

The Sweet Spirit
Olive Branch United Methodist Church
February 2022



Pastor's Pen
February 2022

Living through Uncertainty

Protection of the LORD be with you!

Do you remember February 2020? It was then that COVID-19 landed on the US continent and started producing positive cases. From then to now, we've been practicing how to live with uncertainty for two years. In the absence of its vaccine, many people had a fear of this unknown and dreadful virus. The world economy froze, supplies of daily necessities were delayed, and even grocery stores were almost empty.

When various vaccines were developed, people started to be vaccinated and we soon anticipated the end of this pandemic, variations such as Delta and current Omicron that exceed human responsiveness have shattered our expectations. Are you yet optimistic about the future?

Of course, someday this will end. But as each of us has various experiences and perceptions, the way we view the future will also vary. As your pastor, my concern is not about our future but our today, saying that our sense of community and solidarity could have been weakened amid recurring uncertainties.

Thankfully, our church has continued our mission despite the hardships of the past two years. With God's help, our own determination and practice made us survive. But on the other hand, our performance may have been constrained to the extent that we feel safe. Therefore, the challenge we need to live with endless uncertainty is to go beyond our safety line to encourage each other and continue our connection.

With this said, let me bring some spiritual insight from the Bible regarding it. The Bible offers a variety of spiritual reflections through 45 different references to the plague/pest. Among them, I want to talk about uplifting the spiritual experience of God who protects us through the plague.

“[H]is faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear ... **the pestilence** that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.” (Psalm 91:4-6 NRSV)

The Bible does not say that there will be no epidemics. Instead, it says we will not be afraid of the pestilence. Because God's faithfulness is our shield. This is a different matter than taking action to protect each of us and each other. So, let's have a heart to trust in God. And let's encourage each other to say this.

“My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” (Psalm 91:2, NRSV)

It is not a great thing to practice peace when everything is okay. But trusting God and practicing peace in the midst of uncertainty is pleasing to God. We never know when this pandemic may recede, so we must not stop encouraging and uplifting ourselves as Christians.

And let us keep our faithfulness before God.

From Gasburg in Christian Love,
Pastor Hyungsuk Oh

If you have anything to share for our newsletter, please send it to Jane DiStefano at delinea49@yahoo.com. Even pictures of your grandchildren enjoying a visit with you or a special trip you took. We can share in each other's joys and needs!

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A United Methodist Women's Book Review

Finding God in a bag of Groceries by Laura Lapins Willis

"If you have wondered about how you know what a good next step is, about how you find a place in God's church: if you have wondered about the ways self-knowledge intertwines with knowledge of God, read this book." Lauren Winner

We travel with Laura Willis as she seeks her own ministry among bags of groceries as a director of a food pantry. The encounters with the clients of the food pantry are moving,

Here are a few quotes from the book "Jesus is in the messiest place of our lives. And Jesus calls us to love those places where He comes to us even when we don't think we can do it."

"Contemplative prayer reminds us If we don't have the answers to our questions maybe we should be quiet and listen--listen to our intuition; listen to our heart ,listen to God. If we aren't getting answers to the questions we are asking, we might need to ask different questions. Above all we need God's grace."

"While I was searching for an answer to my vocational questions, I realized my work was right in front of me; to be Christ for others and to let them be Christ for me; to understand that following God's calling begins with recognizing my own need for nourishment, for healing and for help -- my own hunger for food from the hands of Christ."

You can borrow this book from the United Methodist Women's Library- ask a UMW member.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



At our January 12, 2022 meeting of Olive Branch UMW we held our annual Special Program - A call to Prayer and Self Denial. Love, Justice and Service - answering the call. We learned more about the Order of Deaconess and Home Missioners administered by the United Methodist Women.

The stories of six women and their becoming deaconess were read and discussed. Their stories were so unique and different from one another. God calls people from all walks of life to do His work. Our scripture was 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 -- "There are a variety of gifts, a variety of service, variety of activities but the same God activates all of them in everyone." We need to take time to listen to how God is leading us to use our gifts. How are you using yours?

The funds in our Treasury are distributed at the end of each year. Ten charities were sent a donation. Donations went to: Hunters for the Hungry; John 3:16; Henry Fork Center; Wesley Service Center; Heart Havens; Society of St. Andrews; UM Family Services; Jackson Field Home; Grace Café; Family Violence & Sexual Assault and two individuals whom we determined could use our help.

Our fundraisers, the Souper Bowl in Feb. and Salad Sunday in the fall are our two major sources of income. We could not make these distribution/donations without your support of these events. Please mark February 13th on your calendar for "Souper Bowl" Sunday. If you can't make it, you can make a donation at anytime. Just put UMW on the memo line of your check.

This year we are challenging ourselves to read more from our book list. The themes of the books are Social Justice, Education for Mission, Spiritual Growth, Leadership Development and Nurturing for Community. You may see an occasional book review in upcoming newsletters. We would love to share our library with you. It is in the prayer room off the Sanctuary. See Jane, Nancy, Vicki, Alice, Jeesuk or Pastor to check one out.

Our next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, February 9th at 10 AM at church. All ladies of the church are welcome to attend. Come and check out the wonderful things UMW supports.

REMEMBER: We are still not past the COVID-19 Pandemic, and even though many of us are still not coming to Church, we need your support. Please continue to send your donations to:

Olive Branch UMC P. O. Box 65 Gasburg, VA 23857

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WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Our Secret Valentine project is in the works. Names are being placed in the basket in Jan. and names will be drawn on 1/30 and 2/6/22. On Sunday, February 13 you will exchange your cards/gifts. Some people like to remain "secret" and that is okay.

Our 5th Sunday hymn sing will be moved to the 4th Sunday in February. Due to the weather and Covid issues we were not able to get everything in place to do it in January. There will be three more 5th Sundays this year, so please continue to give us your favorite hymns.

Ash Wednesday details will be provided soon. Save the date of March 2, 2022.

We would like to have a member of the congregation participate during the worship service on the 3rd Sunday of each month. They would read announcements, Call to Worship, etc. Please consider saying Yes.

We have a new sign-up sheet for the Church Marquee. We have books with suggested messages and it only takes a few minutes a couple of times each month. There are so many ways you can help your church.

Members of the worship team are Jane and Ed DiStefano, Martha Haithcock, Karin Clements, Kathy Dyer, Pastor Oh, and Nancy Maguire. Please share your ideas and thoughts about our worship experience. God is guiding us all. Let His light shine thru You.



Snow Day Humor

OUTREACH

Many thanks for all the support you give us. We can never thank you enough for all the support you give to us. Because of you we are able to continue our support of fifteen families through food delivery.

Here is what is coming up next.

Food delivery is the 2nd Friday each month. Feb. 11, 2022, at 11 AM in church fellowship area. We love to see new faces. If you cannot commit to every month, we would still encourage you to join us when you can. Once you learn the process, we could give our regulars a break (or cover them when they can't make it).

And just for your information, we recently did a report for the food bank and wanted to share with you the true magnitude of your work. These numbers represent our total efforts to help those in need in our community.

Collectively we serviced almost 5,000 families which represented 8,100 people Food Lion provide us almost 35 tons of surplus food plus an additional 3.25 tons of food in the holiday food boxes. The detailed breakdown is:

- Bakery - 10,017 pounds
- Deli/Dairy - 9,970 pounds
- Meat - 17, 527 pounds
- Produce - 32,449 pounds
- Holiday boxes - 6,594 pounds

Convicted Ministry continues to support seven inmates. We could use help in getting cards to the inmates, our goal is to cover special occasions or even once a month. Tyler provided these names as they don't get mail often. You can help by signing the cards at the entrance on the table. If you could help us with the mailing process, we have labels and stamps, it would be a big help. Thank you.

Prayer Grams - You are doing a great job signing in each Sunday. If you have someone who needs a Prayer Gram, please provide us with their name and address.

Easter Food Baskets -Easter is April 17th this year, In mid-March we will have our list of items for this special meal which will include some Easter candy for the children (and grown- ups too).

Outreach is a total church activity; we appreciate all you do to help. Thanks for getting involved.

Thanks for all you do.

Please share with your teams or others in your churches as you wish.

-- Outreach Committee

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United Methodist Men

The UMM (United Methodist Men) of OBUMC are looking for a “few good men” to bring this organization back to life. Ray Dyer is planning a UMM Meeting on Saturday, February 19, 2022 at 8:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall at the church. Ray will be cooking and would love to have you join him. It is always a great time for fellowship. Please plan on attending.

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Upcoming Events

The First Sunday Each Month – Bring Canned Vegetables for Our Food Pantry
Feb. 9th - United Methodist Women - meeting in Fellowship Hall
Feb. 11th - Food Delivery - 11 AM - all welcome to come and help at the church and/or ride for delivery.
Feb. 13th "Souper" Bowl Luncheon - United Methodist Women fund raiser
Feb. 13th Secret Valentine card/gift exchange,
Feb. 19th – United Methodist Men 8:00 AM
Feb. 20th 3rd Sunday - Congregation Participation –
volunteers to do Announcements, Call to Worship, etc.

OLIVE BRANCH HEALTHY CHOICE TEAM

The Healthy Church Team has determined that we will follow the CDC recommendations. This includes wearing masks if unvaccinated, allowing anyone who desires to wear a mask to do so without conflict or question and caring for those who are vulnerable to the virus, for example, kids, babies, and those who have underlying diseases.

If you have any questions, please see Pastor Oh or Jane DiStefano

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We have several shut-ins who would certainly appreciate hearing from you.

CLARY, Beryl 2998 Gasburg Rd, Brodnax, VA 23920 (434) 917-6754

JONES, Pauline, The Bloom Center, 308 Weaver Ave., Emporia, VA 23847 (434) 348-4004

KING, Frances, The Hermitage, 1600 Westwood Ave, Room E319, Richmond, VA 23227 (804) 474-1959

KING, Mabel, 503 Arcadia Drive, Henrico, NC 27842 (252) 535-3557

LADLEE, Richard & Cynthia, 112 Dogwood Acres, Henrico, NC 27842 (252) 537-9446

LOCKERMAN, Jane, P.O.B. 106, Gasburg, VA 23857

MINKS, Catherine, 119 Reserve Way, apt 211, Williamsburg, VA 23185 (757) 645-7891 lvangels35@gmail.com

WRIGHT, Sarah, 1189 Gasburg Road, Brodnax, VA 23920

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Prayer List: Please keeps these people in your prayers!

Catherine Moore & family

Jane & Alex Lockerman

Evans Family

Margaret Lodato

Bonnie Hitson

Dick & Diane Clary and their family

McKenzie (Nancy's Granddaughter)

Morrissey)

Lee Edwards (Sandra's friend)

Traveling Mercies

June English (Pat's mom, heart surgery)

Jim Price

Sarah Wright

Joy White

Randy Williams

Ann & Skip Water (Nancy's Friend)

Judy Blackman (request from Pat

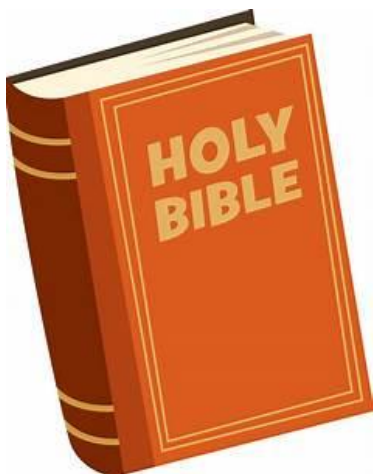
Shut-ins

FOR THOSE IN THE ARMED FORCES or CIVILIAN SERVICE

James Pride; Brandon Winston; Ryan D'Ambrosia; Jamie Ritchie; Chad Freiling

FOR OLIVE BRANCH UMC; THE WORLD; OUR NATION; OUR STATE; OUR COMMUNITY; THE UNCHURCHED

CONVICTED MINISTRIES



We continue to support Convicted Ministries. We are still looking for people who can send a card or note each month to one of our inmates. They really appreciate the mail and just knowing someone cares means so much to them. If you want to send a card, you can use my return address. The prison is not accepting anything with the Church return address. If you want, you can use my address. Also, you need to hand write the prisoner's name and address and then you can hand write the return

address or use one of my labels.

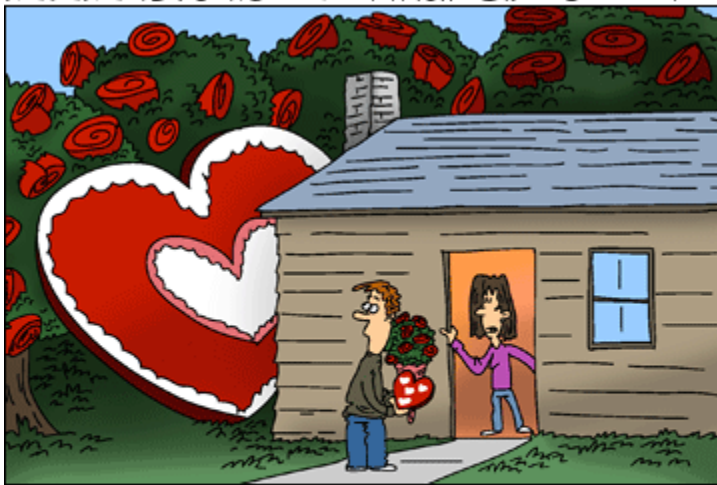
This month is Valentine's Day so let's get a few cards out.

A special note to let you know that Charles, who was released from prison last year, has finally found an apartment of his own. This is so special for him. I am sure a note from us would be greatly appreciated.

And if you would like to write a note to Tyler or Charles, here is their address:
Charles Mathis, 24 N. Charlotte St., Apt. 301, Pottstown, PA. 19464
Edmund Tyler Baird #1608880, Scotland Correctional Inst., P.O. Box 247, Phoenix, MD 21131



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02-15-2013

JESUS STOPPED BY AND NOBODY LOVES
MORE THAN HIM, BUT BEFORE YOU GET
JEALOUS OR ANYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW
THAT IT IS FOR YOU TOO

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 – Lisa (Baird) Horoszewski
- 2 – Linda Dennis
- 6 – Tim Mattox

FAMILIES OF THE MONTH

Polly Clary
Marion Lea Clary
Sara Clary

God is good all the time; and all the time, God is good...

This is your newsletter. It is meant to be a way to communicate what your church is doing and what all the organizations are doing both in the congregation and the community. I am sending this electronically via email and copies will be made available for those who need a printed copy.

There are many organizations within our church, and I hope they would like to have their achievements, plans, and meetings made known to the entire church. It is my hope that they will ask one of their members to drop a short note as to what they are doing each month. The line of communication in the church needs to be open and

full of what we are doing at Olive Branch to make disciples in our area. If you would like to send us something, please bring it to church or send me an email (delinea49@yahoo.com) and we will see that it is published. We need all information by the 24th of each month for the following month. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and all our activities!

God Bless. Jane Distefano