Westover Reflections - October 2026

"Do you think that I have come to bring peace on the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other! From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against-or two in favor and three against."

-Luke 12:51-52

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:
***Sunday, 4 October: World Communion and Blessing Box Sunday.**
***Thursday, 15 October, 6:00 pm, at Macedonia UMC: Cary, Charge Conference.**

To say that this is a **"disturbing passage"** would, I believe, be an understatement; for I am sure that **none of us** want to hear that Jesus has come to **divide people.** To be sure, there is enough of that in the current state of the world!

Look, my friends, **we are not talking** about being in a bar in Raleigh during a **State vs. Carolina game!** We are talking serious issues. And when Jesus steps into our lives there will be conflict. We don't want it, of course. But it is what happens when we decide to follow Jesus.

Again, these words are strange and **unsettling** because we see too much conflict in the world around us. And I can surely attest to the truth that some of these issues cause division among our citizens, among church folk, and, yes, among family members. (I, for example, know that my brother and I cannot talk about certain things.)

Some of these disagreements can result in **"playful conversations"** about division. I mean most people **are not** going to get that bent-out-of-shape over a **State-Carolina** battle.Fire the coach, maybe. But we **are not** going to walk away from a relationship, or so I pray.

Knowing that most of us have sat through enough meals around the table wherein there was some topic that did not have a **consensus of opinion,** I can't help but wonder why Jesus would seemingly encourage division. Again, there seems to be plenty of it already in the world.

Perhaps the **answer is found** in word from the Apostle Paul. In ***Ephesians 3:14ff***, the Apostle begins the passage with these words: ***"When I think of all of this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious,, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong…"***

Jesus **isn't seeking** to sow division, my friends. **In reality,** we are called to **unity**. Our Father in heaven is our common denominator. However, we must also acknowledge this self-evident truth: ***Any unity that is built on injustice-where we fail to live in a right relationship with one another and "share the love of Chris that surpasses all understanding"-is no unity at all.*** It is a false peace. It is a trap that any one of us can easily fall into.

I have heard over the years how friends and family members have justified their decisions may saying something along the line: **"I had to settle…"**

The crux of Luke's passage is that Jesus ***does not "settle."*** And He doesn't expect us to do so, either. Throughout all of Scripture it is perfectly clear that God is not interested in trivial disputes, **could care less** about silly issues that don't change the substance of debate. What interest our Father in heaven is this: ***Justice***. Justice that is given equally to all.

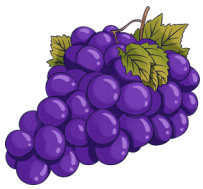
And when we as followers of Jesus seek to have a world in which justice is the priority, then there will at times be division. **Feathers will be ruffled.** However, it is far better ***to ruffle feathers, to ripple the waters,*** than it is to compromise on what we know to be the truth in the eyes of the Holy.

Still in His Peace,
William



by Bruce Smith, Director of Music Ministries

First Fruits of Worship



Song Story: "Thy Word (Is A Lamp Unto My Feet)"

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"

Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith brought unto the world a powerful worship song back in 1984 that has made an indelible mark on the Christian worship experience. It is a song that is rooted in Psalm 119:105 as it turns the Biblical image of light for a path into a prayer for guidance, courage and perseverance.

"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 109:103-105

The genesis of this song occurred during a period where Amy Grant was recording her latest album "Straight Ahead" with Michael W. Smith, her lifelong collaborator. They were using the studios at Caribou Ranch in Colorado. One evening, Amy went for a long walk and after a while it started to get dark. She suddenly was faced with not recognizing the terrain or any paths leading back to the ranch, and thus became lost. As Amy reflected on her disorientation and fear at being lost, she remembered God's word from the psalmist, and immediately related to the lyrics she was to write...

"When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way – still you're there right beside me And nothing will I fear, as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end."

She found her way back to the ranch and immediately wrote down her lyrics and told Michael W. Smith about the song and her inspirational walk and he penned the music to the song. The result was a tender confessional song that speaks directly to the God whose Word brings light to dark paths, and help to the lost. It's relationship to scripture is seen in it borrowing influence from Psalm 27.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold[of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Psalm 27:1

The new song was included on Amy's groundbreaking "Straight Ahead" album and the song crossed over from contemporary worship to traditional worship by being included in hymnals from various denominations. It is found within our Methodist Hymnal as well.

As we connect in worship, it's important for us to admit to ourselves and to God that we may have lost our way, but we will hold on to the promise that God's Word will lead us to the light and back on to the path He has established for us.

"I will not forget Your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering
Jesus be my guide and hold me to your side. I will love you to the end"

We are never lost when we focus on His Word!

United Methodist Men & United Women of Faith

The UMM and UWF (and anyone else who would like to come) will enjoy breakfast together on Saturday, October 3 at 9:00 AM. This is always a blessed time of fellowship and food. Breakfast is provided and *everyone* is invited. It's a great way to start your Saturday!



UMM will meet in the Fellowship Hall after breakfast.

After breakfast Craft Circle will meet in Wesley Hall. We'll be painting jars and making Fall arrangements. "Bring your own" lunch starts about noon.



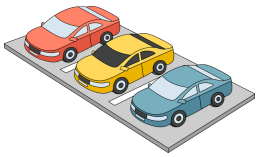
After lunch, UWF book study will resume with Chapter 5, "Abigail, the Trapped One." Come join us for a morning of wonderful fellowship!

Fall Festival Update

Unfortunately, it was necessary to cancel our planned Fall Festival. We simply do not have the manpower for an event of this scale right now.A big thank you to all who had volunteered to help.

Fair Parking

Parking cars last year was such a huge financial success that we are doing that again this year! We'll be parking cars on both Fridays and Saturdays during the NC State Fair. If you are willing to help with this fundraiser, please contact Kent Gibson.



Homecoming

Homecoming and our Thanksgiving Celebration will be Sunday, November 15. Rev. Gray Southern will bring the message at the combined 11:00 AM service.

Meats will be provided, but please bring side dishes and desserts to share. More details coming in our November newsletter.

Mark your calendars

Saturday, Oct 3, 9:00 AM **UMM and UWF breakfast - Wesley Hall**
Saturday, Oct 3 10:00 AM **Craft Circle - Wesley Hall**
Saturday, Oct 3 10:00 AM **UMM meeting - Fellowship Hall**
Saturday, Oct 3 12:00 AM **lunch (bring your own) - Wesley Hall**
Saturday, Oct 3 12:30 PM **UWF book study - Wesley Hall**
Sunday, Oct 4 **World Communion and Blessing Box Sunday**
Thursday, Oct 15 6:00 PM **Charge Conference**- Macedonia UMC, Cary
Friday & Saturday, Oct 16 & 17 **Fair Parking**
Friday & Saturday, Oct 23 & 24 **Fair Parking**
Sunday, Oct 25 **Gibson baby shower** 2:00 PM Fellowship Hall
Saturday, Nov 14 **Set up for Homecoming/Thanksgiving celebration** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Sunday, Nov 15 11:00 AM **Combined Service, followed by Homecoming and Thanksgiving Celebration**
Saturday, Nov 28 **Decorate for Advent & Christmas** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Saturday, Jan 9 **Undecorate Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall 10:00 AM-3:00 PM**

Happy birthday to:

4 Budd Batts
6 Christa Crowder Doerr
7 Shannon Fisher
10 Phyliis Danskin
17 Kristen Anne Lowsky
19 Danny Poole
26 Deniece Land
26 Lynne Price
27 Yemi Adebiyi
30 Becky Rogers
31 Bruce Smith

Information or questions for newsletter? Please contact Sharron at Sharron.Gibson9194@gmail.com





Baby Shower

You are invited to a baby shower for

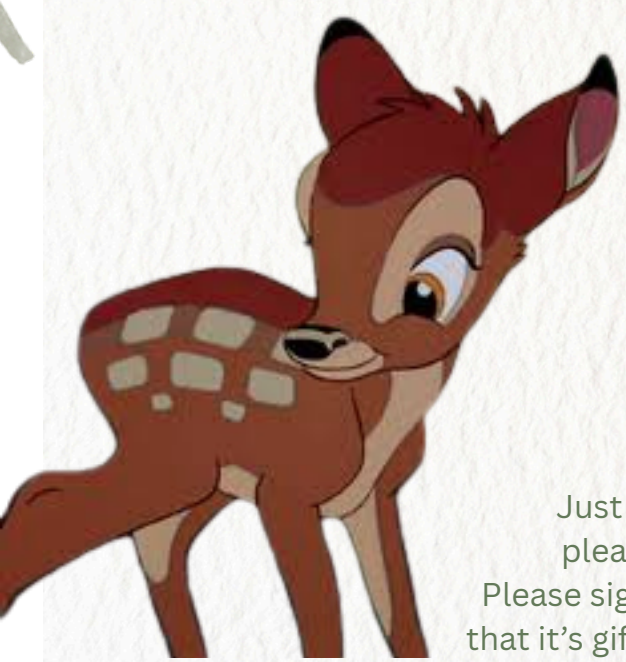
Justin and Tempest Gibson

Sunday, October 25, 2026 at 2:00pm

Westover UMC Fellowship Hall

RSVP to Sharron (919)-614-0467

The parents-to-be are registered at both Target and Amazon.







Just a small request, it's not too hard,
please bring a book instead of a card.
Please sign your book so that parents can share
that it's gift from you even when you're not there.