



# Latimer's Voice

The Newsletter of Latimer Memorial United Methodist Church

Publisher: Witness Team

Volume No. X

Issue No. 1

January 2021

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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:



### “Opting In or Out?”

Those of us who follow sports have heard the term “Opting out” a good bit this past year

during the pandemic. Basically, sport players who are concerned about contracting COVID-19 from other players have been granted the opportunity to “opt out” of playing this year and not incur any penalties. College football players were granted an extra year of eligibility whether they played or not. Those who chose not to play could not lose their scholarships. Most declared before the season started if they would play, but the rules allowed them to “opt out” at any time during the season. This option became painfully aware to me when several South Carolina Gamecock football players decided to “opt out” after the firing of coach Will Muschamp. They were defensive stars Israel Mukuamu and Jaycee Horn. They did not want to risk contracting the disease at that point, especially when their team was not doing that well. They wanted to preserve their health for the upcoming NFL draft next year.

At first our reaction to this “opt out” might be that these players were selfish. Before we are too hard on them, thought, let us consider whether those of us with advantage have always had the ability to “opt out” of life’s hard decisions in favor of living more comfortably. Rev. Peter W. Marty, editor of *Christian Century* magazine, writes an article about opting out in the November 18, 2020 issue. He says he has begun a new spiritual discipline in his life. It’s an effort to notice how often in a given day he takes advantage of personal luxuries that allow him to opt out of certain situations. He writes, “The more closely I observe other people who lack the resources, connections, or affluence to be able to opt out of undesired circumstances, the clearer my faith bearings become.”

If you own a car, you can opt out of public transportation (or having to walk to your destination). If you enjoy a certain level of comfort, security, and

means, you can opt out of the local public school system and go private or move to an upscale community where the public schools are in better shape. If you fly and want to opt out of arriving with pain from insufficient legroom, you can become an airline club member and get seats with more legroom. If you have enough income, you can hire a yard service and opt out of cutting your grass or trimming your shrubs yourself.

During the season of Advent, we think of Mary. She could have opted out and not ridden to Bethlehem with Joseph. She would have still delivered Jesus but the tone set would not have been the same. Rev. Marty writes that among the most remarkable features of the Gospel narratives is the resoluteness of Jesus in walking to the cross. Despite numerous opportunities to opt out of the way of suffering, despite the consistent efforts of his disciples to try to talk him out of such an end, he stays the course. Even near the end, surrounded by a hostile group of people holding clubs and swords, Jesus can say, "Do you

think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels." His decision to opt in to his greater calling of love remains both instructive and saving.

For some thirty years of owning my own home, I have chosen to opt in and cut my own grass and trim my own shrubs. Besides saving me thousands of dollars in service fees, it gives me joy and time to reflect. It also gives me the perspective of those who work such jobs. When I lived in Washington, DC for three years in seminary, I had a vehicle but normally chose to use public transportation. I opted in because it was cheaper (and I didn't have to deal with DC traffic) and it gave me the ability to be with those who had less resources.

The advantage that so many of us enjoy of being able to opt out of less than desirable circumstances should induce neither pride nor guilt. As Rev. Marty writes, our greater responsibility is to identify and choose opportunities to opt in, where we can come to the table and share in the

work of strengthening the common good. This sharing is even more important today when there is so much suffering and stress with the COVID-19 pandemic. How will you "opt in?"

- Rev. Wally Culp

### **From the Nurture Team:**

Jesus is born. Alleluia! His very presence in our lives gives us great reason to rejoice and celebrate. Be assured. God is a big God. Nothing is too difficult for Him to handle. And He cares about all that concerns you. Maybe you've experienced deep loss this past year, or you feel all alone this season, and fear or despair have gripped your heart... you can bring it to Jesus. All of it, and He will give you rest. Immanuel....God with us. Thank you Jesus.

The December Advent Candle lighting Liturgy was derived from Pastor Amy Wake, at First United Methodist Church, Honolulu, Hawaii. Published by Discipleship Ministries, Nashville, TN.

## ADVENT READINGS 2020

### November 29

# 1 “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness –on them light has shined... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:2,6.

Today we give thanks for the prophets among us, who bring to us surprising new visions of hope, who renew our faith and remind us what may be.

### December 6

#2 “In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people.’” Luke 2:8-10

Today we give thanks for the shepherds among us, Workers for the common good, steadfast watchmen we rarely see, the ones who have much to teach us

about watching for God in the darkness. But God did see them, God valued them and God declared the greatest news of all to them alone.

### December 13

#3 And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. Luke 1:46-49.

Today, we give thanks to the Marys among us, determined to do as God asks, stepping out in faith and beckoning us to do the same.

### December 20

#4 “In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. Luke 2:1, 3-4.

Today we remember Joseph, worn-out traveler and worried husband, doing

what was necessary for the sake of his family, his burdens stifling his hope in the promise of God. There was no room for him, yet he knows to whom he belongs.

### December 24

#### Christmas Eve

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger” Luke 2:6-7

Tonight, on this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant Redeemer, the lowly Lord, the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.. And now we know,... He is born and nothing will ever be the same!

Thank you for the Poinsettia Tribute that graced our sanctuary this Christmas.

A reminder to keep in touch with our home-bound. If you know someone at home or hospital, and would like a visit, the church Newsletter, Copy of Wally’s sermon, or The Upper Room please let Glenda Conley or Pastor Wally know. Wishing all a blessed and safe New Year.

- Sandy Sorrow

### **From the Outreach Team:**

Some of our usual channels of outreach have been closed to us during the last months. This is due to the fact of limited physical contact and not being allowed to donate items.

Opportunities to reach out to Richard Campbell, Meals on Wheels, Patrick B. Harris, and Kairos Weekend was limited. The Grief Support Group has not had meetings. Please keep these areas of service in your )..

We did get to have the Chili Cook-Off meal earlier this year (2020) and had donations of \$640 to send to the Cancer Association of Anderson. This association uses donated money to help residents of Anderson County that have cancer.

A donation was collected and sent to help with the Elder Basket Ministry.

Latimer continues to support BIMA (Belton Interfaith Ministerial Association).

We asked for donations to the Epworth Christmas Fund. We received \$500+ to send to Epworth for the purchase of gifts for the children and youth that

make their home at Epworth.

Thanks to donations of school supplies for the Back to School GiveAway by our church family we were able to join in mission with other churches and groups in Belton to give two hundred seventy-five (275) filled backpacks to students.

I am so thankful we have been able to stay connected to our church family through the Prayer Chain. Just the sound of another's voice can make the day better. We have also tried to call people just to say hello and to send cards and notes of encouragement.

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”  
Isaiah 41:10

- Pat Wilson

### **From the Witness Team:**

With all the uncertainties that is going on now let us take a pause and be reminded that The Bethlehem Star was visible a few nights before Christmas Day 2020. This is a reminder to Christians that God's presence is with

us and if we believe in Jesus we will have everlasting life. Look around for little blessings in our life. Could be a phone call, text, email, hand written letter or an act of kindness.

I was in Ingles checking out and this young man was behind me with his lunch in hand. I invited him to go ahead of me he reluctantly went ahead after I said Merry Christmas. He thanked me again before he left. Little acts of kindness can make someone's day a little easier. So let your little light shine.

The song Go Tell It On the Mountain has been on my mind I would like to share it:

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and  
everywhere,  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their  
watching  
o're silent flocks by night,  
behold throughout the  
heavens  
there shone a holy light.

The shepherds feared and  
trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's  
birth.

Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas  
morn.

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hill and  
everywhere  
go tell is on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

- Jane Barton

### **Church Council:**

The next Church Council meeting will be Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM by Zoom.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

For the month of December, deposits for budget purposes were \$7,603.00. Expenditures for the same period are as follows: Salaries (including pension, health, and direct billing) - \$6,478.00; Utilities - \$475.00; Office - \$199.00; Upper Room - \$39.00; Worship - \$34.48. In addition, amounts were given and checks written for Epworth, BIMA, poinsettias, and love offering. Also, a check was sent to the Conference in an amount sufficient to make our apportionments giving total 85% of asking as approved by Council at a special meeting called on December 13.

On December 16, a closing was held for the sale of the three rental lots adjacent to the church property, which sale was approved by unanimous vote at the special Charge Conference held on December 13. The monies received have been invested and will be used to pay insurance and janitorial expenses in the future.

- Linda Millwood

### **Our Homebound:**

Phillip Brannon  
Jackie Manning  
Frank Clark  
Bessie Clark

### **Our Prayer Concerns:**

Dr. Tom Barnett, Sarah Blackwell, Phillip Brannon, Ben Brogden, Hilda Bruce, Dr. Thomas Burris, Juanita Butler, Bessie and Frank Clark, Jocelyn Collins, Katie Coward, Tim Culp, Carl DuBose, Kate DuBose, Gloria Eaves, Tony Ellett, Bob Emhof, Eric Emhof, Linda Emhof, Dick Finney, Cory Foubert, Jim Grubbs, Family of Eugene Hembree, Jane Jackson, Amy and Jim Lane, Susan Long, Jerry Manning, Sara McDowell, Mike Mock, Nancy Nagel, Racine Owings, Brenda Parfitt, Joe Frank Pinson, Keith Ridgeway, Melissa

Scott, Kandice Shirley,  
Family of Lucretia Snipes,  
Joda Snipes, Frank Sorrow,  
Norma Timms, Frank  
Woods, Carl and Ellen Yates



### **United Methodist Women:**

"Courage to change the things we can" was the topic for this month's study on handling anxiety. Core emotions such as anger, joy, fear, disgust, sadness and love work together to keep control of our feelings. When these emotions are not balanced anxiety takes over. We think of courage in relationship with fear. Courage can often expose our vulnerability. For example we may have a strong opinion about something but we do not openly express this because we fear how others will react. In order to obtain the courage we need we must put God's words into our whole being so that we can keep ourselves on course toward God. Remember memorizing all those Bible verses when you were a child? We need to keep remembering these

because we need these encouraging words imbedded into our being to persevere through difficulty.

Normally the World Thank Offering program is held in October but an abbreviated program was held as part of the business meeting in December. The UMW missions extend worldwide. The World Thank Offering was begun about 135 years ago when the women were asked to donate 2 cents per day to these missions. Through this program even small groups such as Latimer's are able to be a part to help women, children and youth with many of their needs.

The pledge service usually held in November will be a part of the January meeting on Jan. 4, at 3:00 at the church.

- Regina Bullions



### **New Arrival:**

Big sister Payton and cousin Millie introduce you to Lila Mae Burleson who was born December 7, 2020. Lila weighed 7

pounds 3 ounces and measured 19 ¾ inches. Mom Nihan, Dad David, and Sister Payton are all doing well, as are Grandmom, Granddad, uncles and aunts, and cousins! Sadly, Brother Daghan is presently in Turkey (as are Lila's maternal grandparents) and will not be able to meet her in person for a while. In the meantime, we are getting to know and love another wonderful little girl.



# POINSETTIA TRIBUTES

## GIVEN IN MEMORY OF:

Rev. Wallace Culp, Jr.  
Gertrude & Glenn Coward  
Rhonda Jean Walfield  
Mr. & Mrs. E. B. Calcutt  
Mr. & Mrs. J. C. DuBose, Sr.  
Carl & Dot Sorrow

## BY:

Wally & Ellisa Culp  
Glenda C. Conley  
The Walfield Family  
Jim & Judith DuBose  
Jim & Judith DuBose  
Frank & Sandy Sorrow

## GIVEN IN HONOR OF:

Our Grandchildren  
Our Grandchildren  
Max & Alana Walfield  
Mildred Culp Brackett

## BY:

Andy & Regina Bullions  
Gloria & Bill Eaves  
Ron & Gay Walfield  
Wally & Ellisa Culp

The white poinsettia was given in honor of Lila Burleson by Kent and Linda Millwood.