your fellow questioners, seekers, and believers.

We believe God meets us in our questions, not just in our certainty. So come, bring your curiosity, your doubts, your hopes—and let's seek God together. Join us in worship in-person or online, and at our discussion

groups this summer!

Your partner in ministry,
Rev. Karen Jones

P.S.: The submission form is closed for the series, but I am always interested in hearing from you. So, if you ever have faith questions you need help exploring, please feel free to reach out to me via email.



"HOLY CURIOSITY" SERMONS

Sundays at 11:00 AM

7/6 Christian Influence in Challenging Times

"... How may we be a persuasive influence that modifies and transforms our world, city, and church to be better followers of Jesus Christ?"

"...how to reach across the table in a divided America (or just find your own peace)...being upset/frustrated/dismayed with the Far Right and its hold on 'Christian Values.' How do we find discernment in when to hold each other accountable, having hard conversations, and when to let those relationships go."

7/13 Sexuality (Preached in tandem with Rev. Hillary Taylor)

"...would I still be welcomed to Heaven or condemned to Hell [for loving gay family member just the way they are.]"

Are bi, trans, gays in leadership roles allowed, and "...how does [their leadership] affect others in our community of faith?"

7/20 God and Gender

"What are some feminine images of God in the Bible? Why do we portray God as a man/father, and what could we gain from more diverse views of God?"

7/27 Heaven and Angels

"How will [deceased husband] know he will recognize me when I get [to heaven]?"

"...I also have questions about angels, and what we know about heaven from Scripture."

"Can loved ones communicate with us after they've passed? Does the Bible address ghosts/apparitions coming back to earth to visit?"

8/3 Judgment and Salvation

"What will happen to my loved ones who are not saved or who have fallen asleep in their faith? Jews, atheists, former Christians, etc.?"

"...if someone is raised in a culture that never introduces them to Christ, are they denied access to heaven? Or, if they are practicing Jews, love and serve the Lord in all the ways, they, too, go to hell?"

"In hell, do people burn to death, or is hell more a place without access to God?"

8/10 (break from series for Back to School Blessings)

Jana Clack – Director of Discipleship, will be our guest preacher. We will bless children, parents, teachers, and school staff as we prepare to start the new school year.

8/17 Why do bad things happen to good people?

"I struggle with why an all-powerful God allows terrible things to happen to innocent people. Like why do children get incurable diseases? Why do tragedies like school shootings happen? How can a loving, merciful God fail to intercede?"

"Why do bad things happen to good people?"

8/24 How Does Prayer Work?

"How does God answer prayers?"

(or) Why doesn't God answer my prayers?

8/31 Correct Religion

How do we reconcile that our religion is THE correct religion? Our Truth is THE Truth with a capital T? What about our brothers and sisters that are Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, etc.? Do we have to believe that these devout humans are going to hell because they don't believe in our God? How can we be the loving, Christian people we want to be while believing that we are the only people on earth who have it "right"?

HOLY CURIOSITY DISCUSSION GROUPS

**TUES
7/8**

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Open Hearts UMC (pizza provided) @ 6:00 PM



SEXUALITY

Magnetic South Brewery (Greenville) @ 6:00 PM

**MON
7/14**

**TUES
7/22**

GOD AND GENDER

Southernside Brewery @ 6:00 PM



HEAVEN & ANGELS

Corona Mexican Restaurant (Augusta Rd.) @ 6:00 PM

**TUES
7/29**

**TUES
8/5**

JUDGMENT & SALVATION

Southernside Brewery @ 6:00 PM



WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN

Open Hearts UMC (pizza provided) @ 6:00 PM

**TUES
8/19**

**TUES
8/26**

HOW DOES PRAYER WORK

Southernside Brewery @ 6:00 PM



CORRECT RELIGION

Corona Mexican Restaurant (Augusta Rd.) @ 6:00 PM

**TUES
9/2**

DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERS



REV. HILLARY TAYLOR



REV. CHUCK SHAW



REV. KEN OWENS



REV. KAREN JONES



REV. MEL ARANT



REV. CATHY JOENS



OPEN HEARTS
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DISCUSSION GROUP LEADERS



REV. HILLARY TAYLOR



REV. CHUCK SHAW



REV. KEN OWENS



REV. KAREN JONES



REV. MEL ARANT



REV. CATHY JOENS

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