

Dear Lake Toxaway UMC Family and Community,

Summer usually brings reunion, excitement and new energy to our little church. By this time, we would have chairs in the aisle and have people going to the fellowship hall to worship from the chairs over the closed-circuit television. The first weekend of July brought one of the weekends of highest attendance to the church. We would have a very talented young singer from the Brevard Music Center and that person's voice also would have helped us to sing more heartily and joyously in our congregational music.

The danger we face is to fall into sentimentality. Rural churches have faced this temptation for years. We can find ourselves saying, "Remember when..." Lake Toxaway UMC has a history where the church was closed for several years; some vandalism occurred to the building. Visionary individuals gathered and began to imagine the possibility of re-opening the church. They met with the Bishop and faced years of small attendance and tight financial situations. God blessed those visions and dreams, and our church is a small but vibrant congregation of Christians united to worship God and to serve our community.

Honestly, the challenge God enables us to undertake in this current time requires imagination and creativity. I acknowledge I have fallen into the temptation of saying I lack the creativity and energy for such a time as this. I have made this focus a matter of my prayer life this week. And again, the lectionary texts for this week are so appropriate. The apostle Paul said, "For I do not do what I want, but the very thing I hate (Romans 7: 15)." And Jesus invites us "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11: 28-30)." I struggle to let go of my control and seek the leadership of Christ, but I know His leadership does make the burden light. Faithfulness to Christ allows the burden to be exactly where it is intended to be in God's kingdom among us!

I have some thoughts about where we might consider moving forward as I think we will deal with this pandemic much longer than any of us originally thought:

- 1) We need to continue to tell the missional stories (outreach efforts) of our church! We have contributed close to \$34,000 to local ministries and students in this current calendar year.
- 2) We need to think about small home groups to either worship or meet for Bible study with a focus on evangelism. These groups can meet by Zoom, in backyards or on porches. The focus is to see each other's faces, share prayer requests and hear updates on each other's families. It could be a group that meets to use the livestream to worship together. (If this creates an interest in you please call, text, email me!)
- 3) I am thinking about a few Vesper services (we would be limited to 25 currently in an outside setting) and the possibility of a Vesper Service on Zoom. (Again, if this interests you, call, text, email me!)
- 4) Continue to worship online with the virtual worship service. It is not a professional production; that is not worship. Worship is the work of the people in praising God. Invite new neighbors to join in! I am convinced this virtual worship will remain with us when we finally can gather fully in our sanctuary.
- 5) Remain faithful in our financial stewardship to the church.

This pandemic has given all churches a timeout to reimagine God's promised future. We cannot put the new wine of the Spirit into old wineskins!

I appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve as your pastor and love you. Please join me in putting on your "thinking caps" and invite the Holy Spirit to be at work so those who come behind us will find us faithful!

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Home Worship for Community Worship
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, July 5th, 2020**

<https://youtu.be/5bxrZthkKvY>

If the Livestream is interrupted it cannot be restarted but we will have a backup of the recorded service on YouTube as soon as possible.

PRELUDE

Prelude on "Restoration" Gilbert M. Martin

GREETING

L: We gather this day to worship!

P: But we bring with us heavy burdens which weigh us down.

L: We gather this day to praise God!

P: But our hearts ache inside us and we feel we can go no further.

L: Come all who are burdened and who feel weighed down. Come to Jesus.

P: Lord Jesus, take our burdens and heal our spirits. AMEN.

HYMN #400

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
(Printed w/ permission)

INVOCATION

We gather together this morning, O Lord, eager to feel your healing touch for our wounded spirits and weary souls. Flood our lives with your peace. Shine your light of joy in our souls this day, for we pray in Christ's Name. AMEN.

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

24:34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant.

24:35 The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys.

24:36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has.

24:37 My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live;

24:38 but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

24:42 "I came today to the spring, and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going!

24:43 I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,"

24:44 and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also" --let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

24:45 "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

24:46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

24:47 Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms.

24:48 Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

24:49 Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

24:58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will."

24:59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men.

24:60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes."

24:61 Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

24:62 Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb.

24:63 Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming.

24:64 And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel,

24:65 and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself.

24:66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

24:67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Psalm 45:10-17 (Read Responsively)

45:10 Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house,

45:11 and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him;

45:12 the people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people

45:13 with all kinds of wealth. The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes;

45:14 in many-colored robes she is led to the king; behind her the virgins, her companions, follow.

45:15 With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.

45:16 In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons; you will make them princes in all the earth.

45:17 I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations; therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever.

Romans 7:15-25a

7:15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

7:16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.

7:17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

7:19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

7:20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

7:21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.

7:22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,

7:23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

7:25a Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

11:16 "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

11:17 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon';

11:19 the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

11:25 At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants;

11:26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

11:27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

11:28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

L: *Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.*

P: ***Thanks be to God!***

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

Merciful and loving God, we are so grateful for your redeeming love for each one of us. We confess that there have been times of doubt in our spirits. We confess that when the times of difficulties are upon us, we don't always believe that you will take our burdens. We feel we have to always be in control, trying to demand the desired outcome. Help us to place our trust in you. Remind us that you surround us continually with your care, you never just let us go to drift aimlessly about. Open our hearts and spirits again to your healing powers. For we pray these things in the name of Jesus, the one who will take our burdens and give us peace. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear the good news, dear friends! Jesus releases us from our burdens. Place your whole trust in his love. AMEN.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH (The Apostles Creed)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, dead, and buried;

the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Prelude on "Foundation" Sam B. Owens

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of wisdom and all good gifts: We bring our tithes and offerings to your altar, remembering that, like Abraham, you have blessed us to be a blessing to others. Remind us this morning that the gift of freedom that comes to Christ is also a gift not to be kept but to be shared. Even as the world asserts that freedom is a ticket to "go our own way," you made us free to be part of Christ's body in the world, connected and interdependent. May the way we live and the way we give reflect that kind of freedom. In Christ's blessed name, we pray. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #529

How Firm a Foundation
(Printed w/ permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

God of the Ages arr. Wayne Wold

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Liturgist: Rick Dobbins

Announcements

Worship Committee – Covid-19 Update

The Western North Carolina Conference has recommended churches do not return to indoor worship (Phase 3) for the foreseeable future. *It is required we all wear our masks while in church and when out in public.*

Therefore we will continue Phase 2 limiting church attendance to 10 people.

This will help us to continue the Wesleyan call to “do no harm, do good and stay in love with God”.

LTUMC Website

We have updated our old Lake Toxaway website to a temporary static one meaning we will not have the ability to make updates. We are in the process of researching and interviewing website design and hosting companies especially paying close attention to the needs of our LTUMC family. Our website is: <https://laketoxawayumc.org>

New LTUMC Directory

Saunders has had a great response to her e-mail on 6/25. There are the three phases requesting for updates:

1. E-mail has been sent to those we have e-mail addresses for in our 2017 Directory. This went out on 6/25.
2. E-mail to those we have e-mail addresses for but do not have other contact information.
3. Phone calls to those we do not have e-mail addresses for.

Please reach out to Saunders as needed: administrator@laketoxawayumc.org or saunderv@hotmail.com or 469-569-2314 (cell). Thank you all for the GREAT response!

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 400

1. Come, thou Fount of ev - ery bless - ing, tune my heart to
 2. Here I raise mine Eb - e - ne - zer; hith - er by thy
 3. O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con -

sing thy grace; streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing,
 help I'm come; and I hope, by thy good plea - sure,
 strained to be! Let thy good - ness, like a fet - ter,

call for songs of loud - est praise. Teach me some me - lo - dious
 safe - ly to ar - rive at home. Je - sus sought me when a
 bind my wan - dering heart to thee. Prone to wan - der, Lord, I

son - net, sung by flam - ing tongues a - bove. Praise the mount! I'm
 stran - ger, wan - dering from the fold of God; he, to res - cue
 feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here's my heart, O

fixed up - on it, mount of thy re - deem - ing love.
 me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
 take and seal it, seal it for thy courts a - bove.

WORDS: Robert Robinson, 1758 (1 Sam. 7:12)
 MUSIC: Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 1813

NETTLETON
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How Firm a Foundation

529

1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
 2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
 3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
 4. "When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
 5. "The soul that on Je - sus still leans for re - pose,

is laid for your faith in his ex - cel - lent word!
 for I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
 the riv - ers of woe shall not thee o - ver - flow;
 my grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can he say than to you he hath said,
 I'll strength - en and help thee, and cause thee to stand
 for I will be with thee, thy trou - bles to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign
 that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my righ - teous, om - ni - po - tent hand.
 and sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.
 thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.
 I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake."

WORDS: "K" in Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*, 1787 (2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 13:5; Is. 43:1-2)
 MUSIC: Early USA melody; harm. from *Tabor*, 1866

FOUNDATION
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