



This is Us

NEWS, VIEWS, & GOSPEL TRUTHS

EAST NAPLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | SEPTEMBER 2020

# Our Traveling Companion

*How helpful is it to be in pursuit of genuine people when one has not pursued a genuine encounter with one's self?*

The journey to find genuine people is often laden with numerous roadblocks. I have come to realize that the greatest obstacle on such a journey is the one that arises because of self-deception. How helpful is it to be in pursuit of genuine people when one has not pursued a genuine encounter with one's self? I have often heard people say, "I want to be surrounded by people who are real." My spirit truly resonates with this desire, for I too long to be surrounded by people who are "real" and can "keep it real," but how can I find people and be around people if I am unwilling to be honest with myself about myself? Therein is the problem: the journey to find genuine people is unrealistic if we do not simultaneously begin a journey of

self-recovery, not self-discovery, in the risen Savior. Self-recovery is challenging because it requires courage to transcend mechanisms that have enabled us to engage in necessary avoidism. We truly do not want to face ourselves.

Faith in the risen Savior and the God who raised Him up can supply the power for one's search for the genuine within. I say this because most of us are fearful of what we may find when God begins peeling away the layers of stained garments; however, knowing that we are accepted and loved by God in Jesus Christ transcends the fear we may possess. In 1 John 4, we find these most liberating words, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear ..."

God's love of us and for us, as revealed through the crucified and risen body of Messiah Jesus, is our traveling companion on the journey of receiving a new self.

We cannot be apprehensive about what we may find along the journey because we are loved by God in spite of all the holes within our souls. In his book, **The Courage to Be**, Paul Tillich (1886-1965) reminded us that true courage knows that we are accepted by God, even when we think we are unacceptable. That is liberating! That is empowering! That is the God of the resurrected Christ!

*Peace,  
Pastor Craig*



**Happy Labor Day** to all, but especially to those who these past few months, have put their lives at risk to save and serve others. COVID-19 has robbed many from the means of supporting their families; if that is you, we extend our prayers, that our faithful Jehovah Jireh will show what an awesome provider He truly is.

Whether you labor in the field for souls and get no earthly reward for it, or you are blessed to hold a paying position, let us all give thanks that we have made it thus far, by and through God's amazing grace.

# The Way of the Cross is Messy



On a road trip across the Deep South, I could see in the distance a huge cross on the side of a stretch of highway. Grabbing my camera, I tried desperately to get a good clean shot, but apart from the cars that dared to drive past at that given time, there was another obstruction (something on the dashboard) I couldn't get rid of. Click, click, click I went, and hoped at least one shot would be decent.

None of them were perfect and at the moment when disappointment was about to set in, the irony became quite clear. Is the way of the cross perfect? Jesus' wasn't. Mine hasn't been and I don't know of anyone whose journey to that place of surrender and crucifixion has been clean and free of mess.

Our mess becomes a part of the obstacle course we have to walk along this Christian journey, in the process of being shaped into the image of Christ.

The cross is a symbol of death to our flesh, our carnal (regarding the satiating of our 5 senses) nature. As Christians, we are called to die to self and not walk in and fulfill the lusts of the flesh. But those of us who strive to walk in obedience to the Word of God, know that it is HARD. We take the steps, make a bit of progress, and then boom, this obstacle, and then the next comes, and we get derailed. Determined not to fail, we bow our heads in shame, we seek forgiveness, and work up enough courage to try again.

But the way will always be messy. We will make promises to ourselves to do better. However, because we do not exist in isolation, our children, spouses, co-workers, neighbors, fellow drivers on the highway, will do or say the wrong thing at the wrong time, and just like that, we will be back at square one.

Galatians 5:16-26 lays it all out for us, the practices of the flesh vs the practices (Fruit) of the Holy Spirit. Who said practicing Christianity was easy? Please, let us be honest—it is hard work. Jesus warned that those who wanted to be His disciples had to deny themselves, take up their cross, and then follow Him.

Overcoming our natural sinful nature is a constant battle for the Christian. We were born with the stain of original sin and unfortunately, as a result, our default thoughts, actions, and reactions will be carnal. We must daily, moment by moment, situation by situation, consciously tell/remind ourselves to respond differently. We are encouraged in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to take every thought captive and make them line up with the Word of God.

I don't know about yours, but the way to my cross has been so messy. I thank God for His mercy, His amazing grace, and His unconditional love. I am grateful that He knows and sees my heart; He hears my cries. The end of the beautifully penned Psalm 139 says it so well, *"Search me [thoroughly], O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there is any wicked or hurtful way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

Thank you, Jesus, for the way of the cross!

**CDGOLD**

## This is Us, One Family Under God!



Different in age, stage of life, or ethnicity, but all the same by and through the purchased blood of Jesus Christ.

# Mission Update



Fifty-eight dresses are on their way to Nicaragua.

Thank you to all who support and volunteer to make our Dress A Girl program such a success!



The medicines and medical supplies for Cuba were dropped off on August 25. Let us pray that they reach the churches and people of Cuba quickly as there is such need. I communicate with Pastor Reynerio at Cañamazo Methodist Church often through Facebook Messenger. They continue to pray for the congregation of ENUMC, and the people of Naples each morning at 6:00 am.



Thank you for the school supplies and funds donated to equip our New Horizons students for a safe new school year.

## ***You Are Invited!***

If you have an interest in mission work and would like to visit our committee or join, we would love to have you!

Our next meeting is Tuesday, September 1, at 7:00 pm in the small room of Elsey Hall. We will social distance and wear masks.

*Kris Clemmensen,  
Mission Coordinator*



The Florida United Methodist Conference has created the "Fill The Table" initiative to provide 3,000,000 meals for those in need by September of 2021. We are going to be a part of this! Food donations will continue to go to the Food Pantries at St. Matthew's House and Grace Place. Food collected this month will go to help fill the boxes at St. Matthew's House for their mobile food pantries. They have distributed over 2,000 boxes to families in July, and 9,100 boxes since the pandemic began. Any financial donations will go to the Harry Chapin Food Bank (HCFB) because our money goes farther there. HCFB supplies St. Matthew's House and Grace Place with fresh and canned items for their pantries. Every dollar donated to HCFB turns into \$8 worth of food. 96% of the money donated to HCFB goes to help those in need and only 4% goes to administrative costs. If you are interested in volunteering with HCFB, Grace Place, or St. Matthew's please contact Kris Clemmensen, or the church office. We are eager to increase our support during this pandemic by stocking their food pantries. Let's help create three million meals!

## **Help ENUMC Fill Food Boxes for St. Matthew's House**

- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Soup
- Ramen Noodles
- Vegetables
- Chef Boyardee
- Canned Meat
- Canned Beans
- Cereal Small Boxes
- Macaroni & Cheese boxes or cups
- Individual Snack items

## **Give Food**

1.2 pounds of food equals one meal!

Drop off items at ENUMC office on Mondays between 10:00 am-3:00 pm, or bring to church on Sunday mornings and place in the food cart in the Narthex. All food donations for September will go to St. Matthew's House.

## **Donate Funds**

\$2 equals one meal!

Write out a check to ENUMC with FOOD in the memo line or place money in an envelope labeled FOOD. If you give online, type FOOD under OTHER. All financial donations will be sent to the Harry Chapin Food Bank.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A very Happy Birthday to each and every one of you on this month's list. You are beautiful creations of an awesome and amazing Creator. May your uniqueness help you stand out in the most positive ways, and may the Father's gifts continue to open doors before you. Be thou exceedingly blessed on your special day, and every other day.



*Princess Sassy Pants & Co*

|                   |        |                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|
| Megan Beddow      | 1-Sep  | Tina Leonard      | 12-Sep |
| Carol Griffin     | 1-Sep  | Ronald Cunningham | 15-Sep |
| Ed Nulton         | 1-Sep  | Udene Torres      | 17-Sep |
| Elizabeth Moxam   | 2-Sep  | Gisela Tatem      | 19-Sep |
| Jack Yates        | 2-Sep  | Kathie Lewis      | 20-Sep |
| Maxine Kilburg    | 4-Sep  | Tom McElroy       | 20-Sep |
| Janelle Simmons   | 4-Sep  | Kaci Jo Daudert   | 21-Sep |
| Renaldo Baylina   | 7-Sep  | Noel Lee          | 21-Sep |
| Dave Price        | 8-Sep  | Bettie Weldon     | 21-Sep |
| Diane Saso        | 8-Sep  | Hannah Ahlquist   | 22-Sep |
| Ruth Fralick      | 9-Sep  | Ginny Chism       | 23-Sep |
| Ester Ricardo     | 9-Sep  | Brandon Goodwill  | 23-Sep |
| Christine Simpson | 9-Sep  | Gerard Valdivia   | 24-Sep |
| Bill Washburn     | 9-Sep  | Delfin Proenza    | 27-Sep |
| Derene Denson     | 10-Sep | Chuck Mahan       | 28-Sep |
| Jack Smith        | 10-Sep | Tyler Delashmet   | 29-Sep |
| Sam Mattell       | 11-Sep | Roy Wilson        | 30-Sep |

## BARGAIN NOOK COVID-19

I am happy to report that it has gone smoothly since we opened last month.

Many of our customers come in every week and have no problem accepting our rules. Everyone—volunteers, and customers— must wear a mask and sanitize their hands. We only allow 3 customers in the shop at a time. If others are waiting outside, we limit shopping to 15 minutes. Unfortunately, sales are down to about one-third of last year's due to the virus and lack of inventory. The items that sell the most and are needed are jewelry, linens, and kitchen items.

We appreciate all donations and thank you for supporting the Bargain Nook. We are open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so if you have donations, please come by on those days.

*Carol*

