



The Latimer's Voice

The Newsletter of Latimer Memorial United Methodist Church

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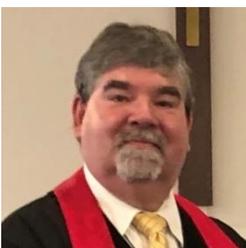
September 2020

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:



"Do the Right Thing"

The year 2020 has been a challenging one for us. We

are constantly being faced with decisions which are outside of our comfort zone. How much of our personal freedoms do we give up for safety? How far do we go to protect ourselves and others? How far do we stick our necks out for racial justice? We know from scripture that we are to love our neighbor as thyself. From what the Apostle Paul writes in Corinthians, we know we are part of a community, so we cannot just make decisions as an individual. What is the morally right thing to do?

I share with you some comments from Rev. Peter W. Marty, who is the editor of *Christian Century* magazine. In the August 12, 2020, issue he talks about how Christians are to make decisions. What is good conscience? He writes that reflecting on conscience provides us with an opportunity to reexamine what we mean when we refer to that whispering voice within us.

Is our conscience some built in capacity designed by God to help us know the difference between moral right and wrong, or is it a socially developed facet of our lives that begins forming as early as our parents' influence on our character?

Marty concludes that there's reason from both scripture and human experience to be confident that it is both. The word *conscience* comes from the Latin *conscientia*, which means "knowing together with." Conscience is not just my or your own little voice. It's joint knowledge.

There's something about conscience; in the New Testament, the apostle Paul uses the Greek word *syneidesis* about 20 times to describe conscience as both as guide and a witness to our moral understanding of life. It takes effort to renew this conscience, in part because it is not always a reliable guide. "I strive

always to keep a clear conscience toward God and all people.” says Paul in Caesarea (Acts 24:16).

The business of continually refreshing one’s conscience is something that Harry Truman got right, according to biographer David McCullough. Truman memorized and frequently recited a prayer that included these words: “Help me to be, to think, and to act what is right because it is right.” The discipline of that prayer helped keep Truman’s conscience from falling into disrepair.

Truman needed to know what was morally right. He had to make one of the most significant decisions in human history. I recently read a book, *Countdown 1945*, which looks at Truman’s decision to use the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Truman did not make a rash decision. In the 116 days from the time he became president to the dropping of the bomb on August 6, 1945, he was constantly seeking advice on whether to use the bomb. Generals McArthur and Eisenhower advised him not to use it, stating that Japan was already

defeated and the United States should not be the first nation to use such a terrible weapon. Other advisers told him it would be immoral if he did not use the weapon and ultimately save the lives of countless American soldiers and Japanese who would die in an invasion of the Japanese mainland.

What a burdensome decision. Truman ultimately decided to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and a second one on Nagasaki. The Japanese surrendered and World War II ended. Thousands of people died in the bombings and a new age of warfare began. There has been and will be opinions over the morality of the bombings. But Truman always remained comfortable with his decision. Throughout his presidency he was faced with major decisions on how to deal with the Soviet threat, including the Berlin airlift and the Marshall Plan to save Western Europe from Soviet takeover. He also had to deal with the Korean War.

Truman was not fancy but he got the job done. Historians now look favorably on his time in the White House. They view

Truman as a straight shooter from middle America. He is now ranked as the fifth best president of all time. Think of the prayer he recited.

We may not completely know how much of our conscience is due to what God gave us and to what we have been taught over the years. What we do know is to keep in constant prayer and reflection about God’s will. The turmoil of the present situation reminds us that conscience is never formed in the heat of the moment. It acquires the shape of goodness over time and through disciplined attention to right and wrong.

- Rev. Wally Culp

From the Nurture Team:

*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
When I feel afraid, think I’ve lost my way, still you’re there right beside me.
And nothing will I fear as long as you are near,
Please be near me to the end.
I will not forget your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering.*

Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side, and I will love you to the end.”

Words by Amy Grant

One of the ways God holds us is through His word. I encourage you to daily read the scriptures. Let them speak to you. Put yourself in the reading. Using the suggested readings from “The Upper Room”, “Daily Bread”, the Sunday School materials are also great ways to keep your mind focused on God’s love and his will for His people. His will for you. Sometimes revelation will come roaring at you,

other times in a whisper. Sometimes you experience a dry spell. But keep searching His word. Pray, then pray some more. Let me know what scripture has been your rock – your inspiration during this time of change.

Well, it is September. The days are getting shorter and the shadows longer. School is opened in most of our communities.

Latimer Memorial will have their church council meeting September 8, and major decisions will be discussed regarding

additional safely reopening concerns. Any and all changes will be announced as soon as we can.

We sure appreciate the love, help, care and concern for the safety protocols that are in effect.

“May the Lord bless and keep you . May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, May He lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

- Sandy Sorrow

From the Outreach Team:

We were offered the opportunity to share our resources, time, and prayers to a worthy effort to help our Belton students and families be prepared for the new school year. Our congregation stepped up by donating many school supplies, much time, and prayers to let our community know we are a church that cares.

In addition to school supplies, we had a tri-fold telling about Latimer to put in the backpacks. We appreciate Wally, Susie, and Kent for updating these bi-folds and printing them. We also had

bookmarks with encouraging words for the backpacks.

A total of 275 filled backpacks were handed out at a “Drive-Through” on August 3rd at the Belton Recreation Center. The Belton Firemen were there to direct traffic.

The organizer of this even was Teresa Phillips, Community Project Manager, Anderson School District Two.

We are blessed to have this opportunity to share and reach out to our neighbors. Please continue to pray for our students and school personnel.

- Pat Wilson

From the Witness Team:

The new cookbooks have all been delivered and paid for. There are errors in some of the copies. If you see one please let me know and I will make a list and let everyone know about these in a Newsletter in the near future. These are small errors and can be easily corrected without having to reprint the pages.

Tommy has recovered nicely from his hip replacement surgery. You may see him walking down the Rail Trail or sidewalk every day. One of our friends sent him a card a few weeks ago with a prayer enclosed. We thought we would share it with our friends.

I said a prayer for you today. I felt the answer in my heart, although He spoke no words. I didn't ask for wealth or fame. (I knew you wouldn't mind.) I asked Him to send treasures of a far more lasting kind. I asked that He be near you at the start of each new day. To grant you health and blessings and friends to share your way. I asked for happiness for you in all things great and small - but it was for His loving care I prayed for most of all. Amen

David and Jane are planning to be back the middle of September. We sure have missed them. It seems like they've been gone for a lot longer than 6 months. We'll be glad when they are home.

- Susie Howell

Epworth's Annual Work Day Offering

Epworth's annual Work Day offering will take place on Sunday, September, 13th.

This offering has been received for decades as church members would pledge a day's wages to support the children of Epworth.

This year will be much different as many of us are unable to gather for worship as was the case for the Epworth Mother's Day offering in May. Even though the ways of receiving the offerings have been impaired, the goal is still the same: that each church member contributes a minimum of \$6.00. Epworth is not an apportioned item thus the success of these offerings is vital for the support of God's work through Epworth.

Charge Conference

Charge Conference will be held on Wednesday, October 7, at 7:30 pm. Whether this will be live or by Zoom will be determined at the church council meeting;

Church Council:

The next Church Council meeting will be Tuesday, September 8th at 4:30 PM. This will be a zoom meeting.

Our Homebound:

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, Stephen Culp, Tim Culp, Gloria Eaves, Richard and Margaret Edwards, Tony Ellett, Eric Emhof, 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, Frank Sorrow, Norma Timms, Frank Woods, Carl and Ellen Yates

Treasurer's Report:

From July 26 until August 19, Latimer has had the following receipts and expenditures:

Undesignated receipts for the past four weeks total \$6,235.00, with extra donations for Aldersgate in the amount of \$220.00, Cookbooks in the amount of \$420.00, Hats in the amount of \$15.00, and Upper Room for \$2.00. During that same period were as follows: Salaries and benefits - \$5,135.06; Direct billing - \$1,063.00; Utilities - \$617.98; Epworth - \$415.00; UMCOR - \$50.00; Cookbooks - \$494.73; Trustees - \$164.02; Worship - \$286.26; and Custodial supplies - \$162.13. The final three amounts are to be adjusted to more accurately reflect the spending for Covid supplies. The monies for Epworth and UMCOR were collected in the previous month, while the amounts for Trustees and the cookbooks come from escrow accounts and do not affect the budget.

- Linda Millwood

Bishop's Corner:

What's Going On

By Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

"God, the Master, told the dry bones, 'Watch this: I'm bringing the breath of life to you and you'll come to life. I'll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You'll come alive and you'll realize that I am God!'" Ezekiel 37:5-6 (The Message)

Forty-five years ago, against the advice of his Motown record executives, Marvin Gaye released the song "What's Going On."

The world was changing rapidly as the 1960s came to a close and a new decade began. The civil rights movement, women's rights, assassinations, picket lines, Vietnam – so much was happening as awareness of injustice and oppression grew. But change does not come without push back, and Gaye recognized the timely message that resonated from these song lyrics.

"What's going on" is not a question. It is a statement. "Mother ... there's too many of you crying; brother

... there's far too many of you dying." Gaye vocalized the reality of the era, calling into question the problems caused by hate and fear, yet also offering a response that could bring healing and hope. Namely, "Father ... we don't need to escalate. ... For only love can conquer hate. ... Don't punish me with brutality; talk to me so you can see what's going on ..."

What's going on is that we can't breathe. The weight of oppression and injustice is suffocating. Pressure is being applied to the necks of our brothers and sisters instead of being used to change policies and prejudices.

When our eyes are opened in a new way to the realities of injustice in the world, we have a personal and collective responsibility to put our faith into action. By studying the context, you will recognize that the experiences of others may well be different from your own. We have much to learn by talking and listening to one another rather than speaking in sweeping generalities. If we are willing and open, we will grow. As we reflect on this broadening perspective, the opportunities for action will

come into focus. If you want to make a difference, you can't do it from the sidelines.

Ezekiel, a prophet of God, finds himself surrounded by dry bones. Death and hopelessness abound, yet God's glory and power are revealed as God brings the dry bones back to life. What once was a place of desolation and despair can be replaced by life and hope if we choose to obey God's commands.

Our collective memory as a society can be so fleeting. The old adage "there is nothing new under the sun" rings true as we recognize the similarities between what the world looks like now and how it looked half a century ago. And yet, here we are, standing on the threshold of opportunity. The opportunity to influence the culture, to create positive change. The opportunity to allow God to work through us, breathing new life into dry bones.

The time is now. Let us work together, as Marvin Gaye sings, to "find a way to bring some understanding here today." How will your actions shape the future so that one day soon hate and fear

will succumb to the power of reconciliation, hope and love?

The late Rev. Joseph Lowery, United Methodist clergy and former president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, often shared this prayer when speaking: "Lord, in the memory of all the saints who from their labors rest, and in the joy of a new beginning, we ask you to help us work for the day when black will not be asked to get back, when brown can stick around, when yellow is mellow, when red can get ahead, and when white will embrace what is right."

Let it be so. Amen.

