

MEADOWVIEW MESSENGER

Meadowview United Methodist Church

Where Christian Caring Comes to Life

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The Pastor's Pondering: **Bridge Over Troubled Waters**

Suffering in one way or another abounds with the fall of mankind at Creation. Take mental and/or emotional health, for example. All concerned will agree that the Scriptures have something to say about emotional and psychological health.

Consider, for example, the following statements in Scripture:

“You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness” (Psa. 88:18; or “darkness is my only friend” in the ESV footnote as a possible translation). The extended lament of Job in chapter 3 where, among other things, he says, “Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire?” (3:11); “why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest” (3:16-17). In similar fashion, Jeremiah (citing Job 3), following a night in the stocks, complains: “Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame?” (Jer. 20:18).

In these examples, the troubling issue before them is taken to the Lord, either in complaint or regret, but in such a manner as suggests that the reason for and solution to their predicament lies (or did at some time lie) within God’s ability to change.

Poor health (physical and emotional) has been a part of humanity’s experience from the beginning, though our expectation of a sickness-free existence exponentially increases as medical science continues to expand its borders. Limiting ourselves to physical sickness, we note that the Bible records a surprising amount: atrophy (Lk. 6:6), dermatological diseases (see, Lev. 13), dysentery (2 Chron. 21:18; Acts 28:8), epilepsy (Matt. 4:24; 17:5), hemorrhage (Lk. 8:42-48), indigestion (1 Tim. 5:23), infirmity (Jn. 5:5), leprosy (Matt. 8:2; Mk. 1:40; 14:3), tapeworm (Acts 12:23).

Evil *is* a problem, no matter what view of it we take. Trouble comes when evil is intersected into the lives of mankind. And mankind allows it to penetrate the inner-most part of its person. It is in those times that mankind needs a bridge that will lead over those troubled waters.

Typically, philosophers and theologians recognize two types of evil – natural and moral. By *natural* evil we mean evil that is not of particular human volition or action. So, we can think of hurricanes or floods or tornadoes or cancer (although sometimes cancer is a consequence of human action). *Moral* evil is evil in which there is a particular human volition or human action involved – as in sexual violence, war, all forms of cruelty (to animals and human beings) and discrimination, slavery and injustice.

The nature of God’s involvement in all that occurs in the world of humanity and angels, though we may employ terms such as “concurrent,” or “confluent,” or “compatibilist” (and each have nuanced distinctions), remains incomprehensible – that is to say, it is *beyond our grasp*. However, this should not be read as a justification of irrationality. We need to reaffirm some of these features, such as: God is totally sovereign in all his will and acts (thus ensuring that his will of events comes to pass). And He is a bridge over any and all troubled waters.

Things happen which contradict God’s “will of command” – people lie, cheat, rebel, all of which violates God’s moral will for us – but at the same time, the end as much as the beginning is exactly as God purposes, for we are “predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11).

Mankind may do dastardly things and with purposeful intention, and yet God “overrules” to bring about exactly what he had planned all along – thus Joseph spoke to his bothers: “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20).

Evil on the part of human beings causes suffering for which its perpetrators are held morally responsible and liable to judgment; nevertheless, as James makes all too clear, the cause of evil cannot be laid at God’s feet: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one” (Jam. 1:13-17).

It is not enough simply to acquiesce, to grin-and-bear the trials; we must learn to see suffering for what it accomplishes to the one who has faith. It is the perspective to which Paul turns in Romans 5: “we rejoice in our sufferings” (verse 3). And why *rejoice*? Because “suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (vv. 4-5).

There is no hint of masochism in this statement, simply a resolve to view suffering as the vehicle through which God brings us to the purest form of our existence – conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). And it is in looking to Jesus in our suffering that resolution comes. Jesus, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). There is no circumstance or set of contingencies through which our Savior has not passed, as our forerunner blazing a way for us to follow (Heb. 6:20; 12:2).

So, in Christ Jesus there is a bridge over the troubled waters of life. We have a Savior who has experienced more suffering than we ever will. And yet, He still reigns. When you feel the world is closing in on you remember the bridge over the troubled waters is sturdy and will withstand any amount of weight.

From Jane Taylor, DS of Clinch Mountain District:

Beginning September 1, 2021, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett will take over the episcopal duties for Holston in addition to her role as bishop of the North Alabama Conference. This will not combine the conferences. We will simply be sharing a bishop. Our beloved Holston Conference will remain proudly Holston Conference as we continue doing God’s work in Southwest Virginia, East Tennessee and the northern-most tip of Georgia.

Celebration for new Bishop Wallace-Padgett: Maryville, UMC, Maryville, TN.: October 17th 3:00 p.m.

Choir Director for Shady Grove: Part-time, salaried position, music knowledge required.

Responsibilities: planning weekly choir practices, selecting hymns, providing musical leadership for all musical events in the church, working closely with pastor in coordinating and planning special musical events, such as Easter, Christmas. Contact Sandra Stephon@ Sandra.martin74@yahoo.com SPPR Chair.

Altar Flowers - anyone interested in supplying altar flowers on a Sunday, please see Patsy Henegar.

Altar Flowers 2021

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Jan: Patsy Henegar (628-7321) | Jul: Denise Sadler-Chapman (780-4414) |
| Feb: Janice Cornett (698-9956) | Aug: Cherie Henderson (698-8535) |
| Mar: Margaret Carter (628-6948) | Sep: Anita Taylor (944-5565) |
| Apr: | Oct: Susan Pennington (944-3146) |
| May: Mary McFarlane (356—5385) | Nov: Susan Hayter (944-4509) |
| Jun: Kathy McKinney (944-3613) | Dec. Wayne Rector has flowers for Sunday before Christmas (need someone until poinsettias appear) |

Normal (repeating) schedule:

- Sunday: Worship @ 9:00 a.m. – Facebook live
- Sunday: Worship @ 10:00 a.m. (-11:00)

Prayer Concerns for Our Church Family

Lynn Baggett; Wade Blevins; Peggy Bolling; Mack Boyd; Judy Briscoe; Dale Carter; Margaret Carter; Haley Charlton; Joanna Dennstaedt; Rev. Doyle's daughter; Judith Faris; Trish Foster; Diane Mash Jones; Wanda Kealey; Adeline Littleton; Linda Martin; Christine Puttock; William & Doris Quintana; Susan Rasnick; Wayne Rector; Tony Smith; David Swiney; Peggy Vaughan; Sandra Warmoth; Jeremy Weaver; Skeeter Yeatts; Donnie Mutter (kidney failure); Wendell Smith, Elizabeth Gray; Luke Caudill

Bert Parsons, Kathy McKinney, Cherie Henderson

*Remember our service men and women wherever they serve*If changes need to be made to the prayer list, please contact Annette Sunrell at shadygrove_umc@yahoo.com or 276-206-3243 (call or text)*

Sunday Worship services

Face-to-face services are back in full swing. Pastor Barbara is still presenting a message on Facebook "live" **each Sunday morning at 9:00 (note new time)** for those who are unable to attend.

Clinch Mountain District Charge Conference

Schedule 2021:

November 7, 2021 @ 2:30 p.m. at Pleasant View UMC: Washington County & Abingdon Hubs (SG & MV). CC forms are due in District office by Nov. 01, 2021.

Bible Study:

Bible study is being held every Wednesday morning at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall @ Shady Grove.

Pastor's new vacation dates: September 12-21, 2021

District Conference: Sunday 9/19 – 3:00 p.m. @ John Wesley UMC in Bristol, VA.

Meadowview meetings:

- **Nominating Committee:** Sept. 05, 2021 @ 3:00 p.m. (Joy Scruggs, Janice Cornett, Beverly Sheddan, Mary McFarlane)
- **Finance & Church Council meeting (to confirm charge conference material):** Sept. 26, 2021 immediately following worship service

Birthdays in August:

Lori Price	2 nd
Nancy Carter	6 th
Brennan Lester	7 th
Emma Buchanan/David McFarlane	8 th
Matt Henderson/Trish Foster	9 th
Milton Maiden	16 th
Jake Caudill	20 th
Julie Cuadill/Missy Deel	22 nd
Zoe Chapman	27 th

Anniversaries in August:

Robbie & Michelle Wallace	1 st
David & Mary McFarlane	11 th
William & Doris Quintana	21 st

- **Half Century Lunch:** Nancy invites you to come to 28395 Rich Valley RD, Meadowview, VA for the September lunch on September 8th. She is going to provide "One Hundred Year Old Spaghetti". She is asking that each of you provide part of the lunch and let her know what your contribution will be. Suggestions follow: Disposable cups, plates and napkins, Drinks, Salads, Desserts, Bread. She will need to know ahead of time what you will bring!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Please reply to her email or call her at 944-4017!

Contact info for Pastor Barbara:

Email: pastordoyle1209@gmail.com
Phone: 276-525-1637 (home); 423-341-2198 (cell)