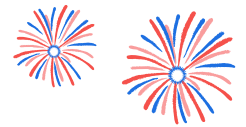


Westover Reflections - July 2026



***“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance.”
-Psalm 33:12***

As I am writing this missive for the **July Newsletter**, I have many thoughts as I consider that the **4th of July** will be **America’s 250th birthday**. Thus, I am mindful that some of you are expecting me to acknowledge this, as well I should.

I find myself on this date thinking about the movie that Mo and I will see this afternoon with friends of ours. The movie is titled **“Pressure.”** It is about General-later President-Dwight Eisenhower’s decision as to when to launch **“Operation Overlord,”** i.e., **the D-Day invasion**. No small decision, mind you!

Thinking about the movie and remembering the history that I read through the years, as well as our current **state of affairs**, I went back to the days of my youth **-1973** to be exact. You see, I have among my small collection of **45’s** one by a Canadian radio broadcaster named **Gordon Sinclair**. **Mr. Sinclair** did an editorial piece called **“The Americans”** at a time when our nation was having some, let us say, difficulties. (You can hear **“The Americans”** by Gordon Sinclair on **YouTube**.)

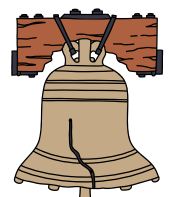
At the time the dollar, much to the glee of more than a few nations outside our country, was taking a beating on the world markets. We were also having a number of natural disasters across the land-flooding along the whole of the Mississippi and tornadoes destroying communities in the heartland. At the time of **Mr. Sinclair’s** recording, he reminded the world, and us, that our great nation had been **a very present help** to others in their times of need, but we did not always receive the same aid in kind. However, we were still always willing to make the effort, to **reach into our household and federal pocketbooks**-until, and even **when it hurt**-to put much of the rest of the world, including the then rich nations like Germany and Japan back on their feet after World War II. This help came at no small cost to American lives.

Did you know that **2,501 American service members** were killed during the **6 June 1944 D-day invasion-2,400** at **Omaha Beach**. In total, our nation suffered over 6,000 casualties (including wounded and missing) that day. Those who gave the last full measure, and those who went home with memories they never cared to share, did so because Americans have always been **good winners**. We have been a **people who had compassion** for the less fortunate-the ones in dire straits-because we were believers in something bigger than ourselves, something higher, something Divine.

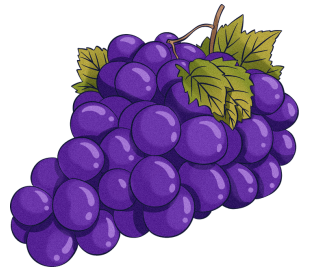
On our **250th** birthday our legacy is not found in military parades to demonstrate our mite, nor in political rhetoric designed to appease one side of the political spectrum, or the other. No, our legacy is so much more; for we are so much more! Our legacy, I would suggest, is found, in the words of **Leviticus 25:10**-words that are inscribed on the **Liberty Bell** in Philadelphia- **“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”**

My hope, my prayer, is that we never lose our sense of identity that we are placed here to be that **“beacon of hope”** for the rest of the world; for when we as Americans are at our best, we know who we are called to be. We are children of the **High King of Heaven**. And He is the one who blessed us with this great land, and He is the One before whom we shall all bow.

***Still in His Peace,
Pastor William***



First Fruits of Worship



by Bruce Smith
Director of Music Ministries

Worship – Just What Are You Expecting?

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isaiah 40:31

When you have a big event in your life – a big vacation, a wedding, a move, or a new experience – don't you feel the rumblings of anticipation as the date draws near. You might be anxious, nervous, excited, or lose sleep. And when the day arrives, isn't it so much sweeter because of the anticipation you've experienced those weeks and months before. It seems worth the wait when the day comes. Isn't that why Heinz Ketchup made great use of the Carly Simon song – "Anticipation" – as the ketchup bottle is opened and turned up and you have to wait for the first drops of ketchup to come out of the bottle?

Why is that any different from the expectation we should have before we come to church on Sundays? Do we think so little of that experience that we don't formulate any expectations for it during the week? We get to see and engage with our church family, pray, sing great worship songs, and hear a word from God to us. Why can't we approach church with the statement, "I can't wait to see what God is going to do this Sunday in my life!"?

We should be able to anticipate God fulfilling our needs...

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

As well, we should expect God to tell us things as we worship...

"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known." Jeremiah 33:3

And, we can have our strength restored...

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

All of these can be ours when we come to worship on Sundays. But if we arrive with indifference and with no expectation, then what we receive will be equal to that sense of anticipation. I think we should come to worship, sit down, and pray quietly, "Lord, I can't wait to see and hear what you will have for me today in worship. Speak to me, Lord." Better still, we should be excited throughout the week to get to be with our church family, learning and growing together. My Mother used to tell me this to infuriate me when I couldn't wait for something. She said, "remember, good things come to those who wait!"



It is almost time to launch our children on a mission of God's love at Galaxy VBS! **We are so excited!**

We are still in need of a few more adult volunteers and we are always eager to welcome more young friends. If you are willing to help, please plan to attend our volunteer meeting on Monday, July 6th at 5:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to help, but cannot make the meeting, please let me know.

We strongly encourage families to register their children by July 6th so that we can plan "enough" for all of our kids. Families can register online at WestoverUMC.org or by returning a registration form to me.

Our tshirts are custom made and super cool this year! All VBS kids receive a tshirt if they are registered ahead of time. **Any adults that would like a shirt, please let me know ASAP.**

Our church family is invited to join us for the VBS breakfast on Saturday morning, July 18 at 9:00 AM. If you have any questions, please contact me!

Blessings,
Sharron Gibson

Mark you calendars:

Communion Sunday & bring items for blessing box- July 5
VBS Volunteer Meeting - Monday, July 6, 5:00 PM
District Listening Session - Thursday, July 16, 6:30 PM
Vacation Bible School - Friday, July 17, 5:00-7:30 PM
VBS & church family breakfast - July 18, 9:00 AM
Vacation Bible School - Saturday, July 18, 9:00-11:30 AM
Trustees Meeting - July 21, 5:00 PM
UMM meeting and workday - July 25, 9:00 AM



The final numbers are in from the United Methodist Men's BBQ, and wow, are they impressive! The final profit was \$3,265. In addition, we received nearly \$350 in donations to help stock our blessing box.



The men had a breakfast and a workday in June and are planning another for July 25 at 9:00 AM. **Everyone** is invited to come hungry for breakfast and ready to help beautify our church grounds.



No Craft circle, UWF or game night

Due to the July 4th holiday and VBS, there will be **no** craft circle, United Women of Faith or game night this month. We look forward to getting together again in August!

Happy birthday to:

2 Les Watkins
3 Christopher Crowder
6 Bonnie Highsmith
6 Clay Adams
10 Sandra Danskin
11 Segun Adebisi
12 Lang Ksor
13 Makenzie Watkins
15 Micah Medlin
15 Kiersten Marshall
16 Lynne Cruz
28 Barbara Gue
30 Travis Ksor

HAPPIEST BIRTHDAY!





Register at
WestoverUMC.org by
July 6.

YOU ARE INVITED ON A VES JOURNEY
WITH US!

Westover United Methodist Church
300 Powell Dr, Raleigh

Friday evening, July 17 (5:00-7:30 PM)
& Saturday morning, July 18 (9:00-11:00 AM)

JOIN US AS WE LAUNCH INTO A
WEEKEND OF BIBLE ADVENTURES,
CRAFTS, MUSIC, FOOD, FELLOWSHIP
AND FUN



Questions? Email Sharron.Gibson9194@gmail.com