

A Faith-Filled Philosophy

The word *philosophy* in the title may conjure up images of old men sitting around in academic settings. That's okay; philosophy has always had a haughty air to it, and it hard for ordinary citizens to relate to that discipline.

Here's my surprise thesis: **everyone is a philosopher**. Philosophy, when boiled down to its essence, is simply a disciplined and articulated way of thinking about particular subject or area of life, and that is something we all do to some degree or another. In our case, the subject is **Christian discipleship**—how we choose to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in everyday life, or that span of time, whatever it may be, between our moments of worship. As I have mentioned in other places and times, our ability to think about the stimuli all around us is a key part of our spirituality—one that counter-balances our emotions in those same situations.

For a particular way of thinking to become a philosophy (an alternative term would be a Greek word *ethos*), you have to compare it to other ways of thinking. In other words, you voluntarily test your philosophy, and the decisions and behavior that stem from it, against other perspectives. That is the responsible and mature approach to interacting with others on social, civil, and religious issues. Most likely, you will not agree with many of your colleagues, and perhaps some in your family, but now you know where everyone stands. IF *mutual respect* is in place (and that is a huge assumption on my part), then you can “agree to disagree” but yet maintain your personal civic virtue (my topic from last week's newsletter).

What informs our philosophy or ethos as disciples of Jesus Christ in times of difficulty or disagreement? What other philosophies (ways of thinking and acting in our world) does our faith in the risen Christ come into contact and test us? Those are questions I continually ask myself, and now I am inviting you to do the same.

Let me start with the latter question first. One common philosophy that our faith in Jesus Christ encounters is **egoism**. According to Lawrence Hinman in ***Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory***, egoism claims that everyone acts in their own self-interest to increase pleasure and/or reduce pain. That then becomes one's moral criteria for determining what is right or wrong. Egoism can be expressed as the question “What have you done for me (or us) lately?”, and it plays itself out in society with concerns for one's own welfare (or one's clan, party, gang, etc.). Narcissism is an extreme form of egoism, and fear, greed, and/or insecurity are among its motivators. Fear, greed, and insecurity feed our perceived need for power and control and destroy our faith, properly understood as trust and confidence in what God does in the present and will do in the still unknown future. The reason is simple. Individuals who think and act out of egoism, in whatever form it takes, ultimately trust only themselves. Those in Christ choose a different path.

That brings me back to the first question. Those in Christ Jesus do not work out of egoism but rather out of what Jesus teaches in the Gospels. Our faith in our risen Lord and Savior is the foundation of our personal philosophy as those in Christ, and it informs our way of thinking about how to live our lives in our current world. Our trust and confidence in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ rises above and then replaces all the motivators of egoism within us and quenches our thirst for power and control in a chaotic world.

In Christ's gospel (his birth, life/teaching, death and resurrection), moral justice has been served. We are no longer under the indictment of sin when we have a relationship with Christ, but we do voluntarily hold ourselves accountable to Him and the grace He bestows. We then become agents of Christ's gospel and bring the light of God's grace into a very dark world through our personal behavior more so that some institutional initiative or program. It is in that manner that we invite others to join us—not so much with our words but more with our loving and faith-filled actions. We've been a faith-filled philosophy to fight our internal and collective selfishness that can so easily entangle us. Together, we will take the higher, and more difficult, moral road in our personal lives and as a congregation of Christ's disciples, and then "see" with eyes of faith what good things God has in store for us in the future regardless of our present circumstances. That, in a nutshell, is **hope**, and I hope you come to worship this Sunday, or join us on Facebook at 10:00 a.m., to hear more on hope.

Yours in Christ our Lord,

Pastor Tom

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS BENEFIT OUR CHURCH

Over the past few months, three Boy Scouts from Troop 1251 have been working on projects that have made our building and church grounds more appealing and useful. Thank you **Caleb Jones**, **Bradley Mellington**, and **Kolson Kimbrough** for your hard work! LLCUMC has chartered the troop for many years, and they meet in our Fellowship Hall. Rick McWhirt is the congregation's liaison with the troop, and Pastor Tom serves as the troop's Executive Officer.



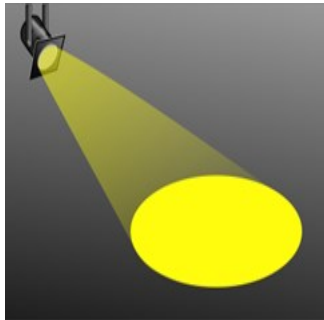
Bradley's Eagle Scout Project – Painting the bleachers at the ball field



Kolson's Eagle Scout Project – new floor and paint in our children's classroom



Caleb's Eagle Scout Project – painting both dugouts of the ball field.



OUR WORSHIP TEAM IS EXPANDING!

As we improve our ability to live stream our worship services with better equipment within the next month, we will need one other person in the back to run the equipment for the high-definition camera at our 10:00 Sunday morning service. This is in addition to those who run the slides on Sunday.

If you or someone you know is tech savvy and can help us, let Pastor Tom know (831-333-6893 or pastorllcumc@gmail.com).

Mission Spotlight – Tarsney Lakes Outreach Mission

Since 2017 LLCUMC has been ministering to families of Tarsney Lakes, a community a few miles east of Lake Lotawana. It started as summer continuation of the Back-Snack mission at Mason Elementary to provide those students with a hot lunch once a week and lunch foods for the remaining days of the week. The mission quickly evolved as we found that we could show God's love by ministering also to the families of the children. Since that first year, LLCUMC has held weekly Wednesday lunches in the summer for families with school-aged children, provided school supplies, provided food for Thanksgiving meals, gift cards and dessert baskets for Christmas, Easter egg hunts, and most importantly, friendship.

Although the weekly, summer meals were discontinued this year due to the challenges of the corona virus, we were able to provide gift cards for school supplies in August and will finish out the year with deliveries of Thanksgiving meal kits and Christmas baskets. Thank you for your continued participation and support of this mission.



On Going: Les Case, Wade Davis, Roger Grable, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Linda Koleiny, Shane Miley, Nancy Rowe

Depression and Mental Health: Robby Sherrod

Strength and Healing: Gene Crist, Graves family, Mike McMillin, Kirk Morehead and family, DJ Petty, Dennis Rogers, Andrew White

Missions: Kenyan G-Marc Project, Chics for Chicks, Hillcrest Transitional Housing, Harvester's Food Bank, Lazarus Ministries, Tarsney Lake Families, Congregation de Mellier, Heart and Soul Children's Learning Center

Please contact the office to update or add prayer requests

November 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Services 8:00 & 10:00	2	3	4 Missions Meeting 7:00	5	6	7
8 Services 8:00 & 10:00	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Services 8:00 & 10:00	16	17	18	19 PPRC Meeting 7:00	20	21
22 Services 8:00 & 10:00	23	24 Church Council Meeting 7:00	25	26 Happy Thanksgiving	27	28
29 Services 8:00 & 10:00	30					