



***“But Peter and the Apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’”***

**Acts 5:29**

**Good day, Saints,**

You know, there are just some days when I open this **Holy Writ** and I know, yes, I am certain, that this **Ancient Word** was meant for me in that moment. And I am always amazed by the timing; for it is as if God placed the **Sacred Text** in that moment...just for me, most of the time when I was struggling with some human element of life, the underbelly of faith, someone saying to me that I needed to read the **Word** more closely.

So, I happened upon this **Word** from the **Book of Acts** after one of these moments. You may not realize this but I am **rather opinionated** on some issues. I know! Shocking, to say the least. (Perhaps, I have not told you good folks that I came back to North Carolina to do graduate work in **Political Science** at UNC-Chapel Hill with one goal being to become an editorial writer.)

I am on **Facebook** where I feel free to express thoughts on many subjects, including **Cowboy Logic**, cooking recipes, songs that I like to share, and, of course, the **state of political soul-craft**. I have a friend from my childhood days who is a wonderful lady. She and I were, let us say, close competitors in school. Mr. Mitchell, our History Teacher, was always pitting us against one another in academic games because he knew that we **knew our stuff**. And, thus, for us to be on the same team meant that no one else stood a chance—just speaking truth, my friends.

Well, long story short, my friend and I still compete! And she likes to occasionally throw out the reminder, when we disagree, that we are Christians, which is to say that she thinks one way on some issues, but I think another, which confounds her...because, in her mind, she believes that all Christians should see things but one way.

In one recent post we got into a rather long back and forth debate. And she threw out the **“We are Christian”** comment, implying that because we were church folk there was a certain way to view the world...her way.

Of course, I responded with my own Biblical statement as I reminded her of this word from the **Book of Acts**, suggesting that there are, to be sure, those moments when, yes, we recognize that certain entities are ordained by God, but there are also those times when Christians must **“obey God rather than human authorities.”** We have an obligation, my friends, to live into our faith and let our faith guide our acceptance/rejection of what is right and wrong. To be silent when one disagrees, whether with our social/political/ theological or moral views, is to acquiesce, at times, to the unacceptable.

Look! We Christians are living in the world. We are going to agree on many things...and we will have moments in life wherein we may disagree with that which we see in the world around us. But I believe that we are called to be a voice among the discourse. Just because we are Christians together does not mean that we have a monopoly on all things. There are times when we must discern from the cacophony around us that which is truth based on our understanding of God’s will and purpose. And every voice matters! If we believe that every voice does matter, we will be subject to those who criticize us.

We, to be sure, do not have to deal with direct persecutions in our daily lives, but we still face revelations and realizations that can be dangerous to our spiritual lives, just as the Sanhedrin’s threats were to the Apostles’ physical lives. And we all know that despair and doubt, if allowed to fester, are destructive forces to be sure.

But, if we listen more closely to God, and obey God’s will for our lives, and allow for God to be the primary influence, rather than human voices, the dynamic is changed. God alone! This is what we hang our hopes on. Anyone or anything else is bound to be flawed, bound to disappoint, and in the process, likely to shake our faith and scar our souls. I admit: Some are the days when I listen well to this process, while there are those days when I am reminded that I need to spend more time in prayer in order to be a voice of faithful reasoning. At the end of the day, however, I know that we Christians are called to faithfully live in the world, while not surrendering our moral compass, nor our voice seeking justice and righteousness for all people, that God has placed within our being. Stay faithful; stay encouraged.

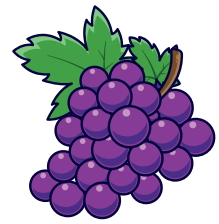
**Still in His Peace,**

**Pastor William**

# *First Fruits of Worship*

by Bruce Smith

Director of Music Ministries



## *All The Earth Worships!*

Have you ever considered how God made this world to remind us who the creator is and how we should respond to Him? I know it's a stretch, but look at the world we live in from the Godly perspective. We see trees, hear birds, feel the gentle breeze, all of these sensory blessings from God are means for us to experience worship in nature.

Think of what God's word says about nature worship...

***"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.  
Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;  
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.  
Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes"***

Psalm 96:11-12

***"Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,  
lightning and hail, snow and clouds,  
stormy winds that do his bidding,  
you mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars,  
wild animals and all cattle,  
small creatures and flying birds"***

Psalm 148:7-10

I know...it's hard imagining inanimate objects have a mind and a spirit to worship, but God created them, so why not? Just look at the imagery...trees with their branches lifting high into the sky – kind of looks like our arms lifted up to God in praise, doesn't it? Look at the birds sailing through the air with such freedom and peace, or their beautiful songs they sing to start a new morning on earth. Can't that be an inspiration to us that we should be lifting up beautiful songs to the Lord each day? Have you ever felt a cool breeze on a hot day, the way it feels, the way it sounds as it rustles the leaves? Of course you have, and can't that be a reminder of the creator who sent that breeze to you to inspire a "thank you, Lord" for the way it makes us feel?

The prophet Isaiah said it well...

***"You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.  
Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."***

Isaiah 55:12-13

Even Jesus commented on nature giving God praise...

***"Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,  
"Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you,"  
he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."***

Luke 19:39-40

So the next time you are on your front or back porch, or walking through the woods, stop...stand quietly... look up... and truly experience how all the earth worships the creator God. Babbling brooks, rustling leaves, singing birds, swaying tree limbs, and when you see, hear, and feel how much they worship...join with them!

## BBQ

The United Methodist Men are hosting a BBQ on Friday, May 30. Lunch will be served 11:00 AM -2:00 PM and dinner from 4:00-7:00 PM. Plates will be \$12.



UMM have advanced tickets, but plates can be purchased at the door. How can you help? Sign up to work a shift, donate desserts, invite your friends and neighbors! Questions? Contact Les Watkins or Kent Gibson.

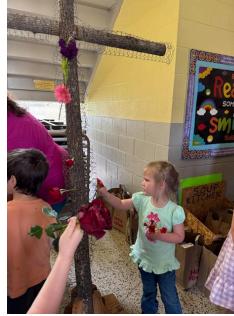
## Game night

Join us in the Fellowship Hall on Friday, May 9 for game night. Pizza dinner will be served at 6:30, followed by bingo and other fun games. There are always prizes and game night is always fun!



*Thank you!!*

A HUGE thank you to all who helped with our annual Easter egg hunt! We had a great turnout, with over 20 children and their families. What a joy it was to see so many enjoying time together. Wow, what a great day it was!



Also, a big thanks to United Methodist Men. Thanks to their donation, and donations from movie night, we were able to restock supplies for our blessing box.

## VBS

Vacation Bible School is approaching quickly! We need a committee to plan and make this happen for the children. If you are interested in helping, please contact Sharron Gibson.

## UWF and craft circle work day

The United Women of Faith and Craft Circle will meet on Saturday, May 3. UWF book study is 10:00-11:00 AM. Then we plan to focus on the children's room in the education building and the other rooms upstairs. We really want to spruce these rooms up a bit to make them more warm and welcoming. We'll break for lunch around noon. All are invited!

## Mark you calendar

May 3 UWF book study 10 AM Wesley Hall  
May 3 UWF and craft circle work day 11 AM  
May 3 Lunch 12:00 PM (Bring your own lunch)  
May 9 Game night & dinner 6:30 PM Fellowship Hall  
May 30 UMM BBQ

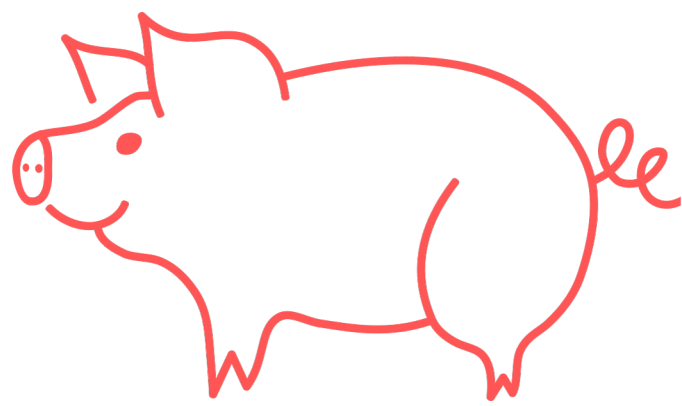
## Happy May birthday to:

1 Kimberly Holder  
1 Anna Sargent  
5 Camryn Watkins Lucas  
10 Laura Brooks  
Travis Allen  
13 Janet Giannattasio  
14 Ruth Miller  
17 Deena Poole Scott  
20 Y'Duy Ksor  
20 Treu Ksor  
21 Alma Foley  
22 Jennifer Price  
25 Sandra Johnson-Leu  
27 BJ Decoeur  
27 Mark Treni  
31 James Carter



*Happy Birthday!*

# **BBQ**



## **Westover United Methodist Church**

**300 Powell Drive  
Raleigh NC**

**Friday, May 30, 2025**

**11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

**and**

**4:00 - 7:00 PM**



**\$12.00 per plate for pork  
bbq , slaw, potato salad,  
hushpuppies and dessert**

**Hosted by Westover United Methodist Men**