

Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church



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Worship Times:
 9:00am Traditional
 10:00am Sunday School
 11:00am Contemporary

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church
 P.O. Box 681900
 1915 Oakdale Road Charlotte,
 NC 28216
 704-392-2387
www.thegrovetoday.org

Inspiration Point

Look for the Silver Lining!

On December 7, 1941, when he had been ordered to assume command of the U. S. Navy in the Pacific Arena, Admiral Chester Nimitz flew to Hawaii and ordered a boat to tour the area and to survey the destruction. There were major ships sunk or destroyed all over the place. The boat driver asked him what he thought about all the destruction. Nimitz replied, "They have made three of the most grave decisions a commander could ever make!" "What do you mean?" asked the boat driver. To which Nimitz replied, "They were so excited to see all the battleships lined up so they could have bombed them that they overlooked the dry docks where these ships will be repaired. Had they wiped them out, each ship would have had to be towed back to the US to be repaired. The second mistake was that they chose to bomb on Sunday Morning. Over 85% of the men were off the ships and on liberty ashore. Had they lured the ships out to sea and bombed them, we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800! The third mistake was missing the fuel tank farm about 5 miles over the hill there! All our fuel reserves for the entire Pacific Fleet is stored in that place. One plane could have strafed that field and have destroyed our entire fuel reserve!"

All of the United States were grieving over the loss of men and machines that we suffered that day, but the man who would lead in the war was looking ahead and seeing what was available to carry on the job at hand! His was a positive outlook, and that kind of thinking ultimately carried the US to victory over Japan in 1945!

Then, there is today! Look at where we all are right now. We are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic with this thing called COVID 19. Millions have been infected and over 300,000 have died worldwide. In the US alone, close to 90,000 have died, and right here in Mecklenburg County close to 800 have died.

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The economy is shut down, with many hundreds having lost their jobs, and their money is running or has run out. They cannot pay their rent, nor buy food for their families! But look at what else is taking place; hundreds of organizations are gathering food and have established distribution centers to provide food for hundreds of families. You can see them on the daily news, with cars lined up ten to fifteen wide and going back for a quarter of a mile! It is not time to withdraw into our own little shells, cocooning I believe they call it. There is ample opportunity for each of us to look around in our worlds and pick out a cause that we can contribute to or help with! We can make cloth masks, donate money or food, help older people with their chores, or even take them to their doctor appointments. Just wear your masks, and you will have to wait in the car for them. But what else do you have to do? Join a prayer group by phone or zoom! Get back into your Bible reading and prayer time, and yes at one time you were maybe too busy, but you do not have that excuse anymore! God will meet you at your favorite spot, and wonder just where you have been!

We will be a long time getting through all this, so use the time to develop good worship, Bible Study and Prayer schedules! Be positive! God has promised you will come through this in good shape! Psalm 91:9, 10 **Because you have made the LORD, which is your refuge, even the most High, your habitation; there shall be no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path!**

Brother Phil

Drive In Worship at PGUMC

During the on-going COVID-19 pandemic we have all had to improvise in so many areas of life. You probably aren't getting out and going quite as much as you are used to doing. There are probably fewer trips to the grocery store. And how many of us found ourselves in desperate need of a haircut? Churches everywhere have had to improvise as well! Pleasant Grove has been blessed to be able to offer online worship services and weekly devotions offered by our amazing church staff. Then, as we were allowed and advised to make baby-steps back toward "normal," we were able to offer drive-in church. With the help of our awesome Praise Band, our ministers were able to connect with our congregation face to face...albeit from a distance. Hopefully we will be back in our usual worship spaces soon... but let's give thanks now for the ability to make do when the times necessitated we do so!!!



Did You Know...?



...that people all over the world are finding creative ways to help out during the recent pandemic? Of course you did! Many human-interest stories have found their way onto news broadcasts and even to having their own television show. And, if you can sift through the negativity and all of the statistics online, you can find stories of hope, love and compassion that can just melt your heart! But, did you know that many United Methodists are using their own talents and gifts to spread hope and love in their own communities? We thought we would pass on a few examples of United Methodists blessing others during these strange and unusual times.

Who knows... maybe these little stories will inspire some of our members to go out (or stay in) and use what God gave them for the good of others!!!

It might seem odd to find out that a Methodist church has an engineering small group. But, in Columbus, Indiana, home of Cummins Inc., Asbury United Methodist Church has about 16 members who are engineers. So, over the years they have built ramps, roofed houses, replaced water heaters, and renovated buildings for a homeless shelter and a drug treatment center. However, they had never delved into medical equipment. When the coronavirus shut the world down though, they got busy. Their local hospital was in need of respirators and ventilators. So the group, Mission Columbus, got busy finding materials that were cheap and available and coming up with a design that works efficiently. Within their first 14 days of working on this awesome project they went from searching for materials to having a working prototype to show to the hospital officials. With the cooperation and blessing from the hospital they are well on their way to making 150 ventilators and respirators at no cost to the hospital through church funding.

Wyatt Clarke, a 15 year old from Marysville, Michigan, is spreading hope and love in a totally different way! Wyatt says he “goes where the sidewalk takes me” most days as he plays the bagpipes for neighbors in his hometown. And of course, he dons the traditional regalia as he plays for others. He didn’t think that he would get much of a reaction when he first started playing. He didn’t realize that folks were videotaping and standing outside on their porches and listening. Wyatt is an accomplished musician. He plays tuba, stand-up bass, bass guitar, regular guitar, trombone, trumpet, mandolin, ukulele, tin whistle, keyboards, fox drum, cello, viola, and violin...in addition to the bagpipes. His father, pastor of Marysville UMC, gave Wyatt the idea to entertain during the coronavirus shutdown after seeing a news story about a musician doing the same thing in Knoxville, TN. His father says of Wyatt, “Wyatt has always been a kid who from a very young age has wanted nothing more than to spread joy to people. He found a way that he can do that through the gift of music, and just absolutely ran with the ball.”

The senior pastor of Hanscomb Park UMC in Omaha, Nebraska recently preached a sermon about our tendency to wait for crises to pass rather than help in the moment of crisis. Within this sermon she noted that some people had “toilet paper fortresses” in their homes and weren’t inclined to share. A quote from her sermon read, “You can’t do this and still call yourself Christian.” Shortly after this sermon was delivered she received a call from one of her members saying, “Well, Pastor Chris, what are we going to do with our toilet paper stash?” Subsequently, the church donated 200 rolls of toilet paper to *Together Omaha*, a homeless service organization.



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And finally, Sarah Knisely, a United Methodist living in East Liverpool, Ohio, has found a way to use her counseling skills to help others cope during these tough times. She broadcasts a weekly Facebook show entitled “Fear and Faith” during which she suggests using deep breathing, prayer, and exercise as well as visualizing a beautiful place where you’d love to be, were it not for the restrictions of COVID-19. Knisely is a licensed clinical counselor and feels such a burden to be useful in the kingdom of God. Though she remains careful not to attempt mass therapy over the Internet, she does offer information and Bible stories that address anxiety. During “Fear and Faith” she has reviewed the stories of Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane, the prophet Elijah, and Esther, who saved the Jewish people during difficult times. She says that she talks a lot about what these people might have been feeling and suggests that her viewers just might be able to identify with them.

Now, maybe you’re not an engineer or a musician; maybe not a preacher or a counselor, but there is no doubt about the fact that God gave you a gift and a talent that He intends for you to put to use doing Kingdom work right now. So, think about how you can minister to those whom God has blessed you with...your family, your friends, your church family. And then think about the other people that you can reach; those who are also made in the image and likeness of God, and just do it! We would love to hear about how you employ yourself for the work of our Loving God...not as a way of bragging or putting yourself on a pedestal, but rather as means of inspiring others and shining a spotlight on the love of God!!! You can email us, with or without your name, at pgumcnewsletter@gmail.com.

(The information contained in this article was written by Jim Patterson, a UM News reporter in Nashville, Tennessee, and originally appeared on the United Methodist website on May 4th, 2020. Photos courtesy of, Omaha Hanscomb Park UMC.)

What Do You Say When Asked...

Where Can We Go To Feel Encouraged In Times Of Loneliness...?

“I will give you a little recipe I have found for conquering loneliness. First, I am never lonely when I’m praying, for this brings me into companionship with the greatest friend of all-Jesus Christ. He said, “I call you not servants, but friends” (John 15:15). Then, I am never lonely when I am reading the Bible. I read it every day-whole chapters of it. Nothing dissolves loneliness like a session with God’s Word.” (Billy Graham)

Happy Father's Day!!!



This year, in the United States, Father's Day will be celebrated on Sunday, June 21st. The origins of this observance sometimes get lost in the revelry of the beginning of summer and in the gift-buying, gift-giving, and remembrance of the father figures in our lives. So, let's take a look back at the beginnings of this special day.

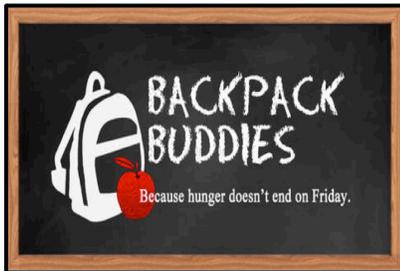
To get back to the very beginning of this day to celebrate fathers, fatherhood, paternal bonds and the influence of fathers in society, we have to go all the way back to 1907. It is believed that the tradition of Father's Day started from a memorial service held for a large group of men who died in a mining accident in Monongah, West Virginia. After this observance, Mother's Day became a tradition in 1909. Coupling these two events together, Father's Day was founded in Spokane, Washington at the YMCA in 1910 by Sonora Smart Dodd. Her father, William Jackson Smart, was a Civil War veteran and a single parent who raised six children. After hearing a sermon about Mother's Day, Dodd told her pastor that fathers should have a similar holiday honoring them. She originally wanted the observance to be held on June 5th, her father's birthday. However, the pastors didn't have enough time to prepare their sermons so the celebration was put off until the third Sunday of June. Although the movement had little success through the 1920s, seen largely as a money-grab by those manufacturing ties, tobacco pipes, and any traditional presents to fathers, Dodd's efforts eventually paid off. In 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first presidential proclamation honoring fathers, designating the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Six years later, the day was made a permanent national holiday when President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1972.

This year, when we all have so very much to be thankful for, let us all remember those who have filled the fathering roles in our lives. Let's remember fathers who have provided for us, grandfathers who have loved us, and brothers who have protected us. Let's thank God for all who have had a hand in fathering us and showing us much of the character and attributes of our Heavenly Father by their words and their actions. This year, maybe more so than in other recent years, let's be sure to thank the fathers in our lives and let them know just how much they mean to us. After all...it's not about the gift of a tie...it's about the gift of ties that bind!

Happy Father's Day!!!



Backpack Buddies Finishes Another Year in Ministry



This month finishes our tenth year in ministry through the Backpack Buddies program. For ten years we have assisted families from Oakdale Elementary School who find themselves in food insecure situations. For ten years we have provided weekend food to as many as twenty students, as well as grocery store gift cards for their families around the holidays. And for ten years we have hoped to love on these families, providing for their basic needs in a way that seems so...basic.

This year, as we approached the final quarter of the school year, it seemed that nothing was out of the ordinary. We were still providing weekend food each week to our twenty students. Donations were coming in as our members brought in their designated items as well as singular contributions. We had a good working relationship with the Family Liaison at the school. Nothing-new...same old, same old...right?

Then along came March 14th, and the Governor's announcement that schools would be closing due to the Covid-19 crisis. Families began to scramble to figure out what they were doing. Schools began to scramble to figure out how they would continue to educate their students. Daycare facilities and After-School Care programs began to scramble to figure out how they could operate safely to continue to serve families. And Backpack Buddies scrambled too! We knew that families were depending on our program. We wanted to continue to provide weekend food...but could we do more to help? That was the question...and "YES" was the answer!

For twelve weeks we have provided that weekend food and for twelve weeks we have been able to give each family that came to our campus on Friday mornings a grocery store gift card. And for almost every one of those weeks we have also been able to provide toilet paper for these precious families. Such simple things, such necessary things. We have been told multiple times that if it weren't for what we were doing and what the school system were doing; they don't know how they would have put food on the table. The gratitude has been humbling, to say the least.

Thanks to you, Pleasant Grove, and our partners in the faith community at Pleasant Grove Presbyterian, we have stayed the course and made a difference in the lives of families with young children. Thanks to all who have brought donations. Thanks to all who have given monetarily. Thanks to all who have given of your time to pack the bags and distribute the bags. Thanks to all who have said an encouraging word to our school families. Thanks to the TP Nerd (You know who you are!). And thanks to all who have prayed for this ministry, it's volunteers and its recipients. We really are all in this thing together and couldn't have done it without you!

Stay tuned for the plans for our 11th year of Backpack Buddies!!! The adventure continues!!!



Celebrating our Graduates!!!

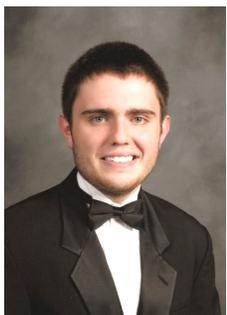
In this strange year that is 2020, we think it's necessary and important to celebrate in any way we can. And because we are followers of Christ, we are able to find cause to celebrate in the everyday life, in the wonders of nature, and in the sure and steadfast Love of Christ. Also, we still look for and celebrate the momentous occasions that continue to be a part of our lives. This month we would like to join you all as a church family to celebrate our college and high school graduates.



Henry Coy Lee Monteith graduated from East Carolina University on December 13, 2019. He received a degree in Construction Management from ECU. Coy is currently employed with Barnhill Contracting Company.



Rebecca Burns Usher graduated from Elon University in May of this year. Becca received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with a minor in Neuroscience, Cum Laude. She is planning on applying to veterinary school in the near future.

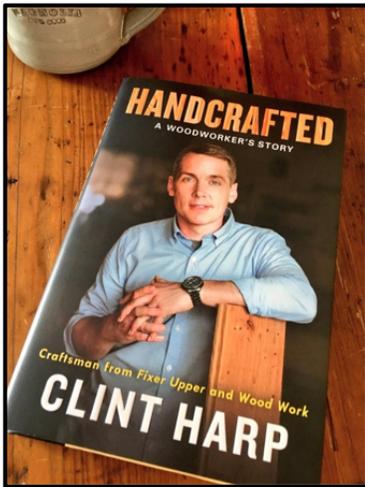


Joseph Woodrow Roberson is graduating from East Lincoln High School, Class of 2020. While in high school Joseph was a member of the National Science Honor Society and a member of the National English Honor Society. Joseph was awarded the Chancellor's Scholarship to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He plans to major in Biology at UNCC.

Pleasant Grove wants to wish each of our graduates much success as they take on the next part of their lives. We couldn't be more proud of these three extraordinary young people. We look forward to seeing how God is going to bless them as they seek to find their way in the world, while reflecting Christ into that world! We also hope that each of these family members knows that their church family will always be here for them and will be holding them in our prayers.

God Bless Our Graduates!!!

Recommended Reading



This month's Recommended Reading selection is brought to you with the men in mind...after all; it is the month in which we celebrate Father's Day!!! However, anyone can read this book and get a lot out of it! Handcrafted, by Clint Harp, is an entertaining, informative, and inspiring read. Spanning Clint's journey from a childhood learning carpentry and hard work at his grandfather's knee, through his struggle to maintain balance between pursuing his dream and being a good provider, to his partnership with Chip and Joanna Gaines, Handcrafted is a memoir but also a manual for dreamers. Clint gives us an unvarnished, thoughtful look at a path that is possible for anyone bold enough to pursue it. And because this is an unvarnished, raw and honest look at one man's life from his own perspective, it contains a few words that you might possibly not include in your own everyday language. Not meant to be offensive in any way, the narrative comes from a place of real life with all of its struggles and stumbles, as well as its victories.

While Clint Harp is now known for being Chip and Joanna Gaines's go-to furniture craftsman on Fixer Upper, his life has not always been the DIY dream that we see on television. Ten years before, he played the role of what he thought was a good husband, provider, and father, working hard at a sales job that came with a nice paycheck. However, he became increasingly aware that he was living someone else's version of the good life. He kept coming back to his unfulfilled dream of building furniture. He leaned on the support of his wife, the encouragement of a mentor, as well as a life full of lessons from the important people in his life, as he finally took the leap, quit that nice job, and set out on his path to become a carpenter. With no formal training, no financing, no workspace, and no customers, Clint and his family were very quickly on the verge of financial disaster. Then, Clint met Chip Gaines at a gas station – the brief encounter that would mark the beginning of a life that Clint and his wife Kelly would have never been able to envision for themselves.

In an excerpt from Handcrafted, Clint Harp writes:

“I have a story. So do you. And as we stumble along, trying to follow our dreams and find our way, we're filling the pages of a giant book called *life*. All those who came before us, the men and women whose names we don't always know but who helped lay the path we now travel, had their stories as well. And many more will come after us, making their own contributions and building on what we've left behind....I've learned that handcrafting a life is a lot like woodwork, really. You know you want to create something beautiful, a piece that will last. So you take some lumber, make your first rough cut, and go from there. And the process that carries you from the first rough cut to the last finishing coat – that's what makes the masterpiece.”

In reading this book, you will watch Clint grow up in a divided family. You will see him accept Christ as his Savior and Lord of his life at the age of eight. You will see him through college, engagement, youth ministry, marriage, an unsuccessful attempt at a church plant in Europe, fatherhood, career moves, and ultimately to living into his true self.

In the words of Clint Harp:

“I'm walking through this world not in search of a trail to follow, but in recognition that the trail is waiting for me to blaze. It is up to me to truly be me. And if Kelly and I love each other well; if we love our children with all our heart; if we live our lives with love for anyone who crosses our path; and if we try to become the best versions of ourselves, day by day - that will be the greatest work of our lives. If we achieve that, maybe our kids will grow up and do the same and one day pass that on to their children. Once I figured all this out, the Bible stories and scripture verses of my youth began to make so much more sense. The pieces slipped together. If God truly does want me, the person He created, to be a reflection of His love, creativity and power, then doing the work I was put here to do is the best way for me to accomplish that.”

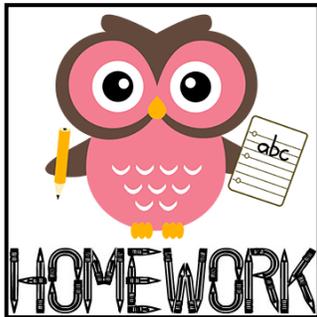
You can see from these excerpts why we highly recommend Handcrafted, by Clint Harp! Enjoy the read!!!

After School Care Additions

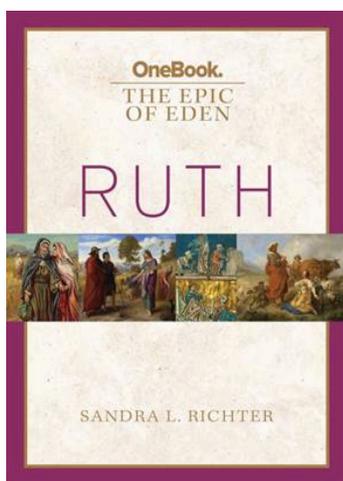


As schools have been closed this spring, our After School Care Program has been operating in a full-time, full-day manner to accommodate our working parents. We have been implementing new and unprecedented procedures as we do our best to keep our children and families as safe as possible. The children have been so great, even when we have had to remind them of the need for social distancing! They are still busy doing homework, attending ZOOM meetings with their classes, doing crafts, exercising, and playing in the gym and out of doors. We know that they miss their friends and teachers from school but

at least with ZOOM meetings on the computer they get to see their classmates at times. Summer will soon be here and we are hoping to be at the point in this unusual time to be able to go on field trips and outings together. If not, we will get very creative and do our best to give our students a great summer! Everyone stay safe!!!



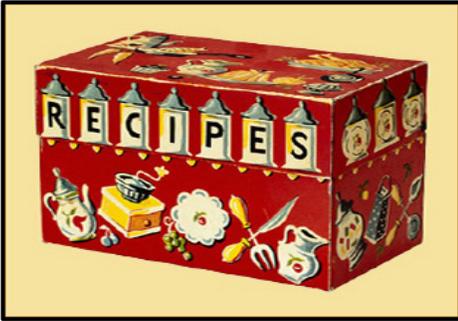
Bible Study Opportunity...



Jana Alexander is now leading a new Bible study, on the book of Ruth. The study meets via Zoom, on Monday evenings at 6:30, beginning. To participate in the study, you'll need the study guide book for Epic of Eden:Ruth. There are still a few books available at \$14 each. Let Jana know if you would like to join the study.

Because this is on Zoom, anyone can participate! Feel free to invite your friends! The writer of this study wrote it with folks who are new to Bible studies in mind, too.

To sign up, please contact Jana directly (704-881-3736; janaalexander09@gmail.com) so you will be added to the list to receive the Zoom link.



The Recipe Box

We love bringing a new or different recipe to our readers each month...because hey! We all have to eat! Right? Sometimes the recipe is from one of our Pleasant Grove cookbooks and just deserves to be highlighted. Sometimes it will be something new that came from a website or a post on the Internet. And sometimes we will share a recipe with you that has stood the test of time. That is exactly what we are featuring in this month's *Recipe Box*! This recipe for **Lemon Pound Cake** comes to us through the kitchen of Jean Lynch. She had the recipe passed down to her from her mother, Mrs. Maude Brown. According to Jean, her mother was a good cook and an even better baker! Ahhh, that we would all have a great baker in our homes!!! Jean says that she has made this cake many, many times and has always had good luck with it. She says she doesn't do much baking these days but thinks that her sweet husband, Dick, just might join her in the kitchen to bake this very special cake! You know, so many times, what makes the recipe great isn't that it is fancy and complicated. It isn't that it calls for exotic ingredients or that it is even that impressive upon presentation. What makes a recipe special is that it is made with love and has so many wonderful memories attached to it.



We are sure that you are going to enjoy baking this wonderful cake...who knows you might just start something within your own family that leads to more love and even more memories shared...all because of a recipe!!!

Lemon Pound Cake

3 ½ cups sugar
 3 ½ cups flour
 6 eggs
 1 ½ cup Crisco (don't pack the measuring cup)
 1 ¼ cup milk
 ½ teaspoon baking powder (plus just a tad more)
 1 tablespoon vanilla
 1 ½ tablespoon lemon flavoring



Grease and flour a tube pan. Preheat your oven to 325 degrees. In a stand mixer, cream together the sugar and Crisco. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add baking powder, vanilla, and lemon flavoring. Beat well to combine. Alternate adding the flour and milk. Beat well to be sure everything is mixed thoroughly. Pour batter evenly into your tube pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 90 minutes. Test to be sure the cake is done with a toothpick, with the toothpick coming out clean. Enjoy!

THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF:

IN MEMORY

Horace Nixon

Pina Nance – Family Life Center
Wayne and Anna Therrell – Family Life Center
Steve and Karen Dellinger – Family Life Center
Hazel Sanders – Family Life Center
Anonymous – Family Life Center
Arnold and Rebecca Lakey - Family Life Center
Roy and Margaret Parker – Family Life Center
Brenda Watkins – Family Life Center
Willie and Nadine Williams – Family Life Center
Ted and Betty Rector – Family Life Center
Double Ring Sunday School Class – Family Life Center
Don and Jane Adams – Family Life Center
Peggy Pace – Family Life Center
Steve and Maria McClure – Family Life Center
Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Family Life Center
Brenda Latham – Family Life Center
Roger and Patti Beard – Family Life Center

Lucia Wilkins

Roy and Margaret Parker
Steve and Karen Dellinger
Double Ring Sunday School Class

Nancy Brown

Steve and Karen Dellinger
Double Ring Sunday School Class
Roy and Margaret Parker

Ray Alexander

Double Ring Sunday School Class
Steve and Maria McClure
Anonymous – Family Life Center

Words Alone Are Not Enough

posted on June 01

Over the past weeks and months we have watched the tragedy of COVID-19 claim over 100,000 lives and counting – and that's in the wealthiest nation on the planet. In parts of the developing world the numbers will likely be even higher. We've witnessed the horrific deaths of two more black men, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, perpetuating the lie that has been with us from the very founding of our nation. Sadly this lie has also been a part of our history as United Methodists in events like the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the creation of the Central Jurisdiction with the formation of the Methodist Church in 1939. It is the lie that tells us that the lives of our black neighbors really don't matter as much as the lives of others.

And so, over the past week we've seen the frustration, anger, and desperation of people of color, and their allies, spill over into nationwide protests. We've seen major cities on fire. It all reminds me of that great line from James Baldwin quoting a spiritual...

*"God gave Noah the rainbow sign,
No more water, the fire next time!"*

In a moment like this, it is hard to know where to begin. Words are important, they matter because they shape the world we inhabit, but words alone are not enough. Our words must be embodied.

As followers of the Word made flesh, the good news must take on flesh in us and have its way with us. What we say and how we live as Christians cannot be, must not be, separated from what we know about God in Jesus Christ. We don't believe in some generic idea of "God". We believe in and put our trust in Jesus, the brown skin, Middle Eastern Jew in whom the eternal logos took on flesh and dwelled among us. This very same Jesus was executed on a cross so that Rome could keep the "peace". "In much the same way that black bodies have been lynched and continue to be brutalized to this day." And on Easter God raised the brutalized body of Jesus from the dead, overcoming death making Christ, not Caesar, Lord and King of all bodies, all nations, and all peoples.

Among other things this means that our bodies matter to God. As Paul teaches, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:22-23)

In Christ the redemption and renewal of creation, including our bodies, has begun and that redemption and renewal will not be complete until God's reign of justice and peace fills the whole earth.

The Church, as the body of Christ, is called by God and filled with Pentecost power to be a foretaste and a sign of God's reign. Our preaching, teaching, ordering the life of the church, and sharing the mysteries of baptism and Holy Communion is not about helping people cope with life or live their "best life now". The Gospel is not self-help. It is the radical claim that Christ is King and Lord of all of life and we can live accordingly or find ourselves out of step when Christ comes. Among other things, this means that, if the Spirit of the Lord is upon us then the ministry of the Church is about following the way of Christ and joining him.

(Continued on next page)

*In...bringing good news to the poor,
proclaiming release to the captives
recovering of sight to the blind,
letting the oppressed go free,
and proclaiming the year of the Lord's
favor. (Luke 4:14-22)*

So, if what we are preaching, teaching, and living as the church is not good news for the poor, or release for the captive, or sight for the blind, or liberation for the oppressed then we have ceased to preach, teach, and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our words and deeds are no longer true. And this is critical as we think about what this good news looks and sounds like to a world on fire.

I have been wrestling with what to say and even more with how to respond. I know that as a white, male District Superintendent I speak and lead from a place of significant privilege and with that privilege comes great responsibility. I cannot and would not presume to speak for my colleagues of color. They have their own voices and their own stories. I can, with humility, listen and learn. I can invite the church to sit and be with those stories and allow that truth to shape our response. I can do the important and necessary work of learning the history of white supremacy and racism, teaching that history, and then commit both to calling out the lies that are told and to telling the truth. I can leverage my privilege to hold our leaders, our institutions, and myself accountable for the ways we are silent to the sin of racism or worse complicit with the sin of racism. Because I pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, I can also commit to doing the long and hard work of helping create systems - economic, healthcare, educational, political, criminal justice, and ecclesial - that are holy and just, that are shaped by the life and witness of Jesus

Now, I know that as we go about this work some will complain "you're being political". To which I would respond, "Yes, we are. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is political". It is not political in that it is either Democrat or Republican. It is political because we are announcing the reign of God and reminding the world that Jesus Christ is Lord and King and all lives, nations, economies, political systems, and even the Church are under Christ's judgment and rule. It is political because as Christians we claim that our allegiance is to Christ who transcends all that would divide us. It is political because we are first and foremost citizens of the peaceable Kingdom of God where all bodies, including black and brown bodies, and the bodies of the vulnerable and the oppressed, matter.

Church we must find our voice and our way. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God demands us to speak about the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, the daily struggle for life for people of color, and the sin of racism. If we remain silent surely the stones will cry out. Even more, as followers of Christ - who is hope, truth, justice, peace, goodness, and life in the flesh - we must commit to practices of confession, repentance, peacemaking, and reconciliation. That is our gospel work. Let us pray for holy fire to come upon the Church anew, that we might do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God so that justice and righteousness will roll down and all our neighbors will know the fullness of life.

Come Holy Spirit.

David Hockett, Metro District Superintendent



Bible Wordsearch

The Sealed Scroll 2

Wordsearch 182

Rev.5:8-14

D	T	I	M	E	S	T	G	L	O	R	Y	H	L	R
O	A	E	W	O	R	T	H	Y	P	H	T	R	A	E
G	N	C	P	I	T	O	S	R	L	G	T	W	L	I
W	G	R	B	U	N	E	A	E	N	L	O	H	L	G
I	E	E	E	O	R	I	L	E	I	R	E	M	O	N
S	L	A	R	G	S	C	R	P	S	R	O	F	R	O
D	S	T	L	E	N	T	H	H	O	D	P	N	C	I
O	R	U	I	T	S	I	I	A	G	E	E	G	S	T
M	D	R	A	E	H	P	V	N	S	V	P	N	A	A
S	R	E	D	L	E	G	I	I	A	E	H	I	N	N
S	T	S	E	D	O	K	V	E	L	U	D	G	G	I
S	E	N	O	R	H	T	H	O	U	S	A	N	D	A
E	G	A	U	G	N	A	L	R	I	E	J	I	O	L
D	O	O	L	B	R	E	W	O	P	C	I	S	C	S
L	A	M	B	S	S	E	R	V	E	N	E	M	A	E

AMEN	POWER
ANGELS	PRAISE
BLOOD	PRIESTS
EARTH	REIGN
ELDERS	SANG
FELL	SCROLL
GLORY	SEALS
GOD	SERVE
HEARD	SLAIN
HEAVEN	THRONE
HONOR	TIMES
KINGDOM	TRIBE
LAMB	VOICE
LIVING	WEALTH
NATION	WISDOM
PEOPLE	WORTHY
	THOUSAND
	PURCHASED
	CREATURES
	LANGUAGE
	STRENGTH
	WORSHIPED
	SINGING

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Psalm 64

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