

## Hope in the Midst of Chaos

In times of stress, uncertainty, and chaos (such as we are currently experiencing), I see individuals putting their trust in all sorts of things—anything and everything it seems other than God. Those things could be human or non-human, and because they are not of God, they are, by definition, idols. As the psalmist writes, idols have been a problem for a long time, and, in the process, reminds us where we *should* place our trust, especially in this Advent/Christmas season.

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice;  
let the many coastlands be glad!
- <sup>2</sup> Clouds and thick darkness are all around him;  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
- <sup>6</sup> The heavens proclaim his righteousness;  
and all the peoples behold his glory.
- <sup>7</sup> All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
those who make their boast in worthless idols;  
all gods bow down before him.

--Psalm 97: 1-2, 6-7 (NRSV)

There is only one God, and God is not found in persons and things of this earth. Personalities will, in time, disappoint us, and we cannot take our material possessions with us after we die. The attainment of power and position also goes away when we die. Only in one place, the kingdom of heaven, do we come close to *reflecting* the love of God present through the Holy Spirit (the *gifts* of the Spirit and the *fruits* of the Spirit), but even there we are *not* God. As C.S. Lewis points out, the creation cannot be the Creator, no more than a statue can become a person, no matter how talented the sculptor may be.

My hypothesis on our current human condition (which I do not have the time or resources to test, unfortunately) is that too many Christians have surrendered their faith to idols, whether personalities (politicians, pundits, or pastors), material things (money, cars, homes), spiritual things (power, prestige, position), or some spiritually deadly cocktail of all three categories. Consequently, Christianity takes on a pharisaic attitude rather than that of unconditional love, the Good News only reaches the elect of like-minded people, and hope for our society gives way to despair. Some writers might point to the secularization of our society over the last 60 years or so as the cause, and perhaps they are correct. All I know is what I see and hear: judgment, arrogance, and division coming from bad Christians rather than grace, humility, and reconciliation.

The Good News this Advent and Christmas season is that such darkness and idolatry will not win in the long run. As you look back in history, it never has. Evil has had its seasons (measured in months, years, maybe decades) but over the past 2,000 years God reigned supreme over personalities, power, and partisan ideologies that contradict the gospel of Jesus Christ. Goodness, peace, hope, and love have the final laugh for those who are truly in Christ Jesus our Lord—a community of different ages, genders, races, ethnicities, incomes, nationalities, and political ideologies who live together in the kingdom of God, on earth as it is in heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may it be so for us.

Yours in Christ our Lord,

*Pastor Tom*

*Join us for our Virtual  
Christmas Eve Service*

*at 8:00pm*

*Online at Facebook/LLCUMC*



Covid has changed the way we are worshipping this Christmas Eve, but that doesn't mean we can't share in the beautiful gathering of our Candlelight Service. We ask that everyone light a candle, either alone or with your family while watching the Christmas Eve Virtual Service. We would love to see your Christmas spirit, so please share a photo to help us all feel the peace and joy of this day even though we are apart. If you would like to come by the office and pick up a candle and holder please feel to contact Tonia and she will have them ready for a quick and safe pickup.

Office: 816-578-4544

Email: [secretaryllcmc@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryllcmc@gmail.com)

*Candlelight  
Service*







Covid can't keep the amazing children and teachers at LLCUMC down! Mrs. Sophie took all the children from church a Christmas Sunday School project to help them join in the Christmas spirit while worshiping at home. They were asked to decorate their Christmas Angels and share a picture for all of us to enjoy. These are 2 of the Angels done by Eli and Ellie Anderson, absolutely beautiful and a sign that no matter where we are we can still share and enjoy the meaning and love of Christmas. If any of the other children completed their angels please forward the pictures and I will share them next week.





# POWER of PRAYER

**On Going:** Les Case, Wade Davis, Roger Grable, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Linda Koleiny, Shane Miley, Nancy Rowe, all the families who have lost loved ones or are sick from the Covid Virus

**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, Luke, Emma, Leih

**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*

## *2020 Missions Giving Tree to benefit Lazarus Ministries*

We are collecting for men, women, and children:

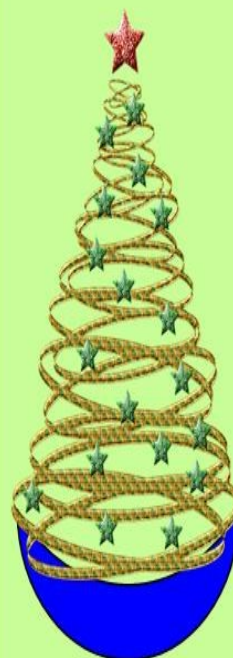
- New socks and new underwear



- Gently used (or new) warm winter coats



- Monetary donations to fund the Lazarus meal program



**DONATED ITEMS** may be dropped off at the church office on Monday - Thursday mornings throughout December (816-578-4544). Checks may be mailed to the church. Please make payable to LLCUMC with "Lazarus Ministries" notated in the memo. **THANK YOU!**

***Dear Friends in Christ,***

What a challenging year this has been! I pray for health and safety for you and your family. During this pandemic it is especially important to remember that God blesses each of us every day, and everything we have is a gift from Him. He has given us talents, health, property, relationships, the gospel, and the environment we live in. As a Christian steward, I serve God out of love and gratitude for these gifts.

Even during a pandemic, we are called to continue Christ's work in our community, and to show God's love and grace to all people. Our monetary giving to the church is a way of furthering the mission and vision of the church; enabling the church to continue Christ's work in the local community and around the world. Our contributions go toward the basic maintenance and repair of our church building; a facility that houses our own Heart & Soul Children's Christian Learning Center, providing quality education and child care for many local families, and also space for numerous organizations in our community to meet, such as Boy and Girl Scouts. Through our offerings we provide pastoral care, discipleship opportunities, and other ministries in our church. In addition, our offerings provide funding for missions outside the walls of our church, and are used to fund apportionments to the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church, which supports local, regional, and church-wide activities. Through the church, our resources are used to spread the gospel in word and deed.

John Wesley once said, "Do all the good you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can". I believe the actions of our congregation show us following in Wesley's footsteps, routinely supporting one another and helping God's children whenever and wherever we can. Your generosity is what makes ministry at LLCUMC possible. Unfortunately, giving is down significantly this calendar year and I'm asking for your help in providing the church with the monetary resources to continue doing good.

I know that the pandemic has left some individuals unemployed or financially struggling, which has impacted their ability to give at the same level as they did last year. Thus, as you consider your end-of-year giving and your personal annual commitment to next year's giving, I'm hoping that those of you whose income is stable would consider taking a step forward in generosity and increasing your giving from the past. In the midst of doing this I believe you will find your own life blessed even as you invest in the ministry of the church.

Author Lynn Miller once said that "Stewardship is the act of organizing your life so God can spend you". As you consider your giving commitment to the church, I pray that we all organize our lives so that God can help us make the most of our short time on this wonderful earth.

Sincerely,

***Lee Fuerst***

Church Council Chair

# December 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>29 Online Services</b> <b>10:00 am</b>	30	1	2	3	4	5
<b>6 Online Services</b> <b>10:00 am</b>	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>13 Online Services</b> <b>10:00 am</b>	14	15	16	17	18	19
<b>20 Online Services</b> <b>10:00 am</b>	21	22	23	<i>24 Christmas Eve Service Online 8:00 pm</i>	<i>25 Merry Christmas</i>	26
<b>27 Online Services</b> <b>10:00 am</b>	28	29	30	31		