

The Russell Report

Russell Memorial Methodist Church

A Family Rooted in Christ and Reaching Out in Love



Vol. 19, No. 8

August 2023

Is There a Word?

Along with your conference delegates and my lovely wife, I recently attended the annual meeting of the Eastern Texas Conference of the Global Methodist Church. Since then many people have asked for my thoughts on the gathering. Since I am usually not good at elaborating with details, my response has been to say, "It was good—very good." The spirit among the people was joyful. Worship was passionate, preaching was powerful, teaching was relevant, and fellowship was encouraging. A clergy colleague of mine is fond of saying, "It's a great day to be GMC!" Indeed, the days of the conference were great days. It is a good feeling to be part of a new thing that God is doing.

With that said, there is another thought I would share. I am mindful of two dynamics that often coexist: optimism and realism. It is to embrace hope for tomorrow while also acknowledging the challenges of today. This came to the forefront of my mind during the message shared by Rev. Dr. Chappell Temple during the Friday morning devotional at annual conference. (I heartily commend the message to you. The video can be found on our church YouTube channel under "Suggested Videos.") Optimism and realism are concurrent themes in scripture. The message of Jeremiah to the people of Judah is a great example. We are fond of quoting Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you," says the Lord..." These are words of optimism and hope for God's people. Yet in the same pages we find harsh words of realism. Suffering the lingering effects of a siege upon Jerusalem by the Chaldean army, Zedekiah, king of Judah, asks Jeremiah if there is a word from the Lord. The prophet's response is, "Yes, there is! You will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 37:17). It surely wasn't what the king wanted to hear. The future for God's people is always bright, but present reality may be full of hardships.

The "word from the Lord" for today's churches may not be the word we want to hear, especially when the people called "Christian" have taken too lightly our mission in the world. Congregations eventually feel the negative effects of inward focus and comfort. When that happens, our preferred word from the Lord would include quick fixes and easy answers to get us back on track. For sure, nothing we endure will come close to what the people of Judah suffered for their faithlessness (2 Kings 25 mentions the painfully vivid details).

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Even so, we might find it necessary to release things or habits that are familiar to us. We might have to rebuild things that have fallen into disrepair through neglect. We might need to do an extreme makeover of practices in order to be effective. Through it all we may resemble Jacob, wrestling with God at the risk of walking away with a limp. However we eventually describe the way forward, the adjectives are unlikely to include “quick and easy.”

Some people might observe the joy and optimism in Global Methodist gatherings right now and conclude that we have fooled ourselves into thinking that all our problems are resolved. “We’ve made the jump and our troubles are gone!” Wouldn’t it be great if it worked that way? Wisdom tells us that a simple act of denominational re-affiliation is not the magic pill to make any congregation healthy again. Changing the sign on the church lawn, the header on the bulletin and the logo on the business card does not resolve habits that deter a congregation’s effectiveness. Such things are resolved by transformational Holy Spirit work in the connected life of a congregation.

I can say with confidence that the optimism within the GMC right now is held in good tension with realism. God has a great future in store for his people, and the hard requirements of discipleship will be the work of getting there.

One more element of Jeremiah’s story speaks to us here. It is a small detail in the text that has escaped my attention until now. The narrative can be found in Jeremiah 39:11-40:6. The Babylonian king makes Jeremiah an offer: go willingly to Babylon and receive special care and protection. It is a pretty sweet deal, to be sure. Why would Jeremiah want to remain in a land that is being decimated by an invading army among people who don’t appreciate his ministry and inflict harm upon him? Would you be surprised to know that Jeremiah declined the offer? He elected to stay in Judah, where his ministry would continue to be met with opposition and things were going to get much worse before they would get better.

Why would he stay? I think it is simple. He had a calling to work among his people for the sake of God’s purposes, and he knew he couldn’t do the work from Babylon under the care of bodyguards and the comfort of the king’s provision. To put it another way, he chose the road of hardship, sacrifice and vulnerability. He chose the faithful road.

Is there a word from the Lord? Yes. The world needs what the church has to offer. Are the people of the church ready for the challenge? I pray that the answer is “yes!”

Pastor Dave

Our steps are made firm by the LORD when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the LORD holds us by the hand. *Psalm 37:23-24*

Fire Drill Sunday!

Remember that Sunday AUGUST 13 is the day to perform our yearly fire drill. We look forward to great fellowship after worship with a pot luck meal. You can drop off your food contribution in the Deen Building before worship. Please keep in mind that the drill is for the congregation as a whole AND for the Safety Team. We have procedures in place that are designed to help in case of emergencies. Doing the drill helps us to see what needs to be improved. When you cooperate with the instructions of team members, you are helping in their work. In the event of evacuations, whether in the sanctuary or the Deen Building, the "rule of thumb" is to cross the street, gather in the parking lot, and wait to be counted. Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

A BACK-TO-SCHOOL PRAYER



Loving God, thank you for the rest and relaxation we enjoyed over the summer.

Today, we pray for our children as they begin their new school year.

Bless them with joy at seeing friends, excitement at new experiences, and a love of learning. Watch over all who learn, replacing fear with joy, anxiety with peace, and tiredness with energy.

Grant teachers wisdom, patience, and joy in serving their students.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Calendar of Events for August

Dates to Remember for August



Wednesday, August 2, Youth Group trip to Creation Museum
 Saturday, August 5, Back to School Fair
 Monday, August 7, 5:00 p.m. Day School Board
 6:00 p.m. Trustees
 Wednesday, August 9, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Youth Bowling @ Film Alley
 Thursday, August 10, First Day of School WPISD
 Saturday, August 12, 10:00 a.m. Safety Team
 Sunday, August 13, FIRE DRILL SUNDAY, Potluck following worship
 Saturday, August 19, 9:00 a.m. Crafting with Christ

Happy Birthday!

		Sarah Garay	8/9
		Ron Turner	8/11
Donna Rowland	8/1	Roger Moore	8/11
Jeanie Hataway	8/1	Angelina Fields	8/13
Linda Dickerson	8/1	Brenda Cherry	8/16
Jana Davis	8/1	Brenda Brown	8/17
Kelli Huff	8/4	Larry Turner	8/18
Bryson Brown	8/5	Sandy Bryant	8/20
Aiden Nychka	8/6	Austin Teel	8/21
Lucy Hill	8/6	Helen Lawrence	8/23
Cathy (Lamb) Stein	8/6	Pat Mitchell	8/23
Mike Roddy	8/7	Linda LyBrand	8/28
Robin Berry	8/9	Gerald Clemmons	8/28

Right Now Media

Don't forget about the amazing offer of rightnow media offered through the church. Text RMUMC to 49775 for an invitation to set up your account, or contact the church office to request help.

Our Presence and Our Gifts

	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Worship	103	84	92	92	104
Giving	\$5,948.00	\$8,967.00	\$7,569.00	\$12,302.00	\$4,637.00

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Youth Group to Creation Museum with Cheatham 6:00 pm Choir Practice	3	4	5
6 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	7 5:00 pm Day School 6:00 pm Trustees	8	9 Youth Group bowl- ing at Film Alley with Cheatham 5:30-7:30 pm 6:00 pm Choir Practice	10 WPISD School Starts	11	12 10:00 am Safety Team
13 FIRE DRILL! 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Potluck	14 6:00 pm Finance	15	16 6:00 pm Choir Practice	17 9:00 am Games in the Deen Building	18	19 9:00 am Crafting with Christ
20 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	21	22	23 6:00 pm Choir Practice	24	25	26
27 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship Service	28	29	30 6:00 pm Choir Practice	31		

Youth Mission Project

The youth want to help members of our community by providing hygiene health kits for the blessing box. If you have sample sizes of shampoo, conditioner, lotion, soap, toothpaste, or other hygiene items with the exception of toothbrushes (we have plenty) we would love for you to donate them to us. We plan on grouping items into ziplock bags for those in need to take from the blessing box. You can drop off any donated items in the boxes for the Angel Tree. One is located in the Deen building and the other is located in the narthex of the church.



Game Time

Have you heard about our game gathering? Join us on the 3rd Thursday of the month, in the Deen building for games and light snacks. We have dominos, cards, bridge, etc. We will gather at 9:00 a.m. and get the games started at 9:30 a.m. We hope to see you there! (as you can see by the picture, we have a good time!)

COME VISIT THE CHURCH LIBRARY



We have a small church library started in the Choir Room of the church building. We have a limited selection of books at this time, but are looking to grow our catalog. If you are interested in checking out a book, please come in and take a look!

Remember in Prayer:

Family of Travis Deen
Family of Naomi Caldwell
Family of Dwayne Brock
Family of Rosa Davis
Family of Sammy Savage
Family of Scott McKay
Family of Bill Hedges
Family of Sandra Howard
Arthur Galope, Jr.
Alice Kolb
Betty Manning
Billie Cade
Bobbi Smith
Bruce Evers
Bruce Lacy
Chad Ash
Charles & Wynona James
Cheryl Bradley
Cheryl & David Shaw
College Students

Crestwood Nursing &
Assisted Living
Darian Richardson
Denny McCormick
Eric Johns
Fausto Sanchez
FG Hardy
Harrison Mayone
Helen Liston
Hollie LyBrand
Inez Wade
Isaac Bullard
Revival at Asbury College
Jared McDonald
Jeff D'Amico
Jenny Bell Robertson
Jim & Sandra Smith
Kristin Jackson
Marigrace & Mike Lang
Margie Arehart
Margie Evers
Mark Brown

Marty & Barb Mitchell
Mary Bullard
Phillip Young
Randy Scott
RMMC Staff
Robert Butts
Robin & Lorelai
Sasha Webster
Scrub
Shari Smith
Students, Teachers,
Administrators & Staff
Sunday School & Church
William Moore



Memorials

In memory of
Lawson White
Given by
Judy Powers, and
George & Lenna Deen.

In memory of
Keeta Lybrand
Given by
Judy Powers, Candice Wingo &
Jerry Hollister, Ted & Denise Deen,
Lucia Deen, Herschell & Linda LyBrand,
Larry & Theresa Turner,
George & Lenna Deen, Ginger Hess,
And Pat Mitchell.

In memory of
Rosa Davis
Given by
Fritz Gilbreth and
Herschell & Linda LyBrand.



Russell Memorial Methodist Church

Rev. David Cartwright, Pastor
John Ross, Minister of Music
Vanna Duda, Pianist
Jackie Cockerham, Financial Administrator

Nancy McDonald, Office Administrator
Fritz Gilbreth, Organist
Theresa Turner, Ladies Hand Bells Director
Shane McBride, Youth Director

Join us Sunday Morning!

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED