

SENIOR *Spotlight*

Vol. IV, Issue 6 | September 1, 2020



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

It wasn't hard to get drawn into the spectacle of the recent political conventions. Whatever your political leaning happens to be, we were all curious to see how conventions would be handled under the recommended guidelines of mask-wearing and social distancing, knowing there wouldn't be any packed arena floors where people were scrunched together, elbow to elbow, while representatives and delegates struggled to be heard, even with the help of microphones. Would there be fireworks, confetti, a balloon-drop? Would the press and pundits see it the way you or I saw it?

Inevitably, political conversations (discussions, arguments) revolve around what's right and what's not right, and that quickly devolves into who's got the better idea and who's headed off a cliff. The degree to which we allow ourselves to become engaged in such conversations often depends on the degree to which we are comfortable with controversy. Years ago I served on a church task force, and one of its members was a United Methodist bishop. At one point in our conversation about how best to deal with a thorny problem, it seemed like there were as many different opinions about a solution as there were people sitting around that expansive executive boardroom table. Amid all the hubbub, the bishop spoke up and said, "Some of you sitting here may be uncomfortable with controversy, with all this disagreement and fussing over what we should do. But I like it! If we listen to each other, it's often how the most successful solution to a problem can be found."

I don't remember too many things from long ago in such clear detail, but I remember that meeting, and where it was, and what was said, and who said it. It changed me. Although I don't always manage to be so optimistic and hopeful (not the same thing as "optimistic") in the heat of a disagreement, still to this day I often think twice about controversy and disagreement. I *try* to believe that people with whom I disagree do not have bad motives. And especially that they are not bad people. I completely admit that I sometimes think they're nuts, but I know that's what they may think about me, too. And, for example in the case of a political conversation, thinking somebody's nuts is a whole lot better than accusing them of purposefully trying to destroy the country.

Now some people are nefarious and unrepentant; some have a "My-Way-Or-The-Highway" attitude. Some people are just stinkers who will never care what you think. It makes sense to spend as little time around them as possible. But in my experience, most people are willing to get down off their high horse of self-righteousness if they find somebody willing to do the same thing. And that's a hopeful thing, isn't it?

A long time ago a very wise man said, "In all things it is better to hope than to despair" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe). In just a few words he offers an invaluable motto for ordering one's approach to life. ("In all things." Wow!) And more recently, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached that "Peace is not merely a distant goal we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

We're all called upon to be peacemakers. And the apostle Paul admonished new Christians to be hopeful in all circumstances. "In ALL things." "In ALL circumstances." (Even our current political life!?!?) It takes willingness. It takes commitment. It takes you and me.

Stephen

Poetry, Prose & Ponderings

The following comes from Sharon Christen. "Thank you, Sharon!" She writes:

*I recently came upon the statement
"Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better."*

It's pithy and clever. It challenges us to be a better self. It suggests that "yes" we can change. It suggests we know how to change. It suggests that we are able to be better without being scolded. It suggests that we can – and should – always be in a learning mode. It's a gentle challenge. And I think in light of what's been happening with the protests, racism, etc., it's particularly provocative that it's written by a beautiful wise black woman – Maya Angelou – who writes poetry that speaks to the heart and mind and yet is timeless.

I love words. I do a lot of reading. An important event of my week is trying to complete the NYT crossword puzzle which may happen about once in twelve tries. I love to talk ... my husband will vouch for that! When Pastor Joe was going to teach the Collage Class he asked us to answer a couple of questions. One of them was "What would you not like to see change?" My first reaction was our worship service. It's full of words. Familiar, beautiful challenging words from the creeds, the prayers, the hymns, scripture ... words we say when babies are baptized and vows we make when new members join our community. As I listen and say these words I try to hear them with my ears and with my heart and then ponder what they might mean to me, today.

I think Maya Angelou's words can be applied to the pandemic. When it started we didn't hear much about masks. As time went on we learned that the scarcity of masks meant they needed to be allocated first to front line health care workers. As masks became more available and we learned how they helped stop the spread of the disease, more and more people began to wear masks and in so doing became responsible for protecting the health of their neighbors. To me, this seems to be a good example of Maya Angelou's challenge to us ... "when we know better, do better."

Send your submission – a poem or an excerpt of prose, short enough to be suitable for printing here – accompanied by some reflection on what it has meant to you and why. Understand that it may be edited to accommodate available space. Mail submissions to "Senior Spotlight Poems & Prose; 4024 Caruth Blvd.; Dallas TX 75225," or email "sfleming@upumc.org," subject line "Senior Spotlight Poems & Prose."



NEW! SERMONS-BY-PHONE

On the go & tired of the news on the radio? Sitting around with nothing to do and bored by the internet and TV? What if you could simply sit comfortably, close your eyes & give them a rest (if you're not driving), and listen to the most recent sermon by our new pastor? Well now you can. It's as easy as dialing eleven numbers. UPUMC has engaged in services of

Sermon By Phone to make listening to Sunday's sermon as easy as pie. Just dial **1-214-271-5195**. No further buttons to press. No bothersome directory tree to wade through. You'll hear University Park UMC's latest sermon straight through. No interruptions, no ads to endure. How great is that! Try it. Let me know how you like it. It's just one more way we're hoping to "stay connected" during these strange days of social distancing.

Nearly all of the Calendar & Events information on the next page is available to you 24 hours, 7 days a week at UPUMC.ORG. There are other church mailing lists to which you can ask to be added that will suit your individual interests best. Your church staff and many, many volunteers are keeping our church up and running even though the building is still closed. Help us address your needs – for fellowship, for education, for spiritual renewal and growth – by letting us know how well, or how poorly, you think we're doing. Honest feedback is most welcome!



Stay Connected to UPUMC

Upcoming Events!

NEW SERMON SERIES: Amidst the backdrop of COVID-19, our lives are filled with many new stresses and struggles. In this new sermon series, we'll consider such issues as loneliness, relationships, and anxiety, and together find hope for the journey. Every Sunday from August 23rd through September 20th. Sermons available online at www.upumc.org/sermons or by phone at 214-271-5195.

FIRST THURSDAYS ON THE LAWN: Join us the first Thursday of each month for an in-person worship service. We will worship for a half hour on the Caruth lawn, outside of Fellowship Hall. Bring your own lawn chair, or ones will be provided, and don't forget your mask.

NEW UPUMC PODCAST: We are excited to announce a new weekly podcast with Monica Frazier, Minister of Community Life. Join Monica as she interviews a member of our UPUMC family. We encourage you to listen each week and live into our vision of a community where we will know and be known. Listen each week at www.upumc.podbean.com.

NEW BIBLE STUDY WITH CHARLES HOSCH: Enjoy a new Bible teaching with Charles Hosch. This week, Charles focuses on the words "necessity" and "must" as they appear in the Bible. Watch lessons at www.upumc.org/biblelessons.

HURRICANE LAURA DISASTER RELIEF: The North Texas Conference of the UMC is collecting donations to help provide relief for those affected by Hurricane Laura. If you would like to help, you can make an online donation at www.upumc.org/give or send a check with "Hurricane Laura Relief" in the memo line.

MONTHLY STAFF PICKS BOOK CLUB: Join us for our monthly book club starting this month on every Second Tuesday at 8pm. This month, on September 8, Rev. Victoria Robb Powers will lead a discussion on the book she has chosen – Sue Monk Kidd's ***The Book of Longings***. For a listing of upcoming books by month, visit www.upumc.org/events

MEET OUR NEW PASTOR: If you haven't yet met our new senior pastor, Rev. Joe Stobaugh, join us on Sunday, September 13 at 10am for a church-wide zoom. Email Monica at mfrazier@upumc.org requesting a link you can click to be part of the visit.

ENNEAGRAM JOURNEY: Sundays at 3pm starting September 13. Interested in learning more about the Enneagram? Join us on Sundays via zoom as we discover more about ourselves and how we relate to God and each other. Register online via our church website – www.upumc.org/events.

OCTOBER MISSION'S PUMPKIN PATCH: October 18-31, 11am-7pm daily except Mondays. Celebrate fall and pick out a pumpkin or two benefitting UPUMC missions. The Pumpkin Patch will be located in front of the Fellowship Hall on Caruth Blvd. Be sure to wear your mask!

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY: Sunday, November 1 at 8:45am. During this special Sunday worship service, we honor all those who have passed away in the last year. You won't want to miss this meaningful occasion.

ADVENT – A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER: This Christmas will surely be one we remember for years to come. No matter what our world looks like, we plan to safely celebrate the season of Advent together. Save the dates!

- Advent devotional starting November 29
- Live Nativity: December 13
- Service of Healing and Hope: December 20
- Christmas Eve Lesson and Carols: December 24

SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE: Premiering on Facebook, Sundays at 11:00am or at www.upumc.org/sermons.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays at noon on our Facebook page.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: If you're not already receiving it, sign-up at www.upumc.org/newsletter.

PRAYER REQUESTS: www.upumc.org/prayer

LET'S BE FRIENDS: Follow us on Instagram (@upumc) and Facebook (@UniversityParkUMC)

Prayers, Condolences, Support

Hayden Jones died Friday, August 7, 2020. Hayden was active in our youth group and served for some years as an usher in worship. Although he remained in the Dallas area, he gradually ceased to participate in church activities while continuing to support the mission and ministries of his church financially.

Helen Peavy, died Sunday, August 9. She was 104 years old. You may not have known Helen. She had not been able to attend church for some time. She moved into assisted living and then had to go into medical facilities. She was always a very pleasant person and we'll miss her. Her son Charles said her service will likely be out of town.

Tom Solomon, a member of the Wedding Ring Sunday School Class, passed away August 26, due to complications of COVID-19. Please keep his wife LeAnn and family in your prayers.

Marjorie (Hopkins) May has returned home from her tests at Presbyterian.

Patty Kendrick is now back at home in Dallas, and her arm is in a brace.

Address: 2941 Stanford; Dallas, Texas, 75225-7802.

Richard Hearne has returned home from his stay in the hospital.

Please keep these persons and families in your prayers. Prayers help, and although many times it is unseen and unknown to us, the benefit to those prayed for and to the pray-er is a precious gift and a blessing.

CHAIR YOGA GROUP FORMING



Cherry Fowler, a member of our church who many of you know, is an experienced yoga instructor and practitioner. She is interested in finding out if there is enough interest to begin a Zoom class on Tuesdays at 11am. She offers the following description: "Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga that can be done while sitting. Some poses can also be done standing using a chair for support. Chair yoga can improve your flexibility, concentration and strength, while boosting your mood, and reducing stress and joint strain. Chair yoga is a great way for older adults to loosen and stretch muscles and improve circulation."

If interested, contact Monica Frazier – mfrazier@upumc.org.

UPUMC BACK TO SCHOOL PARADE



Stephen Fleming, Editor | Jennifer Stinchcomb, Layout & Printing | contact Stephen at 225-776-5753 or sfleming@upumc.org

FIND US ONLINE: To view detailed information about our Senior Life Ministry, please visit our website at www.upumc.org/seniors