



Raeford United Methodist Church

May 2020

Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, beginning in our own community.

WINGO'S WORDS

Last week, I had the pleasure of speaking with our new pastor, Joshua Eom. In our conversation, I was reminded that Joshua had served in what was my first full-time appointment! I was appointed there in 1988, he in 2011. It gives me comfort to know that he will be following me here at Raeford UMC. Joshua is excited to be appointed here and is looking forward to meeting and seeing you all. I told him how caring, patient, loving and kind you have been to Diane and myself. I also told him of your love of Christ and his mission to the world. I spoke of our deep connection to our community through things like the Food Pantry, our partnership with McLaughlin Elementary School as well as our Military Support Group. I suggested that he write a letter of introduction to the congregation, so that you may get to know a little about him. What follows is his letter. As we live into this time of transition, I encourage you to pray for Joshua and his wife Herena and for Diane and myself. Know that we all are praying for you!

Love in Christ, Brian



Hello, my new friends in Raeford!

I am so honored to be appointed as your pastor starting this June. My wife Herena and I look forward to meeting you, and we are preparing for our move with daily prayers. As you may be curious about who we are, I write this with a humble heart to introduce ourselves a little bit.

My wife and I have been married for 31 years and have two children.

Steven, our son, is currently stationed in Augusta, Georgia, as an army officer. He married his wife Min Jung (MJ) two years ago. They both graduated from NYU for dentistry, and they have two spunky cats they love. Our daughter, Kelly (another cat lover with 2 fur children), is currently working at Duke while preparing for her graduate school applications in clinical psychology. She recently got engaged to Michael, who is a student at the DPT program at Baylor University. They are hoping to marry in November, hopefully, as the current virus pandemic subsides. They are all so very excited to meet you!

Before I came to America in 2003, I was an engineer who worked for the Korean government. I would say on a superficial level, life was pretty stable. But God never let me forget a promise I had made in college. Back then, I said to him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You lead me and do whatever You tell me to do." That one promise came back to haunt me later in life, and Herena and I had to choose whether to follow His calling or ignore it altogether.

In fact, Herena had no intention in becoming a pastor's wife! But as we were talking and praying, she sensed that God was saying to her that she needed to forget what was behind and strain forward for the prize that was in heaven through Christ Jesus.

So, in 2003, we came knowing nothing about our future. But God had a good plan for us in His good will. It has now led us to you, and for that, we are ever thankful!

WEEKLY SERVICES

Sunday

Sunday School 9:45 AM

Worship 11:00 AM

Wednesdays

Supper/Fellowship 5:30 PM

Study 6:00 PM

(Childcare available)

Dear friends, I know from even my own story, life can turn out quite unexpected. I didn't know when I left South Korea that I would someday work at the United Methodist Church. And as we are now going through this unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, and no one exactly knows how the future will unfold, I pray that we can still trust the Lord and believe that God is in charge through it all. Yes, whatever may come, our Lord Jesus is able and willing to help with His power!

I pray, as we prepare for our coming works together, we can expect our Lord's goodness and guidance again and again. His wisdom is never-failing, and he will teach us how to live with certainty and strength. I look forward to meeting you all. As I pray for you, please also pray for my wife and me during this transition.

Yours in Christ,
Joshua and Herena Eom

It looks like we'll continue to miss meeting together in Worship and Sunday School through the month of May. We are including the Bible Study Lessons from Belton Joyner, Jr. The NC Conference provides the lessons monthly/quarterly. PDF copies are available at nccumc.org/bible-study/. You may also subscribe to receive these lessons by email. Dr. F. Belton Joyner Jr. is the author of "Being United Methodist in the Bible Belt", "United Methodist Questions, United Methodist Answers", "The Unofficial UM Handbook" and many other books. Retired, but extremely active, Dr. Joyner teaches at Duke University Divinity School in the United Methodist Course of Study Program, speaks at many educational events and preaches. He is a former member of the Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church.

Bible Study: May 2020

Belton Joyner, Jr.

Based on the scripture lessons of Cokesbury's Adult Bible Study Series

May 3, 2020 Text: Revelation 22:1-5 "The River of Life-Giving Water"

It's strange how this happens. I just sat down to write the next commentary for this series. It is the first time I have done so since my son died unexpectedly. And guess what: the text is a description packed with images of the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1), showing God's ultimate gift of presence with God's people. It is a promise of victory even as we walk through valleys of grief.

One of the key images is a river (Revelation 22:1). Perhaps one's baptism is a foreshadowing of that river of life. "Remember your baptism and be thankful," is the invitation to anticipate that fully present kingdom of God. That water flows from the throne of God (Revelation 22:1) and thus it is when baptismal waters splash on an infant or on a new believer.

And notice that that water (Dare we call it "baptismal water?") nourishes the tree of life, producing a harvest that heals the broken places (Revelation 22:2). Life comes from a tree! Jesus dies on a tree and from that death has come healing. In our baptism, we participate in that death in order to participate in that resurrection to healing.

In Revelation 22:4, the description is given that in God's coming kingdom, the servants (literally, slaves) of the Lord will see God's face. That is to be fully in God's presence. What a gift! In Exodus 33:20, God tells Moses that one cannot look on God's face and live, but now those human limitations are put asunder and the full image of God (Genesis 1:26) is restored.

In ordinary times, the darkness of night can be a context of fear or can be the hiding place for our misdeeds. If we are trying to cover up our sin, we might even fear the light, aware that in good light, others might see our broken deeds. But in God's good kingdom, in the new Jerusalem, there is "nothing accursed found there" (Revelation 22:3), so there is no night, only the light of God's full presence.

The writer John has revealed a picture of God's good future. Because the promises of God are true, we can make claim upon this assurance even now. That's not a bad thing to grasp in days when Death seems to have such a strong word! Of course separation from those we love is painful, but there is a "blessed assurance" that God's tomorrow is a river of life.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Jilrgen Moltmann (*The Theology of Hope*, Harper and Row) has written: "Thus hope goes on its way through the midst of happiness and pain, because in the promises of God it can see a future also for the transient, the dying, and the dead."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You, Lord, for tomorrow..."

May 10, 2020 Text: Genesis 3:21; 4:10-16 "God's Grace Toward Adam, Eve, and Cain"

United Methodists around the world were scheduled to meet this week (May 5-15, 2020) in General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The future shape of The United Methodist Church (or even its existence) will unfold in the decisions that are made. Issues around human sexuality have deepened divides among us. In that context, we study these verses in Genesis about how God gives grace for new beginnings.

Our study begins with Genesis 3:21. God provides clothes for Adam and Eve. Previously, they had done that "fig leaf thing" (Genesis 3:7), but fig leaves do not exactly make for sartorial splendor. With this new clothing, God has shown a grace and care for the fallen couple. Before their sin, Adam and Eve had evidently been quite comfortable and wholesome in their relationship although they were naked (Genesis 3:7). This had not been an issue until they broke in their relationship with God. When relationship with God is broken, our relationship with one another is also broken. God meets Adam and Eve where they are in their new shame and, with the gift of garments, he gives them a healing way to be in relationship with one another.

The other account in this week's study tells how God treated Cain after Cain killed his brother, Abel. God spells out some potent punishment for Cain (Genesis 4:11-12). Cain pleads for mercy because such punishment would destroy him (Genesis 4:13). God puts a protective mark on Cain so no one would kill him (Genesis 4:15). What a gift of undeserved grace! God is a God of new beginnings and Cain moves on and civilization begins to unfold. (Look at the list of people named in Genesis 4:17-22.) This all happened because God protected an undeserving Cain.

What need for new beginnings do we bring to God? Which of our broken relationships require God's touch for healing? What new revelation does God offer for the mess in which we find ourselves? This week's study verses present God's willingness to give grace to some very undeserving people. Maybe I need to scribble my name on these pages in the Bible. What about you?

What Someone Else Has Said:

Frederick Buechner (*A Crazy, Holy Grace*, Zondervan Press) has written: "There is forgiveness, There is compassion. There is mercy in God. And therefore, you dare take your chances and do what you can do with the hand that life, or God, has dealt you. Open your ears and your eyes to the elusive, invisible, silent presence of healing, of the power of God to heal, which moves as quietly, as undramatically, as the wind moves."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Grace, O God, I need Your grace..."

May 17, 2020 Text: Exodus 16:2-15 "God Provides Food in the Wilderness"

Well, what happened in Minneapolis last week? I am writing this well before the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Delegates have not yet even received copies of all the proposals to be considered. So, you have an advantage: you know what happened!

Although I cannot describe the results of the 2020 General Conference, I think I can say with confidence that for some—if not all—in this denominational family, there are going to be journeys in a wilderness. In a wilderness, we do not feel the comfort of our usual places of security. In a wilderness, there is often little hint of in which way we should move next. In a wilderness, we no doubt complain about how we got into this mess and we long to go back to the way things used to be. Wilderness living is not easy living.

It is not just the Church that faces life in a wilderness. Have you not had to get on with life after the loss of a loved one? Have you not sometimes wondered how to get all the bills paid? Have you not sometimes heard a doctor say "We are just not sure what to do next"? Have you not lived with the tension of some broken human relationship? Wilderness living is not easy living.

It is not surprising that the Israelites complained in the early days of their escape toward the Promised Land. It didn't take long (Exodus 15:24). What was that---three days (Exodus 15:22)? We ourselves are good enough at complaining that we recognize it when we see it! The word translated "complain" (*ilwn*) literally means to stop and stay at the same place. Complaining does have that repetitive, over-and-over-again feel to it.

With abundant grace, God provides nourishment for the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16:12). Wilderness food does not always look like what we want or expect. When the Hebrew children saw what God had provided, they asked, "What is it?" (Exodus 16:15). I suppose if our heart (and stomach) is set on prime rib, a pimento cheese sandwich, although nourishing, does not look like what we need. Perhaps sometimes we do not eat well in the wilderness because the nourishment is not to our liking.

This week's text is an invitation to trust that God's grace is sufficient. Even in the wilderness. Even if we do not recognize it.

What Someone Else Has Said:

African American Heritage Hymnal (GIA Publications, Inc.) contains this hymn text: "Tell me, how did you feel when you come out of the wilderness, leaning on the Lord. I am leaning on the Lord. I am leaning on the Lord. Who died on Calvary."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Lead me, Lord, in this wilderness..."

May 24, 2020 Text: Luke 23:32-33, 39-43 "Grace to the Dying Thief"

Last fall, I was at a Duke women's basketball game. There were only 2.7 seconds left on the first quarter clock. Duke got the ball in bounds and Kyra Lambert dribbled a few steps and heaved the ball to the goal about 75 feet away. Swish! The crowd erupted in the loudest and most enthusiastic cheer of the evening. There is a special excitement when something good happens just at the last moment.

The other night I was at a men's prayer group. (Let me tell the truth. It was during the prayer time that comes before every dartball game in our church league.) When the leader asked for prayer requests, one of the men asked for prayers of thanksgiving. His long-ill nephew had died, but just before his death, he made a profession of faith and was baptized into the communion of saints. There is a special joy when something good like that happens just at the last moment.

That same joy, that same excitement, is what captures us in today's study text. In Luke 23, we read about the two thieves who were being crucified, one on each side of Jesus. One of them mocked Jesus, but the other one asked Jesus to remember him. Our Lord said to him, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). There it is again: a burst of extra thrill as someone comes to faith, even at the very last moment.

It is the same grace that breaks into a heart when someone is a youth as the grace that breaks into a heart on a death bed. What makes this last minute gift of grace so remarkable is that no one expected it. All the chattering and all the muttering is making fun of Jesus (Luke 23:35, 36, 39). Then, all of a sudden, this criminal—there is no question of his guilt—offers a word of repentance and a gentle request: "remember me."

I guess we could say that Jesus is an equal-opportunity grace giver. There is indeed a stir of excitement at the drama of this moment, but, truth to tell, it is the same undeserved gift that each of us in faith has received.

Jesus asks us to remember him at the Holy Table (Luke 22:19) and He, in turn, remembers those who accept His grace, be it a dying thief or a burgeoning believer.

What Someone Else Has Said:

Kenneth Carder (*Living Our Beliefs*, Discipleship) has written: "It makes a difference if we believe God's preferential love and purposes are limited to our nation, our tribe, and our race, or if God's love and purposes include all humankind."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Remember me..."

May 31, 2020 Text: Acts 2:1-21 "The Holy Spirit Inspires Jesus' Followers"

These past few weeks have been about the evidence of God's surprising gift of grace to the undeserving: Adam, Eve, Cain, the complaining Israelites, and the thief on the cross. Today's lesson speaks of the presence of God for faithful followers, for those who came from all kinds of places, for those who were in a variety of religious expressions, and for those who simply were mystified (Acts 2:2-13).

It was so confusing that finally Peter (along with the other disciples) got everyone's attention and tried to put all that had happened into perspective (Acts 2:14).

Notice this about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: it was both communal and individual. The text (Acts 2:2) speaks of a wind that filled the entire house; it was a gift of the Spirit to the entire community. "We are in this together." Then, see what happened next: the Spirit came as tongues of fire and rested on each one individually (Acts 2:3). "This is a gift to me."

Our personal journey of faith is in the context of community. Personal faith is not in isolation. It is part of a community story.

Our community experience is not all there is to faith. We also have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

It is an individual experience.

Sometimes I tend to think that everyone's faith story ought to be like mine. Sometimes I tend to think that others ought to be involved in church life in the same way as I am. But that is not what happened at Pentecost. Everyone did not hear it in the same way; Parthians heard it in a way they understood; Medes heard it in a way that they understood; Elamites heard it in a way that they understood (Acts 2:9-11).

The Holy Spirit came in a way that each could receive that gift. Thanks be to God.

What Someone Else Has Said: El Nuevo Testamento Dios Llega al Hombre (American Bible Society) begins the Pentecost story this way: "Cuando llego la fiesta de Pentecostes, todod los cretentes se encontraban reunidos en un mismo lugar. De repente, un gran ruido que venia del cielo, como de du viento fuerte, resono en toda la casa donde ellos estaban. Y se les aparecieron lenguas como fuego, repartidas sobre cada uno do allos."

Prayer: As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "Thank You, grace-giving God, for the wideness of Your mercy..."

TRUSTEES

Hard to believe that you can actually have work (or in this case, not done) while the church building is not being used.

We are still waiting on pricing of a part needed for the boiler system to get it up and running adequately. This will leave one issue left with the boiler but we are trying to leave this issue alone until we have no choice because of the major cost involved.

We have put the custodial staff on lay-off for the duration of the shut down by the bishop.

Mike went in to work to a flooded kitchen, which was because of clogged up drain on the exterior window well outside the kitchen window. He vacuumed up the water and cleaned out the drain. Thank you Mike.

Other than this, not much to report on.

Hope all are battling this storm well and look forward to seeing all your smiling faces again soon.

Ron W. Ellis

DVD Announcement

Since it appears we will be in the "stay at home" mode for some time to come (at least through May). It occurs to us that some of our congregation may not be internet connected. We have been posting Worshipful Moments on both Facebook accounts associated with the church (Raeford United Methodist Church page and the Raeford United Methodist Church Group page). We have also linked the Facebook page to our church's website www.raefordumc.org.

In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, we are planning to offer recordings of each week's Worshipful Moments. If you are not connected to the internet and would like an audio CD copy of the sermon and music, please contact the church office at 910-875-2111 (or Brian directly at 919-949-4388) and we will put you on the list for delivery. We will call you in advance prior to delivery and leave it at your door.

FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Graduating seniors who are involved in Raeford United Methodist Church and have been accepted by a post-secondary degree college may apply for the RUMC Scholarship. Applications may be picked up from the church office. The application must be returned by the third Sunday in May (May 17, 2020)

Tithing through PayPal



Did you know you can send a tithe or offering to Raeford UMC using your PayPal account? Its quick and easy! Simply go to your PayPal account homepage and click on the "send" tab. Once there, enter the church's email address (raefordumc@embarqmail.com). Then, when asked, click **"send money to a friend"**. There is no service fee for selecting that option. Enter your donation and select the account from which you'll draw the funds. You can also use MC/Visa. It's that simple!



UMCMARKET...SAVINGS. SUPPORT.

The Stay At Home Order has been extended to at least May 8, 2020. While you're at home why not shop online? Online shopping is simple, right?. That's why we do it. Add a benefit by shopping UMCmarket.org. Following a few simple steps, you can register, designate Raeford UMC as your church you want to support and shop. It's that simple. We all know how simple online shopping is. Now donating to your favorite United Methodist ministry can be just as simple. Checks are remitted to our church quarterly. April's check was for \$5.34. How much can we earn this quarter if we all shopped through UMC Market?

School supplies. Holiday shopping. Weddings. Birthday gifts. Home decorating. There are hundreds of stores to choose from so that you get to shop where you like. Contact Mike in the office if you have any questions or help getting started.



Missions in our Own Back Yard—McLauchlin Elementary School!

We continue to enjoy our partnership with McLauchlin Elementary faculty and staff. Mr. Renninger, principal, updated us about what's happening at McLauchlin during this time of the Coronavirus.

McLauchlin continues with distance learning and most students are getting online to complete their assignments. Teachers are daily hard at work preparing, "delivering", and critiquing relevant lessons for students. They also have designated hours during the day when parents or students can contact them with questions. Breakfast/lunch distribution continues and across the county, approximately 7,000 meals are being delivered daily.

McLauchlin had a "Car Parade" the Friday before their Spring Break. Most of the staff participated as they drove through many of the areas in their district just to see the students from cars. The Raeford police department provided several officers to go with them to help with traffic control. This experience was rewarding to the students, but equally rewarding for the teachers.

Teacher Appreciation Week is May 4th – 8th. McLauchlin administration is preparing gifts and will deliver them to teachers' homes. We, at RUMC, are also going to prepare a small gift bag for each teacher and they will be delivered at the same time.

McLauchlin appreciates the prayers of our church members. They ask that we continue to pray for the safety of all those involved in meal distribution as well as to continue to pray for the students and faculty.

(Committee Members: Verna Barnhill, Kathy Brigman,
Jane Britt, Maxine Colston, Deanna Ray, Kathy Warner)

RUMC PRESCHOOL

Raeford UMC Preschool had to close our doors for the remainder of the school year. We surely miss our sweet children and families, but we look forward to seeing them soon! We hope and pray that everyone is staying safe and healthy! We are still enrolling for the 2020-2021 school year. Registration is ongoing until all slots are filled! We'd love for you to join our preschool family! For more information and to register, contact Karen Tapp at 910-818-7434.

What's your favorite song?

Everyone has a favorite hymn. For me it is "Here I Am, Lord." Every time I sing this hymn I think back to the first time I ever sang it: It was when I was in Wilmington and my church had just gotten the then-new United Methodist hymnal that we still use today. I remember singing this song in the sanctuary of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church, with the sun shining onto me through the stained-glass window above the organ. I remember almost crying as I sang the beautiful melody and contemplated the meaningful lyrics. I wanted to be a missionary after singing that song. I wanted to go out into the world and make a difference. To this day, this is still one of my favorite hymns and even though I never became a missionary, it still makes me want to do more for the world and its people.

In the midst of the strange new world we find ourselves in, I wanted to offer everyone the chance to request their favorite hymns for use during our online worship, and throughout the summer. The hymn you love might provoke a memory like mine, or it might just be that you love a song because you love it. Either way, everyone deserves to hear and sing their favorite song.

So – here's your chance! Every week throughout the summer, one of these hymns will be used within the worship service. We will sing these most loved songs together, near or far, and we will share in each other's favorite musical memories. Please email or call the church office to share your request, or email Marian at choirumc@embarqmail.com. We would love to hear your stories, or just your favorite song!



During the month of May we will be looking at the first Christian communities.

- May 3rd: Peter and John Acts - 4:1-22
- May 10th: Peter in Prison - Acts 12:1-17
- May 17th: Paul is Changed - Acts 9:1-19
- May 24th: Paul Escapes - Acts 9:20-25
- May 31st: Pentecost - Acts 2:1-41

Our monthly memory verse is; "As for us, we can't stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20

Our children's church is being conducted over Facebook on the RUMC children's Ministry page. If you would like an E-mailed copy of the lessons, please contact me at joanna.beeson@yahoo.com

Joanna
Joanna.beeson@yahoo.com



We are pleased to announce the birth of Eli Michel Jones, son of Stephanie (Hasty) and Kyle Jones born April 15th. Stephanie is the daughter of Gene Hasty and Sherry Compton and the granddaughter of Margaret and Ed Hasty. She is family to others in our church including Cindy Conoly, Debbie and Harley Adams, Jimmy Conoly, and the Colstons.

APRIL FINANCES

Budget Offerings:	\$11,268.00
Designated Offerings	\$255.00
Expenses:	\$17,071.32

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following members of our church family and friends in your daily prayers: Norma Connell, Jimmy Conoly, Lawrence Hales, Joanne Hendrix, John Manning, Donna Matthews, Pam Peck, Mike Ray, Doris & Spencer Wilking, Jamie Warner, Helen Bernard, Mickey Brigman, Troy Carraway, Frances Davis, Sam Glenn, Laura Hanan, Mary Alice Inman, Allan Loftin, Ricky Jones, Stephanie Hasty Jones, Tamara Mackey, Mary Maxwell, Neil A. McDonald, Jennifer McNeill, Joanna McPhatter, Rick Register, Brandon Schrimpf, Ruth Scott,

Retirement Homes

Kaye Lively	Autumn Care
Jerry Lytle	Open Arms Retirement Center
Doris Peeler	Wesley Pines



BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

<i>John Leandro</i>	<i>May 4</i>
<i>Brian Wingo</i>	<i>May 6</i>
<i>Marian Elliott</i>	<i>May 7</i>
<i>Joanne Plummer</i>	<i>May 10</i>
<i>Tammie Cox</i>	<i>May 11</i>
<i>Thomas Manning</i>	<i>May 11</i>
<i>Deanna Ray</i>	<i>May 12</i>
<i>Bubba Warner</i>	<i>May 14</i>
<i>Heather Richards</i>	<i>May 16</i>
<i>Ernest Sutton</i>	<i>May 20</i>
<i>Don Steed</i>	<i>May 20</i>
<i>Samuel Stansberry</i>	<i>May 20</i>
<i>Coach Z</i>	<i>May 27</i>
<i>Elmer Caldwell</i>	<i>May 28</i>
<i>Billy Colston</i>	<i>May 31</i>

Everyone's birthday is important to us! If you are new to RUMC and your name is not on the birthday list, please let the office know so we can update the list!



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