

From
the
Pastor



How do we live as God's people during the middle of this time? It is the question squarely in front of us these days. My guess is that you are feeling the same thing I am feeling - the overwhelming weight of the division in our society and the anxiety that accompanies it. It has infiltrated communities, churches, and even families. I have been praying about how to lead in the midst of this and three things come to mind: encouragement, education, and engagement. Sunday's Homecoming message was on encouragement. *This is a gift we can give each other every day!* Education is always good. Recently, the morning message was from Colossians, hopefully reminding us that our most important education comes from God's words and certainly we do not demonstrate the behaviors and attitudes God requires when we develop an "*us against them*" attitude, demonize others, stereotype, blame, and forget God's word to clothe ourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.**

With the goal of discovering helpful actions and a more faithful witness, I have been turning to a variety of resources in addition to my regular spiritual habits. Recently, I tuned in to a webinar on leading in a divided time, and the presenter, J.R. Briggs put into more concise words what I have attempted to say in a number of circles. There are two lies that seem to have convinced scores of people that they are truths: first, when you disagree with someone's lifestyle or views you have to hate them and separate yourself from them; and secondly, when you love someone you have to agree with everything they say or do.

Loving someone does not mean you are in agreement about everything. Disagreeing with someone does not mean that we must disengage from them. Dialogue, learning, separating facts from hype, and developing relationships with those of a different cultural background than your own are just a few positive actions that move us closer to God's call to love our neighbor. This past June, I offered a series of Facebook posts entitled, "*I can do more.*" It was prompted by the beginning of the intense cultural unrest that continues today. I confessed my own sin of needing to do so much more to work for a more equitable society. I challenged myself and all listening to choose to learn, to examine our own biases, to ask God to renew our minds in such a way to ensure that we are aligned with God's will.

In July and August, I began reading. I chose to read history, including the resources, [Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America](#) and [To Be Faithful to our Heritage: A History of Black United Methodism in North Carolina from the Colonial Period to 1968.](#) I learned more about Greensboro's own St. Matthews UMC which was organized in 1866. It has a long history of involvement in civic affairs in the Greensboro community, and I believe it is still the same church leading us today. I hope you will check out a recent post on Muir's Chapel's Facebook page about a partnership between West Market UMC and St. Matthew's UMC. In 2018, they began the program "Let's Talk Race." It started with a small group book study on racism that asked the question, "Is the church the answer to the racial divide?" The two churches began some truthful hard conversations.

I believe that truthful hard conversations are a faithful start. The problem of inequalities in our society is complicated and has a plethora of contributing factors, thus we have much to learn. Racism is a part of this picture. Diabetes or blocked arteries are not going to simply heal themselves if we deny their existence, fail to seek medical attention, and avoid necessary lifestyle changes. We educate ourselves when we have a medical condition and seek the advice of experts.

Education is a key player for a more just society and honoring God's call to "*do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*" (Micah 6:8 NRSV.) Yet, I find that even education is challenging when we live in a fractured society because much of the information we find is manipulated or exaggerated. It is sometimes even designed to increase our fears - or as it has been called 'weaponizing fear.' Fear divides. Fear leads to mistrust and paranoia and even hate. Thus, I continue to struggle to find reliable data and straightforward information. **Continued on Page 2**

FROM THE PASTOR CONTINUED...

Another recent post on our Facebook titled, *Overt and Covert Racism*, offers a wide overview of many contributing factors to racism. It is a great read, but even this document contains statements and data that have been manipulated and are inflammatory, and seem to have no basis in fact. (Examples: Stop and Frisk was isolated to New York and was often used absent of reasonable suspicion. It is no longer in use and the Terry Stop which is in use requires reasonable suspicion or probable cause. SRO programs differ from state to state. In North Carolina, they are in all public high schools. This is a wonderful program where officers often cultivate long lasting relationships with their students.) We are called to dig deeper and find accurate statistics on everything.

We will not bridge the divide by increasing fears and painting anyone - police officers or protestors - white or black - rich or poor - with a broad brush. We do not come out as a strong society until we come together and build trusting respectful relationships. We need each other - citizens, business owners, police, professionals, people of all ethnicities and from every corner of society. We do not come out as a strong society by pretending that everything is okay and that no reforms are necessary. Reforms are always necessary in churches, schools, banks, government, police departments, nursing homes, hospitals. Reforms are ever needed in our very hearts as pride and greed and laziness and selfishness and sin in its many forms always waits at the door to take residence. Let us fight the evil in our hearts rather than fight one another.

In order for us to be God's people during this time, I am issuing a challenge. From now until the end of 2020 (**Yes, We Want 2020 to End!**), **engage in one activity each week** that works to bring people together rather than increase the divide, that either encourages, educates, or engages us in actions that build up.

During these challenges, I hope we find even more creative ways to love each other. Muir's Chapel has a great history of feeding people, working with the non-profits in Greensboro and offering quality congregational care to the vulnerable in our own congregation. With all that is going on around us, I hope to have more accurate information and hear directly from people about their personal experiences.

I hope I can link us to strong resources that have the goal of healing and restoring. As we have lived with uncertainty and have been adapting and learning through the pandemic of Covid-19, I will certainly make mistakes as I try to find the best way to lead through our unrest. But, it is clearly the church's call to bring people together, to love our neighbor, to work for equality, and NOT to increase the divide.

Each week I am suggesting an activity. Your creativity and connections may lead you to even better activities so I hope you will share with us ideas for growth and your own learnings!

- **September 14-** Listen to a preacher from a different cultural background than your own, If you have not listened to our first missional network service, check this out. Here is the link again to this service: <https://oneinthelord.weebly.com/>
- **September 21-** Our own local police have a number of effective community partnerships. Learn more about these at www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/police. Once you are on the website, click on "Community Engagement." Or talk to a local police officer about these programs. **PRAY THE DAILY PRAYER.**
- **September 28-** Support our local feeding ministries.....Greensboro Urban Ministry, Backpack Beginnings, Community Breakfast, etc. **Extra is needed at this time!** **PRAY THE DAILY PRAYER.**
- **October 4-** Listen to this video from 2012. It is a little dated, but reminds us that this is ongoing work for us: Cultural Humility: People, Principle and Practices – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaSHLbS1V4w>
- **October 11-** Check on those who are most vulnerable in your neighborhood and families this week. Do something creative for them. **PRAY THE DAILY PRAYER.**

Each day, I am inviting you to pray this prayer:

"Lord, have mercy on us. We have forgotten that we belong to you and that we belong to one another. We were created to live in harmony and to take care of creation and each other. We lost our way and we cry to you for help. You have tasked us with overcoming evil with good, with being peacemakers, those who help overcome division, those who forbear with each other, those who feed the poor, do justice and live for others and not ourselves. Forgive us and equip us with Your Holy Spirit. We cannot do this on our strength, but must rely on you.

Lord, encourage us because it can all seem bigger than us but You, Lord, are in control. You are working out Your purposes for Your Creation. You are with us and are our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Lord, grant all those in positions of leadership with wisdom, courage and compassion. Lord, grant me wisdom, courage and compassion that I will honor the prayer you taught us "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

Pastor Brenda

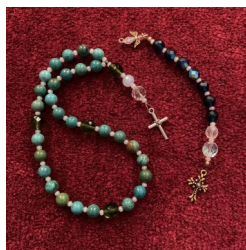
PRAYER BEADS WORKSHOPS

"To try to pray is to pray. You can't fail at it. It's the only human endeavor I can think of where trying is doing. Reaching out is holding on. Joining in is letting go." Rick Hamlin, 10 Prayers You Can't Live Without

Developing a stronger prayer life is one of the first keys to spiritual maturing and more effective ministries that help others, and thus honor God. We have an exciting opportunity on **Wednesday,**

September 30 at 7:00 pm. We will offer a live (online) workshop led by Pat Marsh on how to make your own prayer beads. Kits will be available in the church office, and you can pick up your kit or have it mailed to you. The time and link for the workshop will be posted soon, and the workshop will be taped for people to access it at a later date.

Please email or call the office and let them know if you would like to participate in this workshop and need a kit by **Monday, September 21st.**



SEPTEMBER

Birthdays

17	Jay Moore
Brett Harris	Kathryn Pope
Tony Lewis	25
Chris Peascoe	Nancy Campbell
Jimmy Ridge	Earl Ridout
Terrie Sutherland	Patrick Sullivan
18	26
Susan Bray	Elizabeth Wall
Walker Browning	27
Pat Marsh	Susan Bowden
19	Ida Smith
Elizabeth Payne	28
20	Nancy Briggs
Ryan Ripple	Donnie Coble
21	Kim Cox
Anna Kutz	Connie Jobe
22	29
Lyndon Bray	Kathryn Kale
John Forbis	Susan Millikan
23	Jason Price
Olivia Miller	Jarrad Williams
Maegan Simpson	30
24	Chris Browning
Jellikatu Egharba	Katie Sullivan
Erin Hight	

ENCOURAGERS NEEDED

Who was your favorite teacher? I will never forget my 9th grade English teacher, Nancy Sullivan. She later attended my wedding! And my high school Art teacher inspired me to major in Art Education at UNCG. We have many wonderful educators in our Muir's Chapel family who are facing a uniquely challenging year, and we would like to support them. We are seeking volunteers to be Secret Pals who will pray, as well as send cards, notes, etc. to lift up each educator. You will be provided with a name and information about your Secret Pal, and will continue through the 2020-21 school year. We need approximately 30 volunteers to make this happen. If you are willing to give your time to be an encourager, please email Cammie Berrier at clmberrier@gmail.com or Cathy Oakes at tocamcar@aol.com. Remember your favorite teachers and Pay it Forward!

THANK YOU

Dear MCUMC,

Thank you for your support and prayers for teachers. It means a lot to me knowing so many are praying for us. I appreciate the gift card as I was able to provide much needed supplies for my class. Your thoughtfulness is truly heartwarming. Love, *Becky Hinerman*

Dear Muir's Chapel Church Family,

Thank you so very much for the sweet letter and gift card. The prayer is powerful! The gift card is greatly appreciated. I've had to buy several new devices to help me teach remotely. Your generosity touched my heart! Here's hoping we can get back to normal soon! I miss people so much!
Sincerely,
Teresa Whiting

Dear Muir's Chapel Family,

Thank you very much for the gift card to purchase school supplies for my classroom. This school year has definitely presented new challenges and I am grateful for your love, prayers, and support.
Thank you,
Amanda Browning

Thank you for the generous gift! It sure is a wild year to be a first-year teacher, but I appreciate the support that I have received from everyone here at Muir's Chapel. My thoughts and prayers go out to all other teachers and families as we move forward into the 2020-2021 school year.
Alana Nottage

Thank you for the gift card. That was so sweet of you (our church family) to think of me and all other educators! Thank you for all you do!
Love always, *LeAnn Love*

Dear MCUMC,

Thank all of you for the Congregational Care support, but especially thank you to Brenda for going above and beyond mere monetary help; she has called, visited, encouraged, etc. me so much throughout the year. She is truly a blessing!

I also want to thank the wonderful Kennedy Family who left a beautiful bouquet of flowers, with a lovely note on my door step—so thoughtful and sweet! God bless you all!
In Christian Love,
Nancy Aldridge



It is with great honor that we recognize Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas "Patrick" Payne, son-in-law of Alvin and Libby Butler, as he recently received the Medal of Honor. Patrick was presented with this prestigious award at a White House ceremony on September 11th for helping rescue over 70 hostages from an ISIS prison compound in Iraq in 2015. Congratulations, Patrick, Alison and family. Thank you Patrick for your service.

Let us also remember those just starting their military career: Please keep Sam Seals, son of Ray and Amy Seals, in your prayers as he begins basic training this week with the US Army in Ft. Benning, GA.

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GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH

In memory of Joseph P. DeSantis and Ruth Thornlow DeSantis

For the Cemetery Fund
By Susan Lowe and Edward "Tony" DeSantis

In memory of Dot Yeager

For Music Ministry
By Annie Kincaid Circle
For Congregational Care
By Jo Kay

In memory of Jack Brown

For Music Ministry
By Karen Sexton

In memory of Gladys Mingia

For the Budget
By Jo Ann Marsh
By Gladys' Children
By Joan Johnson
By Elva McLean
By Marie Wilson
By Judy Wilson

By Susan Bray
For Congregational Care
By Casey Duncan
By Annie Kincaid Circle
By Mary Shipp
By Clarence & Marie Slaughter
By Gaynelle Joyner
By Sam and Pat Smoak
By Anne and Eugene Eagle
For the Good Samaritan Fund
By Earl and Zona Ridout
By Fellowship Class
For Small Group Books
By Karen Holmes

In honor of Howard Sullivan

For the Good Samaritan Fund
By Fellowship Class

In honor of Sam Seals with love and gratitude

For the Good Samaritan Fund
By Marc, JoAnn, Abby and William Scott

September 6th Offering

Giving	\$7,610.00
Other Income	<u>\$130.48</u>
Budget	<u>\$7,740.48</u>
Designated Funds	\$1,728.52

September 13th Offering

Giving	\$10,650.00
Other Income	<u>\$5,912.98</u>
Budget	<u>\$16,562.98</u>
Designated Funds	\$8,021.00

SYMPATHY

Our sincere Christian sympathy is extended to Craig and Kirk Harris and family on the passing of their mother, Elizabeth Harris, on September 9, 2020; And to the family of Marie Whitehurst Swiggett, who passed away on September 11, 2020.