



Latimer's Voice

The Newsletter of Latimer Memorial United Methodist Church

Publisher: Witness Team

Volume No. IX

Issue No. 7

July 2020

Editor's Comments:

Please use my e-mail address to submit stories, events, happenings, or other information that you would like in the Newsletter. If you do not have a computer, please give it to me in person or mail it to me. The deadline for all news items to be submitted is the 20th of each month. That will give me time to have it compiled and printed for distribution on the last Sunday of the month.

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Pastor's Ponderings:



"A Sign from God?"

I have recently been asked by several people if

the COVID-19 virus is a sign from God (no one at Latimer has asked me this). I tell them I really do not know. I have said I would focus less on it being a sign than on how we handle our trust in God in the midst of it. But this is a common belief among Americans. A recent poll from the University of Chicago Divinity School found that about two-thirds of Americans believe that God is sending a message that humanity needs to change.

If I had more time with them I want to ask what do they mean by a sign. Do they mean is God trying to teach us something? Do they mean God intentionally gave us something for some reason? I do not believe God intentionally created something which gives misery, illness and death to people. Despite some people's desire to get an answer and blame this on something, our God of grace would not do this to us. Some

probably focus on the God of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) who specifically brought certain things to Earth (the flood, the plagues in Egypt). But those things had specific meaning. What we need to understand is they were part of the salvation story and help us understand why God no longer does such things to bring people back in right relation with God and with each other. With Jesus dying for us, God no longer needs to do these things to get our attention. God's grace is all we need. We do not need a sign.

There is also the idea of *theodicy*, a term which means God's justice. Under this theological theory, some believe God puts us through things to give us more strength. Once again, I do not see why this is needed. We do not need to suffer misery and death in order to have the strength we need. As believers in the saving grace of Jesus

Christ, we get our strength through the Holy Spirit.

We have to ween ourselves away from the theology that “everything happens for a reason.” As I have told those in the grief support group, death and illness are arbitrary and capricious. Usually there is no good reason for why bad things happen. Peter Marty, Editor of the *Christian Century* magazine and minister, had a very insightful statement in the magazine this week. He writes: “members of the ‘everything happens for a reason’ crowd who believe that God has a purpose behind even our most unwelcome suffering like to know that someone is in charge. When we feel powerless because we can’t control what we wish we could, God becomes the go-to party of responsibility. Plenty of believers subscribe to this idea when inexplicably bad things happen. In their mindset, it’s better to have an incomprehensible God who may hurt us, but who at least is in charge.”

Instead of blaming God for this pandemic, I think

we need to focus on what we can do with God in the midst of turmoil. Do we trust God even more to protect us, comfort us, lead us? Do we rely on the Holy Spirit to be more creative to deal with changes in our lives? I know I have had to be more creative and I am glad to have had the guidance of the Spirit in coming up with new ideas on how to worship. I also believe that even though we have not been able to worship inside our sanctuary until recently, the community of our church has become even stronger as we come up with ways to reach out to each other. The coronavirus is giving us all a fresh reason to band together and breathe goodness into a chaotic world. Let us continue to trust God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we deal with a new reality.

- Rev. Wally Culp

From the Nurture Team:

“THE LORD BLESS AND KEEP YOU. THE LORD LIFT HIS CONTENTANCE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU. THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON

YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.”

We all have a story to tell during this Covid 19 Pandemic. The one story that brings us all together is still the oldest story in the world. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

Our Bishop Holston and Pastor Wally continue to help us reopen our doors safely. As we continue to worship inside the sanctuary, we will use the 3-step protocol of

- *Wear a face covering
- *Use hand sanitizer
- *Social distancing.

We were successful in our drive-in worship for several Sundays in May and June, and starting June 14 returned to the sanctuary for worship. Thanks to the Re-Open Team and all the work to provide the safety steps. It is so nice to be able to see each other. We are still broadcasting our worship service to the parking lot on FM radio 89.5 each week. Our next meeting is July 14 to discuss the next phrase. Please continue to keep our church covered in prayers.

Special thanks for the mystery person that mowed the church lot. What a boost that was!!

July-August **Upper Rooms** are available at church. Also, Sunday School Study books are here as well.

Regarding the July Calendar, at this time no Food and Fellowship meal is scheduled for July. No decision yet on Sunday School, Group meetings, or Choir practice reopening.
*"God Bless America"---
Wishing all a safe and Happy 4th of July.*

- Sandy Sorrow

From the Outreach Team:

Thought for the Day:

This Thought for the Day was in the Upper RoomGod can use my words of encouragement to make an extraordinary difference.

We have been able to stay connected to our Church Family through the Prayer Chain at least once each week and some weeks more than once. This has been a blessing and a way to

share and encourage each other.

The Back to School GiveAway at this time is planned for August 3, 2020. For the Belton schools the event will be held at the Belton Recreation Center. The GiveAway will be 9-11 AM and 5-6 PM. The 5-6 PM is being added so parents that work can come after work. Copies of the school supply list will be available. This is one way we can help the children of our community (our neighbors) feel good about themselves on that first day of school. This is so important.

There is a copy of the list of school supplies attached to this Newsletter. A box will be provided in the entryway of the church for your donations.

"Let us consider how we may spur one another towards love and good deeds." Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

- Pat Wilson

From the Witness Team:

Our new cookbook is finished and ready to be

handed out. If you have ordered cookbook(s) and would like for Susie to bring them to you just let her know.

Her home phone is (864) 338-5469, cell (864) 221-2710, and email susiehowell635@gmail.com.

- Susie Howell

Justice for All:

On June 7, in my sermon "Justice for All," I challenged you to take actions to bring racial harmony to our community and nation. I appreciate the comments I have received from you so far. Please continue to have conversation with me, especially by e-mail or phone. Please continue to have conversation with others.

I have made a suggested reading list which is attached to this newsletter.

- Rev. Wally Culp

Church Council:

Church council will have a meeting on July 14 at 5:00 p.m. This meeting will be by Zoom. You will need access to the

internet to get Zoom. I know that some of you do not have access, so I am thinking of how we will involve you in the meeting. Reports will be sent out beforehand for you to review before the meeting. Council will conduct its usual business and will also review the status of the use of the church building.

Treasurer's Report:

Thank you for the third month in a row for all your continued financial support for Latimer. Because of you, there has been no stress in meeting our obligations. For the month beginning May 17 and ending June 19, you have given for budget purposes the total amount of \$9,554.88. Expenditures for that same period are as follows: Staff and ministerial support including benefits and direct billing - \$6,547.67; Worship and worship supplies - \$180.19, for supplies needed for virus precautions; Utilities - \$372.67; and Sunday School and Upper Room materials - \$308.59. In addition to the budget giving, funds were also received for the sale of

cookbooks, Epworth, UMCOR, Sunday School, and Upper Room.

- Linda Millwood



Our Homebound Members:

Phillip Brannon
Bessie Clark
Frank Clark
Jackie Manning

Our Prayer Concerns:

Sarah Blackwell, Phillip Brannon, Ben Brogden, Hilda Bruce, Juanita Butler, Bessie and Frank Clark, Katie Coward, Tim Culp, Gloria Eaves, Richard and Margaret Edwards, Tony Ellett, Linda Emhof, Dick and Nancy Finney, Jim Grubbs, Eugene Hembree, Jane Jackson, Amy and Jim Lane, Susan

Long, Sara McDowell, Mike Mock, Nancy Nagel, Racine Owings, Brenda Parfitt, Steven Peck, Keith Ridgeway, Melissa Scott, Kandice Shirley, Lucretia and Joda Snipes, Norma Timms, Frank Woods, Carl and Ellen Yates

The Latimer Lovelies:

The Latimer Lovelies will meet at Tucker's on Wednesday, July 8th at Noon. Please let Sandy Sorrow know if you plan to attend.

Grief Support Group:

The grief support group will meet on Wednesday, July 22, at 2:00 p.m. Please note the change in time. Lunch will not be served. The guest speaker will be Theresa Phillips of Anderson School District number 2. A light dessert will be served.

Bishop's Corner:

All in Due Time

By Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

"After his suffering Jesus presented himself alive to the disciples by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking

about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This,' he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" —Acts 1:3-8

Growing up in the Holston household, respect for your elders was the rule. Fear was not exactly what my brother and I had for our father, even though we were scared at times, but it was the awesome power of his presence. He was a yes sir/no sir kind of guy. If he asked you to jump, you asked how high. If he asked you to run, you asked how far. If he asked you to stand, you asked how long.

I believe the late folk singer Jim Croce said it best in these lyrics, namely: "You don't tug on Superman's cape; you don't spit into the wind; you don't pull the mask off the ole Lone Ranger, and you don't mess around with Jim!" Jim was my dad's nickname, and my brother and I had a healthy dose of respect for him.

But everyone has a weakness. Mythology records Achilles the Greek god and his heel. The biblical text tells us about David and Bathsheba. The comics suggest Superman had his kryptonite. My dad's weakness was repairing cars. He belonged to that grand fraternity of "shade tree mechanics." You know, those people who enjoy working on automobiles in their spare time, in their own driveways, doing basic maintenance, sometimes beneath a shady tree in their yard. Those who can sometimes cause more damage than improvement to their cars.

Now, my dad was a do-it-yourself kind of guy, but not when it came to cars!

It was a cold Sunday night in January. Remember that respecting your elders was the norm, which meant as children we had to be outside while he

repaired the car, often standing and freezing.

As he worked, the vehicle almost started. He invited us to get into the car, but it was colder in there. I observed through the windshield in the small opening created by the lifted hood that the air filter was removed, exposing the carburetor. I noticed my dad poured gasoline into the carburetor and poured more...and more...and more.

He yelled "Hit it!" My brother and I both rushed to the ignition. I was the oldest, and I wanted to be the helper; my brother wanted to keep me from being first. Now this was a blur for both of us. He said I did it, but I thought he turned the key.

Regardless, the key was turned and we had ignition. There were colors—red, yellow and orange. There was smoke—a lot of smoke. There was that signature loud noise of an explosion—kaboom!

My brother and I looked at each other both thinking, "We're going to get it. We've just killed our dad!"

Then he slowly moved to the side, and we saw him. The best way to describe it was if you've ever seen

the movie Gremlins. The character Stripe had a white stripe down the middle of his head. When we saw our dad, his mustache and eyebrows were singed. He also had a brown stripe down the center.

Have you ever had laughter emanate in your body and you had to stifle it? It's painful, really painful.

There was our dad. Staring at us. Daring us to speak. We waited ever so patiently for him to give us words of grace, and finally they came.

"Go inside the house with your mother."

We zipped out of the car and inside the house as fast as we could, because we knew that was our only opportunity for escape.

As tough as it was to stifle ourselves, we patiently waited for our parents to go to sleep. Then when the coast was clear, my brother and I stayed up all night laughing about the night's events.

Sometimes it is not possible to say anything or respond in the moment. You simply have to wait patiently for an opportunity, even if that is not right now.

In the midst of a humorous moment, I remember the patience of my dad. For him, patience was a manner of graciously accepting life without forcing one's own agenda onto it. Patience is not only a virtue, but also an acquired taste.

People want to get back to living, and that is important. But we can't rush it.

None of us are perfect. We are all venturing into these new spaces with a steep learning curve. No one really has all the answers. But what we do know is that we need to move forward slowly. There's no point in pouring all the gasoline into the tank before the first crank.

It is important to give ourselves space to be patient as we go forward. We are learning as we go, trying one plan, then course-correcting if that plan does not work. There are some things that we need to keep in the forefront of our minds through the transition back into our communities and back into our church buildings. Love each other. Care for each other. Be sure that you don't get so exasperated that—
kaboom!

Before sharing opinions or feedback with one another, listen first to make sure the coast is clear, to confirm that now is the best opportunity to respond. If it isn't, then continue to wait patiently. Show a healthy dose of respect.

When Jesus returned to visit the disciples after the resurrection, their most burning question was "When?" As people who profess to be followers of Jesus, we yield to God's authority. We focus now on preparing our hearts for the coming of the Holy Spirit so when we are called to be witnesses, we can answer, "Here I am Lord, send me."

We've got cabin fever, and like the disciples we, too, want to know "when." But as we practice patience, we need to give each other space to prepare, to figure things out, to maneuver safely in this new normal.

We are all trying to live beyond our expectations. With God as our authority and with patience acquired, we'll be ready when it's time to turn the ignition.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES TO COLLECT FOR THE 2020 – 2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Glue

- sticks
- liquid in bottles

Crayons

- any
- 24 count
- twistables

#2 Pencils

Erasers

- small pencil caps
- big pink erasers

Plastic Folders

- with pockets & prongs
- without prongs
- blue/green/red/orange/yellow

3 Ring Binders

- 1 inch
- 1 ½ inch
- 2 inch
- 3 inch

Notebooks

- spiral 1 subject
- spiral 3 subject
- composition (marbled)
(wide & college ruled)

Dividers for Binders

Sheet Protectors

Earbuds

Markers

- any size
- pip-squeaks for Pre-K - K5
- dry erase

Highlighters

Colored Pencils

Bags

- gallon size
- quart size
- sandwich size

Pencil Case

- hard case
- zippered pouch

Scissors

Paper

- loose leaf notebook paper
(wide ruled & college ruled)
- construction
- graph

Index Cards

Sticky Notes

Box of Tissues

Hand Sanitizer

Disinfectant Wipes



Suggested Reading List

This is a suggested reading list to examine race relations in the United States. All these books are in my personal library. If you have time to only read one book, I suggest Foner. It's only about 200 pages and really gives some excellent information on why there are still cultural and legal problems in the US regarding race. Grant is a long book but well worth the read. You could just read the second half of the book to get an good history of post-Civil War history. The Underground Church is not specifically about race relations but suggests ways the church can be revolutionary.

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