



Sunday Happenings

In case you missed all the good stuff...

When I think about the church being a home for all... I immediately think of Martin Luther King Jr who spoke the powerful words: I have a dream... he wrote:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

He dreamt of a better life of justice and equality for all. He dreamt of the day when black people would be treated justly and have equal rights. But he also understood that it wasn't enough to just dream. He knew he was called to do his part to prepare the way for that vision of a better, healthier community... even if it meant that he may not see it. Today, I think we are all yearning for better days.

Many of us know the story of Rosa Parks, the Civil Rights icon attributed with prompting the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955... but did you know there were two other women before her that did similar things? In 1952 Private Sarah K

Evans was on her way home from her first military assignment when she refused to move to the back of the bus. Upon refusing, she was taken to jail and detained for 13 hours. Evans sued the Interstate Commerce Commission for discrimination. Despite a judicial victory in November of 1955, the ruling was not enforced until 1961.

And then there was Claudette Colvin, who refused to give up her bus seat to a white person. Inspired by Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, Colvin has resisted the injustice she experienced on the city bus. As a result, she was handcuffed and arrested.

Neither of these two women's names are well-known... neither are their stories. But they are what we call forerunners. They had also dreamt of a home for all people... a vision for peace, justice, and equality, and they did their part to prepare the way for what would happen some years later.

“Forerunners are often unseen figures and unsung heroes. Their backstories are unknown. The details of their lives are underimagined or undervalued. They garner minimal attention because they are forerunners—those who plow the ground, destabilize the terrain and make ready for change that is to come. They are not The One; they are those who come before The One.” – Courtney V. Bugs

Our text on Sunday from Luke was also about a forerunner; John the Baptist. We generally don't hear much about John but maybe once or twice a year. That's because John was the forerunner to Jesus... he was just one voice in his time crying out in the wilderness for justice and peace that would be ushered in through the One that was greater than he... Jesus the Christ.

His message? Prepare the way of the Lord.

Prepare for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God who had a God-sized dream! A dream to heal and save, to love and include, to comfort and restore *all of humanity* to God's original intention and purpose... to make a home for all.



What does a home for all look like? I believe (paraphrasing the late John Lewis) It is a place of worship where we see and celebrate the spark of divinity that is in every person... a place where we embrace every person as a beloved child of God. And most importantly, it is a place where everyone... everyone... all flesh... can see the salvation of God together. That is what John is essentially preaching here.

But... there's always a but...

The key to building a home for all is to see yourself as a forerunner... to give God the opportunity and space to give you a God-sized vision, to renew, forgive and heal you... and then do your part. Nothing is insignificant.

I am sure that Claudette and Sarah never imagined that their stories would be shared... or that their simple actions would be seen as forerunners of a civil rights movement. They simply had a vision for something better and were willing to do their part.

John the Baptist really didn't know how the Messiah would do these things... nor was he certain that Jesus was indeed the One. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was indeed the one. But uncertainty didn't stop him. He kept on doing his part, preparing the way, until his death.

What vision has God placed on your heart? What are you feeling passionate about when it comes to your faith? What steps are you willing to take to prepare the way?

Brothers and sisters... let us not engage in passive dreaming but active dreaming. May we be forerunners of a home for all that Jesus was willing to sacrifice his life for... so that everyone could see God's salvation. Because nothing is insignificant when partnering with the spirit of God. Nothing is impossible with God!

A few things to note:

Pastor Beth's office hours

Monday - 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Tuesday - 12:00 PM - 9:00 PM (This includes Evening Board Meeting)

Wednesday - 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM (Working remotely in afternoon, Advent Virtual Study at 7)

Thursday - 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

We are still planning to have our Christmas Eve service at 7:00 PM. It will also be live-streamed for those who prefer to remain at home.

Join us Wednesday, December 15 for our Advent Bible Study. There are opportunities for both in-person as well as virtual participation. The in-person study will meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 in the church parlor. The virtual Bible study will meet Wednesday evenings at 7. Each study is a stand-alone session. In other words, you do not need to have attended the previous sessions. The Bible studies will cover the material in the Advent devotional guide as well as the texts from the previous Sunday. I hope you can join us for this meaningful journey!

The Zoom Link for the Wednesday evening Bible Study is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5570044849?pwd=RUpaR29LVXN5VzNROElpdGFFTFcrZz09>

Thank you to everyone for giving to the Angel Tree project!

In our prayers:

Please pray for the families who lost their homes and loved ones during the terrible tornado outbreak over the weekend. What might we do in response?

Pray for Ferne Rohr (The Legacy), Stanley and Brenda Shackelford, Melba Cline, Frances and Fred Wilkerson Sr., Fred Wilkerson Jr., Judy Zdinak, Vernon and Cleo Simmons, Jay and Rosalie McLear (Shenandoah), Daniel Melton, Emily Edwards' friend Dennis in Nicaragua, Linda Propst, Sue Whisman, Bob Armbruster, Wallace Clark, Cindy Spitzer, Russell and Sandy Roberts, Phyllis Lunsford, George Sullivan, Annie Collins' brother-in-law Bob Howell, Bob Weiss, Charlotte Kennedy, Dan Packer, Jr. (son of Beth Packer), Kenneth Weaver (Sally Shomo's brother), Louise Pilson, the Weiss family, the family of Ann Clark.