SUMMER 2023

Thread

THAT OTHERS WILL GLORIFY GOD

"You are the light of the world.
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

DISCOVERING GOD'S VISION

Find how God has uniquely
and wonderfully gifted you

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Special Thanks
We want to extend a special thank you to anyone and everyone who submitted an article in this issue. We also want to acknowledge and thank you. Thank you for your prayers, donations, and gifts that have helped fulfill our mission and purpose of spreading the Good News as Christ's disciples.

The Thread is a publication by
Fredericksburg United Methodist Church,
designed and edited by Angelina Vannicola

The Thread.

Fredericksburg United Methodist Church Digest

Intro

A Letter from the Editor

Angelina Vannicola,
Director of Communications

The Thread Magazine is a periodical produced by Fredericksburg United Methodist Church designed to give you an insider's look into the beating heart of our church and walk with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that this periodical blesses you in some way. The Thread Magazine is an open forum meaning anyone who is a part of our body is invited to submit an article, a devotional, or a testament of how the Lord has been working in and through their life.

We sincerely hope you submit something for the next edition.

On a personal note, I usually include an article of my own, but earlier this month I was graciously invited by Pastor Jacqui to preach a sermon on June 11, 2023.

If I had to say what is on my personal mind and heart - it is well summarized in my message. If you missed it, you can watch it or any of our previous messages online at Fredumc.org/live.

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other about them. Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. Romans 15:14-15

In His Love,
Angelina

Features

08 THAT OTHERS WILL GLORIFY GOD - HOW WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

by Don Doss

18 DISCOVERING GOD'S VISION FOR YOUR LIFE: YOU AND YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

by Zala Koym

20 GEORGE'S NEWEST, MOST THRILLING EPISTLE YET!

by Pastor George Lumpkin

22 A LETTER FROM THE HEART OF PASTOR JACQUI LIRETTE

by Pastor Jacqui Lirette

OUR CHURCH IN MISSION

SPOTLIGHT

Submitted by Beverly Harrell

The Schoolhouse Angels ministry began as a commitment to the Fredericksburg Elementary School by our church body of Christ to love, support, and assist the staff. The Schoolhouse Angels declare the creed that everyone who touches the life of a child during the school day is as important as the teacher in the classroom. The Schoolhouse Angels ministry has taken several different forms through the years.

First, the Angels simply provided a free lunch to the teachers and staff at the beginning of the school year. Now, the Angels provide a sandwich lunch at the beginning of the school year, and the Angels are also able to support the teachers and staff throughout the year through small "Angel gifts" and notes of encouragement every month. The Schoolhouse Angels do not have an official budget and operate completely on an all-volunteer, donation basis. In order to continue this ministry, we need your help.

There will be an Altar Rail offering later this year dedicated to our ministry and the outreach of Schoolhouse Angels (look out for a giant yellow pencil that will be in the Narthex!). You can also give at any time by contacting us directly.

Lastly, we ask that you lift up our educators, schools, staff, and children daily in your prayers. They need our prayers now more than ever.

If you have any questions about the Schoolhouse Angel ministry or would like to give directly, please contact Beverly Harrell at 830-889-8836 or email SchoolhouseAngels@hotmail.com

Schoolhouse Angels serve lunch to FES staff.
Pictured: Natalie Bowman, Peggy Hannon, Beverly Harrell, Jana Sultemeier, Karen Neffendorf, Ginger Barr

"

Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

GALATIANS 3:1-5

THAT OTHERS WILL GLORIFY GOD

BY DON DOSS

Our church stands at a crossroads. It's funny, we always are at a crossroads between what we were and what we will be - every moment of every day! But this seems unique in the times we live, whether to stay the way we historically have been or move on to a new way we will become.

What in the world are you talking about Don??

Being in the ministry for almost 50 years, one general understanding that I have had since day one is that we were made to glorify God in all we do. The purpose of praise and worship is definitely to glorify God, and every time the choir sings my prayer is that God will be magnified through what we sing... that's what I work for, that's my job description. Well, just maybe I must add an asterisk to that understanding - it's taken almost 50 years to get

there but I've found something in this verse that after hundreds of perusals I haven't 'read' before...

"YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A CITY SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN. NOR DO PEOPLE LIGHT A LAMP AND PUT IT UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A STAND, AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL IN THE HOUSE. IN THE SAME WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, SO THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN."
MATT 5:14-16

I've sung and directed countless songs on this verse, I guess I just missed the last part... "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Our church should present itself to the community like a city on a hill, with an attitude and lifestyle so obvious that it gives others evidence that there is a God. Wow. Our 'job' isn't just to give praise to him but demonstrate our love for the Lord so that others will do it...so that they may see our good works and THEY will give glory to God!

Unfortunately, the difficulties and darkness that surrounds us as we see in the Methodist fighting sometimes is more obvious that the light we are meant to shine to the world. Instead of our shining the light of freedom, hope and love, we occupy ourselves with the endless business of 'church' and forget to care for our first love.

The church of Galatia had a similar problem in getting tied up in legalism. Those that were from a Jewish tradition understood circumcision was a non-negotiable, and you couldn't be a Christian without first being a Jew. The controversy became great in the newer non-traditional churches to the point there was no bigger issue to them, they were convinced that yielding to the circumcision issue was more important than anything else!

Paul, who takes pride in his own Hebrew tradition wrote...

"Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all... You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace... For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Galatians 5:2-6

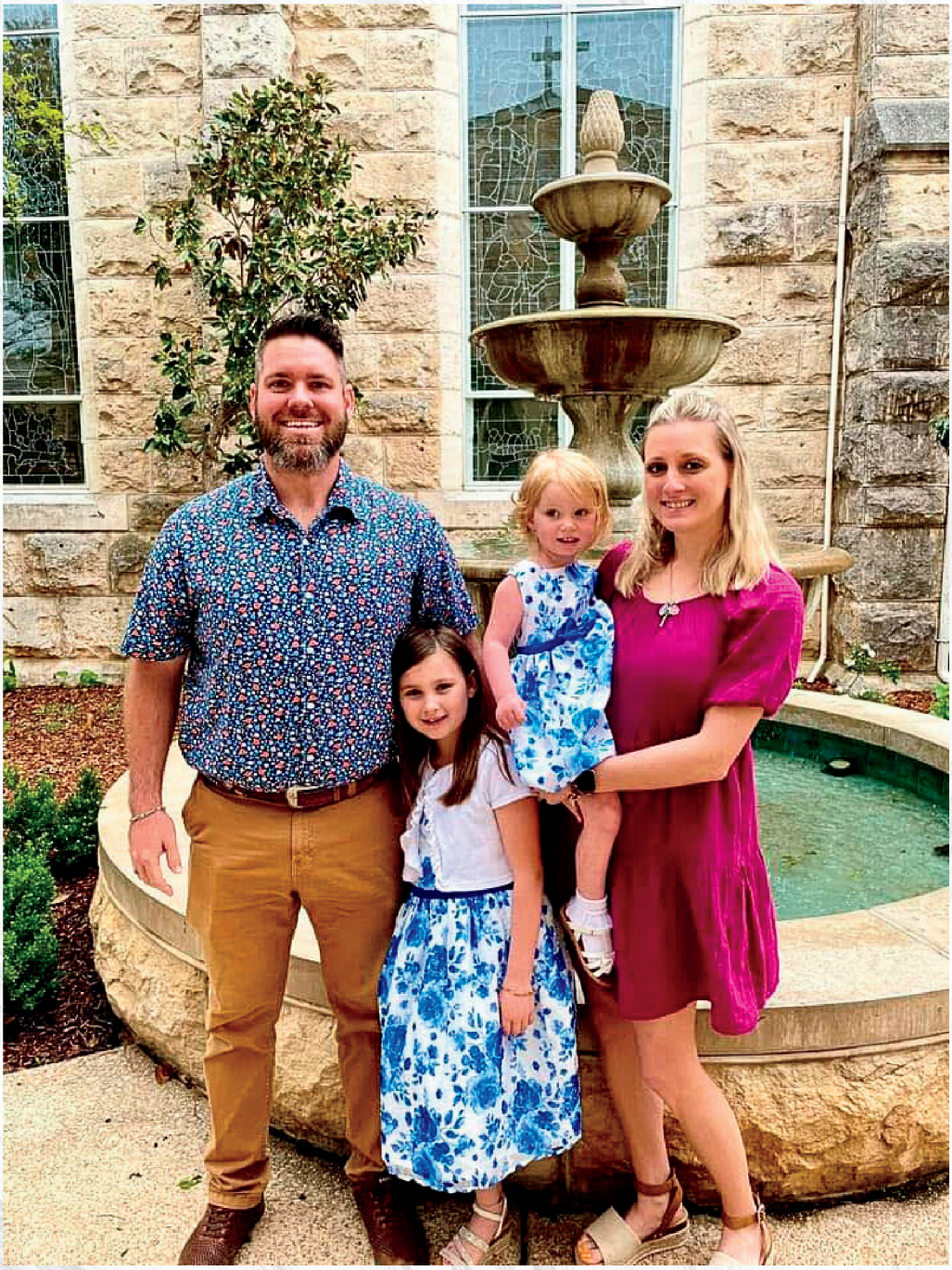
The very thing the church was arguing about, Paul says, has NO VALUE!! The only thing that counts is our expression of love to others. So no matter if it's right or wrong, that doesn't matter. Legalism, rules, doctrine and endless tedium is worthless. What matters is our caring for this community, our sharing the love of Christ to whomever we come in contact.

The Church, both local and global is exposed, it cannot be hidden. Let's stop taking sides, it's just not important... it really isn't. We are exhibiting ourselves to the world around us whether we like it or not and we can be read like a book, more like a billboard!! Let them see something different from this hilltop than what they see elsewhere. Our job is to express our love so honestly, distinctly, and obviously that others will be drawn to us because of what they see us doing - good works and loving those around us.

How do we turn this thing around? It can only start through you and me, one person at a time. Just let God guide you in your thinking and caring and loving - do it so others will see Jesus through you. Throw away the basket that hides the light, turn it on, shine it out bright!!

WELCOME STEPHANIE!

WESLEY NURSE



Güten Tag y'all! My name is Stephanie Oris, and I am the new Wesley Nurse for Fredericksburg!

The Wesely Nurse Program is the largest geographic outreach ministry of Methodist Healthcare Ministries with over 80 sites spread throughout South Texas. The professional practice of the Wesley Nurse is not limited to the physical dimension of medical needs; rather, it includes a mind, body and spirit holistic approach. A key component Wesley Nurses undertake in their communities is providing health education, health promotion and facilitation of resources. We assist individuals and communities in achieving improved health and wellness through self-empowerment and access to healthcare resource information. Best of all, all services are FREE!

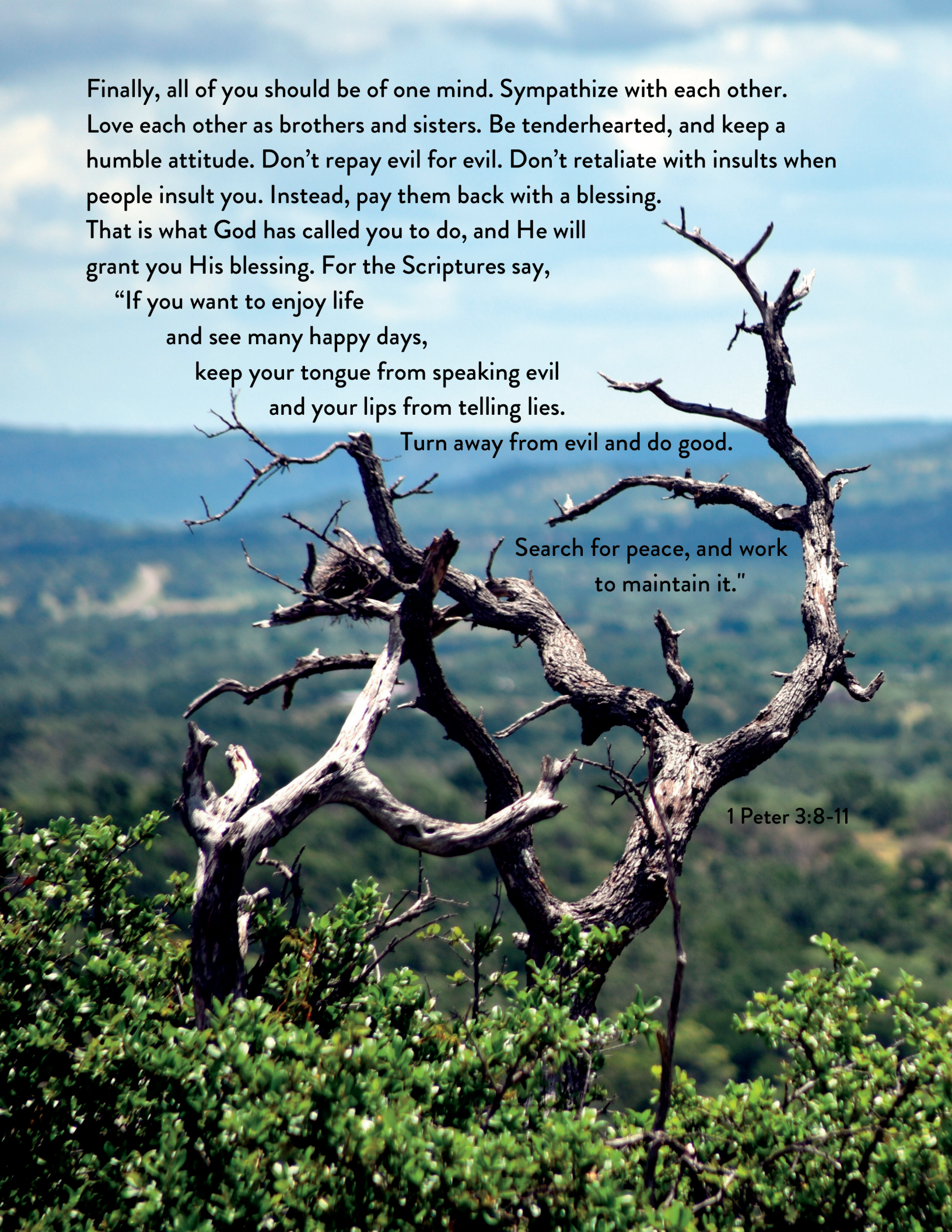
I am a local with roots traced back to the founding of Fredericksburg. I graduated from Fredericksburg High School and received my nursing degree from Baptist Health System School of Health Professions in San Antonio in 2014. I began my nursing career working in oncology and obtained my national certification as a oncology certified nurse. For the past 5 years, I worked as a perioperative nurse which included getting patients ready for surgery, working in the operating room and caring for patients in the recovery room. I am married to my husband, Cody, of almost 15 years (this November) and together we have two beautiful little girls. Elsie is 6 and will be going into 1st grade this coming August at St. Mary's and Olivia is 3 and attends Kindernest at Holy Ghost. We are parishioners of St. Mary's Catholic Church and are active within the ACTS community and both serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. We love to travel as a family and have a goal of visiting every state eventually. My husband served in the US Navy which is where our love for travel began.

I have been in this position since mid-February and have just completed my training and orientation process. I am excited to grow in this ministry and truly help God's children, especially those in most need. My office is located off the fellowship hall next to the kitchen. Please feel free to stop by and say hello when you are here, I would love to meet you!

Methodist Healthcare Ministries

SERVING HUMANITY TO HONOR GOD

STEPHANIE ORIS
WESLEY NURSE
210-660-3390
STEPHANIE@FREDUMC.ORG



Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and He will grant you His blessing. For the Scriptures say,

"If you want to enjoy life
and see many happy days,
keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies.
Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work
to maintain it."

1 Peter 3:8-11

Consider a life changing experience...

Stephen Ministry is YOUR ministry. It is an important way we at Fredericksburg United Methodist Church care for one another. If you or someone you know is struggling with one of life's situations or crisis like loneliness, prolonged health issues, grief, hospitalization, being overwhelmed, caring for another person, or an adult child going off or moving back home or any other life crisis, consider having a Stephen Minister who can provide a one-to-one confidential caring ministry to people in our church or in our community. If you know someone who is facing difficulties, suggest that he or she request a Stephen Minister. The referral coordinator is available to help someone receive care. You can make a difference and really help by encouraging them to talk to someone. Also, remember that our Stephen Ministers are trained and available to listen and help people as they face changes in their lives.

Stephen Ministry is YOUR Ministry

by Zala Koym

What exactly is *Stephen Ministry?*

Stephen Ministry is an ongoing cycle in our congregation. It cannot function unless people from our congregation answer the call to participate. Stephen Ministry is a ministry in our congregation in which trained and supervised laypersons, called Stephen Ministers, provide one-to-one Christian Care to individuals in our congregation or in our community who are facing life challenges, difficulties or crisis. Stephen Ministers complete 50 hours of training and commit to two years of service. Many serve well beyond these two years.

Our congregation's Stephen Ministry equips lay-people to provide one-to-one Christian care to people in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulty.

What is a Stephen Leader?

A Stephen Leader is a church member who answers the call to attend the Leadership Training Course to learn the Stephen Series System to lead your ministry. These individuals learn how to cast our vision, recruit, select, train, and supervise our Stephen Ministers. They help identify people in need of care, and match them with a Stephen Minister. A Stephen Leader can become a Stephen Minister before or after attending the Leadership Training Course.

Who is involved?

FUMC currently has six trained Stephen Leaders and seven active Stephen Ministers. Altogether seven women and six men have been trained to provide one-to-one Christian care.

Your Stephen Leaders are:

John Hutcherson Linda Behrends
Zala Koym Dana Schafer

Your Stephen Ministers are:

Justin Dallas Lynn Harris
Rick Schafer Brenda Miiller
David Umbreit Jana Sultemeier
Susan Tilley

Would you like to be a part of a ministry that makes a real difference in other's lives when they need it most--and in your own? Consider becoming a Stephen Leader and/or a Stephen Minister. Scholarships are available. The next Stephen Ministry Training Class will begin in the **Fall of 2023**. More information coming soon!

For more information contact:
Zala Koym (830) 992-1432
Referrals Coordinator:
Linda Behrends (817) 991-6854

"And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?
“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.
Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need."
Matt. 6:30-33

HOW GOD TEACHES LESSONS THROUGH HIS LITTLEST CREATURES

"But I trust in
Your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices
in Your salvation.
I will sing the Lord's praise,
for He has been good to me."
Psalm 13:5-6

The Lord can teach some of His lessons through His littlest creatures can't He? Let me introduce you to "Albert" the Zebra Finch.

I have a unique little bird, Albert. He gets up every morning and sings happily; he's really a joy to listen to. Two years ago he had an accident in his cage. I prayed God please let him live. He was upside down and just hanging there. I got him out of his cage, but his left leg had to be amputated in order to save him. He survived the accident and over time he learned how to balance himself and shift his weight to his other side.

He fell a lot, but every time he would fall, he got himself right back up and sit on his perch. He has survived with one leg. He has learned to adapt, balance, and preserve. He has taught me a lot about life. That no matter what the obstacle is, if we keep going through the obstacles, persevering, that God will give us His strength to endure anything no matter what the hardship may be. Albert taught me to balance life, and have faith knowing God will give us His strength to just keep going through the road blocks in life. New mercies can be taught even through His little creatures. Albert singing in the morning to meet each day with a joyful heart, to rejoice and be thankful - no matter the circumstances, it is well with my soul.

WRITTEN BY
STEPHANIE JOHNSON

DISCOVERING GOD'S VISION FOR YOUR LIFE

You're invited to come discover God's vision for your life by being a part of this 4-week course is designed to help you better understand how God has anointed you and given you special and unique spiritual gifts. This course will deep-dive into the power of using your spiritual gifts, where they come from, what the Bible says about spiritual gifts, and how you can use your gifts for His glory. For the one seeking direction - this is for you. For the one who feels like they want to serve but don't know where or how, this course is for you. For the one who simply wants to better understand God's vision for the one who simply wants to better understand God's vision for your life and all God has planned for you - this course is for you.

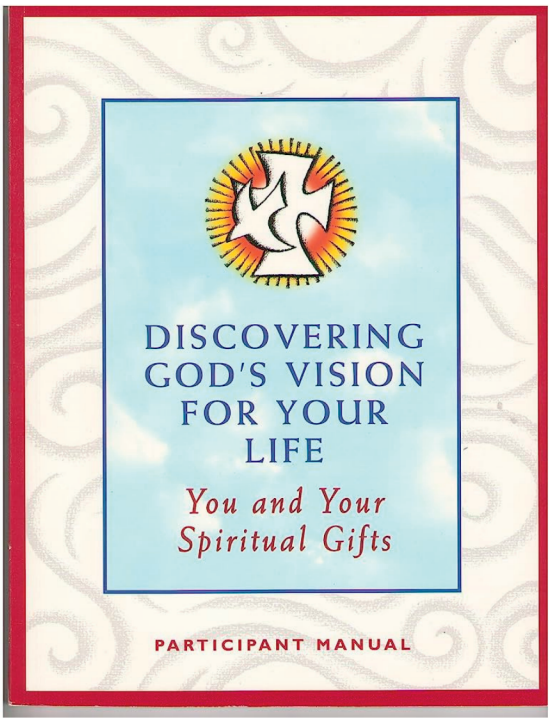
The course is 4 weeks:

July 16 & 23 and August 6 & 13,
Sundays after church
from 12:30pm-3pm

$25 per registrant which includes your book, materials, and also lunch!

The course covers:

- **What does God want me to do with my life?**
- **Who am I?**
- **What makes me unique?**
- **Unwrapping your gifts package**
- **Spiritual gifts in the spotlight**
- **Love personifieid**
- **Your calling**
- **God's vision and your vision coming together**



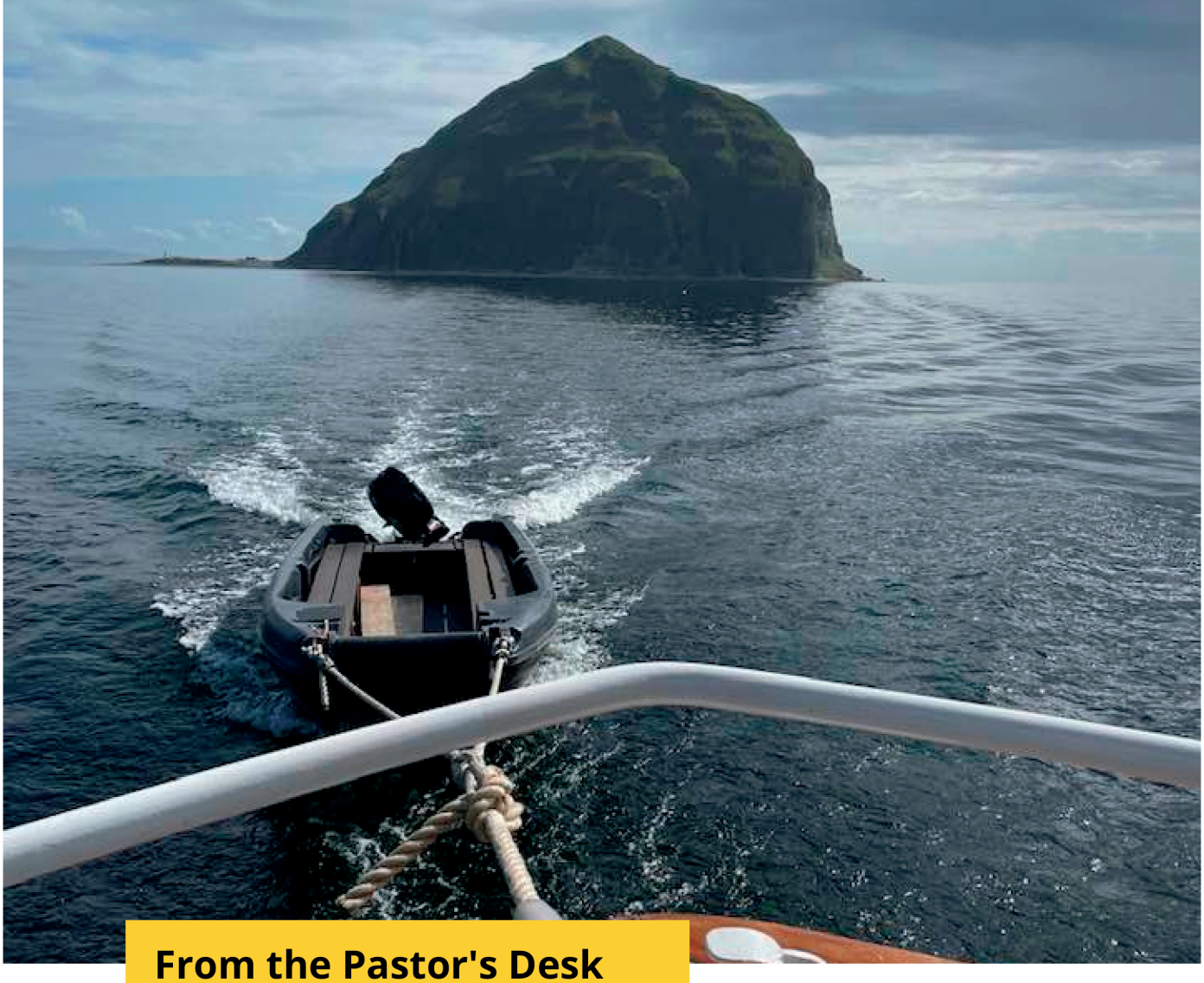
For questions or to register, contact Zala Koym at ckoym@aol.com or 830-992-1432.

WHERE THERE IS NO

VISION,

THE PEOPLE PERISH.

- PROVERBS 29:18



From the Pastor's Desk

George's newest, most thrilling epistle yet!

Summer's greetings to all of you, my friends in Christ. I trust you are managing to stay out of the heat as much as possible, and staying in The Word as much as possible.

This last week I was in Corpus Christi for the Annual Conference of the Rio Texas Conference. I am pleased to announce that I have been reappointed by the Bishop as your pastor for the coming Conference year.

It's hard to believe that I am starting my 9th Conference year here in Fredericksburg! In spite of the many challenges (Covid, building renovations, etc.) Fredericksburg UMC, as well as the community itself has been a delight and a blessing to Brenda and me. We sincerely thank you for your love, friendship, support, wisdom, guidance, prayers, and forgiveness, just to name a few of the many things we are grateful for.

To be perfectly honest, Annual Conference was a little bit of everything this year. Because there are churches and friends who have disaffiliated from our denomination, I struggled with grief, sadness, frustration, and even some anger. On the other hand, there was also excitement, hope, and inspiration. It was inspiring to see many people, especially younger people, who are on fire for Jesus and engaged in some amazing, creative ministries. Churches in our Conference are engaged in everything from disaster relief efforts, to border ministry, to raising up children and teens in the faith, to spiritual and faith formation ministries. We ordained new leaders for the Kingdom, heard the Word proclaimed, and sang God's praises.

"The Spirit continues to do new things. The Kingdom is not defeated."

My study leave has been a "journey" leave as much as anything. At the end of April, I went to Colorado Springs for a pastor's renewal retreat. Upon return, we were off to Scotland, which was part vacation but also part pilgrimage, as we visited and worshiped at different Christian holy sites that have been places of prayer and ministry since the 5th Century. Returning, I spent some time at our farm and helping family. And then last week, off to Corpus Christi! From Pike's Peak to the Laguna Madre! Whew.

My reading list has been eclectic to say the least. Everything from "The Weary Leader's Guide to Burnout" to Celtic Christian worship books to Bon Appetit magazine to binge-watching Ted Lasso. In fact, I just ordered a book called "The Gospel according to Ted Lasso." Sermon series? Maybe. Fasten your seatbelts. I remain grateful for this opportunity to refresh and renew. I have been focusing on listening prayer, reading about the early Church Fathers and Mothers, and immersing myself into the Gospels. I will be returning to the office the 3rd week of July. If you are expecting me to be different, well I don't know about that. I am who I am. Better, maybe. Stronger in the Lord, hopefully. Excited for what the Spirit is doing, most likely. ***"The joy of the Lord is my salvation"*** is what I am striving towards. Joy. Strength. Hope. Grace. All the good words.

So, blessing, grace and peace be with all of you my friends.

Still blessed to be your pastor.

Pastor George

FROM THE HEART OF PASTOR JACQUI

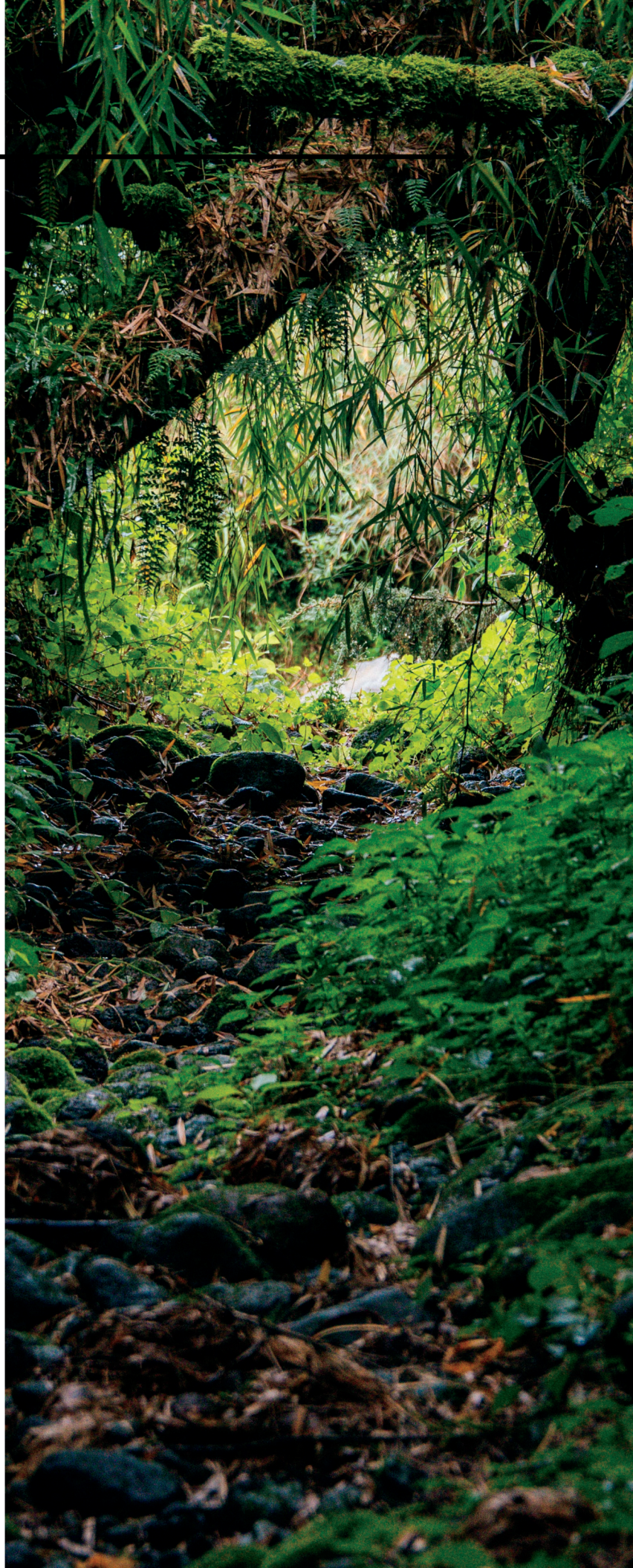
HOW WE SURVIVE

BY JACQUI LIRETTE

Dear friends,

As you probably know, I'm always thinking and always learning. As I go through my week, I gather bits of information and gather stories almost passively, weighing this and that, trying to see if this new insight can be helpful to me or to the people in my life. It's my privilege to be able to share many of these things through sermons, to proclaim the good news! Some things however, I learn and find helpful, but don't end up using in a sermon. Some things spark my imagination but they never end up preached from the pulpit. I think The Thread is a good opportunity to share things like this, so here I go:

My husband Chris and I have a few favorite TV shows that we follow. One of these shows is called Naked and Afraid. You may or may not have heard of it. It's a wilderness survival show, pairing two survivalists as they try to make it in the wild for 21 days, with almost no resources — not even the clothes on their backs! One of the ground rules of the show is that each contestant can choose one survival item to bring from civilization. As we watched, we began musing about which survival items are the most helpful.

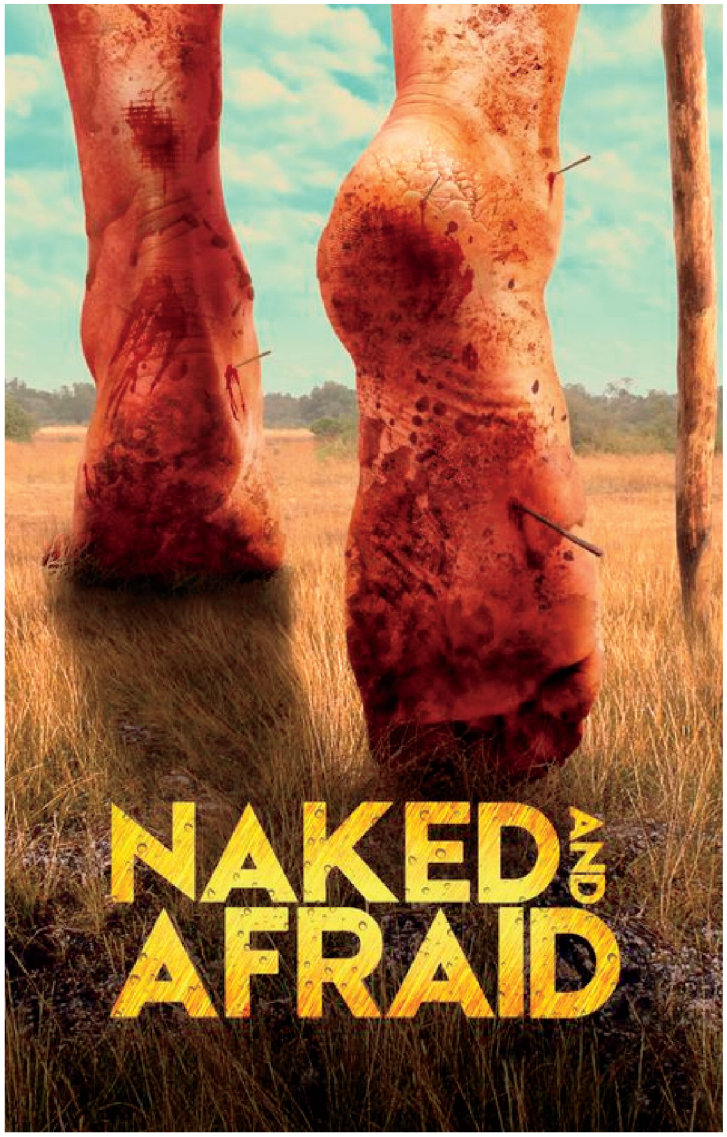


Some contestants choose a sharp knife, which is versatile and helpful regardless of the setting. Some choose a pot, for boiling water. Some choose a fire starter, not confident in their ability to start a fire by more primitive means.

Even though Chris and I had a lot of good discussion around which items would be best, and had fun imagining how we would fare in a survival show, one thing began to stand out more and more as we watched: The success or failure of the survivalists didn't depend on the item they chose. It always, always came down to how they worked together as a pair. If the duo could communicate, resolve conflict in a fair way, express their needs and their strengths alike, and devote their energy to the good of the team, they were highly likely to succeed. If they were selfish or dismissive, or if they fought dirty, or if they abandoned one another, the adventure was almost certainly doomed.

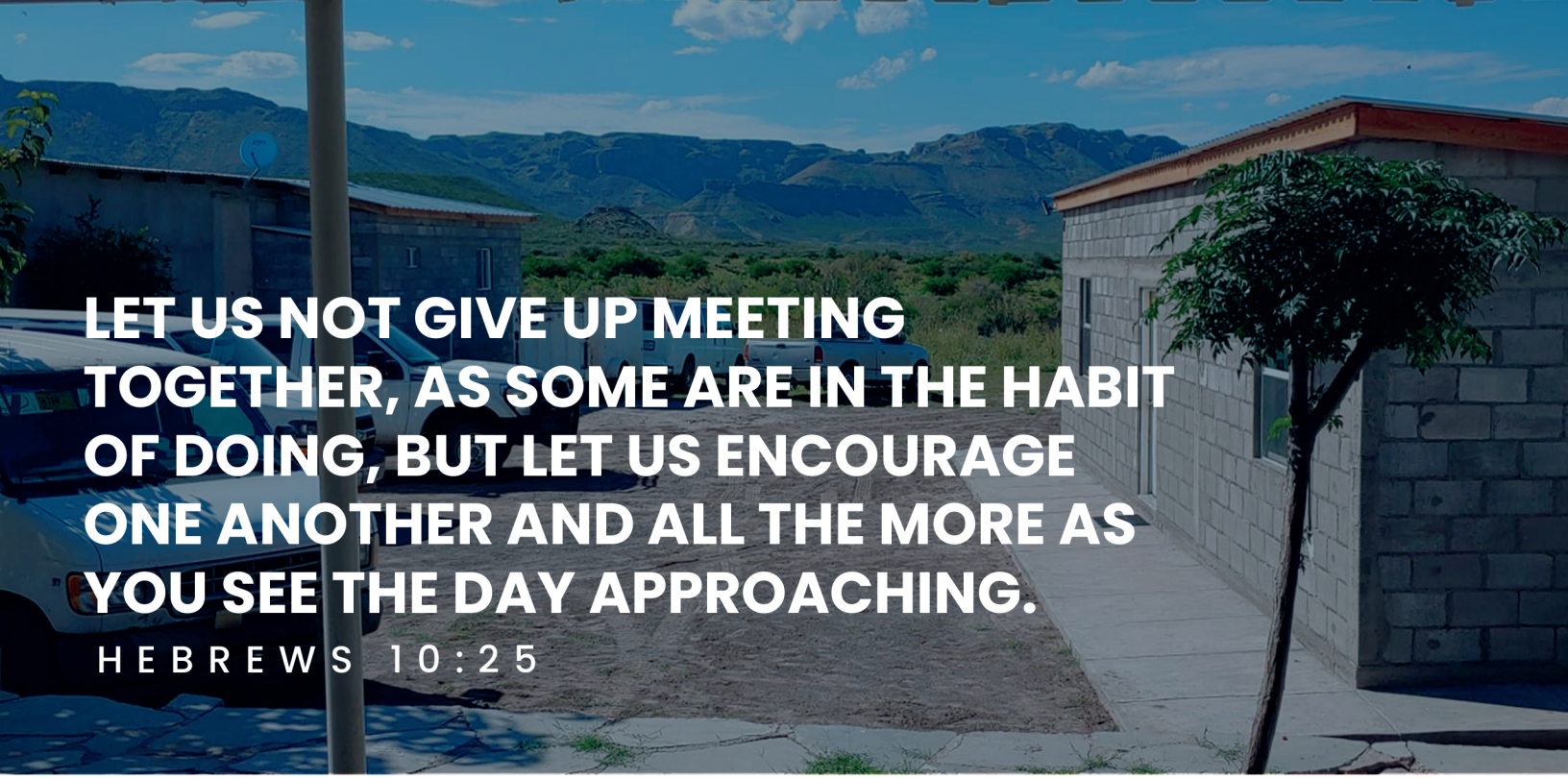
Brothers and sisters, we get very preoccupied with our assets. Our talents. Our traditions. All these things are wonderful blessings, that enrich our lives together and our expression of faith. But we can't rely on them to hold us up. In the very first moment he build his Church, Jesus Christ gave us what we need to rely on: one another. All we do together, everything we're able to accomplish, depends on how we work together. Can we communicate, resolve conflict fairly, express our needs, and cover one another's weaknesses? If we can live in unity, and be a good team, we have all we need! If we cannot, then it doesn't matter what else we have.

I thank God for your love and grace. I'm so grateful to be in a church family with you. We make a pretty good team! This I wanted to share, just as a reminder. We can, and should, rely on each other.



We should be trustworthy and safe with one another, fair and kind. We mustn't let our heads be turned by fear or hate. Let's be sober minded and vigilant, holding fast to the truth. Let's stay united in Jesus Christ, who loved us, saved us, and called us together a holy purpose.

Grace and peace to you,
Pastor Jacqui



Koinonia

By Beth Cross Watson

The meaning of KOINONIA is the Christian fellowship or body of believers

This scripture has been and continues to be important to me in my walk with God.

In the past, I purposely neglected my involvement and presence in a loving group of Godly women. God, as only God can do, continued to wave the Hebrews 10:25 message in my face. It seemed every sermon, devotional, story and song stressed that Christians need one another to flourish. Eventually I acquiesced and, following the direction of the scripture, began to faithfully fellowship with this wonderful group of women, The Koinonia Reunion group.

Years passed and changes occurred. For various reasons the group fell apart, but I never stopped yearning for the friendship, love and understanding of this group.

After losing the group that helped keep me accountable I once again, placed myself on the sidelines.

God never stopped nudging me but I obstinately managed to stay at arm's length from my church family and from God's call. A shift in my perspective was slow to come but God never gave up.

Last year, out of the blue, I said "Yes" to God's gentle nudges and dove in head first to a medical mission trip to Mexico. The joy I received in serving others as well as the camaraderie of the team absolutely changed my life and my attitude.

Subsequently, I have willingly said yes to more opportunities to encourage, assist, love, pray for and listen to others. It is a joy to reconnect with others for God' glory.

I will no longer wait for another person to invite me to become involved. I will listen carefully for prompts and whispers from God and will follow my heart and the Holy Spirit residing there.

Written by Beth Cross Watson
Photos by Beth Cross Watson and Judy Hutcherson

THE THREAD

Devotional

FROM "GIVE HIM 15" MINISTRIES
SUBMITTED BY SHARON GRIMES

A Prophetic Dream of a Founding Father

When the Declaration of Independence was unanimously adopted by the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, there was cause for celebration among the 13 colonies. While Thomas Jefferson was the main writer, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and two others advised and edited as they compiled the document, separating the United States from the tyranny of Great Britain.

Twenty years later, before the elections of 1796 and 1800, Jefferson and Adams still enjoyed a friendship. As mentioned, they had worked closely together to write the Declaration of Independence. They visited each other while serving as diplomats in Europe in the 1780s—Jefferson as minister to France and Adams as the nation's first Ambassador to Great Britain. After Jefferson's wife passed away in 1782, he regularly visited the Adams' home. In fact, John and Abigail Adams became like a surrogate family to Jefferson.

“Jefferson revealed his affection for Adams to James Madison, writing that Adams ‘is so amiable, that I pronounce you will love him if ever you become acquainted with him.’ Mrs. Adams once called Jefferson ‘one of the choice ones of the earth,’ and Mr. Adams wrote Jefferson saying that ‘Correspondence with you…is one of the most agreeable events in my life."

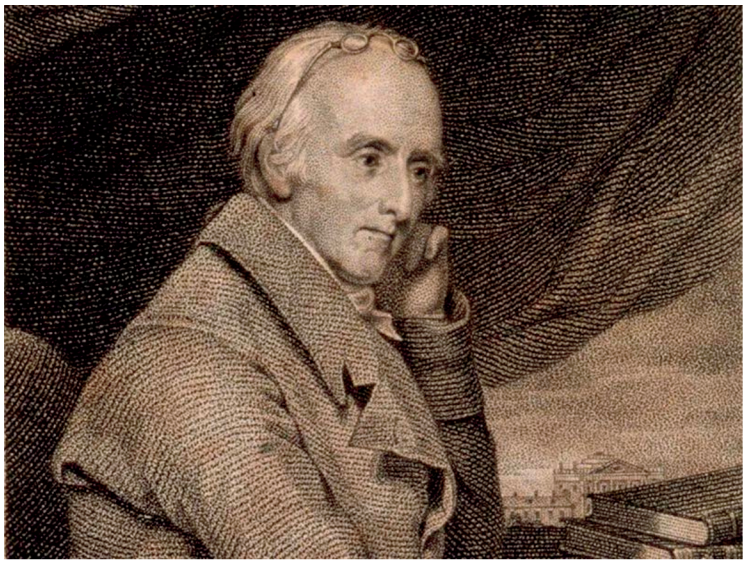
The rift began while Adams was serving as George Washington’s vice president in the 1790s. Then, Adams won the presidential election of 1796. Jefferson had run against Adams and received the second highest amount of votes, so according to the law at that time, Jefferson became vice president under Adams. How awkward would that be!

Jefferson ran against Adams again in the presidential election of 1800, which turned into a bitter battle, with nasty attack ads and personal accusations. Adams was a staunch Federalist promoting centralized, national power, while Jefferson was a Democratic-Republican who sought a limited government with greater control given to the states. Jefferson won that election. Adams left Washington D.C., to avoid Jefferson’s inauguration, so strong was Adam’s feelings against him at the time.

Communication between Jefferson and Adams ceased after this contentious and divisive presidential campaign. Their mutual friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush, was deeply troubled over the chasm between the two men.

One night, after Jefferson left the presidency, Dr. Rush had a dream which he felt had a prophetic message. On October 17, 1809, Rush wrote the dream and sent it to Adams, urging him to write Jefferson. He sent several more requests over the next two years.

Dr. Rush’s final attempt to get Adams to write Jefferson was on December 16, 1811. Jefferson had told Dr. Rush that he was open to reconciliation but needed Adams to write first.



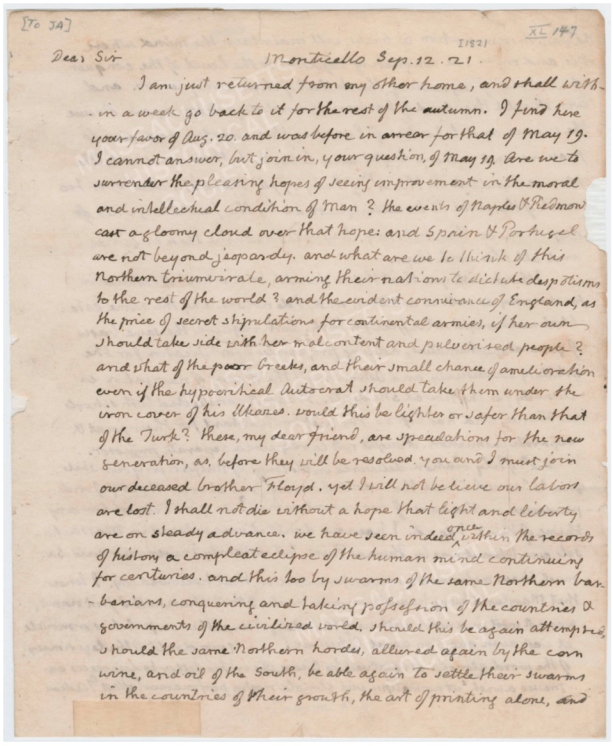
Dr. Benjamin Rush, (1749-1813)

Rush wrote to Adams and said:

“And now my dear friend - permit me again to suggest to you, to receive the olive branch which has thus been offered to you by the hand of a Man who still loves you. Fellow labourers in creating the great fabric of American Independence…Embrace, embrace each other. Bedew your letters of reconciliation with tears of affection and joy.”

After more than a decade of silence they realized their friendship was more valuable than their differences, so they renewed their correspondence. Adams took the first step and wrote to Jefferson on New Year's Day in 1812, concluding by saying, "I wish you, Sir, many happy new years and that you may enter the next and many succeeding years with as animating Prospects for the Public as those at present before us. I am, Sir, with a long and sincere esteem, your Friend and Servant.."

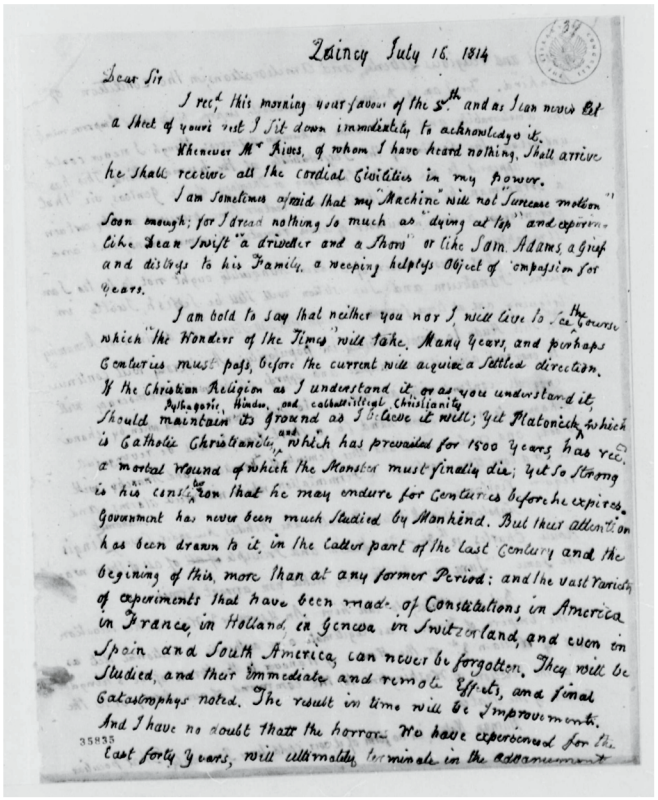
Jefferson replied to Adams three weeks later on January 21, 1812: "A letter from you calls up recollections very dear to my mind. It carries me back to the times when, beset with difficulties & dangers, we were fellow laborers in the same cause, struggling for what is most valuable to man, his right of self-government."



Dear Sir — Monticello Sep. 12. 21.

I am just returned from my other home, and shall within a week go back to it for the rest of the autumn. I find here your favor of Aug. 20. and was before in arrear for that of May 19. I cannot answer, but join in, your question, of May 19. Are we to surrender the pleasing hopes of seeing improvement in the moral and intellectual condition of Man? the events of Naples & Piedmont cast a gloomy cloud over that hope: and Spain & Portugal are not beyond jeopardy. and what are we to think of this Northern triumvirate, arming their nations to dictate despotisms to the rest of the world? and the evident connivance of England, as the price of secret stipulations for continental armies, if her own should take side with her malcontent and pulverised people? and what of the poor Greeks, and their small chance of amelioration even if the hypocritical Autocrat should take them under the iron cover of his Ukases. would this be lighter or safer than that of the Turk? these, my dear friend, are speculations for the new generation, as, before they will be resolved, you and I must join our deceased brother Floyd. yet I will not believe our labors are lost. I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance. we have seen indeed, within the records of history a compleat eclipse of the human mind continuing for centuries. and this too by swarms of the same Northern barbarians, conquering and taking possession of the countries & governments of the civilized world. should this be again attempted, should the same Northern hordes, allured again by the corn wine, and oil of the South, be able again to settle their swarms in the countries of their growth, the art of printing alone, and

One of the many letters from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, September 12, 1821
Massachusetts Historical Society



Quincy July 16. 1814

Dear Sir

I rec.d this morning your favour of the 8th and as I can never But a Sheet of yours rest I Sit down immediately to acknowledge it.

Whenever Mr Rives, of whom I have heard nothing, shall arrive he shall receive all the cordial Civilities in my power.

I am Sometimes afraid that my Machine will not Surcease motion Soon enough; for I dread nothing So much as "dying at Sea" and exposing Like Dean Swift "a driveller and a Show" or like Sam. Adams a Grief and disbleg to his Family, a weeping helpless Object of compassion for years.

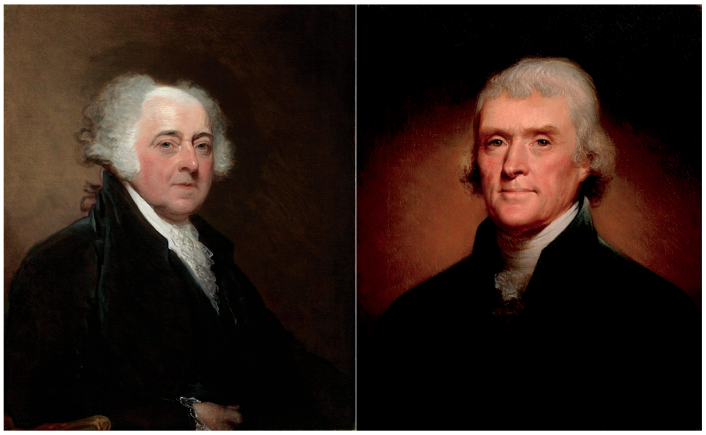
I am bold to Say that neither you nor I will live to See the Course which the Wonders of the Times will take. Many Years, and perhaps Centuries must pass, before the current will acquire a Settled direction. If the Christian Religion as I understand it, or as you understand it, Pythagoric, Hindoo, and catholic Illegal Christianity Should maintain its Ground as I believe it will; Yet Platonick, which is Catholic Christianity, and which has prevailed for 1800 Years, has yet a mortal Wound of which the Monster must finally die; yet So Strong is his constitution that he may endure for Centuries before he expires. Government has never been much Studied by Mankind. But their attention has been drawn to it, in the Latter part of the last Century and the begining of this, more than at any former Period; and the vast Variety of experiments that have been made of Constitutions, in America in France, in Holland, in Geneva in Switzerland, and even in Spain and South America, can never be forgotten. They will be Studied, and their Immediate and remote Effects, and final Catastrophys noted. The result in time will be Improvements. And I have no doubt that the horrors We have experienced for the 35835 last forty Years, will ultimately terminate in the advancement

One of the many letters from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, July 16, 1814
Massachusetts Historical Society

The two men were regaining a level of trust. On July 15, 1813, Adams wrote Jefferson: "You and I, ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other."

"As accurately described in Rush's dream, Adams and Jefferson did again become close friends, and there did indeed follow the 'correspondence of several years' described in the dream. Furthermore, the 'world was favored with a sight of the letters' as entire volumes were eventually published which contained the letters written between those two in their latter years." Their letters, over the next 14 years, covered such subjects as government, liberty, religion, philosophy, agriculture, family news, disappointments, and happiness.

Seventeen years after Dr. Rush's 1809 dream, Adams and Jefferson did "sink into the grave nearly at the same time" also as the dream had indicated. Amazingly, they both died on July 4th, 1826 – the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence! Adams was 90 and Jefferson was 83. Once political opponents, John Adams' last words were of his friend. Historians differ, but it was either: "Jefferson survives" or "Jefferson still lives." He didn't know, however, that Jefferson had died a few hours earlier.



John Adams, 1735-1826 (left),
Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826 (right)

Most people aren't aware that both Adams and Jefferson died on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Incredibly, it was as though both men willed themselves to live until that landmark day. Their passion to see the survival of this "holy experiment" - as many described America in that day - kept them alive until this milestone was reached. Adams, too weak to attend the national Fourth of July celebration, asked to be sat in a chair by his window in order to watch the festivities. While there, he drifted into unconsciousness and died later that night. Another of Adams' last words spoken before he graduated to Heaven were "Independence forever."
Passionate in life; passionate in death.

Who was Dr. Benjamin Rush? He, whose prophetic dream helped unite these two?

- He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.
- He served as physician-general of the Continental Army.
- He was a professor of medicine at University of Pennsylvania.
- He helped establish five universities and colleges.
- He was a prolific antislavery writer.
- He helped start America's first Bible Society. In 1791 he founded First Day Society, an early type of Sunday Schools.

Rush died in 1813—known as one of America's most notable founders. Peacemaker. Reconciler. Prophetic dreamer. Friend to two mutual statesmen who needed to reconcile. A man who believed in forgiveness. One who highly honored God.

Although Adams and Jefferson were wounded by partisan politics and never saw eye-to-eye regarding government, as old men they re-evaluated their lives, chose to try and understand the other, and forgave them. Their letters give us a rich picture of America in their times. What a legacy. We can give thanks to a man who was determined that they mend their friendship...and who acted on a God-given dream!

What a privilege to live in this America!

— *Prayer*

Father, thank You for the brave men who wrote and adopted our Declaration of Independence, making us a free nation. We often forget their solemn sacrifices when many knew by signing that document they might be signing their own death warrants. Some did lose their homes, fortunes, loved ones. Thank You for all those who lay down their political differences for the sake of unity and freedom. Thank You for the lessons they taught us about forgiveness and reconciliation. May we be worthy of their sacrifices.

Thank You for speaking to us, Holy Spirit, through Your word, dreams, visions, prophecy, and words of knowledge. Teach us to value Your voice, and to recognize it more quickly. We ask You to mature the prophetic giftings in the church, that we might enjoy and see the full fruit of this Christ-anointing. May listening to You become more than an exciting anomaly. May it be a daily pleasure.

We ask this in the name of our worthy Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S THE TESTAMENT OF

FREEDOM

BY DON DOSS

The Music Ministry of Fredericksburg Methodist Church in conjuction with the Fredericksburg Chorale will present a concert on Saturday, July 1, at 3PM featuring the major work." The Testament of Freedom" written by Randall Thompson from the writings of Thomas Jefferson. The concert will include the Chancel Choir and Orchestra of the Methodist Church along with members of the Chorale and other local musicians.

This is one of those incredible choral works that has limited presentation opportunities because of the difficulty of the music in the choral and orchestral parts. Randall Thompson uses a lot of compositional tools at his disposal to set the beautiful texts with an incredible sound that brings the test to life in a stirring fashion.

Randall Thompson ranks as one of America's greatest 20th-century choral composers, along with his one-time student Leonard Bernstein. In 1941 he became chairman of the music department of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. In 1942, the University asked him to compose a work for its April 13, 1943 "Founders Day", the 200th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson with the composer at the keyboard and broadcast on nationwide radio.

Thompson selected four passages from Jefferson's collected works for the four parts of The Testament of Freedom. These include excerpts from "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" (1774) found in the first movement The God Who Gave Us Life, the "Declaration of Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms" (July 6, 1775) used in the second and third movements, We Have Counted the Cost and We Fight Not for Glory. This was written two days after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence to convince the last holdouts that war with Mother England was inevitable. And the last piece a letter to John Adams (September 12, 1821) I Shall Not Die Without a Hope. Adams, who was once a bitter enemy of Jefferson's would die within hours of Jefferson on July 4th, 1826.

At the time of its composition, our nation was in the heat of World War 2. The US was engaged in four wars - the Russians finally taking out the German invaders, Rommel's Afrika Corps being pushed back

into Tunisia, and the British beating off the Blitz. But the Axis still had a hold on almost all of Europe and Japan, though defeated at Midway and New Guinea, still held power over 100 million people.

There were heavy controls on Americans at home with travel, rationing of food and fuel, and civilian defense initiatives. It was still feared that Japan might attack the US mainland so a coordination in manufacturing, agriculture, education, and government were all directed solely to the war effort. It was an environment where patriotic expression was not only tolerated, but very much promoted.

Small wonder then of the positive reception in 1943 to Jefferson's words, written to inspire the scattered resistance toward war with the nation which, one hundred sixty-seven years later, was the US' greatest ally.

And even today, it is still the intellect and writing of Thomas Jefferson that moves the hearts of people who still believe in the ideals of a free nation and the great cost to keep it that way. Jefferson's words keep The Testament of Freedom simply too profound to be merely patriotic. It remains in the American choral repertoire thanks to its powerful choral sound along with the incredible orchestration written by the composer himself. And there is still a rush of patriotic fervor that happens, something largely missing from American art music of the twentieth century.

The concert will also include other patriotic favorites such as the National Anthem, God Bless America and the Battle Hymn of the Republic. There is no charge for the concert. Come early!

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men. We...solemnly publish and declare, that these colonies are and of a right ought to be free and independent states...and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour."
- Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, 1776

Fredericksburg United Methodist Church Music
and the Fredericksburg Chorale
presents

The Testament of Freedom

July First
3pm

Composed by Randall Thompson from the writings of Thomas Jefferson, this concert will include Fredericksburg United Church Chancel Choir, Orchestra of our Church and feature members of the Chorale with other local musicians. One performance only Saturday, July 1, 2023 at 3pm. Donations welcome. Admission is free.

Fredericksburg
United Methodist Church

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FUMC Foundation Update

By David Nelson, Jim Harris and the Foundation Board

The Fredericksburg United Methodist Church Foundation was created in 1986 to provide a means for supporting the church and its programs. It provides a perpetual source of support through charitable gifts and living memorials.

The Foundation, through generous contributions, gifts and prudent investing, now has assets exceeding one million dollars. Last year, the Foundation was able to provide grants for the sanctuary construction project, tuition for pastors to enter part-time or full-time Christian ministry, and multiple mission projects. We hope to raise funding for capital projects for the future.

Currently, the Foundation is assisting with the necessary funding to install a new code-compliant fire alarm system for the church. The current system as noted by the Fredericksburg Fire Department, that our church is not up to building code, so this has been a high priority for us to contribute in any way we can. Additionally, the Foundation had the opportunity to take part in funding the *Spanish as a Second-Language* class hosted here at our church. The prayer is that by helping to equip our church members and leaders with bilingual skills, it will help fulfill and achieve the vision to be a more diverse and inclusive church.

There are several ways to contribute to the Foundation. The most common method is through a check payable to the Foundation. However, there are other ways to contribute. The Foundation accepts donations as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy, real estate, personal property, stocks and bonds, and a qualified charitable donation with required minimum distribution for IRA (RMD). All gifts to the FUMC Foundation are tax deductible. Donating appreciated investments directly to a charity avoids reporting gains as taxable income. Bequests, life income gifts, and other donations are generally exempt for Federal Estate and Gift taxes.

One increasingly popular way to give to the FUMC Foundation is an annual donation of all or a portion of any

required minimum distribution charitable gift or RMD. Persons over 72, 73 for those that reached 72 after December 31, 2022, are required to take a RMD distribution each year. RMD's are fully taxable unless they are transferred directly to a church or other charitable entity. Once the RMD is directly transferred to the charitable entity, the donor gets credit for the RMD payment, and it is not taxable to the donor.

During 2023 as you make your investment and financial decisions, the FUMC Foundation Board asks you to consider the Foundation as a possible way to invest in the future of Fredericksburg United Methodist Church through your giving. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the Foundation Board members, the church financial secretary, or your tax advisor.

For questions or more information on ways to support the Foundation, email FUMCFoundation@outlook.com

Thank You

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office@fredumc.org
Prayer Requests: care@fredumc.org
For more information or to stream our services, visit our website at FredUMC.org

SUNDAY SERVICES
9am | Contemporary Worship
11:10am | Traditional Worship