

The Sweet Spirit
Olive Branch United Methodist Church
May 2017



From The Pastor's Pen



- As I'm sitting at my laptop, reflecting on my life, I'm reminded that this is the first Mother's Day in 67 years, that I can't hear her voice when I wish my mother a Happy Mother's Day. Many, many memories flood my mind as I think of all the love, support, teaching and discipline that my mother taught and exemplified for me and my siblings.

I also saw her and Dad struggle to make ends meet as they put so much of their hard earned salaries into my polio recovery and subsequent needs of many surgeries, braces, special shoes, etc. I watched her as she grieved her parent's deaths many years ago, Dad's death 13 years ago, and my brother's death 8 years ago. And now, I grieve her death. But I had the awesome experience of seeing her a week before she went to be with the Lord and saying our last good-byes and "I love you".

I remember the smell of home baking, and the taste from licking the spoon, and the warm rolls just out of the oven; and the dinners that only your mother can make; even if it was only beans on toast; but a mother could add that special something, that something to a simple meal that make it special. This in itself was a blessing.

To all who still have their mothers alive, give them the honor that they deserve. If you mother is with mine, praise God for their lives and nurturing they gave you. I know, not everyone has or had a favorable relationship or memories of a good mother, but without her, you would not be here today. I could go on forever, and you know I would, but I would like share a poem I came across by an unknown author entitled, "My Mother."

Your love, I know - I've seen your tears; you've given to me my life.

You have walked me through days and years, of heartache, toil and strife.

To see that I could have the best, that you could give to me,

You gave up your needs and often rest, as you viewed eternity.

To do His will, my highest call, And by your special care, I stood and walked and did not fall,
You held me up in prayer. Though strands of gray may brush your hair,
And miles divide our way, I know that by your quiet prayer, you've helped me day by day.
You have shown me how to give, how to share,
To put my own needs last. You've helped me see and be aware,
That life is so soon to pass.
To spite your love I would not dare,
For there is not another, who spreads her gentle love and care,
Like you - My Loving Mother
May Our Lord Bless you and keep you all.
May God bless all women in our lives!

Just a Thought

The Power of a Mother's Promise
by Stacy W

Have you ever made a promise to God when you were terribly ill -- you thought you were going to die? Or when you were on the verge of bankruptcy? Or like my husband, when the roof of a huge chicken barn was collapsing because of the snow? Did you keep the promise? My husband did and so did Stacy's mother. Heart touching story.

"Twenty seven years ago my Mom made a promise that changed our lives forever", says Stacy W. Now as a mother herself she sees the benefit of that promise unfold in her own life. On May 30, 1975 Stacy's sister Carey was born. This completed a trio of girls. A week after Carey's birth her Mom knew something was terribly wrong. Her left leg suddenly stopped working. As soon as she arrived at the hospital it was diagnosed as blood clots – two hundred of them!

In her hospital bed her Mom had a conversation with God – something that had comforted her battered heart as a child. Life had been harsh during her earlier years. Now she turned to it again. "Oh God, I want to live to see my babies grow up and get married," she prayed. "Please help me. I will do anything... I'll... I'll read the Bible...from cover to cover." was her promise.

As she recovered she acted on her promise. Starting in Genesis, she plodded through, thinking it could be understood only by men who wore stiff collars. In the book of Acts the question came up, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer was clear, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." She understood that Jesus had taken the punishment for everything she had ever done wrong. She responded to his

call. She later told Stacy the truth about Santa Claus and replaced it with the story of Mary and Jesus. “This story is real,” she said.

When Stacy was eight her Mom decided they needed to go to church. They did, but it felt like a foreign culture to them. Her mother had another prayer, “God, if you really want us to go to church, you’re going to have to send one to our back yard. Three weeks later a short Norwegian pastor invited them to a new church starting up in a barber/beauty shop near their house. They went, but tried to stay invisible, but were soon surrounded and embraced by caring people. Mom grew in her faith and Dad and the rest of the family decided to follow Jesus too. Her parent’s lives were drastically changed. The time came when Stacy decided she wanted some freedom to “live it up a little”. She thought she’d come back after she’d had some time to do things her way. At 17 she indeed did decide to come back. God had protected her in spite of her bad decisions.

When Stacy and her sisters married, their Mom relished in the weddings. God answered her prayer that she would see them wed, and choose mates who loved God. Her joy ballooned with the arrival of grandchildren, and when Mike and Stacy were expecting a baby they flew home to share the news in person.

After some tests, a blood test came back indicating a genetic blood disorder that could cause clotting during pregnancy. Suddenly she was having a “high risk pregnancy”. Her Mom felt guilty: “How could I have passed this on to you?” she thought. But God intervened and prevented Stacy from suffering what her mother had. “Why was I singled out for so great a grace?” was Stacy’s response.

On March 30, 2001 Stacy’s Mom witnessed the birth of Mike and Stacy’s son, Liam. She would also see how Stacy and Mike would tell him about God’s plan for his life.

Stacy’s Mom saw the benefits of her earlier promise unfold before her eyes as her children and grandchildren chose to walk in the ways of the Lord.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, God has given you His Holy Spirit to help you live life according to His perfect plan. Why not pray this simple prayer and by faith invite Him to fill you with His Spirit:

Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by directing my own life. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now invite Christ to again take His place on the throne of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as You commanded me to be filled, and as You promised in Your Word that You would do if I asked in faith. I pray this in the name of Jesus. As an expression of my faith, I thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Church Administrative Council meets every other month on the second Monday at 7:00 PM. The next meeting will be June 12th at 7:00 PM. Anyone interested in the business of the church is invited to attend. It is always an open meeting, although voting is limited to committee members.

Just a note, Jane's surgery was a success. She came home on the 28th of April. She spent 7 days in rehab and now must walk with a walker. She still has pain in her leg which is caused by a damaged nerve. The doctors say it will heal and she should be good as new when it does. (about 3 – 6 months.) She will be receiving rehab over the course of her healing. We thank all of our church family for the visits, soup, fudge, cards. and prayers. God bless each and everyone of you.

Chat & Chew with Bishop Sharma D. Lewis
May 20, 2017
Crenshaw UMC in Blackstone, VA

LUNCH PLANS: *Deadline May 12th*

Talking to the members of our churches is very important to Bishop Lewis in responding to how she can best lead us as United Methodist in the Virginia Conference.

Clergy and all laity are encouraged to attend this event. The schedule is as follows:

- 8:30-9:30 Continental Breakfast
- 9:30-11:30 **CLERGY** Session
- 11:30-12:15 Worship (with **Clergy & Laity**)
- 12:30-2:00 Lunch (with **Clergy & Laity**)
- 2:15-4:15 **LAITY** Session

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLERGY:

- What are the biggest challenges that the Annual Conference is facing or will face in the near future?*
- What are our promising, untapped, growth opportunities?
- What are your most creative ideas of taking advantage of our untapped growth opportunities?
- If you were the Bishop, what would you focus your attention on?

QUESTIONS FOR THE LAITY:

- What would you like to know about your new Bishop?*
- What do you desire from the leadership of your new Bishop?
- How might we reach more laity in the Virginia Conference to be involved in their Local Church/District, Conference and General Church Level?*
- If you were the Bishop, what would you focus your attention on?*

All Clergy are invited to a Continental Breakfast before the Clergy Session begins.

All Clergy and Laity are encouraged to join us for worship at 11:30. Lunch will follow for both clergy and laity at which time Bishop Lewis will be table hopping and getting to know who we are on the Farmville District. The Laity Session with Bishop Lewis will follow lunch.

In both the Clergy Session and Laity Session Bishop Lewis will have questions for us to answer and perhaps we will have questions for her.

Deadline May 12th LUNCH PLANS:

Lunch will be served at 12:30 with a box lunch. Choices will be Chicken Salad, Turkey & Roast Beef. A selection of cheeses, tomato, lettuce, onion and condiments will be available for your sandwich. Cost will be \$8 per lunch.

Please make your paid lunch reservations by May 12, to Crenshaw UMC, 200 Church Street, Blackstone, VA, 23824. It would be most helpful if reservations are made through each church with one check, but individual reservations will be accepted.

I look forward to seeing you on May 20th. If you have any questions, please call me at 434-292-5486 or 434-294-4721 (c).

Sue Mayo, District Lay Leader

CHAT & CHEW WITH BISHOP LEWIS

CRENSHAW UMC, 200 CHURCH STREET, BLACKSTONE, VA 23824

CHURCH: _____

TOTAL ATTENDING: # _____ Clergy # _____ Laity

LUNCH CHOICES (how many of each):

_____ Chicken Salad _____ Turkey _____ Roast Beef

Please return this form by **May 12th** with your payment of \$8 per lunch. Thank you.

Outreach

Please don't forget our Church pantry! Our brothers and sisters in the greater community are suffering and need help. We are blessed that Food Lion is willing to provide us with meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. We currently service 12 families with food donations. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. I know you will open your hearts. Also, one of our biggest needs is meat. So if you are able, pick up an extra package of meat to help out one of our families. A big “thank you!”

Monthly Recipe

If you enjoy stir- fry then you will like this. It's quick and easy.

If you have a recipe you would like to share please send it to me or give me a copy .

Chicken & Vegetable Stir-Fry

- 1 3/4cups Swanson® Chicken Broth **or** Swanson® Chicken Stock
- 1tablespoon soy sauce or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 1/4pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into strips
- 5 cups fresh cut up vegetables (broccoli, celery, peppers, carrots)
- 1/4teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup long grain white rice, prepared according to package directions (about 3 cups)
- 2 Tablespoons cornstarch

How to Make It

Stir the cornstarch, broth and soy sauce in a small bowl until the mixture is smooth. Spray a 12-inch skillet with vegetable cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add the chicken and stir-fry until well browned. Remove the chicken from the skillet. Add the vegetables, ginger and garlic powder to the skillet. Stir-fry until the vegetables are tender-crisp. Stir the cornstarch mixture in the skillet. Cook and stir until the mixture boils and thickens. Return the chicken to the skillet and cook until the chicken is cooked through. Serve the chicken mixture over the rice.

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Step 3 - Add the vegetables, ginger and garlic powder to the skillet. Stir-fry until the vegetables are tender-crisp.

Step 4- Stir the cornstarch mixture in the skillet. Cook and stir until the mixture boils and thickens. Return the chicken to the skillet and cook until the chicken is cooked through. Serve the chicken mixture over the rice.

Upcoming Events:

Sun April 9th - Second Sunday Luncheon - After Services

Wed. May 10th – UMW Meeting 1:00 PM

Sat. May 19th – UMM Meeting 8:00 AM

Wed - Choir Practice 7:00PM

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 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 (revedumc@yahoo.com) and we will see that it gets 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 to all! Ed DiStefano