

Pastoral News

09.18.22 - Week 2 - Value Reset - Luke 10:25-37

Reset

God's mercies are new every morning! But sometimes it is easy for us to get stuck in the same old routine. There are times when we just must hit the "reset button," so we can claim the fresh start God makes available to us. As we rediscover our true identity in the love of God, we will discover new purpose and, guided by the compass of God's values, head off in an exciting God-given direction!

Week 1: Soul Reset | Luke 3:21-23

Resetting your soul begins with remembering who you are. In baptism, God calls us beloved.

Week 2: Reset Values | Luke 10:25-37

What does it mean to live according to God's values?

Week 3: Reset Purpose | Mark 1:32-39

Centered living comes from understanding God's purpose.

Week 4: Reset Direction | Acts 9:1-15

Whether we've been in the church for a long time or are exploring the faith, Jesus sometimes calls us to move in a new direction, even when we think we are already heading in the right direction.

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

What's In This Month's Issue:

- Caritas Challenge
- Prayers Needed
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- United Women of Faith

October Calendar

2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th

Worship @ 10:30

6th UWF @ noon

4th, 11th, 18th, & 25th

Tops @ 9

Prayer Group @ 10

Koinonia @ 11

Bible Study @ 1

5th Garland Business Meeting @ 8:30

13th & 27th

Crafting Group 9 till noon

16th

Ad Council meeting at noon

26th

Flashes Articles Due

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' ²⁷He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' ²⁸And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

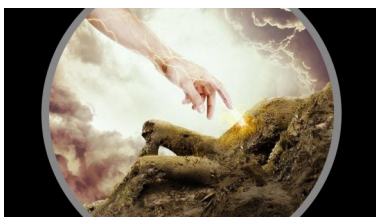
29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' ³⁰Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' ³⁷He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

I am not trying to change anyone's mind; I am simply trying to give you all the facts and my thoughts on the matter. I know that we all have different reasons to believe what we believe, however each of us should be at least honest with ourselves and figure out why.

If you believe being gay or transgender is a sin, if you believe that there is no room in the inn, or in leadership or in the pulpit for a gay or transgender person that is your right and your opinion. If you however say that it is God's rule and it says so in the bible...than this message might be for you...read on, with an open heart and an open mind.

My Opinion

Lots of talk behind the scenes...thought I need to put in my two cents...to defend those who want to be part of a church willing to love and be open and affirming.

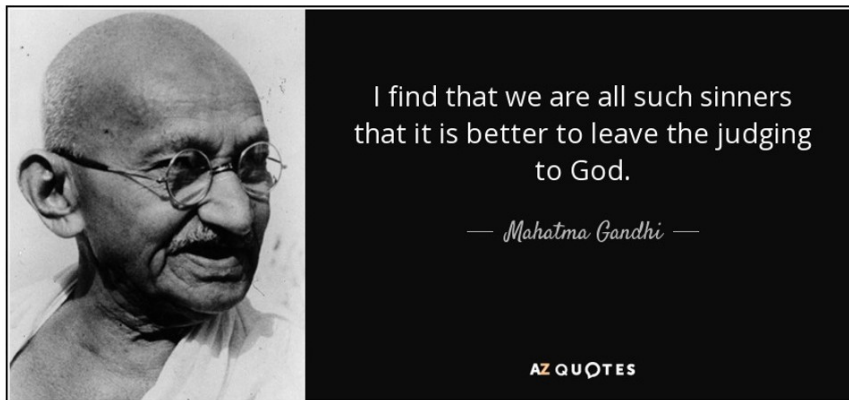


Let us begin at the beginning...

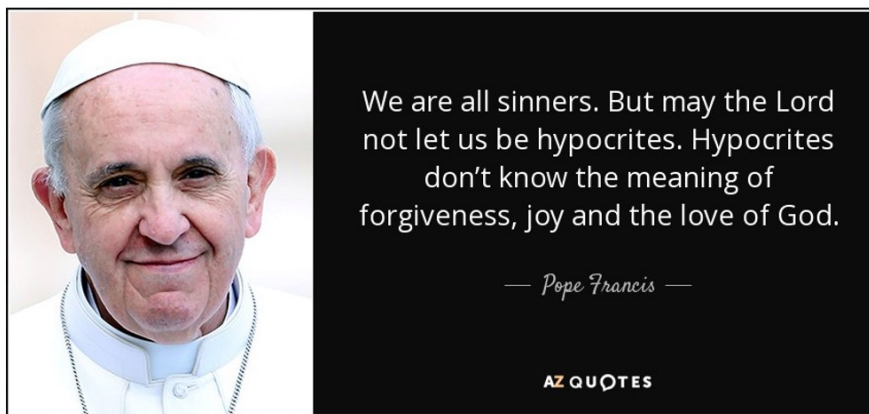
Genesis 1:26

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion

over the fish of the sea...we are all created in God's image, man, woman, gay, straight, transgender...



We are all sinners...



Bible -

Christians are believed to have massacred more followers of Jesus than any other group or nation.

Those who believed in the Trinity butchered Christians who didn't.

Groups who believed Jesus was two entities—God and man—killed those who thought Jesus was merely flesh and blood.

Some felt certain God inspired Old Testament Scriptures, others were convinced they were the product of a different, evil God.

Some believed the Crucifixion brought salvation to humankind, others insisted it didn't, and still others believed Jesus wasn't crucified.

Indeed, for hundreds of years after the death of Jesus, groups adopted radically conflicting writings about the details of his life and the meaning of his ministry and murdered those who disagreed. For many centuries, Christianity was first a battle of books and then a battle of blood.

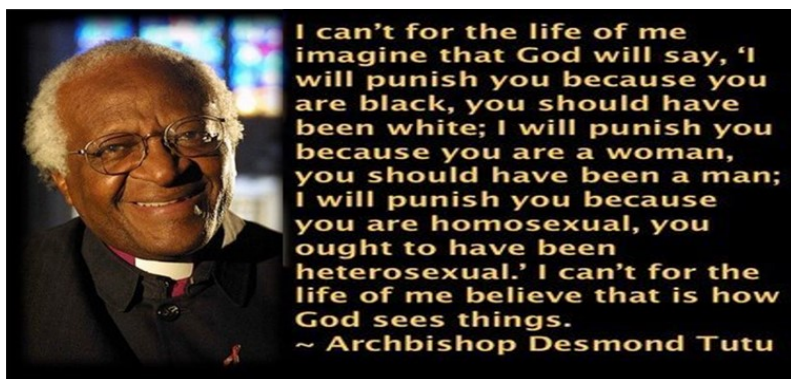


Can the Church be wrong?

First church split was over Circumcision

The East-West Schism resulted in a formal split between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. **Western Schism** rose out of internal church disputes in Europe.

Church of England? King Henry... 45,000 denominations globally. **Why?** Because of different Bible interpretations...Earth is Flat, Protestant Reformation, Slavery, Womens Rights **They all have one thing in common – exclusion and division**



I can't for the life of me imagine that God will say, 'I will punish you because you are black, you should have been white; I will punish you because you are a woman, you should have been a man; I will punish you because you are homosexual, you ought to have been heterosexual.' I can't for the life of me believe that is how God sees things.
~ Archbishop Desmond Tutu



A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?'
We must always consider the person.

— Pope Francis —

AZ QUOTES

GENESIS 19

A City Destroyed for Sin

Full Passage
Genesis 19:1-29

"The LORD has found the cries of injustice so serious that the LORD sent us to destroy it." -Genesis 19:13

Traditional interpretation
used to Clobber gay people

PASSAGE RECAP

- ▶ God **destroyed** these ancient cities because of their rampant **sinfulness**.
- ▶ Central to their iniquities was **homosexuality**, evidenced by the **men** of Sodom wanting to have **sex** with the male/angelic visitors.

JUSTIFICATION FOR DISCRIMINATION

- ▶ LGBTQ individuals are a **threat** to the well being of society.
- ▶ God destroyed cities for it, and God **still punishes societies** today that tolerate LGBTQ activity.

Why that's a misuse
of this passage

IT'S NOT ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

- ▶ The male characters in the story are **not gay**. They are power hungry monsters who wanted to **gang-rape** foreigners.

THE BIBLE EXPLAINS THIS STORY FOR US

- ▶ The Bible **explains** the "sins of Sodom" for us in multiple places.
- ▶ **Homosexuality** is never mentioned. Rather, the focus is on **pride** and failure to show **hospitality**.

How to UnClobber it.
A better way forward

KNOW OUR CALLING

- ▶ Israel was **called** to be a people who embodied **hospitality** and sought **justice** for the oppressed. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a story passed on as a **warning** should they forget their calling.

EMBRACE RADICAL HOSPITALITY

- ▶ In what ways do we today neglect the call to **radical hospitality**? May we always **open** ourselves up to the **needs** of the outsiders, the marginalized, and the outcast.

*"The point of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is that the people of God are called to be people who **receive** the outcast and the outsiders.... **not create** them."*

Learn more in the course,
UnClobbering Genesis



FUN FACT:

Other cultures had Genesis 19 type stories, aka, "divine beings visit wicked cities and destroy them." See: Baucis and Philemon.

LEVITICUS 18 & 20

It is an Abomination

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" -Leviticus 18:22

Full Passage
Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13

Traditional interpretation
used to Clobber gay people

PASSAGE RECAP

- Two verses in Levitical law declare a **specific** type of same-sex activity between two **men** as *toevah* (in Hebrew), a.k.a. an "**abomination**."

JUSTIFICATION FOR DISCRIMINATION

- If God called it "sintul" back then, then surely it will **always** be so.
- "Abomination" means vile, gross, **subhuman**. This word has **armed** the church with **justification** to see LGBTQ individuals as "less than."

Why that's a misuse
of this passage

BAD TRANSLATION

- The Hebrew word (*toevah*) did not imply, "vile, gross, or subhuman."
- Toevah* was about a violation of cultural **boundaries**, not objective offenses that are inherently wrong.

NOT UNIVERSAL

- The prohibition is about a **specific** act, not **any/all** same-sex activity.
- No prohibition against **lesbians**.

HOW IS THIS FOR US?

- Leviticus was written for the **Jewish** people as they entered the promised land. **Not** for us, 3,000 years later.

How to UnClobber it.
A better way forward

SACRED CALLING

- The idea of **Leviticus** was that Israel was to **live differently** from those around them when they entered the promised land. This was a calling to be **holy**, "set apart," so as to **reveal** to the world the true **heart** and **nature** of God.

LIVING HOLY TODAY

- This calling remains for us today. **We** are now the **lights** of the world. What might it look like to **live differently** from the culture around us?

"When it comes to questioning the *sinfulness* of same sex attraction, or of a gay couple in a *loving relationship*, these two verses are not trying to answer those questions."

Learn more in the course:
[UnClobbering Leviticus](#)



FUN FACT:

Moses acknowledged to Pharaoh that the Jewish worship of Yahweh was "*toevah*" (an abomination) to the Egyptians.

ROMANS 1

Abandoning what is Natural

"The males traded natural sexual relations with females and burned with lust for each other." -Romans 1:27

Full Passage
Romans 1:26,27

Traditional interpretation
used to Clobber gay people

PASSAGE RECAP

- ▶ Paul describes both **men** and **women** who **turned their back** on God and exchanged **natural** relations for **unnatural** ones.

JUSTIFICATION FOR DISCRIMINATION

- ▶ Used as Biblical support for labeling homosexuality as **"unnatural."**
- ▶ Homosexuality is a broken state that is a result of people **turning their backs on God** and chasing their own desires.

Why that's a misuse
of this passage

RIPPED OUT OF CONTEXT

- ▶ These two verses are part of a larger thing Paul was doing in Romans 1, which was part of a larger thing he was doing with the letter altogether: attempting to **unify** Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
- ▶ The point of this passage was **expose** Jewish **prejudice** against Gentiles and level the playing field, so as to bring everyone together.

NOT PAUL'S PERSPECTIVE

- ▶ These aren't Paul's **beliefs** on **homosexuality**. He **borrowed** rhetoric from common Jewish sources which were originally written to be **anti-Gentile**.

How to UnClobber it.
A better way forward

RESTORE INTENT

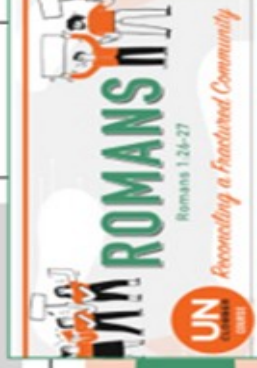
- ▶ This clobber passage was part of a **larger effort** from Paul to unify Christians in Rome who were **fractured** along ethnic lines.
- ▶ We have to know **why** Paul wrote Romans (to bring **unity**) or we'll never understand these two verses. A simple reading isn't enough.

OWNING PREJUDICE

- ▶ The church needs to bring to the surface its long-held **prejudice** against LGBTQ individuals.
- ▶ Once named/owned we can **repent** & begin efforts for **reconciliation**.

FUN FACT:

Early church fathers interpreted Paul's "unnatural sex" to be sex-acts that were non-procreative (not "same-sex" acts).



Learn more in the course:
[UnClobbering Romans](#)

"In a tragic twist, these words — originally written to unify two fractured groups — have been misused to justify the division between the church and the LGBTQ community."

1 COR 6 & 1 TIM 1

Will Not Inherit the Kingdom

"Do not be deceived... male prostitutes, sodomites... will not inherit the Kingdom of God." -1 Corinthians 6:9

Full Passage
1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10

Traditional interpretation
used to Clobber gay people

PASSAGE RECAP

- In two different letters, Paul writes out a list of **sins** and includes "**homosexuality**" as something that **excludes** you from the Kingdom.

JUSTIFICATION FOR DISCRIMINATION

- This makes the Bible "clear" that **homosexuality is a sin**.
- Not **worse** than other sins, perhaps, but nonetheless still sinful.
- Same-sex behavior is **incompatible** with a life lived for God.

Why that's a misuse
of this passage

TRANSLATION ISSUES

- Translators **can't decide** on how to handle two Greek words—one of which Paul seemed to **create** (making it hard to know for certain).
- Some translations go with **behavior** (aka, "men who have sex with men"), others go with **identity** (aka, "homosexuals").

SPECIFIC, NOT GENERAL

- Paul was naming **specific** kinds of same-sex behavior, he was **not** saying that **any/all** sex acts between two men/women are **sinful**.
- A person's sexual **identity** is **not** what is at stake in these verses.

How to UnClobber it.
A better way forward

WHAT'S REALLY AT STAKE

- These two poorly mistranslated words refer to those who **exploit** others for sex, who **sell** themselves for sex, or where there is an **imbalance in power**.
- If there is **exploitive** or transactional sex between two people of the same gender, that is **incompatible** with life in the Kingdom.

CONSISTENCY

- Let's call *all* people—**regardless** of their sexual orientation—to a life of **equity**, mutual **respect**, and **love**. May *all* people strive for a healthy sexual ethic together.

"The next time someone asks you, 'do you think **homosexuality** is a sin,' try responding with, 'do you think **heterosexuality** is a sin?'"

Learn more in the course:
[UnClobbering Corinthians](#)



FUN FACT:

The ancient world used the term "eunuch" to name castrated males and males who showed no sexual interest in women.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 -King James Version

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

So, let us look at those words, and the number of times each it talked about in the bible, and might that tell us something of value?

Fornicators = 67 occurrences (A person who has sex with someone who they are not married to)

Idolaters 41 Bible Verses

Adulterers 40 times

'Effeminate' 25 times in the bible

"Abusers of themselves with mankind" (Male prostitutes or perverts)

Sodomites 55 times (Nothing to do with Sodom and Gomorrah)

Thieves 39 Bible verses

Greediness/Covetous 70 times (70 Major Bible Verses about Greed and Money (Materialism))

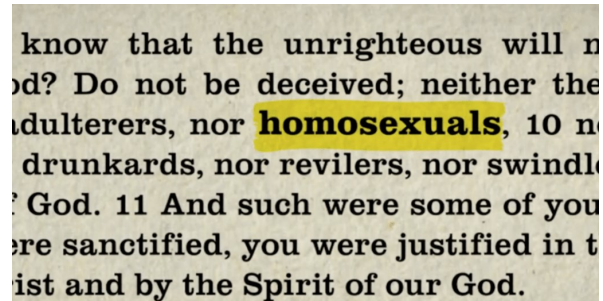
Drunkard = more than 70 + times

Reviling others 25 Occurrences

Extortioners/Robbers same as Thieves? (See above)

Gossip = 32

All those words are used so many more times than the concept of Homosexuality why? Could it be because they are more important to God than being gay or transgender? And if it is so important why did Jesus not ever talk about it?



The Word Homosexuality:

Those who "practice homosexuality" will not inherit the Kingdom of God. The translation there is odd, in part because the word homosexual didn't even exist until more than 1,800 years after the bible was written.

The first appearance of the word "homosexual" in an English translation of the Bible was placed in 1 Corinthians 6:9 by translators of the Revised Standard Version in 1946

The RSV committee decided the word "homosexual" was an inaccurate translation of malakoi and arsenokoitai in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and replaced it with "sexual perverts."

An example of "sexual perverts" would be a dirty old man exposing himself to children on a playground. The RSV team admitted that the Greek word arsenokoitai was not condemning homosexuals, but instead those who were abusive in their pursuit of sexual encounters.



Historical context of Paul's time

The historical context shows that pederasty, sex with slaves, temple prostitution and other abusive forms of sex were prevalent in the first century when the Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Even though the Bible contains six verses that appear to condemn homosexual activity, it contains more than 200 verses that condemn heterosexual activity. So as researchers it is important for us to determine the type of homosexual or heterosexual activity being condemned.

My Personal experiences

Gay couple in my band in Texas, lived in fear every time a new pastor came, because they may have to give up their family, friends and ministries. They were the most loving, devoted, giving, faithful people I have ever known. It was obvious to me and our congregation that their ministry was and is blessed by God.

Young man was kicked out of his church in which he grew up in for being transgender. After a while his mom talked him into coming to our church. He was just in tears, telling me he thought God did not love him anymore and he would never be welcomed into church again. Broke my heart, that's what the church is doing when we cannot love and accept our neighbors...so sad, is that what Jesus want us to do?

In my Opinion: Being Gay or Lesbian or Transgender or LGBTQIA+ is not a sin.

It is my hope and my prayer that you may have had a chance to hear a different side to the argument...maybe just maybe this has created a little doubt in your mind...and maybe just maybe the love you carry in your heart is wanting to reach out a little further...

Peace, René



Stand Up To Bullying

October is National Bullying Prevention month. The color blue represents kindness, awareness, peace, and solidarity. So blue is the color to wear in support of anti-bullying. Members of Fowler UMC have been working since April 1st to produce 500 blue hats. These hats are for each student at Willard Elementary so that they can choose one and wear it proudly as they stand up to bullying.

On Thursday, October 13th, there will be two assemblies at Willard Elementary. One at 9:30 am for grades k-2 and one at 10:30 am for grades 3-5. Teachers and staff members, also wearing blue hats, will provide information for students and parents, that will answer the following questions:

What does bullying mean?

What does bullying look like?

What should I do when I see it?

What should I do when it happens to me?

What can I do to avoid participating in bullying behavior?

Dotie Godley, Loraine Chase, Donna Norris, Roberta Decker, and Diane Strobeck will be at Willard on October 13th at 9 am to prepare for the distribution of hats. This has been a very rewarding project for our congregation these past 6 months. It is our goal that every Willard student will experience a bully-free school year. This event will be a special memory and learning experience for them this year and for years to come.

Thank you to each person at Fowler UMC, that participated in any way, to make this project a success. May God bless each one of you!

Dotie Godley



Thank You!

Dear Fowler Family,

I am now settled in Seattle in my permanent on-campus housing. I moved in from temporary housing yesterday, and have a cool view of the city lights and even the top of the Space Needle!

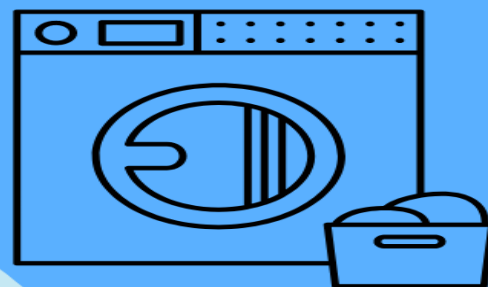
For the past several weeks, I've been working hard memorizing music and practicing with the drumline - some of the rehearsals have been from 9 a to 9pm! It definitely feels like drinking from a fire hose, but I'm having a lot of fun performing the marching band halftime show at football games in front of 72,000 fans!

Thank you all so much for the generous scholarship funds. Yesterday I went to the bookstore and was able to use that money to purchase all of my fall course materials, books, and even my chemistry lab coat!

I miss you all and can't wait to see everyone when I can come to church over winter break.

Love, Gabriel

Caritas Challenge For October



**This month is
Laundry Soap.
They have asked for
any kind but no low
sodium please.**

Great Job with the September Challenge!

We collected over 100 cans of soup and chili! For the month of October it is Laundry soap. Let's see if we can beat our first time.



Prayer Requests

““And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Ephesians 6:18 NIV

1st - Steven Ledoux

5th - John Godley

14th - Jackie Whipps

15th - Ron Ring

20th - Mable Pangle

24th - Gelene Griffiths

30th - Linda Hammer

LeeAnna Willis

Hand of God to Touch

Pastor René

Concern for neighbors well being

Enjoyable lunch with former fellow co-workers

Son and his search for new job

Health and Healing

Mark

Jennifer – broken toe

Dan Montgomery

Prayers of Gratitude

Praise for Creation

Dick got an A at his Doctor appt after his recovery from Covid and no more oxygen

For family and friends

Our beautiful world

Continued Prayers.

Linda Stancil

Wishing our friends and family

a “happy. . .”,

a “merry. . .”,

a “best wishes . . .”,

and a “blessings . . .”

for their special day.



United
Women
in Faith

Join us on Thursday, October 6 at noon for lunch and fellowship. Bring your sack lunch, dessert will be provided. Our program will focus on the history and the future of United Women in Faith.

The name United Methodist Women may have changed, but our Purpose remains the same:

The organized unit of United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose

PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ;

to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the United Methodist Church.

In the 150 years of women organized for mission, the name has changed many times but our mission with women, children and youth has remained the same.

Sharon Stovall,
President, Fowler UWF

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**Do you like to craft?
13th & 27th for our Crafting day.
Let's talk and craft together.**



Knit, crochet, cross stitch, quilt



**Come join us!
We meet
every other
Thursday
from 9am to
noon!**